

THE SOURCE OF ALL BLESSING

by Rabbi Dovid Green

In this week's parsha is the directive to the Kohanim (Aaron The Priest and his descendants) to bless the Children of Israel (Numbers 6:22-27). The blessings are as follows. "May G-d bless you and protect you. May G-d shine His Countenance upon you and favor you. May G-d lift up His countenance to you and give you peace."

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (19th cent. Frankfurt) comments (Horeb chap. 112) "The Kohanim, the representatives in the sacrificial worship should bless Israel (the nation). How? They should declare that the Name of the One and Only G-d hovers over them, that everything streams forth from Him, and that He is the only source of all blessing. Thus will the One G-d really become the Grantor of all blessing. When the Kohanim - the official representatives of the national community of Israel declare this, it is in fact the national community that makes this declaration through its representatives. This injunction stresses that Israel should declare to itself, through its representatives, that it expects every physical and spiritual blessing from the Only One Who will bless it. Hence it is not the Kohein who blesses or has the power to bless; it is G-d that blesses. But The Priestly Blessings...in the formula prescribed by the Torah...is then a prerequisite of the blessing granted by G-d. G-d blesses him who expects the blessing from Him only; for only such a one will regard the blessing he receives as having been received from Him, to be used only according to His will. For such a man will the blessing become a true blessing. Do you wish for a blessing from G-d? Think of Him as the Only Source of blessing, and He will bless you."

Rashi states that the explanation of "May G-d bless you and protect you" is may He bless you financially and preserve your financial gift that it shouldn't be lost. The Chofetz Chaim (early 20th cent. Poland) adds: " However, wealth that comes through another means, which isn't a blessing of G-d, is that which comes through dishonesty and the like...that kind of wealth does not have G-d's protection over it, and in the end it will be lost from him, or he will be lost from it...or sometimes it will be lost through sickness or other troubles. This is what is stated in Proverbs (10:22) The blessings of G-d (truly) bring wealth and it will not bring sadness with it." But wealth which comes through activities which G-d does not approve of does bring sadness in the end.

Rabbi Hirsch's words and the Chofetz Chaim's words really compliment each other. When someone feels that all of his blessing comes through G-d blessing his efforts, and his gains are not a direct result of his own efforts, he knows that blessing cannot come through dishonesty. In the long run we really cannot take what is not coming to us. May we all merit the blessings which are contained in

the Priestly Blessings.

Good Shabbos.

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