

Opening D'var – Congregational Meeting May 2021

A few months ago, in parashat Yitro we read, "*V'atem tihiyu li mamlechet kohanim goy kadosh* – And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." This is the message God delivers to Moses just before the Israelites are gifted with Torah at Sinai – an event that was celebrated just a couple weeks ago on Shavuot. We are taught that the entire community stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai as God descended in a fiery cloud to present the laws to Moses. And the people responded, "All You say, we will do, and we will hear." The people responded, according to Torah with one voice – all the people. Each individual joined with his or her neighbor in a collective response that sealed the deal of the Covenant God made with the Jewish people! And, according to our Sages, ALL members of the community were present – women, men, children and elders. This is what it means to be a *Kehillah K'dosha* – a holy community, a sacred community – each person having a voice.

As Ron Wolfson described in our opening video this evening, this is what we have to offer – our Sacred Community, our TBC *Kehilla K'dosha*, made holy and sacred by the presence of each of you and the committed involvement of ALL our TBC family. At the end of the day, what is a community? It is a collection of individuals

coming together and interacting with each other – praying, learning, sharing, supporting and celebrating together – so without everyone's participation, everyone's voice, a community does not exist. This is the journey we are on together – to reimagine and redefine exactly who and what our Sacred Community is – what it looks like and what we as a *Kehilla K'dosha* bring to our little corner of the world.

I invite you this evening and in the coming weeks and months to make your voice heard – your individual voices that together will lift up TBC's "*Kol Kadosh* – one Sacred Voice." In this week's parasha, *B'ha'a lot'cha*, God instructs Aron regarding the kindling of the Candelabrum in the Tabernacle. '*B'ha'a'lot'cha*' means "When you raise up." Aaron is told to kindle the lamps until the wicks catch flame and burn on their own so that their reflection is captured in the stands of the Menorot. The Midrash from our Chasidic Masters teaches that this is an allegory for our purpose on earth: to kindle the flame of Divine consciousness until all of created reality burns on its own with the enthusiasm required to fulfill its Divine purpose. In this sense, the "*B'ha'a'lot'cha*", the "raising up" of the Candelabrum flames provides us with the metaphorical opportunity to rekindle the Divine essence dwelling at the very core of each of us. In doing so, we allow for the emergence of our innate Divinity inside of our *Kehillah K'doshah* – a sacred,

communal re-awakening of our Divine consciousness. In this way we become a community living the very essence that is Judaism. We open the doorway for everyone and everything's intrinsic Divine nature to be revealed. We fulfill God's covenant given at Sinai only in community as we come together, burning with Divine Consciousness and spreading this light to one another and to the world.

You are all invited to join me and your TBC family in this sacred work....