

PARSHAT TAZRIA-METZORA
03 IYYAR 5781/15 APRIL 2021



Purification

Painting by Yoram Raanan

“...crimson thread, wool dyed with pigment made from a simple creature, and hyssop a lowly plant, both symbolize humility.”

A WHISPER WILL BE HEARD

1. A debate about purity/impurity.

Rabbi Eliezer said: If the halakha is in accordance with my opinion, Heaven will prove it. A Divine Voice emerged from Heaven and said: Why are you differing with Rabbi Eliezer, as the halakha is in accordance with his opinion in every place that he expresses an opinion? Rabbi Yehoshua stood on his feet and said: It is written: “It is not in heaven” (Deuteronomy 30:12). The Gemara asks: What is the relevance of the phrase “It is not in heaven” in this context? Rabbi Yirmeya says: Since the Torah was already given at Mount Sinai, we do not regard a Divine Voice, as You already wrote at Mount Sinai, in the Torah: “After a majority to incline” (Exodus 23:2). Since the majority of Rabbis disagreed with Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion, the halakha is not ruled in accordance with his opinion. (Talmud, Bava Metzia 59b)

2. From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow.
The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
Like a courtyard.

But doubts and wondering
Dig up the world
Like a mole,
Like a plow.

And a whisper will be heard
In the place where the House once stood
That was destroyed.

 ("The Place Where We Are Right," Yehuda Amichai)

3. Nothing new can grow between us when we speak to each other from the place where we are right. (Parker Palmer)