

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • אמור תשע"ט • 514
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

LAG BA'OMER

AN AUSPICIOUS DAY

On the day that Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai was preparing to leave this world, he told his son Reb Elozar and the *talmidim* who were gathered around him, "This is an auspicious time. I am now going to reveal holy secrets that I have never yet disclosed, so that I will arrive in *Olam HaBa* without reason for embarrassment. I see that today is a distinctive day, for *HaShem* and all the *tzaddikim* are rejoicing in my celebration (*hillula*)."

He instructed his *talmid* Rebbi Abba to write down what he was about to say, Rebbi Elozar to repeat it, and the other *talmidim* to listen carefully. He then revealed to them the section of *Zohar* known as *Idra Zuta*. At that time, the *kedusha* of Rebbi Shimon was so intense that none of the *talmidim* were able to gaze upon him, and throughout the day, a fire surrounded the house, keeping everyone else at an awed distance.

Rebbi Abba recalled: "While I was in midst of writing, and Rebbi Shimon was in the middle of quoting a *possuk*, he stopped at the word 'Chaim'. I waited, wanting to continue, but did not raise my head to see why he had stopped, for I was unable to look at the bright light that he radiated. Suddenly, I heard a voice call out a *possuk* that included the word 'Chaim', and then another voice called out another *possuk*. I fell to the ground and wept. When the fire subsided and the light faded away, I saw that the great luminary, Rebbi Shimon, had passed away. He was lying on his right side, with a smile on his face."

Soon afterwards, residents of nearby Tzipori came to take Rashbi to bury him in their village, but the inhabitants of Meron sent them away. Meanwhile the bed, now outside the house, raised itself in the air, while a fire burned in front of it. A voice rang out, "Come and gather for the *hillula* of Rebbi Shimon!" When they entered the cave in which he would be buried, another voice was heard, coming from within: "This man shakes up the world and all its kingdoms; many adversaries in *Shamayim* are silenced because of his merit; *HaShem* glories in him daily. Fortunate is his portion, both Above and below!"

(זהר ח'ג דף רצ"א ע"ב, רצ"ו ע"ב)

On that Lag Ba'Omer, Rashbi was illuminated by the light of *Moshiach*, thereby attaining the highest

level of his lifetime, and partially revealed that light to his *talmidim*. Hence, Lag Ba'Omer each year is a day of the revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah*, the inner, mystical dimension of the Torah.

(סדר עם דא"ח שער ל"ג בעומר, סה"ש תש"ד ע' 124)

CONSIDER

What is the reason for the great joy on Lag Ba'Omer?
Didn't Rashbi pass away on this day?

How did chassidim rejoice on Lag Ba'Omer?

HOLY CELEBRATIONS

AriZal taught that it is a *mitzva* to rejoice on Lag Ba'Omer, because Rashbi called his *yahrzeit* a *hillula*, a celebration. This joy is meaningful to every Yid, for Rashbi protects the entire world from judgment.

(לקו"ש חכ"ב ע' 138)

For the Mitteler Rebbe, Lag Ba'Omer was an exceptional *Yom-Tov*. From the time he settled in Lubavitch, he renewed the *minhag* of celebrating Lag Ba'Omer in a field outside the city, with a light *seuda* and *LeChaim*. He too would say *LeChaim*, something he did not usually do for health reasons, and the chassidim would sing and dance. The Rebbe would perform miracles, *bentching* many childless women to have sons who would grow up to be true chassidim. Though he usually sent such requests to his brother, Reb Chaim Avrohom, on Lag Ba'Omer he would *bentch* them himself. People waited all year long for Lag Ba'Omer.

After delivering a *maamar*, the Mitteler Rebbe would ask the *eltare chassidim* to relate their Lag Ba'Omer memories of earlier years, and share the words of Torah and stories that used to be related. Even after he left, the chassidim would continue to *farbreng* until evening.

(היום יום י"ח אייר, תר"מ ח"א ע' 60, סה"ש תש"ו-ה'ש"ת ע' 412)

The gaon Reb Yonasan Eybeschutz cautions that one should make good use of this holy day and not waste it on foolishness.

Similarly, in a letter to his chassidim before Lag Ba'Omer, the Alter Rebbe writes: "Rejoice on the day of Rashbi's celebration, because we drink from his wellsprings of *Chassidus*. Celebrate by singing praises to *HaShem* from *Tehillim*, and not *chas veshalom* by lightheaded frivolity."

