

# CHAPTER 15

## INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 15

This chapter treats of uncleanness by issues in men and women; in men, a running issue, (<sup><B1501></sup>Leviticus 15:1-3), which defiles him, and everything he touches, or that touches him or them, (<sup><B1504></sup>Leviticus 15:4-12); the cleansing from which is directed to, (<sup><B1513></sup>Leviticus 15:13-15); and seed flowing from him, (<sup><B1516></sup>Leviticus 15:16-18); in women, their ordinary courses, (<sup><B1519></sup>Leviticus 15:19-24); or extraordinary ones, (<sup><B1525></sup>Leviticus 15:25-27); and the law for the cleansing of them, (<sup><B1528></sup>Leviticus 15:28-31); and a recapitulation of the whole, (<sup><B1532></sup>Leviticus 15:32,33).

**Ver. 1.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron*, etc.] Aaron is spoken to as well Moses, because some of these purifications, after mentioned, depended on the priest, as the affair of profluvious men and women, as Gersom observes:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Speak unto the children of Israel*, etc.] From whence we learn, says the above mentioned writer, that these uncleannesses were only usual among the children of Israel, not among the Gentiles; that is, the laws respecting them were only binding on the one, and not on the other <sup>f519</sup>:

*and say unto them, when any man*; in the Hebrew text it is, “a man, a man”, which the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases, a young man, and an old man:

*hath a running issue out of his flesh*; what physicians call a “gonorrhoea”, and we, as in the margin of our Bibles, “the running of the reins”:

*[because of] his issue, he [is] unclean*; in a ceremonial sense, though it arises from a natural cause; but if not from any criminal one, from a debauch, but from a strain, or some such like thing, the man was not defiled, otherwise he was; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“if he sees it three times he is unclean;”

so the Misnah <sup>f520</sup>.

**Ver. 3.** *And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue*, etc.] Or the sign of it, by which it may be judged whether he is unclean by it or no:

*whether his flesh run with his issue*; or salivates, or emits a flow of matter like a saliva, or in the manner of spittle:

*or his flesh be stopped from his issue*; with it, or because of it; because it is gross, as Jarchi says, it cannot come forth freely:

*it [is] his uncleanness*; whether it be one or the other, he is reckoned on account of it an unclean person. This was an emblem of the corruption and vitiosity of nature, and of all evil things that are in or flow out of the evil heart of man, which are defiling to him; (see <sup><4018></sup> Matthew 15:18,19).

**Ver. 4.** *Every bed whereon he lieth that hath the issue is unclean*, etc.] Which he constantly makes use of; so the Targum of Jonathan, which is peculiar to him, and appointed and appropriated for him to lie upon. Jarchi says, every bed that is fit to lie upon, thou is appropriated to another service; but, he adds meaning is, which he shall lie upon (or continue to lie upon); for it is not said, which he hath laid upon, but which he lieth upon, and is used by him continually; according to the Misnah <sup>f521</sup>, a man that has an issue defiles a bed five ways, so as to defile a man, and to defile garments; standing, sitting, lying, hanging, and leaning:

*and everything whereon he sitteth shall be unclean*; which is appropriated to sit upon; and so the Targum, as before, what is his proper peculiar seat, what he is used to sit upon, and is fit for that purpose: and it is observed by some Jewish writers <sup>f522</sup> that a vessel that is not fit to sit upon is excluded, as if a man was to turn up a bushel, or any other measure, to sit upon it; (see <sup><5015></sup> Titus 1:15).

**Ver. 5.** *And whosoever toucheth his bed*, etc.] Is unclean. According to the Misnah <sup>f523</sup>, a bed defiles a man seven ways, so as to defile garments; standing, sitting, lying, hanging, and leaning, and by touching, and by bearing:

*shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water*; in forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan:

*and be unclean until the even*; be unfit for conversation with other men till the even, though both his body and clothes are washed.

**Ver. 6.** *And he that sitteth on [any] thing whereon he sat that hath the issue*, etc.] Shall be unclean, even though he does not touch it. Jarchi says, though there should be, as he adds, ten things or vessels one upon another, they all defile because of sitting, and so by lying:

*shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even*; as in the preceding case. (See Gill on “<sup>CRIB5</sup>Leviticus 15:5”).

