



כולל רבנים
רבינו צבי אשכנזי

An Initiative of Amsterdam Community Kollel

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

26 Av

- A group of 70 followers of the Vilna Gaon arrived in Eretz Yisrael, 1809.
- 10,000 Jews were sent from Borislav ghetto to Belsen, 1942, in the first mass deportation of Jews to the gas chambers.

27 Av

- Queen Bona Sforza of Poland confirmed upon the Jews the same rights that Jews of Lithuania had been granted, 1533.

28 Av

- Yahrzeit of the Netziv, Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin, author of Haamek Davar, 1893.

29 Av

- Jews of Holland were emancipated, 1796.
- Yahrzeit of Rabbi Shmuel Salant, chief rabbi of Jerusalem, 1909.

30 Av

- Moshe Rabeinu ascended Har Sinai for the third time, to receive the Second Luchos and forgiveness for the People.

1 Elul

- Beginning of the Third Plague in Egypt.
- Hashem tells Zerubavel (via Chaggai) to rebuild the Beis haMikdash.
- Beginning of the year for purpose of animal-tithes, according to the Tana Kama in Rosh HaShana 1:1.

2 Elul

- 160 Jews in France burned to death on charges of well-poisoning, 1321.
- First printing of the Shulchan Aruch, near Tzfas, 1555.

FRUITS OF LIFE

In this week's parsha, the Torah discusses the case of the *Eglah Arufah*. When a person is found murdered in the countryside and the identity of the murderer is unknown, the nearest town must bring a calf and perform the unique procedure to atone for the murder.

Immediately before this passage, the Torah discusses which trees may be cut down during a siege. A fruit-bearing tree may not be destroyed, while a non-fruit-bearing tree may be cut down. The *Kli Yakar*, quoting R' Yitzchak Abarbanel, asks why these two subjects appear next to one another. What is the connection between the prohibition against cutting down a fruit tree and the mitzvah of *Eglah Arufah*?

He explains the connection based on the Gemara in *Sotah 46a*. The Gemara asks why the Torah commands that the *Eglah Arufah* must be a young calf that has never worked and that it should be brought to a barren valley? Says *Hakodosh Baruch Hu*, bring something which has not yet produced fruit, to a place that does not produce fruit, to atone for the death of a person who has been prevented from producing fruit. What are the "fruits" that the victim can no longer produce? The Gemara initially suggests that this refers to the children he might have had. Ultimately, the Gemara concludes that the "fruits" refer to the mitzvos that he would have continued to perform had his life not been taken from him.

This explains the connection between the two passages. The Torah values the potential of a fruit-bearing tree so much that we are forbidden to destroy it. If this is true of a tree, an inanimate object, how much more must we value the spiritual fruits that a person can produce, his *mitzvos*. The Torah describes man as **אדם עץ** **השדה**, "a tree of the field." The passage of *Eglah Arufah* therefore follows the prohibition against cutting down fruit trees, teaching us the value of every person and every mitzvah that he may yet perform.