**Barbie and Berakhah**

**Rav Baruch Frydman-Kohl**

**Kehillat Beth Israel, Ottawa**

**Kol Nidre 5784**

Whether in person or across the ocean, Josette and I bless our children and grandchildren every Shabbat. We don’t miss this opportunity to share our love with them. When our son was in a tank in Gaza, we gave him blessings; when we had a bad week with one of our sons, he still received a blessing.

Greta Gerwig, the director of the hit film, “Barbie” remembered that as she was growing up, her Christian family’s closest friends were observant Jews; they vacationed and played together. She also ate with them on Friday nights, where blessings were sung in Hebrew, including over the children at the table. Every Shabbat, the Jewish father would place his hand on Gerwig’s head, and bless her too.

Gerwig said: “I remember feeling the sense of, ‘Whatever your wins and losses were for the week, whatever you did or you didn’t do, when you come to this table, your value has nothing to do with that…. You are a child of God. I put my hand over you, and I bless you as a child of God at this table. And that’s your value.’ I remember feeling so safe in that and feeling so, like, enough.”

She hoped that people leaving the synaplex after seeing “Barbie” would laughing, maybe cry. “I want people to feel like I did at Shabbat dinner…I want them to [feel] blessed.”

Last year, Christian and Muslim participants in my Path of Abraham/ Sharing Perspectives study mission came to Jewish homes for a Shabbat dinner. Two of them were so taken by this tradition that they called their children to say, “Let’s do this in our home.”

Even if you haven’t done this before, please look at page 200. Think of your hopes for your family during the year ahead. Consider where you and they may have messed up. If you do nothing else during the next 24 hours, if you are sitting with family or are solo thinking of a friend, look at them, perhaps even put your arms around them, bring them to mind, give them your blessing.

I’ll help you:

May Adonoy bless you and protect you.  
יְבָרֶכְךָ ה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ

May Adonoy show you favour and be gracious to you.

יָאֵר ה פָּנָיו  אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ

May Adonoy show you kindness and grant you peace.

יִשָּׂא ה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלום

May this be our blessing to one another tonight and throughout the year. גמר חתימה טובה.

<https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/august-2019/how-to-bless-your-children-on-shabbat-and-holidays>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/blessing-the-children>