

MICRO OR MACRO: WHAT COMES FIRST?

By Yosef Vogel

Human beings more than anything else need to feel that they are making a difference. This desire could express itself in many shapes or forms, sometimes positive and at other times negative, but it is always there and is in constant need of being satisfied.

Jews especially are blessed with an extra portion of this need to make a difference. This powerful force has throughout the ages, driven us to make a contribution to society, vastly beyond any relation to our limited numbers.

This desire and need to make a difference becomes especially challenging in our times. With the ever increasing growth of the world population and a greater awareness of the global dynamics of the earth we inhabit, we ask ourselves, how can one person possibly make any meaningful difference.

The answer lies in this week's Torah portion, in the very first sentence that G-d said to Abraham, which propelled the first Jew to begin his journey of life. It is indeed on this very same path that we Jews continue to walk on until this day. It is the great voyage of life. A voyage which sets as its goal to make the world and its inhabitants a better place. To add value to the lives of the people around us.

In that very first sentence, a word appears which seems out of place. G-d tells Abraham "Lech Lecha", which literally means "go forth to you". Indeed, most commentaries are puzzled by this word and go on to offer many different explanations.

However on a simple level there lies one of the greatest insights into all human endeavour. G-d is telling man that if one wants to make a difference in the world around us, then "go forth into yourself". If one wants to change the "big" world one must start by changing the small world. If one wants to change the macro world, one has to begin by changing the micro world. They are inextricably linked. And in order to change ourselves, we have to dig deep inside and unleash the great treasures that exist below the surface.

Change in the world starts with change by the individual. We can't solve problems on the macro level; we have to first seek change as individuals.

We have to add value to our friends and our family. We have to give them more than we take from them. We have to love them more than they love us. We have to think about them more than we think about ourselves. In short, the world should be a better place because of us.

And to the degree that we make this change on the micro level, it will result in a great change on the macro level. Where all people and nations are "producing" more than they are "consuming". Where all nations are adding value to the world at large.

26 October

Lech- Lecha

Shabbat Begins: 5:30 pm

Shabbat Ends: 6:31 pm