

# The Weekly *Farbrengens*



למען ישמעו • אחרי-קדושים תשע"ח • 459  
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.

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

### 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)

### 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?

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 *eltre* 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 תשי"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' ק"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 א"ר, תר"מ ח"ג 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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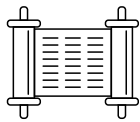


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## MUSIC DURING SEFIRA

I'm driving on a long trip. May I listen to music during sefira to help me concentrate on the road?

During the period between Pesach and Shavuot, we mourn the passing of Rabbi Akiva's students. Different customs exist regarding which days within this period are designated for mourning, and the Chabad custom is to follow all opinions, which covers the entire period (with the exception of lag ba'omer and shloshes yemei hagbala).<sup>1</sup>

The Alter Rebbe mentions that in addition to refraining from haircuts and weddings, we are restricted from dancing and other things that bring extra joy (*simchos yeseiros*).<sup>2</sup> Contemporary *poskim* write that music generates extra joy and is prohibited during sefira (some add that it is similar to dancing),<sup>3</sup> and the consensus amongst *poskim* is the same regarding recorded music.<sup>4</sup> *Poskim* debate the permissibility of recorded vocal singing or a *cappella* music, especially when it sounds similar to musical instruments. In practice, one may be lenient if it doesn't bring to joy or if it doesn't sound like music.

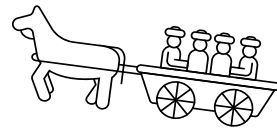
Torah may be taught to children with tunes, as the music is for learning purposes. Children may attend music or dance classes, when it is done for their educational development and not for joy, though performances must be held after sefira. (The children should be told that it's permitted for learning).<sup>5</sup> Children under six may listen to music, as they have not reached the age of *chinuch*.<sup>6</sup>

Since the prohibition is against increasing joy, one may listen to music for non-joyous purposes, such as therapeutic music or to as a mood balancer for one who is depressed.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, one who requires music to focus on driving may do so.<sup>8</sup>

Some *poskim* permit music and dancing at a *seudas mitzva*,<sup>9</sup> but the Alter Rebbe implies that dancing is prohibited even at a *seudas mitzva*.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, music, which is less stringent, may be played by a *seudas mitzva* or a *siyum*.<sup>11</sup> (The Rebbe would recommend a *siyum* for lag ba'omer rallies taking place on a day other than the actual date of lag ba'omer).<sup>12</sup>

1. ראה שו"ע ר"א ח"א סי' תצ"ג ס"ה. לקו"ש ח"ז עמ' 122.  
2. שו"ע ר"א ח"א סי' תצ"ג ס"א (שינה מלשון החק יעקב שם סק"ד ולומד ששמחות יתרות הו"ל איסור נוסף).  
3. ראה פרשי" סוכה דף נ' ע"ב (שיר של שואבה). ערוה"ש או"ח סי' תצ"ג ס"ב (כ"ש מריקודים). מנח"י ח"א סי' קי"א ובעל שבה"ל ב'אלה הם מועדי' ח"ג ע' תכ"א (מנהג ישראל).  
4. ראה שו"ת אג"מ ח"א סי' קס"ו וראה מסורת משה ע' קנ"ו סעיף שבי"ט שהסתפק בזה. וכ"מ דעתו של כ"ק אדמו"ר ע"פ זכרונות המזכיר הר"ל.  
5. ראה הליכות תינוקות וקטנים פי"א ספ"א פ"ב.  
6. ראה שו"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"ד סי' כ"א אות ד' (שבאילות לרבים מחנכים הקטנים).  
7. ראה שו"ת בנין אריאל עמ' 66 זה ע"ד מ"ש בשו"ת מהר"ם י"ד סי' שס"ח. ראה שו"ת בה"ל פסח מהר"ל נחמסנון סי' ט"ו.  
8. ראה שו"ת מקדש ישראל סי' ס"ה.  
9. אליהו רבא או"ח סי' תצ"ג סק"ב (עיי"ש שככה הוא מדייק המג"א סק"א).  
10. שהרי בסי' תצ"ג ס"א אסר ריקודין ומחולות בטעות קידושין ובסי' תמ"ד סט"ו פסק שסעודת קידושין הו"ל סעודת מצווה. אך בסיים סי' י"ל שהריקוד הוא חלק מהמצווה ואינו בכלל האיסור.  
11. אשרי האיש או"ח פס"ה ס"ב ובשו"ת בה"ל פסח שם מדייק ב"ל אד"ו שבסעודת"מ אין איסור דשמחות יתרות.  
12. לקו"ש שם, ולכא"ו הכוונה הוא לשמחות יתרות.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



## 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.

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)

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

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



### HOW COULD WE FARBRENG?!

A terrible *machlokes* gripped Crown Heights during the winter of 5733 (1973), which caused the Rebbe much grief. One day in the month of Nissan, as the secretary Reb Nissan Mindel was leaving the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe said to him, "We'll see you *Erev Pesach* at the *matzos* distribution."

with an anguished voice.

Ultimately the Rebbe did *farbreng*, but noticeably withdrawn, with little interaction with the crowd. Even the *maamar* was recited without the preparatory *niggun*. (*Tchayeinu*, issue 4)

That year on 15 Iyar, when *Harav Chodakov* exited the Rebbe's room, many noticed that he was weeping. Soon it was announced that the Rebbe would not participate in the Lag Ba'omer parade due to the *machlokes*. (*Otzar Hachassidim* NY, page 314)

Surprised, Reb Nissan asked why they wouldn't see each other at the Yud-Alef Nissan *farbrengen*.

"How could we *farbreng* when there is such *machlokes*?!" the Rebbe replied

