

The Lesson of the Gid Hanasheh

By Benjamin Neiman, 9th Grade

“Therefore, the Jewish people will not eat the gid hanasheh that is on the hip joint, to this day” (Breishis 32:33).

The Torah directly links the prohibition of gid hanasheh to Yaakov's struggle with “the man who wrestled with him until daybreak” - the malach of Esav (Bereishis 32:25), causing Yaakov to “limp on his thigh”. Left unclear is why there should be a permanent Mitzvah to commemorate this. There are no Mitzvos to commemorate Akeidas Yitzchak, Yaakov's difficulties with Lavan, the selling of Yosef, or a host of other crucial stories that helped form the Jewish people. Yaakov's struggle with the malach would seem to be one of the least significant stories in Bereishis and, not surprisingly, takes up only a few Pesukim. Yet it, and no other, has a Mitzvah attached to it. Why?

The story of Yaakov's wrestling match is introduced by the phrase “And Yaakov was left alone”. The prohibition of gid hanasheh is thus a permanent reminder of the importance of, and a prelude to the mitzvah of Veahavta Lereiacha Kamocha - loving your fellow Jew; let alone one's own parent. How could an aging father with four wives and twelve children be left alone in the middle of the night? Could not even one son accompany him? And when Yaakov did not return to his family, should not a team of children have gone to search for him?

The gid hanasheh teaches that an integral part of Judaism is the need for

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Yaakov's Extra Preparation

By David Benhamu, 11th Grade

In this week's Parsha, Parshat Vayishlach, Yaakov is informed that his brother Eisav is coming towards him with an army of 400 men. Yaakov and Eisav hadn't been on good terms, so naturally, Yaakov perceived this as an act of war. Yaakov gets ready to fight against Eisav alongside his wives and children. He prepares by doing three things: he sends gifts to appease his brother, splits his family into different camps, and most importantly, he prays to Hashem.

Rashi comments that these three things are essential in order to prepare for war. But yet, even after Yaakov did all three of these things and seemingly was ready for war, he was attacked by an angel. Why was he attacked by an angel if he did everything that he needed to do? He followed all of the rules and did all of the right things and was still attacked. Why did this happen?

To find the answer let's look at how this fight ended. Yaakov was able to beat the angel and go back to his camp almost unscathed with the exception of an injured Gid Hanasheh. The angel then changed Yaakov's name to Yisrael for two reasons. Firstly, because he was victorious against an angel of Hashem and secondly, because the name Yaakov means “heel,” which is bent, and now he is straight with Hashem.

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Vayishlach Questions

1. This parsha begins: "And Yaakov sent messengers" to Esav. Where does the Torah state: "And Yisrael sent messengers"?
2. In this parsha, what verse has 8 words in a row ending with the letters *yud-mem*?
3. What competitive sport is mentioned in this parsha?
4. Who is mentioned in the Torah as walking with a limp?
5. In this parsha, who has a name that is also the name of an animal? (5 answers)
6. In this parsha, Shchem and Chamor who are killed "at the point of a sword." Who else in the Torah is killed "at the point of a sword"? (2 answers)
7. Which married couple in this parsha have names that begin with the same letter? Which other married couples in the Torah have names that begin with the same letter? (2 couples - one found in Rashi)

Answers

1. Numbers 21:21 states that "Yisrael sent messengers" - i.e. the Jews sent messengers to the Emorite king for permission to cross his land.
2. In Genesis 32:15, the gifts of Yaakov to Esav are enumerated, with 8 words in a row ending with the letters *yud-mem*.
3. Wrestling is mentioned in Genesis 32:25: "And a man wrestled with him [Yaakov]."
4. Yaakov walks with a limp after he is injured in the wrestling match (Genesis 32:32).
5. The following people have names of animals: Chamor (donkey) is the father of Shchem (Genesis 33:19). Devorah (bee) is the wet-nurse of Rivka (Genesis 35:8). Rachel (sheep) is one of the Matriarchs. Aya, which means "buzzard" (Genesis 36:24). Dishon, which means "elk" (Genesis 36:25).
6. The nation of Amalek is killed "at the point of a sword" (Exodus 17:13), as is Sichon (Numbers 21:24). Bilaam is also killed by sword but the verse states "with the sword," not "at the point of a sword" (Numbers 31:8).
7. Esav is married to Ada, both beginning with *ayin* (Genesis 36:2). Aaron married Elisheva, both beginning with *aleph* (Exodus 6:23). The wife of Noach is Na'ama, both beginning with *nun* (Genesis 4:22 with Rashi).



