FEET ON THE GROUND, HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
Blessed are you Hashem our God, King of the universe, who spreads the earth upon the waters

Hurricane Sandy!
Who doesn’t remember the water devastation!

"The ocean is in the road, there are trees down everywhere. I’ve never seen it this bad."

"The Hudson River came in and filled half of Hoboken like a bathtub"

FEET ON SOLID GROUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talmud: Brachos 60b</th>
<th>träומד בבלל מסכת ברכות דף ס עמוד ב</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When you put your feet on the ground- you should say the blessing of “who spreads the earth upon the waters”</td>
<td>כי נחותי לארעה, לימא: בורך רוקע האור על המים</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talmud: Tamid 32a</th>
<th>träומד בבלל מסכת תמיד דף לב עמוד א</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Even experienced sailors only feel safe when they make landfall and put their feet on the ground.</td>
<td>כל נחותי ימא לא מיתבת אתה יהו עד דסקק, ליבשותא</td>
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</tbody>
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 WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS BLESSING AND DRY LAND?
The super-storm forced coastal water surges from Florida to Maine - with parts of New York City seeing the worst flooding. Recorded water level values there exceeded 9 feet above the Mean Higher High Water line.

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### The Miracle of Boundaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bereishis chapter 1</th>
<th>רמב&quot;ן בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק א</th>
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<tr>
<td>5) And God called the heavens - sky and there was an evening and a morning - day 2. 6) And God said, let the waters gather from under the sky into one place and dry land will be visible and it was so.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(ח) וַיַּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִיעַ שָמָיִם וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בּוֹקֶר יוֹם שני: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקָּוְעֵי הַמַּיִם מִתַחַת הַשָּמַיִם אֶל מָקוֹם אֶחָד וְתַרְאֶה הַיַּבָּשָׁה וַיְהִי כֶּנֶּקֶט.</td>
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### Ramban Commentary

The waters will gather from under the heavens - The depths, which were water and dust, like the murky waters mixed up. He decreed on the waters that they should gather in one place, surrounded on all sides, and He decreed on the dust that it should ascend until it appeared on the water and it dried up, and the dry land would be fit to settle, and so it says to spread out the land on the waters. And these were two decrees were done by the will of God, opposite of their nature, for it is fitting to honor the dirt and to degrade the water, to be the pillar of the earth, and the water covers it from all sides. And therefore it says the water will gather from under the heavens, meaning to a low place, and it says that the dry land will be visible.

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### Why is it Important to Create Separations and Boundaries According to the Ramban?

- It is important to create separations and boundaries to honor the dirt and degrade the water, fitting the nature of the earth.
- The dry land is seen as the pillar of the earth.
- The water covers the earth from all sides.
- The text emphasizes the importance of these boundaries in maintaining the natural order.
Unparenting: Parents Raising Kids without Rules?
BY TRACY A. STANCIEL, DECEMBER 5, 2012

Letting your kids do whatever they want is so extreme to me that I was almost speechless when I read about it. There are parents who believe that they should not tell their kids what to do. According to a story in Friday magazine, Dayna & Joe Martin are raising their children with no rules.

Raising kids without rules seems like an oxymoron, because if you are raising your kids there are rules and boundaries. They take the term "hippie" to a whole new level.

The kids are 13, 11, 7 and 4 years old. Their children have no rules. When I say no rules, I mean no rules. These kids don’t have to attend school and they are not home schooled. If they want to learn something, they can choose to pick up a book. They can eat whatever and whenever they want. There are no chores and no punishments. The mother has said “The kids come and go as they please, because who am I to tell them when they have to go to bed?” Umm, you are their parent!

There are so many things that can be said about this story. My brain is overwhelmed. The article states:

*The Martins’ unusual approach to parenting is perfectly legal in New Hampshire, US, where they live.* Dayna started following it when Devin was born in 1999. "At school, Joe and I hated being told what we had to study and resented not being able to concentrate on things we were interested in. I was depressed and rebelled. "My grades suffered as I simply wasn’t interested in what I was being forced to learn. My parents were frustrated, but when they understood why I was behaving the way I was, they were totally behind me. I graduated high school, unlike Joe who dropped out three months before he was due to graduate."

First of all, I was unaware that there was a state in this country that allowed parents to opt out of providing their children with an education. Second, these parents seemed like a couple of spoiled brats when they were younger. What kid has been totally happy and on board with what they were being forced to learn in school. Parents, the next time your kid comes home and says "I hate math", just tell him that he doesn’t have to learn math anymore. Let me know how that will go over with your child’s school.

