

Blessing of the Priests

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

The Torah then goes on give us the famous blessing the Priests would give the people in the Temple, a blessing for closeness to God and peace.

May God bless you and protect you

May God's presence brighten your life and be kind to you

May God look favorably upon you and give you Peace.

The Torah specifies that they are the vehicle for the blessing. The blessing comes directly from God. The priests are the symbolic front men. That is why they hide their face under the tallit so that we should not focus on them or their human appearance, but on the message.

Today this remnant of priestly service is still to be found in our synagogue rituals. Ashkenazim do it only on festivals. Sephardim all year round. The blessing is like the way parents express their love for their children and the hope that they will have a fulfilling and successful life. To do this one needs to make use of the gifts God has given us, we need to work to fulfil our potential. And we need the love our parents shower on us. But we also need peace, positive and helpful external circumstances. Without which we cannot succeed.

A blessing is an expression of love, whether it comes from God or our parents.