The complete edition of
**Rabbi Moshe Atik's Torah
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First Aliyah: On his way home to his father, Yaakov sent messengers to Eisav. The messengers reported back that Eisav is coming to greet Yaakov with 400 men. In response Yaakov divided his family and belongings into two groups so one group could flee if the other faced a battle. He also prayed to Hashem to protect him.

Second Aliyah: Yaakov sent Eisav gifts (hundreds of heads of cattle and sheep) in order to appease him. That night Yaakov crossed a river with his family after which he encountered Eisav's angel who wrestled with him until dawn. Although Yaakov won, he was injured by his sciatic nerve. When the angel wished to leave, Yaakov refused to let him go until he got blessed by the angel. The angel blessed Yaakov and informed him that his name would eventually be changed to Yisrael.

Third Aliyah: The Torah tells us that we do not eat the sciatic nerve (*gid hanashe*) of any animal because of the wrestle between Eisav's angel and Yaakov. When Eisav and Yaakov finally met up they embraced and wept.

Fourth Aliyah: Yaakov's family approached and greeted Eisav. Yaakov pushed Eisav to take the gift he had sent him. Eisav offered to accompany Yaakov on his trip home, but Yaakov declined the gesture. Eisav returned to his home in Se'ir, and Yaakov proceeded to the city of Sukkot. Eventually Yaakov arrived at the outskirts of the city of Shechem, where he purchased a plot of land and built an altar to God.

Fifth Aliyah: Yaakov's daughter, Dinah, was abducted and violated by Shechem. Chamor, the governor of the city and father of Shechem, informed Yaakov that his son wanted to marry Dinah. Yaakov's sons slyly agreed to the proposition, provided that all the men of the city would circumcise themselves to which they agreed. On the third day following their mass circumcision, Dinah's two brothers, Shimon and Levi, killed all the city's male inhabitants and saved Dinah. Yaakov was displeased by this act, fearing reprisal from the neighboring Canaanites. Yaakov arrived in Beis El, and Hashem appeared to him, blessed him, and changed his name to Yisrael.

Sixth Aliyah: On the way to Chevron Rachel passed away while giving birth to Binyamin; Yaakov buried her there. Later, Reuven interfered with his father's marital life. Finally, Yaakov arrived in Chevron. Yitzchak died, and was buried in Maras HaMachpeilah alongside his wife Rivkah and his parents. The Torah now lists the wives and descendants of Eisav who settled in Se'ir.

Seventh Aliyah: The Torah continues its listing of the family of Eisav in Se'ir.

