

for him, one-tenth of a measure of choice flour with oil mixed in for a grain offering, and a *log* of oil; ²²and two turtledoves or two pigeons, depending on his means, the one to be the purification offering and the other the burnt offering. ²³On the eighth day of his purification he shall bring them to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, before the LORD. ²⁴The priest shall take the lamb of reparation offering and the *log* of oil, and elevate them as an elevation offering before the LORD. ²⁵When the lamb of reparation offering has been slaughtered, the priest shall take some of the blood of the reparation offering and put it on the ridge of the right ear of the one being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. ²⁶The priest shall then pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand, ²⁷and with the finger of his right hand the priest shall sprinkle some of the oil that is in the palm of his left hand seven times before the LORD. ²⁸Some of the oil in his palm shall be put by the priest on the ridge of the right ear of the one being purified, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, over the same places as the blood of the reparation offering; ²⁹and what is left of the oil in his palm the priest shall put on the head of the one being purified, to make expiation for him before the LORD. ³⁰He shall then offer one of the turtledoves or pigeons, depending on his means—³¹whichever he can afford—the one as a purification offering and the other as a burnt offering, together with the grain offering. Thus the priest shall make expiation before the LORD for the one being purified. ³²Such is the ritual for him who has a scaly affection and whose means for his purification are limited.

³³The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:

TZARA'AT IN BUILDING STONES
(vv. 33–53)

This section deals with some sort of mold, blight,

ועשרון סלת אחד בלול בשמן למנחה ולג שמן: ²² ושתי תורים או שני בני יונה אשר תשיג ידו והיה אחד חטאת והאחד עלה: ²³ והביא אתם ביום השמיני לטהרתו אל־הכהן אל־פתח אהל־מועד לפני יהוה: ²⁴ ולקח הכהן את־כבש האשם ואת־לג השמן והניף אתם הכהן תנופה לפני יהוה: ²⁵ ושחט את־כבש האשם ולקח הכהן מדם האשם ונתן על־תנוף אֶזְנו־המטהר הימנית ועל־בהן ידו הימנית ועל־בהן רגלו הימנית: ²⁶ ומן־השמן יצק הכהן על־כף הכהן השמאלית: ²⁷ והזה הכהן באצבעו הימנית מן־השמן אשר על־כפו השמאלית שבע פעמים לפני יהוה: ²⁸ ונתן הכהן מן־השמן אשר על־כפו על־תנוף אֶזְנו־המטהר הימנית ועל־בהן ידו הימנית ועל־בהן רגלו הימנית על־מקום דם האשם: ²⁹ והנותר מן־השמן אשר על־כף הכהן יתן על־ראש המטהר לכפר עליו לפני יהוה: ³⁰ ועשה את־האחד מן־התורים או מן־בני היונה מאשר תשיג ידו: ³¹ את אשר־תשיג ידו את־האחד חטאת ואת־האחד עלה על־המנחה וכפר הכהן על המטהר לפני יהוה: ³² זאת תורת אשר־בו נגע צרעת אשר לא־תשיג ידו בטהרתו: פ ³³ וידבר יהוה אל־משה ואל־אהרן לאמר:

ביעי
שני

or rot, perhaps of a fungoid nature, that produced recessed lesions and discoloration in the plaster or mud used to cover building stones.

³⁴When you enter the land of Canaan that I give you as a possession, and I inflict an eruptive plague upon a house in the land you possess, ³⁵the owner of the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, "Something like a plague has appeared upon my house." ³⁶The priest shall order the house cleared before the priest enters to examine the plague, so that nothing in the house may become impure; after that the priest shall enter to examine the house. ³⁷If, when he examines the plague, the plague in the walls of the house is found to consist of greenish or reddish streaks that appear to go deep into the wall, ³⁸the priest shall come out of the house to the entrance of the house, and close up the house for seven days. ³⁹On the seventh day the priest shall return. If he sees that the plague has spread on the walls of the house, ⁴⁰the priest shall order the stones with the plague in them to be pulled out and cast outside the city into an impure place. ⁴¹The house shall be scraped inside all around, and the coating that is scraped off shall

³⁴ כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן
לָכֶם לְאֶחְזָה וְנִתְּתִי נֶגַע צֹרְעַת בַּבַּיִת
אֶרֶץ אֲחֻזַּתְכֶם: ³⁵ וּבָא אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַבַּיִת
וְהִגִּיד לַפֹּהֵן לֵאמֹר כְּנָגַע נִרְאָה לִי בַּבַּיִת:
³⁶ וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן וּפָנּוּ אֶת-הַבַּיִת בְּטָרִם יָבֹא
הַכֹּהֵן לִרְאוֹת אֶת-הַנֶּגַע וְלֹא יִטְמָא כָּל-
אֲשֶׁר בַּבַּיִת וְאַחֵר כֵּן יָבֹא הַכֹּהֵן לִרְאוֹת
אֶת-הַבַּיִת: ³⁷ וְרָאָה אֶת-הַנֶּגַע וְהִנֵּה
הַנֶּגַע בְּקִירֵת הַבַּיִת שִׁקְעָרוֹת יִרְקַרְקַת
אוֹ אֲדָמָדִמָּת וּמֵרֵאִיהֶן שָׁפֵל מִן-הַקִּיר:
³⁸ וַיֵּצֵא הַכֹּהֵן מִן-הַבַּיִת אֶל-פֶּתַח הַבַּיִת
וְהִסְגִּיר אֶת-הַבַּיִת שְׁבַע יָמִים: ³⁹ וְשָׁב
הַכֹּהֵן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְרָאָה וְהִנֵּה פֶשֶׁה
הַנֶּגַע בְּקִירֵת הַבַּיִת: ⁴⁰ וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן וְחִלְצוּ
אֶת-הָאֲבָנִים אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶן הַנֶּגַע וְהִשְׁלִיכוּ
אֹתָהֶן אֶל-מְחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל-מָקוֹם טָמֵא:
⁴¹ וְאֶת-הַבַּיִת יִקְצַע מִבֵּית סָבִיב וְשָׁפְכוּ
אֶת-הָעֹפֶל אֲשֶׁר הִקְצוּ אֶל-מְחוּץ לְעִיר

36. Once the priest arrives and quarantines the house, everything inside it becomes impure as well.

37. streaks that appear to go deep into the wall Literally, "lesions that appear to be recessed within the surface of the wall."

38. close up the house A diseased person is closed up in a house. Here, the house itself is locked up to keep people out.

39. If the lesions became enlarged, it is likely that the blight, or fungus, has penetrated to the stones themselves.

41. The mud coating is scraped off the interior facing of the rest of the stones to ascertain whether the infection had penetrated the stones themselves.

34. The appearance of *tzara-at* in the stones of a house was a mysterious event. Some Sages doubted it ever happened, and others consigned it to a distant past. Commentators consider the afflicted house (*ha-bayit ha-m'nugga*) to be a moral warning rather than a natural occurrence, even more emphatically than they consider cases of skin disease to be a moral warning. They fasten on the word for "I inflict" to deduce that this was a plague sent by God. A home is a family's private refuge. Thus a home afflicted by plague represents the breakdown of the social values that kept a family safe and united. It was a cause for concern if the problems of society at large had come to infect the home. Most commentators suggest

that the antisocial behavior that brought the plague to the house was selfishness, a blindness to the needs of others.

35. owner of the house Literally, "one whose house it is," leading the Sages to conclude that the owner sinned by saying, "the house and everything in it are mine and I don't have to share it with anyone else" (BT Yoma 11b). As punishment, the house is torn down. The Midrash pictures such owners claiming that they cannot help the poor because they are poor themselves. When their houses are dismantled, all will see what they were hoarding (Lev. R. 17:2).

40. stones . . . to be pulled out From the heart of the selfish owner.

be dumped outside the city in an impure place.

⁴²They shall take other stones and replace those stones with them, and take other coating and plaster the house.

⁴³If the plague again breaks out in the house, after the stones have been pulled out and after the house has been scraped and replastered, ⁴⁴the priest shall come to examine: if the plague has spread in the house, it is a malignant eruption in the house; it is impure. ⁴⁵The house shall be torn down—its stones and timber and all the coating on the house—and taken to an impure place outside the city.

