

HALACHICALLY SPEAKING

BACK ISSUE



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LAG B'OMER

Lag B'omer is a day which people celebrate with great *simcha* and joy. What is the reason for this great celebration? When does it start? Why do so many people go to *Meron* on *Lag B'omer*? Should one go to *Meron* for an *Upsherin*? All these questions and many others will be discussed in this issue.

The day is called *Lag B'omer* and not *Lag L'omer* because *B'omer* (and *Lag*) is the numerical value of *Moshe (Rabbeinu)* and *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* rose to the same level as *Moshe (Rabbeinu)*.¹

Lag B'omer will always fall out on the same day of the week as *Purim*.²

1. Elei Heim Moadei page 382, Ben Pesach L'Shavuos page 301, Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:page 268 in the footnote, Ohr Mufla pages 66-67.

2. Tur O.C. 428, Shulchan Aruch O.C. 428:1. Refer to Me'or V'Shemesh page 142, Ohr Mufla pages 69-70. *Lag B'omer* also happens to fall out the same day as *Moshe Rabbeinu's Ushpezin* (Shar Yisoschor Chodesh Iyar 20:page 98, Gal Einay page 31).



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What Happened on Lag B'omer

Many different events took place on *Lag B'omer*.³ Some say that it is the day that *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* exited the cave where he and his son hid for thirteen years.⁴ *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* died on *Lag B'omer* and revealed the *Zohar* to us.⁵ The *Rama* also died on *Lag B'omer*, and many have the custom to go to his *kever* on *Lag B'omer*.⁶

The Simcha of Lag B'omer

We are happy on *Lag B'omer*.⁷ Some explain that the *talmidim* of *Rav Akiva* who died throughout the days following *Pesach* stopped dying on *Lag B'omer*.⁸ Some *poskim* ask that if so many *talmidim* died, why should we be happy?⁹ The answer may be that we are happy that the *talmidim* that *Rav Akiva* acquired afterwards did not die.¹⁰ The *talmidim* of *Rav Akiva* died because they did not show respect to each other.¹¹ Some say that they spoke *loshon hara* about each other.¹² Others say that although each *talmid* grew to higher levels of *Torah*, they treated each other as if they had not grown at all, because they were still friendly from their younger days.¹³

Others say that the joy is to show honor for *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai*.¹⁴ Some say that the *mon* started to fall on *Lag B'omer*.¹⁵ Others say that the reason for the joy is based on *kabbalah*.¹⁶

3. Refer to *Nesivos Sholom* 2:pages 327-331.

4. Refer to *Meseches Shabbos* 33b, *Bereishis Rabbah* 79:6, *Koheles Rabbah* 10:8, *Ben Pesach L'Shvuos* page 302:6.

5. *Birchei Yosef* 493:4, *Chayei Adom* 131:11, *Kaf Hachaim* 493:26, *Ben Pesach L'Shvuos* page 302:7, *Gal Einay* page 32. *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* lived till about eighty years-old.

6. *Ben Pesach L'Shvuos* page 302:8, *Nitei Gavriel Pesach* 3:page 278.

7. *Darchei Moshe* 493:1, *Rama* 2, *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 5, *Yaavetz* page 163a, *Matei Moshe* 68:page 148, *Me'am Loez Vayeitzeh* page 575, *Gal Einay* page 11.

8. Refer to *Meseches Yevomos* 62b, *Meiri Yevomos* page 229, *Shulchan Aruch* 493:2, *Levush* 493:2, *Gra* 493:2, *Mishnah Berurah* 8, *Divrei Torah* 3:83, *Aruch Hashulchan* 493:5, *Taamei Haminhagim* page 251:604, *Mishnas Rav Aaron* 3:pages 13-17. Refer to *Pri Megadim M.Z.* 493:1, *Mishnah Berurah* 7.

9. *Pri Chadash* 493:2, *Moadim B'halacha* page 301.

10. *Pri Chadash* *ibid*, *Sdei Chemed Eretz Yisrael* 6:page 8. Refer to *Maharsha* to *Meseches Moed Kotton* 28a "Meis B'chamishim.

11. *Meseches Yevomos* *ibid*.

12. *Me'am Loez Vayeitzeh* page 575.

13. *Harav Yisrael Belsky Shlita*.

14. *Chayei Adom* 131:11, *Kaf Hachaim* 27, *Orchos Rabbeinu* page 92:16. Refer to *Birchei Yosef* 493:4.

15. *Chasam Sofer* Y.D. 233, *Sefer Hatodah* page 259, *Ohr Gedalyuhu Moadim* page 77:2.

16. *Ibid*, see *Bnei Yisoschor (Nissan)* 12:12.

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The Greatness of the Day

Lag B'omer is a *segula* for *parnasa*.¹⁷ Some say that it brings one to *yiras shomayim*.¹⁸ It is a day for one to ask for his needs through *tefilla*,¹⁹ and one can ask for salvation in any area of life.²⁰

Meron and Lag B'omer

The custom to go to *Meron* on *Lag B'omer* dates back to the *Rishonim*.²¹ One should not go to *Meron* by himself.²² Some say that it is meaningful to go three days before and after as well.²³ Although some question the *inyan* of going to *Meron* on *Lag B'omer*,²⁴ the custom is to go. It would seem that one who does not live in *Eretz Yisrael* does not have to be *matriach* himself to go to *Meron* on *Lag B'omer*.²⁵ One who cannot go to *Meron* should study the teachings of *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai*.²⁶

Today, animals are *shechted* on the side of the road to *Meron*. One should make sure that these animals are *shechted* properly and salted according to *halacha*. This is usually not the case, and one should be careful not to consume the meat. Furthermore, one should be careful to avoid areas where people walk around dressed immodestly.²⁷

Lag B'omer and Rav Shimon Bar Yochai

Why do hundreds of thousands of people go to *Meron* to the *kever* of *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai*?²⁸

17. Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:page 292.

18. Sefas Emes Emor 652, Ohr Gedalyuhu Moadim page 154:4, Lag B'omer page 260.

19. Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:pages 292-293. Some say it is a day to do *teshuva* (Yaros Devash 2:11, Ohr Mufla page 26). Others say it is a day for *hasmuda* in learning (Gal Einay page 15).

20. Bnei Yisoschor (Iyar) 2:page 98. See Ohr Gedalyuhu Moadim page 154, Gal Einay page 16.

21. Refer to Ateres Zekanim 493, Kaf Hachaim 493:26, Shaarei Halacha U'minhag page 165, Taamei Haminhagim pages 256-266 in depth for a list of who went to *Meron*. Some say if one does not go he does not see *simcha* in his days (Taamei Haminhagim page 275).

22. Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:page 276.

23. Nachlas Yisrael 51, Taamei Haminhagim page 268:footnote 43. Refer to Da'as Torah 3:46 who seems to argue.

24. Shoel U'meishiv 5:39, Chasam Sofer Y.D. 233, Taamei Haminhagim page 271.

25. Taamei Haminhagim page 269:6.

26. Moreh B'etzvah 8:223, Moed Lechol Chai 7:8, Kaf Hachaim 493:27, Taamei Haminhagim page 272, Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:page 277:6. The Doleh U'mashka page 196 says he did not learn the teachings of the *Zohar* etc on *Lag B'omer*.

27. Yechaveh Daas 5:35, Yalkut Yosef Moadim page 435, Mekadesh Yisrael 107.

28. Minhag Yisrael Torah 493:page 347. The *simcha* is made in America as well but on a lower level (Mekadesh Yisrael 104, see Minchas Elazar 4:60). *Kohanim* may not enter the *kever* of *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* (Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 366:23:footnote 34). Approximately 400,000-450,000 go to *Meron* for *Lag B'omer*.



