

# 7.

## Naso

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### Bless You!

*Don't Underestimate the Power of Blessing*



*Dedicated to Yehuda Leib Markson  
on the occasion of his birthday.*

*May he go from strength to strength and enjoy good health,  
happiness, and success in all his endeavors. May Yehuda  
Leib's father's soul in Gan Eden have much nachat as he  
watches his son follow the virtuous example he set.*

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

### *Naso*

Completing the head count of the Children of Israel taken in the Sinai Desert, a total of 8,580 Levite men between the ages of 30 and 50 are counted in a tally of those who will be doing the actual work of transporting the Tabernacle.

G-d communicates to Moses the law of the *sotah*, the wayward wife suspected of unfaithfulness to her husband. Also given is the law of the *nazir*, who forswears wine, lets his or her hair grow long, and is forbidden

to become contaminated through contact with a dead body. Aaron and his descendants, the *kohanim*, are instructed on how to bless the people of Israel.

The leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel each bring their offerings for the inauguration of the altar. Although their gifts are identical, each is brought on a different day and is individually described by the Torah.

## I. BIRKAT KOHANIM: WHO, WHAT, AND WHEN

*You've Been Blessed*

### TEXT **1a**

BAMIDBAR (NUMBERS) 6:22–27

וַיִּדְבֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:  
דַּבֵּר אֶל אֶהֱרֹן וְאֶל בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תִבְרְכוּ אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמֹר לָהֶם:  
בְּרִכָּה ה' וַיִּשְׁמְרָה:  
יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ:  
יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:  
וַשְׂמוּ אֶת שְׁמִי עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֵם:

G-d spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is how you shall bless the Children of Israel, saying to them:

“May G-d bless you and watch over you.

“May G-d cause His countenance to shine to you and favor you.

“May G-d raise His countenance toward you and grant you peace.’

“They shall bestow My Name upon the Children of Israel, so that I will bless them.”

## TEXT 1b

VAYIKRA (LEVITICUS) 9:22-23

וַיִּשָּׂא אֶהָרֹן אֶת יָדָיו אֶל הָעָם וַיְבָרֶכֶם וַיֵּרֶד מֵעֲשֵׂת הַחֲטָאֹת  
וְהַעֲלָה וְהִשְׁלָמִים:  
וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל אֱהֹל מוֹעֵד וַיִּצְאוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת הָעָם וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד  
ה' אֶל כָּל הָעָם:

And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them. He then descended from preparing the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offering.

And Moses and Aaron went into the Tent of Meeting. Then they came out and blessed the people, and the glory of G-d appeared to all the people.

### A Holy Calling

## TEXT 2

NACHMANIDES, PIRUSH HARAMBAN, BAMIDBAR (NUMBERS) 6:23

”דבר אל אהרן ואל בניו לאמר כה תברכו.” כבר הזכרתי בסדר ויהי ביום השמיני כי צוה את אהרן לשאת את ידיו אל העם ולברך אותם ביום ההוא וכאן צוה לדורות לאהרן ולבניו ופירש הברכה שיברכו אותם.

“This is how you shall bless”: I have already mentioned in the reading of *Shemini* that Aaron was commanded to raise his hands toward the people and bless them on that day. Here, Aaron and his sons were commanded to bless them for future generations, and the Torah enumerates the language of the blessing they should use.

**Rabbi Moshe  
ben Nachman  
(Nachmanides,  
Ramban)  
1194–1270**

Scholar, philosopher, author, and physician. Nachmanides was born in Spain and served as leader of Iberian Jewry. In 1263, he was summoned by King James of Aragon to a public disputation with Pablo Cristiani, a Jewish apostate. Though Nachmanides was the clear victor of the debate, he had to flee Spain because of the resulting persecution. He moved to Israel and helped reestablish communal life in Jerusalem. He authored a classic commentary on the Pentateuch and a commentary on the Talmud.

# TEXT 3

SEFER HACHINUCH, MITZVAH 378

משרשי המצוה. שחפץ השם בטובו הגדול לברך עמו על ידי המשרתים החונים תמיד בבית השם, וכל מחשבתם דבקה בעבודתו, ונפשם קשורה ביראתו כל היום, ובזכותם תחול הברכה עליהם, ויתברכו כל מעשיהם, ויהי נעם השם עליהם.

One of the reasons for this mitzvah: In His great goodness, G-d desired to bless His people through those who regularly reside in G-d's house, whose every thought is devoted to His service, whose souls are bound to Him in awe all day. In their merit, this blessing will land on them, and all their deeds will be blessed, and G-d's pleasantness will be upon them.

## *Sefer Hachinuch*

A work on the biblical commandments. Four aspects of every mitzvah are discussed in this work: the definition of the mitzvah; ethical lessons that can be deduced from the mitzvah; basic laws pertaining to the observance of the mitzvah; and who is obligated to perform the mitzvah, and when. The work was composed in the 13th century by an anonymous author who refers to himself as "the Levite of Barcelona." It has been widely thought that this referred to Rabbi Aharon Halevi of Barcelona (Re'ah); however, this view has been contested.

## Only When Called Up

# TEXT 4

RABBI ASHER BEN YECHIEL, TALMUD TRACTATE MEGILAH, 3:22

”כל כהן שאינו עולה לדוכן עובר בשלש עשה”. ירושלמי: רבי אדא בר פזי כד הוה תש ולא חזיק רישיה הוה קאים ליה אחורי עמודא רבי אלעזר הוה נפיק לברא כלומר היה יוצא לחוץ כדי שלא יצטרך לעלות לדוכן כשהחזן קורא כהנים דהא דאמרינן דעובר הכהן בג' עשה היינו כשהחזן קורא כהנים דאמור להם מתרגמינן כד יימרון להון ואם הוא בבית הכנסת כשהחזן קורא כהנים ואינו עולה עובר ואם אינו בבית הכנסת אינו עובר.

“Any priest who does not ascend to the platform [the designated site for the recital of the blessings] transgresses three commandments”:

The Jerusalem Talmud states that when Rabbi Ada bar Pazi was feeling too weak or light-headed, he would stand behind a column; Rabbi Elazar would depart. That is, he would go outside so that he would not be required to ascend to the platform when the cantor calls to the priests. The statement that a priest [who does not go up] transgresses three commandments refers to once the cantor has called to the priests.

This is [because the words in the Torah] “Say unto them” are rendered in the Aramaic translation as “*when* they say to them.” If he is in the synagogue when the cantor calls to the priests and he does not ascend, then he transgresses; if he is not in the synagogue, he does not transgress.

### Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel (Rosh)

1250–1328

Rabbi, author, and Talmudist, he is widely known by the acronym “Rosh.” Rabbi Asher was a native of Germany, where he was a prominent disciple and successor of Rabbi Meir (Maharam) of Rothenburg. Due to the persecution and massacres of German Jewry under Emperor Rudolph I, Rabbi Asher was forced to flee, and in 1305, he arrived in Toledo, Spain. He is best known for his halachic commentary on the Talmud. Rabbi Asher was the father of Rabbi Yaakov, the author of the *Arbaah Turim*.

Only with Mikveh Prior

## TEXT 5a

RABBI YOSEF CARO, SHULCHAN ARUCH, ORACH CHAYIM 128

כתב האגור שנשאל מהר"י מולך למה אין הכהנים נושאים כפיהם  
בכל יום מאחר שהוא מצות עשה?  
והשיב מפני שמנהג הכהנים לטבול קודם כמו שכתוב בהגהות  
מיימוניות ובכל יום קשה להם לטבול בחורף, ולכן עלה המנהג  
דוקא ביום טוב.

The *Agur* writes that the Mahari Moelin was once asked why the priests do not raise their hands [in blessing] every day if it is a positive commandment to do so.

He answered that inasmuch as the priests are accustomed to first immersing [themselves in water] to spiritually prepare for delivering the blessings, as it is written in the *Hagohos Maimonios*, and it is difficult to do so every day during the winter, therefore the custom has emerged to only [perform the blessings] on the festivals.

**Rabbi Yosef Caro**  
(*Maran, Beit Yosef*)  
1488–1575

Halachic authority and author. Rabbi Caro was born in Spain but was forced to flee during the Expulsion in 1492 and eventually settled in Safed, Israel. He authored many works, including the *Beit Yosef*, *Kesef Mishneh*, and a mystical work, *Magid Meisharim*. Rabbi Caro's magnum opus, the *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law), has been universally accepted as the basis for modern Jewish law.

## Gotta Take Off Work

### TEXT 5b

RABBI YOSEF CARO, IBID.

וגם מטעם ביטול מלאכה וכשהכהן אינו נקרא אינו עובר עב"ל  
דחק עצמו לקיים מנהג מקומו.

“Another reason is so as to avoid people taking off from work; as long as the priest is not called [to bless], he does not transgress”: [The Maharil] has strained to find an explanation to justify the custom that was prevalent in his place.

## Right Frame of Mind

### TEXT 6

RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI,  
SHULCHAN ARUCH HARAV, ORACH CHAYIM 128:57

נהגו בכל מדינות אלו שאין נשיאת כפים אלא ביום טוב משום  
שאז שרויים בשמחת יום טוב וטוב לב הוא יברך מה שאין כן  
בשאר ימים אפילו בשבתות הם טרודים על מחיתם ועל ביטול  
מלאכתם ואינם שרויים בשמחה.

ואפילו ביום טוב אין נשיאת כפים אלא בתפלת מוסף שיוצאים  
אז מבית הכנסת ויטיבו לבם וישמחו בשמחת יום טוב.

The prevailing custom in all these lands is to only [perform the Priestly Blessing] on the holidays, because then they are reveling in the joy of the holiday, and “a good heart blesses.” However, on the other days, even on Shabbat, they are distracted by their livelihood and their inability to work, and they are not in a state of joy.

**Rabbi Shneur  
Zalman of Liadi  
(Alter Rebbe)  
1745–1812**

Chasidic rebbe, halachic authority, and founder of the Chabad movement. The Alter Rebbe was born in Liozna, Belarus and was among the principal students of the Magid of Mezeritch. His numerous works include the *Tanya*, an early classic containing the fundamentals of Chabad Chasidism; and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, an expanded and reworked code of Jewish law.



## TEXT 7

TALMUD TRACTATE SOTAH, 38B

אין נותנין כוס של ברכה לברך אלא לטוב עין שנאמר "טוב עין  
הוא יבורך כי נתן מלחמו לדל". אל תיקרי יבורך אלא יברך.

The cup of blessing for the recital of Grace after Meals is only given to one who is of a generous disposition, as it is said, "He that has a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor"—read not *yevorach* ("shall be blessed") but *yevarech* ("shall bless").

## TEXT 8

ZOHAR 3, P. 145B

פִּהוּן גְּדוֹל דְּלִתְתָּא, אֶקְרִי מְלָאךְ ה' צְבֵא-וֹת, מְשׁוּם דְּאִתִּי מְסֻרָא  
דְּחֻסָּד. מֵהוּ חֻסָּד. רַחֲמֵי גוּ רַחֲמֵי. וּבְגִין כֵּן, כִּהֵן לָא אֲשֵׁתִּיכַח  
מְסֻרָא דְדִינָא.

The High Priest of our nether world is referred to as "an angel of G-d of Hosts" because he comes from the side of kindness—love within love. For this reason, the priest is not found in the side of strict judgment.

### Babylonian Talmud

A literary work of monumental proportions that draws upon the legal, spiritual, intellectual, ethical, and historical traditions of Judaism. The 37 tractates of the Babylonian Talmud contain the teachings of the Jewish sages from the period after the destruction of the 2nd Temple through the 5th century CE. It has served as the primary vehicle for the transmission of the Oral Law and the education of Jews over the centuries; it is the entry point for all subsequent legal, ethical, and theological Jewish scholarship.

### Zohar

The seminal work of kabbalah, Jewish mysticism. The *Zohar* is a mystical commentary on the Torah, written in Aramaic and Hebrew. According to the Arizal, the *Zohar* contains the teachings of Rabbi Shimon bar Yocha'i, who lived in the Land of Israel during the 2nd century. The *Zohar* has become one of the indispensable texts of traditional Judaism, alongside and nearly equal in stature to the Mishnah and Talmud.

## II. WHO GETS TO BLESS?

### *An Exclusive Rite*

## TEXT 9

RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI, SHULCHAN ARUCH HARAV 158:2

זר שנשא את כפיו אפילו עם הכהנים עובר בעשה שנאמר "דבר אל אהרן ואל בניו לאמר כה תברכו את בני ישראל" ולא זרים.

A non-priest who “lifted his hands” [i.e., performed the Priestly Blessing], even if in conjunction with priests, violates a positive commandment. As it says, “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is how you shall bless the Children of Israel,’” [which implies that] others may not.

*Bless Who?***TEXT 10**

RABBI EFRAIM ZALMAN MARGOLIS, MATEH EFRAIM 619:2

נהגו שהאב והאם מברכין את בניהם טרם לכתם לבחת הכנסת ומעתירים בברכה זו גם כן שיחתמו לחיים טובים ושיהיה לבם נכון ביראת ה' וישום בלבבו אהבתו ויראתו בלב שלם וכל אחד כפי מערכי לבו ושינון לשונו שופך תחנונים בבכי ובדמעות שליש למען יקים ד' את דברו ויקובל תפלתו ויעתר אל ה' וירצהו ואגב זה מעוררים הבנים והבנות שילכו בדרך טובים וארחות צדיקים ישמרו ולחזק לבבם לתורתנו הקדושה.

**Rabbi Efraim  
Zalman Margolis  
1762–1828**

Considered a high rabbinical authority of his time, Rabbi Margolis was born in Brody, Ukraine, and served as a rabbi there. A successful banker, Rabbi Margolis established a yeshiva in his own home and raised many prominent disciples there. A prolific author, he published many works, all bearing his name "Efraim."

It has become customary for the father and mother to bless their children before going to the synagogue. In this blessing, they also wish that they be sealed for a good life, that their hearts retain a proper fear of G-d, that their hearts should be implanted with a wholehearted love and fear of G-d.

Everyone does so in accordance with the nature of his own heart and fluency of his tongue, pouring out weeping, tearful supplications that G-d make his words come true, that his prayers be accepted, pleading with G-d to hearken to the blessing. As a result of this, one's sons and daughters are inspired to walk a good path, the path of the righteous, and to strengthen their hearts to the Torah.

# TEXT 11

THE REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON,  
TORAT MENACHEM 5744:2, P. 943

בכמה מקומות נוהגים שבערב שבת (או בערב יום הכפורים) מתאספים הבנים הנכדים והנינים בביתו של האב והסב-כדי לקבל את ברכתו, והוא מברך את כל אחד ואחד מבני המשפחה, מקטנם ועד גדולם "ילדים הכי קטנים, בני ג' וד', נערים שהגיעו למצות, בחורים שהגיעו לעונת השידוכין, אברכים נשואים, אברכים שכבר נולדו להם בנים ובנות, עד ליהודים זקנים שכבר השיאו את בניהם ובנותיהם.

In many places, on the eve of Shabbat (or Yom Kippur), children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren are accustomed to gather in the father's or grandfather's home to receive his blessing. The parent then blesses every member of the family, from the youngest to the eldest: the smallest children aged three or four years old, or youths already after the age of bar mitzvah; those of marriageable age, already married, or who already have sons and daughters of their own; and even older Jews, who have already married off their children.

## Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson 1902–1994

The towering Jewish leader of the 20th century, known as "the Lubavitcher Rebbe," or simply as "the Rebbe." Born in southern Ukraine, the Rebbe escaped Nazi-occupied Europe, arriving in the U.S. in June 1941. The Rebbe inspired and guided the revival of traditional Judaism after the European devastation, impacting virtually every Jewish community the world over. The Rebbe often emphasized that the performance of just one additional good deed could usher in the era of Mashiach. The Rebbe's scholarly talks and writings have been printed in more than 200 volumes.

## Not the Real Thing

# TEXT 12

RABBI YISRAEL MEIR HAKOHEN KAGAN,  
BI'UR HALACHAH 128, S.V. D'ZAR OVER B'ASEH

יש לתמוה על מנהג העולם שנוהגין לברך אחד לחבירו בין שהוא כהן  
או זר בעת שמלוה אותו בלשון יברכך וגו'... ועל זה אמרה התורה  
אתם ולא זרים האיך מותר לזר לברך אחד לחבירו בלשון זה?...  
ואולי יש לומר דטעם המנהג משום דסבירא ליה כהב"ח דדוקא  
בפריסת ידים עובר הזר בעשה.  
אי נמי דכיון דתקנו רבנן שלא לישא כפים בלא תפלה שוב מי  
שאומר פסוקים אלו של ברכת כהנים בלא תפלה בין כהן בין ישראל  
הוי כמכוין בפירוש שלא לקיים בזה המצוה דברכת כהנים ולכן שרי.

One is perplexed by the widespread custom for people—whether or not they are priests—to bless their friend when seeing them off by using the language [of the Priestly Blessing]. . . . It was with regard to this that the Torah said, “Priests should bless and not others”; how is it permissible for a non-priest to bless his fellow using this blessing? . . .