10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Dovi Flug

Taking the Law Into Your Own Hands

- Is it permissible to take the law into your own hands? For example, if someone gets a bagel with eggs but is charged for a bagel with egg and cheese, can the person purchase a bagel with egg and cheese the next day and tell the cashier to charge him for a bagel with egg (and neglect to mention the cheese).
 - The gemara in Bava Kamma discusses a concept called “Ovid Inish Dina Inafshei”, “taking the law into your own hands”: Rabbi Yehudah holds “lo ovid inish dina inafshei” and Rav Nachman holds “ovid inish dina inafshei.” The gemara tells a story of two people who were partners in a well and one of them was drawing water on the wrong day. When the other partner realized, he threw something at the first guy, chased him away, and drew the water for himself. The gemara says that even if a person hold like Rabbi Yehudah who believes “lo ovid inish dina inafshei,” that, generally, someone can’t take the law into their own hands, it is nonetheless not the case in a situation like this where one will lose money like our story of the well. And if one were to hold like Rav Nachman, even if they will not lose money, they are still able to take what is rightfully theirs without going in front of a bais din.
 - The Rif, Rosh, Rambam, and the Shulchan Aruch all pasken like Rav Nachman that “ovid inish dina inafshei.” Therefore if one sees that his money is in the hands of someone else he can take it back by any means even without going to bais din. The Shulchan Aruch even says that a person may use physical violence if it will get him his money back.
 - The Rama clarifies though, that a person can only use violence if there’s no other alternative.
- However there are some limitations to this halacha.
- The Rosh writes that one can't take anything from the person who has his money; it must be the exact object or the exact bills.. This means that if the person stole \$20 from you, you can not just take anything from him worth \$20, it must be *your* \$20.
 - The Mordechai in Bava Kamma adds that not only must it be the person’s object, but they must be absolutely positive that it is their object. In other words if you see someone walking around with the same baseball bat that you have, if you’re not positive that he stole it from you, you may not try to take it.

SPARKS OF CHASSDUS



*With Akiva
Magder*

Although twin brothers, Yaakov and Eisav are extremely different. Yaakov, as we know, represents emes as well as the Torah. Eisav, on the other hand, represents the yetzer hara, malach hamalves, sitra achra, and pretty much anything bad. We would think that a tzadik of Yaakov's caliber would try to hide the fact that he has such an evil brother, however, in this week's parsha we see the opposite. The pasuk in the beginning of the parsha says: "Please save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav - because I fear him - so that he does not come and attack me, mother and children alike." Why would Yaakov have to mention the fact that Eisav is his "achi- brother"? it's redundant!

The sefarim hakadoshim point out that there are two sides of Eisav, the side of 'achi' and the side of 'Eisav'. The side of 'achi' is the side of Eisav which acts like the yetzer tov. The side of 'Eisav' is the cruel and mean side of Eisav in which he represents all the things mentioned above. The reason Yaakov referred to the 'achi' side of Eisav, is because sometimes Eisav (yetzer hara) can act like a brother. At other times, the yetzer hara can lead one to do an aveirah, deceiving one into thinking it is really a mitzvah. The side of 'achi' can be more dangerous than the side of standard 'Eisav'. Yaakov was praying to Hashem that he should not fall into the hands of the Eisav known as 'achi'. The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh comments on the double language of "...hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav...". He says that Yaakov didn't know which way Eisav was going to greet him with. Either with the side of brotherhood and love, which the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh says would be a way that Yaakov would not be able to be protected from. Or maybe Eisav would publicize his evil intention to hurt Yaakov. Therefore, Yaakov davened for protection from both 'achi' and 'Eisav'.

Living in the society we find ourselves in, we must daven to Hashem to save us from the Eisav that's masked in 'achi'. In today's world, where we are fully integrated citizens in society, it can be easy to lose our identity. Although brothers can be similar, we must realize that we are very different than our brothers. Therefore, we must be cautious of the yetzer hara, of 'achi'. It can be easy to lose one's Jewish identity in a world that treats us like brothers. We must daven that we too are saved "from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eisav."

(Benyamin Neiman- Continued from page 1)

us to care for, look after, and assist our fellow Jew in all circumstances. Indeed, the Radak (Breishis 32:33) claims that Yaakov's sons, realizing their mistake in leaving him alone, and as a (belated) display of honor to their father, took it upon themselves not to eat from the gid hanasheh. At Har Sinai, Hashem validated their repentance, prohibiting the gid hanasheh for all future generations. The Gid Hanasheh, therefore, is more than just the commemoration of an event; it's a rallying cry for the brotherhood of Jewry.



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We are what we own

By Ari Saffra, 9th Grade

Yaakov prepared for war against Eisav by dividing the camp in two so that one of the camps could escape while the other would be in battle. The two camps crossed over a body of water, leaving Yaakov vulnerable and alone in the middle of the night. Because of this he is attacked by the angel. The question is why did Yaakov allow himself to be alone?