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As mentioned earlier, *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* was *niftar* on *Lag B'omer*.²⁹ Normally, the *yahrtzeit* of a *tzaddik* is a day of fasting, not a day of *simcha* and joy.³⁰ However, *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* is different. Before he was *niftar* he called his students and revealed to them the secrets of the *Torah*. These secrets were written down and are contained in the *Zohar*.³¹ Therefore, we are extra happy and rejoice on the day that these secrets were given to us. Others say that since *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* miraculously survived his prolonged stay in the cave,³² we celebrate his *yahrtzeit* by being happy.³³ Three thousand *halachos* were introduced on the day that *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* died, and this is another reason to celebrate on *Lag B'omer*.³⁴

Any time the *Gemorah* mentions *Rav Shimon* without any other name, it means *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai*.³⁵ He was the *talmid* of *Rav Akiva* and *Rav Yehoshua*.³⁶

The day that he was *niftar* is referred to as the “*yom hilulei*” of *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai*.³⁷

Tachanun* on *Lag B'omer

Tachanun is not recited on *Lag B'omer* or at *mincha* on the thirty-second day of the *omer*.³⁸ One recites *lamnatz'eiach ya'anacha* on *Lag B'omer*.³⁹ However, others omit it;⁴⁰ this is not the overwhelming custom. When *Lag B'omer* falls out on Sunday (as it does

29. Taamei Haminhagim page 251:kuntres achron 604, page 271:11, Bnei Yisoschor (Iyar) 3:2:page 123b (new), Sefer Hatodah page 258, Moadim B'halacha pages 299-300, Yechaveh Daas 5:35.

30. Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 376:4, see Shulchan Aruch O.C. 568:7-9.

31. Moreh B'etzah 223, Mishmeres Shalom 38:1, Taamei Haminhagim page 256, pages 267-268 in depth, Kaf Hachaim 493:26, Ben Pesach L'Shavuos pages 314-315, Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 96:13, see *Lag B'omer* (Artscroll) pages 50-52.

32. Refer to Rabbeinu Chananel Meseches Succah 45b.

33. Shem Aryeh O.C. 14. Before he was in the cave he was *Shimon Bar Yochai*, and after he left the cave he got the name *Rav* because of all the *Torah* he learnt there (Mekomos Hakedoshim page 18).

34. Matamim Hachodesh page 16, Shar Yisoschor Chodesh Iyar Gal Einay 23. Refer to Taamei Haminhagim pages 251, 267-268. See *Lag B'omer* page 229.

35. Rambam in Pirush Hamishnayos to Zerayim page 59b column 1, see Rashi in Meseches Shavuos 2b “mishmo.” Refer to Avos 4:17, Berochos 43b, Gittin 67a for other sayings of *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai*.

36. Refer to Medrash Rabbah (Vayikra) 21:8, Meseches Gittin 67a.

37. Zohar 3:page 291a, Moreh B'etzah 223, Chayei Adom 131:11, Aruch Hashulchan 7, Kaf Hachaim 493:27, Taamei Haminhagim pages 265-266, 272. There are different translations for the words *hilulei*. Some say it is *simcha* others say it is *hallel* (refer to Moadim B'halacha page 301, *Lag B'omer* page 212).

38. Darchei Moshe 493:3, Rama 131:6, 493:2, Levush 493:2, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 493:3, Shaarei Teshuva 493:2, Be'er Heitiv 5, Matei Moshe 688, Shulchan Aruch Harav 6, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 120:6, Mishnah Berurah 131:35, 493:9, Shaar Hatzyion 11, Igros Moshe O.C. 1:159, Mekadesh Yisrael Sefira 108. Refer to Chok Yaakov 493:6 who seems to say that *tachnun* should be recited on *Lag B'omer*.

39. Shulchan Aruch 292:2, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 403:3, Mishnah Berurah 493:9, Mekadesh Yisrael 108.

