

## Parashat Korach - Numbers Chapter 16, verse 3

וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם רַב־לָכֶם כִּי כָל־הָעֵדָה כְּלָמָּה קְדוֹשִׁים וּבְתוֹכְכֶם יְהוָה וּמִדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל־קְהֵל יְהוָה:

They combined against Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and יהוה is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above יהוה’s congregation?”

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### What are some textual problems of this verse?

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#### Examining the commentators’ discussions of the problems

##### Rashi

לכם רב You TAKE TOO MUCH UPON YOU — i.e. much more than is proper have you taken for yourselves in the way of high Office.

כלם קדשים [FOR] ALL [THE CONGREGATION] ARE HOLY — they all heard the utterances on Sinai from the mouth of the Almighty (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 4).

וּמִדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ WHY THEN LIFT YE UP YOURSELVES [ABOVE THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LORD] — “If you have taken royal rank for yourself, you should at least not have chosen the priesthood for your brother — it is not you alone who have heard at Sinai: ‘I am the Lord thy God’, all the congregation heard it!” (Midrash Tanchuma, Korach 4).

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##### Ibn Ezra

YE TAKE TOO MUCH UPON YOU. Enough for you. Its meaning is, you have grabbed the greater portion.

SEEING ALL THE CONGREGATION ARE HOLY. For the entire congregation became holy from the day they stood on Sinai.

AND THE LORD IS AMONG THEM. For the Levites were chosen after God’s glory dwelt amidst the children of Israel. Now if Moses knew when he was on Mount Sinai that the tribe of Levi was chosen, Israel did not know WHEREFORE THEN LIFT YE UP YOURSELVES ABOVE THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LORD? For Aaron to be kohen gadol (high priest) and Moses, who taught Aaron, to be above him.

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##### Chizkuni

כי כל העדה כולם קדושים, “for the entire congregation are all holy.” Korach was referring to the firstborn of each family. (Ibn Ezra). He based himself of Exodus 13,2. It follows that it is the firstborn who have the duty and the privilege to perform the service in the Tabernacle.

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### What meaning do we derive from the verse?