

"Therefore the Bnei Yisrael do not eat of the sinew of the thigh muscle... unto this day because he (Eisav's angel) struck the hollow of Yaakov's thigh in the sinew of the thigh muscle." (32:33)

As Yaakov wrestled with Eisav's angel, he was injured on that fateful night. As a constant reminder of that "conflict," we are forbidden from eating the sciatic nerve of an animal. In the *Talmud Chullin 99b*, Chazal comment that *gid din*, nerves, have no taste. It is, therefore, perplexing that the *Torah* would prohibit the consumption of a food which has no taste. The *Torah* ostensibly seeks to provide us with the opportunity for performing *mitzvos*. Consequently, even if a *mitzvah* is reasonably simple to perform, it still presents a valuable opportunity for spiritual advancement.

Horav Avigdor Nebentzal, *Shlita*, offers a profound insight into the "workings" of the *yetzer hara*, evil inclination. His concept sheds light on the prohibition of *gid ha'nasheh*. The accepted opinion is that the *yetzer hora* seeks to eliminate our opportunity to attain *Olam Haba*, while simultaneously exposing us to the blandishment of *Olam Haze*. This is not true. The *yetzer hara* allows us to have nothing! The *yetzer hora* gives us neither *Olam Haba* nor *Olam Haze*! This is inferred from the prohibition of the *gid ha'nasheh*.

The *yetzer hara* had a single opportunity to inflict injury upon Yaakov. Where did he strike him? Which part of his body did he weaken? He struck the *gid ha'nasheh* which has no taste. There is no *Olam Haba* and no *Olam Haze*! The *yetzer hara* is nothing more than a sham that cannot produce anything of eternal value. True, quite a number of forbidden foods might be considered tasty, but herein are the *yetzer hara's* true colors exposed; his essence is revealed. His real goal is to give nothing to Yaakov. He seeks to destroy Yaakov and leave him with nothing. Those who think that by acceding to the demands of their *yetzer hara* they are exchanging the eternal for the temporal are wrong, for in the end they will have neither *Olam Haba* nor *Olam Haze*.