40. Pri Chadash 131:1, Siddur Yaavetz 2:page 163, Shulchan Hatohar 131:18.

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this year) one does not recite *tzidkascha tzedek* at *mincha* on *Shabbos*.⁴¹

Fasting

One may fast a *ta'anis chalom* on *Lag B'omer*. One should not fast for a *yahrtzeit* on *Lag B'omer*.⁴²

Those who have the custom to fast on their wedding day should do so on *Lag B'omer*.⁴³ Others are lenient.⁴⁴ Even one who did not fast should still say *viduy* at *mincha*.⁴⁵

Marriage

The custom is to permit marriages on *Lag B'omer*.⁴⁶ Some only permit a daytime wedding on *Lag B'omer*.⁴⁷ The *Sefardim* have the custom to marry on the thirty-fourth day of the *omer*.⁴⁸ The overwhelming custom is to permit a marriage on the night of *Lag B'omer*.⁴⁹ However, others have the custom not to get married on *Lag B'omer* as well.⁵⁰ A wedding that started on the day of *Lag B'omer* may continue into the night.⁵¹ Dancing and music are permitted at a wedding on *Lag B'omer*.⁵²

It is interesting to note that one who attends a *chasuna* during the time he is observing the restrictions of *sefira* may only dance after the *chosson* and *kallah* enter the ballroom,

41. Levush 493:4.

42. Refer to Meiri Yevomos 62b, Ben Pesach L'Shavuos 17:23-24.

43. Magen Avraham 573:1, Chayei Adom 132:43, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 146:2, Mishnah Berurah 573:7, Daas Torah 493:1, Aruch Hashulchan E.H. 61:21, Mekadesh Yisrael 111:page 156, Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 365:22. Refer to Shulchan Haezer 6:3:6 and Misgeres Hashulchan 146:3 who bring lenient opinions. Refer to Otzer Haposkim 61:1:10:2 pages 261-266 in depth.

44. Elya Rabbah 573:3, Mishnah Berurah 573:7, Piskei Shemuos page 68. If the wedding is on *Lag B'omer* at night then all would agree one fasts on the thirty second day of the *omer* (Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:page 272:8).

45. Pischei Teshuva E.H. 61:9.

46. Rama 493:1, Magen Avraham 5, Levush 2, Minchas Elazar 4:60, Darchei Chaim V'sholom 636, Yechaveh Daas 3:31. If the *chosson* has one *minhag* and the *kallah* has a different one, the custom of the *chosson* is followed (Refer to Yechaveh Daas 3:31, Igros Moshe O.C. 1:158, Yismach Lev 1:page 100). Some say the dancing should be done by day and the *seuda* may be done at night (Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 365:footnote 81).

47. Elya Rabbah 7, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 1, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 120:6, Mishnah Berurah 11, Kaf Hachaim 26, Shaarei Halacha U'minhag 222:page 165, Yismach Lev 1:page 101 quoting the opinion of Harav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita. Refer to Shulchan Aruch Harav 5.

48. Shulchan Aruch 493:1, Pri Chadash 1, Biur Halacha "yeish," Kaf Hachaim 25, Minchas Yitzchok 4:84, Yechaveh Daas 3:31.

49. Machzik Beracha 5, Aruch Hashulchan 4, Kaf Hachaim 28, Mahari Asad (Yehuda Yaleh) 2:39, Chelkes Yaakov 1:97, Igros Moshe O.C. 1:159, Shevet Ha'Levi 8:168:5, Shearim Metzuyananim B'halacha 120:13. Refer to Hilchos Yemey Ha'omer pages 40-43 in depth.

50. Divrei Yoel 26:1, Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:page 214:footnote 17 (Minhag in Skver), see *Lag B'omer* page 178:footnote 31.

51. Igros Moshe E.H. 1:97:page 247, Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:page 217:19, Mekadesh Yisrael 103, Chut Shani Shabbos 4:page 380.

