Bekhorot 43

Daf Yomi · Shabbat, October 31, 2026 · כ׳ חשון תשפ״ז · Covers 43a (new chapter) through 44a (end of R. Yosi's baraita)

Summary

Bekhorot 43 opens the seventh chapter, *Mumin Elu* (מומין אלו), which turns from blemished animals to blemished kohanim. Its first Mishnah teaches that every blemish that disqualifies a firstborn animal, permanent or temporary, also disqualifies a kohen from Temple service, and that a person has additional disqualifications: irregular head shapes (*kilon*, *liftan*, *makaban*, *shakut*, *sekifat*), hunchbacks (disputed by R. Yehuda) and baldness without a fringe of hair from ear to ear.

The Gemara first asks how blemish lists can be shared at all, when the Torah names a wart (*yabelet*) only for animals and *dak* and *tevalul* (eye conditions) only for kohanim. A baraita links the two lists through a *gezeirah shavah* on the words גרב and ילפת, which appear in both. The Gemara shows why the analogy needs a "free" (*mufneh*) word, proves that one of these words is indeed superfluous, and then asks why the Torah did not simply write one combined list. The answer, from the school of R. Yishmael, is that a passage repeated in the Torah is repeated for the sake of its new details. Rava adds a parallel analysis: why the Torah wrote the law of blemishes three times, for kohanim, for ordinary offerings and for the firstborn, since none could be derived from another, or even from the other two.

The source for the kohen's extra disqualifications is R. Yochanan's reading of "any man *of the seed of Aharon*": a kohen must look like the rest of Aharon's descendants. The Gemara distinguishes three levels: a true blemish, which also invalidates the service he performs; "not resembling the seed of Aharon," which is a positive commandment but does not invalidate the service; and disqualification merely "because of appearance." It then explains the head shapes, the dispute about hunchbacks, two versions of Rava's ruling on baldness, and R. Yochanan's ruling that bald men, dwarfs and men with watery eyes are disqualified as "not resembling," against R. Yehuda, who considers them fit.

Two further Mishnayot conclude the daf. The first defines the *gibben* of the Torah (Vayikra 21:20) as one who has no eyebrows or only one, with R. Dosa and R. Chanina ben Antigonus offering other definitions; the Gemara reconciles the Mishnah with a baraita and with Rav's ruling that a creature with two spines is not viable. The second defines the *charum* as one with no bridge between his eyes and lists other eye defects. A baraita adds noses that are sunken, upturned, blocked or overhanging, and the Sages tell R. Yosi that his narrow definition goes too far.

Detailed Summary

1. A new chapter: blemishes in a kohen 43a

The first line of 43a completes the previous chapter, *Al Elu Mumin*, with Rava's answer about the *tumtum* and levirate marriage (covered in the summary of Bekhorot 42). The chapter had listed the blemishes that permit a firstborn animal to be slaughtered. A kohen with a blemish may not perform the Temple service (Vayikra 21:16–23), and the Torah lists some of his blemishes there, but not all. The new chapter asks which defects disqualify a kohen.

MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 43a)

מומין אלו בין קבועין בין עוברים פוסלין באדם, ויתר עליהן הכילון והלפתן והמקבן ושראשו שקוט וסקיפת, ובעלי חטרות רבי יהודה מכשיר וחכמים פוסלין. הקרח פסול. איזהו קרח? כל שאין לו שיטה של שער מוקפת מאוזן לאוזן, אם יש לו ה"ז כשר.

"These blemishes" (those the previous chapter listed for a firstborn animal), whether permanent or passing, disqualify a person (a kohen, from the service, as long as he has them). A person has more than these: the *kilon*, the *liftan*, the *makaban*, one whose head is *shakut*, and the *sekifat* (head shapes, defined in the Gemara). As for hunchbacks (*ba'alei chatarot*), R. Yehuda declares them fit and the Sages unfit. A bald man (*kere'ach*) is unfit. Who is "bald"? Anyone without a row of hair running around from ear to ear; if he has one, he is fit.

2. How the two blemish lists are shared: a *gezeirah shavah* 43a

QUESTION. Why should "these blemishes" be shared? The animal list includes the wart (*yabelet*, Vayikra 22:22), which the Torah does not mention for a person; and the kohen's list includes *dak* and *tevalul*, eye conditions (Vayikra 21:20), which are not written for animals.

