

ונברכו ברך כל משפחות האדמה (יב:ג)

"And through you shall be blessed all the families of the earth." (12:3)

How shall all the families of the earth be blessed through Avraham?

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888, Germany) answers the question by referring to the beginning of the verse. "And I will bless those who bless you and those who curse you, I will curse." The manner the other nations will be treated by G-d is corresponding to the respect they provide Avraham. Those nations who bless Avraham, shall be endowed and graced by G-d. However, those nations which curse and belittle Avraham will be ill-fated and doomed. This is the meaning of being blessed "through" Avraham.

The Or HaChaim (Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar 1696-1743, Morocco-Jerusalem) explained that the nations of the world fall into one of three categories. Those nations that bless Avraham, G-d will bless them. Those who are hateful and detestable to Avraham, G-d will curse them. Those who neither bless nor curse Avraham will receive their blessing "by means of Avraham". As Rashi explains in verse 2, G-d gave the power to Avraham to grant favor and shower blessings on whom Avraham sees fit. This is why the wording of "through you shall be blessed" is located after "I will bless those who bless you and those who curse you, I will curse", to allow each nation to categorize itself in regard to how they treat and behave towards Avraham Avinu. It is Avraham himself who is granted the power by G-d to bless those nations he feels deserving. Shabbat Shalom