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Lag BaOmer - בעומר ל׳׳ג

Revealing The Hidden

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# Dedication:

This Torah [study](study.html) owes its genesis to my beloved [teacher](teacher.html), Hakham Dr. [Yosef](joseph.html) ben Haggai. [One](one.html) of the great Nazarean scholars of our [time](time.html), he [taught](teacher.html) us, his students, that Torah [study](study.html) demands the highest intellectual and moral courage. He did this in the best way possible: by personal example. The following thoughts, many of which are his, are a small indication of what I learned from him, not least that Torah is, among other things, a refusal to give easy answers to difficult questions.

I am dedicating this [study](study.html) to my beloved [teacher](teacher.html) on the occasion of his birthday: Lag BaOmer 5766. May [HaShem](hashem.html) give His Eminence many more [insights](insights.html) and bring him much prosperity in this [world](worlds.html) and the next for His many kindnesses to me and my family, Amen v’Amen!

# I. Introduction

Let’s begin this [study](study.html) with a little background information. In our [study](study.html) on the [Omer](omer.html), we examined the Torah requirement to count the days between [Pesach](passover.html) ([Passover](passover.html)) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html). This [study](study.html) will focus on day [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) of the counting of the [Omer](omer.html).

[Thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) days following the [first](one.html) day of [Passover](passover.html), [Jews](gen-jew.html) celebrate a "minor" [holiday](festival.html) called Lag BaOmer, the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day of the [Omer](omer.html). Lag BaOmer בעומר ל׳׳ג, is a [Hebrew](hebrew.html) phrase that means the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day of the [Omer](omer.html). Lag - ל׳׳ג, is how we say “[thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html)” in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) (ל=30, ג=3). BaOmer - בעומר is how we say “In the [Omer](omer.html)”. The counting of the [Omer](omer.html) links [Pesach](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html) ([Feast of Weeks](shavuot.html)).

The [omer](omer.html) count reaches [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) on [Iyar](feasts.html) (אייר) [eighteen](eighteen.html), the [eighteenth](eighteen.html) day of the second month. Lag BaOmer is therefore related to [Iyar](feasts.html) 18. The gematria of [eighteen](eighteen.html) is יח which, when rearranged, is חי the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for “Life”.

The month of [Iyar](feasts.html) is [known](daat.html) by the [name](name.html) "Ziv" in the Tanakh, (Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim – AKA the Old Testament), a word which means *brilliant*. Only during the era of the second [Temple](temple.html) was the [name](name.html) [Iyar](feasts.html) adopted. [Iyar](feasts.html), related to the words for light and for air, also means brightness. In fact, every day of [Iyar](feasts.html) has its own [mitzva](cmds613.html) because we count the [Omer](omer.html) during every day of [Iyar](feasts.html). It’s where the [Jews](gen-jew.html) spend all their [time](time.html) working on self-improvement. And so all of the [events](feasts.html) of [Iyar](feasts.html), including Lag BaOmer, should be brought in this month of [Iyar](feasts.html).

[Iyar](feasts.html) 18 is [three](three.html) days after the full [moon](chodesh.html) of [Iyar](feasts.html). Therefore, the [moon](chodesh.html) has begun to visibly wane. The [moon](chodesh.html) is no longer at peak brightness.

Some Sephardim have the minhag (custom) to call this [holiday](festival.html) לעמר ל״ג - Lag LaOmer. It is more accurate according to the rules of [Hebrew](hebrew.html) grammar. Lag LaOmer means the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day "of the [Omer](omer.html)", as opposed to BaOmer - "in the [Omer](omer.html)."

Why do Ashkenazim and some Sephardim say Lag BaOmer? Because Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai was a gilgul of the neshama of Moshe Rabeinu. The words "Lag BaOmer" have the numerical value of 345, which is also the numerical value of "Moshe". The [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will have the neshama of Moshe Rabeinu.

Hakham Nachman Bulman, *shlita,* explains that "everyone" calls the day "*Lag BaOmer*" because the main proponents of saying "*BaOmer*" are Hakham [Yitzchak](isaac.html) Luria, the *Arizal,* and the Sephardi Kabbalists.

The minor [holiday](festival.html) of Lag BaOmer commemorates [three](three.html) historical [events](feasts.html):

**1.** The end of a period of [mourning](mourning.html) for thousands of students of Hakham Akiva who died in a [plague](plagues.html), the great [plague](plagues.html) Askera, during the counting of the [omer](omer.html). This respiratory [plague](plagues.html) is the worst of all 913 [known](daat.html) fatal diseases and is often a punishment for slander and malicious gossip.

**2.** The anniversary of the death of the author of the [Zohar](orallaw.html), Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai. On this day he revealed the deepest secrets of the Torah, as found in the [Zohar](orallaw.html), and it was the day his soul ascended to it’s source.

**3.** Bar Kochba’s revolt against the Romans. This was an attempt at ushering in the Messianic era.

Lag BaOmer is an oasis of joy in the midst of the sad Sephirah period which is almost unnoticed by most contemporary [Jews](gen-jew.html). Yet it contains historic lessons of such great severity that this [generation](toldot.html) must not only unravel the mystery of Lag BaOmer but will discover that its own fate is wrapped in the crevices of its secrets. Lag BaOmer, according to our Sages, deals with the deepest secrets of the [future](future.html) Messianic Age. These are the inner secrets of the Torah which are revealed on Lag BaOmer, to the diligent talmid. Because it contains these secrets, we cannot discuss it openly or directly, but rather we must hint towards these answers and the talmid must “fall in” on his own.

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Of the 49 days of the omer, how many do we not say tachanun?

7 days of Pesach

2 + 1 days of Rosh Chodesh

7 shabatot

Rabbi Akiva’s 12,000 pairs of students did not die on days of simcha. This means that they died for 32 days during the counting of the Omer.

There are 17 days when we don’t say tachanun, during the counting of the omer.

There are 17 days after Lag BaOmer when we count the omer. This is why Rabbi Akiva’s students are said to have stopped dying on Lag BaOmer.

This is why Lag BaOmer is a day of simcha.

On Lag BaOmer, Rabbi Akiva began teaching 5 new students. One was Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

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Hakham Ginsburgh pointed out the following interesting concept:

When lag (ל׳׳ג) is spelled backwards (גל) it spells *gal*, which means *reveal* or *revelation* as in the verse in:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 119:18*** *[****Gal*** *einai v'abitah nifla'ot mitoratecha.] "Open (reveal to) my* [*eyes*](body.html) *that I may see the wonders of Your Torah."*

The latent potential of Lag BaOmer is the opportunity to connect to the inner, wondrous dimension of the Torah (The Living Torah – [Mashiach](mashiach.html)) and to reveal it in our lives.

# II. Torah Shebalpeh

During the Middle Ages, Lag BaOmer became a special [holiday](festival.html) for Hakhamim and Rabinical students and was called the *Scholar's* [*festival*](festival.html). This [name](name.html) is surely related to the fact that only the most diligent talmid can understand the secrets of the Torah as revealed in the [Zohar](orallaw.html), the esoteric part of the oral [law](law.html). Another reason for this [name](name.html) comes from the fact that the Torah scholar students of Rabbi Akiva stopped dying on this day and could continue their [study](study.html) of the Torah. Obviously, the reason the [plague](plagues.html) ended was because the cause of the [plague](plagues.html) ended. Beginning on Lag B'[Omer](omer.html), the students began to respect each other as befitted students of Rabbi Akiva. On Lag B'[Omer](omer.html) the students of Rabbi Akiva had a fresh start. Before that day, the [world](worlds.html) was empty of Torah. But on Lag B'[Omer](omer.html), Rabbi Akiva established a [new](new.html) kind of student. These [new](new.html) students built a [new](new.html) [world](worlds.html), a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [world](worlds.html) and a good [world](worlds.html).

The mission to change the [world](worlds.html), together with the power to do so, were given to the students of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimon. Once they opened the door, they gave this mission over to all students in all [generations](toldot.html). Every student, boy or girl, who follows in the footsteps of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimon has the power to build the [world](worlds.html). And they can build the [world](worlds.html) in such a way that there will be blessings and [eternal life](eternal.html).

Thus it is understandable why Lag B’[Omer](omer.html) was called the *Scholar's* [*festival*](festival.html).[[1]](#footnote-1)

Lag BaOmer is also called the [holiday](festival.html) of the Torah Shebalpeh, the oral [law](law.html), according to the Pri Tzadik[[2]](#footnote-2). Hakham Akiva[[3]](#footnote-3) and Aaron the [High Priest](priests.html) were the masters of the Torah Shebalpeh. Why were they masters of Torah Shebalpeh? They were masters of Torah Shebalpeh because they brought people together. Aaron was Moshe’s [*mouth*](body.html) to Paro, and he was the [first](one.html) to give Moshe’s Torah to the leaders of Israel. Aaron HaKohen was also noted for his ability to bring peace between people, according to the [Talmud](orallaw.html).

***Sanhedrin 6b*** *R. Eliezer the son of R. Jose the Galilean says: It is forbidden to arbitrate in a settlement, and he who arbitrates thus offends, and whoever praises such an arbitrator [bozea’] contemneth the Lord, for it is written, He that blesseth an arbiter [bozea’], contemneth the Lord. But let the* [*law*](law.html) *cut through the mountain, for it is written, For the judgment is* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s. And so Moshe's motto was: Let the* [*law*](law.html) *cut through the mountain. Aaron, however, loved peace and pursued peace and made peace between man and man, as it is written, The* [*law*](law.html) *of truth was in his* [*mouth*](body.html)*, unrighteousness was not found in his lips, he walked with Me in peace and uprightness and did turn many away from iniquity.*

[Yeshua](yeshua.html) was called “The Word of God” in Yochanan (John) 1:1. This [secret](sod.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) testifies that He is the Living Torah, both oral and written. Further, this explains why [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s ascension occurred on Lag B’[Omer](omer.html), the [festival](festival.html) of the [Oral Torah](orallaw.html).

Torah Shebalpeh requires good character. It requires someone who can learn from a [teacher](teacher.html) and with a [study](study.html) partner. Torah Shebalpeh requires us to get along because we must learn from another.

Hakham Akiva's students each had different opinions about the meaning of what they were learning. Each [one](one.html) wanted his friends to understand everything the way he thought was right. They argued with each other, each [one](one.html) only trying to prove that he was right. They thought that they were being nice to their friends by doing this; they really wanted their friends to [know](daat.html) the right way. What they did not realize was that more than [one](one.html) person could be right, and you have to respect different opinions (as long as they are based on the Torah).

Hakham Akiva’s students were stingy with each other in the transmission of Torah in order to avoid giving respect. If we cannot get along, if we do not have respect for [one](one.html) another, then we cannot learn Torah Shebalpeh. Lag BaOmer is therefore a [time](time.html) when we get along with each other in order that we should build our character and in order to make Israel what it is supposed to be.

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) records that on the day on which Rashbi (Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai) died, he revealed the secrets of the Torah, and the house became filled with light and [fire](fire.html) to the point that the students could not approach or even look at Rashbi. Rashbi not only died on Lag B’[Omer](omer.html), but he was also born on the same day. It is quoted in the [name](name.html) of the Ari that Hakham Akiva ordained Rashbi and his colleagues on Lag BaOmer, thus ensuring the continuity of the Torah Shebalpeh after the death of his earlier students.

[***Zohar***](orallaw.html) ***3:291b*** *Until now, I have held the secrets close to my* [*heart*](body.html)*. But now, before I die, I wish to reveal all. Hakham Abba reports: "I couldn't even lift my* [*head*](body.html) *due to the intense light emanating from Hakham Shimon. The entire day the house was filled with* [*fire*](fire.html)*, and nobody could get close due to the wall of* [*fire*](fire.html) *and light. At the end of the day, the* [*fire*](fire.html) *finally subsided, and I was able to look at the* [*face*](body.html) *of Hakham Shimon: He was dead, wrapped in his Talit, lying on his right side, and smiling."*

# III. [Mourning](mourning.html)

It is now the almost universal practice among traditional [Jews](gen-jew.html) to observe the season of counting the "[Omer](omer.html)" as a [time](time.html) of sadness, by refraining from activities that are associated with gaiety and celebration. The [mourning](mourning.html) period lasts from [Pesach](passover.html) ([Passover](passover.html)) until LagBaOmer.

Lag BaOmer is a festive day on the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [calendar](calendar.html), celebrated with outings on which children traditionally p[lay with](marriageact.html) bow and arrows[[4]](#footnote-4) (commemorating the Bar Kochba revolt), bonfires, and other joyous [events](feasts.html).

These Lag B Omer practices are an enigma to many scholars. When we realize that the Triennial Torah reading cycle places the present Torah Seder, “Tol’dot Noach” and “Vayzkhor Elohim Et Noach” in the temporal purlieu of Lag BaOmer, we can readily understand why the bow and arrow is an ancient game for children to play at Lag BaOmer. The rainbow, a token of peace fits well with these materials as G-d makes a covenant with the earth.

What is the inner [connection](connection.html) between Lag B'[Omer](omer.html) and outings to parks? Let us understand more about this [connection](connection.html). Lag B'[Omer](omer.html), as you [know](daat.html), is Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's day of rejoicing. In the very beginning of his book, the [Zohar](orallaw.html), Rabbi Shimon writes about children and about flowers growing in a field. [First](one.html), Rabbi Shimon explains that when [Jewish](gen-jew.html) children learn Torah they uphold the [world](worlds.html). Then he quotes the verse "The buds were seen in the land”. This section is about the [creation](bara.html) of the [world](worlds.html), for, "When were the buds seen in the land”? On the [third](three.html) day of [creation](bara.html), when the earth began to grow grass and trees. When do [Jewish](gen-jew.html) children see the earth growing grass and trees? When they go on outings to parks and fields on Lag B'[Omer](omer.html), of course!

Many visit the resting place, in Miron in Northern Israel, of the great sage and mystic Hakham Shimon bar Yochai (commonly [known](daat.html) by the acronym of his [name](name.html), *Rashbi*).

Lag BaOmer is a day of rejoicing on which [Jews](gen-jew.html) celebrate their unity by gathering together and celebrating. Significantly, it is the yahrzeit (the anniversary of the passing) of the great Talmudic sage, Hakham Shimon bar Yochai, whose teachings highlighted the concept of unity by drawing attention to the verse:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 133:1*** *"How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to sit together."*

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Vayikra, Section 3, Page 59b*** *It has been* [*taught*](teacher.html) *in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Jose: Once the people were short of rain and they sent a deputation to R. Simeon, R. Jesse, R. Hizkiah and the rest of the Companions. R. Simeon was on the point of going to visit R. Pinchas ben Jair, along with his son R. Eleazar. When he saw them he exclaimed: ‘“A song of ascents; Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *together in unity” (Ps. CXXXIII, 1). The expression “in unity”,’ he said, ‘refers to the* [*Cherubim*](angels.html)*. When their faces were turned to* [*one*](one.html) *another, it was well with the* [*world*](worlds.html)*-”how good and how pleasant”, but when the* [*male*](male+female.html) *turned his* [*face*](body.html) *from the* [*female*](male+female.html)*, it was ill with the* [*world*](worlds.html)*.*

# IV. Hakham Akiva

Chazal [teach](teacher.html) that Lag BaOmer’s significance lies with Hakham Akiva. Who is Hakham Akiva? Hakham Akiva was either a [convert](aliens.html) or the son of a [convert](aliens.html) who began to [study](study.html) Torah when he was [forty](forty.html) years old. Chazal understand that Hakham Akiva was [one](one.html) of the greatest Sages that ever lived.

Maimonides describes Rabbi Akiva as an "[arms](body.html) bearer of Bar Koziba".[[5]](#footnote-5) The source of Maimonides's assertion is a passage in the [Jerusalem](city.html) [Talmud](orallaw.html):

[***Jerusalem***](city.html)[***Talmud***](orallaw.html)***, Taanit chapter 4:5 page 68d*** *Rav Shimon Ben Yochai* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: "Akiva my master would expound the verse a* [*star*](mazaroth.html) *will come from* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *as 'Koziba will come from* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*.' When Rabbi Akiva would see Bar Koziba he would say, 'There is the King* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html)*.'"*

*Rav Yochanan ben Torta said: "Akiva, grass will grow from your cheeks and still the son of David will not come".*

Hakham Akiva was the armor bearer of Bar Kochba whom Hakham Akiva declared [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ([Messiah](mashiach.html)). This is our [first](one.html) [connection](connection.html) of the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) with Lag BaOmer. It is also well [known](daat.html) that most of Bar Kochba’s army was populated by Hakham Akiva’s Talmidim.

Hakham Akiva’s most famous talmid was Rashbi, *Hakham Shimon bar Yochai*, author of the [Zohar](orallaw.html), is also closely associated with Lag BaOmer. Every year on Lag BaOmer thousands of people [journey](stages.html) to his grave on his yahrtzeit which was also the day that he revealed the [secret](sod.html) ([sod](sod.html)) Kabbalistic side of the Torah, the [Zohar](orallaw.html). We have a tradition that Rashbi was married and received his smikha (ordination) on Lag BaOmer.