Rashi – ד"ה ותו דק תבלול

THE ISSUE. The animal list in the previous chapter included many items not written in the Torah. Why does the Gemara single out *dak* and *tevalul*?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. The others, such as damaged palate ridges or a tail that does not reach the knee joint, come from the general phrase "any bad blemish." But *dak* and *tevalul* are spelled out for a person and not for an animal, which suggests the Torah deliberately did not apply them to animals.

WHY IT MATTERS. The question is not merely "where is the source?" but "the Torah's silence seems intentional," which is why a formal derivation is needed.

ANSWER. מילף ילפי מהדדי: the two lists are learned from each other. A baraita: for a person, a wart is not stated; for an animal, *dak* and *tevalul* are not stated. How do we apply each list to the other? The Torah says גרב (*garav*, a dry scab) and ילפת (*yalefet*, a lichen-like rash) in both passages, גרב גרב ילפת ילפת לגזירה שוה: the identical words create a *gezeirah shavah*, a textual link that makes the two lists one.

WHY THE WORDS MUST BE "FREE." A *gezeirah shavah* must use a word that is *mufneh* (מופנה), superfluous in its own context, for otherwise the analogy can be refuted by pointing to a difference between the two subjects. Here it could be refuted both ways: a person cannot learn from an animal, since an animal itself is offered on the altar (and so is held to a stricter standard); and an animal cannot learn from a person, since a person has more commandments.

IS IT FREE? Yes. The Torah could have written only *yalefet*, and I would reason: if *yalefet*, which is not repulsive, is a blemish, then *garav*, which is repulsive, certainly is. Why then write *garav*? To leave it free for the analogy.

Tosafot – ד"ה גרב דכתב רחמנא ל"ל למעוטי

QUESTION. *Garav* is not superfluous: on 41a Rava used it to teach that a groove in the flesh (*charutz* not on a bone) is not a blemish. Moreover, even granting that one of the two pairs is extra (there are two *garav*s and two *yalefet*s, one in each passage), it would be free only on one side, and some hold (Bava Kamma 25b) that such an analogy can be refuted. And the baraita says "*garav garav, yalefet yalefet*," as though all four words served the analogy.

ANSWER. Rava's derivation does not take away the word's freedom here, because under that derivation *garav* is not needed for its own content at all; it is there only to teach about *charutz* in the flesh.

WHY THIS MATTERS. Tosafot reconcile two uses of the same word: a word can carry a teaching and still count as "free" when the teaching does not depend on its literal meaning.

3. Why not one combined list? "Repeated for the new detail" 43a

QUESTION. Let the Torah write all the blemishes in one place, put *garav* and *yalefet* in both, and let us learn the other subject from it!

ANSWER. In which place? Had it written them all for a person, I would say that whatever disqualifies a person disqualifies an animal, but a single (uncloven) hoof (*kalut*) and damaged palate ridges (*chutin*), which do not exist in a person, would not disqualify an animal. Had it written all for an animal, I would say that the *gibben* and *charum*, which do not exist in animals, would not disqualify a person.

Rashi – ד"ה גבן וחרום ליתנהו בבהמה · ד"ה קלוט וחוטין דליתנהו באדם

THE ISSUE. Why could these blemishes not exist in the other subject?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. A person has no cloven hoof; and a person has upper teeth that hide the palate ridges, whereas an animal, which lacks upper front teeth, shows them, so damage to them is visible. The *gibben* concerns eyebrows (Rashi gives the Old French word for them), which animals lack, and the *charum* has no nose bridge between the eyes, which an animal does not have.

WHY IT MATTERS. Each list contains items that are physically impossible in the other subject, so neither list could be the "master list."

Tosafot – ד"ה גבן וחרום דלא איתנהו בבהמה

QUESTION. Later in the chapter, R. Chanina ben Antigonus defines the *gibben* as one with two backs and two spines, which an animal could have.

ANSWER. The Gemara speaks according to the first Tanna, who explains *gibben* as concerning the eyebrows. For the same reason it does not mention the crushed testicle, which R. Chanina ben Antigonus defines differently; the Gemara is not speaking according to him.

