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Parashat Vayishlach - #307

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## On the Parashah...

### One United Whole

[Tal Chermon]

Question: Why does the injury Yaakov incurs when wrestling with the angel translate into a prohibition against eating the Gid Ha-Nasheh (sciatic nerve) of an animal? What do the animals have to do with Yaakov's experience?

Answer: This question is not specific to this halachah but is relevant to many halachot. For example, when a person becomes impure, his purification is affected by the sprinkling of the ashes of the red heifer. The unsolved murder of a wayfarer is atoned for by a decapitated calf. A goat is sent to *Azazel* as part of the atonement process on Yom Kippur for the sins of the Jewish People. It is evident that there is a connection between human existence and the animal kingdom. This is because the whole of existence is a single organism referred to in Hebrew as the "Datzcham" Unit - an acrostic standing for the four realms of existence: a. "Domem" – inanimate elements. b. "Tzome'ach" – vegetation. c. "Chai" – the animals. d. "Medaber" – the speaking being, i.e. humans (See Orot Ha-Kodesh 2, p. 361). All levels are interrelated and connected through hidden pathways. We and the animals are connected. This was very obvious in Noach's Ark where the whole remnant of the animal world was dependent on Noach. Therefore, an improvement in one part of this united whole, such as in the animal kingdom, can heal and improve another part of the organism, namely, man. This is just like a human being who takes a tablet through part of his body and yet is healed in an entirely different part, because the same vitality flows through all of the limbs and thus unites them. A frailty in Yaakov's thigh thus can be reflected in the prohibition to eat a certain limb in an animal.

Rav Aviner in the News...

Conversion Law Halahically Problematic

Rosh Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim and prominent Dati Leumi community Posek, Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a, has come out against the conversion bill sponsored by MK Elazar Stern. The bill passed its preliminary reading in Knesset this week. The Rav feels the bill is "problematic from both a halachic and national perspective."

While Stern and Bayit Yehudi are hailing the bill as a breakthrough towards removing many stumbling blocks faced by a conversion candidate, many/most leading Dati Leumi Rabbanim are opposed, fearing the ramifications. Needless to say Chareidi Poskim are opposed as well.

Rav Aviner asks "What is meant by facilitating conversion? Should a candidate not be required to wait on a long line or perhaps they should address him in a nicer way, with more love and patience? "Love the convert" and if that is what is behind efforts to go easier then it is positive".

Rav Aviner fears, however, under the new law there will be Batei Din that will provide an expedited conversion which will result "in regular converts who are "Yirei Shamayim" as well as those who are "Yirei Shamayim Lite". What is their intention when they speak of easier conversion? If they are thinking of 300,000 immigrants from Russia that are not converting today, then a new reality of two nations will emerge.

This will lead to conversion that is not in line with Halachah and a division of the nation into two".

Rav Aviner feels that conversion is one of those things where one must satisfy all halachic opinions, for this is at the heart of the 'Who is a Jew' controversy. The Rav acknowledges there should not be "Foot-dragging" as exists today in the judicial system but compromising Halachah and the conversion process is not the way to eliminate the lag.

## True or Superstition?

Shabbat Birth

Passing a Knife

Q: Is it true that one should not pass a knife from one person's hand to another's but rather should place it on the table and the other person pick it up?

A: Not true (see Ner Be-Ishon Layla p. 240).

Clothing on the Deceased

Q: Can I wear the dress of a woman who passed away? I was told that it will bring me negative energy.

A: Nonsense (One should only refrain from wearing shoes that were being worn by a person when he passed away. Geshet Ha-Chaim Vol. 1 8:2).

#### Complete Fast

Q: There is a concept of a complete fast called "Inedia", in which one eats no food and is sustained by the air, light and universal energy. Some have followed this method for years and have been sustained?

A: Nonsense. A person needs food and drink. Those who claim that they do not eat are deceptive and eat in secret. A critical medical trial with the head of the cult was stopped after a few days because it reached a dangerous stage. Students pay a huge sum of money for these seminars. Three naïve students died from starvation (Skeptical.com).

#### Segulah for Woman to Cover Her Hair

Q: My wife does not want to cover her hair. Is there a Segulah so she will?

A: Speak to her heart (And similarly in Shut Doresh Tzion, Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi said: There are no Segulot. Work and you will be successful in explaining it to her).

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