Several contemporary Hakhamin have written of the Lag BaOmer-Bar Kochba [connection](connection.html), including Hakham Adin Steinzaltz in his commentary to the [Talmud](orallaw.html)[[6]](#footnote-6). Dr. Nachum Wahrman, in his work *Chagei Yisrael U'Moadav*, writes:

*"[The cessation of Hakham Akiva's students' deaths on Lag BaOmer] is connected with Bar Kochba’s war with the Romans, because according to a tradition that took root in the* [*nation*](nations.html) *from ancient days, Hakham Akiva's students were the main force of Bar Kochba’s army. Similarly, it is accepted in the* [*nation*](nations.html) *that on the 18th day of* [*Iyar*](feasts.html) *(Lag BaOmer), an important turnabout took place in the battles in favor of Bar Kochba’s rebels. Coins found from those days, on* [*one*](one.html) *side of which was written 'Shimon' and on the other, 'For the* [*Freedom*](freedom.html) *of* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*,' are witness to the fact that Bar Kochba apparently succeeded in conquering* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, for a* [*time*](time.html)*, and there are those who estimate that this victory took place on Lag BaOmer."*

This day commemorates the beginning of the Great Revolt against the Romans, in the year 66C.E., just prior to the destruction of the Second [Temple](temple.html). According to Josephus, on the seventeenth of [Iyar](feasts.html) “many stood upon the roofs of the houses and threw down stones upon the heads of the Romans…”[[7]](#footnote-7). On the same night (the eve of Lag BaOmer) torches were lit on the tops of the mountains in order to announce the beginning of the revolt. Some sources trace the custom of lighting bonfires on Lag BaOmer to this historical [event](feasts.html)

Another reason we celebrate Lag BaOmer is that the epidemic which caused the death of Hakham Akiva's 24,000 disciples (12,000 pairs) ceased on that day[[8]](#footnote-8) according to the Shulchan Aruch HaRav 493:5. The Askera[[9]](#footnote-9) [plague](plagues.html) lasted [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) days. The [Talmud](orallaw.html) speaks of the reason for the death of these 24,000 Talmidim:

***Yevamoth 62b*** *It was said that R. Akiva had* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *thousand pairs of disciples, from Gabbatha to Antipatris; and all of them died at the same* [*time*](time.html) *because they did not treat each other with respect. The* [*world*](worlds.html) *remained desolate until R. Akiva came to our Masters in the South and* [*taught*](teacher.html) *the Torah to them. These were R. Meir, R. Judah, R. Jose, R. Simeon and R. Eleazar b. Shammua; and it was they who revived the Torah at that* [*time*](time.html)*. A Tanna* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: All of them died between* [*Passover*](passover.html) *and* [*Pentecost*](shavuot.html)*. R. Hama b. Abba or, it might be said, R. Hiyya b. Abin said: All of them died a cruel death. What was it?-R. Nahman replied: Croup (Askera).*

It is [known](daat.html) that we [mourn](mourning.html) during this period for the 24,000 Talmidim (students) of Hakham Akiva who died because they did not treat [one](one.html) another respectfully[[10]](#footnote-10).

The Levush states that the Talmidim of R. Akiva who died during the days of the [Omer](omer.html), did not die on any of the days on which Tachanun is not said, incorporating the [seven](seven.html) days of [Pesach](passover.html), the [two](two.html) days of [Rosh Chodesh](chodesh.html) [Iyar](feasts.html), [one](one.html) of [Rosh Chodesh](chodesh.html) [Sivan](feasts.html) and the [seven](seven.html) intervening Shabbatot. This totals seventeen days, leaving [thirty](thirty.html)-[two](two.html) days on which the Talmidim did die. Hence the Minhag to observe [thirty](thirty.html)-[two](two.html) days of semi-[mourning](mourning.html) during the [Omer](omer.html).

And the Maharal gives this as the reason for the rejoicing on Lag BaOmer. He seems to maintain that R. Akiva's Talmidim died from the beginning of the [Omer](omer.html) until Erev Lag BaOmer. This is also the opinion of the Nofes Tzufim, who maintains that R. Shimon bar Yochai was the last of R. Akiva's Talmidim to die, on Lag BaOmer, at which point the Dinim (judgment) became sweet, which is why it became a day of rejoicing.

When we [study](study.html) Parashat Balak, we see that Bilaam failed [time](time.html) and again to curse Israel, but rather blessed them. At the very end, before he departed, however, he gave Balak advice on how to really undermine the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people by enticing them to [sin](sin.html) with the Midianite women, and incur [HaShem](hashem.html)'s wrath. Balak took Bilaam's advice and the result was a [plague](plagues.html) in which 24,000 people died. It was these same 24,000 souls who, as gilgulim, were [known](daat.html) as Hakham Akiva's talmidim and these talmidim died from [Pesach](passover.html) until the [thirty](thirty.html)-second day of the [Omer](omer.html), a total of [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) days.

Aaron the [High Priest](priests.html) was distinguished by his ability to unite all the people. When Aaron passed away, the Torah states that the ‘entire [nation](nations.html) cried’ and mourned after him, a statement that is reserved for Aaron alone, distinguishing him even from Moshe Rabeinu. Rashi explains that Aaron was a pursuer of peace, he fostered love between all the people and as such was beloved and remembered by the entire [nation](nations.html).

Hakham Akiva [taught](teacher.html) that “love your fellow as yourself” is a cardinal principle in Torah, indeed, this is the most famous of his teachings. This was also [one](one.html) of the cardinal principles [taught](teacher.html) by [Yeshua](yeshua.html) as well:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 5:43*** *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and* [*pray*](prayer.html) *for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*: for he maketh his* [*sun*](hachama.html) *to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *is perfect.*

Thus Lag BaOmer also carries the theme of Ahavat Israel, the imperative to love and respect [one](one.html)’s fellow. This theme, Ahavat Israel, was also a major theme of [Yeshua](yeshua.html), [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html):

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 6:27*** *But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28 Bless them that curse you, and* [*pray*](prayer.html) *for them which despitefully use you. 29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the* [*one*](one.html) *cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. 30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*

Hakham Yochanan ben Torta is the author of the well-accepted view that the cause of the destruction of the Second [Temple](temple.html) was groundless hatred.[[11]](#footnote-11) We have heard that the talmidim of Hakham Akiva died because they did not treat [one](one.html) another with respect. Therefore Rav Yochanan is adamant that the cause for the destruction of the Second [Temple](temple.html) must be healed before [one](one.html) can [speak](mashal.html) of a [new](new.html) messianic movement. Further, he postulated that the King [Mashiach](mashiach.html) must come with [world](worlds.html) changing miracles.

[Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html) ([Yeshua](yeshua.html)) was [one](one.html) of [four](four.html) men whose names were given before they were born. This characteristic is intimately connected with those who are intimately connected with the [Temple](temple.html), as I have attempted to show in my paper on the [Temple](temple.html). This suggests that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) *is* The [Temple](temple.html) as [Yeshua](yeshua.html) succinctly stated:

***Yochanan (John) 2:12*** *After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. 13 And the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html)*’* [*Passover*](passover.html) *was at* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, and* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *went up to* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, 14 And found in the* [*temple*](temple.html) *those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money* [*sitting*](mashal.html)*: 15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the* [*temple*](temple.html)*, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise. 17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath* [*eaten*](eating.html) *me up. 18 Then answered the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html) *and said unto him, What* [*sign*](signs.html) *shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? 19* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *answered and said unto them,* ***Destroy this*** [***temple***](temple.html)***, and in*** [***three***](three.html) ***days I will raise it up.*** *20 Then said the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html)*,* [*Forty*](forty.html) *and* [*six*](six.html) *years was this* [*temple*](temple.html) *in building, and wilt thou rear it up in* [*three*](three.html) *days? 21* ***But he spake of the*** [***temple***](temple.html) ***of his*** [***body***](body.html)***.*** *22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *had said.*

The King [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will come when the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people can be forged into [one](one.html) cohesive [body](body.html). In the same way that Moshe Rabeinu as the redeemer of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people led them [out of Egypt](thebirth.html) in total unity. This was seen when they stood at Mt [Sinai](stages.html) and declared as a single man:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 24:7*** *… All that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath said will we do, and we will hear.*

[Mashiach](mashiach.html) will come at a [time](time.html) when the unity of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people is so complete that there will never be baseless hatred. When He comes the students will all treat each other with respect. King [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will be the [head](body.html) of the unified [body](body.html) of Israel:

***Colossians 1:12*** *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the* [*inheritance*](inherit.html) *of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have* [*redemption*](redemption.html) *through his* [*blood*](body.html)*, even the* [*forgiveness*](forgive.html) *of* [*sins*](sin.html)*: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the* [*head*](body.html) *of the* [*body*](body.html)*, the congregation: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

The passage which tells us about the death of Hakham Akiva's students seems to vindicate at least part of Rav Yochanan ben Torta's observation: A [generation](toldot.html) which is no better than the [generation](toldot.html) which suffered the destruction cannot expect to witness the rebuilding of the [Temple](temple.html).

The [mourning](mourning.html) of Sefirah is not for the talmidim alone, but for the failure of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people to be worthy of the messianic age, for the fall of the curtain on [Jewish](gen-jew.html) independence, [Jewish](gen-jew.html) hopes and [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Messianic ambitions.

The days between [Passover](passover.html) and Lag BaOmer mark the [redemption](redemption.html) that did not happen. We [mourn](mourning.html) that failure. Thus, during the [first](one.html) [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) days the light that governed the [redemption](redemption.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html) dominates, only to be replaced by the light that was involved in the reception of Torah for the last seventeen days. The final seventeen days, the Supernal Light of Torah was called upon in its revelation in [creation](bara.html), is for acquiring a taste for spirituality.

While ultimately Hakham Akiva and his [generation](toldot.html) failed, we must recognize that Hakham Akiva was completely correct in his understanding of the process, and the capability of man. Too many [Jews](gen-jew.html) are followers of Rav Yochanan Ben Torta, awaiting the miraculous as a prerequisite for [redemption](redemption.html). These nay-sayers wait passively for the [sign](signs.html) from [heaven](heaven.html) that the [time](time.html) for [redemption](redemption.html) has come.

We must follow Hakham Akiva, and take proactive steps, accepting our partnership with the Almighty. Drop after drop after drop adds up to a tidal wave of activity. When we succeed, the days between [Passover](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html) will reacquire their original identity and become a [time](time.html) of joy. When we succeed, The King [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will return on Lag BaOmer even as He left on Lag BaOmer:

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:6*** *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this* [*time*](time.html) *restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to* [*know*](daat.html) *the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *as he went up, behold,* [*two*](two.html) *men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*? this same* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, which is taken up from you into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*.*

Hakham Elazer ben Aruch tells us that a good [heart](body.html), a Lev Tov, is a prerequisite for Torah. The [two](two.html) [Hebrew](hebrew.html) words of “Lev Tov” have a gematria of 32 + 17 = 49, the levels of progress, starting from the [Omer](omer.html) [offering](korbanot.html). The [first](one.html) 32 days we [mourn](mourning.html) ever-present evil, for our [Temple](temple.html) is still not rebuilt. Tov (good, 17) reflects the last 17 days, after Lag BaOmer, when glimmerings of goodness and [good news](mishna1.html) break thru.

# V. Hakham Shimon bar Yochai





The Tomb of Hakham Shimon bar Yochai,  
with the Town of Safed in the Background

In this section I would like to explore the facinating [connection](connection.html) that Hakham Shimor Bar Yochai, [known](daat.html) by the acronym *Rashbi*, has with Lag BaOmer. I would also like to explore Safed (also spelled: Zefat, Tsfat, Zfat, Safad, Safes, Safet, Tzfat, Tzefiya) and it’s [connection](connection.html) to this [holiday](festival.html).

Let’s start by getting a glimpse of the greatness of this great sage:

[***Succah***](succoth.html) ***45b*** *Rabbi Shimon said, "I have the power to correct the entire* [*world*](worlds.html)*; I can exempt the whole* [*world*](worlds.html) *from judgment.".*

[***Shabbat***](sabbath.html) ***33b;*** [***Succah***](succoth.html) ***45b*** *Rabbi Shimon was leaving the cave where he and his son Rabbi Elazar had been in hiding from the Romans for* [*thirteen*](thirteen.html) *years. They were talking about the righteousness which exists in the* [*world*](worlds.html) *when Rabbi Shimon said "It's enough that you and I are in the* [*world*](worlds.html)*." Another* [*time*](time.html) *he said, "I myself have sufficient* [*merit*](merit.html) *for the entire* [*world*](worlds.html)*."*

Lag B'[Omer](omer.html) is the day of the passing of Rashbi. The day on which he left this [world](worlds.html), Rashbi revealed many of the hidden secrets of the Torah, the hidden light. The revelation of the hidden light is like the revelation of the colors in the rainbow.

It has been noted that the story of Rashbi’s stay in the cave is related in the [Gemara](orallaw.html)[[12]](#footnote-12), on folio page [number](nchart.html) [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) and that it is the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) [time](time.html) that he is mentioned in the [Talmud](orallaw.html):

***Shabbath 33b*** *Now, why is he [R. Judah son of R. Ila'i] called the* [*first*](one.html) *speaker on all occasions?-For R. Judah, R. Jose, and R. Simeon were* [*sitting*](mashal.html)*, and Judah, a son of proselytes, was* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *near them. R. Judah commenced [the discussion] by observing, ‘How fine are the works of this people! They have made streets, they have built bridges, they have erected baths.’ R. Jose was silent. R. Simeon b. Yohai answered and said, ‘All that they made they made for themselves; they built market-places, to set harlots in them; baths, to rejuvenate themselves; bridges, to levy tolls for them.’ Now, Judah the son of proselytes went and related their talk, which reached the government. They decreed: Judah, who exalted [us], shall be exalted, Jose, who was silent, shall be* [*exiled*](galuyot.html) *to Sepphoris; Simeon, who censured, let him be executed.*

*He and his son went and hid themselves in the Beth HaMidrash,[and] his wife brought him bread and a mug of water and they dined. [But] when the decree became more severe be said to his son, Women are of unstable temperament: she may be put to the torture and expose us.’ So they went and hid in a cave. A miracle occurred and a carob-tree and a water well were created for them. They would strip their garments and sit up to their necks in sand. The whole day they* [*studied*](study.html)*; when it was* [*time*](time.html) *for* [*prayers*](prayer.html) *they robed, covered themselves,* [*prayed*](prayer.html)*, and then put off their garments again, so that they should not wear out. Thus they dwelt* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *years in the cave. Then Elijah came and stood at the entrance to the cave and exclaimed, Who will inform the son of Yohai that the emperor is dead and his decree annulled? So they emerged. Seeing a man ploughing and sowing, they exclaimed, ‘They forsake life eternal and engage in life temporal!’ Whatever they cast their* [*eyes*](body.html) *upon was immediately burnt up.[[13]](#footnote-13) Thereupon a Heavenly Echo came forth and cried out, ‘Have ye emerged to destroy My* [*world*](worlds.html)*: Return to your cave!’ So they returned and dwelt there* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *months, saying, ‘The punishment of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *in Gehenna is [limited to]* [*twelve*](twelve.html) *months.’ A Heavenly Echo then came forth and said, ‘Go forth from your cave!’ Thus.’; they issued: wherever R. Eleazar wounded, R. Simeon healed. Said he to him, ‘My son! You and I are sufficient for the* [*world*](worlds.html)*.’ On the eve of the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html) *before sunset they saw an old man holding* [*two*](two.html) *bundles of myrtle and running at twilight. What are these for?’ they asked him. ‘They are in honour of the* [*Sabbath*](sabbath.html)*,’ he replied. ‘But* [*one*](one.html) *should suffice you’?-*[*One*](one.html) *is for ‘Remember-’ and* [*one*](one.html) *for ‘Observe.’ Said he to his son, ‘See how precious are the* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *to Israel.’ Thereat their minds were tranquilized. R. Phinchas b. Ya'ir his son-in-*[*law*](law.html) *heard [thereof] and went out to meet him. He took him into the baths and massaged his flesh. Seeing the clefts in his* [*body*](body.html) *he wept and the* [*tears*](mashal.html) *streamed from his* [*eyes*](body.html)*. ‘Woe to me that I see you in such a state!’ he cried out. ‘Happy are you that you see me thus,’ he retorted, ‘for if you did not see me in such a state you would not find me thus [learned]. For originally, when R. Simeon b. Yohai raised a difficulty, R. Phinehas b. Ya'ir would give him* [*thirteen*](thirteen.html) *answers, whereas subsequently when R. Phinehas b. Ya'ir raised a difficulty, R. Simeon b. Yohai would give him* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *answers.*

This interesting [Gemara](orallaw.html) [needs](needs.html) to be unpacked a bit so that we can understand what is going on. Remember that [Gemara](orallaw.html) is [remez](remez.html) literature. This means that the various items are hints to something far deeper. Before I begin to unpack this, let me note that there are some who say that Hakham Shimon ben Yochai and his son exited the cave on Lag B’[Omer](omer.html).[[14]](#footnote-14)

Okay, lets examine some of the items mentioned in this [Gemara](orallaw.html).

The [Gemara](orallaw.html) indicates that Hakham Yochai and his son were buried up to their necks. The [*neck*](body.html) is what the Torah uses when it is hinting to the [connection](connection.html) between [heaven](heaven.html) and earth, between the upper [world](worlds.html) of the [head](body.html) and the lower [world](worlds.html) of the [body](body.html). Thus the picture presented is that of [two](two.html) humans who are a part of the earth (buried in the sand as it will be buried in death) and at the same [time](time.html) they are connected to the upper [world](worlds.html) in their total focus. Additionally, the burial means that there is no more movement. There is no more *doing* and no more *going*. This is what happened at Matan Torah when [HaShem](hashem.html) [spoke](mashal.html), there was no movement anywhere on earth.[[15]](#footnote-15) The meaning of this is clear. We move because we have [needs](needs.html). When all of our [needs](needs.html) are met, there is no more movement. Being buried up to the [neck](body.html) effectively buried the [body](body.html) and negated it. Hakham Yochai and his son no longer had [bodies](body.html). This is an allusion to the [Olam HaBa](futures.html), the [World](futures.html) To Come.