WHY THIS MATTERS. The Gemara's examples depend on definitions that are themselves disputed later on the daf.

FURTHER QUESTION. Then let the Torah write everything in one place, write the items absent in that subject in the other place, and write *garav* and *yalefet* in both so that each learns from the other!

ANSWER. The Torah did as the school of R. Yishmael taught: כל פרשה שנאמרה ונשנית לא נשנית אלא בשביל דבר שנתחדש בה, "every passage that is stated and then repeated is repeated only for the sake of something new in it." Rashi: here the new elements are the *gibben* and *charum* in a person, and the single hoof and palate ridges in an animal. The repetition of the common blemishes is simply the Torah's style when presenting a passage that contains new material.

4. Rava: why blemishes are written three times 43a

Rava asks: why did the Torah write that a blemish disqualifies in three settings: a kohen, consecrated offerings (*kodashim*, Vayikra 22) and the firstborn (Devarim 15:21)?

ONE FROM ONE. They are all needed. Had the Torah written only the kohen, one could say it is because he is subject to more commandments. A kohen cannot be learned from the firstborn, since the firstborn itself is offered on the altar. Offerings cannot be learned from the firstborn, since its sanctity is from the womb. A kohen cannot be learned from offerings, since they themselves are offered; and the firstborn cannot be learned from offerings, since their sanctity is greater (Rashi: sin, guilt, burnt and peace offerings are of a higher order, just as a person is "greater" in commandments).

ONE FROM TWO. Then derive one from the other two! Which would the Torah omit? If the firstborn, to be learned from the others: they have greater sanctity and apply to non-firstborns too. If offerings: the other two have sanctity on their own (from birth, not by an act of consecration). If the kohen: the other two are themselves offered on the altar. **CONCLUSION.** All three are needed.

Tosafot – ד"ה למה לי דכתב רחמנא מום באדם מום בבכור מום בקדשים צריכי כו'

QUESTION. If the three settings cannot be derived from one another, how do we know for kohanim and offerings that every visible, permanent blemish disqualifies? That principle was derived for the firstborn (37a) from a "general and specific" reading of its own verse. Likewise, the kohen's blemishes that are not written for the firstborn and do not come from "any bad blemish," such as *dak* and *tevalul*.

ANSWER. הואיל דגלי גלי: since the Torah revealed in each setting that blemishes disqualify, it revealed it, and the details of which defects count can be shared.

WHY THIS MATTERS. Rava's argument proves only that the basic law must be stated in each place; it does not prevent the lists from sharing details, which is exactly what the *gezeirah shavah* above accomplished.

5. "Resembling the seed of Aharon": three levels of disqualification 43a–43b

SOURCE. "A person has more": from where? R. Yochanan: the verse says כל איש אשר בו מום מזרע אהרן (Vayikra 21:21), read as איש ששוה בזרעו של אהרן, "a man who is equal to the seed of Aharon." Rashi: only one who otherwise looks like Aharon's descendants needs an actual blemish to be disqualified; one who does not resemble them is disqualified even without a blemish.

BLEMISH VERSUS "NOT RESEMBLING." What is the difference between a blemish and one who does not resemble the seed of Aharon? Whether he desecrates the service. A blemish desecrates it, as it says, "he has a blemish … and he shall not desecrate" (Vayikra 21:23): service performed by a blemished kohen is invalid. One who does not resemble the seed of Aharon does not desecrate the service.

"NOT RESEMBLING" VERSUS "APPEARANCE." What is the difference between one who does not resemble and one disqualified because of appearance (מראית העין)? A positive commandment.

Rashi – ד"ה עשה · ד"ה משום מראית העין

THE ISSUE. What are the categories, and what is the "positive commandment"?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. "Appearance" refers to cases later in the Mishnah, such as one whose eyelashes fell out or whose teeth were removed, who are unpleasant to look at. One who does not resemble the seed of Aharon transgresses a positive commandment if he serves, for the verse implies "one who resembles the seed of Aharon shall be a kohen and serve," and one who does not shall not serve. A prohibition derived from a positive statement has the force of a positive commandment.

