

A blessing that changed history: Birkat Kohanim

Parashat Naso ([B'midbar/Numbers 4:21-7:89](#)) 5782 B"H

Have you heard the beautiful song titled, "*The Blessing*," by Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, and Elevation Worship?

The lyrics for the beginning of the song come directly from [Numbers 6:22-26](#).

Many of us know these verses as the "Aaronic Benediction."

But that is a very formal way of talking about these verses.

The LORD told Moses to tell *Aaron* and his sons to bless the children of Israel using these words, so from this we get the term "Aaronic."

"Benediction" is just a fancy word for a "blessing" but we usually associate it with an "ending" or "final blessing." Many church services end with a "benediction." *When I was small, that translated to, hurry and gather your crayons, it's almost time to leave.* Yes, I used to color in church.

The Aaronic Benediction (or Aaronic Blessing) is also known as the Priestly Benediction (yet another reason *pastors* tend to use this at the close of worship services).

In Hebrew, this blessing is called "*Birkat Kohanim*." (Also spelled *Cohenim* or rendered *HaKohanim*.)

It is a blessing that has withstood the test of time, continuing to minister to hearts around the world.

Birkat Kohanim: The Priestly Blessing

[“ADONAI bless you and keep you!](#)

[ADONAI make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you!”](#)

[ADONAI turn His face toward you and grant you *shalom!*” Numbers 6:24-26, TLV](#)

יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה, וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ
יְאֵר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנֶּךָ
יֵשָׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

ADONAI bless you and keep you
ADONAI make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you
ADONAI turn His face toward you and grant you shalom

Numbers 6:24-26, TLV



This blessing was particularly unique in the time in which it was originally transcribed. The other nations worshipped multiple deities and they did not have the sense of a personal connection or relationship with their gods in the way that the God of all Israel was so closely attentive and interactive with the Israelites.

Torah means “instruction.” This blessing was a part of the “instructions” that the LORD gave to the nation of Israel. The

Torah and its fulfillment have changed history, and the Birkat Kohanim has long been a part of the unfolding reality of salvation. The Birkat Kohanim remains central to Judaism, but since it is also now so beloved among Christians it is a wonderful starting point for believers to share with unbelieving Jews the Good News of Messiah.

Birkat Kohanim transliteration and translation

Would you like to learn how to say the Birkat Kohanim in Hebrew? Here is a transliteration:

Ye'varechecha *ADONAI* v'yishmerecha,
Ya'er *ADONAI* panav eleicha v'ichuneca
Yisah *ADONAI* panav eleicha v'yasem l'cha shalom. B'midbar
6:24-26

[“The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you
peace.” Numbers 6:24-26, NKJV](#)

The first track on [Adonai: The Power of Worship from the Land of Israel](#) begins with this very blessing if you would like to hear the Hebrew.

Why is this blessing so special and timeless?

The Birkat Kohanim has touched hearts for generations because of its simplicity but also because of its profundity.

Notice the repetition of the Divine Name YHVH 3 times. *In Hebrew, something repeated 3 times means pay attention! It is important!*

The LORD uses His instruments – saints willing to bless others to pronounce blessing in His Name. It isn't just any saying. **It is a blessing containing the Holy Name of God infused in each phrase. There is power in His Name – so there is power in this blessing.**

In fact, you continue reading [Numbers 6](#) through [verse 27](#), you will see that the LORD says, [“In this way, they are to place My Name over B'nei-Y'israel, and so I will bless them.”](#) Yes, there is power in His Name!

May the LORD bless you.

The LORD, the Maker of the Universe, your Creator, the Almighty Sovereign LORD MOST HIGH. May that specific, wonderful God be the One who blesses you. May you know exactly who He is. He isn't just any god, He is God Most High, the God of Israel.

May He keep you.

The Hebrew term for “keep” contains the connotation of “guarding” as well. May the Almighty One guard you, protect you, keep you.

May the LORD make His face shine upon you.

This is beyond amazing. Even Moshe (Moses) was only allowed to see God from the back. But this blessing indicates that His fullness of His glory is available to us! This blessing prays that the light of His face would shine in our direction. Could anything be more glorious than that? Our Father loves us that much that His countenance would be lifted upon us, His graciousness would be made known, and He endows us with His peace, His *shalom*.

We all need peace. We all need that sense of wholeness. It allows us to relax and to de-stress when we know He holds us in perfect peace. Peace in the Hebrew language refers to that

completeness, a very holistic peace that permeates.

The Aaronic Blessing provides us the comfort in knowing the LORD God Almighty cares about us, is in relationship with us, and has granted us favor enough that He would want to shine His face upon us and be gracious to us.

The Aaronic Blessing in Song

There are many traditional renditions of the Aaronic Blessing that are frequently used in synagogue services and at Shabbat tables to bless our children and families.

Here is a beautiful symphonic rendition of “The Blessing” song sung by Passion City Church:

And a special treat:

Here is “The Blessing” sung in Hebrew (Ha Bracha) by Joshua Aaron.

So today, may you feel the weight of His glory, knowing that the LORD desires you to walk in blessing.

May He indeed make His face to shine upon you and give you peace today.

And ask yourself this:

Who will you bless? Who will you pass along this blessing to? Who around you needs to know that the LORD loves them and wants to be in this type of blessing relationship with them? How can we pray for you? Proclaim the Name of the LORD upon your life and your family today!

Related: [How you can be blessed in your daily routine](#)

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