



Torah for Turbulent Times **"We All Have That Spark"**

"Life is like fireworks. You can close your eyes and be scared or open them and enjoy the view." Can it be July 4th already?!? I almost forgot about the date. I was reminded of it though as Hayley and I drove through Strafford, VT last weekend in search of the elusive Fen Trail to see the Lady Slipper Orchids, apparently just in bloom for a couple of weeks. It took a moment to register, but then I remembered the upcoming date. The sign read, "Parade Cancelled." [We did eventually find the trail and the gorgeous, wild orchids, picture below.] Was it coincidence? Just this past Shabbat we learned of a different kind of "fireworks" in the Torah. While this story has many layers, complications, and a tragic end, one line stands out to me from Korach.

Kulam k'doshim. Everyone. Is. Holy.

It's a great line from a wild story. Unfortunately, Korach's intentions are questionable, as he confronts Moses and Aaron and asserts that they have made a grave mistake by lifting themselves above the rest of the community. As for the "fireworks," the confrontation is put to the test before G-d. Each man is challenged to bring forth his fire pan, lay incense upon it, and step back. G-d appears, the earth opens up to swallow Korach and his followers, and a consuming fire is released. As for those fire pans, they are then hammered together to build the ancient altar.

(Numbers 16-17:5)

The fire pans become an eternal reminder. Now elevated from the scene of human confrontation and carnage, they are transformed with a little metal work into the sacred altar itself. The Torah tells us this is for the purpose of a teachable moment, one that can be relived on a daily basis, as daily offerings are brought forth to the altar. It's

explicitly stated that the lesson is about who can and cannot be within the sacred ring of authority and leadership. But, what remains with me and what I imagine the people are reminded of when they see their own reflections in the sheets of copper plating of the altar are Korach's original words of affirmation. Everyone. Is. Holy.

May the spark of holiness that resides within each one of us burst into the world as a beautiful bouquet of fireworks. May our eyes not be closed with fear, but be open to the holy display of humanity and our potential to make the world a healthier and better place.

-Rabbi Mark