52. Igros Moshe E.H. 2:95, Avnei Yushfei 1:113.



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as the earlier dancing is not considered being *mesameach* the *chosson* and *kallah*.⁵³ Even those who hold like the *Arizal* and are *noheg* the *issur* of haircuts throughout *sefira* may make a wedding on *Lag B'omer*.⁵⁴ No weddings are permitted on the night of the thirty-second day.⁵⁵

Haircuts / Shaving

According to the opinion of the *Mechaber*, one may not take haircuts until the morning of the thirty-fourth day.⁵⁶ The *Rama* holds that one may shave on *Lag B'omer*.⁵⁷ Many apply this to the night of *Lag B'omer* (because *tachanun* is already omitted on *erev Lag B'omer*),⁵⁸ while others say it means first thing in the morning. This is based on the concept that if one waits a little in the morning it is as if he waited a whole day (*miktzas hayom k'kula*).⁵⁹ The custom of many seems to be that shaving or taking a haircut is permitted after *neitz hachama*.⁶⁰

When *Lag B'omer* falls out on Sunday (as it does this year), shaving and haircuts are permitted on Friday because of *kovod Shabbos*.⁶¹ The logic is that *tachanun* is already omitted on *erev Lag B'omer*, so technically shaving would be permitted on *Shabbos*. Since one cannot shave on *Shabbos*, the allowance is pushed back to Friday.⁶² One may not shave on *Motzei Shabbos* when *Lag B'omer* falls out on Sunday.⁶³ Furthermore, many say

53. Harav Yisrael Belsky Shlita.

54. Harav Yisrael Belsky Shlita, see *Minchas Elazar* 4:60.

55. *Nitei Gavriel Pesach* 3:page 216:18.

56. *Shulchan Aruch* 493:2, *Biur Halacha* "yeish," *Kaf Hachaim* 25. Refer to *Kaf Hachaim* 493:18. If *Lag B'omer* falls out on Friday then even according to the *Sefardim* haircuts etc are permitted on Friday because of *kovod for Shabbos* (*Shulchan Aruch* *ibid*).

57. *Rama* 493:2, *Levush* 2, *Chayei Adom* 131:11, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 120:15, *Machzik Beracha* 2, *Aruch Hashulchan* 7, *Nitei Gavriel Pesach* 3:page 222, *Ben Pesach L'Shavuos* page 249:footnote 17). This was the opinion of the *Chazon Ish* and the *Steipler* (*Orchos Rabbeinu* 2:page 95:10).

58. *Be'er Heitiv* 493:5, *Chok Yaakov* 6, *Elya Rabbah* 7, *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 5, *Mishnah Berurah* 11, *Shaar Hatzyion* 12, *Biur Halacha* "yeish," *Mekadesh Yisrael* 103.

59. *Gra*, *Mishnah Berurah* 6. Refer to *Machatzis Hashekel* 3.

60. *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 5, *Mishnah Berurah* 7,10, *Lekutei Maharich* 3:page 569 (new), *Doleh U'mashka* page 196. The *Halichos Shlomo Moadim* 2:page 364:footnote 80 is lenient, since bonfires etc. are made at night, haircuts etc should not be different.

61. *Rama* *ibid*, *Chok Yaakov* 7, *Shulchan Aruch Harav* 5, *Chayei Adom* 131:11, *Mishnah Berurah* 5, *Aruch Hashulchan* 6, *L'Torah V'horah* 2:page 19:2 quoting the opinion of *Harav Moshe Feinstein zt"l*, *Rivevos Ephraim* 6:page 294:2, *Orchos Rabbeinu* 2:page 95:11, see *Chok Yaakov* 7. This is even according to the *Sefardim* (*Bais Dovid* 208). *Lag B'omer* falls out on Sunday in the following years (5767, 70, 71, 73, 74, 77, 84, 88, 91, 94, 95, 97, 98). Some say to take the haircut on Friday after *chatzos* if possible, although taking it before *chatzos* is also permitted (*Halichos Shlomo Moadim* 2:page 364:footnote 79).

62. Harav Yisrael Belsky Shlita. Refer to *Nodeh B'Yehuda* 1:28:page 64 (old).

63. *Ben Pesach L'Shavuos* page 250:footnote 20 quoting the opinion of *Harav Elyashiv Shlita*, *Doleh U'mashka* page 196, *Halichos Shlomo Moadim* 2:page 364:footnote 31.

