



## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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Among the many significant concepts that our *Sedra, Parshat Naso*, introduces us to, is the mitzvah of *Birkat Kohanim*. If we contemplate the *nusach habrachah* which the *Kohanim* recite, we can learn numerous important messages.

*Baruch Ata Hashem, Elokeinu Melech Haolam, asher Kidshanu b'kedushato shel Aharon, ve'tzivanu leveraich et amo yisrael b'ahava-* Blessed are you Hashem, Master of the Universe, who has sanctified us with the holiness of Aaron and instructed us to bless his People, Israel, with love...

What is the significance of the unique formulation of this blessing- *asher Kidshanu b'kedushato shel Aharon*, unlike the typical phrasing of most other *birchot hamitzvot*- *asher Kidshanu b'mitzvotav*? What does it mean that Hashem has sanctified us (either the *Kohanim*, and/or Israel) with the sanctity of Aharon? Why not simply: who has sanctified us, and instructed to bless the People of Israel? Why must the *Kohanim* bless the Jewish people *b'ahava-* with love?

The ***Netivot Shalom, the Slonimer Rebbe zy'a***, offers a beautiful insight which can assist us in answering each of these questions.

*The Kohanim, who are the descendants of Aharon, are thus tasked with emulating the ways of Aharon. We learn from the mishna in Pirkei Avot that collectively, the Jewish people should strive to be among the students of Aharon- to love Shalom and pursue Shalom,*

*love our fellow human being, and bring them closer to Torah. Shalom is one of the names of Hakadosh Baruch Hu! Ahron HaKohain serves as the example of one who both demonstrates love and devotion to Hashem, and to humanity, and served as a conduit to bring others closer to Torah, through love. So too, when the Kohanim, those who are descended from Aharon, rise to bless the Jewish people, they and we are reminded, that to truly emulate Aharon, we must strive to personify not only love and devotion to Hashem yitbarach, but also love and devotion for humanity...*

Similarly, the ***Toldot Yaakov Yosef, Rebbe Yaakov Yosef of Polonye zy'a***, taught in the name of the ***Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh zy'a***:

*When there is unity and love amongst Klal Yisrael, then it serves to allow Hashem's Divine love to descend and rest upon us...*

Seemingly, *Birkat Kohanim* reminds us of this vitally important message. Perhaps now more than ever, as we continue to face tremendous challenges, as we continue to struggle to return our hostages, as we continue to daven for our *chayalim* to be protected, may we also merit to remain united, to love each and every member of *Klal Yisrael*, and to be worthy of Hashem's compassion and love. ■

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