**Ver. 7.** *And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue*, etc.] Shall also be unclean, even any part of his flesh, or member of his body: the Jewish canon is <sup>f524</sup>, he that toucheth one that has an issue, or he that has an issue touches him, or anyone moves him that has an issue, or he moves him, defiles food, and drink, and washing vessels by touching, but not by bearing; and particularly touching the issue itself is instanced in, and such a man’s spittle, etc. are defiled:

*shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even*; as before. (See Gill on “<sup>CRIB5</sup>Leviticus 15:5”).

**Ver. 8.** *And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean*, etc.] Not purposely, which is not usual for a man to do, and whenever it is done, nothing is more affronting; but accidentally, when, as Aben Ezra expresses it, he spreads his spittle, and it falls upon a clean person; and under this, as Gersom observes, is comprehended whatever is brought up by coughing, as phlegm, or flows from the nose, or is pressed out of it; and so Maimonides <sup>f525</sup>: and this may denote all corrupt communication which proceeds out of the mouth of evil men, whether immoral or heretical, which not only defiles the man himself, but those he converses with; for evil communication corrupts good manners:

*then he shall wash his clothes*, etc. as in the foregoing instances. (See Gill on “<sup>CRIB5</sup>Leviticus 15:5”).

**Ver. 9.** *And what saddle soever he sitteth upon that hath the issue*, etc.] When he rides upon any beast, horse, ass, or camel, whatever is put upon the creature, and he sits upon it, the saddle, and whatever appertains to it, the housing and girdle:

*shall be unclean*; and not fit for another to use, but be defiling to him, as follows.

**Ver. 10.** *And whosoever toucheth anything that was under him shall be unclean until the even*, etc.] Either when lying along, or sitting, or riding, as in (<sup><ORIS4></sup>Leviticus 15:4,6,9); various are the traditions of the Jews concerning these things; if one that has an issue and a clean person sit together, in a ship, or on a beam, or ride together on a beast, though their garments do not touch, they are unclean, etc. <sup>f526</sup>:

*and he that beareth [any of] those things*; that carries any of the above things from place to place, as his bed, his seat, his saddle, or anything on which he has lain, sat, or rode.

*shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even*; (see Gill on "<sup><ORIS5></sup>Leviticus 15:5").

**Ver. 11.** *And whomsoever he toucheth that hath the issue*, etc.] Not only he that touched him that had the issue, but whomsoever, and indeed whatsoever he touched, as the Targum of Jonathan, the Septuagint, and Arabic versions, were unclean; (see Gill on "<sup><ORIS4></sup>Leviticus 15:4");

*and hath not rinsed his hands in water*; which is to be understood, not of the man that is touched, but of him that toucheth; and is interpreted by the Jewish writers, generally, of bathing the whole body; according to Aben Ezra, the simple sense is, every clean person, whom he that hath an issue touches and hath rinsed his hands, he is indeed unclean, but not his garments; and if his hands are not rinsed his garments are unclean, and this is as he that touches all that is under him; wherefore it follows:

*he shall wash his clothes*, etc. that is, if a man is touched, as the Targum of Jonathan, and not a thing, as directed and prescribed in the above cases instanced in; all which are designed to instruct men to abstain from conversation with impure persons in doctrine and practice.

**Ver. 12.** *And the vessel of earth that he toucheth which hath an issue shall be broken*, etc.] That it might not be made use of afterwards; which was ordered, that they might be careful what they touched who were in such circumstances: according to Gersom an earthen vessel received no uncleanness but from the middle, though he owns the law does not distinguish between the middle and the outside; wherefore Jarchi is of opinion, that if the back or outside of it was touched, it was unclean, and to be broken:

*and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water*; and after that be used: what should be the reason why an earthen vessel defiled by touching should be broken, and a wooden vessel defiled in the same way should not, but be rinsed and cleansed, when an earthen vessel might as well be rinsed and fit for use as that, is not easy to say; it depended upon the will of the lawgiver: according to Ainsworth, the one may signify the destruction of reprobate persons, the other the cleansing of penitent sinners.

