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## Purifying the Camp

### 5: 1-4

**Purifying the camp DIG:** What is the object lesson in these verses? What were the three areas of defilement that would cause a person to be put out of the camp? What should the modern reader be impressed with? What is especially important to see in the first ten chapters of Numbers?

**REFLECT:** What do we learn here about God's expectation for us to walk in purity before Him? Are you walking in purity before God today? Ask **ADONAI** to show you if there is anything in you that offends His presence in your life? Confess your sin and ask Him to give you complete victory over it.

**The focus now shifts from safeguarding holiness among the priesthood, to safeguarding holiness among the people.**



The preparations for beginning the march toward the Promised Land now move out from **the Tabernacle** and its Levitical and priestly personnel, to **the purity and holiness** among all **the people of Isra'el in the twelve tribes** who were gathered around the center of **the camp**.<sup>79</sup> In the Dispensation of the Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus, to see link click Da - The Dispensation of the Torah**), **skin diseases**, especially open sores, were among the three prominent factors (along with oozing **discharges** and contact with **a dead body**) that

rendered a person **unclean**. Such persons were regarded as unfit to be in the holy community and were potential contaminants of **the Tabernacle** and the pure worship of **ADONAI**. They were to be excluded from the community during the period of their disease. These brief verses use the Hebrew verb *salah*, meaning to *send away* or *expel*, no fewer than four times. The emphasis on this strong verb points to the seriousness of the situation: such people must be **expelled**.<sup>80</sup>

**ADONAI said to Moshe, “Order the people of Isra’el to expel from the camp (until healed by God) everyone with tzara’at”** (see the commentary in **Leviticus Bw - Holiness and Tsara’at**). **The unclean** were **expelled** from **the camp** because **YHVH** was dwelling in the midst of it. The book of **Revelation** uses the same ideas to explain the New Jerusalem: **God Himself will be with them; He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more . . . but nothing unclean will enter it** (see the commentary on **Revelation Fv - Nothing Impure Will Enter New Jerusalem**). In anticipation of the heavenly consummation, the early Church exercised discipline over its members who blatantly erred in practice of belief (**First Corinthians 5:1-13; Second Corinthians 6:14 to 7:13; Second Thessalonians 3:14; Titus 3:10; Second John 10**).<sup>81</sup>

**Everyone with a discharge** was also **expelled from the camp**. These discharges were primarily from the sex organs and were chronic in nature (see **Leviticus Cl - Personal Discharge and Defilement**). Again, these matters were tangible. The people who suffered from those maladies became living object lessons to **the whole camp** of the necessity of all of them to be **“pure”** in their approach to **the LORD**.

**And whoever is unclean because of touching a corpse** (see **Da - The Red Heifer: The application**). The ultimate, tangible sign of **uncleanness** was a **corpse**. The process of decay and disease in dead flesh were evident to all. Physical contact with **a corpse** was a sure mark of **uncleanness**. Normal contacts with others in **the camp** would have to be curtailed until proper cleansing had been made (**6:6**).

**Both male and female you must expel; put them outside the camp; so that they won’t defile their camp.”** The modern reader should be impressed with the fact that the various disorders that rendered one **unclean** – and hence expelled from the camp – affected **men** and **women** alike. The concepts of pure and **impure**, clean and **unclean**, cut across gender lines. The essential issue in all the

mitzvot of purity in **Isra'el** was not magic or health or superstition; the great reality was the presence of **YHVH** in **the camp**. There could be no **uncleanness** where **He** dwelt. **Ha'Shem's** constant dwelling in **the Tabernacle** needed to be matched by **Isra'el's** diligence in keeping **the camp pure**. The last words of **5:3** are dramatic in their presentation: **where I live among you**.<sup>82</sup> These words would give rise to the term Sh'khinah, the idea that **God's** presence was "centered" in **the Tabernacle**, specifically in the Most Holy Place, and between the cherubim.

**Numbers 5:4** reports the immediate response of **the people**, in line with the atmosphere of dutiful obedience throughout the first ten chapters. **The people of Isra'el did this and put them outside the camp - the people of Isra'el did what ADONAI had said to Moshe**.<sup>83</sup> It is with sadness, however, that the we will recall this positive obedience later in the book when we read of **Isra'el's** failure to obey **the LORD's** commands.

When our **Lord** ministered on the earth, **He** ignored the mitzvot of uncleanness and touched lepers (**Luke 5:12-15**), healed a woman with an issue with blood (**Luke 8:43-48**), and **He** even touched the dead (**Luke 7:11-17; 8:49-56**). The touch of **the Great Physician** brought healing to the victims, but didn't defile **the Son of God**. It was only when **He** died on the cross that **He** bore our defilement and the awful "disease" of our **sin** (**First Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:4-6**). Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven is now open to all who repent of their **sins** and believe in the Gospel.<sup>84</sup>

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** that **You** always are, always have been and always will be totally and perfectly pure. **You** never have the slightest unclean thought or action. Your home in heaven is free from all illnesses. **You** never catch a cold, get covid or grow tired. When **Yeshua** touched the leper (**Mark 1:40-45**), **He** was not made unclean, but rather the unclean leper was healed (**Luke 5:12-16**). **Purity** for **You** is an intrinsic part of who **You** are. No **sin** can enter **heaven**. Not even the slightest **sin** can sneak in. **And nothing unholy shall ever enter it, nor anyone doing what is detestable or false, but only those written in the Book of Life (Revelation 21:27)**.*

*Thank **You** that when I repent and turn away from my **sins**, **You** forgive me (**1 John 1:9**). Praise **You** for **Your** great love that willingly went to the cross to suffer the pain and shame on my behalf because of my **sins**. **Focusing on Yeshua, the initiator and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, disregarding its shame; and He has taken His seat at the right hand***



**of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).** Thank **You** so very much for not only taking away my punishment, but for also giving me **Your** righteousness so I could live forever in heaven. **You** are so very wonderful and Awesome! **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21).** I love **You** and want to live with **purity** in my attitudes, thoughts and actions. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen