

Madras Impurity

Ref: *Sefer Taharah, Hilchot Metamei Mishkav Umoshav, Chapters 7–8*

Midras impurity (was trodden upon)

A *zav* conveys uncleanness to couch – *mishkav*, seat – *moshav*, and saddle – *merkav* in five ways:

- Standing
- Sitting
- Lying
- Hanging
- Leaning

Any of these 5 acts is called *midras*.

If one of these acts was performed on an article made for lying, sitting or riding, they become *av tumah* impurity, even if a stone intervenes between *zav* and article (the *midras*).

Similarly, a couch or saddle conveys uncleanness to humans in seven ways:

- Standing
- Sitting
- Lying
- Hanging
- Leaning
- Touching
- Carriage

I.e. if a pure person came into contact with an impure couch or saddle as above, (i.e. the *midras*) he would become impure, even if a stone separated between him and the *midras*.

A *zav* does not impart impurity to an object on which he lies until the majority of his body is supported by the couch (for example).

Similarly, vice versa, the majority of a pure person must be in touch to become impure from say a couch.

The implement, must have been made for sitting, lying or riding. If not, it does not become impure.

Some implements have a dual purpose, and these therefore can contract *midras* impurity.

Reminder

Pack on Impurity of vessels



Zav etc impurity is unique in that if a *zav* (source of impurity) moves something that is pure, that entity becomes impure. With other impurities if a person moves an impurity (even without touching it) he becomes impure. But nowhere in Torah, except with *zav*, does it exist that the impurity i.e. the *zav* can move a pure person and make him impure.

There is a further stringency imparted by a *zav* and that is, if he moves a sealed earthenware container it becomes impure. (If he just touches it, it remains pure.)

Any kind of movement even indirect, will allow the transmission of impurity.

To become a *zav* or a *zav* to affect an article (an *av tumah*), the majority of a person's body had to be supported. However, to transmit impurity to a pure person, even a minor part of his body can be involved e.g. a finger of a *zav* over a pure person, makes him impure.