

The  
**CHASSIDUS**  
**PERSPECTIVE**  
*with Reb Yoel Kahn*

Prepared by  
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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 Vzos 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 Jews in front of them, resulting in everyone ultimately depending on them.

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*.

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### A QUESTION AND AN ANSWER

Adjacent to the above-cited *pasuk* in *Vzos 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, 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

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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.

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

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