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PESACHIM 22A

BY RABBI AVIGDOR BERENSTEIN

The *Gemara Pesachim* 22a mentions the prohibition of eating *gid hanasheh* (sciatic nerve), citing a *posuk* in *Parshas Vayishlach* following the description of Yaakov *Avinu's* hip being dislocated, "Therefore *B'nei Yisroel* do not eat the *gid hanasheh*", giving the impression that this prohibition already applied at that time. However, the *Gemara Chullin* 100b clearly states that the prohibition dates only from giving of the Torah, just that it is written after the episode of Yaakov *Avinu*.

Why does the Torah mention *gid hanasheh* before it applied? For that matter, why is it prohibited? True, the Torah says that it has to do with Yaakov *Avinu's* injury, but what is the significance?

Sefer Hachinuch (*Mitzvah* 3) says something marvelous: "Part of the root of this *mitzvah* is to hint to Yisroel that though they will suffer many times in exile at the hands of the nations and Eisav's descendants, they may be secure that they will not go lost, rather their progeny and identity will last forever and will be redeemed from all enemies. Remembering this through this *mitzvah*, they will retain their faith and righteousness forever. The hint is that the angel who fought with Yaakov, who tradition tells us was the angel of Eisav, tried to destroy Yaakov and his descendants but could not, and hurt him by touching his thigh. Similarly, Eisav's descendants make Yaakov's descendants suffer but we will be saved from them. Just as the sun shone to heal our forefather and relieve his pain, so will the sun – *Moshiach* – shine for us to heal our suffering and redeem us, Amen, swiftly, in our days."

At first glance, this posuk seems to focus on Yaakov *Avinu's* injury and pain, but the *Sefer Hachinuch* teaches us that on the contrary, this *mitzvah* serves to remind us of Yaakov's greatness and how securely he can rely on Hashem. True, he was injured and his hip dislocated, but the sun healed him right away. The angel hurt him, but he remains standing upright. The *mitzvah* of not eating *gid hanasheh* brings to mind both the injury and its sequel as a reminder for all generations of Yaakov's descendants that even when the nations injure and hurt us, we are assured that we will never be destroyed. We will eventually be saved.

Still, one must ask, why was the angel able to hit Yaakov, necessitating a miraculous cure? Couldn't Hashem have prevented the angel from injuring him? Yaakov's immediate cure shows that he was worthy. If so, why was the angel able to hit him at all?

However, upon reflection, this is precisely what reveals Yaakov's real power: Despite his having absorbed the angel's blow and his hip's consequent dislocation, he remains hale and hearty, against all odds! Hashem wanted Yaakov to stand healthily on his "injured" leg to demonstrate that Yaakov's ability to stand is supernatural. Even when his dislocated hip cannot naturally support him, he stands firmly in place because his stability stems not from natural strength but from his lofty spirituality for which he is guaranteed by Hashem that he and his descendants will always stand proudly, surviving the harshest blows their enemies may deal them.

As the *Haggadah* says, "That is what has sustained our ancestors and us… for in every single generation they try to annihilate us, but *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* saves us from their hand." Indeed, in every generation, including ours, in the most trying situations, we have seen and continue to see Hashem's shielding providence, reinforcing our faith in *Klal Yisroel's* eternal existence.

This explains why the prohibition of eating *gid hanasheh* is mentioned before it applied, because Hashem's promise that *Klal Yisroel* will survive all situations is in the merit of our *Avos* and began in their lifetime, predating the giving of the Torah.

Also, the *Zohar Hakadosh* (Vol. I p. 171b) says that dislocating Yaakov Avinu's hip symbolizes Eisav's angel's attack on the financial supporters of Torah, thus undermining the Torah's stability, because Yaakov Avinu is the pillar of Torah and dislocating his hip represents weakening the base on which the Torah rests.

