

## The banner of the Bnei Dan, the rear-guard of all the camps, embanked according to its legions. (10:25)

*Rashi* explains why *Shevet Dan* traveled at the rear of the procession. They were the most populous of the tribes. They traveled at the rear in order to retrieve and return any item lost by its owner - who had traveled in front of them. *Tosfos* explain that any member of the other tribes who was detained for some reason would also travel along with them. *Bnei Dan* were people of integrity, helping out those who straggled behind - both physically and spiritually. *Michtav M'elياهو* emphasizes that they collected the "lost souls" along the road, restoring them to Judaism.

Why were *Bnei Dan* chosen to perform this most noble kindness towards their fellow Jew? Apparently, Hashem sought to avail them of an opportunity to perform kindness for their fellow man. **Horav Zalmen Sorotzkin, zl**, contends that *Bnei Dan* were in need of special merits because of their lapses and failures in the area of *avodas Hashem*. When *Yoravaam ben Nevat*, the evil king, wanted to introduce his calves for idol-worship, no tribe other than *Shevet Dan* were willing to accept them. Moreover, the *pesel Michah*, the idol that traveled with them from Egypt, was located in the midst of the tribe of Dan. Because of their shortcoming in the area of *mitzvos bein adam la'Makom*, between man and Hashem, they were given the opportunity to excel in the area of *mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro*, between man and his fellow man.

Hashem desires that every Jew remain in close contact with the body of our People. Obviously, one remains an active "participant" in Judaism through *Torah* study and *mitzvah* observance. Hashem, however, refuses to discard any Jew, regardless of his religious orientation. This is the reason that *Shevet Dan* was given the opportunity to remain involved via the medium of *chesed*.

We emphasize that these *mitzvos* did not in any way compensate for a lapse in *mitzvah* observance. It was a provision for the group as a whole, particularly those who did not accede to the temptation of idol-worship, to maintain a balance in their relationship with Hashem.