⁴⁶Whoever enters the house while it is closed up shall be impure until evening. ⁴⁷Whoever sleeps in the house must wash his clothes, and whoever eats in the house must wash his clothes.

⁴⁸If, however, the priest comes and sees that the plague has not spread in the house after the house was replastered, the priest shall pronounce the house pure, for the plague has healed. ⁴⁹To purify the house, he shall take two birds, cedar wood, crimson stuff, and hyssop. ⁵⁰He shall slaughter the one bird over fresh water in an earthen vessel. ⁵¹He shall take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the crimson stuff, and the live bird, and dip them in the blood of the slaughtered bird and the fresh water, and sprinkle on

אֶל-מָקוֹם טָמֵא: ⁴²וְלָקְחוּ אֲבָנִים אֲחֵרוֹת וְהֵבִיאוּ אֶל-תַּחַת הָאֲבָנִים וְעָפְרוּ אֶחָר יִקַּח וְטָח אֶת-הַבַּיִת:

⁴³וְאִם-יָשׁוּב הַנֶּגַע וַפָּרַח בַּבַּיִת אַחֵר חֲלָץ אֶת-הָאֲבָנִים וְאֲחֵרֵי הַקְצוֹת אֶת-הַבַּיִת וְאֲחֵרֵי הַטּוֹחַ: ⁴⁴וְבֹא הַכֹּהֵן וְרָאָה וְהִנֵּה פֶשֶׁעַ הַנֶּגַע בַּבַּיִת צִרְעַת מִמָּאֶרֶת הוּא בַּבַּיִת טָמֵא הוּא: ⁴⁵וְנָתַץ אֶת-הַבַּיִת אֶת-אֲבָנָיו וְאֶת-עֲצָיו וְאֶת כָּל-עֹפֶר הַבַּיִת וְהוֹצִיא אֶל-מְחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל-מָקוֹם טָמֵא:

⁴⁶וְהָבֹא אֶל-הַבַּיִת כָּל-יְמֵי הַסִּגִּיר אֹתוֹ יִטְמָא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: ⁴⁷וְהִשְׁכַּב בַּבַּיִת יִכְבֹּס אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וְהָאָכַל בַּבַּיִת יִכְבֹּס אֶת-בְּגָדָיו:

⁴⁸וְאִם-בֹּא יָבֹא הַכֹּהֵן וְרָאָה וְהִנֵּה לֹא-פֶשֶׁעַ הַנֶּגַע בַּבַּיִת אַחֵרֵי הַטּוֹחַ אֶת-הַבַּיִת וְטָהַר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַבַּיִת כִּי נִרְפָּא הַנֶּגַע: ⁴⁹וְלָקַח לְחֹטֵא אֶת-הַבַּיִת שְׁתֵּי צִפְרִיִּים וְעֵץ אֶרֶז וּשְׁנֵי תוֹלַעַת וְאֵזֹב: ⁵⁰וְשָׁחַט אֶת-הַצִּפֹּר הָאֶחָד אֶל-כָּל-יֶחֱרֹשׁ עַל-מִים חַיִּים: ⁵¹וְלָקַח אֶת-עֵץ-הָאֶרֶז וְאֶת-הָאֵזֹב וְאֶת שְׁנֵי הַתּוֹלַעַת וְאֶת הַצִּפֹּר הַחַיָּה וְטָבַל אֹתָם בְּדָם הַצִּפֹּר הַשְּׁחוּטָה וּבְמִים חַיִּים וְהִזָּה אֶל-הַבַּיִת שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים:

42. take other coating and plaster the house The stones could be retained if the blight had not penetrated into them.

46–47. These verses deal with the transmission of an impurity that is present in a closed structure to people who are inside the structure while it is impure.

49. The procedures for purifying the house that has “healed,” so to speak, are almost identical to those prescribed in verses 1–32 for purifying a diseased person. There is only one difference: Oil and blood are sprinkled on a person; water and blood are sprinkled on a house.

