

# BITACHON LESSON FROM THE PARSHA

פרשת נשא תשפ"ה – Know Where Your Bounty Is From

**וְשָׂמוּ אֶת שְׁמִי עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם** - *They shall bestow My Name upon the Bnei Yisroel, and I will bless them* (Bamidbar 6:27)

The Gemara (Chulin 49a) records a dispute between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Akiva about the correct reading of this Posuk and as to the mechanics of *Birchas Kohanim*: **רבי ישמעאל אומר...כהנים מברכין לישראל והקדוש ברוך הוא מברך לכהנים. רבי עקיבא אומר...כהנים מברכין לישראל והקדוש ברוך הוא מסכים על ידם** - Rabbi Yishmael understands that the Kohanim bless Klal Yisroel, and in turn Hashem blesses the Kohanim. **וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם** means Hashem will then bless the Kohanim. Rabbi Akiva understands that the Kohanim bless Klal Yisroel, and Hashem agrees with their blessing. **וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם** means Hashem will then bless Klal Yisroel.

According to Rabbi Akiva's understanding, the Kohanim do not give their own independent blessing to Klal Yisroel; Hashem is the one giving the blessing, and the Kohanim are just conduits. If that is the case, what is the purpose of the Kohanim here? The blessing is from Hashem; He can give it directly, without it going through the Kohanim. **בְּרַכַּת ה' הִיא תַעֲשֶׂיר**

To answer this question, let's take a look at the words of the Ramban (Bereishis 46:15) who is addressing the question of the Ibn Ezra as to why the Torah does not mention the miracle of Yocheved bearing children at the age of 130, whereas the miracle of Sarah giving birth at age 90 is explicitly mentioned and much discussed as the tremendous miracle that it was. Isn't giving birth at 130 a greater miracle than at 90?

Says the Ramban: **אבל אומר לך דבר שהוא אמת וברור בתורה כי הנסים הנעשים על ידי נביא שיתנבא כן מתחילה או מלאך נגלה במלאכות השם יזכירם הכתוב והנעשים מאליהן לעזור צדיק או להכריע רשע לא יזכירו בתורה או בנביאים** - *Miracles that follow a prophetic revelation or those foretold by heavenly angels warrant being explicitly recorded in the Torah, whereas miracles that "happen" to assist righteous people or to penalize wicked people, do not warrant explicit mention in the Torah.*

When a miracle is foretold, it comes through loud and clear as Hashem's doing. It was predicted and executed flawlessly and "on script" - it is undeniable to all who witnessed it that it's the hand of Hashem. A less broadcast miracle, however, that just "happened", sans any pre-game hoopla, no matter how awesome and miraculous it is, people will find ways to downplay it, minimize it and otherwise not give Hashem credit for it.

They will blame it on a "fluke of nature", a "perfect storm", "good genes", "a good doctor", "a stroke of luck",

or a thousand other explanations. Anything but the Hand of Hashem. The Yetzer Hara is great at getting people to blame all their problems and issues on Hashem; when it comes to the "bad stuff" they place Hashem front and center. Yet, when "good stuff" happens to them, suddenly they forget about Hashem. "Nah, it had nothing to do with Him", they say, "I worked hard", "I got lucky", "I deserved a good break", it's all I, I, and more I. Yes, the wily Yetzer Hara has people hoodwinked, big time!

So, what does all this have to do with Birchas Kohanim? Rav Zaidel Epstein Zatzal (Mashgiach of Torah Ohr) explains: If Hashem would bless Klal Yisroel directly and send down heavenly bounty, the Yetzer Hara would get us to attribute it to "nature", to our good fortune, to anything other than Hashem. We often see people who are saved from various precarious situations in miraculous ways, and then find endless ways to give the credit for their salvation to anyone but Hashem. "Luckily, I got into Dr. So and So, who is an expert in this field", "That Shadchan really knows what she's doing", "It was a real nail-biter, but my skilled lawyer got me off the hook", "My shrewdness got the deal through", "It's good that politician was elected, otherwise we would be in real trouble", and many other such ludicrous attributions pepper people's speech as they discuss successful outcomes. Hashem's name is totally missing from their lexicon.

In order to ensure that Klal Yisroel sees the hand of Hashem, and doesn't get blinded by the Yetzer Hara, Hashem commanded that His blessing be delivered via the Kohanim. This way, Klal Yisroel will go out of their way to partake in Birchas Kohanim, and then when the blessings begin bearing fruit and they experience *Yeshuos* in their life it will be evident that it is from Hashem, as the Kohanim did nothing more than utter the words given to them by Hashem to be His conduits.

By Sarah Imeinu, it wasn't the miracle itself that impressed people, it was the prophetic prediction that preceded it that made people take notice of Hashem's power. So too, for many people, the bounty that Hashem sends, sadly, doesn't impress them. It's the Torah's prediction that it will come via the Kohanim that impresses people when they experience a bounty after receiving the Birchas Kohanim.

Our job is to remember that whatever we get, whatever good we experience, whatever salvations we merit, it's all a result of **וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם**

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**Good Shabbos!**