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that shaving is not permitted on Thursday night if one has time to do it on Friday.⁶⁴ One who started shaving on *Lag B'omer* may continue after *shekia* as well (even if he does not shave after *Lag B'omer*).⁶⁵

According to the opinion of the *Arizal*, shaving is prohibited even on *Lag B'omer*.⁶⁶ Shaving is permitted on *Erev Shavuot* even for those who follow the *Arizal's* opinion.⁶⁷

Meron and Upsherin

Hundreds, if not thousands of people, cut their children's hair in *Meron* on *Lag B'omer*.⁶⁸ This was the custom of the *Arizal*.⁶⁹ Some explain that the holiness of *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* should be a *zechus* for the child.⁷⁰ Others say that *Rav Shimon bar Yochai* taught us that hair is part of the *yetzer hara* when he gave us the *Zohar*.⁷¹ Many have the custom to go to *Meron* on *Lag B'omer* and cut the child's hair even before the child has actually reached the age of three.⁷² Others say that one should only go to *Meron* if the child was born during *sefira*.⁷³ Some question the custom to cut hair at a *kever* of any *tzaddik*.⁷⁴

Saying "Today is *Lag B'omer*"

Some *poskim* say one who has not yet counted the *sefira* of *Lag B'omer* should avoid commenting that, "Today is *Lag B'omer*", since doing so may be considered counting

64. Refer to Mishnah Berurah 260:5, Rivevos Ephraim 1:338, 4:131, see Kaf Hachaim 23, Ben Pesach L'Shavuot page 250. One who did not cut his hair in this situation until Sunday was not *mezalzel* in the honor of *Shabbos* (Rivevos Ephraim 1:338).

65. Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 96, Ben Pesach L'Shavuot page 247:7:footnote 10 quoting the opinion of Harav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita.

66. Shaarei Teshuva 493:8, Birchei Yosef 3, Moreh B'etzvah 8:221, Kaf Hachaim 13, Lekutei Maharich ibid, Shulchan Hatohar 260:8, Darchei Chaim V'sholom 628, Rivevos Ephraim 3:540:7, Minhag Yisrael Torah 493:15. Refer to Moed Lechol Chai 6:7, Minchas Elazar 3:65.

67. Kaf Hachaim 13, Ohr L'tzyion 3:17:6.

68. Refer to Pardes Yosef Tazria 13:33, Minhagei Eretz Yisrael 23:13, Shaarei Halacha U'minhag page 166, Chanoch L'nar 32:footnote 4, Yalkut Yosef 5:pages 435-436, Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:page 316:8, Eyunei Halachos 1:page 457, Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 364:footnote 32. Some go on other days to *Meron* for this even not on *Lag B'omer* (Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:pages 312-315). Others go to the *kever* of *Shmuel* to cut the child's hair (Radvaz 2:608). The *minhag* is to permit the haircut to be done at night of *Lag B'omer* (Mekadesh Yisrael 82).

69. Ateres Zekanim 493, Sefer Hatodah page 258, see ibid:page 259, Minchas Elazar 4:10, Divrei Yoel 27, Peros Noshrim page 328.

70. Sdei Chemed marches Eretz Yisrael 6:page 7. Refer to *Lag B'omer* pages 313-314.

71. Aprakasisa D'yana 1:161. Refer to Kotzosov Taltlaim page 60 for an additional reason.

72. Ben Pesach L'Shavuot 19:13:footnote 20, *Lag B'omer* page 27:footnote 29. Some say he can even be two and a half (Kotzosov Taltlaim page 39:footnote 16).

73. Refer to Arugas Habosem O.C. 210, Aprakasisa D'yana 1:161, Chinuch Yisrael 8, Teshuvos V'hanugos 2:246, Minhag Yisrael Torah 493:pages 351-353, Hilchos Yemei Ha'omer page 33. The Chazon Ish said if one makes an *upsheirin* earlier than he is supposed to it is damaging to the child (Teshuvos V'hanugos 2:246).

