

NASO (NUMBERS 4:28-7:89)

Blessing the Blessers

2003 · Rabbi Yerachmiel Sepowitz

Outside of Israel, it happens thirteen times a year. In many communities in Israel, it is still a daily occurrence.

The Kohanim -- Priests stand before the congregation with their hands stretched out in Blessing: "*May G-d bless you and keep you. May G-d make His presence enlighten you and grant you grace. May G-d direct His providence toward you and grant you peace.*" (Numbers, 6:24-26)

G-d has charged the children of Aaron with the responsibility of blessing His children.

Three questions:

- 1) Why is it the job of the Kohanim to bless the Nation? Why can't ANYBODY do it?
- 2) Why does G-d need to have somebody bless us? Why doesn't He do it Himself?! (After all, the Kohanim are simply asking G-d to bless us!)
- 3) Everybody lines up in front of the Kohanim to be blessed. When do the Kohanim get to line up in front of someone to be blessed? Who blesses THEM?!

1) The Kohanim are the children of Aaron. They carry his compassion for one's fellow man. (See "Bless Your Heart!")

2, 3) G-d wants to fill the world with compassion. He wants us to care for one another. Therefore, he wants us to bless one another. Yes, He could have done it Himself, without waiting for someone else to ask Him to do it. He could have bestowed divine blessing upon whoever deserves it. But He preferred to have the blessing come through the good wishes of one's fellow man.

By blessing others, we become better people. Therefore, "they will link My name with the Israelites, AND I WILL BLESS THEM." (Verse 27)

G-d Himself bestows His blessings upon the Kohanim as a reward for blessing the Israelites.

The Talmud tells us that when a person prays for his fellow man's needs, his own needs are met FIRST. A sick person should pray for others to get well. Someone in need of a job should pray for his friends to meet their financial goals.

If you want to be truly blessed, learn to sincerely bless others. Your joy at their good fortune will be a blessing in itself.

Have a great Shabbos.

Rabbi Yerachmiel Seplowitz

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