



Volume 5. Issue 23

## External Blemishes

The sixth *perek* of *Mashechet Bechorot* discusses the various blemishes that would render a *bechor* fit for slaughtering. The *perek* begins by discussing those blemishes that occur in the ear, then moves on to those in the eye and only then begin discussing those blemishes which are found in the nose and the mouth. Following on from the theme of blemishes the seventh *perek* focuses on the various blemishes that render a *Kohen* unfit for service in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*.

This period of time in the Jewish calendar is specifically designated for Man to undertake a *cheshbon hanefesh* and rid himself of any “blemishes” that may be tainting him. One of the essential requirements of doing *Teshuva* is undertaking *vidui* (confession). In the *nusach* of our *Tefillot* this process is done by striking our heart and mentioning the passages beginning with “*Al Chet SheChatanu Lefanecha.*”

R' Moshe Rosenshtein, quoted in the *sefer Darchei Mussar* proposes an interesting idea. He explains that the *ikar* of our *vidui* is that we mention that we have sinned in front of G-d (*Lefanecha*). The only reason why we are able to enumerate all our sins in detail is due to this fact that we find ourselves in a position of having accepted upon ourselves the concept of serving G-d. In our *vidui* we are admitting that we wish to come close to G-d for that is what we were created for, however, due to our shortcomings, we have slipped along the way. It is through this *vidui* that we are able to come closer to *Hashem*. This is the idea of mentioning the sins that we have done “*lefanacha*” – in front of G-d. For if we were distant to *Hakodesh Baruch Hu* - then there would be no advantage of mentioning any details as we would only be guilty of one general sin – that of being distant from *Hashem*!

This idea can be compared to that of a soldier who is serving in the army of the king. All the while that he

is in the king's service he must be careful to wear his full uniform. If he is missing even a button or his shoes are not shined, he will be punished. However, if he flees from the army and takes off the uniform – he will not be penalised for this minor detail. This is because in this instance he will be punished for the more serious charge of abandoning the army – the details of his minor charges are insignificant in the face of his main transgression. This parable mirrors the relationship between man and G-d. If he understands and feels that he is standing before *Hashem* and accepts the yoke of heaven upon himself then there is reason for him to list his sins in detail. However, if he is distant from *Hashem* there is no purpose to him detailing his sins because he is guilty of the far greater sin of abandonment.

In his *vidui*, *Rabbeinu Nissim Gaon* states:

*Ribbono shel Olam*, if I were to stand here and enumerate my sins, the time would run out, however my sins would not run out.

How could *Rabbeinu Nissim* have so many sins? According to this *understanding* in the *Darchei Mussar*, the fact that *Rabbeinu Nissim* was constantly involved in the service of *Hashem* and was so close to Him, was the exact reason why he could go into such detail about his sins. However, for those people who are not on that level must first get to the point where they feel “*lefanacha*” – ‘in front’ of *Hashem*. This means that first a person must feel that they are close to *Hashem*, only afterward can they go into the details of their sins. This is the effect of *Yom Kippur*. On *Yom Kippur* we are on the level of *Malachim*, and since we have come close to *Hashem*, it is only fitting that we then begin to mention our sins in detail and with the *nussach* “*al chet shechatanu lefanecha.*”

*Gmar chatima tova.*

*Yehuda Gottlieb*

**Revision Questions**

בכורות ו' ב' – ז' ג'

- Name 3 types of *mumin* of the eyelid? (ו' ב')
- What is the meaning of the term *tevalul*? (ו' ב')
- According to R' Haninah ben Antigonus, how many times must a watery eye be examined in an eighty day period? (ו' ג')
- What food must be eaten in order to prove that water in they eye is a lasting blemish? (ו' ג')
- Is a pierced nose on an animal considered a blemish? (ו' ד')
- Explain the machloket between Tanna Kamma and R' Haninah ben Antigonus 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 that are blemishes in a case where they need not be measured? (ו' י')
- To which part of the animals 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"ז)
- How does the *Mishnah* define someone who is termed 'bald'? (ו' י"ב)
- What is a *harum*? (ו' ג')
- If one's eyelashes have fallen out is this considered a blemish? (ו' ג')

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**Sunday -Thursday**  
Between mincha & ma'ariv  
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**Friday & Shabbat**  
10 minutes before mincha  
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**Next Week's Mishnayot...**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
5 <sup>th</sup> October ו' תשרי	6 <sup>th</sup> October ז' תשרי	7 <sup>th</sup> October ח' תשרי	8 <sup>th</sup> October ט' תשרי	9 <sup>th</sup> October י' תשרי <b>יום כיפור</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> October י"א תשרי	11 <sup>th</sup> October י"ב תשרי
Bechorot 7:4-5	Bechorot 7:6-7	Bechorot 8:1-2	Bechorot 8:3-4	Bechorot 8:5-6	Bechorot 8:7-8	Bechorot 8:9:10