What is the meaning of the carob tree? We [know](daat.html) that a carob tree takes [seventy](seventy.html) years to bear fruit. [[16]](#footnote-16) So, not only was the sprouting of this tree miraculous, but the [time](time.html) to produce fruit was equally miraculous. Chazal [teach](teacher.html) that the years of a man are [seventy](seventy.html) years.[[17]](#footnote-17) This [teaches](teacher.html) us that the carob tree fruit is something which is beyond the lifetime of a man. Further, [seventy](seventy.html) years is the years of the [Babylonian](bavel.html) [exile](galuyot.html).[[18]](#footnote-18) This suggests that this tree is suggesting that we are looking at the age beyond the current [exile](galuyot.html). As the carob is sweet, so we would expect that the end of the [exile](galuyot.html) will be a [time](time.html) of sweetness. Finally, we can also view the fruiting of the carob tree as a return to the state we had in [Gan Eden](eden.html). In [Gan Eden](eden.html) when [one](one.html) planted a tree he [ate](eating.html) of it’s fruit the same day! This carob tree suggests that Hakham Yochai and his son had returned to [Gan Eden](eden.html) as it was before the [sin](sin.html) of [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon. This “return to the [future](future.html)” is what is spoken of in Kohelet:

***Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) 1:9*** *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no* [*new*](new.html) *thing under the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*.*

Just as an aside, the Ben Ish Chai tells us that the carobs tasted like the manna. This makes another [connection](connection.html) that we need to note: As the manna was miraculous and helped the people to receive Torah on [Shavuot](shavuot.html), so also was the carob miraculous and helped Hakham Yochai and his son receive Torah secrets. Thus we learn that the Torah is only given to those who [eat](eating.html) manna, to those who become a part of [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

The cave, during second [Temple](temple.html) days, was a place where people were buried. A cave also has the connotation of a [connection](connection.html). So, for example, the cave at Machpela was said to be the [connection](connection.html) to [Gan Eden](eden.html). Thus a cave is a portal to the next [world](worlds.html). In some way we would say that Hakham Shimon ben Yochai was in [Olam HaBa](futures.html) even while he was still in this [world](worlds.html). Hakham Shimon ben Yochai and his son exited the cave on Lag B’[Omer](omer.html). To suggest that this portal is related to Lag B’[Omer](omer.html).

Why does the [Gemara](orallaw.html) tell us that Hakham Yochai was commanded to go back to *his* cave? As a hiding place, he surely didn’t own it. We can see by what happened that *his* cave was quite unique. While most go into their cave and never come back out in this [world](worlds.html), Hakham Shimon went to his cave and came back out. Because he could come and go, this cave was called *his* cave. It was as though death had no power over him.

The well of water is another interesting symbol. Throughout the Torah we see that whenever we see water we always are [speaking](mashal.html) of Torah. A well is dug by human effort. It is not a naturally occurring phenomenon. The water on the other [hand](fourteen.html), is entirely up to [HaShem](hashem.html). No amount of human effort will create or produce water. Taken together, these [two](two.html) indicate significant human effort combined with the blessing of [HaShem](hashem.html) is required to derive the secrets of the Torah.

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) relates[[19]](#footnote-19) that [three](three.html) of the greatest men of the Torah encountered their [future](future.html) wives at wells of water. Their names were [Yitzchak](isaac.html), [Yaaqob](israelja.html), and Moses. This suggests that the well of water in the cave is a place where Hakham Yochai and his son meet [Mashiach](mashiach.html), their [future](future.html) spouse.

This [teaches](teacher.html) us that Hakham Yochai and his son have Torah at their fingertips, but this did not come except through their great labor.

The [twelve](twelve.html) years, plus [one](one.html), are a clear allusion to the [tribes](tribes.html) of Israel which are always listed as [twelve](twelve.html), yet there are [thirteen](thirteen.html) if [one](one.html) were to list them all.

Hakham Shimon ben Yochai took off his clothes to [study](study.html) Torah in order to show that he had stepped out of his [body](body.html) (which is like a suit of clothes) to a higher level. When he would [pray](prayer.html) for the [physical](physical.html), he would put on his clothes (he would step back into his [body](body.html)). In the same way, when we burn clothes, on Lag B’[Omer](omer.html), we are connecting with the idea that this [body](body.html) is like a set of clothes which we can shed at will to achieve a higher [world](worlds.html). The burning is an allusion to the conversion of the [physical](physical.html) (clothes) into the [spiritual](physical.html) ([fire](fire.html)). Another way to understand their lack of clothes is to view them like [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon before the [sin](sin.html). The Torah [teaches](teacher.html) that [Adam](adam.html) and Chava were naked and unashamed.[[20]](#footnote-20) This suggests that Hakham Yochai and his son had returned to [Gan Eden](eden.html) as it was before [Adam](adam.html)’s [sin](sin.html).

The sand effectively negates the [needs](needs.html) of the [body](body.html). Our [Gemara](orallaw.html) has nothing to say about excretion. The lack of excretion was also seen in the wilderness when we came [out of Egypt](thebirth.html). Thus our closeness with [HaShem](hashem.html) and our supernatural [food](food.html) (manna in the wilderness and carob in the cave) combine to show that there is no more evil to be separated from the good. There is only the good. The manna fell at ones [feet](heel.html) if he were righteous and involved in the [study](study.html) of Torah. It was ready-to-[eat](eating.html) without any preparation. In the same way, the carobs were at their fingertips and they required no preparation.

The end of this [Gemara](orallaw.html) shows how those in the mundane [world](worlds.html) still have a taste of the [Olam HaBa](futures.html) through their honoring and guarding of [Shabbat](sabbath.html). They use their labor of the [six](six.html) days to connect to the [Shabbat](sabbath.html). They picture the [six](six.html) thousand years of labor followed by the Messianic age when all will be [Shabbat](sabbath.html). This seventh millenium is itself a prelude to the [Olam HaBa](futures.html). In this seventh millenium, we will still have *going* and *doing* as pictured by the old man. Never the less, in the messianic age we will be connecting with [Shabbat](sabbath.html) through all of our actions.

When Hakham Yochai and his son caused things to burn up, this is the reminder of the bonfires and of the renewal of the earth at the end of the age. [HaShem](hashem.html) stopped this [fire](fire.html) because it was not yet [time](time.html) for this renewal. Thus Hakham Yochai and his son go back to the cave for [twelve](twelve.html) months. The [Gemara](orallaw.html) indicates that this is analagous to the [wicked](wicked.html) spending [twelve](twelve.html) months in Gehenna. So the cave symbolizes death and then the cave symbolizes the dead in Gehenna.

When Hakham Yochai encounters the old man on erev [Shabbat](sabbath.html), we learn another significant thing about [time](time.html). This [time](time.html), just before [Shabbat](sabbath.html) starts, is the [time](time.html) when this [world](worlds.html) ‘kisses’ the next [world](worlds.html). This [time](time.html) speaks to the messianic age when we nned to hurry to make last minute preparations for the messianic age and the [Olam HaBa](futures.html). The sweetness of the myrtle (taken by Sephardim for [Shabbat](sabbath.html) evening) is given to remind of the [two](two.html) [Shabbat](sabbath.html) [commands](cmds613.html) to guard and to remember. We recall that the sweet smell of the myrtle is to give pleasure to the additional soul that we receive on [Shabbat](sabbath.html). The sense of smell is the sense of the soul. At this [time](time.html) we give precedence to the soul rather than to the [body](body.html). After all, it is how the righteous judge. This [time](time.html) just before [Shabbat](sabbath.html) is the [time](time.html) when [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon was created. This [teaches](teacher.html) us that man was not made for work, but rather he was made for the messianic age and the [Olam Haba](futures.html). This [time](time.html) when man was created is ripe for [redemption](redemption.html), it is ripe for the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) of [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and of the messianic age. As we have mentioned before, Hakham Shimon ben Yochai and his son exited the cave on Lag B’[Omer](omer.html). They exited at this [time](time.html) just before [Shabbat](sabbath.html). They exited when this [world](worlds.html) kisses the next [world](worlds.html). This [time](time.html) of ‘[kissing](mashal.html)’ is the [time](time.html) of Lag B’[Omer](omer.html).

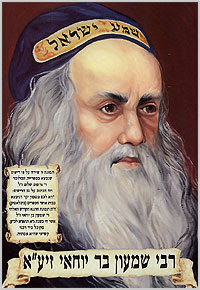
The [Gemara](orallaw.html) tells us that Elija came to announce to Hakham Yochai that he and his son could leave the cave. Why Elijah? When we hear Elijah [coming](coming.html), we hear the echos of the prophet Malachi who is sent before [Mashiach](mashiach.html) to prepare the way for the messianic era.[[21]](#footnote-21) Thus we have a hint to the fact that this [Gemara](orallaw.html) is [speaking](mashal.html) of the [time](time.html) just before the messianic era, an era where we begin our return to [Gan Eden](eden.html). This is the beginning that starts on Lag B’[Omer](omer.html).

Now, why does our [Gemara](orallaw.html) include both Hakham Yochai and Hakham Eleazar, his son? If we go back to our observation that the focus of Lag B’[Omer](omer.html) is Hakham Yochai in order to deflect the Romans from focusing on Hakham Akiba who is the [teacher](teacher.html) and the greater of the [two](two.html). Remembering this observation suggests that the cave contains the [teacher](teacher.html) (Hakham Akiba) and his talmid (Hakham Yochai) with Hakham Yochai and his son as stand-ins for Hakham Akiba and Hakham Yochai. This also explains why Hakham Yochai does all the talking. This explanation is reinforced when we understand that the relationship of a [teacher](teacher.html) and his talmid is a [remez](remez.html) to the relationship of a father to his son.

Taken together, this [Gemara](orallaw.html) is showing us the nature of the the [Olam HaBa](futures.html). This is a [world](worlds.html) without movement. A [world](worlds.html) where Israel can [study](study.html) Torah without the cares of this [world](worlds.html) interrupting us. It is a [world](worlds.html) when [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is the [head](body.html) and Israel is in a [marriage](mashal.html) [covenant](covenant.html) with [HaShem](hashem.html). It is a [world](worlds.html) without [sin](sin.html), hunger, thirst, or any worry.

The [Gemara](orallaw.html)[[22]](#footnote-22) narrates how Rashbi and his son hid in a cave for [twelve](twelve.html) years after fleeing from the Roman decree of death. There, covered in sand, fed by a carob tree and drinking from a spring, the greatest secrets of the Torah were composed. Emerging from the cave, Rashbi perceived [Jewish](gen-jew.html) farmers working. Dismayed by their lack of Torah [study](study.html), he "burned them up!" His shock is understandable in light of his position that [Jews](gen-jew.html) should only [study](study.html) Torah and not work. He is considered to be the only person whose Torah [study](study.html) is so great that he need not [pray](prayer.html) (although he did [pray](prayer.html) in the cave). Nonetheless, Rashbi and his son were ordered to return to the cave for another year, after which a mellower Rashbi emerged, whose love for every simple [Jew](gen-jew.html) was all too apparent. This too[[23]](#footnote-23) was on Lag BaOmer.

There is a recorded tradition in the writings of the HiDA (Hakham Haim David Azulai), that Rashbi, author of the [Zohar](orallaw.html), received the sacred traditions of the Kabbalah from Hakham Akiva specifically on the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day of the [Omer](omer.html), Lag BaOmer. This suggests a tradition of the revelation of the [sod](sod.html), or [secret](sod.html), level Torah on this day.

Throughout the [Talmud](orallaw.html) we find that Rashbi had unique attributes which made him stand out among all his colleagues. Rashbi was a unifying force, his yahrzeit on Lag BaOmer is celebrated by [Jews](gen-jew.html) of all backgrounds. His is the only yahrzeit that has become a [holiday](festival.html) among all the people.

What was the uniqueness of the Rashbi? He openly united and integrated both dimensions of Torah: The esoteric and the exoteric, the Talmudic and the mystical, the [body](body.html) and soul of Torah. Rashbi is both [one](one.html) of the greatest Talmudic scholars and the author of the [Zohar](orallaw.html), the classical work of Kabbalah.

The Rashbi united the ‘[body](body.html) and soul’ of Torah, so he also united the [body](body.html) and soul of people, and thus united all people, regardless of background and school of thought. We can see this unity every year, on Lag BaOmer, at his grave. At his grave we see [Jews](gen-jew.html) of every flavor and color, all united in their joy.

The *Kaf-Hachaim[[24]](#footnote-24)* remarks that Lag BaOmer is the day celebrated in Rashbi’s honor, and it was his will that we should rejoice on that day.

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 57:1*** *The Tzaddik is lost; yet nobody bothers to note what has happened. People of kindness are taken away; yet no* [*one*](one.html) *understands. It because of the evil that approaches, the Tzaddik is lost.*

This is the explanation of the verse, "The Tzaddik is lost...because of the evil that approaches..." The Tzaddik's entire being is devoted to destroying and combating evil. However, his ability to do this is limited by his [physical](physical.html) [body](body.html). Therefore, [HaShem](hashem.html) removes this Tzaddik from the [world](worlds.html) prior to the evil's [coming](coming.html). This is so that the Tzaddik's [body](body.html) will no longer restrict his efforts to help Israel. In [heaven](heaven.html), he is free to mitigate the harsh decree.

This pasuk in Yeshayahu can now help us understand that [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s ascension and departure from this [world](worlds.html), was for our benefit, as we read:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 53:10-12*** *Yet it pleased* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an* [*offering*](korbanot.html) *for* [*sin*](sin.html)*, he shall see his* [*seed*](flower.html)*, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *shall prosper in his* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *shall my righteous servant* [*justify*](justification.html) *many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the* [*sin*](sin.html) *of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

***Romans 8:31-34*** *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right* [*hand*](mashal.html) *of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

This is the true reason for the great celebration on Lag BaOmer. On the 33rd Day of the [Omer](omer.html) many, many years ago, Rashbi’s powers to bring help and [salvation](salvation.html) to all of Am Israel increased manifold.[[25]](#footnote-25)



View from Safed

## Safed - צְפַת

Safed is a [city](city.html) on a hill. It is 900 meters (3200 [feet](heel.html)) above sea level. Safed is Israel's highest town. The [city](city.html) is most closely associated with [Jewish](gen-jew.html) mysticism, the kabbalah, whose foremost exponent, Hakham [Isaac](isaac.html) Luria, The Ari, lived and [taught](teacher.html) there. The [Zohar](orallaw.html) (meaning *splendor* or *radiance*) was written by Rashbi, near Safed. Besides the kabbalists, Safad also attracted numerous other [Jewish](gen-jew.html) scholars and spirtualists, including [Joseph](joseph.html) Caro, the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, Rabbi Moshe Cordovero and Solomon Alkabetz, composer of the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) hymn *Lecha Dodi.* This calls to mind what the Master of Nazareth said:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 15:13*** *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under* [*foot*](heel.html) *of men. 14 Ye are the light of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*. A* [*city*](city.html) *that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*.*

Thus we understand that Safed was the [city](city.html) on a hill with a great light ([Zohar](orallaw.html)).

Meron, where Rashbi is buried, is a village just outside of Safed.

Safed is also to play an important role in the final [redemption](redemption.html). The Meam Loez, in the [name](name.html) of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, says that the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will come from Safed on his way to [Jerusalem](city.html). The Ari HaKodesh said that until the [third](three.html) [Temple](temple.html) is built, the Shechinah rests above Safed.

Safed is the fulcrum where the [spiritual](physical.html) meets the [physical](physical.html). The Ari explained that the mystical dimensions of the Torah are a "*kabbala*", literally "something that is received". It is not a [knowledge](knowledge.html) that can be attained through studying a text, but an understanding that must be "received" from a a [teacher](teacher.html) who himself received from [one](one.html) before him. Thus the mystical dimension of the Torah is hidden, but it was revealed by Rashbi.

In our [generation](toldot.html) we are close to the completion of the [sixth](six.html) [millennium](millenium.html). This dark [generation](toldot.html) desperately [needs](needs.html) the revelation of Torah and [Mashiach](mashiach.html), therefore, we have been permitted to have the teachings of the Ari and those of the [Zohar](orallaw.html) revealed in a most significant way. From our [generation](toldot.html) onwards, the words of the [Zohar](orallaw.html) will begin to be revealed more and more until their whole measure is revealed according to the will of [HaShem](hashem.html).

In the light of this we can now understand the words of Rabbi Kook (*Orot ha-Kodesh*, I, p. 141):

*Revealing the mystical in "the last* [*generations*](toldot.html)*" to* [*purify*](purity.html) *the hearts and occupy the minds with sublime thoughts whose origins are in the secrets of the Torah, will become, in the last* [*generation*](toldot.html)*, utterly essential to the preservation of Judaism. The descent of the* [*generation*](toldot.html)*, which led to the necessity of employing this lofty means, is itself the ascent.*

# VI. The Rainbow



Lag B’Omer takes place of the 18th day of the second month. However, in the beginning the second month was not Iyar, rather the second month was Heshvan, according to the Gemara.[[26]](#footnote-26) The Torah teaches us that the flood began on the seventeenth day of the second month:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 7:11*** *In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.*

This means that the first full day of the flood was the eighteenth day of the second month!

From this we understand that Lag B’Omer is the bimodal equivalent of the mabul, the flood. As we examine the customs of Lag B’Omer you will constantly see the flood motifs coming through.

The biblical calendar of agriculturally-based religious holidays divides the year neatly into two halves (the early and the latter rains). On the 15th of Tishri, we celebrate the fall harvest with Succoth and six months later, the spring harvest coincides with our celebration of Pesach. Each of these festivals lasts for seven days and then is followed by an extra gathering, an **atzeret**, at its conclusion. However, the atzeret celebrations of Succoth and Pesach differ in their timing. The concluding festival of Succoth, now called Shemini Atzeret, happens immediately at the conclusion of the holiday, giving Succoth the feeling of being an eight day celebration, whereas the atzeret of Pesach arrives a full seven weeks later with the arrival of Shavuot. I am calling this bifurcation of the calendar the bimodality of the year. In the following paragraphs, I will try to explain how this bimodality connects the flood and Lag B’Omer.