Rashi gives an answer to this based off a Gemara in Chulin and he says Yakov had crossed over the water with his family but realized that he had forgotten 'small vessels', so he went back to get them. He apparently didn't want to bother anyone from his camp, so he went back for his vessels alone. But why would Jacob endanger himself like that, just for a few small vessels? The Gemara even learns out from here never to walk by yourself at night in a dangerous neighborhood, so what was Yaakov thinking?!

In Shema it says, "You should love God with all your heart, all your life, and all your possessions." One may ask that once it already says all your life, why does it need to say all your possessions? The answer is because there are people who value their possessions over their own life. We seem to care a lot about our possessions, and some people would give their very lives to defend their possessions. Why? Do people not understand that life itself is more important?

A possession is something much deeper than simply an object that you happen to own. When you acquire an object, you gain power over that object. Even if you never use the object, the fact that you are aware that you could use it if you want to, gives you a tremendous feeling of power.

Our fascination with possessions and power, traces back to Adam and Chava. After they were banished from the Garden of Eden because of the sin, Chava gives birth to her first child, and named him Cain. She says, "I have acquired a man with God." The child was her creation and acquisition, therefore, the name Cain really means possession. Why would Chava state this as her first fact of existence post Gan Eden?

In Gan Eden individual possessions didn't exist. There was no concept of jealousy or possessiveness because Gan Eded had unlimited supply of everything for everybody. Immediately after being leaving from there, Chava realizes that human beings will now need to possess things in order to function in the world. Their possessions will define who they are and what their focus of life will be. Chava defines Olam Hazeh existence as a world of possessions. The question for every person still is, for what purpose will we acquire possessions, and what type of possessions should we strive to attain?

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(David Benhamu- Continued from page 1)

This fight comes to show us that it is true that you must prepare for war in the three ways mentioned above, but there is one more thing that you need to do. You must also straighten your life and your connection to Hashem. That is why Yaakov's name was changed. It was Hashem letting him know that he was on the right path and he would come out victorious. We can learn from this that we must live a straight life and walk on a straight path. Good Shabbos!



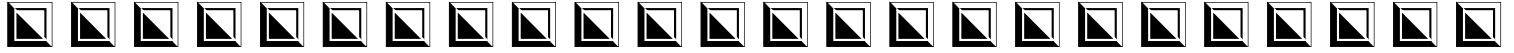
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THE ETERNAL FIGHT

By Menachem Gewirtz, Director of Social Media, 12th Grade



In this week's parsha we read the story of Yaakov's fight with the angel of Esav. At the end of the battle Yaakov is victorious, but he does not come out unscathed. During the battle the angel manages to hurt Yaakov in the gid hanasheh. The pasuk tells us that "the children of Israel may not eat the gid hanasheh...until this day, for he touched the socket of Jacob's hip, in gid hanasheh". The Radak asks on this an obvious question. What is the torah trying to teach us by not allowing us to eat the part of the body that Yaakov injured all those years ago?

The Radak explains that the isur of not being allowed to eat the gid hanasheh is meant to serve as a constant reminder of the nature of the eternal fight between the Bnei Yisrael and the 'angel of esav'. It functions as a reminder that we must always fight to keep our Judaism holy despite living in Galus. Even though sometimes it might feel as if we are being beat down, we must keep fighting and recognize that in the end of days the rest of the nations will sing shira to Hashem and we will prevail.

Adapted from YU Torah



(Ari Saffra- Continued from page 5)

Yaakov Avinu, as well as other righteous individuals of the past, took great pride in their possessions because they sanctify all that they own by using objects for serving Hashem. Even 'small vessels' shouldn't be wasted because they have a use and serve a purpose in Yaakov's sanctification of the world. Therefore, he goes back to retrieve his 'small vessels' so he shouldn't waste any spiritual potential that God has granted him in the world.

