

Parsha Plug: Parshat Emor

Vayikra 22:17-25	ויקרא כב:יז-כה
<p>17 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 18 Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the children of Israel and say to them: Any man whatsoever from the house of Israel or from the strangers among Israel who offers up his sacrifice for any of their vows or for any of their donations that they may offer up to the Lord as a burnt offering 19 to be favorable for you, [it shall be] an unblemished, male, from cattle, from sheep, or from goats. 20 Any [animal] that has a blemish, you shall not offer up, for it will not be favorable for you. 21 And if a man offers up a peace offering to the Lord for declaring a vow or as a donation from cattle or from the flock to be accepted, it shall be unblemished. It shall not have any defect in it. 22 [An animal that has] blindness, or [a] broken [bone], or [a] split [eyelid or lip], or [one that has] warts, or dry lesions or weeping sores you shall not offer up [any of] these to the Lord, nor shall you place [any] of these as a fire offering upon the altar to the Lord. 23 As for an ox or sheep that has mismatching limbs or uncloven hooves you may make it into a donation, but as a vow, it will not be accepted. 24 [Any animal whose testicles were] squashed, crushed, pulled out, or severed, you shall not offer up to the Lord, and in your land, you shall not do [it]. 25 And from the hand of a gentile you shall not offer up as food for your God any of these [blemished animals], for their injury is upon them, there is a defect on them; they will not be accepted for you.</p>	<p>יז וַיְדַבֵּר ה', אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. יח דַּבֵּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בְּנָיו, וְאֶל כָּל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ, אֲלֵהֶם: אִישׁ אִישׁ מִבֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִן-הַגֵּר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיב קָרְבָּנוֹ לְכָל-גְּדֻרֵיהֶם וְלְכָל-גְּדֻבוֹתָם, אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרִיבוּ לָהּ, לְעֹלָה. יט לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם: תָּמִים זָכָר--בְּבָקָר, בְּכֹשֵׁבִים וּבְעִזִּים. כ כל אֲשֶׁר-בוֹ מוּם, לֹא תִקְרִיבוּ: כִּי-לֹא לְרִצּוֹן, יִהְיֶה לָכֶם. כא וְאִישׁ, כִּי-יִקְרִיב זֶבַח-שְׁלָמִים לָהּ, לְפֶלֶא-גֹדֵר אוֹ לְגְדֻבָּהּ, בְּבָקָר אוֹ בַצֹּאן--תָּמִים יִהְיֶה לְרִצּוֹן, כָּל-מוּם לֹא יִהְיֶה-בוֹ. כב עֹוֹרֹת אוֹ שְׂבוּר אוֹ-חֲרוּץ אוֹ-יִבֶלֶת, אוֹ גֶרֶב אוֹ יִלְפַת--לֹא-תִקְרִיבוּ אֵלֶיהָ, לָהּ; וְאִשָּׁה, לֹא-תִתְּנוּ מֵהֶם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ--לָהּ. כג וְשׁוֹר וְשֵׂה, שְׂרוּעַ וְקָלוּט--גְּדֻבָּה תַעֲשֶׂה אֹתוֹ, וְלֹגְדָר לֹא יִרְצֶה. כד וּמַעֲוֹךְ וְכַתּוּת וְנִתּוּק וְכָרוּת, לֹא תִקְרִיבוּ לָהּ; וּבְאֲרֻצְכֶם, לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: כה וּמִיד בֶּן-נֶכֶר, לֹא תִקְרִיבוּ אֹת-לֶחֶם אֱלֹקֵיכֶם--מִכָּל-אֵלֶיהָ: כִּי מִשְׁחַתֶּם בָּהֶם מוּם בָּם, לֹא יִרְצוּ לָכֶם.</p>