On the 27th day of the second month, Noach, his family, and all the animals that were with them left the ark.[[27]](#footnote-27) Exactly one lunar year and ten days before, one complete solar year, the flood began on the 17th of the second month, the day before Lag B’Omer. When Noach, the animals and his family went out from the ark, God made a covenant,[[28]](#footnote-28) with all the animals and the people, that there would never be again be a flood of water to destroy life on Earth.

The rainbow covenant was given with a rainbow as a sign of the covenant on Iyar 27,[[29]](#footnote-29) which is always the **42nd day** of the Omer,[[30]](#footnote-30) the day before Yom Yerushalayim. Other days connected the Rainbow Covenant include Shabbat Noach and Shabbat Behar.

The septennial Torah reading lectionary[[31]](#footnote-31) is divided into two 3 ½ year cycles, which follows the standard Sabbatical cycle (shmita). Every time we read about the mabul in Bereshit (Genesis) chapters 7 – 9, it will juxtapose Iyar 18 with Heshvan 18, 3 ½ years later – When the mabul took place. Now, Iyar 18 and Heshvan 18 are normally juxtaposed bimodally[[32]](#footnote-32) EVERY YEAR of the septennial cycle.

At the same time, we read about the rainbow covenant (Bereshit (Genesis) 9:9-17), which took place on the 27th day of the second month (Heshvan 27), will also line up with the 27th day of the second month (Iyar 27). The trienning cycle puts events very close to their proper time slot!

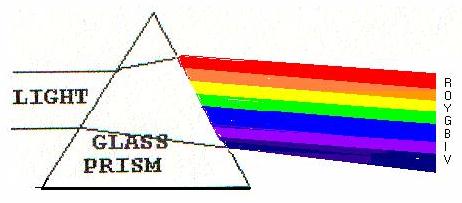
|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 005 – Gen. 8:1-22 = 22 v,  וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים, אֶת-נֹח | Heshvan 11, 5783 | Iyar 15, 5786  Second Pesach |
| 006 – Gen. 8:15 – 9:17 = 25v.  צֵא, מִן-הַתֵּבָה | Heshvan 18, 5783 | Iyar 22, 5786 |

This juxtaposition of Lag B’omer with the reading of the mabul, is another reason for associating the rainbow with Lag B’Omer.

On Lag BaOmer it is customary to take the children to picnics to p[lay with](marriageact.html) bows and arrows. [One](one.html) of the explanations given for this custom is that we are told that in the course of Hakham Shimon’s lifetime, no rainbow appeared in the sky. The rainbow is a [sign](signs.html) of human failing: as related in the [ninth](nine.html) chapter of Genesis, [HaShem](hashem.html) promised that whenever mankind shall be as *undeserving* as it was in the [generation](toldot.html) of the flood, the rainbow will remind Him of His vow to never again destroy His [world](worlds.html). But as long as Hakham Shimon was alive, his [merit](merit.html) alone was enough to ensure that [HaShem](hashem.html) would not regret His [creation](bara.html). Hence the [connection](connection.html) of the bow (*keshet -* הַקֶּשֶׁת)[[33]](#footnote-33) to Lag BaOmer. [One](one.html) of the most complete expressions of unity is the establishment of oneness between adults and children, [two](two.html) opposites. For this reason, Lag BaOmer is celebrated by activities with [Jewish](gen-jew.html) children. Additionally, the rainbow is intimately connected with [Mashiach](mashiach.html), according to the [Zohar](orallaw.html):

[***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, 1:72b*** *R. Judah said, ‘This is assuredly so, but the rainbow that appears in the sky has a profound mystic significance, and when Israel will go forth from* [*exile*](galuyot.html) *that rainbow is destined to be decked out in all the finery of its colours, like a bride who adorns herself for her husband.’ The Judean said to him, ‘This is what my father said to me when he was on the point of departing this* [*world*](worlds.html)*: “Do not expect the* [*coming*](coming.html) *of the* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html) *until the rainbow will appear decked out in resplendent colours which will illumine the* [*world*](worlds.html)*. Only then expect the* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html)*.”*

A rainbow reveals the hidden secrets of white light. White light seems indivisible, yet with a prism we can reveal it’s hidden colors. No color can be discerned in its pure whiteness. The rainbow reveals the [secret](sod.html) of the white light. It shows us how the white light is really composed of all the colors.



Lag B'[Omer](omer.html) is the day of the passing of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. The day on which he left this [world](worlds.html), Rabbi Shimon revealed many of the hidden secrets of the Torah, the hidden light.

The revelation of the hidden light of the Torah and [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is like the revelation of the colors in the rainbow.

# VII. Customs

Tachanun (penitential [prayers](prayer.html)) and "nefilat apayim" are not recited on Lag BaOmer, neither at shacharit (morning [prayers](prayer.html)) nor at mincha (afternoon [prayers](prayer.html)). They are not recited at mincha of the previous day, either. We do not fast on Lag BaOmer, yet nowhere does [one](one.html) find a source to support its being made into a [festival](festival.html). Moreover, if the intention is to mark the death of Hakham Shimon bar Yochai, why the celebration? The accepted way of marking the death of a righteous person is by fasting. How then is it that Hakham Shimon bar Yochai's expiration has become occasion for joy and festivity? I believe that these questions are all rightfully answered when we understand that this was the day of [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s ([Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html)) ascension. So, we find that the essence of our joy on Lag BaOmer centers on the talmidim of [Yeshua](yeshua.html), and Hakham Akiva, who took it upon themselves to [hand](fourteen.html) down the great Master's tradition.

For Sephardic [Jews](gen-jew.html), the [Omer](omer.html) period [mourning](mourning.html) continues until the [thirty](thirty.html)-[fourth](four.html) day of the Counting of the [Omer](omer.html) and until then weddings and haircuts are forbidden. Only in the case of singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments are they lenient, permitting them on the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day of the [Omer](omer.html). At nightfall, with the commencement of the [thirty](thirty.html)-[fourth](four.html) day of the [Omer](omer.html), they return to observing all of the customs of [mourning](mourning.html) until the following morning. On the morning of the [thirty](thirty.html)-[fourth](four.html) day of the [Omer](omer.html), all [mourning](mourning.html) practices are lifted. Moreover, if Lag BaOmer falls on Friday the Sephardic [Jews](gen-jew.html) too permit the cutting of [hair](hair.html). There are also, among the Sephardic [Jews](gen-jew.html), some who end their [mourning](mourning.html) on the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day of the [Omer](omer.html) like the Ashkenazic [Jews](gen-jew.html).

Hakham [Yoseph](joseph.html) Hayyim (author of Ben Ish Hai), states that weddings are permitted from the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day. It should be noted that Sephardim may perform marriages on any day from Lag BaOmer on and not on Lag BaOmer itself.

On the eve of Lag BaOmer, it is our custom to have a festive meal during which many special songs, especially those connected with Hakham Shimon Bar Yohai, are sung. No musical instruments are used. In addition, Hakham [Yoseph](joseph.html) Hayyim, wrote the "Hillula Rabba" (“The Great Ascent”) which is appropriate to read during this auspicious night.[[34]](#footnote-34)

Ashkenazic tradition permits weddings and haircuts on the day of Lag BaOmer, and there are those who are lenient, permitting weddings and haircuts already from nightfall on Lag BaOmer eve. There are differing practices among Ashkenazic [Jews](gen-jew.html) concerning how to behave after Lag BaOmer has passed. Some are accustomed to ending all [mourning](mourning.html) practices on Lag BaOmer, while others continue to observe these customs even afterwards. Only on Lag BaOmer itself do they suspend their [mourning](mourning.html) customs.

## [First](one.html) [Hair](hair.html) Cuts

Many have the custom not to cut a boy's [hair](hair.html) until he is [three](three.html) years old, the age at which he [first](one.html) begins to learn Torah. Because this idea is tied into Kabalistic thought concerning [hair](hair.html), many put off the ceremony, called an *chalakah*, until Lag BaOmer.

Some people [eat](eating.html) carob to commemorate the miracle[[35]](#footnote-35) of the carob tree that sustained R. Shimon Bar Yochai and his son for [twelve](twelve.html) years while they hid from Roman authorities.

For hundreds of years now there has been a custom to light a large bonfire in Meron in honor of Hakham Shimon bar Yochai's Hillula (ascent - Yahrzeit celebration). The Hillula of Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai is considered to be the Matan Torah (Giving of the Torah) of Torat HaNistar, (the Hidden or Mystical aspects of the Torah). A Hillula is a celebration of the life and deeds of a Tzadik. The day is celebrated with illuminations, because, according to the narrative, at the death of R. Simeon the [world](worlds.html) was filled with light, since the revelations which he had received were then put in writing in the [Zohar](orallaw.html).

Imagine that you have a bonfire burning brightly in front of you. What are you doing? If you are like most folks, you are mezmerized by the flames and you find your [eyes](body.html) following the flames up into the sky. You follow the burning embers as they fly ever further up. This is the effect of a bonfire. Curiously, this is the same thing that the desciples did at [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s ascension:

***II luqas (Acts) 1:9-11*** *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *as he went up, behold,* [*two*](two.html) *men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*? this same* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, which is taken up from you into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*.*

Judaism [teaches](teacher.html) that the souls of righteous men ascend to [heaven](heaven.html) upon [liberation](freedom.html) from their [bodies](body.html). Thus Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai and [Yeshua](yeshua.html) both ascended on Lag BaOmer. The difference is that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) ascended bodily.

At Hakham Shimon bar Yochai's Hillula there is such fellowship between [Jews](gen-jew.html). We offer each other [food](food.html) and drink, we say Tehillim together.

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 122:7-9*** *“May there be peace within your walls and serenity within your palaces. For the sake of my brothers and friends, I shall* [*speak*](mashal.html) *peace amongst you…”*

This were precisely the same things that [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s desciples did after the ascension:

***Luqas (***[***luke***](luke.html)***) 24:51*** *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*. 52 And they bowed to him, and returned to* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *with great joy: 53 And were continually in the* [*temple*](temple.html)*, praising and blessing God. Amen.*

Even in places other than Meron, Hassidic [Jews](gen-jew.html) make a practice of lighting bonfires on Lag BaOmer. Some also light candles in the [synagogue](synagog.html) in honor of Hakham Shimon bar Yochai's Hillula. The bonfires and candles, with their light, symbolize Torah and [mitzvot](cmds613.html), as it says:

***Mishlei (Proverbs) 6:23*** *For the* [*commandment*](cmds613.html) *is a candle, and the Torah, light.*

This [connection](connection.html) between the bonfires and the light of Torah also provides an additional [connection](connection.html) to [Mashiach](mashiach.html) who is called the “Light of the [World](worlds.html)”:

***Yochanan (John) 8:12*** *Then spake* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *again unto them, saying, I am the light of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*: he that followeth me shall not* [*walk*](walking.html) *in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

The customs of lighting candles and bonfires as an allusion to the Torah and [mitzvot](cmds613.html) also provided the perfect illustration that points to [Yeshua](yeshua.html), The Living Torah. As [fire](fire.html) only ascends, so too did [Yeshua](yeshua.html), ascend on Lag BaOmer. We have previously learned in our [study](study.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) that [**Mashiach**](mashiach.html) **= Israel**. This suggests that when [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ascended, Israel also ascended. As it says in the Nazarean Codicil:

***Colosians 1:18*** *And he is the* [*head*](body.html) *of the* [*body*](body.html)*, the* [*church*](church.html)*: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

***Yochanan (John) 15:5*** *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

Hassidic [Jews](gen-jew.html) make a practice of lighting bonfires on Lag BaOmer in order to hint at the great light of the secrets of the Torah which were revealed by Hakham Shimon bar Yochai. The [Zohar](orallaw.html) records that on the day on which Hakham Shimon bar Yochai died, he revealed the secrets of the Torah, and the house became filled with light and [fire](fire.html) to the point that the students could not approach or even look at Hakham Shimon. The revelation of the secrets of the Torah is also the mission of [Yeshua](yeshua.html), [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html):

***Matityahu (Matthew) 13:34*** *All these things spake* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: 35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my* [*mouth*](body.html) *in parables; I will utter things which have been kept* [*secret*](sod.html) *from the foundation of the* [*world*](worlds.html)*.*

Thus we can clearly see that the messianic aspirations of Bar Kochba that were so adamantly supported by Hakham Akiva were misplaced only in Bar Kochba. The messianic longing that was so fervently displayed by Hakham Akiva, and his Talmidim, is intimately bound up with Lag BaOmer and it’s association with [Yeshua](yeshua.html), [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html).

