AMIDA, THIRTEENTH BERAKHA: Protect those who protect us

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Grant Your compassion, HaShem our God, to the righteous and to the pious,
To the survivors of Your people Israel, (to their elders) and to their Sages, who are persecuted; To the true proselytes, and to us.
Give an appropriate reward to all those who truly trust in Your name.
And [help us] to be counted among them.
May we never be ashamed for having trusted You,
Since we always rely on Your infinite goodness.
Blessed are You, HaShem, the supporter and the protector of the righteous.

We ask HaShem to protect the righteous (Tsadiqim) in specifically in this section dealing with "national" requests, because the Tsadiqim are the heroes of our People: the men and women that the Nation of Israel has as its role models, the people we should follow and imitate.

"Grant Your compassion, HaShem our God …"

In this blessing we ask HaShem to protect and help the righteous and pious people. And all those who, because of their special vulnerability (the Sages of Israel, for example, were persecuted to death in the time of the Roman Empire, to eradicate the Oral Tradition of the Jewish people) who might easily become victims of oppression. We ask HaShem to care for those who behave with goodness and justice, who seek the knowledge of God and the obedience of His commandments.

"… to the righteous and to the pious …"

The righteous, Tsadiquim, are those who strictly follow the commandments of God; while the pious or Hasidim are those who behave at a level above righteousness. Let me explain: the Hasidim are righteous people who practice our Tora beyond our religious duties, *in a very specific area of Mitsvot*: Hesed, "kindness", like, visiting the sick, comforting the mourners, helping the needy, caring for and protecting the weak, etc.

While excess in certain ritual Mitsvot could be considered

wrong, objectionable or a symptom of arrogance, in the area of "kindness" doing beyond what the Tora requires of us is noble and unquestionable.

It is also important to note that the category of righteous and pious people is open, dynamic and completely independent of "classes". In other words, anyone can belong to the category of righteous or pious, depending exclusively on one's righteousness and good deeds.

"Grant an appropriate reward … and let us be counted among them"

In this Berakha we ask HaShem to reward the righteous and all those who put their trust in Him. We also ask HaShem to inspire us to follow in the footsteps of the righteous, and to help and inspire us to become like them .

"And may we never be ashamed for having trusted You …"

Why do the Tsadiqim and the Hasidim deserve a special protection and an appropriate reward from HaShem? Because these holy people, especially the Hasidim, live by standards of altruism that are very different from the rest of us. They behave as if they had come into this world only to give, not to receive. They are experts in defending others, but they do not know how to defend themselves. They take care of other people, often neglecting their own needs. I know volunteers, for example, who dedicate themselves with such care and dedication to the sick; to assist those in need, and to help the poor, that sometimes do not have enough time or energy to care for themselves or even for their own families. That is why we ask HaShem to concede these human-angels a special protection.

In addition, it is not uncommon for people that noble to be exposed not only to ingratitude but also to abuse. That is why we ask HaShem to prevent good people from shame, when they exceed in nobility and goodness. We ask that HaShem protect them, when they are vulnerable. We beg HaShem to reward them, by caring for them and their families as they care for us and for other people.