**Ver. 13.** *And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue*, etc.] That is, it is ceased from him, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi explain it; for otherwise, according to the ceremonial law, he was not yet cleansed, until he had done everything next prescribed; but when he perceived there was an entire stop put to his disorder:

*then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing*; by which time it would appear whether he was thoroughly rid of it or not; and these seven days, as Jarchi observes, must be seven pure days, quite free from pollution, and continued in a constant course, without interruption; for, as Gersom says, if he saw any impurity in anyone of these days it did not come into the account: nay, according to Maimonides<sup>f527</sup>, he must begin to number again from the day of the last appearance:

*and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water*; typical of the fountain opened in Christ to wash in for sin and uncleanness, even the fountain of his blood, which cleanses from all sin; and in which both the persons and garments of the saints are washed and made white:

*and shall be clean*; in a ceremonial sense; as all that are washed from their sins in the blood of Christ are clean in a spiritual and evangelical sense.

**Ver. 14.** *And on the eighth day*, etc.] Having on the seventh done as before directed:

*he shall take to him two turtledoves, or two young pigeons*; of his own, or purchase them; this was the meanest offering that was brought, and of the least expense, and which, in other cases, the poorer sort were allowed to bring, but here it was the offering of poor and rich:

*and come before the Lord unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; not into the tabernacle, where he was not admitted till the sacrifice was offered, and atonement made; but he was to stand at the door of the tabernacle, at the eastern gate; and so fronting the west, where stood

the holy of holies, the place of the divine Majesty, he is said to come before the Lord, presenting himself to him to be cleansed:

*and give them unto the priest;* the two doves or pigeons, to be offered for him according to the usual rites.

**Ver. 15.** *And the priest shall offer them, the one [for] a sin offering, and the other [for] a burnt offering,* etc.] As in the case of a new mother who is poor, and of a poor leper, (<sup><BR13></sup>Leviticus 12:8 14:22);

*and the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord for his issue;* which, though not in itself sinful, yet might be occasioned by sin, for which the atonement was made: or, however, it was a ceremonial uncleanness, and therefore a ceremonial expiation must be made for it, typical of the atonement by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, by which all kinds of sin is expiated and removed.

**Ver. 16.** *And if any man's seed of copulation go out from him,* etc.] Not in lawful cohabitation, nor voluntarily, but involuntarily, as Aben Ezra observes; not through any disorder, which came by an accident, or in any criminal way, but through a dream, or any lustful imagination; what is commonly called nocturnal pollution <sup>f528</sup>;

*then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even;* and so the Egyptian priests, when it happened that they were defiled by a dream, they immediately purified themselves in a laver <sup>f529</sup> so the Jewish priests did when the like happened to them asleep in the temple <sup>f530</sup>; (see <sup><BR30></sup>Deuteronomy 23:10,11).

**Ver. 17.** *And every garment, and every skin,* etc.] Or that is made of skin, which a man wears, or lies upon, (see <sup><BR38></sup>Leviticus 13:48);

*whereon is the seed of copulation;* or on any other, for, as Gersom says, there is the same law concerning the rest of vessels, seeing this is a principal uncleanness, and defiles vessels; and perhaps the law makes mention of these, because it is more apt to be found on them:

*shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the even;* (see <sup><BR23></sup>Jude 1:23).

**Ver. 18.** *The woman also with whom man shall lie [with] seed of copulation,* etc.] It seems to respect any congress of a man and woman, whether in fornication or adultery, or lawful marriage, and particularly the

latter; for though marriage is honourable and holy, and carnal copulation in itself lawful, yet such is the sinfulness of nature, that as no act is performed without pollution, so neither that of generation, and by which the corruption of nature is propagated, and therefore required a ceremonial cleansing:

*they shall [both] bathe [themselves] in water, and be unclean until the even*; so Herodotus<sup>f531</sup> reports, that as often as a Babylonian man lay with his wife, he had used to sit by consecrated incense, and the woman did the same: and in the morning they were both washed, and did not touch any vessel before they had washed themselves; and he says the Arabians did the like: and the same historian relates<sup>f532</sup> of the Egyptians, that they never go into their temples from their wives unwashed; (see <sup><B1915></sup>Exodus 19:15 <sup><B2104></sup>1 Samuel 21:4).