# VIII. Readings from the [Triennial](shmita.html) [Cycle](cycles.html)

In a previous [study](study.html) I learned that the [triennial](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) ([Shmita](shmita.html)) of Torah readings will put the Torah in an order that relates to the [events](feasts.html) of the week in which it is read. In the following table, I will attempt to show the relationship of Lag BaOmer to the [triennial](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) sedarim for [fourteen](fourteen.html) (14) years.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 5765  5th reading | Bereshit (Genesis) 6:9 – 7:24  Building the ark and the flood.  Rashi indicates that the [first](one.html) full day of the flood was on [Iyar](feasts.html) 18 which is Lag BaOmer. Thus this reading from the [triennial](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) clearly relates to Lag BaOmer. [Noach](noachide.html) and his family exhibited the unity of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s people with [Noach](noachide.html) being a [remez](remez.html) for HaMashiach.  The [eighteenth](eighteen.html) (18th) and the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) (33rd) word of this [seder](haggada.html) is את – ET, The [first](one.html) and the last [letters](letters.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) Alefbet. |
| 5765  6th reading | Bereshit (Genesis) 8:1 – 9:17  End of the flood and the rainbow.  In addition to the fact that Rashi says that the flood started on Lag BaOmer, we have a tradition that during the life of Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai no rainbow appeared because of his [merit](merit.html). This fact gives rise to the tradition that the children p[lay with](marriageact.html) bows (a backwards rainbow) and arrows on Lag BaOmer. |
| 5766  53rd reading | Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 10:1-29  [Plagues](plagues.html) of Locusts and Darkness.  The [seder](haggada.html) speaks of the darkness of the Egyptians. Our Sages [teach](teacher.html) that the [Jews](gen-jew.html) had light during this [plague](plagues.html). On Lag BaOmer the [Zohar](orallaw.html) was revealed. Yet this great light is unusable by the [goyim](gen-jew.html). Thus we see that this is a fitting reading for Lag BaOmer. |
| 5766  54th reading | Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 11:1 – 12:28  Plundering the Egyptians, [Passover](passover.html).  In this reading the [Jews](gen-jew.html) are commanded to borrow gold and silver. Our Sages have [taught](teacher.html) that this was the treasure that was revealed to the [Jews](gen-jew.html) during the [plague](plagues.html) of darkness. Further, this is the [seder](haggada.html) that foretells the death of the firstborn of the [wicked](wicked.html). This is a repeat of the death of the firstborn of the [wicked](wicked.html) that occurred during the flood which started on Lag BaOmer. This [seder](haggada.html) also contains the [command](cmds613.html) of the [Passover](passover.html) lamb which is the [sacrifice](korbanot.html) which preserved the firstborn of the righteous, just as they were preserved in the days of [Noach](noachide.html). Thus we have another reading fit for Lag BaOmer. |
| 5767  94th reading | Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:1-22  Peace offerings – no robbing or hating.  The [Passover](passover.html) [offering](korbanot.html), if disqualified, is to be used as a Peace [offering](korbanot.html). Now Lag BaOmer is the [third](three.html) day after the second [Passover](passover.html), the second [Passover](passover.html). The Peace [offering](korbanot.html) becomes can not be [eaten](eating.html) on the [third](three.html) day and must be burnt. Hakham Akiva’s 24,000 students died during a [plague](plagues.html). It was Hakham Akiva's contention that the [plague](plagues.html) was a warning to cease any further Lashon hara (evil speech) or that something worse would happen.  What were the root causes of the Flood, that began in earnest on Lag BaOmer? Rashi cites sexual immorality and [idolatry](idolatry.html). Following the [Gemara](orallaw.html) in Sanhedrin, Rashi adds that "Hamas" or theft sealed the [generation](toldot.html)'s fate. This [seder](haggada.html) also warns us against immorality, [idolatry](idolatry.html), and theft. Thus we see, again, that we have several strong connections with Lag BaOmer. |
| 5767  95th reading | Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:23 – 20:27  Fear [HaShem](hashem.html), sanctify yourself.  What were the root causes of the Flood, that began in earnest on Lag BaOmer? Rashi cites sexual immorality and [idolatry](idolatry.html). Following the [Gemara](orallaw.html) in Sanhedrin, Rashi adds that "Hamas" or theft sealed the [generation](toldot.html)'s fate. This [seder](haggada.html) also warns us against immorality and [idolatry](idolatry.html). Thus we see, again, that we have a strong [connection](connection.html) with Lag BaOmer. |
| 5768  143rd reading | Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4 – 7:11  [Shema](shema.html), a special people.  The [Shema](shema.html) refers to [HaShem](hashem.html), [eighteen](eighteen.html) (18) times. Lag BaOmer occurs on [Iyar](feasts.html) 18. The goal of the [Shema](shema.html) is in 6:24 – *that he might preserve us alive*. A theme of Lag BaOmer is the unity of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s people as indicated by the lack of fighting on the ark.  In the [Shema](shema.html), we [pray](prayer.html): "if you listen to My [commandments](cmds613.html) ... I will give the rain in its correct [time](time.html) ... and you will [gather](gather.html) your corn your wine and your oil ... Be careful in case you turn away and serve other gods ... then the L-rd will be angry with you and stop up the sky and there will be no rain and the earth will not give its produce ... " |
| 5768  144th reading | Devarim (Deuteronomy) 7:12 – 8:20  Keep the [commandments](cmds613.html), ridding the land of evil inhabitants.  The focus of this pasuk is the destruction of the [wicked](wicked.html) who inhabit [Eretz Israel](city.html), by [HaShem](hashem.html). This is the theme of the flood and the theme of Lag BaOmer. |
| 5769  27th reading | Bereshit (Genesis) 29:31 – 30:21  Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah’s children.  This [seder](haggada.html) deals with the [birth](thebirth.html) of [Yaaqov](israelja.html)’s children from Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah. Children are a blessing from [HaShem](hashem.html) like the Manna and like rain, which are themes of Lag BaOmer. |
| 5769  28th reading | Bereshit (Genesis) 30:22 – 31:2  Rachel is remembered, [Yaaqov](israelja.html)’s wages.  This [seder](haggada.html) again speaks of the blessings of children and of special sheep from [HaShem](hashem.html), themes of Lag BaOmer. |
| 5770  72nd reading | Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 32:15 – 33:23  The golden calf, Moshe pleads for the  People.  The [laws](law.html) of the Torah which we receive on [Shavuot](shavuot.html) are not enough to protect us from the Golden Calf. So [HaShem](hashem.html) in His infinite mercy gives us broken tablets the deepest [secret](sod.html) of the Torah, the Torah of Hakham Akiva and Reb Shimon Bar Yochai. He gives them to us before [Shavuot](shavuot.html), on Lag BaOmer. And then on [Shavuot](shavuot.html) what we receive is even deeper than the secrets of the Torah, the utmost heavenliness and [HaShem](hashem.html)’s holiness of the Torah.  The [Gemara](orallaw.html) says that [HaShem](hashem.html) always gives the medication before the disease. So every [Shavuot](shavuot.html) there is always a possibility of making another golden calf. Maybe last year we did it, maybe we are still doing it. So Lag BaOmer is the day that [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us the secrets of the Torah. |
| 5770  73rd reading | Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 34:1-26  [Thirteen](thirteen.html) attributes, pilgrimage [festivals](festivals.html).  The [beard](hair.html) is seen in Kabbala as the seat of mercy (rachamim). Kabbalistic works identify [thirteen](thirteen.html) components of the [beard](hair.html) (either tufts or parts of the [face](body.html) that are devoid of [hair](hair.html) and thus outline the [beard](hair.html)), corresponding to G-d’s [thirteen](thirteen.html)attributes of mercy ([Exodus](exodus.html) 34:6-7). Indeed, Arich Anpin connotes ‘patience’ a concept closely allied to that of mercy. The [thirteen](thirteen.html) components of the [beard](hair.html) of Arich Anpin are called mazzalot (sing. Mazal), which means a ‘source of flow’ or influence.  The “corners” of the [beard](hair.html) are denoted in the forming of peyotes when a child receives his haircut on Lag BaOmer. |
| 5771  118th reading | Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) 15:1-41  [Fire](fire.html) offerings, gathering wood on [Shabbat](sabbath.html).  [Fire](fire.html) only rises and those who violate [Shabbat](sabbath.html), lower themselves. As the [Zohar](orallaw.html) causes us to rise, which is associated with the ascension of [Yeshua](yeshua.html), so we see another theme of Lag BaOmer. |
| 5771  119th reading | Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) 16:1 – 17:15  [Qorach](qorach.html)’s rebellion.  The [Talmud](orallaw.html) relates that Hakham Akiva’s students all died between the holidays of [Pesach](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html) because they did not treat each other respectfully[[36]](#footnote-36). The day they stopped dying was LagBaOmer (the 33rd day of Counting the [Omer](omer.html)[[37]](#footnote-37). Clearly the lack of respect that [Qorach](qorach.html) had for Moshe is associated with the lack of respect found in Akiva’s disciples. So [Qorach](qorach.html) died as did Akiva’s disciples.  The prophet Elisha was also called a bald man. As he was going to Bet-El, youths came out and called after him, “Go, you bald man, go, you bald man!” Elisha cursed them, and [two](two.html) bears came out of the forest and attacked [forty](forty.html)-[two](two.html) children” (II Kings 2:23-24). He created “a bald spot” among the children that day. [Qorach](qorach.html) does the same, when he causes the death of so many people who joined his revolt[[38]](#footnote-38). Since we see that the [hair](hair.html) on our heads is associated with Lag BaOmer, we again have a [connection](connection.html). |
| 5772  4th reading | Bereshit (Genesis) 5:1 – 6:8  [Generations](toldot.html) of [Adam](adam.html), [Noach](noachide.html)’s [generation](toldot.html).  This [seder](haggada.html) contains the reason for the flood after [ten](ten.html) [generations](toldot.html). |
| 5772  5th reading | Bereshit (Genesis) 6:9 – 7:24  Building the ark and the flood.  Rashi indicates that the [first](one.html) full day of the flood was on [Iyar](feasts.html) [eighteen](eighteen.html), which is Lag BaOmer. Thus this reading from the [triennial](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) clearly relates to Lag BaOmer. |
| 5773  55th reading | Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 12:29-51  Death of the firstborn, [leaving Egypt](thebirth.html).  There are [two](two.html) firstborns: Those that belong to [HaShem](hashem.html) and those that do not. The purpose of the flood was to destroy the firstborn who did not belong to [HaShem](hashem.html). Thus this is a very appropriate reading for Lag BaOmer. |
| 5773  56th reading | Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 13:1 – 14:14  [Leaving Egypt](thebirth.html), Paro follows.  They left during the counting of the [omer](omer.html). [HaShem](hashem.html) protected them even as He protected [Noach](noachide.html). |
| 5774  98th reading | Vayikra (Leviticus) 23:15-44  The [Omer](omer.html) and the fall [festivals](festivals.html).  The counting of the [Omer](omer.html) is an integral part of understanding the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day of this count. Thus we see that this reading tallies with Lag BaOmer. |
| 5774  99th reading | Lev. 24:1 – 25:13  Menorah oil, blasphemer, [Sabbatical](shmita.html) and [Yovel](yovel.html) years  Rashi tells us, was the son of a [Jewish](gen-jew.html) woman and the Egyptian whom Moshe killed in Egypt[[39]](#footnote-39). What is unusual is the fact that the mother's [name](name.html) is mentioned in the Torah (Shelomit bat Divri), which usually constitutes Lashon hara, evil talk.  However, Rashi is quick to explain why. Singling out Shelomit bat Divri is an indirect way of telling us that, in spite of the Egyptians' best efforts, the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) women stayed loyal to their husbands throughout their long servitude, that is, with the exception of Shelomit bat Divri. Furthermore, Rashi explains, the Torah mentions her [name](name.html) to emphasize what led to her unfaithfulness: she was always talking and saying "Shalom" to everyone. In other words, Shelomit's lack of modesty is the basis of a loss of holiness.  They say that the problem with talking too fast is that you might say something that you haven't thought of yet; you can add to this that the problem of talking too much is that you can say things that can lead to the unthinkable! Perhaps this is why we couple with the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of the [Omer](omer.html)-[Offering](korbanot.html), the [mitzva](cmds613.html) to verbally count the [omer](omer.html) as well. This reminds us that "there is nothing better for the [body](body.html) than silence," and nothing better for the soul than holy speech. This is true acCOUNTability. |
| 5775  143rd reading | Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4 – 7:11  [Shema](shema.html), a special people.  The [Shema](shema.html) refers to [HaShem](hashem.html) [eighteen](eighteen.html) times. Lag BaOmer occurs on [Iyar](feasts.html) 18. The goal of the [Shema](shema.html) is in 6:24 – *that he might preserve us alive*. A theme of Lag BaOmer is the unity of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s people as indicated by the lack of fighting on [Noach](noachide.html)’s ark. |
| 5775  144th reading | Devarim (Deuteronomy) 7:12 – 8:20  Keep the [commandments](cmds613.html), ridding the land of evil inhabitants.  The focus of this pasuk is the destruction of the [wicked](wicked.html) who inhabit [Eretz Israel](city.html), by [HaShem](hashem.html). This is the theme of the flood and the theme of Lag BaOmer. |
| 5776  28th reading | Bereshit (Genesis) 30:22 – 31:2  Rachel is remembered, [Yaaqov](israelja.html)’s wages.  This [seder](haggada.html) again speaks of the blessings of children and of special sheep from [HaShem](hashem.html), themes of Lag BaOmer. |
| 5776  29th reading | Bereshit (Genesis) 31:3 – 32:3  [Yaaqov](israelja.html) leaves Laban.  [HaShem](hashem.html) takes care of the righteous and thwarts the plans of the [wicked](wicked.html). The monument [Yaaqov](israelja.html) sets up is called Galeed. If you reverse the [letters](letters.html) of “Lag” you get “Gal” which means revelation. Galeed is a “witness heap”. |
| 5777  30th reading | Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 32:15 – 33:23  The golden calf, Moshe pleads for the  People.  The [laws](law.html) of the Torah which we receive on [Shavuot](shavuot.html) are not enough to protect us from the Golden Calf. So [HaShem](hashem.html) in His infinite mercy gives us broken tablets the deepest [secret](sod.html) of the Torah, the Torah of Hakham Akiva and Reb Shimon Bar Yochai. He gives them to us before [Shavuot](shavuot.html), on Lag BaOmer. And then on [Shavuot](shavuot.html) what we receive is even deeper than the secrets of the Torah, the utmost heavenliness and [HaShem](hashem.html)’s holiness of the Torah.  The [Gemara](orallaw.html) says that [HaShem](hashem.html) always gives the medication before the disease. So every [Shavuot](shavuot.html) there is always a possibility of making another golden calf. Maybe last year we did it, maybe we are still doing it. So Lag BaOmer is the day that [HaShem](hashem.html) gave us the secrets of the Torah. |
| 5777  73rd reading | Shemot ([Exodus](exodus.html)) 34:1-26  [Thirteen](thirteen.html) attributes, pilgrimage [festivals](festivals.html).  The [beard](hair.html) is seen in Kabbala as the seat of mercy (rachamim). Kabbalistic works identify [thirteen](thirteen.html) components of the [beard](hair.html) (either tufts or parts of the [face](body.html) that are devoid of [hair](hair.html) and thus outline the [beard](hair.html)), corresponding to G-d’s [thirteen](thirteen.html)attributes of mercy ([Exodus](exodus.html) 34:6-7). Indeed, Arich Anpin connotes ‘patience’ a concept closely allied to that of mercy. The [thirteen](thirteen.html) components of the [beard](hair.html) of Arich Anpin are called mazzalot (sing. Mazal), which means a ‘source of flow’ or influence.  The “corners” of the [beard](hair.html) are denoted in the forming of peyotes when a child receives his haircut on Lag BaOmer. |
| 5778  117th reading | Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) 14:11-45  The [sin](sin.html) of the spies.  As [HaShem](hashem.html) destroyed the sinners in the flood, so he destroyed those who believed the report of the spies. |
| 5778  118th reading | Bamidbar ([Numbers](nchart.html)) 15:1-41  [Fire](fire.html) offerings, gathering wood on [Shabbat](sabbath.html).  [One](one.html) of the traditions of Lag BaOmer is to light bonfires. Now, there is no sense in gathering wood if not to make a [fire](fire.html) (which was forbidden on [Shabbat](sabbath.html)). Thus we see that this is an appropriate reading for Lag BaOmer. |

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In the [Triennial](shmita.html) Torah reading [cycle](cycles.html), the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) reading in Bereshit (Genesis) 37:1-37. This [seder](haggada.html) speaks about the betrayal of [Yosef](joseph.html) ben [Yaaqov](israelja.html), which was the [first](one.html) step in his ascension! Further, we [know](daat.html) that [Yosef](joseph.html) ben [Yaaqov](israelja.html) before he became second to Paro, was a [remez](remez.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html). The [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) word of this [seder](haggada.html) is את – ET, The [first](one.html) and the last [letters](letters.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) Alefbet. This reminds us of [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s words:

***Revelation 1:8*** *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

Alpha and Omega are the [first](one.html) and last [letters](letters.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) alphabet.

The [eighteenth](eighteen.html) (18th) [seder](haggada.html) in the [triennial](shmita.html) [cycle](cycles.html) is Bereshit (Genesis) 22:1-19. This [seder](haggada.html) is the story of the Akeida, the binding of [Isaac](isaac.html)! The [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) (33rd) word of this portion, following the introduction, is also את – ET, The [first](one.html) and the last [letters](letters.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) Alefbet.

# IX. Lag BaOmer [Events](feasts.html)

My [teacher](teacher.html), Hakham Dr. [Yosef](joseph.html) ben Haggai has [taught](teacher.html) that the following are [events](feasts.html) of Lag BaOmer:

**1)** Israel was [forty](forty.html) years in the [Sinai](stages.html) Wilderness. [HaShem](hashem.html) has shown Moshe the Heavenly [Tabernacle](mikdash.html), or [Temple](temple.html), and had instructed Moshe to make a [Tabernacle](mikdash.html) in the wilderness alike the order of the [one](one.html) shown to him at the mountain. It took [one](one.html) year to build the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html) of Israel, which Israel used as the [meeting place](settimes.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html) with them for the remaining [thirty](thirty.html)-[nine](nine.html) years. During those [thirty](thirty.html)-[nine](nine.html) years, Israel spent [six](six.html) years moving about with the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html) dismantled and unused. This brings us to the point that the [Tabernacle](mikdash.html) of Israel was in use as the [meeting place](settimes.html) for [HaShem](hashem.html) and His people for exactly [*thirty*](thirty.html)*-*[*three*](three.html) years of the [forty](forty.html) years of the wilderness [experience](experience.html).

**2)** When [His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was Lag BaOmer in age ([thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) years of age) his [body](body.html) ([temple](temple.html)) was put to death by the Roman execution of the cross.

**3)** When [His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was risen from the dead for Lag BaOmer days, He ascended to [heaven](heaven.html).

On Lag BaOmer, [Yeshua](yeshua.html) ascended into [heaven](heaven.html)[[40]](#footnote-40). As is well [known](daat.html), Lag BaOmer was instituted as a day of rejoicing because Hakham Shimon bar Yochai died on that day. On the day of a person's passing, his entire lifework and all his labor in Torah and [mitzvot](cmds613.html) are [gathered](gather.html) together and ascend to the [spiritual](physical.html) realms. Thus it is understood why [Yeshua](yeshua.html) ascended on this day.

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Chazal [teach](teacher.html) that there is an intimate [connection](connection.html) between the flood and Lag BaOmer. In this section we will explore some of these connections.

Rashi indicates that the [first](one.html) full day of the mabul, the flood, was [Iyar](feasts.html) 18.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 7:11*** *In the* [*six*](six.html) *hundredth year of* [*Noah*](noachide.html)*’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *were opened.*

[***Rosh HaShana***](teruah.html) ***11b*** *R. Joshua and R. Eliezer are herein consistent [with views expressed by them elsewhere], as it has been* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: ‘In the* [*sixth*](six.html) *hundredth year of* [*Noah*](noachide.html)*'s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month. R. Joshua said: That day was the seventeenth day of* [*Iyar*](feasts.html)*, when the constellation of Pleiades sets at daybreak and the fountains begin to dry up, and because they [mankind] perverted their ways, the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, changed for them the work of* [*creation*](bara.html) *and made the constellation of Pleiades rise at daybreak and took* [*two*](two.html)[*stars*](mazaroth.html) *from the Pleiades and brought a flood on the* [*world*](worlds.html)*.*

According to tradition, rainbows, were not seen while Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai was alive because his [merit](merit.html) alone was enough to protect the [world](worlds.html) against the calamity of a flood. Since "rainbow" and "bow" are both called *keshet* in [Hebrew](hebrew.html), the custom developed for children to p[lay with](marriageact.html) bows and arrows.

Another interpretation is given of this custom, in accordance with a saying in the [Zohar](orallaw.html) that a bow of many colors will appear in the sky immediately before the [coming](coming.html) of the [Mashiach](mashiach.html). The bow with which the children play on that day thus symbolizes the [prayer](prayer.html) of the [Jews](gen-jew.html) that the promised bow shall appear.

On Lag BaOmer, [HaShem](hashem.html) sent The Bread from [Heaven](heaven.html) (manna).[[41]](#footnote-41) The Chatam Sofer says that it was on the 18th of [Iyar](feasts.html) (Lag BaOmer) that the Manna began to fall. This is based on the idea that the [food](food.html) supply ([matza](chametz.html)) that we brought [out of Egypt](thebirth.html) lasted until the 14th of [Iyar](feasts.html) (which marks the 14th of [Iyar](feasts.html) as the end of the [Pesach](passover.html) [time](time.html) frame, hence its choice by [HaShem](hashem.html) for the second [Passover](passover.html)). Then the people went hungry for [three](three.html) days on the 15th, 16th, and 17th of [Iyar](feasts.html), and complained to Moses before they received the Manna on the 18th.

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 16:1*** *And they took their* [*journey*](stages.html) *from* [*Elim*](stages.html)*, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of* [*Sin*](sin.html)*, which is between* [*Elim*](stages.html) *and* [*Sinai*](stages.html)*, on the* [*fifteenth*](fifteen.html) *day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. 2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: 3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did* [*eat*](eating.html) *bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. 4 Then said* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *for you; and the people shall go out and* [*gather*](gather.html) *a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will* [*walk*](walking.html) *in my* [*law*](law.html)*, or no.*

Another [connection](connection.html) between manna and the [omer](omer.html), besides the date, has to do with the use of the word [*omer*](omer.html). In [connection](connection.html) with the manna, Moshe Rabeinu indicates that everyone received an [omer](omer.html) of manna every day. The use of the word [*omer*](omer.html) should automatically connect us to the counting of the [omer](omer.html), just by the use of the word itself!