(יערות דבש ח"ב דרוש י"א, אג"ק אדה"ז ח"א ע' קי"ז)

BOWS AND ARROWS

Why do children traditionally play with bows and arrows on Lag Ba'Omer? The *tzaddik*, Reb Mendel of Rimanov, explains that the rainbow is a sign of *HaShem's* anger, and no rainbow was seen throughout the lifetime of Rashbi, for in his merit that entire generation was protected.

A further explanation is given by Reb Mendel's holy *talmid*, Reb Zvi Elimelech of Dinov, who is known by the title of his *sefer* as the *Bnei Yisaschar*. It is written in the *Zohar* that an especially bright rainbow indicates the imminent revelation of the light of *Moshiach* – and since a foretaste of this light is revealed in the *Zohar*, we play with bows and arrows.

The Rebbe explains the connection of this custom to young *talmidim* of *cheder* age. An arrow is able to overcome an enemy even from a distance, *before* it comes dangerously close. This ability alludes to those activities of *kedusha*, such as *davening* and giving *tzedaka*, that overcome the *Yetzer HoRa* in advance, so that the individual is then able to study Torah undisturbed.

(בני יששכר חודש אייר מ"ג או"ד, תר"מ ח"א ע' 77)

In a letter addressed to all children, the Rebbe writes:

On Lag Ba'Omer, you should assemble to speak of Rashbi and his greatness, to discuss his teachings and to firmly commit to fulfill them with joy. In addition, you should organize a parade in your area, to publicize your connection to Torah – like Rashbi, whose main occupation was studying Torah. The *zechus* of Rashbi will help you fulfill the Torah and its *mitzvos* happily, and will bring the *Geula* soon.

(תר"מ תשמ"ז ח"ג ע' 209)

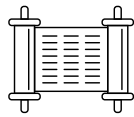


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SHNAYIM MIKRA DURING KRIA

May I read *shnayim mikra* during *krias hatorah*?

Chazal instituted an obligation to review the weekly *sedra* in a manner of *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*, reading it twice in the original and once in the Aramaic translation. Some hold that reviewing the *pasuk* a third time with Rashi can substitute Targum, while others hold that it must be Targum specifically since it was given at Sinai.¹

Halachically, one may split up the *sedra* in any manner that results in reading the Torah text twice and the Targum once. Some have the custom to read each *parsha* section (until a *setuma* or *pesucha* break) twice and then the *targum* on that section, but the preferable custom is—and so is the Chabad custom—to say each *posuk* twice and then its *targum*.²

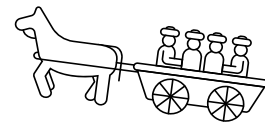
One may begin *shnayim mikra* from Sunday onward, for the new *sedra* begins with the reading at Shabbos *mincha*. Optimally *shnayim mikra* should be read on Friday, and preferably after *chatzos*.³ If one could not complete it on Friday, he should ideally do so before the Torah reading Shabbos morning, or at least before eating the Shabbos day meal. He is obligated to complete it before *mincha* when the next *sedra* is started. *B'dieved*, some hold that one can make it up until Tuesday, while others say until Simchas Torah, and one should do so.⁴

Some *poskim* allow reading *shnayim mikra* during *krias hatorah* – even to read each *posuk* twice with its *targum* thus not following the *kria* along with the *baal korei* – even though one generally ought to listen carefully to *krias hatorah* and refrain from learning.⁵ Others, however, hold that one doesn't fulfill his obligation in this manner, and one should therefore not normally rely on it.⁶

An alternative option brought in *poskim* is to read word-for-word with the *baal korei* in an undertone, thus completing the entire *sedra* once.⁷ One could then complete another round of *mikra* and the *targum* between the *aliyos* or after *davening*. Although some claim that one should always read along with the *baal korei*, according to *kabbala* this is not ideal, and one should listen silently to the *baal korei*.⁸ This is aside from the fact that the preferred custom of *shnayim mikra* is to review *pasuk* by *pasuk*.

Yet, when faced with no other opportunity, one should at least fulfill the minimum halachic obligation of *shnayim mikra* by reading quietly with the *baal korei*, although he may be forfeiting the kabalisticly favorable manner.

