



The Colors of Blood

The *Mishnah* (2:6-7) teaches that there are five colours (of blood) that would render a woman a *niddah*. We shall try to understand the basis of this definitive list.

The *Sefer HaChinnuch* (207) explains that the *Chachamim* understood that any other colours would not originate from the *mekor* (uterus) and therefore would not be a source of *tumah*.¹

The *Minchat Chinnuch* (207:4) however finds the *Sefer Hachinnuch*'s explanation difficult. The *Minchat Chinnuch* cites the *Gemara* (*Nidah* 19a) that probes that source that there is *tahor* and *tameh* blood. *R' Chama bar Yosef* quoted *R' Oshaya* who cites the following *pasuk* "If a matter of judgement is hidden from you, between blood and blood" (*Devarim* 17:8). The implication is that there is discerning between different bloods, blood that is *tahor* and that which is *tameh*. The *Minchat Chinnuch* explains that *R' Oshaya* understands that that this mean even if that *tahor* blood originated from the *mekor* she would still be *tahor*. The *Minchat Chinnuch* understands that this is also the *Rambam*'s position.

The above cited *pasuk* applies relates the *zeken mamre* – the *Chacham* that continues to rule in conflict with the ruling of the *Sanhedrin* despite being warned against doing so. His behaviour would constitute a capital offence. The *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 87a) cites the debate regarding the scope of his ruling that would define him as a *zaken mamre*. *R' Meir* understands that it is only laws that would be punishable with *karet* if violated. *R' Yehuda* maintains that it would be any biblical law, while *R' Shimon* extends it to include those biblical laws derived through one of the thirteen methods.

The *Gemara* continues by explaining the above cited *pasuk* according to *R' Meir*, namely that the *pasuk* must be

referring to prohibitions punishable with *karet*. "Between blood and blood" is therefore understood to related to laws of *nidah*, *zavah* and *yoledet*. Regarding *nidah*, the *Gemara* explains that this would relate to the debate between the *Chachamim* and *R' Akavya ben Mehalalel* where the later understands that blood that is *yarok* (yellow) is *tameh*. If the *Chacham* persisted to teach in accordance with *Akavya ben Mahelalel* it could result in violating the prohibition of having relations with a *nidah*. Consider the example if a women sees *dam* that is *yarok* and a day or two later sees *dam*. Since, on biblical level a *nidah* is *tahor* seven days after the first citing, ruling that *dam yarok* is *tameh* would result in the women thinking she can go to *mikveh* earlier than the *Chachamim* understand. She would immerse seven days after seeing the *dam tahor*, understanding that she is then *tahor*, when really, she is a *nidah*. That is why a *Chacham* the continues to teach this position could be defined as a *zaken mamre*.

One might be tempted to explained that the *pasuk* cited in our *Gemara* is only according to *R' Meir* since it is according to his position that "between blood and blood" must related to the different colours of blood. According to the other opinions, since "between blood and blood" can refer to other prohibition related to blood, then there is no verse the renders shades of blood as being completely *tahor* if they originate from the *mekor*. One would then fall back on the logic of the *Sefer Hachinnuch* or *Tosfot Rid* that the reason why the five colours are listed is because the *Chachamim* understood that they do not originate from the *mekor*. The difficulty with that suggestion is the *Sefer Hachinnuch* rules like *R' Meir* in relation to the *zaken mamre*. That being the cases, it would appear the *pasuk* itself differentiates between completely *tahor* blood and *tameh* blood as the *Michnat Chinnuch* argues.

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¹ The *Tosfot Rid* (22a s.v. *Mekor*) also uses this explanation to solve a problem. The *Gemara* (22a) raises the position that the *mekor* itself is a *makom tameh*. The *Tosfot Rid* then asks, if that is the case, why is the *tahor dam* that originates from the location also not *tameh*. He answers that those *tahor* colours do not originate from the *mekor*.

Revision Questions

נידה א' – ג' – ה'

- When do we no longer say *daya sha'ata* with respect to these women? (א': א')
- What is the exception to the answer in the previous question? (א': א')
- Which *nashim* do not require *bedikot*? (א': א')
- How many *bedikot* are required? (א': א')
- Which *nashim* require additional *bedikot* and for what? (א': א')
- Is it positive to increase *bedikot*? (ב': א')
- How do *bedikot* apply to a *shota*? (ב': א')
- How many *idim* are used for *shimush*? (ב': א')
- When are they obligated to bring a *korban* with respect to these *idim*? (ב': ב')
- What time period is considered "*achar zman*" and for what is it important? (Include both opinions.) (ב': ג')
- When must the *ba'al* ask if she is a *niddah*? (ב': ד')
- What is the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding *bedikot*? (ב': ד')
- To what did the *Chachamim* apply these terms and why are they important: chamber, ante-room and attic? (ב': ה')
- What are the five *damim* that are *tameh*? Explain. (ב': ו'-ז')
- Which other *damim* are debated and by who? (ב': ו')
- What is the debate regarding a *mapelet chaticha*? (ג': א')
- What other cases share the same law? (ג': ב')
- For what things that came from a *mapelet* would a water test apply? Explain. (ג': ב')
- With respect to a *mapelet* regarding what do *R' Meir* and the *Chachamim* argue? (ג': ב')
- What is the law regarding a *mapelet shafiri*? (ג': ג')
- What is the law regarding a *mapelet*:
 - *shilya*? (Regarding what does *R' Shimon* argue?) (ג': ד')
 - *Tumtum*?
 - *Androginus* and a male?
 - *Tumtum* and a female?
 - *Mesoras*? (ג': ה')

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Nidah 3:6-7	Nidah 4:1-2	Nidah 4:3-4	Nidah 4:5-6	Nidah 4:7-5:1	Nidah 5:2-3	Nidah 5:4-5

