# Bekhorot 40

Daf Yomi · Wednesday, October 28, 2026 · י״ז חשון תשפ״ז · Covers 40a (Mishnah on missing testicles) through 41a (the calf's tail and the hock)

## Summary

Bekhorot 40 continues the Mishnah's list of blemishes. An animal with no testicles, or only one, is blemished. R. Yishmael judges by the number of sacs, while R. Akiva requires pressing to see whether a hidden testicle emerges. When a testicle was found after slaughter attached to the loins, R. Akiva permitted the animal and R. Yochanan b. Nuri forbade it. They traded sharp words about wasting Israel's money and feeding Israel sacred meat outside the Temple. Five legs or three, round hooves like a donkey's, and a dislocated or uneven hip are also blemishes. Rav Huna adds that an extra or missing hind leg also makes the animal *tereifah*.

Ila listed in Yavneh a broken leg bone, even if the break itself cannot be seen, and the Sages agreed. He added three more: an eyeball round like a human's, a mouth like a pig's, and loss of most of the speaking part of the tongue. A later court accepted them. A lower jaw that protrudes beyond the upper was ruled a blemish when Rabban Gamliel asked the Sages. The Gemara distinguishes it from a lip, which is a blemish only in a kohen.

A doubled ear, a pig-like tail and a tail with too few vertebrae are discussed, and Rav Huna's numbers for kids and lambs are refuted. R. Chanina b. Antigonus adds a wart in the eye and unequal eyes or ears. The Gemara reconciles the wart with other sources by whether it has bone or hair. The daf ends with the calf whose tail does not reach the hock, which is not a blemish, since calves' tails lengthen as they grow.

# Detailed Summary

## 1. Mishnah: missing testicles 40a

The first lines of 40a complete the discussion of the cubits of Shushan HaBirah and the Mishnah's "finger" (summary of Bekhorot 39).

**MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 40a)**

אין לו ביצים או אין לו אלא ביצה אחת. ר' ישמעאל אומר אם יש לו שני כיסין יש לו ב' ביצים, אין לו שני כיסין אין לו אלא ביצה אחת. ר"ע אומר מושיבו על עכוזו וממעך, אם יש ביצה סופו לצאת. מעשה שמיעך ולא יצא, נשחטה ונמצאת דבוקה בכסלים, והתיר ר"ע ואסר רבי יוחנן בן נורי.

If it has no testicles, or only one testicle. R. Yishmael says: if it has two sacs, it has two testicles; if it does not have two sacs, it has only one testicle. R. Akiva says: one sits it on its haunches and presses; if there is a testicle, it will come out. There was a case where one pressed and it did not come out; it was slaughtered and the testicle was found attached to the loins. R. Akiva permitted it, and R. Yochanan b. Nuri forbade it.

**Rashi – ד"ה שני כיסין · ד"ה והתיר ר"ע**

**THE ISSUE.** What are the "two sacs," and why did R. Akiva permit?

**RASHI'S EXPLANATION.** Every animal has one sac per testicle, since the sac is divided in the middle, which is visible from outside as a groove. R. Akiva permitted because a testicle not in its place is a blemish.

**WHY IT MATTERS.** The external appearance is the test, even if the organ exists internally.

**THE WORDING.** If having only one testicle is a blemish, surely having none is! It is missing something and teaches: if it does not have two testicles in two sacs but in one sac, or it has two sacs and one testicle, it is a blemish. R. Yishmael says: if it has two sacs, it is known to have two testicles; if it has only one sac, it is like having one testicle. R. Akiva comes to say we do not say "it is known"; rather one sits it on its haunches and presses.

**THE CASE.** A baraita: R. Yose said, there was a case in Piran of the house of Menachem: one pressed and the testicle did not come out; it was slaughtered and found attached to the loins. R. Akiva permitted and R. Yochanan b. Nuri forbade. R. Akiva said to R. Yochanan b. Nuri: until when will you destroy Israel's money? R. Yochanan b. Nuri said to R. Akiva: until when will you feed Israel carcasses? A carcass? It was slaughtered! *Tereifot*? It is not tereifah. Rather: until when will you feed Israel sacred meat outside (Rashi: an unblemished animal, still holy)?