Indeed, from their very inception, the sacred *yeshivos* have always been in dire financial straits, with no firm, stable base of support. Often it seemed that their situation could not last, and *Roshei Yeshiva* had to wander far and wide in search of donors. This appears to be a flaw in the Torah's base, an obstacle to establishing *yeshivos*, but in reality, the well-known fact is that no *yeshiva* ever closed due to lack of funding.

Over a year ago, the irreligious Israeli government stopped its subsidies as part of its antireligious campaign, but the *yeshivos* in *Eretz Yisroel* continue to thrive and flourish more than ever.

A few years ago, during the COVID-19 pandemic, for an extended time, *Roshei Yeshiva* could not leave *Eretz Yisroel* to solicit funding for their *yeshivos*. Nonetheless, despite the added expenses of that time, the *yeshivos* continued to blossom with no apparent damage. This teaches us that the *yeshivos*' economic base is the Divine promise that the Torah will never be forgotten, and not any efforts or donations.

A deeper look at the apparent instability of Torah students reveals that it is neither an economic impediment nor instability. Rather, it is a most eloquent expression of the Torah's mighty strength and stability. It exists without legs, with no logical way to ensure its continuity, yet this is what accentuates the Torah's force and inner stability, independent of natural, material conditions. Its existence derives from its own strength; it follows its own rules. Its spirituality is indispensable, so *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* maneuvers all the requisite factors to enable its continuation, disregarding nature and all probabilities.

This is what we can gain from the current situation, in which Torah students in *Eretz Yisroel* are persecuted and treated, *rachmana litzlan,* like criminals. Although the secular-heretical government forces do all they can to fight Torah learning and the vast majority of the irreligious sector's elected officials vehemently oppose Torah learning, they are powerless to stop it because its spiritual, eternal Source is beyond the reach of human efforts.

Amud HaYomi is almost two years into its inaugural cycle through Shas! This historic initiative will enable deeper comprehension of Shas. Additionally, there are optional monthly bechinos with stipends, which affords one a much greater opportunity to be koneh Shas through Dirshu's proven retention and accountability methods.

UPCOMING AMUD HAYOMI LIMUD SCHEDULE

יום	תאריך	DATE	עמוד היומי	דף היומי	דף היומי בהלכה - משנה ברורה סימן וסעיף	עמוד
– פרשת שופטים –						
א	ל' אב	8/24/25	פסחים יט.	עבודה זרה סז	שכ"ה ח'	קנח: (316)
ב	א' אלול	8/25/25	פסחים יט:	עבודה זרה סח	שכ"ה ט' - י'	קנט.
ג	ב' אלול	8/26/25	פסחים כ.	עבודה זרה סט	שכ"ה י'	קנט: (318)
ד	ג' אלול	8/27/25	פסחים כ:	עבודה זרה ע	שכ"ה י"א - י"ג	קס.
ה	ד' אלול	8/28/25	פסחים כא.	עבודה זרה עא	שכ"ה י"ד - ט"ז	קס: (320)
ו	ה' אלול	8/29/25	פסחים כא:	עבודה זרה עב		חזרה
ש"ק	ו' אלול	8/30/25	פסחים כב.	עבודה זרה עג		חזרה
– פרשת כי תצא –						
א	ז' אלול	8/31/25	פסחים כב:	עבודה זרה עד	שכ"ו א' - ה'	קסא.
ב	ח' אלול	9/1/25	פסחים כג.	עבודה זרה עה	שכ"ו ו' - ח'	קסא: (322)
ג	ט' אלול	9/2/25	פסחים כג:	עבודה זרה עו	שכ"ו ט' - י'	קסב.
ד	י' אלול	9/3/25	פסחים כד.	הוריות ב	שכ"ו י"א - י"ג שכ"ז א' - ב'	קסב: (324)
ה	י"א אלול	9/4/25	פסחים כד:	הוריות ג	שכ"ז ג' - ד' שכ"ח א' - ב'	קסג.
ו	י"ב אלול	9/5/25	פסחים כה.	הוריות ד		חזרה
ש"ק	י"ג אלול	9/6/25	פסחים כה:	הוריות ה		חזרה