

WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT

Perhaps the most universal ideal advocated by mankind is that of "peace". Since the beginning of time mankind have yearned for this tranquil state. This is true both on the macro level with regard to nations and societies at large as well as on a micro level in relation to our families and friends.

Yet somehow this great ideal of peace, so compelling in its beneficial value to all, remains elusive. Why is this so?

In order to understand why peace is so difficult to achieve, we must first analyse the nature of peace. This can be best achieved by understanding its opposite.

We can gain some brilliant insight into the essential nature and root cause of hostility by looking into this week's Torah portion. The verse opens - by introducing *Korach* the main antagonist of the narrative - with the words "and *Korach* took". Our sages explain that in fact, He did not take anyone besides himself. He "took" himself from being a part of the Jewish people, to being a separate entity, detached from the Jewish nation.

It is with this insight that we gain immense clarity into the source of any tension that we might have with other people, especially amongst our own brothers and sisters.

A healthy relationship is based on a perspective which sees ourselves and others as part of one greater cohesive entity. Where every component, however diverse or seemingly contradictory is part of a global unit, playing a unique and vital role towards a collective purpose.

The point of departure comes when we as individuals believe that some components of that entity are not important. As a result we disregard those people or even worse we might seek to undermine them. We have lost perspective of one of the most fundamental tenants of what it means to be Jewish.

In order to move towards the pursuit of peace we must constantly retain this clear perspective; that every Jewish person no matter their observance or affiliation, is without exception, an infinitely vital part of our people. As the old adage goes "we are all in the same boat".

As we internalise this thinking in our lives and apply it to the way we behave towards others, we are constantly forced to think, not about what is good for us as individuals, our friends or even our particular communities, but what is in the best interest of all Jewish people, whoever they are, wherever they are.

By Yosef Vogel

Fri 20th June 2014

Korach

Shabbat Begins: 9:07 pm

Shabbat Ends: 10.28 pm