43–45. Is the problem superficial, easily cleared up, or has it entered the structure of the institution, so that the institution is beyond saving?

The house shall be torn down The Midrash sees this as an anticipation of the destruc-

tion of Solomon’s temple, a house that will have been corrupted by the behavior of its inhabitants (Lev. R. 17:7). It then adds, “But it will not be forever, as it is stated, ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation’” (Isa. 28:16).

the house seven times. ⁵²Having purified the house with the blood of the bird, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the crimson stuff, ⁵³he shall set the live bird free outside the city in the open country. Thus he shall make expiation for the house, and it shall be pure.

⁵⁴Such is the ritual for every eruptive affection—for scalls, ⁵⁵for an eruption on a cloth or a house, ⁵⁶for swellings, for rashes, or for discolorations—⁵⁷to determine when they are impure and when they are pure.

Such is the ritual concerning eruptions.

15 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ²Speak to the Israelite people and say to them:

When any man has a discharge issuing from his member, he is impure. ³The impurity from his discharge shall mean the following—whether his member runs with the discharge or is stopped up so that there is no discharge, his impurity means this: ⁴Any bedding on which the one with the discharge lies shall be impure, and every object on which he sits shall be im-

⁵⁴⁻⁵⁷. These verses are a postscript to the entire contents of chapters 13 and 14.

DISCHARGES FROM SEXUAL ORGANS (15:1-33)

Most of this chapter deals with discharges from the sexual organs as a result of illness or infection, not the normal menstruation of females or seminal emissions of males. Little was known about their treatment, apart from bathing, laundering clothing, and carefully observing the course taken by the ailment itself. All the impurities dealt with in this chapter, like any prevailing impurity

within the Israelite community, threatened, directly or indirectly, the purity of the sanctuary, which was located within the area of settlement.

THE ISRAELITE MALE (vv. 1-18)

2. member Hebrew: *basar* (body, flesh); here it is a euphemism for the male sex organ.

4. lies . . . sits Two sorts of objects are ren-

life-engendering power of certain bodily fluids and with the life-endangering dimension of disease. This encounter with the primal forces of life and death rule out (or may possibly replace) other ways of entering into the divine presence.

CHAPTER 15

^{2ff}. Once again we encounter the notion of *tum-ah* not as uncleanness or contamination but as an encounter with the mysterious

⁵² וְחָטָא אֶת־הַבַּיִת בְּדַם הַצִּפּוֹר וּבַמַּיִם הַחַיִּים וּבַצִּפּוֹר הַחַיָּה וּבַעֵץ הָאָרֶז וּבְאֵזָב וּבִשְׁנֵי הַתּוֹלְעֹת: ⁵³ וְשָׁלַח אֶת־הַצִּפּוֹר הַחַיָּה אֶל־מִחוּץ לָעִיר אֶל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה וּכְפָר עַל־הַבַּיִת וְטָהַר:

⁵⁴ חֲמוּשִׁי וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה לְכָל־נֹגַע הַצִּרְעָת וּלְנִתָּק: ⁵⁵ וּלְצִרְעָת הַבֶּגֶד וּלְבַיִת: ⁵⁶ וּלְשֹׂאֵת וּלְסַפְחָת וּלְבִהָרָת: ⁵⁷ לְהוֹרֹת בַּיּוֹם הַטָּמֵא וּבַיּוֹם הַטָּהוֹר וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת הַצִּרְעָת: ס

טו וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: ² דַּבְּרוּ אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתֶּם אֲלֵהֶם

אִישׁ אִישׁ כִּי יִהְיֶה זָב מִבִּשְׁרוֹ זָוָב טָמֵא הוּא: ³ וְזֹאת תְּהִיָּה טִמְאַתּוֹ בְּזָוָבוֹ רָר בִּשְׁרוֹ אֶת־זָוָבוֹ אִו־הַחֲתִים בִּשְׁרוֹ מְזֻזָּב טִמְאַתּוֹ הוּא: ⁴ כָּל־הַמִּשְׁכָּב אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב עָלָיו הָזָב יִטְמָא וְכָל־הַכֵּלִי אֲשֶׁר־יֵשֵׁב