

10

the law, the teacher - genesis 32v33

let us delve deeply into the physical, spiritual, and hidden dimensions of genesis 32:33, drawing from the well of the tanakh. this verse establishes a unique and perpetual dietary prohibition that serves as a living memorial to the transformative struggle of ya'akov.

the verse states: "therefore to this day the people of yashar'el do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of ya'akov's hip on the sinew of the thigh."

this command creates a tangible link between the nation's daily practice and the foundational event that gave them their shem (name).

the physical meaning: a perpetual memorial

on a physical, literal level, this verse institutes a permanent chukat (custom/statute) forbidding the consumption of the gid hanasheh (sciatic nerve).

1. **"therefore... the people of yashar'el do not eat the sinew of the thigh...":** this is a specific, negative commandment. it is a zech (memorial) established by custom from that day forward.
2. **"...because he touched the socket of ya'akov's hip...":** the law is rooted entirely in a

historical encounter. it connects every generation to the moment their father, ya'akov, wrestled and became yashar'el (he who strives with el / he who walks straight to el).

in essence, the physical meaning creates a ed (witness) in the form of a dietary law, ensuring the story of yashar'el's origin is never forgotten.

the spiritual meaning: remembering the struggle that forges identity

spiritually, this law teaches the people to honour the struggles that shape their nefesh (soul/being) and their identity before elohiym.

1. **honouring the wound:** ya'akov was left with a tzela (limp) from his struggle. by prohibiting the gid (sinew) connected to this wound, the law eternally sanctifies it. it teaches that the petsa (wounds) we receive in our encounters with the divine are not marks of shame but are sacred, formative, and integral to our identity. they are the price of the berakhah (blessing).
2. **a nation forged in perseverance:** the prohibition ensures that yashar'el never forgets that its shem (name) and identity mean "he strives with el" and "he perseveres. And the literal meaning of yashar'el is: "he who is upright with el" or "el makes straight" or, "to walk in uprightness to our el / to walk in a straight line to our el." " it valorizes ametz

(courage), tzamid (perseverance), and the willingness to avek (wrestle) in prayer and struggle for a berakhah (blessing), as hosea 12:3-4 recalls: "he strove with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favour. he then walked on a straight path towards his el daily."

in summary, the spiritual meaning is that yashar'el's identity is rooted in a divine struggle, and this law calls them to remember that true koach (strength) is found in clinging to elohiym and persevering until the berakhah (blessing) is received.

the hidden meaning (a tanakh-based view): the transformation of human gevurah (strength)

looking deeper, this law is about the sanctification and transformation of human gevurah (strength/might).

1. **the thigh as gevurah:** in the symbolic language of the tanakh, the yarekh (thigh) is associated with a person's gevurah (strength) and generative koach (power) (e.g., oaths sworn with a hand under the yarekh (thigh) - bereshit (gen) 24:2). the touching of ya'akov's yarekh (thigh) represents elohiym touching the very source of ya'akov's natural gevurah (strength) and koach (power).
2. **the sinew that shrank:** the gid (sinew/tendon) is the connector that transmits the koach

(power) of the muscle to the etzem (bone). it represents the channel of a person's natural force. this channel was divinely touched and altered.

3. **the prohibition as a reminder:** by not eating this gid (sinew), yashar'e1 is reminded that their gevurah (strength) is no longer to be purely their own. the natural, unyielding gevurah (strength) of ya'akov had to be touched and transformed by elohiym for him to become yashar'e1. the nation is called to rely not on their own koach (power), but on the gevurah (strength) that comes from a divine encounter and shacham (surrender). their koach (power) is now a power that has been humbled and refined.

therefore, the hidden meaning is that true gevurah (strength) for the people of elohiym is not found in raw, human koach (ability), but in a gevurah (strength) that has been humbled, touched by the divine, and transformed. the law of the gid hanasheh (the sinew of the thigh) is a perpetual call to rely on yhvh's gevurah, (strength) not our own.