

The *Daf* deals with the first *halacha* of the *Mishna* - that a woman who emits *shichvas zerah* within the three days following marital relations is *tamei*. This *halacha* is derived from the *pasuk* directing *Klal Yisrael* to prepare for *Matan Torah* by refraining from relations for three days to avoid a scenario whereby they could emit *zerah* and be *tamei* at the time of *Matan Torah*. This concern demonstrates that *zerah* inside of a woman is considered fresh and capable of transmitting *tumah* for three days.

The *Gemara* points out a contradiction, inasmuch as this *halacha* of the *Mishna* is contrary to the opinion of *Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya*, while the *Mishna's* second *halacha* (relating to bathing of a newborn child on *Shabbos*) is in accordance with the opinion of *Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya*. The *Gemara* offers two answers, depending on the manner in which we approach conflicting *mishnayos*. One answer attributes the conflicting views within the *Mishna* to different *Tana'im*. The other tries to avoid the necessity of doing that and prefers instead to restate the *Mishna's halacha* and say that the woman emitting *zerah* is *tahor*, thereby aligning both statements of the *Mishna* with the opinion of *Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya*.

The *Gemara* presents four views as to how long *zerah* remains viable in a woman's body, and therefore capable of transmitting *tumah*:

- *Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya* holds that *zerah* can cause *tumah* on the day of relations and the next day, and a woman can become *tahor* with immersion on the third day, without any further concern that she could emit *zerah* and become *tamei*. This is consistent with the view of the *Rabanan* who maintain that *Klal Yisrael* abstained from relations on Thursday and Friday preceding *Matan Torah* and became *tahor* on Friday night in time for *Matan Torah* on *Shabbos*.
- *Rabbi Yishmael* holds that *zerah* can cause *tumah* on the day of relations and the following two days, and a woman can become *tahor* with immersion on the fourth day. This is consistent with the view of *Rabbi Yose* who maintains that *Klal Yisrael* abstained from relations on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday preceding *Matan Torah* and became *tahor* Friday night in time for *Matan Torah* on *Shabbos*.
- *Rabbi Akiva* holds that *zerah* can cause *tumah* for 60 hours following relations (five full day or night segments). This is consistent with the view of *Rabbi Yose* who maintains that *Klal Yisrael* abstained from relations on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday preceding *Matan Torah* and became *tahor* Friday night in time for *Matan Torah* on *Shabbos*, but is premised on the additional understanding that *Moshe* gave the order of separation first thing on Wednesday morning, thus leaving five segments of abstention before immersion on Friday night (and Wednesday daytime was a relevant timeframe for an instruction on abstention, as there are circumstances in which it might otherwise be acceptable for relations to occur during the daytime).
- The *Chachamim* hold that *zerah* can cause *tumah* for 72 hours following relations. This is consistent with the view (a) of *Rabbi Yose* who maintains that *Klal Yisrael* abstained from relations on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday preceding *Matan Torah*, (b) of *Rabbi Akiva* that abstinence started Wednesday morning; and (c) that the *Torah* was specifically given during the day on *Shabbos*, so that there was a full 72 hours (including Friday night) in which the woman could emit *zerah* and still be able to go to the *mikvah* before *Matan Torah*.

The preceding *halacha* represents the rule for *zerah* emitted by a woman. *Zerah* from a man, however, transmits *tumah* as long as it is moist.

The previously referenced dispute between the *Rabanan* and *Rabbi Yose* about when *Klal Yisrael* started the period of abstention centers around what day of that week was *Rosh Chodesh*. *Rabbi Yose* says *Rosh Chodesh* was Sunday, while the *Rabanan* say that *Rosh Chodesh* was Monday.

Inspiration

The *Gemara* establishes that the timeframe of separation might have resulted in members of *Klal Yisrael* being in a *Tevul Yom* status at *Matan Torah*, but that is acceptable because the *Torah* is given even to imperfect people.

The *Gemara* establishes that the *Torah* is not given at night so that it be done in a manner apparent to all. This is consistent with the teaching that we should be “*az kanamer* – strong like a leopard,” maintaining a balance whereby we are not ashamed of our religious observance.

Klal Yisrael was set up with the option go to the *mikvah* Friday night, instead of going *Shabbos* morning (according to all views other than the *Chachamim*), so that they could all be together, going forward to accept the *Torah* “*k’ish echad, b’lev echad*,” in a unified manner, and not having a scenario where some are going to receive the *Torah* and others to the *mikvah*. Incidentally, it does not require one unified opinion, just one unified heart.

In querying whether the halacha is the same for a non-Jewish woman or animal emitting Jewish *zerah*, the *Gemara* establishes that a Jew’s worry for doing *mitzvos* causes the body to be hotter. *Rav Levi Yitzchak M’Berditzhev* says that the concept from *Chanukah* of *Hadlaka Oseh Mitzvah* (the lighting is what fulfills the mitzvah) applies also to all mitzvos – to do the mitzvah properly, it should fiery and warm.