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 16:15-18*** *And when the children of Israel saw it, they said* [*one*](one.html) *to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath given you to* [*eat*](eating.html)*. 16 This is the thing which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath commanded,* [*Gather*](gather.html) *of it every man according to his* [*eating*](eating.html)*, an* [*omer*](omer.html) *for every man, according to the* [*number*](nchart.html) *of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. 17 And the children of Israel did so, and* [*gathered*](gather.html)*, some more, some less. 18 And when they did mete it with an* [*omer*](omer.html)*, he that* [*gathered*](gather.html) *much had nothing over, and he that* [*gathered*](gather.html) *little had no lack; they* [*gathered*](gather.html) *every man according to his* [*eating*](eating.html)*.*

The manna is also associated with dew as the dew provided protection for the manna both above and below:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 11:9*** *And when the dew fell upon the* [*camp*](stages.html) *in the night, the manna fell upon it.*

This same dew will be used in the [future](future.html) to [resurrect](techiyat.html) the dead:

***Chagigah 12b*** *‘Araboth is that in which there are Right and Judgment and Righteousness, the treasures of life and the treasures of peace and the treasures of blessing, the souls of the righteous and the spirits and the souls which are yet to be born, and dew wherewith the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, will hereafter revive the dead. Right and Judgment, for it is written: Right and judgment are the foundations of Thy throne.*

Rambam writes that during the era of the [resurrection](techiyat.html) of the dead, man will exist in a [physical](physical.html) form, but he will not [eat](eating.html) or drink. Such an existence parallels the existence of the Israelites in the desert, where although sustained by the manna, were “pained and starved” since they had to trust in [HaShem](hashem.html) that it would arrive the next day. Thus, in a sense, although they [ate](eating.html), it was if they did not [eat](eating.html), paralleling the era of the [resurrection](techiyat.html) of the dead as described by Rambam.

“Man does not live by bread alone” meaning that the [study](study.html) of Torah, which is compared to bread, cannot by itself give life. It must be accompanied by an awareness that that “it is the word of   
[HaShem](hashem.html)”, that the Torah is [HaShem](hashem.html)’s wisdom and a means to connect with Him. And with this recognition the soul receives its resuscitation.

The manna was a delicate [food](food.html), a diet suited for the [teaching](teacher.html) of wisdom to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people[[42]](#footnote-42). Additionally, the [Talmud](orallaw.html) tells us that the manna had the power to cleanse the [sins](sin.html) of Israel:

***Yoma 75a*** *Now the manna was like gad [coriander]* [*seed*](flower.html)*. R. Assi said [it was] round like a* [*seed*](flower.html) *[of coriander] and white like a pearl.*

*Our Hakhams* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: ‘Gad’ i.e., the manna resembled the* [*seed*](flower.html) *of flax in its capsules. Others say: ‘Gad’ i.e., it was like a tale, which draws the* [*heart*](body.html) *of man, even like water. Another [Baraitha]* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: ‘Gad’, because it revealed to Israel whether the child was* [*one*](one.html) *of* [*nine*](nine.html) *months’ pregnancy from the* [*first*](one.html) *husband, or of* [*seven*](seven.html) *months’ [pregnancy] from the second. ‘White’, because it makes white [cleanses] the* [*sins*](sin.html) *of Israel.*

[Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html) is also associated with the cleansing of the [sins](sin.html) of Israel:

***Marqos (Mark) 2:5-12*** *When* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy* [*sins*](sin.html) *be forgiven thee. 6 But there were certain of the scribes* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this man thus* [*speak*](mashal.html) *blasphemies? who can* [*forgive*](forgive.html)[*sins*](sin.html) *but God only? 8 And immediately when* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy* [*sins*](sin.html) *be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and* [*walk*](walking.html)*? 10 But that ye may* [*know*](daat.html) *that the Son of man hath power on earth to* [*forgive*](forgive.html)[*sins*](sin.html)*, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) 11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. 12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.*

Our Sages note[[43]](#footnote-43) that the Torah was given only to those who [ate](eating.html) manna. This suggests that manna is a necessary component to receive the Torah. In fact, [Yeshua](yeshua.html) indicated that this bread from [heaven](heaven.html) gives life. [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was the epitome of the [oral Torah](orallaw.html). He was the bread that came down from [heaven](heaven.html):

***Yochanan (John) 6:31*** *Our* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *did* [*eat*](eating.html) *manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *to* [*eat*](eating.html)*. 32 Then* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*; but my Father giveth you the true bread from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, and giveth life unto the* [*world*](worlds.html)*. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

The beginning of the flood and the beginning of the manna share the characteristic that the [heavens](heaven.html) miraculously opened.

It is brought down[[44]](#footnote-44) that Lag BaOmer is also a day of [salvation](salvation.html) for everything, just as [Noach](noachide.html) and his family were saved, were saved on this day.

## [Purim](purim.html) and Lag BaOmer[[45]](#footnote-45)

The *Mechaber[[46]](#footnote-46)* notes that Lag BaOmer always falls out on the same weekday as [Purim](purim.html). Further, he notes that the word *palag,* translated “part” serves a mnemonic for this phenomena. This [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word is comprised of [three](three.html) [letters](letters.html) *pei*, *lamed* and *gimmel*. The mnemonic is interpreted to mean that the weekday of *pei* which represents [Purim](purim.html) will be the same for *lamed-gimmel* which stands for [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) or Lag BaOmer as we [know](daat.html) it.

We may ask what symbolic relationship is there between [Purim](purim.html) and Lag BaOmer in that they both share the same day of the week?

When studying the commentaries we discover that many important [events](feasts.html) occurred on Lag BaOmer. Let us present [two](two.html) such [events](feasts.html). The [first](one.html) is the *mabul*. The *pasuk* records that “on the seventeenth day of the second month all the fountains of the great depth were opened and the windows of the [heaven](heaven.html) were opened. There was rain on the earth for [forty](forty.html) days and [forty](forty.html) nights” (Bereshit 7:11,12). Rashi here notes that the [forty](forty.html) days of rain do not include the [first](one.html) day. This is because the rainfall of the [first](one.html) day was incomplete due to the fact that it did not rain the prior evening. Thus, according to Rashi although the windows of the [heaven](heaven.html) along with the fountains of the great depths were opened on the seventeenth, the mabul did not begin until the [eighteenth](eighteen.html) day of the second month. The seventeenth day of the month was just the warm up period. There is a dispute in the [Gemara](orallaw.html) if the months of the Torah are calculated from [Tishri](feasts.html) or from [Nisan](feasts.html). If we follow the opinion that they are calculated from [Nisan](feasts.html), it emerges that the mabul stared on the [eighteenth](eighteen.html) day of [Iyar](feasts.html), which is the same day as Lag BaOmer.

The commentators explain that this is [one](one.html) reason for the custom that children p[lay with](marriageact.html) bows and arrows on Lag BaOmer. The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for bow is keshet. This is the same word used for rainbow. The rainbow was designated by [HaShem](hashem.html) to serve as a [sign](signs.html) that He would never again bring a mabul, a flood, to the [world](worlds.html), though the rainbow only appears when we deserve to be flooded again. We remind ourselves of this [sign](signs.html) on the anniversary of the mabul.

The Torah records that the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people came to rest in the desert of [Sin](sin.html) on the [fifteenth](fifteen.html) day of the second month. On the sixteenth day of the month the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people complained to Moshe that they had nothing to [eat](eating.html). The next day on the seventeenth of the month, [HaShem](hashem.html) told Moshe that on the following day, the [eighteenth](eighteen.html), the manna would begin to fall (Shemot 16). As mentioned above, the [eighteenth](eighteen.html) day of the second month is Lag BaOmer.

Both of the above [events](feasts.html) share the characteristic that the [heavens](heaven.html) miraculously opened. However there is a major difference between the [two](two.html). The [first](one.html) [event](feasts.html) was the beginning of [forty](forty.html) days of complete destruction whereas the second [event](feasts.html) was the beginning of [forty](forty.html) years of great blessing. We may derive that the [eighteenth](eighteen.html) day of [Iyar](feasts.html) is an auspicious [time](time.html) for [HaShem](hashem.html)’s revelation. However, this revelation may come in the form of blessing or punishment. In preparation of this day it is incumbent upon us in to [pray](prayer.html) and repent so that [HaShem](hashem.html)’s revelation manifest itself in the form of blessing and not destruction.

We find this also to be true of [Purim](purim.html). [Purim](purim.html) day was originally designated for the annihilation of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. However, due to the [prayer](prayer.html) and repentance of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) People this day was transformed to [one](one.html) of great joy and [salvation](salvation.html) for all [time](time.html).

On both [Purim](purim.html) and Lag BaOmer the stakes are high. [HaShem](hashem.html) will make Himself [known](daat.html) in [one](one.html) way or another. We must prepare ourselves so that we deserve that this revelation come in the form of blessing.

Alternatively, we may note that Lag BaOmer is the day that Hakham Shimon bar Yochai revealed the [secret](sod.html) kabalistic [teaching](teacher.html) of the Torah. Indeed, many have the custom to celebrate this day by visiting his grave in Meron.

Both [Purim](purim.html) and Lag BaOmer represent the revelation of what is hidden. The miracle of [Purim](purim.html) enabled us to discover in retrospect [HaShem](hashem.html)’s hidden guidance of the [world](worlds.html). Similarly, Lag BaOmer is the [time](time.html) when we discovered the hidden secrets of the Torah. Both [Purim](purim.html) and Lag BaOmer are associated with great rejoicing for there is great enjoyment in the revelation of what is hidden.

In parshat Emor the Torah lists all the Biblical holidays. The commentators note that the Hakhamnic holidays are alluded to as well. For example, after Torah concludes the [laws](law.html) of [Shemini Atzeret](shemini.html) it proceeds to discuss the Menorah. This section alludes to the [holiday](festival.html) of [Chanukah](chanukah.html) when we celebrate the miraculous lighting of the menorah that occurred in the [time](time.html) of the Chashmanayim. The next section in the Torah is the Shulchan (table of showbreads) and Lechem Hapanin (Bread of the Presence). This alludes to the [holiday](festival.html) of [Purim](purim.html). [Purim](purim.html) is [time](time.html) of great celebration and demands a lavish feast. This is symbolic of the Shulchan (table of showbread), which also represents festivity.

We may now ask where do we find a hint of the [holiday](festival.html) of Lag BaOmer in the list of [festivals](festivals.html)?

With the above idea in mind we may suggest that Lag BaOmer is part of [Purim](purim.html) and included in Shulchan and Lechem Hapanim (Bread of the Presence). We may further suggest that this is why the showbread of the Shulchan was divided into [two](two.html) parts with [six](six.html) breads in each arrangement. The [holiday](festival.html) of revelation is divided into [two](two.html) parts. The [first](one.html) part is celebrated as the [holiday](festival.html) of [Purim](purim.html) and the second part as the [holiday](festival.html) of Lag BaOmer. Indeed the mnemonic mentioned above is “palag” which is translated as “part.” This indicated that each [holiday](festival.html) is [one](one.html) part of a whole.

We may further note that there are exactly sixty-[four](four.html) days between [Purim](purim.html) and Lag BaOmer. Sixty-[four](four.html) days is equivalent to [eight](eight.html) multiplied by [eight](eight.html).

Between [Pesach](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html) we are obligated to count [seven](seven.html) times [seven](seven.html). [Seven](seven.html) represents the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html), which was created in [seven](seven.html) days. The multiplication of [seven](seven.html) by [seven](seven.html) represents the totality of the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html). In the days between [Pesach](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html) we master our ability to infuse the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) with spirituality.

Similarly we may suggest that there is another counting of [eight](eight.html) multiplied by [eight](eight.html). The [number](nchart.html) [eight](eight.html) represents the [spiritual](physical.html) [world](worlds.html). The multiplication of [eight](eight.html) by [eight](eight.html) represents the totality of the [spiritual](physical.html) [world](worlds.html). As mentioned above [Purim](purim.html) and Lag BaOmer are [one](one.html) [holiday](festival.html) that is broken up into [two](two.html) parts. The holiness of this single [holiday](festival.html) begins on [Purim](purim.html). On this day [HaShem](hashem.html) reveals his hidden guidance of this [world](worlds.html). We then [spiritually](physical.html) refine ourselves in sequences of [eight](eight.html) until we reach the [eighth](eight.html) of the [eighth](eight.html), which is Lag BaOmer. We then [merit](merit.html) to discover the secrets of Torah. The period between [Purim](purim.html) and Lag BaOmer is the [time](time.html) we master our [spiritual](physical.html) understanding of [HaShem](hashem.html) and his Torah.

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[Iyar](feasts.html) 18, Lag BaOmer, was the beginning of [Haman](esther.html)'s downfall and the beginning of the end for [Haman](esther.html)’s decree for the destruction of the [Jews](gen-jew.html):

[***Esther***](esther.html) ***6:13*** *And* [*Haman*](esther.html) *told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the* [*seed*](flower.html) *of the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html)*, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.*

**Rashi:** *Zeresh said: "This* [*nation*](nations.html) *is compared to the* [*stars*](mazaroth.html) *and the sand. When they fall, they fall all the way to the sand. And when they rise, they rise all the way to the sky and the* [*stars*](mazaroth.html)*."*

The Messianic [redemption](redemption.html) is also connected to the month of [Adar](feasts.html) ([Purim](purim.html) is the 14th of [Adar](feasts.html)). [Adar](feasts.html) is a month of celebration as our Sages commented, 'When [Adar](feasts.html) commences, happiness should be increased. This happiness, in contrast to the happiness of the other months of the year, is unlimited in nature. Thus, we find that though the [festivals](festivals.html) of [Pesach](passover.html), [Shavuot](shavuot.html), and [Succoth](succoth.html) are described as '[festivals](festivals.html) of rejoicing', the court would send emissaries to ensure that the celebrations were kept within certain limits. In contrast, the celebrations of [Purim](purim.html) are unlimited in nature. This relates to the Messianic [redemption](redemption.html), for the ultimate expression of happiness will come in the Messianic age.

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On the 15th of [Iyar](feasts.html) the [moon](chodesh.html) is always full. Therefore, on Lag BaOmer, the 18th of [Iyar](feasts.html), the [moon](chodesh.html) has just begun waning.

# X. In the life of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html)

For [forty](forty.html) days, after His passion, [Yeshua](yeshua.html) [taught](teacher.html) his Talmidim[[47]](#footnote-47), and then [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ascends finally to the [heavens](heaven.html)[[48]](#footnote-48), awaiting his return at the [time](time.html) [appointed](settimes.html) by [HaShem](hashem.html), Most Blessed be He! On Lag BaOmer, [Yeshua](yeshua.html) ascended into [heaven](heaven.html).[[49]](#footnote-49)These [forty](forty.html) days are often interpreted as being after His death, yet the text [teaches](teacher.html) us that it was [forty](forty.html) days after His “passion”, His suffering, as Hakham Luqas [teaches](teacher.html) us:

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:1-5*** *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *began both to do and* [*teach*](teacher.html)*, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them* [*forty*](forty.html) *days, and* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

Strong’s concordance gives this definition:

3958 πασχω pascho pas’-kho including the forms παθω (patho path’-o) and πενθω (pentho pen’-tho), used only in certain tenses for it

apparently a root word; TDNT-5:904,798; v

[AV](feasts.html)-suffer 39, be vexed 1, passion + 3588 1, feel 1; 42

1) to be affected or have been affected, to feel, have a sensible [experience](experience.html), to undergo

1a) in a good sense, to be well off, in good case

1b) in a bad sense, to suffer sadly, be in a bad plight

1b1) of a sick person

My hypothesis is that [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s “passion”, His suffering, began when He was selected as the [Pesach](passover.html) lamb on [Nisan](feasts.html) 10.

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 12:1-6*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the* [*first*](one.html) *month of the year to you. 3* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their* [*fathers*](fathers.html)*, a lamb for an house: 4 And if the* [*household*](househld.html) *be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the* [*number*](nchart.html) *of the souls; every man according to his* [*eating*](eating.html) *shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a* [*male*](male+female.html) *of the* [*first*](one.html) *year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: 6 And ye shall keep it up until the* [*fourteenth*](fourteen.html) *day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.*

[Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s passion began on [Nisan](feasts.html) 10 as can be seen by carefully reading the narrative in Luqas 20:1ff. It begins on “[one](one.html) of the days”, that is understood to be the tenth day of the [first](one.html) month. During these days, [Yeshua](yeshua.html) is examined by various groups. This examination starts with the chief [priests](priests.html) and the scribes (Luqas 20:1). We can see that this was the beginning of [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s passion by noting:

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 20:19*** *And the scribes and the chief* [*priests*](priests.html) *tried to lay* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *this parable against them.*

We also see his passion a few days before [Passover](passover.html) in:

***Mordechai (Mark) 14:1*** *After* [*two*](two.html) *days was the feast of the* [*passover*](passover.html)*, and of* [*unleavened*](chametz.html) *bread: and the chief* [*priests*](priests.html) *and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.*

Clearly when people are trying to take your life, you begin to be tortured; your passion has begun.

Now, if we do the math we can see that there are [six](six.html) days from [Nisan](feasts.html) 10, the day they brought the lamb into their homes, till [Nisan](feasts.html) 16, the day of the [Omer](omer.html). Counting [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) days of the [Omer](omer.html), from [Nisan](feasts.html) 16 till Lag B’[Omer](omer.html) ([Iyar](feasts.html) 18), we find [forty](forty.html), less 1, days. It is my opinion that the lamb was actually chosen on [Nisan](feasts.html) 9 and then brought into the house on [Nisan](feasts.html) 10. Thus we have the [forty](forty.html) days spoken of in II Luqas, from the [time](time.html) of [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s passion till His ascension on Lag B’[Omer](omer.html).