1. לסי' קמ"ו אבל סי' זה בשוע"ר לא הגיע לידיו, וכו' במ"ב שם ס"ק יא, וראה גם בס' קצור הל' שבת משוע"ר סי' רפה הע' 13.
2. שוע"ר שם ס"ו דיש נוהגין אחרי שחרית ויש נוהגין אחרי חצות, ובהיום יום ד' טבת מהנהגת נשיאי חב"ד שנהגו אחרי חצות.
3. שוע"ר שם ס"ה, ובמשנ"ב שם סק"ט שיש מעלה לפני קריאת, ובסה"ש תשי"ב ע' 27 שזמן הנכון עד לפני שחרית, ואין מעלה מיוחדת לאמרה במוצאי"ק (כת"ק מהרבי שראיתי לאחרונה בהגה"ה לשיחה).
4. שוע"ר שם ס"ה.
5. שוע"ר שם ס"ב, ובשוע"ר שם מציון.
6. ראה שוע"ר סי' קמו ס"ב, ובשוע"ר שם מציון.
7. לסי' קמ"ו אבל סי' זה בשוע"ר לא הגיע לידיו, וכו' במ"ב שם ס"ק יא, וראה גם בס' קצור הל' שבת משוע"ר סי' רפה הע' 13.
8. שוע"ר שם ס"ו דיש נוהגין אחרי שחרית ויש נוהגין אחרי חצות, ובהיום יום ד' טבת מהנהגת נשיאי חב"ד שנהגו אחרי חצות.
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10. שוע"ר שם ס"ה.
11. שוע"ר שם ס"ב, ובשוע"ר שם מציון.



R. HIRSHEL AZIMOV

R. Tzvi Hirsh Azimov of Klimovitch was born to his father Reb Moshe Nissan, a Lubavitcher chossid. R. Hirshel was of the first *temimim* in *tomchei temimim* in Lubavitch; there, he devoted himself to the service of Hashem. Later, he became one of the *chozrim*, those who would memorize the *ma'amorim* the Rebbe Rashab said as he was saying them. At the young age of 33 years old, he passed away from an illness. The Rebbe Rashab said that he had a pure body and pure neshama; his neshama left him with the same purity as when it came.

There were times that R. Hirshel would say *krias shema she'al hamita* all night, and then take his *tallis* and *tefillin* and go straight to *shul* to *daven*, without sleeping at all.

(Heard from R. Moshe Nissan Azimov)

Reb Hirshel's family was once expecting him home from a long journey at a specific time. When he didn't arrive for a while after, they went down to the train station to look for him. They found him

standing in the train station *davening maariv ba'avoda*, while many secular Jews stood around and observed him with sincere emotion, some even bursting out in tears.

When R. Hirshel fell ill, the doctor instructed him to eat lots of bread with butter. When his sister handed him a piece of toasted bread with a generous smear of butter, he burst out in tears, saying: "All my life I've worked so hard not to eat something like this, and now I have no choice..."

(חסידים הראשונים עמ' 187-182)

The Rebbe Rashab gave R. Hirshel instructions to remain awake all Thursday night (*leil shishi*, as a preparation for *Shabbos*). He did this until his last Thursday night in this world. Even when he was very ill, he would ask his brother to watch that he didn't sleep the amount of time that would require him to wash his hands for *netilas yodaim*.

(ר' מענדל עמ' 181)

A Moment with The Rebbe



REGARDS FROM MERON

Every Lag Ba'omer, beginning in the 5710's (1950's), Tzeirei Chabad would set up a stand in Meron to serve the thousands of visitors. The Lubavitcher *yungeleit* would spearhead the *simcha*, assist people in preforming *mitzvos* and disseminate the wellsprings of Chassidus.

One Lag Ba'omer, after witnessing these activities, the noted Karliner chossid Reb Leibke Gloiberman was moved. He sat down to write a warm letter to the Rebbe, heaping praise on the chassidim and the holy work they do.

Before sending it off to New York, Reb Leibke dipped the letter in oil which was used for the great *hadlaka*-bonfire in Meron.

The letter was much appreciated by the Rebbe, and Reb Leibke received a long letter in return.

Years later, when Reb Leibke's son Reb Noach was in *yechidus*, the Rebbe told him that he keeps his father's oil-dipped letter in a special place.

(*Hamevaser 27 Tammuz 5774, Mosaf Toroni, page 19*)

