

LAG BAOMER

A Special Day

On 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.

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

The 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)

A Holy Celebration

For the Mittlerer 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 Mittlerer Rebbe would ask the *eltere 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)

At a *seudas Shabbos* in the home of Rebbitzin Rivka before Lag Ba'Omer (1897), the elder chossid Rashbatz described the Lag Ba'Omer celebration of תר"ט (1849), which was the last time the *Tzemach Tzedek* went out to the fields: "All the chassidim who had come to Lubavitch for Lag Ba'Omer arrived at the grounds of a chossid called Reb Shlomo, who had been organizing the Lag Ba'Omer celebrations since the times of the Mittlerer Rebbe.

"It was a joyous time for us. The elderly chassidim, despite their age, danced with their *tzitzis* showing, and we, the talmidim of the Yeshiva, pranced like rams. We then sat down to *farbreng*, open-mouthed, listening attentively to every word said by the *eltere chassidim*.

"At four o'clock in the afternoon the Rebbe arrived, delivered a *maamar* of *Chassidus*, and stayed for three hours. Before departing, he told us to sing the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*, the *Arba Bavos*. As we sang, he sat in deep *dveikus*, with eyes closed and tears on his face. When the *niggun* came to an end, the Rebbe stood up and declared that the *zechus* of the *baal hahillula*, the Rashbi, would assuredly protect all Yidden. We all spontaneously cried out in unison, "Amen!" The Rebbe smiled slightly and said, "Amen, *kein yehi ratzon*."

"After he left, the *eltere chassidim* led by Reb Hillel gathered to *chazer* the *maamar*. They wondered why the Rebbe had asked for the Alter Rebbe's *niggun* to be sung and expressed their concern regarding his parting words.

"On the following Monday, an urgent messenger came to Lubavitch with a letter from the printers in Zhitomir: the police had made an inspection regarding the recent printing of *Likkutei Torah*. They had checked where copies had been sent, sealed all the remaining copies in the press, and had ordered the owner, a chossid, to appear for interrogation on Wednesday.

"The rumor spread quickly in Lubavitch, and in one short hour the story's details had twisted and grown.... The Rebbe's sons hurried to their father, who told them the exact story and assured them that the decree would be nullified.

"On Wednesday, when the printer reported at the police station, he was threatened and arrested. On Thursday evening, however, he was set free, and on Friday, the *seforim* were released."

(סה"ש תש"ו-ה"ש"ת, הוספות 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 Riminov, 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"ג ע' 77)

In a letter addressed to all Yiddische 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.

(תו"מ תשמ"ז ח"ג ע' 209)

CONSIDER THIS!

Why was Lag Ba'Omer such a special day amongst chassidim? How did they celebrate it?

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OUR HEROES

Reb Shimon Menashe Chaikin



Reb Shimon Menashe was born around the year 5562 (1802), and moved to Tzfas when he was 18 years old. Later on, he moved to Chevron along with all the Chabad chassidim, as per the instruction of the Mitteler Rebbe. He eventually became the *rov* there for all *Ashknazim*. He passed away on 29 Sivan 5653 (1893).



Reb Shimon Menashe was appointed by the Tzemaich Tzedek to take charge of Colel Chabad, and to distribute the *tzedaka* funds sent by him from Russia. The needy were still many and the money was all used up, when a poor, broken-hearted widow came crying to the *rov*, asking for help feeding her orphaned children. The *rov* was very pained by the woman's plight but could not even find one coin to give her. But how could he let her go empty-handed?

He thought hard and then said to her, "I have a good offer for you. Since in this city people consider me a *tzadik*, I will prepare a note saying "Whoever will buy this note is promised a portion in my world to come!" At first, the woman did not grasp the value of the note, but having no other choice, she took the note and went to one of the rich men of Chevron. The rich man was ecstatic and offered her a very nice sum. The next day a different widow came to the home of the *rov*, and he wrote yet another note. After some time, Reb Shimon Menashe managed to sell almost his whole *olam haba*.

(לב ישראל (גרוסמן) עמוד שב)



Reb Shlomo Leib Eliezrov was a very close disciple of Reb Shimon Menashe, and would often speak with great awe about his teacher. He would relate episodes about his diligence and love for learning Torah. He told that although he was fluent in all parts of Torah, at the age of ninety-four he opened a *Shulchon Aruch Yore Deah* to *simon* 98 and learned with such zeal and passion it was as if he was learning it for the first time in his life.

(שיאלת שלמה עמוד 20)

How Much Bread to Eat?

How much *chalah* should I eat at the Shabbos meal and at *melava malka*?

