



כולל רבנים
רבנו צבי אשכנזי

An Initiative of Amsterdam Community Kollel

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

17 Elul

- No'ach released the dove from the Ark.
- The 10 Meraglim died.
- 2000 Jews of Caesarea were murdered by the local population at the instigation of the Romans, 66 CE.

18 Elul

- Shimon HaChashmona'i was elected Kohen Gadol and governor of the Jews, 140 BCE, marking the beginning of the Hasmonian dynasty.
- Yahrzeit of the Maharal of Prague, 1609.

19 Elul

- Anti-Jewish riots in Stockholm, Sweden, 1852.
- Many London Jews killed in anti-Jewish riots during the coronation of King Richard I, 1189. Among the dead was R. Jacob of Orléans, a Tosafist.

20 Elul

- Charles VI ordered the expulsion of the Jews from France, 1394.
- Ghetto of Mir was liquidated, 1942.
- Yahrzeit of the Ponevezher Rav, 1969.
- Yahrzeit of R. Elya Lopian, 1970.

21 Elul

- Yahrzeit of R. Yonason Eybeschütz, 1764.

22 Elul

- Jews of Homel, Russia were massacred, 1903.
- 9000 Jews of Slonim, Russia, were murdered by the Nazis, 1941.

23 Elul

- A monk who converted to Judaism was burned at the stake in Rome, 1553.
- The Vilna Ghetto was liquidated, 1943.

E PLURIBUS UNUM – OUT OF THE MANY, ONE

RAV SIMCHO STANTON



We live in an increasingly splintered society. If your opinion differs from mine, how can we look each other in the eye? If you align with a different political agenda, how can we live side-by-side?

For those of us blessed with at least a small measure of sense, we know that things do not need to be as they are. We can cherish our differences, whilst still celebrating what unites us.

Our parsha records the speech that Moshe told the Jewish people as they were poised to enter the Promised Land after forty years of wandering in the desert. Drawing near to his death, he gathers the entire people; men, women and children.

But rather than launch straight into the subject at hand, he begins with the following:

You are standing here today in front of Hashem your G-d; your heads [of] your tribes, your elders and your officers, all the Jewish people. Your children and your wives, and the proselyte who is in your midst; from your water carriers to your wood-cutters. To initiate you into the covenant of Hashem your G-d...

Aside from the ambiguous necessity for these sentences, there is also a textual nuance to pay attention to. Clearly, Moshe is addressing the people as a group comprised of many individuals, in the plural. Why then does he use the singular 'לעברך', 'to initiate you [singular]'?

The answer must be understood in the context of Moshe's broader message. The people are about to enter the land of Israel, and would begin, for the first time in our history, to live together not only as a religious community but also as a nation state. In order to function and not fall into disarray, they would have to learn to respect each other's differences and recognise the various roles which members of society play. In short, they would have to learn to be apart yet united with a common goal and purpose.

So Moshe addresses the people as a multitude of individuals but then reminds them: you must all take this responsibility on as one. The covenant we have with Hashem, the common history we share and the future we are all working towards, must forever bind us together.

As we enter the new year, let us not forget this timeless and sacred message!