The mother says that her kids are just as smart as other kids their age. I was wondering how she knew that because they don’t go to school, but later in the article she says that they are friends with other families that have the same life style. So basically, they have no clue
whether or not their kids are actually smart because they hang out with other kids who
don’t go to school and are not home schooled.

This is such a disservice to these children. Part of being a parent means that you provide,
guidance, boundaries and discipline. If these kids ever decide to leave their parent’s home,
they will not be prepared to function in the real world because they won’t know boundaries.
How will they keep a job if they think that they can do whatever they want? These children
are being raised, groomed or allowed to live a life of entitlement. They can do whatever
they want without consequences. I think that’s a recipe for disaster.

What would your household be like if you went to a no rules, no school policy today
Boundaries are important to create freedom. Without boundaries the world is chaotic.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS FAMILY?

DO YOU THINK THE ARTICLE WAS FAIR AND BALANCED?

FREEDOM FOR WHAT?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Misha: Avos 6</th>
<th>Mishneh Mishnayeh 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2) And the luchos were the handiwork of God, they were written by God, the writing of God was engraved on the Luchos. Don’t read it Chorus- engraved rather Cheirus – Freedom. Because you are not a free person unless you are involved in the study of the Torah.</td>
<td>...והלוחות מעשו אלהים המה המכתב ... אלהים הוה הורות על הלוחות לא תकרא חורות אלא יتورו שיאן קר חוריי אלה מ壽מך בלחמות חירות שאין לך חוריין אלא מי שעושה בלחמות חירות</td>
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HOW DOES THE APPROACH OF THE MISHNA IN AVOS ADDRESS THE ARTICLE ABOVE?

Without boundaries, without rules, the world is chaotic. Society needs rules to function.
Likewise, water needs borders, when the water outruns its parameters utter devastation and chaos transpires.
The source for this blessing is found in Tehilim: Notice that the language is in the present tense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tehilim 136</th>
<th>התלילים פרק פל</th>
<th>Radak’s commentary</th>
<th>רדך התלילים פרק פל</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 6) Who spreads the earth on the water – His kindness is eternal | (☼) לארם עלמים עלמים על | Who spreads out: This is a reminder of creation of land, what is the kindness? That he nullified the nature of the water, whose nature is to go over the land as it was in the beginning. It initially covered half the globe and in His kindness he gathered it to one place to reveal dry land to create life and vegetation on it. And to spread means: that he gave domain to the land over the water, even thought the water is higher than the land, he gave the land a position that it would be “higher” so to speak – than the water so that the water would not pass over the land. “That He made the sand as a border to the sea that it shall not be trespassed as an everlasting law” and this is wondrous.

The creation of boundaries needs to be constantly maintained.

We are reminded of this in this tehillim.

WHY DO YOU THINK WE ONLY REALLY TAKE NOTICE OF GOD AND HIS KINDNESSES WHEN THEY SEEM TO BE ABSENT?
The idea of the image of the ladder whose feet are implanted to the ground, it doesn't say implanted in the ground, but rather to the ground, meaning that the primary part was the top which was in the heavens, and from there it would descend until it hit the earth. And this is the living soul of man, that he becomes more noble, so to speak, from the breath of His (God’s) mouth, and from there it descends like a ladder and it descends and connects with the spirit, and the spirit with the soul, until it comes down to this world in a person’s body. And so it says in the Zohar in Naso that He blew life into his soul, meaning that the ladder represents the spirit of life. And Godly angels were ascending and descending it, it is the living soul of the worlds and the power of the ministering angels, for all their ascensions, descents, and the way they act, is totally dependent upon the leanings of the actions, speech, and thought in the body of a person at any moment. And that which it says that they ascend and then descend for the main thing in Torah is to always go up and then the spiritual light will come down from the upper world.

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**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

- This bracha is about feeling safe that there is dry land to rest your feet.
- The bracha reminds us of the importance of boundaries, both physically in terms of the water and in terms of our behavior.
- We are reminded that it is not simply a matter of ancient history when God created the world that it functions properly, but each moment of balance is a kindness that He continues to support and sustain the world.
- The Nefesh Hachaim reminds us that whilst we should enjoy the safety of our feet on the ground, we need to constantly look upwards and dream to strike a balance.