74. Mishpatei Tzedek 74.



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the day.⁷⁵ Other *poskim* permit this, since his intention is to refer to the special day, and not to count the day.⁷⁶ This seems to be the *minhag ha'olom*.

“Chai Rotel”

Prominent in *Meron* is the drink called “*Chai Rotel*.” The *Bobov Rebbe zt”l* said that one who gives out this *mashka* on *Lag B’omer* is *zocheh* to great things including children.⁷⁷ Many people who can’t attend *Meron* on *Lag B’omer* to hand out the *mashka* pay people to hand it out for them. *Chai Rotel* is an ancient Israeli measurement which today is equivalent to 54 liters. The *minhag* used to be limited to wine or grape juice. However, today water and soda are also distributed.⁷⁸

Bonfire

Some say that the reason for bonfires on *Lag B’omer*⁷⁹ is commemorate the light that *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* brought to the world when he revealed the secrets of the *Torah* to us.⁸⁰ Others explain that it is a remembrance of the fire that surrounded *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* while he was in the cave.

Some have the *minhag* to throw garments in the fire on *Lag B’omer* in *Meron*.⁸¹ Some explain that *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* did not wear clothes when he was in the cave, and when he wanted to learn he would cover his body in sand.⁸² Those who permit this say there is no *bal tashchis* by throwing the garments in the fire,⁸³ while others say that throwing the garments in the fire is indeed *bal tashchis*.⁸⁴ The *minhag* today seems to be that no one throws any garments in the fire.

Night or Day

Many have the custom to make the bonfires (and dancing) on the night of *Lag B’omer*.

75. Refer to Shulchan Aruch 489:4, Biur Halacha 489 “sh'im,” Lag B’omer page 176.

76. Ohr L'tzyion 3:16:4; footnote 4, Avnei Yushpeii 5:75:5.

77. Taamei Haminhagim pages 263-264, Gal Einay page 13.

78. Anyone interested in giving money towards this *inyan* can call 1-718-435-1661.

79. Aruch Hashulchan 493:7, Minhag Yisrael Torah 493:pages 347-348, Ben Pesach L'Shavuos pages 32-321, Lag B’omer pages 237-242, Mekadesh Yisrael 106. The Sheilas Rav page 33 one should not go to a bonfire but he should learn *Torah*. Refer to Doleh U'mashka page 195; footnote 523. Some place oil in the bonfire (Ohr Mufla page 66).

80. Harav Yisrael Belsky Shlita, see Taamei Haminhagim 606, see ibid:607 for an additional reason. Refer to Bnei Yisoschor (*Iyar*) 3:6:page 88a, Gal Einay page 12, Ohr Mufla pages 54-55. Some recite a special *tefilla* before lighting the bonfire (*Lag B’omer* page 243).

81. Sdei Chemed Eretz Yisrael 6, Taamei Haminhagim pages 272-274, Torah L'shma 400, Shem M'Shmuel 8.

82. Yehoshuas Malka 12:page 152 (Lekutei Torah), Nitei Gavriel Pesach 3:pages 280-285.

83. Urion Tlisa 52.

84. Refer to Pischei Teshuva Y.D. 251:4, Shol U'Meishiv ibid, Orchos Rabbeinu 2:page 96:14, Doleh U'mashka page 195.

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Others say that the *simcha* should start at day.⁸⁵ However, it seems that the *minhag* is to conduct the bonfire and dancing at night all over the world, not only in *Meron*.⁸⁶ However, music in the absence of a bonfire is prohibited until the next day after *neitz hachama*.⁸⁷

Bows and Arrows

The custom of many is to shoot arrows on *Lag B'omer*.⁸⁸ One reason is that *Hashem* shows a rainbow (*keshes*) in the sky when we deserve destruction, but the rainbow is the *siman* that He will not do so.⁸⁹ In a few generations, the rainbow was not seen because of the merits of some unique individuals. One of those people was *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai*.⁹⁰ Therefore, many *tzaddikim* have the custom to shoot an arrow from a bow (representing a rainbow).⁹¹ Some say that since *Lag B'omer* is a day that is *mesugal* for one's *tefillos* to be answered, we shoot a bow. The beginning letters of *shema kol tefilaseinu* spells *keshes* (rainbow).⁹²

