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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**.[79] 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**.[80]

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).**[81]

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.**[82] 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.**[83] 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.[84]

*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*