



KI HEIM  
CHAYEINU  
כי הם חיינו



Discover the Joy  
of Shabbos

## A Prayer for Posterity

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E10)

*How do you recall the ברכות you received on ליל שבת? How will your children recall that moment?*

### Greeting the Shabbos

The אריז"ל teaches that a man should extend a warm greeting to the Shabbos upon entering his home as a חתן would bring a shining greeting home to his כלה. This is the first step in invoking a spirit of warmth into the home.

As we will see, invoking a spirit of warmth does not only set the tone for a pleasant שבת, but it also sets the stage for bringing ברכה into the home, as well.

### The custom of giving a ברכה to the children

There is a מנהג ישראל to 'Bentch' the children on ליל שבת. R' Gamliel Rabinovich and others explain why the timing of this Brocha is on Friday night. During the week, a child may have irritated a parent, and an unintended קטרוג on the child may have been created by the parent's irritation. Friday night is singled out for warmth, joy, שמחה and רצון, such that it is the right time to give a Brocha and offset any קטרוג or negativity which may have accrued during the week.

### Full of Warmth

The חסיד יעב"ץ points out that 'Bentching' the children should reflect warmth and closeness. The hands that are going to bless the child should draw the child into one's embrace. We see that יעקב אבינו when he was ready to bless

אפרים and מנשה he drew them into his embrace. Warmth has the powerful effect of creating an עת רצון for Brochos to be effective. It is an auspicious time where anyone can give a Brocha to anyone else, not only fathers to children.

### The formula of the Brochos

The מנהג is to bless the children using the formula of the ברכת כהנים. We know that the כהנים declare, in the Brocha they recite before ברכת כהנים, that they are invoking these words in a context of love. And so ברכת כהנים is associated with an עת רצון.

When giving a Brocha to a son we precede the ברכת כהנים with the immortal words of יעקב אבינו who prayed that fathers would bless their sons with the hope that the child will be like אפרים and מנשה: He said, as we do, ישימך אלקים כאפרים ומנשה.

When 'bentching' daughters we precede ברכת כהנים by invoking the אמהות הקדושות, asking ה' to help this child be a fitting offspring to the saintly שרה. רבקה. רחל ולאה.

### The first words of Torah

Rav Meisels points out that right after we recite each morning we say words of Torah. Which words? The words of ברכת כהנים. These are powerful words which open the שערי שמים and when they are uttered it is a time to ask for any and all צרכים, small and large.

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### *Add your personal Brochos*

Be encouraged to add your own Brocha to those in the formula. It is an *עו רצון* so give expression to whatever you wish for that child. Make it personal; think about what the child in your arms needs and ask Hashem's assistance for anything the child struggles with. It does not need to be said out loud, nobody needs to be put on the spot or embarrassed. But your heart should be filled with the needs of this child and your prayer for them to receive the *סייעתא דשמיא* that they need.

### *Looking into the future*

Rav Sternbach שליט"א writes in *טעם ודעת* that we invoke the Brocha of *יעקב אבינו* because when he blessed *אפרים ומנשה* he saw their connection to the *רבש"ע* into the distant future. For that is the greatest Brocha, *לראות בנים ובני בנים עוסקים בתורה*. We pray that not only our children will be engaged in the study of the *תורה הקדושה* but that their children will be engaged in Torah after them and their children in turn. It is with that prayer on our lips that we pray that our progeny will bring *נחת רוח* to their parents and to *אבינו* *רבש"ע*, the *שבשמים*.

*Takeaway: I will try to create a spirit of warmth on ליל שבת so that my heartfelt Brochos can be effective.*