The Bar Yochai Song

On *Lag B'omer* many people have the *minhag* to sing *Bar Yochai*,⁹³ which was composed by the *mekubel Rav Shimon Ben Labia* who died in 1584.⁹⁴ Many people have the custom to sing this song every *Shabbos* in the *zemiros*.⁹⁵ Some explain that *Rav Shimon Bar Yochai* was called *Shabbos*.⁹⁶

85. Harav Yisrael Belsky Shlita, opinion of Harav Korelitz Shlita quoted in *Doleh U'mashka* page 194:footnote 520.

86. Harav Yisrael Belsky Shlita, see *Mekadesh Yisrael* 103, *Chut Shani Shabbos* 4:page 380, *Doleh U'mashka* pages 194-195 footnote 521. The *Halichos Shlomo Moadim* 2:page 362:footnote 23 says dancing is permitted on *Lag B'omer* even if it is not for a *devar mitzvah* (refer to *Ben Pesach L'Shavuos* 15:4:footnote 4). The *Avnei Yushpei* 1:98 is not convinced that dancing is permitted at all after *Lag B'omer*.

87. Refer to *Doleh U'mashka* page 194:footnote 520, *Mekadesh Yisrael* 103.

88. Refer to *Sefer Hatodah* page 259, *Taamei Haminhagim* page 252:605, *Lag B'omer* page 249, *Nitei Gavriel Pesach* 3:page 289:20. The equivalent of *Rashbi* and *Keshes* separately is 805 (*ibid*:page 251). See *Me'or V'shemesh* page 142.

89. Refer to *Eitz Yosef* on *Medrash Rabbah* to *Bereishis* 35:2. See *Bnei Yisoschor (Iyar)* 33:3-4:page 88, *Ohr Mufla* page 64.

90. *Medrash Rabbah Bereishis* *ibid*, *Yerushalmi Berochos* 9:2.

91. *Lag B'omer* page 251, *Ben Pesach L'Shavuos* page 339.

92. *Minhag Yisrael Torah* 493:14.

93. *Darchei Chaim V'sholom* 634:page 205, *Mishmeres Shalom* 38:1, *Lag B'omer* page 278. Others did not sing this song because it had too much meaning (*Yosef Ometz* 589:page 125).

94. *Lag B'omer* *ibid*.

95. *Lag B'omer* page 280, *Otzer Hayidios (Shabbos)* page 210, *Nitei Gavriel Pesach* 3:page 288.

96. *Lag B'omer* page 281, see *Zohar Nosso* page 144b. For this reason some people wear *Shabbos* clothes on *Lag B'omer* (*Ohr Mufla* pages 25-26).



Rabbi Akiva

Omar Rabbi Akiva is a popular song on *Lag B'omer*, since the ideas expressed in the *Mishnah* coincide with the purpose of *sefira*, a period of spiritual cleaning in preparation for *Shavuot*. These words are taken from the last *Mishnah* in *Yoma*.⁹⁷

Lag B'omer on Sunday

There is a discussion in the *poskim* whether bonfires can be lit on *Motzei Shabbos* when *Lag B'omer* falls out on Sunday. The concern is that the police and security forces may have to be *mechalel Shabbos* to prepare for the event (this is especially applicable in *Meron* where there are many Jewish police officers). The *minhag* seems to be lenient with this.⁹⁸



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97. Refer to *Lag B'omer* (Artscroll) page 41.

98. *Shaarei Tzyion* (Rabinowitz) 14:pages 212-214 in depth. Refer to *Modanei Yom Tov* 1:54 who discusses the *halachos* that apply to one who wishes to sleep in his car on *Shabbos* in *Meron* before *Lag B'omer* that falls out on *Motzei Shabbos*.

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