

KOL MEVASSER

Naso: Words that Encourage & Bless

Rabbi Ralph Tawil, judaic.org

This week's perasha contains the verses known as the Priestly Blessing or "Birkat Kohanim." In addition to the metaphysical effects of blessings, there is the effect of hearing encouraging words. The Birkat Kohanim is an example of when words are used communally to promote protection and peace. There are many situations in our lives when the right words said in the right way can serve as a "blessing."

*Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to Aharon and to his sons, saying: Thus are you to bless the Children of Israel; say to them: May Hashem bless you and keep you! May Hashem shine His face upon you and favor you!
May Hashem lift up His face toward you and grant you peace!
So are they to put My name upon the Children of Israel, that I Myself might bless them.*

What does the word "bless" mean? It could mean to say a blessing, or to bestow good upon someone. It is used in both these ways in the section: first, when the Kohanim, Aharon and his sons, bless the Children of Israel; second, when God Himself blesses Israel by bestowing His good upon them.

Why do you think that God wants the Kohanim to recite these words before bestowing His

goodness on Israel? Can't He give Israel good things without the Kohanim reciting a blessing? Of course God can bestow His good upon anyone at any time, whether someone pronounces a blessing upon them or not. Yet, God wants His children to seek one another's good and to wish well upon one another.

The act of pronouncing the blessing and hearing it impacts both the one giving the blessing and the one receiving it in a very deep way. Blessing someone means that I am seeking his good. I want him to succeed, so I will do what I can to help him. The person listening knows that the person pronouncing the blessing wishes him well. The person blessing is asking the most powerful being in the universe to help those who hear the blessing. An environment where people wish each other well is an environment where people succeed.

Why were Aharon and his children specifically chosen to pronounce the blessing? Our sages ask us to "be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace; loving people and bringing them closer to Torah." Aharon's nature was to love people. When we truly love other people, we want them to succeed.

The blessing that the Kohanim recite before they bless the rest of the people in the synagogue emphasizes that the Kohanim were commanded to bless "His nation Israel with love." This daily focus on "ahavat Yisrael" can go a very long way in creating an attitude of successful cooperation within the community.

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KJ Schedule Parashat Naso

Rosh Hodesh Sivan & Erev Shabbat Friday, May 30th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 6:15 am
Minhah/Arbit 7:00 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting 7:39 pm

Shabbat Naso / Saturday, May 31st

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 8:30 am
Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit 7:00 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah 8:44 pm

Weekdays / Sunday, June 1st

Shaharit 7:30 am

Monday, June 2nd

Shaharit 6:30 am

Erev Shavuot / Tuesday, June 3rd

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 6:30 am
Minha & Arbit 7:00 pm
Candle Lighting 7:42 pm

Shavuot, First Day / Wednesday, June 4th

Shaharit 9:00 am
Minha/Arbit 7:45 pm
Candle Lighting after 8:46 pm

Shavuot, Second Day / Thursday, June 5th

Shaharit 9:00 am
Minha/Arbit 7:45 pm
Yom Tov Havdallah 8:46 pm

Erev Shabbat / Friday, June 6th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer 6:30 am
Minhah/Arbit 7:00 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting 7:43 pm

Torah & Haftarah Readings

Bamidbar / Numbers: Naso 586 to 601
Haftara Shoftim / Judges 602 to 604

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The words we use with our brothers, sisters and friends can encourage them to succeed. The words we use in our families and classrooms can create the kind of environment where children feel safe, loved and encouraged. Many times the way we choose to speak to our children determines whether they will be encouraged. Choosing to speak in a positive way instead of criticizing can often encourage children to succeed at home and in school.

When your children are quarrelling, teach them how to use words to create cooperation instead of anger. Model this in your own quarrels with your spouse. One technique is to catch your children doing something good and notice that. Don't lavish praise, because that can also backfire. Global, non-descriptive praise does not direct or reinforce positive behavior. Rather, describe what you see or what you would like to see.

For example: Let's say your children remember to hang up their over coats when they come into the house. Notice it by describing what you see. "Sammy, you came home and hung your coat in its place. That's what I call organized." Or when they forget to hang up their coats, instead of giving them a long-winded harangue, say: "I see the coats on the sofa, I would love to see them hung in the closet." Find the positive way to speak and create an environment of cooperation in the household.

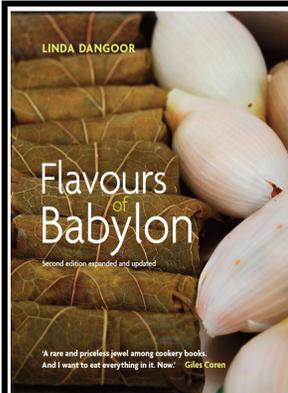
We should remember that, ultimately, God bestows any blessing, and we should not confuse the person pronouncing the blessing with God. In our tefillah, the Kohanim cover their faces and hands and close their eyes with the awareness that it is only God Who bestows the blessing.

Shabbat Kiddush

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There are many ways to apply these concepts. Children at school might encourage one another to do well. Or they could work to be happy when a friend succeeds on a test or an oral report. In sports or other competitive ventures, we should all strive to praise good plays, even those of our opponent. The most important goal of any competition is to have fun and to do our best. Each day, we each have the opportunity to think about ways to use words positively and to encourage success. Shabbat Shalom

In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries for May 31st to June 7th, 2014. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend services the preceding Shabbat.

3 Sivan / Sunday, June 1st

Abraham Blank *Avraham ben Yaacov Dov*
George Sher *Gedaliah ben Moshe Litman HaCohen*

4 Sivan / Monday, June 2nd

Victoria Cohen *Victoria bat Hanina*

5 Sivan / Tuesday, June 3rd

Aharon ben Shlomo *Godsi*
Ezra Kelly Elias Levi *Ezra Kadoori Eliyahu Levi*
Sara Moses *Sara bat Sarah*
Turan Pourati *Turan bat Aghajan*
Khodadad Zakaryaie *Moshe Haim*

6 Sivan / Wednesday, June 4th

Tahereh Hakimpour *Tahereh bat Kokab*

7 Sivan / Thursday, June 5th

Geulah Khakshoor *Geulah ben Avraham*

8 Sivan / Friday, June 6th

Rivka Kohanzadeh *Rivka bat Shimon*

9 Sivan / Shabbat, June 7th

Ester Bekhore *Ester bat Amam*
Ester Ezekiel *Ester bat Amam*
Aziza Judah *Aziza bat Rachel*

Refuah Shlemah

Rahel bat Marcel

Mordechai Cohen / Mordecai ben Avraham
Moselle Amron/Mazal Tov bat Salha Matana
Tilda Levy / Tilda bat Miriam
Joseph Sharaf / Yossef ben Jamila
Maurice Ovadia / Moshe ben Noosha
Pnina Herzbrun / Pnina bat Esther
Michael Herzbrun / Michael Baruch ben Sarah

Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorach