

Priestly Benediction or Threefold Blessing

The priestly benediction is found in the Torah (Numbers 6:24-26) and consists of three blessings, which is why it's sometimes known as the "threefold blessing." On holidays like Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, members of congregation who are part of the *cohenim* (priestly class) recite the blessing for the congregation, often with their *tallitot* (prayer shawls) over their heads and their hands spread in the ancient sign of the Jewish priests (made famous by Spock on *Star Trek*).

Some synagogues have the custom of saying the blessing each Shabbat; it may be led by clergy, by a member of the congregation, or collectively. Some congregations say "amen" after each line, as is customary after most blessings, while others say the traditional response instead, "*kein y'hee ra-tzon*."

At a bar or bat mitzvah, some synagogues have the custom of directing the blessing at the child. Sometimes, a member of the clergy will place their hands on the bat or bar mitzvah's head or shoulders and say the blessing to them, adding a few personal words as well. In other congregations, parents are invited to say the blessing to their child. When the blessing is said quietly or more privately to the bar or bat mitzvah child, the congregation typically does not say "amen" or "*kein y'hee ra-tzon*" at the end of each line (usually because they are out of earshot).

כֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן / אָמֵן	יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ:
כֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן / אָמֵן	יֵאָר יי פְּנֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי וַיְחַנְּדֶךָ:
כֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן / אָמֵן	יֵשָׂא יי פְּנֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי וַיִּשֶׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

Y'var-ekh'cha A-do-nai v'yeesh'm'recha:

Ya-eir A-do-nai pa-nav ei-ley-cha vee-chu-nei-cha:

Yee-sa A-do-nai pa-nav ei-ley-cha v'ya-sem l'cha sha-lom:

kein y'hee ra-tzon / amen

May the Lord bless you and protect you:

May the Lord show you kindness and be gracious to you:

May the Lord bestow favor upon you and grant you peace:

May this be God's will / amen

[A traditional translation.]

May God bless you and guard you:

May the light of God shine upon you, and may God be gracious to you:

May the presence of God be with you and give you peace:

May it be so / amen

[An alternative translation.]