

HIGHEST COMMON DENOMINATOR

What are the contributing factors that comprise our make up?
What determines who we are and what we become?

Human beings are complex and so the answer to this question is a comprehensive one. Yes, to some degree, we all have some understanding of our talents and gifts; however it is what lies beneath the surface of our spiritual identities?

As Jews, this question remains most compelling, because when we look at the range of diversity within our people, our identity seems to differ amongst the diversity of Jews in the world. This is true not just on the surface, but also pertains to the way people look and behave, and the values and beliefs to which they are faithful. There are such varying degrees of diversity that we sometimes wonder, what really connects the Jewish people to one another when they often seem to be at polar ends of the spectrum in observance and affiliation.

In the beginning of the book of numbers which we read this week, we are told about the census that G-d told Moses to conduct for the Jewish people in the desert. The process of counting assigns each individual with a mere number, which in essence seems to strip away all that which makes us unique as human beings. So why then, does G-d perform a census of his people and what message is he sending to us by doing so?

We have all heard of the concept of the "lowest common denominator". It is the most primitive dimension which functions in all human beings to varying degrees. However, there is also the part of us which could be termed the "highest common denominator". This is the part of us which determines who we are, our essence – the point at which we connect with G-d. It is the guiding light to all of our thinking and behaviour and fundamentally is the binding factor which unites us with our fellow man.

This is the timeless message that G-d is conveying to every Jewish individual no matter their background or affiliation. G-d wants to awaken that part within us, the part which determines who we are and who we will become more than any other factor in the equation because the Jewish soul connects and unites us all to G-d and to one another.

So when we next meet another Jew, whether they are strangers, family or friends. Let us focus, not on the "lowest common denominator" but on the "highest common denominator" - The common part that exists within each and every Jew and connects us both to G-d and to his people simultaneously. The Neshamah- the Jewish soul, is a holy force and when we plug into its energy the results are infinitely rewarding both for ourselves and for the world at large.

Warm Regards,
Yosef Vogel

23rd of May – **Bamidbar**

Shabbat Begins: 8.43pm
Shabbat Ends: 9.59pm