Perhaps, one might suggest, the rationale for the custom is in accord with the Bach, who maintains that a non-priest only violates this prohibition if [he delivers the blessing while holding up and] spreading out his hands.

Alternatively, since the rabbis have instituted that the Priestly Blessings are not to be delivered without the accompaniment of prayer, regarding someone who cites the verses of the blessings outside of the prayer services, whether or not he is a priest, it is considered as if his explicit intention is not to fulfill the mitzvah of the Priestly Blessing. Thus, it is permitted.

**Rabbi Yisrael Meir  
Hakohen Kagan  
(Chafetz Chayim)  
1839–1933**

Pre-WWII Polish halachist and ethicist. Rabbi Kagan was the dean of the illustrious yeshiva in Radin, Poland. A prolific author on topics of halachah and ethical behavior, he is often called *Chafetz Chayim* after his first work, a comprehensive digest of laws pertaining to ethical speech. His magnum opus, on which he worked for 28 years, is *Mishnah Berurah*, a concise commentary on the first section of the Shulchan Aruch. He also authored *Bi'ur Halachah*, on the Shulchan Aruch, and numerous other works.

### III. NOT JUST *KOHANIM*, NOT JUST BIRKAT KOHANIM

*The Power in Your Hands*

## TEXT 13a

BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 12:2-3

וְאֶעֱשֶׂה לְךָ גֹדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדָּלְךָ שְׁמֶךָ וְהָיָה בְרָכָה:  
וְאֶבְרַכְךָ מִבְּרַכְיָה וּמִמְקַלְלֶיךָ אֲדָר וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְּךָ כָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה:

And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will aggrandize your name, and [you shall] be a blessing.

And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you.

## TEXT 13b

MIDRASH BEREISHIT RABAH, 11:2

אָמַר רַבִּי בְּרַחְיָה כְּבָר פְּתוּב וְאַבְרָכָה, מִה תִּלְמוּד לֹא מִדְּבַר "וְהָיָה בְּרַכָּה"?  
אֲלֵא אָמַר לוֹ עַד כָּאֵן הָיִיתִי זָקוּק לְבָרַךְ אֶת עוֹלָמִי, מִכָּאֵן וְאֵילָךְ הָרִי  
הַבְּרָכוֹת מְסוּרוֹת לָהּ, לְמֵאֵן דְּחִזִּי לָהּ לְמִבְרָכָא בְּרִיָּה.

Rabbi Berechiah said, “And I will bless you” has already been written; what is the additional “[you shall] be a blessing” teaching?

[G-d] is saying to him, “Until now, I have had to bless my world, but from now on, the blessings have been transmitted to you; bless those who are worthy of blessing.”

## TEXT 14

THE REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON,  
TORAT MENACHEM 5744:1, P. 314

בהמשך להמודבר לעיל אודות כחו של כל אחד ואחד מישראל  
לפעול בכל העולם כולו, הרי בודאי שיש לנצל ענין זה, ולכל  
לראש-על ידי זה שכל אחד ואחד מבני ישראל מברך את שאר  
בני ישראל בכל ענינים טובים, ובודאי שהקדוש ברוך הוא ממלא  
ברכה זו, ובאופן ד"ואברכה מברכך".

Every Jewish person possesses the capacity to impact the entire world. Certainly this is something one ought to utilize, first and foremost, by every Jewish person blessing the rest of the Jewish people in every manner of good. And certainly G-d will fulfill this blessing in the manner of “blessing those who bless you.”

### *Bereishit Rabah*

An early rabbinic commentary on the Book of Genesis. This Midrash bears the name of Rabbi Oshiyah Rabah (Rabbi Oshiyah “the Great”), whose teaching opens this work. This Midrash provides textual exegeses and stories, expounds upon the biblical narrative, and develops and illustrates moral principles. Produced by the sages of the Talmud in the Land of Israel, its use of Aramaic closely resembles that of the Jerusalem Talmud. It was first printed in Constantinople in 1512 together with 4 other Midrashic works on the other 4 books of the Pentateuch.

## The Trickle-Down Effect

# TEXT 15

MISHNAH TRACTATE KILAYIM, 7:1

הַמְבַרֵךְ אֶת הַגֶּפֶן בְּאֶרֶץ, אִם אֵין עָפָר עַל גְּבֵה שְׁלֹשָׁה טְפָחִים, לֹא יִבְיֵא זֶרַע עָלֶיהָ.