- At the first two Shabbos meals¹ one is obligated to eat bread² and recite *birkas hamazon*.³ Some *poskim* write that a *kazayis* (about 1 oz / 27 gr.) is sufficient, since it warrants a *birkas hamazon*.⁴ Others hold that it has to be a substantial meal which is slightly more than a *kabeitza*⁵ (which measures about 2 oz. / 54 gr.).⁶
- One only recites the *bracha* of *al netilas yodoyim* when intending to eating a *kabeitza* of bread. One who plans on eating less, must wash without a *bracha*.⁷
- In order for the small bites to add up to a *kazayis*, they must be eaten within six minutes (*kdei achilas pras*).⁸ Some say that when a *kabeitza* is necessary it must be eaten within six minutes⁹. The Alter Rebbe writes that is enough if each half (*kazayis*) is eaten within six minutes one after the other¹⁰ in one twelve minutes window.¹¹
- In general, one who eats a *kazayis* of bread over a longer period of time does not recite *birkas hamazon*.¹² If in combination with other foods he ate a *kazayis* within the timeframe, he should make the lower of the combined *bracha* *acharona* (i.e. *al hamichya* for bread and cake, *borei nefashos* for bread and fish, etc.). If he ate 2/3 oz. or 19 gr. within nine minutes, some hold that he is obligated to *bentch*, and it is thus recommended that he complete the larger *shiur*.
- For *melava malka* one should eat a *kabeitza*¹³ or at least a *kazayis*¹⁴ of bread. One who has difficulty can fulfill the *seudah* requirement with *mezonos*¹⁵ or other foods.¹⁶

1. ולענין סעודה שלישית – ראה שוע"ר סי' רצ"א סי"ז, לקו"ש חכ"א עמ' 84.
2. ועד"ז כשקובע סעודתו על פת הבא בכיסנין שמברך עלי' המוציא וברכת המזון.
3. שוע"ר קפ"ח סי"י. ובעשת הדחק יש לצאת במזונות – כפי ששמע מהרי"ל מאדה"ל בסוף ימיו הו"ד על גליון שוע"ר שם. וראה צ"צ פס"ד עמ' שנ"ז, ג' שחייב לאכול פת. ראה ספר קיצור הלכות שבת משו"ע אדה"ז מילואים לסימן רע"ד (א).
4. שוע"ר סי' עד"ר סעי' ה'ו'.
5. ראה קיצור הלכות שבת מילואים לסי' רע"ד (ב) האם הכביצה של סעודות שבת צ"ל בכא"פ א' או מספיק בשתיים כמו בנט"י.
6. ראה שיעורי ציון עמ' ס"ט סק"ח.
7. שוע"ר קנ"ח סי"ב.
8. ראה קצוה"ש סי' ל"ו בדה"ש סק"ה שתי
9. תשובות מהצ"צ 6 או 7 דקות (אלא שיש מקום להחמיר עד 4-3 דקות – ראה ספר המנהגים עמ' 45).
10. כף החיים סי' קנ"ה סק"ט.
11. סדר נט"י לסעודה סי"ח.
12. בשם מהרי"ן בן הצ"צ – הובא קצה"ש סי' ל"ו בדה"ש סק"ה. וראה סידור רבינו הזקן עם העו"צ ע' תשכ"ב שמסביר פסק זה. הקצוה"ש נשאר בצ"ע מדוע אין להפסיק בין ב' הכזיתים בפחות מכא"פ.
13. סדר ברה"נ פ"ח סי"ב.
14. פסק"ת סי' ש' סק"ב.
15. משמעות שוע"ר סי' ש' ס"א.
16. משנ"ב סי' ש' סק"א וראה שוע"ר סי' רצ"א סק"ז.

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וב"ג מינא ברכה שתחי' שעפערד
נדבת משפחתם שיחי

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Separate Schools

Mrs. Zahava Aldroti, the wife of the Israeli Member of Parliament Tzvi Aldroti, served as the director of the public elementary schools. During the summer of 5734 (1974), she visited the Rebbe.

After addressing her personal issues, the Rebbe asserted that he wanted to talk to her regarding her work, and entreated her to begin making a separation between boys and girls in the public schools.

The Rebbe also explained the reasoning for the separation from a secular perspective: "A study was just conducted in England where it was revealed that when the genders are separated, being that they are not distracted, the student's progress far more in their learning."

Even having separate classes in the same building, where the boys and girls would merely share the same entrance, was ruled out by the Rebbe (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 6, p. 33). The Rebbe added further that "it would be preferable to erect the buildings on separate streets."

לזכות הילדה חוה ריסא שתחי' זימערמאן שיגדלוה הורי' לתורה, לחופה ולמעשים טובים