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Male Chronic Uncleanness

15: 1-18

Male chronic uncleanness DIG: Seminal fluids are created with the potential to co-create life with the Creator. When not properly contained within holy boundaries, a ritually unclean condition arises. Why would a holy God distance Himself and His house from a *zav*?

REFLECT: In what ways might these mitzvot concerning cleanliness relate to hygiene today? In what ways might they relate to worship attendance (compare Hebrews 9:10? What do they teach about YHVH, His relationship to us, and the things that separate us from Him?



The first thing to note from this section is that sometimes there are abnormal emissions from both males and females. These may or may not be the result of sickness. However, we may be confident that the ones in question in this chapter are not those which come as a result of sexual **sin**. The best way to understand this is to see it in light of the previous definitions of **ritually clean** or **ritually unclean** (to see link click [Bu](#) - **The Mitzvot Regarding Skin Diseases**). Wherein, we have suggested that a person was in the state of being **unclean** when he either **sinned** himself or merely came into contact with **the kingdom of sin and death**.²⁶² **Beginning with the previous Torah portion and continuing with this one, we have been examining the concepts of being ritually clean and ritually unclean in terms of what they can teach us about two kingdoms: the kingdom of sin and death** (see [By](#) - **The Test of Tsara'at**), and **the Kingdom of**

Life and Righteousness (see **Cg - The Test of M'tsora**).

A. Introduction (15:1-2): ADONAI said to Moshe and Aaron, “Tell the people of Isra’el, ‘When any man has a discharge from his body, the discharge is unclean’ (15:1-2).” Having concluded the discussion of **Tsara’at** and **M'tsora**, the Torah goes on to discuss other mitzvot of purity. All of **Chapter 15** deals with discharges that cause a person to be either **unclean** or actually **contaminating**. These discharges in question are functions of the human reproductive organs, whether in good health or not. Again, our attention is returned to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Prior to their disobedience, the Torah tells us that they were naked without shame. In some way, **sin** altered the human condition. The woman is told: **I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband . . . (Genesis 3:16)**. Human sexual reproduction bears the mark of the fall of man.

The Master teaches us that at the resurrection, we enter into an angelic state of purity. Sexual reproduction will no longer be an issue, for there will not be giving and taking in marriage. **For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven (Mark 12:25)**. Therefore, we may infer that ritual impurity is specifically connected to those human elements which will be foreign to our resurrected state. **Clean** and **unclean** teaches us something of the difference between the flesh and spirit. The Torah offers us a clue to this meaning by beginning **Leviticus 15** saying: **When a man has a discharge from his flesh . . . (15:2)**. **The Sages distinguished between different levels of ritual impurity**. For our purposes, we will once again simply note that the Torah speaks primarily of two levels of **uncleanness**. For the sake of simplicity, I have designated them as **contaminating** and **unclean**.

Contaminating: One who is **contaminating** is **unclean** and transmits **ritual uncleanness** to people and surfaces with which he comes in contact.

Unclean: One who has been rendered **unclean**, yet does to transmit that **uncleanness** to others. Depending upon the type of emission a man suffered he will either be **unclean** or **contaminating**.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for always being perfectly holy! Heaven is **Your** holy home and though most want to go there, first the **sin** issue must be taken care of. A person may know all about **Your** love and agree that **You** are wonderful, but if they still love themselves as number one in their life, they forfeit **Your** gift of holiness. Mere knowledge about **You** is not a covenant sealer. For your covenant of love to be given to someone, they must also agree to the terms of loving and abiding in you. **If anyone does not abide in***

me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned (John 15:6).

*Instead of just handing a person a gift and walking away, **You** unite **Yourself** in a loving relationship with the one who loves **You**. There can be no better gift than the gift of a loving and eternal relationship with **You**! **You** are the top most excellent gift that there ever could be! **A relationship with you dear father is truly like finding a pearl of great price or a hidden valuable treasure (Matthew 13:44-45)!***

*How wonderful that it was your purpose and plan to unite those who love **You** into **Yourself**. He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which he set forth in Messiah as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth (Ephesians 1:8-10). Thank **You** that when someone loves and trusts **You** as their Lord and Savior, they are saved and will never be put to shame! **Because, if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame" (Romans 10:9-11). Praise and thank **You** for the joy of uniting ourselves with **You** when we chose to love and to follow **You** in all we do, say and think. We love **You**! In **Your** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen***

B. Abnormal male discharges (15:3-15): A venereal-type emission is referred to as a discharge (Hebrew: zav). The man suffering from a zav is unclean no matter whether it continues flowing or has stopped; it is deemed **unclean** and **contaminating**. Every bed which the person with the discharge lies on is unclean, and everything he sits on is **unclean** and **contaminating** as well. Whoever touches his bed is to wash his clothes and bathe himself in the mikvah; he will be unclean until evening. Whoever sits on anything the person with the discharge sat on is to wash his clothes and bathe himself in the mikvah; he will be **unclean** and **contaminating** until evening. Anyone who touches the body of the person with the discharge or the items he has contaminated are rendered **unclean** and **contaminating** as well and is to wash his clothes and bathe himself the mikvah; he will be unclean until evening. If the person with the discharge spits on someone who is clean, the latter is to wash his clothes and bathe himself in the mikvah; he will be **unclean** until evening. Any saddle that the person with the discharge rides on will be **unclean**. Whoever touches anything that was under him will be **unclean** until evening;

he who carries those things is to wash his clothes and bathe himself in the mikvah; he will be **unclean until evening. If the person with the discharge fails to rinse his hands in water before touching someone, that person is to wash his clothes and bathe himself in the mikvah; he will be **unclean** until evening. If the person with the discharge touches a clay pot, it must be broken because it cannot be cleansed; if he touches a wooden utensil, it must be rinsed in water (15:3-12).**

The man with the zav, however, must count seven days from the day of his last discharge before immersing. When a person with a discharge has become free of it, he is to count seven days for his purification and re-initiation into participation in worship at the Tabernacle and the Levitical sacrifices. Then he is to wash his clothes and bathe his body in the running water of a mikvah; after that, he will be clean. On the eighth day, he is to take for himself two doves or two young pigeons, come before ADONAI to the entrance of the Tabernacle and give them to the priest, who is to offer them, the one as a purification offering (see [Ai](#) - The Purification Offering: Purified by Blood) and the other as a burnt offering (see [Ai](#) - The Burnt Offering: Accepted by God). Thus, the priest will make atonement for him on account of his discharge before ADONAI (15:13-15).

C. Normal male discharges (15:16-18): A man who suffers a simple emission of semen during intercourse is rendered **unclean because semen is regarded as **contaminating**. Everything the semen touches is rendered **unclean**, including the man and his wife. Seminal **emission** is the failure of that emission to bring life. It is, therefore, in some way, a portion of death, and therefore a source of **uncleanness**. If a man has a seminal emission, he is to bathe his entire body in the mikvah; he will be unclean until evening. Any clothing or leather on which there is any semen is to be washed with water; it will be **unclean** until evening. If a man goes to bed with a woman and has sexual relations, both are to bathe themselves in the mikvah; they will be **unclean** until evening (15:16-18).** This is a simple level of **uncleanness**, remedied with an immersion in the mikvah. As sunset on the day of their immersion they were deemed **clean**. This is another good example of why the mitzvot of **clean** and **unclean** should not carry a positive or negative association in our minds. Certainly sexual relations with one's spouse is a high and holy mitzvah, yet it rendered both the husband and wife **unclean**.²⁶³