



The Blemished

With the beginning of seventh *perek* we make the transition from learning about *mumim* (blemishes) that invalidated *korbanot* (offerings) to those *mumim* that are significant for *kohanim* - that would prevent them for working in the *Beit HaMikdash*. The first *Mishnah* teaches that all the *mumim* that applied to *korbanot* was also significant for humans. The *Mishnah* then continues with additional *mumim* that only apply to *kohanim*.

The *Gemara* (43a) derives these additional *mumim* from the *pasuk*: "Any man from among the offspring of *Aharon* the *Kohen* who has a blemish shall not approach to offer the fire-offerings of *Hashem*..." (*Vayikra* 21:21). Note that this *pasuk* is preceded by four *pesukim* that already list the various *mumim*. The *Gemara* understands that this *pasuk* adds additional *mumim* as the those where the individual appears different from the "offspring of *Aharon*". How are these additional *mumim* different? The *Gemara* explains that if a *kohen* with one of the explicit *mumim* performed *avodah* it would be considered invalid. If however a *kohen* with one of these additional *mumim* performed *avodah*, the *avodah* would still be valid, despite violating a positive commandment (according to *Rashi*). The *Gemara* adds that there are additional issues which render a *kohen* invalid for *avodah* due to *maarit ayin*. In other words, if the such a *kohen* performed *avodah*, it would still valid and no *mitzvot* would be violated. Nevertheless, the *Chachamim* forbade a *kohen* from performing *avodah* in such cases due to the appearance be perceived as being not quite right.

What is the issue with a *mum* in *korbanot* and with *kohanim*?

The *Sefer HaChinnuch* (275) explains the people are impacted by the appearance of those that act before them. Therefore, "...it is therefore truly fitting that the messenger, on whom atonement depends, should be a man of grace, handsome in appearance and fair in features, and pleasing in all his ways – that the minds of men may be drawn to him." Similarly, when the *Sefer HaChinnuch* (277) explains the prohibition of a *kohen* with a *mum* entering the *heichal*, he explains, "at the root of this *mitzvah* lies the purpose to

magnify the *glory* of the *Beit HaMikdash* and its splendour. Therefore, it is not fitting for a blemished, disfigured man to go in there. For it is a place of wholeness, perfection..."

Rav Hirsch (*Vayikra* 1:3) however presents a different understanding. *Rav Hirsch* initially cites *Malachi*'s rebuke of the *kohanim* that offered blemished *korbanot*. By doing so, *Malachi* states, "in your speeches the Table of G-d is represented as being one which is rejected with disdain by others, and that which it garners is such the eating of which is contemptible." *Rav Hirsch* explains that instead of representing *Hashem* and the *Beit HaMikdash* as the very highest, that demands the best, they degraded it as "a home for those that can not find a home elsewhere."

More sharply, the *Rav Hirsch* cites *Hoshea* (10:6) who rebukes the *kohanim*, "when the people mourn over it, their parsons rejoice thereat". *Rav Hirsch* explains as follows:

They and their sanctuaries speculate on the pain and grief of the "believers". It is not the vivacious and happy ones who go to their halls. It is the blind, the lame, the sick and the weak who wend their way to their alters. Not as the ruler of fresh pulsating active life, and of the joy of life, but the consoler for what they have to endure and suffer and do without, is what religion is for them. Not so is the G-d of His Temple which Israel is to bear through history as the G-d of the whole humanity. The Sanctuary of His Torah demands the full complete life with nothing left out, nothing missing, and promises in exchange a rich full life in which, even death and pain lose their sting. So just as the priests serving at Israel's Alter of the Law have to be without wound or mutilation, so, must the animals be without wounds or mutilation and vigorous undamaged if they are to serve as the means by which humane beings celebrate their entry into, and progress in, the "covenant of nearness of G-d" on the Alter of His Torah.

May it be *Hashem*'s will that we can all soon return to the rebuilt *Beit HaMikdash* to serve in full health and perfection.

Yisrael Bankier

Revision Questions

בכורות ו: ד' – ז': ה'

- Is a pierced nose on an animal considered a blemish? (ו': ד')
- Explain the *machloket* between *Tana Kama* and *R' Channinah ben Antigros* regarding inspecting the gums for blemishes? (ו': ד')
- If the tail of an animal is mutilated between the joints is that considered a blemish? (ו': ה')
- If the top end of the tail is mutilated and bone is showing, is that considered a blemish? (ו': ה')
- Is the following considered a blemish –
 - Five legs?
 - Three legs? (ו': ז')
- Explain the term *shahul*? (ו': ז')
- Explain the term *kasul*? (ו': ז')
- What blemish did *Ila* enumerate which the *Chachamim* agreed with? (ו': ח')
- What three blemishes did *Ila* enumerate which the *Chachamim* had not heard? (ו': ח')
- If the ear of a kid is doubled and has one bone, is that considered a blemish? (ו': ט')
- If the tail of a kid is like that of a pig or does not have three segments is it a blemish? (ו': ט')
- Name three things that are blemishes and need not be measured? (ו': י')
- To which part of the animal's body must the tail reach to not be considered a blemish? (ו': י"א)
- Name three blemishes that are not permanent and when found in an animal do not permit its slaughter? (ו': י"ב)
- Explain the following blemishes in human beings
 - *Kilon*
 - *Laftan*
 - *Makavan*
 - *Shakua*
 - *Shekifas*? (ו': י"ג)
- How does the *Mishnah* define someone who is termed 'bald'? (ו': י"ד)
- What is a *harum*? (ו': י"ה)
- If one's eyelashes have fallen out is this considered a blemish? (ו': י"ה)
- How big or small are one's eyes if they are considered a *mum*? (ו': י"ד)
- What is a *tzimeah*? (ו': י"ד)
- What is a *tzimem*? (ו': י"ז)
- What are some problems with one's lips that would be defined as a *mum*? (ו': י"ז)
- What are the three definitions given for *mro'ach ashech*? (ו': י"ז)

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
29 March ד' ניסן	30 March ה' ניסן	31 March ו' ניסן	1 April ז' ניסן	2 April ח' ניסן	3 April ט' ניסן	4 April י' ניסן
Bechorot 7:6-7	Bechorot 8:1-2	Bechorot 8:3-4	Bechorot 8:5-6	Bechorot 8:7-8	Bechorot 8:9-10	Bechorot 9:1-2