WHY IT MATTERS. This yields a clear ladder: a blemish (service invalid); not resembling (service valid, but he violated a positive commandment); appearance (a rabbinic-level concern, no commandment violated).

6. The head shapes and the hunchback 43b

The Gemara defines the Mishnah's terms, mostly by comparison with everyday objects:

KILON. His head resembles an *akhla*; Rashi: a barrel lid, narrow at the top and wide below. **LIFTAN.** His head resembles a turnip head (wide on top, tapering below); a baraita adds that his neck stands in the middle of his head (Rashi: the head bulges behind as much as in front). **MAKABAN.** His head resembles a *makaba*, a mallet or axe head (Rashi: rounded and narrow at the back). **SHAKUT.** Flattened in front (Rashi: slanting diagonally). **SEKIFAT.** Flattened behind, as people say, "a piece was taken off." A baraita adds that his neck is *shakut* or *shamut*: *shakut*, sunk in (Rashi: the head rests between the shoulders); *shamut*, long and drooping.

HUNCHBACKS: WHAT IS THE DISPUTE? If the hump contains bone, all agree he is unfit. They disagree where it has no bone: one master (the Sages) holds that he does not resemble the seed of Aharon; the other (R. Yehuda) holds it is merely a lump of flesh (קרקורא דבישרא בעלמא הוא).

7. Baldness: two versions of Rava 43b

The Mishnah: a *kere'ach* is one without a row of hair from ear to ear; if he has one, he is fit. Rava's comment is reported in two versions, attached to different clauses:

FIRST VERSION (ON "A BALD MAN IS UNFIT"). This applies only where he has no hair at the back but has hair in front. If he has hair at the back he is fit, and certainly if he has it at the back but not in front.

Rashi – ד"ה אבל יש לו לאחריו ולפניו כשר וכל שכן שיש לו לאחריו ואין לו לפניו

THE ISSUE. Why is "back only" better than "back and front"?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. Hair at the back without hair in front is more attractive than hair all around the head with a bald patch in the middle.

WHY IT MATTERS. The standard is how the kohen looks, so the "all the more" runs in an unexpected direction.

SECOND VERSION (ON "IF HE HAS, HE IS FIT"). This applies only where he has a fringe at the back but none in front; if he has hair both at the back and in front, he is unfit; all the more so if he has it in front but not at the back, and certainly if he has none at all.

8. R. Yochanan: bald men, dwarfs and watery eyes 43b

STATEMENT. R. Yochanan: הקרחנין והננסין והזבלגנין פסולין לפי שאינן שוה בזרעו של אהרן, "bald men, dwarfs and those with watery eyes are unfit, because they do not resemble the seed of Aharon."

QUESTION. Bald men: our Mishnah teaches them. Dwarfs: our Mishnah teaches them (on 45b). Watery eyes: perhaps R. Yochanan needed to teach that. Rather, the point is that one might have said that the Mishnah disqualifies them only because of appearance.

REJECTION. But wherever appearance is the reason, the Mishnah says so: "one whose eyelashes fell out is unfit because of appearance." Perhaps it said it once and the same holds for all? But wherever there is another such case it repeats it: "one whose teeth were removed is unfit because of appearance" (44a). So the Mishnah's other disqualifications are not merely "appearance."

CONCLUSION. R. Yochanan comes to exclude the view of a baraita: "bald men, dwarfs and those with watery eyes are fit; they said 'unfit' only because of appearance." Which Tanna is that? R. Yehuda, as a baraita teaches: R. Yehuda says, "*the kohanim*" (Vayikra 1:5) comes to include bald men (Rashi: as fit for service; found in Torat Kohanim).

Rashi – ד"ה לאפוקי מהאי תנא אתא · ד"ה ומהו דתימא כו'

THE ISSUE. If the Mishnah already lists these men, what does R. Yochanan add?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. He teaches the reason: the Mishnah disqualifies them as "not resembling the seed of Aharon," so one who serves transgresses a positive commandment, not merely a concern for appearance. In doing so he rules that the halacha follows our Mishnah, against the Tanna who disqualifies them only for appearance.

WHY IT MATTERS. The practical difference between the two lower levels of section 5 is exactly what R. Yochanan decides here.