Since Lag BaOmer was a day for the [heavens](heaven.html) to be opened, we can understand why [Yeshua](yeshua.html) ascended on this day. Further, it is apparent that He will return the same way:

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:9*** *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward* [*heaven*](heaven.html) *as he went up, behold,* [*two*](two.html) *men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*? this same* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, which is taken up from you into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*. 12 Then returned they unto* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *from the mount called Olivet, which is from* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *a* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day’s* [*journey*](stages.html)*.*

The Chatam Sofer says that it was on the 18th of [Iyar](feasts.html) (Lag BaOmer) that the Manna began to fall. Yochanan (John) also brought together the ascension and the Bread from [Heaven](heaven.html) (manna) in the following [sod](sod.html) level passage:

***Yochanan (John) 6:53*** *Then* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye* [*eat*](eating.html) *the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his* [*blood*](body.html)*, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my* [*blood*](body.html)*, hath* [*eternal life*](eternal.html)*; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my* [*blood*](body.html) *is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my* [*blood*](body.html)*, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*: not as your* [*fathers*](fathers.html) *did* [*eat*](eating.html) *manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the* [*synagogue*](synagog.html)*, as he* [*taught*](teacher.html) *in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)[*knew*](daat.html) *in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

It is also apparent that His ascension was also necessary for another gift to be sent to us from [heaven](heaven.html):

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:4-5*** *4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

[***Ephesians***](ephesians.html) ***4:1*** *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye* [*walk*](walking.html) *worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing* [*one*](one.html) *another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4* [*one*](one.html)[*body*](body.html)*, and* [*one*](one.html) *Spirit, even as ye are called in* [*one*](one.html) *hope of your calling; 5* [*One*](one.html) *Lord,* [*one*](one.html) *faith,* [*one*](one.html) *baptism, 6* [*One*](one.html) *God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7 But unto every* [*one*](one.html) *of us is given* [*grace*](grace.html) *according to the measure of the gift of* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended* [*first*](one.html) *into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the* [***body***](body.html) ***of*** [***Mashiach***](mashiach.html)*: 13 Till we all come in the* ***unity of the faith****, and of the* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*:*

We may derive, then, that the [eighteenth](eighteen.html) day of [Iyar](feasts.html) is an auspicious [time](time.html) for King [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s revelation. However, this revelation may come in the form of blessing, as we had with the manna, or punishment, as we had with the flood. In preparation of this day it is incumbent upon us in to [pray](prayer.html) and repent so that [HaShem](hashem.html)’s revelation manifest itself in the form of blessing and not destruction.

When [His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was Lag BaOmer in age ([thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) years of age) his [body](body.html) ([temple](temple.html)) was put to death by the Roman execution of the cross.

I believe that when [Yeshua](yeshua.html) ascended, He was fulfilling His obligation to send us a Comforter to instruct us in all wisdom and therefore triumph over Nebuchadnezzar and Pilate! This suggests that the wisdom of the [Zohar](orallaw.html) being given to Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai, was fittingly given on Lag BaOmer.

Many commentaries note that Hakham Akiva’s student’s stopped dying on Lag BaOmer. Clearly the [twelve](twelve.html) Apostles did not die on Lag BaOmer, but instead continue to change the [world](worlds.html). Their message of love continues to resonate to this very day. They were the antithesis of the disciples of Hakham Akiva. This loving cohesiveness is the key to the Messianic hope.

Finally, note the following words that a Hakham, who wishes to remain anonymous, [spoke](mashal.html) about the author of the [Zohar](orallaw.html):

*When we call this day the “Hillula” (Ascent) of Hakham Shimon, the ascent spoken of is not necessarily his death (i.e., the ascent of his soul), but rather the Hillula is his ascent in the learning of Torah. Lag BaOmer celebrates the day when the sacred traditions of the Kabbalah were saved from being lost forever. Lag BaOmer, therefore, has always been considered the “Kabbalist’s* [*holiday*](festival.html)*.” For on this day Hakham Shimon became possibly the most important link in the chain of Kabbalistic succession.*

The righteous ascend higher and higher each year, as their deeds have greater and greater impact on the [world](worlds.html) that they left behind.

Does this not sound like a [remez](remez.html), a hint regarding the ascension of [Mashiach](mashiach.html)?

Lets now take a look at what the Nazarean Codicil has to say about the ascension of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html):

***II Luqas (Acts) 1:1-4*** *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *began both to do and* [*teach*](teacher.html)*, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given* [*commandments*](cmds613.html) *unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them* [*forty*](forty.html) *days, and* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with [them], commanded them that they should not depart from* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, [saith he], ye have heard of me.*

Many struggle with the thought that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) could not have ascended on Lag BaOmer because the above passage clearly says that the ascension happened [forty](forty.html) days after His “Passion”, not His death!

These [forty](forty.html) days are often interpreted as being after His death, yet the text [teaches](teacher.html) us that it was [forty](forty.html) days after His “passion”, His suffering, as Hakham Luqas wrote.

Further, even if I am wrong, it is important to understand that II Luqas (Acts) is written at the [remez](remez.html) level of understanding. At this level we do not interpret things literally, we interpret them according to hints. In this level we ask the question: What does [forty](forty.html) represent? We find that [forty](forty.html) is associated with a “[new](new.html) [birth](birth.html)” [type](types.html) [experience](experience.html). It also represents a change in mission. It is the [time](time.html) period which is used when there is a dramatic change in life. For example: A fetus becomes a baby in [forty](forty.html) weeks. Moses changed from a prince to a shepherd after [forty](forty.html) years. And after another [forty](forty.html) years he changed from a shepherd into a king!

[Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s life was transformed on Lag BaOmer. [His Majesty](yeshua.html) made the change from [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html) to [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben David. This change was also understood to be the change of the Bnei Israel, because when [Mashiach](mashiach.html) changes, we change. Remember what we have [taught](teacher.html) previously, in our [study](study.html) on [Mashiach](mashiach.html), that:

[Mashiach](mashiach.html) = Israel.

Thus we understand that this [forty](forty.html) day period is a hint to the change that [Mashiach](mashiach.html), and therefore the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, are undergoing.

Some thoughts:

[*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *rose from the dead on the* [*third*](three.html) *day of* [*Passover*](passover.html)*,* [*Nisan*](feasts.html) *17.*

[*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *ascended on the* [*third*](three.html) *day after the second* [*Passover*](passover.html)*,* [*Iyar*](feasts.html) *18.*

So, [Mashiach](mashiach.html) was unclean because He had come in contact with the dead - Himself:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 9:6*** *And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead* [*body*](body.html) *of a man, that they could not keep the* [*Passover*](passover.html) *on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day: 7 And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead* [*body*](body.html) *of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an* [*offering*](korbanot.html) *of the* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *in his* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *season among the children of Israel? 8 And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *will* [*command*](cmds613.html) *concerning you. 9 And the* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses, saying, 10* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead* [*body*](body.html)*, or be in a* [*journey*](stages.html) *afar off, yet he shall keep the* [*Passover*](passover.html) *unto the* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. 11 The* [*fourteenth*](fourteen.html) *day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and* [*eat*](eating.html) *it with* [*unleavened*](chametz.html) *bread and bitter herbs. 12 They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the* [*Passover*](passover.html) *they shall keep it. 13 But the man that is* [*clean*](purity.html)*, and is not in a* [*journey*](stages.html)*, and forbeareth to keep the* [*Passover*](passover.html)*, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the* [*offering*](korbanot.html) *of the* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *in his* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *season, that man shall bear his* [*sin*](sin.html)*.*

Thus [Mashiach](mashiach.html) could not offer the [Pesach](passover.html) [sacrifice](korbanot.html) on [Nisan](feasts.html) 14 and had to wait for [Iyar](feasts.html) 14. What makes this very interesting is that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) could not rebuild His [Temple](temple.html) until He was [clean](purity.html), and He could not ascend to His Father until He has celebrated The second [Passover](passover.html) because of the penalty of being cut off. Thus we see that [three](three.html) days after The second [Passover](passover.html) was His ascension on Lag BaOmer. His ascension took place on the [third](three.html) day after He was [clean](purity.html), after He brought His [Pesach](passover.html) [sacrifice](korbanot.html) on the second [Passover](passover.html), and on the [third](three.html) day when His [Temple](temple.html) was rebuilt!

The bonfires we light are intrinsically connected to [fire](fire.html) which has as it’s principle attribute the fact that it always ascends just as water always descends.

As Bar Kochba was proclaimed the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) by Hakham Akiva, so [Yeshua](yeshua.html) will be declared the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) by Elijah. As Hakham Akiva’s Talmidim (Bar Kochba’s soldiers) die because of their [sin](sin.html), so [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s Talmidim will not die.

There is a theory that during his years in [Jerusalem](city.html), Bar Kochba rebuilt the [Temple](temple.html). The Rashash[[50]](#footnote-50) attributes such an opinion to a non-[Jewish](gen-jew.html) historian. Hakham Leibel Resnick,[[51]](#footnote-51) in "The Mystery of Bar Kochba", believes that he completed the building of the [Third](three.html) [Temple](temple.html). We have learned elsewhere that [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s [body](body.html) is the [Temple](temple.html) that was to be rebuilt [three](three.html) days after it was destroyed:

***Yochanan (John) 2:19***[*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *answered and said unto them, Destroy this* [*temple*](temple.html)*, and in* [*three*](three.html) *days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the* [*Jews*](gen-jew.html)*,* [*Forty*](forty.html) *and* [*six*](six.html) *years was this* [*temple*](temple.html) *in building, and wilt thou rear it up in* [*three*](three.html) *days? 21 But he spake of the* [*temple*](temple.html) *of his* [*body*](body.html)*. 22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *had said*

Thus we would expect that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) would raise up His [Temple](temple.html) [three](three.html) days after it was destroyed.

Lag BaOmer is the yahrtzeit[[52]](#footnote-52)*,* or the hillul the public celebration of the yahrtzeit, of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai[[53]](#footnote-53), who was, according to tradition, the author of the holy [Zohar](orallaw.html). In [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition, the yahrtzeit is actually not a day of sadness, but is actually [one](one.html) of joy and celebration, because the soul is said to ascend up to a higher level on that day. This ascension to a higher level, after death, is what II Luqas (Acts) is trying to hint to with the ascension of [Yeshua](yeshua.html).

## The Place of the Ascension

[Yeshua](yeshua.html) ascended from the [Mount of Olives](east.html), from a place called Bethany:

***Marqos (Mark) 11:1*** *And when they came nigh to* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, unto* [*Bethphage*](bethphag.html) *and Bethany, at the* [*mount of Olives*](east.html) *…*

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 24:50*** *And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his* [*hands*](fourteen.html)*, and blessed them. 51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*. 52 And they worshipped him, and returned to* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *with great joy: 53 And were continually in the* [*temple*](temple.html)*, praising and blessing* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. Amen.*

We have written before about the significance of Bethany. Bethany is the place where Lazarus was resurrected and the place where Mary anointed [Yeshua](yeshua.html).

## [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadole ([High Priest](priests.html))

[Mashiach](mashiach.html) completed His role as [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadole after the order of Malki-Tzedek, on Lag BaOmer:

[***Bereans***](bereans.html) ***(***[***Hebrews***](bereans.html)***) 9:8-14*** *The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the* [*first*](one.html)[*tabernacle*](mikdash.html) *was yet* [*standing*](mashal.html)*: 9 Which was a figure for the* [*time*](time.html) *then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the* [*time*](time.html) *of reformation. 11 But* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *being come an* [*high priest*](priests.html) *of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html)*, not made with* [*hands*](fourteen.html)*, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the* [*blood*](body.html) *of goats and calves, but by his own* [*blood*](body.html) *he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal* [*redemption*](redemption.html) *for us. 13 For if the* [*blood*](body.html) *of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an* [*heifer*](heifer.html) *sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the* [*blood*](body.html) *of* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

[***Bereans***](bereans.html) ***(***[***Hebrews***](bereans.html)***) 10:19*** *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the* [*blood*](body.html) *of* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, 20 By a* [*new*](new.html) *and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an* [*high priest*](priests.html) *over the house of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; 22 Let us draw near with a true* [*heart*](body.html) *in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our* [*bodies*](body.html) *washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider* [*one*](one.html) *another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting* [*one*](one.html) *another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. 26 For if we* [*sin*](sin.html) *willfully after that we have received the* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *of the truth, there remaineth no more* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *for* [*sins*](sin.html)*, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

Lag BaOmer is associated with the Sefirah of Hod. On Lag BaOmer we count [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) days which is associated with the Sefira of Hod Sh'B'Hod (Humility in Humility) in the Kabbalistic schematic of the [Omer](omer.html) counting This Sefirah is associated with Aharon the [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadole ([High Priest](priests.html)). Thus we would expect to find Lag BaOmer associated with [Mashiach](mashiach.html) in His role as [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadole.

The change in [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s role as [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html) and the beginning of His role as [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben David is signified by His ascension after [forty](forty.html) days.

Lag BaOmer is the [time](time.html) to receive. It is a day of ascent. For [Mashiach](mashiach.html) and our own souls ascend on this day in joy and singing:

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 24:50*** *And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his* [*hands*](fourteen.html)*, and blessed them. 51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*. 52 And they worshipped him, and returned to* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *with great joy: 53 And were continually in the* [*temple*](temple.html)*, praising and blessing God. Amen.*

## In Sefer [Ephesians](ephesians.html)

In the following passage we see that the purpose of the ascension is the unity of the [body](body.html) with [Mashiach](mashiach.html) as the [head](body.html). These are the themes of Lag BaOmer:

[***Ephesians***](ephesians.html) ***4:1*** *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye* [*walk*](walking.html) *worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing* [*one*](one.html) *another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4* [*one*](one.html)[*body*](body.html)*, and* [*one*](one.html) *Spirit, even as ye are called in* [*one*](one.html) *hope of your calling; 5* [*One*](one.html) *Lord,* [*one*](one.html) *faith,* [*one*](one.html) *baptism, 6* [*One*](one.html) *God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7 But unto every* [*one*](one.html) *of us is given* [*grace*](grace.html) *according to the measure of the gift of* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended* [*first*](one.html) *into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all* [*heavens*](heaven.html)*, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the* [***body***](body.html) ***of*** [***Mashiach***](mashiach.html)*: 13 Till we all come in the* ***unity of the faith****, and of the* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html) *of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html)*: 14 That we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the* [***head***](body.html)***,*** [***Mashiach***](mashiach.html)*: 16 From whom* ***the whole*** [***body***](body.html) *fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of* ***the*** [***body***](body.html) *unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Those who read the book of [Ephesians](ephesians.html) with the lessons of Lag BaOmer will be immediately struck by the fact that the entire epistle speaks to the themes of Lag BaOmer. The book of [Ephesians](ephesians.html) seems to be the explanation for this inexplicable semi-[holiday](festival.html)! (See also the [study](study.html) titled: [Ephesians](ephesians.html).)

In this Epistle we can see the “armor bearer” (Akiva) in chapter 6. We can see that the focus is on [one](one.html) [body](body.html) with many members and [Mashiach](mashiach.html) as the [head](body.html). The recurring theme of unity is hammered home repeatedly with many examples.

## A Nazirite vow

I have heard a suggestion that [Yeshua](yeshua.html) took an oath to be a nazir in:

***Marqos (Mark) 4:23*** *And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my* [*blood*](body.html) *of the* [*new*](new.html) *testament, which is shed for many. 25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it* [*new*](new.html) *in the kingdom of God. 26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the* [*mount of Olives*](east.html)*.*

If this constitutes a Nazirite vow, then it would have begun after [Yeshua](yeshua.html)’s [resurrection](techiyat.html) as a nazir does not count days in which he’s in contact with the dead or a grave. This suggests that the Nazirite vow ended on Lag BaOmer ([three](three.html) days in the grave + [thirty](thirty.html) days for the vow).

***Nazir 16a C H A P T E R I I I*** *MISHNAH. IF A MAN SAYS, ‘I INTEND TO BE A NAZIRITE’, HE POLLS ON THE* [*THIRTY*](thirty.html)*-*[*FIRST*](one.html) *DAY, BUT SHOULD HE POLL ON THE* [*THIRTIETH*](thirty.html) *DAY, HIS OBLIGATION IS FULFILLED. [IF, HOWEVER, HE SAYS] ‘I INTEND TO BE A NAZIRITE FOR* [*THIRTY*](thirty.html) *DAYS,’ AND POLLS ON THE* [*THIRTIETH*](thirty.html) *DAY, HIS OBLIGATION IS NOT FULFILLED. IF A MAN UNDERTAKES* [*TWO*](two.html) *NAZIRITESHIPS, HE POLLS FOR THE* [*FIRST*](one.html)[*ONE*](one.html) *ON THE* [*THIRTY*](thirty.html)*-*[*FIRST*](one.html) *DAY, AND FOR THE SECOND ON THE SIXTY-*[*FIRST*](one.html) *DAY. IF, HOWEVER, HE SHOULD POLL FOR THE* [*FIRST*](one.html) *ON THE* [*THIRTIETH*](thirty.html) *DAY, HE CAN POLL FOR THE SECOND ON THE SIXTIETH DAY, WHILST SHOULD HE POLL ON THE DAY PRIOR TO THE SIXTIETH, HE HAS FULFILLED HIS OBLIGATION; FOR THIS WAS THE TESTIMONY THAT R. PAPAIAS BORE CONCERNING* [*ONE*](one.html) *WHO UNDERTAKES* [*TWO*](two.html) *NAZIRITESHIPS, VIZ., THAT IF HE SHOULD POLL FOR THE* [*FIRST*](one.html) *ON THE* [*THIRTIETH*](thirty.html) *DAY, HE IS TO POLL FOR THE SECOND ON THE SIXTIETH DAY, WHILST SHOULD HE POLL ON THE DAY PRIOR TO THE SIXTIETH DAY, HE HAS FULFILLED HIS OBLIGATION, THE* [*THIRTIETH*](thirty.html) *DAY COUNTING TOWARDS THE REQUIRED* [*NUMBER*](nchart.html)*. IF A MAN SAYS, ‘I INTEND TO BE A NAZIRITE,’ AND CONTRACTS RITUAL DEFILEMENT ON THE* [*THIRTIETH*](thirty.html) *DAY, HE RENDERS VOID THE WHOLE PERIOD. R. ELIEZER SAYS: ONLY THE* [*SEVEN*](seven.html) *DAYS ARE VOID. [IF HE SAYS,] ‘I INTEND TO BE A NAZIRITE FOR* [*THIRTY*](thirty.html) *DAYS, AND CONTRACTS RITUAL DEFILEMENT ON THE* [*THIRTIETH*](thirty.html) *DAY, THE WHOLE PERIOD IS VOID. [IF HE SAYS,] ‘I INTEND TO BE A NAZIRITE FOR* [*ONE*](one.html) *HUNDRED DAYS,’ AND CONTRACTS RITUAL DEFILEMENT ON THE HUNDREDTH DAY, HE RENDERS VOID THE WHOLE PERIOD. R. ELIEZER SAYS4 : ONLY* [*THIRTY*](thirty.html) *DAYS ARE VOID. IF HE CONTRACTS DEFILEMENT ON THE HUNDRED AND* [*FIRST*](one.html) *DAY,* [*THIRTY*](thirty.html) *DAYS ARE VOID. R. ELIEZER SAYS: ONLY* [*SEVEN*](seven.html) *DAYS ARE VOID.*

Thus we see that the Nazirite vow normally lasts 30 days unless declared otherwise. What makes this idea of a Nazirite vow so interesting is the fact that at the end of [thirty](thirty.html) days, the nazir cuts his [hair](hair.html) and burns it in a [fire](fire.html) on the altar. This is very similar to what we do with the [first](one.html) [hair](hair.html) cut on Lag BaOmer where the cut [hair](hair.html) is burned. Thus we see another [connection](connection.html) between Lag BaOmer and the ascension on [Mashiach](mashiach.html).