Adapted from Aish.com

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ther's name, the woman's voice cracked. "My son... you're my son," she said tearily. The young merchant had a lot to digest. This was his mother sitting in front of him—the mother he had not seen or heard from since infancy, of whom he had no memory whatsoever. And the "gentile" wagon driver was in fact his Jewish half-brother! They sat and talked late into the night, time passing unnoticed. It was a deeply emotional night, to say the least. The following morning, as the traveler prayed Shacharit, he heard a terrible cry from the adjacent room. "Dead! Mama's dead!" the wagon driver wailed repeatedly. After recovering from the shock, the driver lamented that the local priest would surely expect to be paid richly for the burial. "Your mother—our mother—was a Jewess," said his newfound half-brother. "She deserves a Jewish burial, and tomorrow, rest assured, I'll take care of that in the nearest Jewish cemetery." Indeed, on Sunday morning the woman was brought to eternal rest in a neighboring Jewish town. As I read this story, I realized how fortunate I was to find it by Parshas Vayishlach. In this story, we have the reunite of two family members who hadn't seen each other in a while. The son is a merchant traveling on his way. In this week's parsha, we also have two family members who reunite, traveling to see each other. From this story, we can learn that there is no such thing as luck in klal yisroel, and a simple weather delay can change your life. Always keep your eyes open to what's going on around you, you'll be surprised about what you may see.

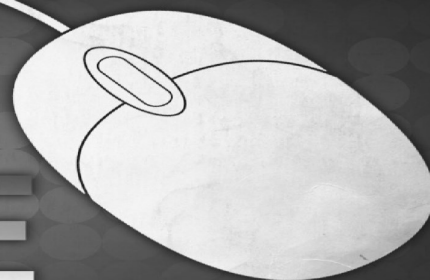


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STORIES OF GREATNESS

TOLD OVER BY: HILLEL GOLUBTCHIK

One year after their marriage, a young couple reveled in the birth of their first child, a healthy baby boy. Alas, the happiness was not to last. Just weeks later, the young mother walked out the door and disappeared from her cozy home. A hastily organized search party of willing townspeople was immediately dispatched, but they returned empty-handed. She was gone without a trace. Life went on, and the child grew up with a devoted father but no mother. Upon maturing and starting his own family, the young man opened a small clothing store. He soon realized that he could make more money by bypassing the distributor and purchasing garments directly from the manufacturer. So, early one Thursday morning he hired a wagon driver and settled in for the long drive to purchase the clothing directly. After a successful day, he carefully piled up his wares and began searching for someone to transport him home. As the sun steadily sank toward the west, he was spotted by a gentile wagon driver who offered his services. Upon hearing the young man's destination, the driver proposed a sensible change to the journey. "My home is on the way, approximately two hours from here. We can stop there for the night. Tomorrow morning, we'll get you home." The young man agreed. The weather, however, did not. Fluffy clumps of white began to fall quickly, accumulating with worrying speed, and the horse plodded through the whiteout with difficulty. They barely made it to the driver's house, where he introduced the young merchant to his mother.

After exchanging the requisite pleasantries, the visitor silently busied himself with Maariv, the evening prayer. The snow continued through the night and any hope of getting back on the road to arrive home before the onset of Shabbat dissipated. The young man's disappointment was palpable. Grateful as he was to his hosts, spending the holy day with gentiles, far from home, was not what he had envisioned. As the afternoon wore on, he began to make his usual preparations for the day of rest. Nothing, he thought resolutely, would dampen his Shabbat. He washed up and approached a corner to say the afternoon prayer, Mincha. The driver's mother didn't say much, but half an hour before sunset she placed two candles on the table and lit them. She covered her face and mumbled something to herself. The visitor watched with the widest of eyes. "May I ask what compelled a gentile woman to light the Shabbat candles?" he finally gasped. The woman ignored his question, inquiring instead, "Where are you from?" The young man named his hometown. Recognition flickered in the woman's eyes. "And are you familiar with these people?" she asked, listing prestigious members of the town's Jewish community. "Of course I know them! How do you know them?" "I used to live there," the woman said wistfully, and she launched into the sad story of her various mistakes, the poor choices she had made, and her impulsive flight from her previous life. When the young merchant mentioned his fa-

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