**Tosafot – ד"ה בפירן של בית מנחם**

**THE TEXT.** Rashi explains Piran as the name of a village. The Tosefta reads "a cow of the house of Menachem," as in Sanhedrin 33a, where a cow of the house of Menachem had its womb removed.

**WHY THIS MATTERS.** The case may be about a particular household's animal, not a place.

## 2. Mishnah: legs, hooves and hips 40a

**MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 40a)**

בעל חמש רגלים, או שאין לו אלא שלש, ושרגליו שהוא קלוטות כשל חמור, והשחול והכסול. איזהו שחול, שנשמטה יריכו. וכסול, שאחת מיריכים גבוהות.

One with five legs, or with only three; one whose hooves are uncloven like a donkey's; the *shachul* and the *kasul*. What is a shachul? One whose hip is dislocated. And a kasul? One of whose hips is higher.

**RAV HUNA.** This applies only when the extra or missing limb is a foreleg (Rashi: there is no tereifah status for a foreleg); with a hind leg it is also tereifah, since anything extra is like something removed (Rashi: an animal whose thigh was removed is a carcass).

**RAV PAPPA.** Do not say only if (the hooves) are round and not split; rather, once they are round, even if split (Rashi: a kosher animal's hooves are never round).

**BARAITA.** What is a kasul and what is a shachul? A shachul is one whose hip is dislocated; a kasul is one with one leg inside the loin and one leg above the loin (Rashi: the thigh normally joins near the loin, not above it). It was taught: also the *sarua* and the *kalut*. A sarua is one whose thigh extends (Rashi: one thigh larger than the other); a kalut is one whose hooves are uncloven like a donkey's or a horse's.

**Tosafot – ד"ה שנשמטה יריכו**

**QUESTION.** Rashi explains it as a dislocated hip whose sinews have not decayed, since if they had, it would also be tereifah (Chullin 54b). But one view there treats it as tereifah even without decay.

**ANSWER.** Rather, it was dislocated this way from birth; likewise the extended thigh below.

**WHY THIS MATTERS.** The blemish describes a congenital defect, not an injury that makes the animal tereifah.

## 3. Mishnah: Ila's list in Yavneh 40a

**MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 40a)**

נשבר עצם ידו ועצם רגלו, אע"פ שאינו ניכר. מומין אלו מנה אילא ביבנה והודו לו חכמים. ועוד ג' הוסיף, אמרו לו לא שמענו את אלו: שגלגל עינו עגול כשל אדם, ופיו דומה כשל חזיר, ושניטל רוב המדבר בלשונו. ב"ד של אחריהן אמרו ה"ז מום.

If the bone of its foreleg or hind leg was broken, even though it is not noticeable. These blemishes Ila listed in Yavneh, and the Sages agreed with him. He added three more, and they said: we have not heard of these. One whose eyeball is round like a human's, whose mouth resembles a pig's, and from whom most of the speaking part of the tongue was removed. The court after them said: it is a blemish.

**NOT NOTICEABLE.** If it is not noticeable, is it a blemish? Rav Pappa: it is not noticeable in itself, but it is noticeable through its work (Rashi: it limps when walking).

**THE ROUND EYEBALL.** This implies that a round eyeball is not normal for an animal. But a Mishnah teaches: a woman who miscarries a fetus shaped like a domestic animal, a wild animal or a bird, kosher or not: if male, she observes the days for a male; if female, for a female; if unknown, for both, says R. Meir. Rabbah bar bar Chana citing R. Yochanan: R. Meir's reason is that its eyeball is round like a human's. Rav Yosef: it is not difficult; one refers to the black of the eye and one to the white.

**THE PIG'S MOUTH.** Rav Pappa: do not say only if it is both pointed and protruding; rather, once it protrudes, even if not pointed (Rashi: the upper lip and jaw extend past the lower).

**THE TONGUE.** Whose view is "most of the speaking part of the tongue"? R. Yehuda's, as a baraita teaches: one from which most of the tongue was removed; R. Yehuda says: most of the speaking part of the tongue.

## 4. Mishnah: the protruding lower jaw 40a–40b

**MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 40a)**

ומעשה שהלחי התחתון עודף על העליון, ושאל ר"ג לחכמים ואמרו הרי זה מום.