9. The *gibben* 43b

MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 43b)

אין לו גבינין או אין לו אלא גבין אחד, זהו גבן האמור בתורה. רבי דוסא אומר שגבינין שוכבין. רבי חנינא בן אנטיגנוס אומר שיש לו שני גבין ושתי שדראות.

One who has no eyebrows, or only one eyebrow: this is the *gibben* mentioned in the Torah (Vayikra 21:20). R. Dosa says: one whose eyebrows lie down (Rashi: the brow hair is long and hangs over his face). R. Chanina ben Antigonus says: one who has two backs and two spines.

CONTRADICTION. Does *gibben* imply "having none"? A baraita says: a *gibben* is one with many eyebrows (Rashi: the two eyebrows run together with no gap); one with no eyebrows or only one, from where? The verse says "*or* a *gibben*."

RESOLUTION. Rava: זהו מדרש או גבן: our Mishnah's case is the derivation from "or a *gibben*." Rashi: the Mishnah means "this too is the *gibben* of the Torah," via the extra "or"; R. Dosa disagrees and does not expound "or."

A CHALLENGE TO R. CHANINA BEN ANTIGONUS. Does this mean such a person lives? But it was stated: if a woman miscarries a creature with two backs and two spines, Rav said that in a woman it is not a child (Rashi: she does not have the impurity of childbirth), and in an animal it is forbidden to eat (Rashi: like a *neveilah*, since it is a non-viable *nefel*, and slaughter does not help).

ANSWER. Rav Shimi bar Chiya had already raised this against Rav, who replied: "You are Shimi!", meaning a scholar like you should know the answer: the Mishnah speaks of one whose spine is crooked, so that it looks like two.

Tosafot – ד"ה בבהמה אסור באכילה

QUESTION. Rashi explained that slaughter does not help because it is a *nefel*, implying the animal was born into the world. That is impossible: in Niddah 24a this case is set where the creature was found inside its mother, and Rav forbids it even with its mother's slaughter while Shmuel permits it; if it had emerged into the world, even Shmuel would forbid it. Rashi there explained that Rav Shimi's challenge was directed at both Rav and Shmuel.

ANSWER. Rabbeinu Tam objected that our Mishnah is about a person, not an animal; the challenge is only against Rav, who says that in a woman "it is not a child," meaning it does not live, whereas our Mishnah disqualifies such a person from the service, implying he lives. The Gemara's wording also shows the challenge is only to Rav.

WHY THIS MATTERS. Tosafot identify the true contradiction: viability. A Mishnah about disqualifying a kohen assumes a living man, while Rav's ruling assumes such a creature cannot live; hence the answer "a crooked spine."

10. The *charum* and other eye defects 43b–44a

MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 43b)

החרום פסול. איזהו חרום? הכוחל שתי עיניו כאחת. שתי עיניו למעלה ושתי עיניו למטה, עינו אחת למעלה ועינו אחת למטה, רואה את החדר ואת העלייה כאחד, סכי שמש, והזגדן והצירן, ושנשרו ריסי עיניו, פסול מפני מראית העין.

The *charum* is unfit. Who is a *charum*? One who paints both his eyes at once (Rashi: he has no nose bridge between his eyes, so the eye-paint brush passes from eye to eye unobstructed). Also unfit: one whose eyes are both high, or both low, or one high and one low; who sees the room and the attic at once; who is *sechei shemesh* (Rashi: cannot look toward the sun); the *zagdan* and the *tziran* (defined on 44a); and one whose eyelashes fell out, who is unfit because of appearance (Rashi: this phrase refers only to the eyelashes).

Tosafot – ד"ה ושנשרו ממנו ריסי עיניו · ד"ה סכי שמש

CLARIFICATION. The Gemara (on 44a) reads *senei shemesh*, "one who hates the sun," who cannot look where the sun shines; *sechei* means one "deprived" of sunlight. As for *risei einav*: here it means the hairs that tend to fall out from much weeping (as in the story of Rabban Gamliel in Sanhedrin 104b), while elsewhere (38a) *ris* means the skin surrounding the eye.

WHY THIS MATTERS. The same term can denote different body parts in different Mishnayot; context determines which.

