In this week's parasha, m'tzora, we are instructed what to do if God inflicts an "eruptive plague" upon a house in the land. The directions are quite specific – including the actual language to be used when informing the Priest, and how to rebuild and purify the house.

I find myself reading these odd instructions with an eye to Passover. I have already begun to try to use up chametz, and I tell Mike he cannot buy anything else that I will have to move to the basement for Pesach. I am thinking about vacuuming the insides of chairs, and washing out cabinets. I have started to buy Passover foods. I am in transition.

Transition from what? And to what? What is the real meaning of this holiday? Is it about the work of cleaning out the cabinets and having 40 people for dinner? Is it about the joy of having our daughters home for the celebration of freedom? Or are we somehow rebuilding and purifying our home, ridding it – and us – of some eruptive plague?

How do we purify ourselves? How do we make ourselves ready for freedom? Maybe Pesach requires a different kind of taking stock than Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. For Passover, we do not simply clean for ourselves, but for those we love. Maybe the house we clean out and purify for Pesach is not solely our personal residence but the state of our community. This shifts the question from **my** relationship with others and God to **OUR** relationships with others and God.

So are we ready for freedom? Is our house pure enough? I think that each of us knows we – as a group – can do better. We can be kinder, more thoughtful, more patient. We can create the kind of community that the people we love deserve and desire. And this could be the real transition of Pesach – to move from the chametz of my needs to the freedom of my community's needs. And then our home will be purified.

Betsy Stone