

D'var Torah: Korach, Pride Shabbat, and Holiness

In this week's parashah, Korach rebels against Moses and Aaron. His challenge is portrayed as driven by ambition and division, yet he utters a remarkable truth:

"Ki chol ha'edah kulam kedoshim, uvetochem Adonai"

"All the community are holy, and God is in their midst."

Korach is not remembered as a hero of constitutional reform. His challenge is framed in the Torah as being motivated by ambition, grievance, and destabilization.

Yet his words raise an enduring question: If all people are holy, what does it mean to build a truly holy community?

That question feels especially meaningful on this Pride Shabbat as we announce an important change in our congregation's practice.

Beginning this High Holy Day season, we will adopt the alternative Yom Kippur Mincha Torah reading from Leviticus 19, *Parashat Kedoshim*, as recommended in the *Lev Shalem* Machzor.

This is more than a liturgical change.

The turn toward this reading reflects a desire to place the message of encompassing holiness at the center of our holiest day, Yom Kippur.

***Kedoshim tihyu* — "You shall be holy."**

Leviticus 19 teaches that holiness is not an abstract idea.

Holiness means:

- **treating workers fairly,**
- **honoring elders,**
- **caring for the vulnerable,**
- **speaking honestly,**
- **loving our neighbor,**
- **loving the stranger.**

Today's parshah declares that all people are holy. Leviticus 19 shows us how to live out that holiness.

After careful study by the Ritual and Pride Committees, the group concluded that Parshat Kedoshim expresses the kind of community we aspire to be.

The Ritual committee proposed this change, and the KBI Board endorsed it.

Announcing this change today, on Pride Shabbat, is especially fitting and meaningful.

Pride reminds us to ask an important question:

Who feels fully welcomed and included in our holy community?

As the parent of a member of the LGBTQ community, I ask:

Who hears the words "all the people are holy" and knows that those words include them too?

The challenge before every shul, ours included, is not merely to repeat holiness as an idea, but to build a community that reflects it.

Parshat Kedoshim gives us that blueprint.

Korach was wrong about many things, but he forced us to ask what it means to be a holy community.

On this Pride Shabbat, may we continue building a congregation where holiness is not only proclaimed, but practiced, and where every person can hear the Torah's call to holiness and know they stand within it.

Shabbat Shalom.