THE BARAITA. *Charum* is one whose nose is sunken. A nose that is upturned (Rashi: short), blocked (Rashi: nostrils closed) or overhanging (Rashi: long, hanging below the lip), from where? The verse says "*or* a *charum*." R. Yosi says: *charum* is only one who paints both eyes at once. The Sages said to him: הפלגת, "you have gone too far" (Rashi: you have exaggerated); even if he cannot paint both eyes at once (because the bridge is not that sunken), he is a *charum*.

The baraita ends at the top of 44a. The Gemara then turns to the Mishnah's next phrase, "both eyes high," which begins the summary of Bekhorot 44.

The full picture in plain language

The new chapter shifts from animals to kohanim, and the daf's first task is structural: if the Torah gives one list of blemishes for animals and another for kohanim, how can the Mishnah say "these blemishes" apply to both? The answer is a *gezeirah shavah* on two shared words, made secure by showing one of them is superfluous. That raises the opposite question, why the Torah wrote two lists at all, answered by R. Yishmael's principle that a repeated passage exists for its new details. Rava's parallel discussion shows that the bare law of blemishes had to be written separately for kohanim, offerings and the firstborn, since each has a feature the others lack.

The kohen's extra disqualifications rest on a different idea: he must look like "the seed of Aharon." The Gemara distinguishes three levels, true blemishes, "not resembling," and "appearance," and the rest of the daf sorts cases into them: misshapen heads, hunchbacks (disputed by R. Yehuda), baldness (two versions of Rava), and R. Yochanan's ruling that bald men, dwarfs and men with watery eyes fall into the middle level, against R. Yehuda.

Finally, two Mishnayot define the Torah's *gibben* and *charum*. For the *gibben*, the Gemara reconciles definitions through the extra word "or," and squares R. Chanina ben Antigonus's "two spines" with Rav's ruling that such a creature cannot live by reading it as a crooked spine. For the *charum*, a baraita widens the category to various nose defects, and the Sages reject R. Yosi's narrower definition.

Glossary

Hebrew	Transliteration	Meaning in this sugya
מום	*mum*	A blemish. In a kohen it disqualifies him from service, and service he performs is invalid ("desecrated").
שוה בזרעו של אהרן	*shaveh be-zar'o shel Aharon*	"Resembling the seed of Aharon." One who does not is disqualified without a blemish; if he serves he violates a positive commandment, but the service is valid.
מראית העין	*mar'it ha-ayin*	"Appearance": a lower-level disqualification for features unpleasant to see, such as fallen eyelashes or missing teeth.
גזירה שוה	*gezeirah shavah*	A textual analogy: identical words in two passages link their laws. Here *garav* and *yalefet* link the animal and kohen blemish lists.
גרב, ילפת	*garav, yalefet*	Skin conditions listed among blemishes for both kohanim and animals; *garav* is described as harder and more repulsive.
דק, תבלול	*dak, tevalul*	Eye conditions written only for kohanim (Vayikra 21:20); applied to animals through the analogy.
קלוט	*kalut*	An animal with an uncloven hoof; a blemish that cannot occur in a person.
כילון, לפתן, מקבן	*kilon, liftan, makaban*	Misshapen heads: shaped like a barrel lid, a turnip, or a mallet head.
שקוט, סקיפת	*shakut, sekifat*	A head flattened in front, or flattened behind.
בעלי חטרות	*ba'alei chatarot*	Hunchbacks. All agree a bony hump disqualifies; R. Yehuda permits one of flesh only.
קרח	*kere'ach*	A bald man without a fringe of hair from ear to ear; disqualified.
ננס	*nanas*	A dwarf; disqualified as "not resembling the seed of Aharon" (R. Yochanan).
זבלגן	*zevalgan*	One whose eyes constantly run with water.
גבן	*gibben*	A kohen's blemish (Vayikra 21:20); per the Mishnah, one with no eyebrows or only one; other Tannaim define it differently.
חרום	*charum*	One with no nose bridge between the eyes; by the baraita, also a sunken, upturned, blocked or overhanging nose.
ריסי עיניו	*risei einav*	Here, the eyelashes; one whose eyelashes fell out is disqualified because of appearance.

Sources: Gemara with relevant Rashi and Tosafot.