

## ‘We are in the time of the Messiah now.’ – The Ancestry of the Messiah in Jewish Sources

*“The scepter shall not depart from Yehuda, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet; So that tribute shall come to him And the homage of peoples be his.”*

GENESIS 49:10  
(THE ISRAEL BIBLE)

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In a recent blog post, a rabbi explained the ancestry of the Messiah in great detail according to Jewish sources. According to the sources, King David was precisely the mid-point of human history which means that the culmination of human history and the Messianic era is expected at any moment.

Rabbi Efraim Palvanov, a teacher and author, writes the blog *Mayim Achronim* (final waters) named for the little-known Jewish ritual of washing the fingers after a meal. Like the eponymous mitzvah, the blog covers Jewish subjects that are misunderstood or not normally discussed. In a recent blog post, Rabbi Palvanov explained the Jewish traditions describing the ancestry of Messiah. He graciously went into depth, explaining the difficult subject to *Israel365 News*.

“We can really begin the ancestry of the Messiah with Abraham, God’s chosen one,” Rabbi Palvanov began. “The Messiah necessarily comes out of Israel. As the progenitor of Israhe set the stage by rejecting idolatry and beginning the process of rectifying the world and moving it back towards a pristine state of Eden.”

While Abraham is the forefather of the Jewish people, his nephew, Lot, is also part of the Messiah’s lineage, from the maternal line.

“After witnessing the catastrophic destruction of five major cities, Lot’s two daughters are under the impression that the whole world was destroyed,” Rabbi Palvanov explained. “They believe they have an obligation to repopulate the planet so they manage to seduce their father and through these unions, they produce the progenitors of the Moabites and the Ammonites. From the Moabites comes Ruth, who was the great-grandmother of King David. From the Ammonites comes Ne’ama, who was the wife of King Solomon. In this manner, the daughters of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, play a role in the Davidic Dynasty.

“Despite being a son of Abraham, Ishmael plays no role in the ancestry of the Messiah,” Rabbi Palvanov emphasized. “He was cast out and everything about the inheritance, spiritual and material, went to Isaac specifically.”

He explained that the Messiah is a product of the covenant and, therefore, expressed through the inheritance of the land of Israel. Inheritance of the land is determined by the patrilineal tribal identity which also determines the identity of the Messiah.

Rabbi Palvanov explained that the identity of the Messiah is tribal as one of his functions will be to bring the Jews back to the Holy Land.

“One of the tasks of *Moshiach* (Messiah) is the ingathering of the exiles, to return the Jewish people to their land,” he said. “Ultimately, that’s also how you know if a person is successfully the Messiah. Many have claimed to be the Messiah throughout history but none have fulfilled any of the tasks that Jewish tradition teaches the Messiah is supposed to fulfill. Chief among them is the ingathering of the exiles.”

“This is because the Torah cannot be completely fulfilled outside of the land of Israel,” he said. “In addition, the work of *Moshiach* is done in Israel; building the Third Temple, the War of Gog and Magog.”

In this regard, the Messiah is usually identified with the Tribe of Judah, as per Jacob’s blessing of his sons. Implicit in the blessing of Judah is that the dynastic monarchy will come through the Tribe of Judah, personified by King David:

*The scepter shall not depart from Yehuda, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet; So that tribute shall come to him And the homage of peoples be his. Genesis 49:10*

“This is fitting as the descendants of Yehuda are, today, the *Yehudim* (Jews), who are the only living descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” the rabbi said.

But Rabbi Palvanov points to the blessing of Dan as another, more empathic messianic prophecy:

*Dan shall be a serpent by the road, A viper by the path, That bites the horse’s heels So that his rider is thrown backward. I wait for Your deliverance/salvation, Hashem! Genesis 49:17-18*

Rashi explains that this verse refers to Samson who came from the tribe of Dan. In Gematria (Hebrew numerology) snake (*nachash*) equals 358 which precisely equals the gematria of the word *Moshiach*.

“This really goes all the way back to Eden, where the Serpent caused man’s downfall, and so it will be the ‘serpentine Mashiach who reverses that event;” Rabbi Palvanov explained. “In Kabbalistic sources, this is the meaning of Isaiah’s description of the great final battle between the *nachash bariach* and the *nachash ‘akalaton*, the “straight serpent” and the “twisted serpent” (Isaiah 27:1). The former is Mashiach, and the latter is the embodiment of evil that will be destroyed at the End of Days.”

Rabbi Palvanov explained that when discussing the lineage of the Messiah, this implies that he can be revealed in any era.

“We understand that in every generation there is a potential Messiah,” Rabbi Palvanov explained. “If the people merit it and the conditions are right, the Messiah of that generation will manifest. This is true of King Hezekiah who came very close to being the Messiah. Samson was the potential *Moshiach* of his generation. This is first brought down in the Midrash (*Beresheet Rabbah* 98:14).”

“In the blessing of Dan we see an explicit reference to salvation, which is precisely *Moshiach*, or *Geula* (redemption),” Rabbi Palvanov said. “We see in Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni* I, 160) that *Moshiach* has a lineage from Judah on his father’s side but from his mother, *Moshiach* is descended from Dan.”

He adds that in Genesis when we read the names of the 70 members of Jacob’s family that came down to Egypt, the only progeny of Dan is Chushim (חֻשִׁים), an exact anagram of “Mashiach” (מָשִׁיחַ)

“According to some opinions, David’s mother, Nitzevet bat Ada’el, was from the tribe of Dan,” Rabbi Palvanov said.

Similarly, there are many places in the Bible where we see a partnership between Judah and Dan. While Jacob blesses Judah as *gur aryeh* (lion cub), Moses blesses Dan as a *gur aryeh*. The Tabernacle was built by Betsalel from the tribe of Judah and Oholiab from the tribe of Dan. This is because Judah was considered the most illustrious of the tribes and Dan was considered the lowliest of the tribes, yet when it comes to serving God, we are all equal.”

“In the Exodus, Judah led the way and Dan was the last tribe,” he added. “Solomon from the tribe of Judah partnered with Hiram, the Phoenician king, who, according to the Midrash, whose mother was from the tribe of Dan. Dan was tasked with being the ‘lost and found’, and picking up all the things left behind by the other tribes ahead of them. This brought them tremendous merit. On a mystical level, Dan’s role is really symbolic of our mission in “finding” and restoring the lost sparks of Creation to rectify the cosmos.

The genealogy of Messiah also implies a specific timeframe.

“Adam is an acronym for ‘Adam, David, Messiah,” Rabbi Palvanov explained. “These three personalities encapsulate all of human history. The soul of Moshiach was contained within Adam, who foresaw that David, the progenitor of Messiah, would be stillborn. So he gave 70 years of his life to David, who lived exactly 70 years while Adam lived 930, though he should have lived precisely 1,000 years.”

“According to Kabbalah, King David was precisely the middle point of human history,” Rabbi Palvanov said. “From Adam to David is precisely the same amount of time as it has been since King David until now. So we are literally in the time of Moshiach right now.”

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