

Moving Towards Moshiach



This has been one long galus filled with troubles. It has been said about our present time: והיתה עת צרה אשר לא נהיתה מהיות גוי עד: והעת ההיא, there will be a time of trouble such as there had never been since there was a nation until that time (Daniel 12:1). Still, we believe it can end at any moment, as we say, אני מאמין...אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא, I believe in the coming of Moshiach, and even though he may delay, nevertheless I anticipate every day that he will come.

Moshiach is a birth process—חבלי משיח—(see Shabbos 118a, Rashi s.v. חבלי, Hoshea 13:13)—which comes with pain (see Yeshaya 26:17, Rashi). However, it ends with happiness, just as a birth does.

Let us take a look in the Torah and see some incredible facts regarding the connection of our generation to Moshiach.

Of the 12 Shevatim, דן is the weakest, lowest (See Shemos 35:34, Rashi), as is shown in the following:

1) Concerning the war with the four kings against the five kings, it says וירדף עד דן, he pursued them as far as Don (Breishis 14:14). The territory of דן was where Avraham stopped chasing them. Rashi says that Avraham's strength weakened because he foresaw that his descendants would set up a calf—עגל—there as an idol (Melachim 1, 12:29).

2) Throughout the years of enslavement there was only one incident in which a Jew had relations with an Egyptian. She was - וירדף עד דן שבט דן (Vayikra 24:11, Rashi).

3) עוני הכבוד was ejected from the שבט דן because they worshipped avoda zara (Tanchuma Ki Seitzei 10, Targum Yonasan Ben Uziel, Devarim 25:18).

4) In the period of Shoftim, each tribe had a judge. The only one whose actions seemed suspicious was Shimshon—from the tribe of Don. We are told that he entered into marriages with Philistine women, he killed himself along with the Philistines (Shoftim 16:30), and so on.

5) In the story of מִיכָה, the spies who were dispatched to seek an area for conquest were from the tribe of Don (Shoftim 18:1,2). This episode resulted in the establishment of avoda zara (Shoftim 18:30-31).

6) When ירבעם בן נבט established avoda zara, he placed one of the idols in דן (Melachim 1,12:29).

7) When Nevuchadnetzar invaded Yehuda, he became more powerful when he reached the territory of Don (Sanhedrin 96a), as it says מִדָּן נִשְׁמַע נְחֻשְׁתָּהּ, from Don is heard the snorting of his horses (Yirmiya 8:16).

8) Don traveled behind the rest of the tribes, as it says that דן was the last to journey (Bamidbar 2:31). Furthermore, Don's encampment was to the north—which represents darkness (The north gets less sun than other places, resulting in more darkness. Actually, the word צפון also means hidden, as in צפון at the Seder. This is because there is less sun there; it is hidden from there), and this is what Don is symbolic of.

9) The Tur (Hilchos Rosh Chodesh 417) tells us that the 12 Tribes correspond to the 12 months of the year. דן corresponds to the month of Teves. Indeed, the 10th month is Teves, and the nasi of the tribe of Don brought his korban on the 10th day (Bamidbar 7:66). Teves is a month filled with impurity, as the secular holidays are in that month, as well as the fast of the 10th of Teves.

10) The last letter in the alef-beis, ת, corresponds to the last tribe, Don. The ת has a shoe that shoots out—to the Satan. This is symbolic of Don. In fact, if we break up the letter ת, we notice that it is composed of a ד and נ—the two letters that spell דן.

The generation of עקבתא דמשיחא, the last encampment before Moshiach. The tribe of דן began with חושים (Bamidbar 26:42, Rashi), who was deaf (Sota 13a). Likewise, our generation is deaf to spirituality in many ways. This generation is known as עקבתא דמשיחא—from the word עקב, heel. The heel is unique in that it is less sensitive than other parts of the body. Nevertheless, it gets stimulated by a tickle. This is similar to our generation, which is less sensitive to spirituality and gets stimulated by the newest gadget, car and the like.