**Ver. 19.** *And if a woman have an issue*, etc.] Having finished, as Aben Ezra observes, what was to be said of the male, now the Scripture begins with the female, whose issue, of a different sort, is thus described:

*[and] her issue in her flesh be blood*; or, “blood be her issue in her flesh”; not in any part of her, but in that which by an euphemism is so called, in the same sense as the phrase is used of men, (<sup><B1512></sup>Leviticus 15:2); and so it distinguishes it from any flow of blood elsewhere, as a bleeding at the nose, etc.

*she shall be put apart seven days*; not out of the camp, nor out of the house, but might not go into the house of God:

*whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even*; the same as one that had touched a man that had an issue, (<sup><B1517></sup>Leviticus 15:7); the pollution of the one reached to the same things as that of the other; and so, in the Misnah<sup>f533</sup>, they are put together, and the same is ascribed to the touch of the one as of the other; it may be understood of everything as well as of every person.

**Ver. 20.** *And everything that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean*, etc.] During her being apart from her husband, with whom she might be, and do all offices for him, but not lie with him; and whatsoever she lay upon during this time, bed or couch, and the clothes upon them, were unclean:

*everything also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean*; chair, stool, etc. as is the case of a man, (<sup><BR14></sup>Leviticus 15:4).

**Ver. 21.** *And whosoever toucheth her bed*, etc.] The same thing that is said of a profluvius man, and so in (<sup><BR22></sup>Leviticus 15:22,23).

**Ver. 22.** *And whosoever toucheth anything that she sat upon*, etc.] Which was appropriated to her to sit upon, as the Targum of Jonathan, which was her proper and peculiar seat, what she usually sat upon; such were obliged to wash their clothes and bathe, as in all the above cases. (see <sup><BR15></sup>Leviticus 15:5,10).

**Ver. 23.** *And if it [be] on [her] bed, or on anything whereon she sitteth*, etc.] That is, if any person or thing should be upon her bed or seat; a vessel on her bed, or a vessel upon a vessel, as Aben Ezra expresses it:

*when he toucheth it*; that person or thing that should be on her bed or seat, as well as touch her bed or seat:

*shall be unclean until the even*; in a ceremonial sense; so defiling was a woman in such circumstances, and to whom the Scriptures often compare unclean persons and things: and Pliny <sup>f534</sup> speaks of menstres as very infectious, or worse, to various creatures and things, in a natural way.

**Ver. 24.** *And if any man lie with her at all*, etc.] Not presumptuously but ignorantly, as Aben Ezra observes; for he was guilty of cutting off, that lay with her wilfully, (<sup><BR18></sup>Leviticus 20:18);

*and her flowers be upon her*; or, “her separation” <sup>f535</sup>, her monthly courses not being ceased:

*he shall be unclean seven days*; and be excluded from all conversation civil and religious:

*and all the bed whereon she lieth shall be unclean*; that and every thing upon it; and this uncleanness also lasted seven days, as Aben Ezra notes, and defiled others, though it is not written.

**Ver. 25.** *And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation*, etc.] Not an ordinary but an extraordinary one, not within that time, but out of it, and which continued three days at least; so the Targum of Jonathan, and sometimes many years; as the poor woman



Christ cured, which she had had twelve years, (see Gill on “<sup><102></sup>Matthew 9:20”):

*or if it run beyond the time of her separation*; beyond the seven days of her separation, and so out of the usual way and time of it; whereby it appears to be somewhat extraordinary and unusual:

*all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation*: all the while it was upon her, be it ever so many days or years, she was kept apart from her husband, and in all respects in the same condition and circumstances, as in the seven days of her separation because of her monthly courses:

*she [shall be] unclean*; as long as it is upon her, and neither be admitted to her husband’s bed, nor to the house of God, which made her condition a very deplorable one.

**Ver. 26.** *Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation*, etc.] As defiled and as defiling as that, (<sup><103></sup>Leviticus 15:20,21);

*and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation*; as such were when she was in that condition, (see <sup><104></sup>Leviticus 15:20).

