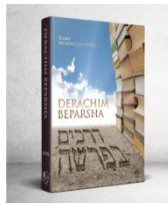


דרכים בפרשה וישאל

R'Mordechai Appel, an alumnus of the Telzer Yeshiva, is a regular Maggid Shiur in the Toronto community



על-כן לא-יאכלו בני-ישראל את-גיד הנשה, אשר על-כף הירך עד היום הזה כי נגע בכף-ירך יעקב בגיד הנשה

Therefore, the Bnai Yisrael may not eat the displaced tendon, which is on the socket of the hip, until this day, for he touched the socket of Yaakov's hip, in the hip sinew. (32:33)

Aside for a blow to his hip-socket, Yaakov Avinu walked (limped) out of his fight with the *Sar shel Eisav* (Eisav's angel) literally unscathed. From this episode we learn the important halacha, which is still relevant today, of refraining from partaking in the *gid hanashe* (eating from the tendon of an animal's thigh). There are many reasons that are discussed amongst the commentaries as to the reason for this prohibition. The Baalei Tosfos offer two reasons that I would like to focus on.

One would expect that a showdown between a person and an angel that possesses supernatural powers would have left Yaakov in a much worse state. Yet, he emerged with only a blow. This was cause for always remembering the kindness that HaShem showed him at that moment. For Yaakov, he would never forget it. How could he? After all, he had a limp as a constant reminder. But what about the next generation; would they remember as well this miraculous victory? **על-כן לא-יאכלו בני-ישראל את-גיד הנשה, אשר על-כף הירך, עד, היום הזה: כי נגע בכף-ירך יעקב, בגיד הנשה** *Therefore, the Bnai Yisrael may not eat the displaced tendon, which is on the socket of the hip, until this day, for he touched the socket of Yaakov's hip, in the hip sinew.*

The Torah is stressing the importance of not only being thankful for something right away, but actually remaining with a feeling of gratitude long after the deed was done.

The second reason that the Baalei Tosfos bring is that this was actually a punishment of some sort. The Torah tells us about the "Aishel" that Avrohom Avinu planted. The gemara in Sotah (10a) discusses exactly what this was (either an inn or a type of tree). The meforshim explain that word **אשל** - **AiSheL** stands for **א**-**Achila**-food, **ש** - **SHTiyah**-drink and **ל** - **Levaya**-escorting a guest (Rashi). Some (Tosfos Hashaleim and GRA to name a few) explain the L[amed] to refer to **Lina**-lodging. From Avrohom we learn how to treat a guest. This does not only include the duration of his stay, but even as he leaves your home. On the most simplistic level, the reason why it is so important to escort the guest properly is because by doing so, he is being left with a good feeling which in turn gives him a sense of security. The gemara in Sotah further teaches us that when a dead body was found between two cities, the Beis Din would have to proclaim that they were not negligent in the matter of escorting.

Coming back to Yaakov Avinu, we can ask: Why was Yaakov left alone that night? Was there no one to escort

him, not even his own sons? Surely, had Yaakov been accompanied by someone else, he would not have been vulnerable to the attack. As a result of their negligence in not escorting him, he was attacked by his hip-socket. Therefore, they would no longer be permitted to partake in that part of an animal.

Tosfos (*peirush al hatorah*) ask on this reason that in any event, the *Gid Hanashe* is not something that has any taste. Is this really a punishment? (see there for a halachik answer based on the laws of bittul)

Rav Chaim Kaufman z"l (Mishchas Shemen) brings a beautiful answer from Rav Boruch Shimon Schneurson (Birchas Shimon):

If you go to your local butcher today, you may notice that many cuts of meat are simply not available even if you were to buy the entire cow. This is due to the difficult process of *nikkur* (*treibering*) - separating out the hinds of the animal from the forbidden parts. As a result of the tedious process, we simply don't partake in it at all. In the end, the punishment was not necessarily on what we cannot eat but rather on the lengthy process of its removal.

This is midah k'neged midah (measure for measure). The children of Yaakov didn't "bother" seeing him out the door. As a result he was harmed. From now on, they would need to "bother" any time they wanted to eat meat.

Many times we are faced with a task. We mull over it and decide that it may be too much of a *tircha* (burdensome), or that it will take too much time, and as a result we forgo the opportunity. Sometimes a person may decide to do it, but to make up for lost time, they leave shul early or skip a shiur that they would have otherwise attended. The Torah is teaching us that by making these calculations, one will not gain a thing. What is possibly gained in one place, is lost out in another.

[The Chasam Sofer notes that an example of this can be learned from the mitzvah of reviewing the parsha twice with translation each week. This halacha even includes Ateres v'divon, i.e. words that have no definition. A person may say to himself, "why waste my time on this; I have so many other things to accomplish." To answer this incorrect thought, the gemara tells us that the reward for doing this mitzvah is long life.]

The Torah is reminding us to examine the mitzvos that we are performing. Are they being done in the best way possible, or perhaps just to get by and say "*boruch shepatrani*"?

By going the extra mile, for someone, not only do we make them feel special and give them protection, but we also show that the mitzvah actually means something to us. It is true that the first few steps may be tough when one is not used to it, but with time, one comes to see that there is really very little traffic on that extra mile.

מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,