However, contrary to what we may think, this is the generation that brings forth Moshiach. Just as the heel supports the entire

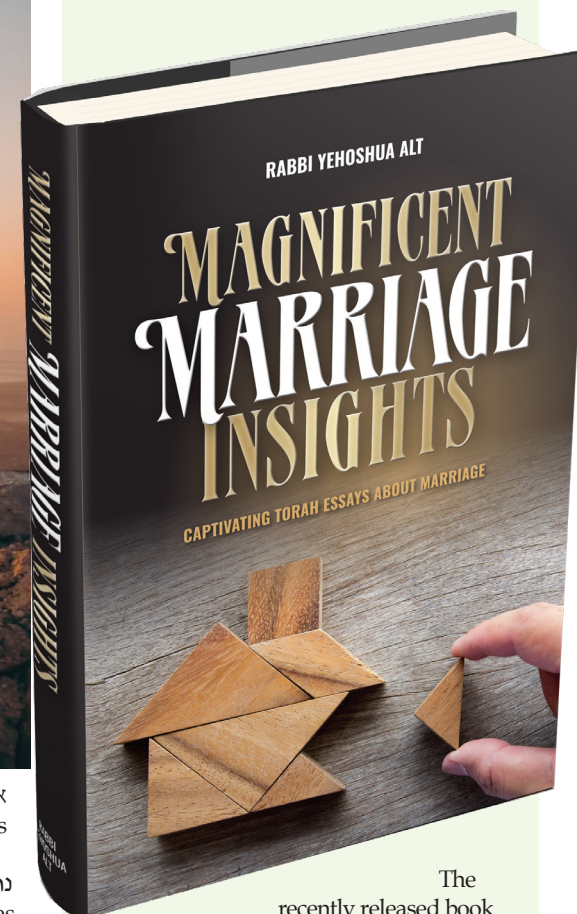
body, likewise the generation of אתבקע אחישמר is what the previous generations stand on, since they bring forth Moshiach.

Don is referred to as a דן נחש—יהי דן נחש (Breishis 49:17). In fact, the word נחש shares the same numerical value as 358 (משיח). Moreover, the letters of נחש are the first letters of, שומר נפשות חסידיו, He guards the lives of His devout ones.

Chushim is the one who killed Esav (Tehillim 97:10). Likewise, we will do the same to the nation of Esav, as it is written ועשו והיתה לה' המלוכה...ועלו מושעים (Ovadia 1:21), and saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esav, and the kingdom will be Hashem's (as this last galus is Galus Edom—Esav). In this way we can understand what Hashem said this to the snake: ואתה תשופנו עקב, you will bite his heel (Breishis 3:15): The generation of עקבתא דמשיחא will crush the snake. When we rearrange the letters of חשים, what do we get? משיח! It is the generation of חשים that brings Moshiach. An allusion to this is found in ונאחנו נחלץ חשים (Bamidbar 32:17), it is the generation of Chushim that will remove us from galus (Interpreting the word נחלץ as to remove, as in ונחלצה נעלו, she shall remove his shoe – Devarim 25:9).

Just as Hashem delivered us from previous exiles, He will take us out from this one too. The four exiles are hinted to in אלה מסעי בני ישראל (Bamidbar 33:1), these are the journeys of the Jewish people, as its initials are י, מ, ב, א—the first letters of the four exiles—יון-מדי, בבל, מדי, יון—(Bnei Yisschar Sivan 5:12). These four exiles have been our journeys. How has Hashem sent us out from exile? This is alluded to in אלה מסעי. Its initials (See also Peninim Mishulchan HaGra, Beshalach 17:14) —א, מ— are a reference to our saviors from galus—אהרן and משה, אסתר and מרדכי, אליהו and משה, אסתר (the future redemption). We must have אב, אמונה, בטחון—אב, as in the future these days will be a time of joy. Let's anticipate the coming of Moshiach, when we will experience the reality of וראו כל בשר יחדיו כי פי ה' דבר (Yeshaya 40:5), the glory of Hashem will be revealed, and all flesh together will see that the mouth of Hashem has spoken.

RABBI YEHOShUA ALT



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