There was a case where the lower jaw extended beyond the upper, and Rabban Gamliel asked the Sages, and they said: it is a blemish.

**WHY "A CASE"?** What does "and there was a case" connect to? We learned "its mouth resembles a pig's," and the Rabbis disagree with Rebbi; we said that they disagree when the upper lip extends beyond the lower, but when the lower extends beyond the upper, it is a blemish. And there was also a case where the lower jaw extended beyond the upper, and Rabban Shimon b. Gamliel asked the Sages, and they said it is a blemish.

**MAN OR ANIMAL?** But that is for a person! The Mishnah teaches: if his upper lip extends beyond the lower, or the lower beyond the upper, it is a blemish. That is for a person, since it says "any man of the seed of Aharon" (Vayikra 22:4), a man equal to the seed of Aharon, but not for an animal. Rav Pappa: it is not difficult; one has bone and one has no bone.

**Rashi – ד"ה הא דאית בה עצם**

**THE ISSUE.** When is a protrusion a blemish in an animal?

**RASHI'S EXPLANATION.** If the bone of the lower jaw extends beyond the upper, it is a blemish even in an animal. If there is no bone, only a long lower lip that covers the upper, it is a blemish in a kohen but not in an animal.

**WHY IT MATTERS.** A kohen must look like his brothers; an animal's defect must be structural.

## 5. Mishnah: the ear and tail of a kid 40b

**MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 40b)**

אוזן הגדי היתה כפולה, אמרו חכמים בזמן שהוא עצם אחד מום, בזמן שאין בו עצם אינו מום. רבי חנניא בן גמליאל אומר זנב הגדי שהוא דומה לשל חזיר, ושאין בה שלש חוליות, ה"ז מום.

A kid's ear was doubled (Rashi: an ear within an ear on one side). The Sages said: when it is one bone (Rashi: one lobe folded and joined below), it is a blemish; when there is no bone (Rashi: the lobes are separate above), it is not a blemish. R. Chananya b. Gamliel says: a kid's tail that resembles a pig's, or that does not have three vertebrae, is a blemish.

**BARAITA.** If its mouth is closed or its feet are narrow because of the space, it is not a blemish; because of the bone, it is a blemish. If its ears are doubled with one cartilage, it is a blemish; with two cartilages, it is not.

**Tosafot – ד"ה פיו בלום**

**THE WORD.** Rashi gives two readings: "swollen" and "narrow." Tosafot prefer the first reading, "narrow," since *balum* means closed, as in "its nose is closed" (43b) and "one who restrains himself in a quarrel" (Chullin 89a).

**WHY THIS MATTERS.** The baraita describes a narrow mouth, not a swollen one.

**THE PIG'S TAIL.** Rav Pappa: do not say only if it is thin; rather if it is round, even if it is thick.

**THE VERTEBRAE.** Rav Huna: in a kid, two is a blemish and three is not; in a lamb, three is a blemish and four is not. A baraita refutes him: in a kid, one is a blemish and two is not; in a lamb, two is a blemish and three is not. Rav Huna was misled by the Mishnah: he thought that since the first clause is about a kid, the end is too. It is not: the first clause is about a kid and the end about a lamb.

## 6. Mishnah: R. Chanina b. Antigonus's additions 40b

**MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 40b)**

רבי חנינא בן אנטיגנוס אומר את שיבלת בעיניו, ושנפגם עצם ידו ורגלו, ושנפרק עצמו של פיו, עינו אחת גדולה ואחת קטנה, אזנו אחד גדולה ואחד קטנה, במראה אבל לא במדה. רבי יהודה אומר שתי ביציו אחת גדולה כשתים שבחבירתה, ולא הודו לו חכמים.

R. Chanina b. Antigonus says: one with a wart in its eye; one whose foreleg or leg bone was nicked; one whose mouth bone was dislocated (Rashi: where the teeth are set); one eye large and one small, or one ear large and one small, by sight but not by measurement (Rashi: if it is noticeable only by measuring, it is not a blemish). R. Yehuda says: of its two testicles, one is as large as two of the other. The Sages did not agree with him.