If one has bent a vine into the ground, if it is not covered with three handbreadths of soil, he may not sow a seed on top of it.

# TEXT 16

RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI, LIKUTEI TORAH 67C

ויש עלמין סתימין דלא אתגליין שהם בחינת מקורים לעלמין דאתגליין. וכל מה שיש בעלמין דאתגליין מוכרח להיות לו מקור בעלמין סתימין כנזכר בדרשת רז"ל אין לך עשב מלמטה שאין לו מזל מלמעלה וכן הוא למעלה מעלה עד רום המעלות וכדכתיב כי גבוה מעל גבוה שומר וגבוהים עליהם.

There are hidden worlds which are not revealed but function as the source for the revealed worlds: Everything that exists in the revealed worlds must have a source in the hidden worlds. So it is mentioned in the teaching of the sages that “There is not a blade of grass below that does not have a corresponding spiritual force above,” and so it is higher and higher, until the greatest of heights, as it is written, “for the highest over the high wait, and there are higher ones over them.”

### Mishnah

The first authoritative work of Jewish law that was codified in writing. The Mishnah contains the oral traditions that were passed down from teacher to student; it supplements, clarifies, and systematizes the commandments of the Torah. Due to the continual persecution of the Jewish people, it became increasingly difficult to guarantee that these traditions would not be forgotten. Rabbi Yehudah Hanassi therefore redacted the Mishnah at the end of the 2nd century. It serves as the foundation for the Talmud.



*Bless Away!***TEXT 17**

THE REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON,  
TORAT MENACHEM 5744:1, P. 317

מכיון שנמצאים אנו ב"עת רצון", "יום סגולה"—הזמן המיוחד ד"שמחת תורה" לפני "הקפות"—מן הראוי של אחד ואחת ינצל זמן זה כדי להביע את ברכתו לחבירו ולכלל ישראל, ונה טוב-בנוסח המקובל ד"ברכת כהנים", שבזה נכללים כל עניני הברכות, עד לענינים גשמיים כפשוטם, בני חיי ומזוני רויחי, ובכולם רויחי, באופן של הרחבה... מתוך מנוחת הגוף ומנוחת הנפש, עד לשלימות ענין המנוחה—"מאתך היא מנוחתם".

Inasmuch as we find ourselves at a favorable time and an auspicious day—the special time of Simchat Torah, before the *hakafot* dancing—it would be appropriate for every person to make the most of this time by conveying blessings to a friend and to all the Jewish people.

To use the traditional language of the Priestly Blessing would be even better, for it includes every manner of blessing, literally down to the most material matters: children, health, and ample sustenance, and may they all be ample and abundant . . . all experienced in a tranquil state of body and mind, to the point of utter tranquility, of which it is said, "Their rest comes from You."

*No Matter Who Blesses***TEXT 18a**

TALMUD TRACTATE MEGILAH, 15A

ואמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי חנינא לעולם אל תהי ברכת הדיוט  
קלה בעיניך.

Rabbi Elazar ben Chanina also said, “Let not the blessing of an ordinary man be lightly esteemed in your eyes.”

**TEXT 18b**

RABBI ELIEZER PAPO, PELE YO’ETZ 22:9

וראוי לאדם להשתדל תמיד שיברכהו, ויברח מאד מלהתקוטט  
עם שום אדם ולהיות גורם קללה לעצמו, שהרי אמרו רבותינו  
זכרונם לברכה “אל תהי ברכת הדיוט קלה בעיניך”... לכן יהיה כל  
אדם חפץ בברכה.

One ought to constantly try to seek out blessings and to vigorously flee from quarreling with any person and bring a curse down on oneself. For our sages have said, “Let not the blessing of an ordinary man be lightly esteemed in your eyes.” . . . Therefore, every person should wish to be blessed.

**Rabbi Eliezer Papo  
1785–1826**

Scholar and author. Born in Sarajevo, Rabbi Papo was an outstanding rabbinic scholar, noted for his piety and holiness. He served as rabbi of the community of Selestria (today in Bulgaria). In spite of his short life, Rabbi Papo achieved remarkable depth and breadth in his rabbinic scholarship and left to posterity a significant literary legacy—most notably his work *Pele Yo’etz*, which discusses Jewish ethics, morals, and personality development.