**Ver. 27.** *And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean*, etc.] Her bed and seat; the Septuagint version is, “that toucheth her”, (see <sup><105></sup>Leviticus 15:19);

*and shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even*; let it be observed, that in all the above passages, where it is said, “he shall bathe [himself] in water”, the Targum of Jonathan adds, in forty seahs or pecks of water; for this was done by dipping the body all over.

**Ver. 28.** *But if she be cleansed of her issue*, etc.] The disease is healed, or a stop is put to it; there are no signs of it remaining:

*then she shall number to herself seven days*; from the time she observed it to cease:

*and after that she shall be clean*; having bathed herself according to the usual manner of unclean persons, for their cleansing; when she would be fit

to be admitted to her husband, though not as yet into the tabernacle, until she had offered her offering next directed to.

**Ver. 29.** *And on the eighth day*, etc.] From the cessation of her issue, and the healing of it, at least from the time she began to number for her cleansing:

*she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons*; the same as the man that had an issue was obliged to bring. Now this is to be understood not of a woman that had an ordinary issue, or her monthly courses; for this would have been both troublesome and expensive to have brought every month, but of a woman that had laboured under an extraordinary one; though some think every menstruous woman was obliged to this offering:

*and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*; whither the man that had an issue brought his; (see Gill on “<sup>f514</sup>Leviticus 15:14”).

**Ver. 30.** *And the priest shall offer the one [for] a sin offering*, etc.] As in the case of a man that had an issue, the offerings of one and the other were the same and for the same purpose; (see Gill on “<sup>f515</sup>Leviticus 15:15”); there being a legal uncleanness in their case, atonement must be made by sacrifice, typical of the atonement of Christ, who by himself has purged our sins. The design of these several laws concerning uncleanness by issues, was to set forth the filthiness of sin arising from the corruption of human nature; particularly the pollution of fleshly lusts, and the necessity of purification from them by the grace of God, and blood of Christ, and of holiness of heart and life, in order to a near approach to God, particularly in public worship, as the next words suggest.

**Ver. 31.** *Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness*, etc.] Or because of it, and while they are in it, as from other persons, even their nearest relations, and from the house of God, as the next clause shows; or teach them, by observing the above laws and rules, to separate themselves, and that they be careful and cautions to keep themselves apart while in such impurities; and the children of Israel are only made mention of, because these laws are only binding upon them, with their proselytes and servants, free or not free <sup>f536</sup>, but not upon Gentiles; (see Gill on “<sup>f516</sup>Leviticus 15:2”):

*that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that [is] among them*; from whence it appears, that men and women, in the

above circumstances, might not go into the tabernacle; and it was chiefly to prevent their access to it that these laws were given, for the greater reverence and honour of it; and that for such persons to enter there was a pollution of it, and the punishment was cutting off, or death; and for one to die in his impurity, without purification and sacrifice, was a dreadful thing, and to be deprecated, and to be guarded against by an observance of the above laws. But the Jews now say <sup>f537</sup>, that forasmuch as the reason of these precepts was, because such persons were forbidden to enter into the temple, that being destroyed, all these precepts of uncleanness are ceased also.

**Ver. 32.** *This [is] the law of him that hath an issue*, etc.] In (<sup><del>1852</del></sup> Leviticus 15:32,33) is a recapitulation of the several laws in this chapter, as of a man that has a “gonorrhoea”:

*and [of him] whose seed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith;* involuntarily, that suffers a nocturnal pollution.

**Ver. 33.** *And of her that is sick of her flowers*, etc.] Her monthly courses, for these are a sickness, (<sup><del>1808</del></sup> Leviticus 20:18); and make a woman languid and faint, as the word is rendered, (<sup><del>2013</del></sup> Lamentations 1:13); or to be in pain <sup>f538</sup>, as some render it here; and pains are reckoned among the signs of them by the Misnic doctors <sup>f539</sup>:

*and of him that hath an issue, of the man, and of the woman;* of both, whether the one or the other:

*and of him that lieth with her that is unclean;* though her own husband.