Rashi on Vayikra 22:19, 25	רש"י על ויקרא כב:יט, כה
<p>To be favorable for you: “Bring Me something that is worthy to appease for you before Me, that will make you favorable before Me.” And what is worthy of attaining God’s appeasement? An unblemished, male, from cattle, from sheep, or from goats: But with burnt-offerings of birds, no unblemished or male [birds] are required, and it is not rendered invalid if it has a defect unless a limb is missing. From the hand of a gentile: If a non-Jew brought a sacrifice and handed it over to the kohen to offer it up to Heaven, you shall not offer up on his behalf any blemished animal. And even though blemished animals are not deemed invalid as sacrifices from the children of Noah unless they have a limb missing--that applies to private altars in the fields. However, on the altar in the Mishkan, you shall not offer them up. You shall, however, accept an unblemished animal from them. That is why the Torah says “Any man whatsoever,” to include non-Jews, who make vows and donations like Israelites.</p>	<p>יט: לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם: הֵבִיאוּ דָבָר הָרָאוּי לְרִצּוֹן אֲתֶכֶם לִפְנֵי, שִׂיחָא לָכֶם לְרִצּוֹן אִפִּימְנִי"ט בְּלַע"ז [פִּיּוּס]. וְאִיזוּהוּ הָרָאוּי לְרִצּוֹן: תָּמִים זָכָר בְּבָקָר בְּכֹשֵׁבִים וּבְעִזִּים: אֲבָל בַּעֲלוֹת הָעוֹף אֵין צָרִיךְ תְּמוֹת וְזָכוּרֹת, וְאִינּוּ נִפְסַל בְּמוּם אֲלֵא בַחֲסָרוֹן אֲבָר: כה: וּמִיד בֶּן נֶכֶר: נִכְרִי שֶׁהֵבִיא קָרְבָּן בְּיַד כֹּהֵן לְהַקְרִיבוֹ לְשָׁמַיִם לֹא תִקְרִיבוּ לוֹ בְּעַל מוּם. וְאִף עַל פִּי שֶׁלֹא נִאֲסָרוּ בְּעֵלֵי מוּמִין לְקָרְבָּן בְּנֵי נֹחַ אֲלֵא אִם כֵּן מִחוֹסְרֵי אֲבָר, זֹאת נוֹהֶגֶת בְּבִמָּה שְׁבַשְׁדוֹת, אֲבָל עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ שְׁבַמִּשְׁכָּן לֹא תִקְרִיבוּהָ, אֲבָל תְּמִימָה תִקְבְּלוּ מֵהֶם, לָכֵן נֹאמַר לְמַעַלְהָ אִישׁ אִישׁ (לְעִיל פְּסוּק יח), לְרַבּוֹת אֵת הַנִּכְרִים שְׁנוֹדְרִים גְּדֻרִים וְגְדֻבוֹת כִּישְׂרָאֵל:</p>

<p>Masechet Temurah 6b</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת תמורה דף ו עמוד ב</p>
<p>Our Rabbis taught: A person who dedicates blemished animals for the altar is guilty on all five counts: for transgressing the prohibitory laws with reference to offering, to dedicating, killing, sprinkling and burning wholly or partly. They said in the name of R. Yossi b'R. Yehudah: [He is guilty] also of the receiving of the blood.</p>	<p>...אמרו: המקדיש בעלי מומין לגבי מזבח, עובר משום חמשה שמות; משום בל תקריבו בל תקדישו בל תשחטו ומשום בל תזרקו ומשום בל תקטירו כולו, ומשום בל תקטירו מקצתו משום ר' יוסי בר' יהודה אמרו: אף קבלת הדם:</p>
<p>Seforno on Vayikra 22:19</p>	<p>ספורנו על ויקרא כב:יט</p>
<p>Male without blemish: The sacrifice must be perfect without blemish for the Rock, His work is perfect (Devarim 32:4). Therefore He desires perfection.</p>	<p>תמים זכר. שיהיה תמים כפי אמנם הצור תמים פעלו ותמים ירצה.</p>
<p>Bereshit 6:9</p>	<p>בראשית ו:ט</p>
<p>These are the generations of Noah, Noah was a righteous man he was perfect in his generations; Noah walked with God.</p>	<p>אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדֵי נֹחַ נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֹתָיו אֶת־הָאֱלֹקִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ־נֹחַ:</p>
<p>Bereshit 17:1</p>	<p>בראשית יז:א</p>
<p>And Avram was ninety-nine years old, and God appeared to Avram, and He said to him, "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me and be perfect."</p>	<p>וַיְהִי אַבְרָם בְּרִי־תֵשַׁעִים שָׁנָה וַתֵּשַׁע שָׁנָיִם וַיֵּרָא ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי־קָל שְׂדֵי הַתְּהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי וְהָיָה תָּמִים:</p>
<p>Devarim 18:13</p>	<p>דברים יח:יג</p>
<p>Be תמים with the Lord, your God.</p>	<p>תָּמִים תְּהִיָּה עִם ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ:</p>
<p>Ramban on Devarim 18:13</p>	<p>רמב"ן על דברים יח:יג</p>
<p>The meaning of "Be תמים with the Lord, your God": We should unite our hearts to Him alone, and we should believe that He alone does all and he knows the truth of what will be...[Do not consult the planets or the dead]...For His creation will not be lacking, as תמים is the fullness of the matter, like "a lamb without blemish", that does not have a defect or lacking. This is a positive mitzvah.</p>	<p>וטעם תמים תהיה עם ה' אלקיך - שנייחד לבבנו אליו לבדו, ונאמין שהוא לבדו עושה כל והוא היודע אמתת כל עתיד...שלא תהיה חסר ביראתו, כי "תמים" הוא השלם בדבר, כמו שה תמים (שמות יב ה) שאין בו מום ושום חסרון. וזו מצות עשה.</p>

Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch on Vayikra 22:18

לְכֹל-נִדְרֵיהֶם וְלִכְל-נִדְבוֹתָם: Here the more precise details of the *mumim* law are given for free-will offerings and apply all the more to duty offerings. Even where there is no consciousness of previous lack of attention to duty in life, the representation of devoting the whole of one's life to duty (תמים) is demanded. This alone makes one worthy to come near to God, as it is just the devotion of one's life in its entirety which is adequate to the expression of this demand. It alone is the purest and most direct corollary to the oneness of God: the complete unity of life for the complete oneness of God.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Two Types of Hero: Naso 5774*

According to Maimonides, there is not one model of the virtuous life, but two. He calls them respectively the way of the saint (Hassid) and the sage (Hakham). The saint is a person of extremes. Maimonides defines hessed as extreme behaviour — good behaviour, to be sure, but conduct in excess of what strict justice requires (Guide for the Perplexed III, 52). So, for example, “If one avoids haughtiness to the utmost extent and becomes exceedingly humble, he is termed a saint (hassid)” (Hilkhot Deot 1: 5). The sage is a different kind of person altogether. He follows the “golden mean”, the “middle way”, the way of moderation and balance. He or she avoids the extremes of cowardice on the one hand, recklessness on the other, and thus acquires the virtue of courage...These are not just two types of person but two ways of understanding the moral life itself. Is the aim of the moral life to achieve personal perfection? Or is it to create gracious relationships and a decent, just, compassionate society? The intuitive answer of most people would be to say: both. That is what makes Maimonides so acute a thinker on this subject. He realises that you can't have both – that they are in fact different enterprises...Maimonides lived the life he preached. We know from his writings that he longed for seclusion. There were years when he worked day and night to write his Commentary to the Mishnah, and later the Mishneh Torah. Yet he also recognised his responsibilities to his family and to the community. In his famous letter to his would-be translator Ibn Tibbon, he gives him an account of his typical day and week – in which he had to carry a double burden as a world-renowned physician and an internationally sought halakhist and sage. He worked to exhaustion; there were times when he was almost too busy to study from one week to the next. Maimonides was a sage who longed to be a saint – but knew he could not be, if he was to honour his responsibilities to his people. That seems to me a profound and moving judgment – and one that speaks to us today.

Rabbanit Devorah Zlochower, *The Problem with Perfection*

As we read through the list of *mumim* disqualifying *kohanim* from the Temple service and the list of *mumim* disqualifying animals from being brought as sacrifices, we are struck by the overwhelming similarity of these lists, but there is an important difference. There is a term that appears a number of times in the animal blemishes but that does not appear in the *kohen* list. We are told that the animal needs to be *tamim*, which is usually translated as “perfect.” The word *tamim* is absent from the section dealing with human *mumim*; only the sacrificial animal is described as *tamim*. With all the emphasis on the disqualifying *mumim*, the *kohen* is still not mandated to be *tamim*...So what does it mean to be *tamim* in one's devotion or service to God? Ramban, connecting the passage in Devarim to God's command to

Avraham, tells us that it means to believe in God alone as omnipotent, or to paraphrase further, that we should believe in God's perfection and God's alone. We humans are not perfect beings; we have our flaws. We are to seek perfection in God alone. In our communal life, our schools, and our *shuls* we are to be Godlike, but in the sense of imitating God's qualities, not in the vain pursuit of perfection: humans see with the eyes, God sees the heart (Shmuel I 16:7). We need to see beyond what our eyes see and into the heart, into the preciousness of each soul. When we look at each other, we need to remember, "How precious is the human being who has been created in the image of God" (Avot 3:14). Our service to God and our life as a community is enriched when we embrace all of our varieties. Perfection and flawlessness is for animals being brought upon the altar. We need to serve God in all our particulars. Only then can we form a community doing God's will *b'leivav shalem*, with a whole heart.