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THE FEET'S EDGE

The bracha Asher received from Yaakov in this week's parsha is that his 'bread be plump' with oil. Rashi notes that the bracha

Moshe gave the tribe of Asher in parshas V'zos Ha'bracha is similarly that they 'dip their foot in oil' due to its abundance.

Aside from the literal meaning of these blessings, Chassidus explains that oil represents tremendous wisdom, an association which is sourced in the Gemara, yet we're told that Asher's 'feet,' the lowest and lowliest part of the body, far beneath the mind and heart and only capable of action, are to be serviced with oil. Asher's 'feet' must therefore have been of such a lofty stature to be worthy of such treatment. Furthermore, Moshiach's legs are described as 'standing atop the mount of olives,' the mountain being the source of the olives which are in turn the source of oil. How can the otherwise deficient feet be considered superior to oil?

AT THE BACK

The tribe of Asher belonged to Dan's camp, along with Naftali, last among

the Jews in the desert, yet the camp of *Dan* is described as collecting and returning the lost objects of the lews in front of them, resulting in everyone ultimately depending on them.

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Likewise, when serving Hashem, one can either do so as a 'head,' using one's mind to comprehend G-dliness, as a 'heart,'

> experiencing love or fear of Hashem, or as a 'foot,' simply following orders out of kabalas ol. But while the latter sounds like a drawback, a hollow existence lacking insight or emotion, a heart- or mind-based avoda can result in a fatal loss of bittul due to one's occupation with oneself. Retrieving what might otherwise be lost, occurs through serving Hashem selflessly, and is what Dan's camp represents. And among the tribes comprising the camp of Dan, Asher is at the center, the focal point, and therefore the greatest personification of kabalas ol.

A QUESTION AND AN ANSWER

Adjacent to the above-cited pasuk in V'zos Ha'bracha, the tribe of Asher is described as being beloved among their brothers. The Sifri attributes this to the fact that Asher's fields were blessed during the shmita year, and they would therefore

supply everyone else with grain. Thus, like the camp of Dan of centuries past, they once again found themselves supporting others, specifically in the context of shmita. The model for



sustenance during this year is expressed earlier when the *Torah* itself asks how there'll be food, immediately replying that the fields will be blessed. Why though was there a need for the question and answer format? Why not present the same information as a statement?

In truth, however, *shmita* is designed to raise that very question, seemingly being an utterly illogical proposition. No blessings are immediately apparent,

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greater, we currently follow the former view, but the advantage of action will be revealed in the messianic era, and thus *Moshiach*'s 'feet' will be elevated above the 'mount of olives.'

On the other hand, using oil on the foot signifies that proper bittul should be supplemented with what oil represents. When coupled with understanding and emotion, the 'foot' absorbs the 'oil,' and the kabalas ol is infused with excitement and delight, reaching the ultimate perfection and elevation.

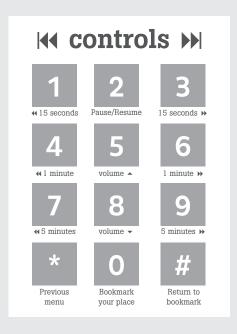
yet we're expected to observe the *mitzva* unquestioningly in spite of our misgivings, and then the *bracha* is earned. *Shmita* thus inherently calls for *kabalas ol*, since we aren't transformed into the state *Moshe* was in when he didn't subsist on food for forty days, nor does the grain of the sixth year have similar properties to the meal *Eliyahu* ate which provided him with energy for the following forty days, and we don't receive special Heavenly manna either, leaving us with the need for the same inferior bread as usual. The situation appears grave, but with the power of the *bittul* of *Asher*, *shmita* is observed, *Hashem*'s involvement in the world becomes apparent, and all the other tribes gain as well.

A FOOT ABSORBED WITH OIL

All twelve *shvatim* exist within us, and our inner *Asher* similarly grants our hearts and minds the ability to view things through the lens of *kabalas ol*, eliminating all questions. *Asher's* 'foot' is thus very great indeed, and is deserving of being bathed in oil, and its superiority will become even more apparent when *Moshiach* comes. In the dispute whether study or action is

For further learning see לקו"ש חלק א' פרשת ויחי.





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