



כולל רבנים
רבינו צבי אשכנזי

An Initiative of Amsterdam Community Kollel

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

3 Elul

- Jews of Budapest were granted permission to conduct religious services in private homes, provided no rabbi was present, 1787.
- Yahrzeit of Rav Kook zt"l, 1935. He died 16 years to the day of his arrival in Jerusalem.

4 Elul

- Jews of Barcelona massacred, 1391.
- Yahrzeit of R. Meir Simcha HaKohen, the Ohr Same'ach, 1926.

5 Elul

- Ukrainian army massacred Jews of Kiev, 1919.
- Mussolini cancelled civil rights of Italian Jews, 1938.

6 Elul

- Yahrzeit of the Tos'fos Yom Tov, 1654.
- Italian planes bombed Tel Aviv, 1940, killing 117.

7 Elul

- Agrippa I dedicated new gate of the Jerusalem wall, 42 CE. Day was celebrated as a holiday.
- Yahrzeit of R. Leib Lopian, Gateshead Rosh Yeshiva, 1979.

8 Elul

- Jewish resistance to Roman forces came to an end in 70 CE with the fall of the walls of the Upper City of Jerusalem.

9 Elul

- Ramban arrived in Jerusalem in 1267, and soon afterwards re-established the Jewish community there
- Yahrzeit of Rav Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin, 1900.

ONE SMALL STEP

RABBI MEIR KATZ



The *pasuk* says: "You shall not see the ox of your brother or his sheep or goat cast off and hide yourself from them; you shall surely return them to your brother." While the simple meaning refers to returning lost animals, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh sees in the *pasuk* a further lesson in our responsibility towards Jews who have become distant from Yiddishkeit.

An "ox" can symbolize a rougher, less refined person, while "sheep" can allude to the pure and holy *tzon kodoshim*. The message is that even when a Jew appears like an "ox," disconnected from Torah and *mitzvos*, we must remember that beneath the surface he remains part of Hashem's holy flock. Therefore, "hashev teshivem"—we must not ignore him, but must do whatever we can to bring him back. The "brother" in the *pasuk*, explains the Ohr Hachaim, refers to Hashem. The double expression, *hashev teshivem*, teaches us that our task is to do what we can, to "return" him as much as possible. The rest we can leave to Hashem.

A powerful story illustrates this. A young man from a Chassidishe family had gradually abandoned Torah observance. Before the Six-Day War, his father brought him to the Tchebiner Rov to receive a *bracha*. The Rov gave him a *bracha* and asked him to accept one small commitment: as a Ziditchover *einikel*, he should maintain the family *minhag* not to say *Tachanun* on Fridays.

The father was surprised that the Rov had chosen such a small commitment. But in order to keep it, the young man realized he had to *daven* on Friday. That, in turn, meant saying *Tachanun* on other days, and eventually he realized that not saying *Tachanun* on Shabbos was connected to keeping Shabbos. Slowly, this small commitment led him back to a fully observant life.

Such stories may be unusual, but the lesson is universal. We do not need to accomplish everything ourselves. Sometimes a small act—a *mitzvah*, an encouraging word, kindness, or a *Kiddush Hashem*—can begin a much greater process. Our job is simply to make the effort and do our little bit. The rest we can leave to Hashem.