

THE THIRTEENTH BLESSING: RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE

by Rabbi Daniel Travis

"On the righteous, on the devout, on the elders of Your people the Family of Israel, on the remnant of their scholars, on the righteous converts and on ourselves ... Put our lot with them forever, and we will not feel ashamed, for we trust in You. Blessed are You, Hashem, mainstay and assurance of the righteous."

The thirteenth blessing of Shemoneh Esrei refers to the righteous. It follows the previous blessing, for after the destruction of the heretics the righteous will regain their true stature (Megilla 17b).

The Medrash relates that someone once slandered a certain righteous rabbi. Afterwards, the speaker was surprised to receive a present from the rabbi with the following note attached to it: "By speaking negatively about me, you caused me to receive all of the reward for your mitzvos. Since you gave me a present, I am sending you one as well!"

When saying the words, "and our portion should be with the righteous," we should keep the above thought in mind. If our portion in the World to Come has been forfeited due to our transgressions, Hashem should allow us to repent and get it back, so that when we get to the World to Come we should also have a place there with the righteous (Arizal, as cited in Kaf HaChaim 117,5).

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