**THE WART.** Is a wart a blemish? But a Mishnah teaches: these do not permit slaughter, neither in the Temple nor outside: one with *garav* and one with a wart (Rashi: not in the Temple since it is disqualified, nor outside since it is not a full blemish). But a wart is written in the Torah (Vayikra 22:22)! Say: one in its body and one in its eye. But the verse is unqualified. Rather: one has bone and one has no bone. The verse speaks of one with bone; the Mishnah of one without bone: in the eye it is a blemish, in the body it is not.

**WITHOUT BONE IN THE BODY.** Is it disqualified at all? It is merely a flesh tag, as the Mishnah teaches: R. Eliezer says those with flesh tags are disqualified in people (Rashi: a kohen) and fit in animals. Rather, both are in the eye: one in the black and one in the white. But there are no blemishes in the white! Rather, both are in the white, and Reish Lakish said: one has hair and one has no hair.

**Tosafot – ד"ה אלא אידי ואידי בשחור גרסינן**

**THE TEXT.** The correct reading is "both are in the black," not "in the white."

**WHY THIS MATTERS.** On this reading, the difference of hair applies to a wart in the black of the eye, consistent with the rule that there are no blemishes in the white.

**EYES AND EARS.** It was taught: "large" like a calf's, "small" like a goose's. "One ear large": and according to the Sages (who disagreed with R. Yehuda), how much? It was taught: Others say, even if it is double the other, it is fit.

## 7. Mishnah: the calf's tail 40b–41a

**MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 40b)**

זנב העגל שאינה מגעת לערקוב, אמרו חכמים כל מרבית עגלים כן, כל זמן שיהו מגדלין הן נמתחות. איזהו ערקוב שאמרו, ר' חנינא בן אנטיגנוס אומר בערקוב שבאמצע הירך.

A calf's tail that does not reach the hock: the Sages said, most calves are so, and as they grow, their tails lengthen. Which hock did they mean? R. Chanina b. Antigonus says: the hock in the middle of the thigh.

**Rashi – ד"ה כל מרבית עגלים**

**THE ISSUE.** When is a short tail a blemish?

**RASHI'S EXPLANATION.** The normal growth of calves is that their tails reach the hock, so a shorter tail is a blemish. As they grow, the tails stretch further down.

**WHY IT MATTERS.** The standard is what is normal for a calf's age.

**THE HOCK.** It was taught: the upper joint protrudes and the lower does not (Rashi: the knee, where the shank meets the thigh, not the joint near the hooves). In a camel, the corresponding place is visible.

The next Mishnah, which concludes the list of blemishes on which a firstborn is slaughtered, begins on 41a and is covered in the summary of Bekhorot 41.

# The full picture in plain language

The list of blemishes now reaches the reproductive organs, legs, hips, eyes, mouth, ears and tail. Throughout, a defect counts if it is a real departure from the animal's normal form that can be seen, directly or through its effects, like a limp. A testicle hidden inside, an extra hind leg or a round, donkey-like hoof all qualify. The sharp exchange between R. Akiva and R. Yochanan b. Nuri shows what is at stake: one side fears wasting the owner's animal, the other fears eating sacred meat outside the Temple.

Several of the Mishnah's blemishes were accepted only after debate: Ila's three additions in Yavneh, Rabban Gamliel's question about the lower jaw, and R. Chanina b. Antigonus's list. The Gemara refines each by asking whether bone is involved, whether hair grows on a wart, and what is normal for a kid, a lamb or a growing calf.

# Glossary

| Hebrew | Transliteration | Meaning in this sugya |
|---|---|---|
| כיסין | *kisin* | The sacs holding the testicles. |
| כסלים | *kesalim* | The loins, where a hidden testicle was found. |
| קלוטות | *kelutot* | Uncloven, round hooves like a donkey's. |
| שחול | *shachul* | An animal with a dislocated hip. |
| כסול | *kasul* | An animal with one hip higher than the other. |
| כל יתיר כנטול דמי | *kol yatir ke-natul dami* | Anything extra is like something removed. |
| יבלת | *yabelet* | A wart. |
| תלתול | *taltul* | A flesh tag, not a blemish in an animal. |
| ערקוב | *arkov* | The hock, the joint the tail should reach. |

Sources: Gemara with relevant Rashi and Tosafot.