

Global Responsibility

To what extent are we as individuals responsible for our Jewish brethren? Our family, friends and community occupy most of our time and resources, so realistically, how we can be expected to add value to lives of others who are beyond our immediate paradigm.

This dilemma applies to all people, and pertains to both leaders and laymen alike. The underlying question is essentially about how we do as Jews view ourselves in relation to other Jews. How integral to our lives are the particular Jewish groups and organisations to which we belong, in relation to our connection with the Jewish people as a whole. In other words; how much does each of us as an individual have in common with other Jews of other affiliations.

At the dedication of the tabernacle in the desert over three thousand years ago - the first collective act of Jewish philanthropy - the leaders of each tribe offered up to G-d both sacrifices and a prayer on behalf of their respective tribes. However as the Torah recounts each and every one of these great leaders prefaced this particular effort on behalf of their constituents, with a collective prayer on behalf of all the Jewish people.

This unifying exercise that combined the efforts of the leaders of all the tribes, notwithstanding their differences, is a powerful demonstration of genuine leadership, which must serve as an inspiration to each and every one of us as their descendents at all times.

On the one hand we each have our strong particular views about Jewish life and the extent of our responsibilities to it, which for the most part are genuine. This is a guiding life principle which we have gained from our parents (grandparents) and teachers albeit and which we all filter in our own unique prism. However it is vital that we must all remember that what has lain at the core of our existence as a people throughout history is that powerful sense of oneness, rooted in our common history and our collective destiny.

And this truth has never been more real than in our day and age when our entire Jewish destiny seems fast fading, in contrast to the globalised version of human destiny. This is especially true with regard to the identity of each and every one of us in the individual sense which in turn affects the collective destiny of the Jewish people. No longer can we pretend that we as Jews have individual destinies, because the very fabric of our nation is based upon the collective.

This notion has powerful ramifications with regard to the scale of influence that we can each have in a positive way on the world. Never before in history has it been possible for an individual of any age to impact so many beyond their limited circle of friends and family. Never before in our long and illustrious history, have we as individual Jews, been able to demonstrate in both spirit and in action this G-dly wish that "all Jews be responsible for each other". May we always endeavor to do our best to play our UNIQUE role in the COLLECTIVE destiny of our miraculous people; it is our divine mission and indeed a privilege with which we have been blessed.

By Yosef Vogel

30st of May – Naso

Shabbat Begins: 8.52pm

Shabbat Ends: 10.10pm