

"And (the stranger) saw that he could not defeat him (Yaakov), he touched the upper joint of his (Yaakov's) thigh, and Yaakov's hip joint became dislocated as he wrestled with him. Therefore Bnei Yisrael do not eat the displaced nerve. (32:26-33)

The *Talmud, Chullin 90b*, cites a difference of opinion between R' Yehudah and the *Chachamim* regarding the prohibition of *gid ha'nashe*, the thigh muscle. The *Chachamim* state that this prohibition applies to the thigh muscle of both the right and left hind legs, while R' Yehudah has the opinion that it applies only to the right hind leg. His reasoning is based upon the premise that the angel struck Yaakov on the right side. The *Chachamim*, in contrast, feel that he was struck from behind, affecting both sides. Since the prohibition is in memory of Yaakov's struggle, what happened that night is critical to the establishment of the *Halachah*.

Be'er Yosef suggests a somewhat homiletic appreciation of the *Halachah* in regard to the narrative. It has been noted that this angel was actually the Satan whose calculated attack on Yaakov caused him to deviate from his belief in Hashem. Although he failed to overpower Yaakov, he did succeed in dislocating his thigh. The hip and loins serve as metaphors for the future descendants of Yaakov, whose faith in Hashem would be weakened.

The *mitzvos* of the *Torah* are divided into two categories: those that concern man's relationship with Hashem (*Bein Adam La'Makom*) and those that address man's relationship with his fellow man (*Bein Adam La'Chaveiro*). The two *luchos* which contain the Ten Commandments and allude to all 613 of the *mitzvos* are similarly divided. The right side reflects those *mitzvos* concerning man's obligation towards Hashem, while the left side focuses on those *mitzvos* which address man's relationship with his fellow man. Man must adhere to both aspects of Hashem's imperative. One who neglects to follow *mitzvos Bein Adam La'Makom* is viewed as incomplete or "limping" on his right side, while one who fails to respond to *mitzvos "Bein Adam La'Chaveiro"* is perceived as lame on his left side.

The angel approached Yaakov with a desire to harm both sides of him, his *mitzvos Bein Adam La'Makom* and *Bein Adam La'Chaveiro*. He did not succeed in either endeavor. This is implied by the angel's statement, "*For you battled with G-d and with man and prevailed.*" Yaakov prevailed in warding off attacks on both aspects of *mitzvah* performance. Upon noticing his defeat, the angel made one last try and struck Yaakov's hip, representing his descendants, aiming to weaken their *mitzvah* observance.

We may note that the latter generations, although they may have been weak in their relationship with Hashem, nonetheless continue to perform many acts of *chesed* toward their fellow man. These may perhaps be viewed as metaphorically limping on their right side. This is reflected in R'

Yehuda's decision prohibiting only the right side of the animal. The *Chachamim* feel that if one's belief in Hashem is weakened, if his *mitzvah* performance *Bein Adam La'Makom* is remiss, then he will not be able to maintain his meritable charitable activities (*mitzvos Bein Adam La'Chaveiro*). Consequently, *Chazal* believe that the prohibition of *gid ha'nashe* extends to both hips.