# XI. Sefirat HaOmer

Sefirat HaOmer, the counting of the [Omer](omer.html), begins on the day after [Pesach](passover.html), [Nisan](feasts.html) 16. Lag BaOmer corresponds to the [fifth](five.html) day of the [fifth](five.html) week of the [Omer](omer.html).

Lag BaOmer is the [time](time.html) to receive. It is a day of ascent. For our souls ascend on this day in joy and singing. The forces of severity are thereby broken. On this day we not only celebrate a most important [event](feasts.html) of the past, we celebrate what we have today, a living and vibrant Kabbalah. We rejoice with Hakham Shimon, for on this day did he receive the Kabbalah from Hakham Akiva. We also rejoice on this day because, if our souls are open to it through our observance of Torah and [mitzvot](cmds613.html), then we too become links in the chain of the Kabbalistic transmission.

By [Iyar](feasts.html) 18 we have reached the count of [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html). After we say the blessing, we say the following words:



**Today is 33 days of the** [**Omer**](omer.html)**, which are** [**four**](four.html) **weeks and** [**five**](five.html) **days of the** [**Omer**](omer.html)**.**

The Sefirah of Lag BaOmer is: **Hod of Hod means** Humility in Humility**,** the splendor of splendor, or Glory that is in Glory.

Nothing is ever by coincidence. The particular character trait associated with that week of the counting as of the 29th day of the [Omer](omer.html) is that of Hod (Glory), the trait of the Aharon the [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadol, the symbol of holiness. And, just as each of the [seven](seven.html) weeks of the [Omer](omer.html) count has its own particular trait, Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malchut, so does each of the [seven](seven.html) days of a particular week, which in the case of the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day, also happens to be Hod.

Thus, Lag BaOmer is the trait of Hod sh'b'Hod "Glory that is in Glory", the essence of the [Kohen](kohen.html) Gadol, the basis of all holiness. "Glory that is in Glory", this is the ultimate sanctification of [HaShem](hashem.html)'s [Name](name.html): **the cause of** [**redemption**](redemption.html), and, the reason for it[[54]](#footnote-54).

Let me introduce this Sefirah by positing the following thoughts from my [teacher](teacher.html) Hakham Dr. [Yosef](joseph.html) ben Haggai:

What does WAY #33 – FULFIL YOUR OBLIGATIONS, have to do with Lag BaOmer? After all, we are on the 33rd day of the counting of the [Omer](omer.html) in this [study](study.html) and the theme for this day must be related to the day itself! So, what say ye? I believe that when [Yeshua](yeshua.html) ascended, He was fulfilling His obligation to send us a Comforter to instruct us in all wisdom, and therefore triumph over Nebuchadnezzar and Titus, and show that His [Temple](temple.html) is still alive and well. It is important that we see [Mashiach](mashiach.html) as a Hakham fulfilling his obligations to his Talmidim no matter what and also fulfilling his obligations towards His people.

An example for us to follow. He who does not take care [first](one.html) of the family of [HaShem](hashem.html) has no right to be a disciple of [His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html) the [Mashiach](mashiach.html). Yes, [first](one.html) the brotherhood, then Israel, and then the [world](worlds.html).

Here is an illustrative incident from the Nazarean Codicil ([New](new.html) Testament) which, in a veiled way, illumines the [connection](connection.html) between Lag BaOmer and the attribute that we are to work on ourselves during this day: Fulfill your obligations:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 8:5-10*** *And when* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6. And saying, Master, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. 7. And* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *says unto him, I will come and heal him. 8. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof: but* [*speak*](mashal.html) *the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 9. For I am a man under* [*authority*](authority.html)*, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. 10. When* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

[One](one.html) of the chief lessons that we can draw from all of this is that we have no rights, but we do have obligations.

Duties vs. Rights

***Yochanan (John) 4:34*** *"*[*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *said unto them, My* [*food*](food.html) *is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."*

[Mashiach](mashiach.html) is saying that he did not even have the right to [eat](eating.html) whilst his Father's [commandments](cmds613.html) and will was left undone. Note duties not rights!

***Yochanan (John) 6:38*** *"For I came down from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."*

***Yochanan (John) 14:15,21*** *"If ye love me, keep my* [*commandments*](cmds613.html)*. … He that has my* [*commandments*](cmds613.html)*, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."*

***Yochanan (John) 15:14*** *"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I* [*command*](cmds613.html) *you."*

What is the [connection](connection.html) between Lag BaOmer and fulfilling our obligations? We have an obligation to love [one](one.html) another. Baseless hatred came to an end on Lag BaOmer. And it is not an option but a most solemn duty to do so. On the day of [Mashiach](mashiach.html)'s ascension all baseless hatred came to an end to those who love Torah! For on that day [Mashiach](mashiach.html) became [appointed](settimes.html) King in the [Heavens](heaven.html). And thereby dispatching the Shechinah! But this means that on Lag BaOmer of all days we recognize that each other was made in the image of [HaShem](hashem.html), and they could see the Shechinah [dwelling](dwelling.html) in each other.

The notion of [time](time.html) being like a spiral, with [events](feasts.html) of a like nature occurring every year at the [appointed](settimes.html) [time](time.html) is what [connects](connection.html) the ascension and the end of the death of R. Akiva's students. Remember please in Torah nothing happens for no reason and all is interconnected with each other!

Please remember that we are working towards [Shavuot](shavuot.html), the [festival](festival.html) of Smikha (Rabbinical ordination)!

# XII. Counting is Clarification

How do we grow [spiritually](physical.html) by the simple act of counting?

Perhaps we can begin by analyzing a different [mitzva](cmds613.html), [one](one.html) that is likewise performed by counting.

The Torah [commands](cmds613.html) man to tithe his animals, and [one](one.html) of each [ten](ten.html) is sanctified as “Holy to [HaShem](hashem.html)”.

***Vayikra (Leviticus) 27:32*** *And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the* [*rod*](staff.html)*, the tenth* (HaAsiri) *shall be holy unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

We are ordered specifically to count till [ten](ten.html). Our Sages derive from the word: ‘HaAsiri’, that the count must be certain, and an animal cannot be sanctified if there is any doubt as to which animal was tenth.

***Bechoroth 58b***[*GEMARA*](orallaw.html)*. Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*: How does he tithe animals? He brings them into a shed and makes for them a small opening so that* [*two*](two.html) *may not go out at the same* [*time*](time.html)*. He also places their mothers outside [the shed] while the offspring are inside, so that [the mothers] low and [the offspring] go out to meet their mothers. But let him bring them out himself? — Scripture Says: Shall pass,[[55]](#footnote-55) intimating that he must not cause them to pass. But let him throw them some green herb [outside][[56]](#footnote-56) so as to induce them to go out? — Said R. Huna: This was prohibited[[57]](#footnote-57) on account of an animal bought or orphaned.[[58]](#footnote-58) Our Rabbis* [*taught*](teacher.html)*, Scripture says: Even of whatsoever passeth under the* [*rod*](staff.html)*: this excludes a trefah which is unable [*[*physically*](physical.html)*] to pass under the* [*rod*](staff.html)*.[[59]](#footnote-59) It is a duty to count them with the* [*rod*](staff.html)*. If, however, he did not count them with the* [*rod*](staff.html)*, or if he counted them while they were crouching or* [*standing*](mashal.html)*, whence do we infer that the tithing is valid? The text states: The tenth shall be holy, in any case.[[60]](#footnote-60) I have here mentioned only that the tenth animal is holy when he calls it the tenth. Whence is it derived that it is holy even if he did not call it the tenth? Scripture says: ‘It shall be holy’, intimating that [it is holy] in any case. You might think that if he had a hundred [lambs] and he took* [*ten*](ten.html) *[at the same* [*time*](time.html) *as the tithe], or if he had* [*ten*](ten.html) *lambs and he took* [*one*](one.html) *[as the tithe], they are* [*redeemed*](redemption.html)*? The text states: ‘The tenth’, and this is not the tenth.[[61]](#footnote-61)*

The basis of the ruling is this: Counting.

Counting is not merely the coincidental lumping together of varied elements. Rather, every act of counting is definitive and clarifying. The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for counting, “LiSpor”, is the same as “L’Saper”, to relate. Both concepts entail the connecting of varied elements into [one](one.html) integrated unit. Similarly, the word “S’Par” is defined as a boundary, for a border clarifies and encapsules [one](one.html) integrated unit, highlighting its separate and distinct countours.

This is the purpose of Sefirat HaOmer, counting the [Omer](omer.html). The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people undergo a process of clarification. We cleanse ourselves of the impurities of Mitzrayim.[[62]](#footnote-62) They take with them the bread of Mitzrayim, sustenance for [thirty](thirty.html) days, until the [*fifteenth*](fifteen.html) *of* [*Iyar*](feasts.html). Only subsequently, when all trace of Egypt is gone, are they ready for manna from [Heaven](heaven.html).

Like every Chazakah (חזקה),[[63]](#footnote-63) [three](three.html) days of a manna diet are necessary in order to cement their change of status. And hence, on the [eighteenth](eighteen.html) day of [Iyar](feasts.html), the [*thirty*](thirty.html)*-*[*third*](three.html) *day of the* [*Omer*](omer.html), they were separated forever from the material [world](worlds.html), and are ready to turn towards Kabbalat HaTorah, the receiving of the Torah.

# XIII. Wisdom and its Acquisition

What is Chachma?[[64]](#footnote-64) The Torah describes Betzalel, the architect of the [Mishkan](mikdash.html), as being blessed with those qualities that enable man to build a Divine [sanctuary](mikdash.html) on earth:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 31:1-5*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses, saying, 2 See, I have called by* [*name*](name.html) *Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the* [*tribe*](tribes.html) *of Judah: 3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in* [*knowledge*](knowledge.html)*, and in all manner of workmanship, 4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 5 And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.*

Rashi[[65]](#footnote-65) defines Chachma as "what a man receives from others". **This definition is essential**, not circumstantial. Meaning to say: all wisdom, true Chachma, is beyond man's grasp. He MUST acquire it from others, for it stems from a different [world](worlds.html):

***Iyov (Job) 28:12*** *But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?*

On a deeper level he is saying, “Wisdom, from *ayin* does it come!” *Ayin* as in *yeish mayayin,*  [creation](bara.html) ex-nihilo. We’re back to [creation](bara.html) already. Wisdom came from [creation](bara.html). Since everything obviously came post nihil, something more is being said here.

We start with, *Yeish mayayin*, something from nothing. Add in Iyov’s “*chachma* from *ayin* does it come” and the result is; *Yeish maychachma mayayin*, that which *is* came from *chachma* which came from *ayin*. In layman’s terms, [First](one.html) G-d created wisdom and from that He brought forth the universe.

Chachma is *mayayin*. Just as all of [creation](bara.html) is likewise: *Yesh* *mayayin*.[[66]](#footnote-66) For these reasons, man is forewarned: "[Know](daat.html) that you come *mayayin,* from nothing",[[67]](#footnote-67) and hence, attach yourself to the [world](worlds.html) above.

Counting [thirty](thirty.html)-[two](two.html) days [connects](connection.html) us to that [world](worlds.html) of Chachma, [one](one.html) that is above and beyond our own. It brings us to Lag B'[Omer](omer.html), a day that reveals a hidden light to the [world](worlds.html). It is this day that separates us from the [world](worlds.html) we left behind.

# XIV. [Marriage](mashal.html) of [heaven](heaven.html) and Earth

Lag BaOmer, according to [Jewish](gen-jew.html) mystical tradition, is a [wedding](wedding.html) between [heaven](heaven.html) and earth.

Lag BaOmer is about linking: [heaven](heaven.html) to earth, human to Divine, [one](one.html) person to another. Like the rain, the water that comes from [heaven](heaven.html), Lag BaOmer reminds us of the unseen [cycle](cycles.html) of which we are all a part. The 18th of [Iyar](feasts.html) is a moment of union par excellence, signifying the [knowledge](knowledge.html) that all of us are leaves on [one](one.html) [tree of life](eternal.html).

How did Lag BaOmer get to be a [wedding](wedding.html) between [heaven](heaven.html) and earth? Perhaps because of the following story:

Shimon bar Yochai and his son criticized the Roman authorities for the government’s self-serving actions and as a result, became fugitives. They ran away and hid in a cave. A miracle occurred and a carob tree and a well of water were created for them. They would strip their garments and sit buried up to their necks in sand, and [studied](study.html) the whole day. When it was [time](time.html) for [prayers](prayer.html), they robed, [prayed](prayer.html), and then put off their garments again so that they should not wear out. Thus they dwelt [twelve](twelve.html) years in the cave. Then Elijah came and stood at the entrance to the cave and said: ‘Who will tell the son of Yochai that the emperor is dead and his decree annulled?’

So they emerged. Seeing a man plowing and sowing, they cried: “They forsake [eternal life](eternal.html) and engage in the worldly life of here and now!" Whatever they looked at was immediately burned up. A heavenly voice came forth and cried. ‘Have you emerged in order to destroy my [world](worlds.html)? Go back into your cave.’ So they returned and dwelt there [twelve](twelve.html) months. A heavenly voice then came forth and said: "Go forth from your cave.”

“On the eve of the [Sabbath](sabbath.html), before sunset, they saw an old man holding [two](two.html) bundles of myrtle and running at twilight. “What are these for?'

“They are in honor of the [Sabbath](sabbath.html)," he replied.

“But isn’t [one](one.html) enough?’

“[One](one.html) is for remembering the [Sabbath](sabbath.html), and [one](one.html) for keeping the [Sabbath](sabbath.html) [in honor of the [two](two.html) sacred phrases, 'honor the [Sabbath](sabbath.html)' and 'keep the [Sabbath](sabbath.html).”'

Said Hakham Shimon to his son, ‘See how precious the [commandments](cmds613.html) are to Israel.’ And their minds became peaceful.”

Hakham Shimon bar Yochai and his son are zealots—they only want the life of the spirit, and ignore the life of the [body](body.html), burying their [bodies](body.html) in sand while they [study](study.html) sacred text. When they emerge from the cave, their [spiritual](physical.html) extremism causes them to reject the life of the [world](worlds.html)—the sowing and reaping humans must do in order to live. They spread [fire](fire.html), destructive [spiritual](physical.html) energy, all around them. The heavenly voice, literally the “daughter-voice”, orders them to go back into the cave and stop destroying the [world](worlds.html). When they emerge again, they are faced with a man who combines the [physical](physical.html), the sweet-smelling leaves of the myrtle, with a deep respect for the [spiritual](physical.html) realm of the [Sabbath](sabbath.html). The [two](two.html) men see how nature can be wound together with spirit, and they become peaceful. This story too is about the union of [heaven](heaven.html) and earth. Shimon bar Yochai and his son reject Roman excess, and with it, the natural [world](worlds.html). In the [womb](thebirth.html)-like cave of God, they learn once again to respect both [body](body.html) and spirit. The man with [two](two.html) twigs of myrtle (commonly a plant used when dancing at weddings) reminds them of the sacred [marriage](mashal.html) of the eternal with the here and now. So too, the mystics celebrate this day as a [time](time.html) of union between the Holy [One](one.html) and the Shechinah. On [Nisan](feasts.html) [one](one.html), the Divine emerges into the [world](worlds.html), and on Lag BaOmer we meet the Divine in sacred dance.

# XV. The [Number](nchart.html) [Thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) (33)

Lag BaOmer is bound up in the meaning of the [numbers](nchart.html) “[thirty](thirty.html)” and “[three](three.html)”. In this section we will be exploring the meaning of the [number](nchart.html) “[thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html)”.

As we have said before, בעומר ל׳׳ג, is a [Hebrew](hebrew.html) phrase that means the [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) day of the [Omer](omer.html). d’’k – Lag, is how we say “33” in [Hebrew](hebrew.html) (k=30, d=3).

**The** [**number**](nchart.html)[**three**](three.html) **is used in the Torah to mediate between** [**two**](two.html) **opposing or contradictory values. The** [**third**](three.html) **value** [**connects**](connection.html)**, mediates, and reconciles the** [**two**](two.html)**. Thus Lag BaOmer is is the ultimate day of unity because it** [**connects**](connection.html)**, mediates, and reconciles!**

Chazal say, that the primary part of Sefira is from the second day of [Pesach](passover.html) until Lag BaOmer. (Although the actual sefira is 49 days, if we count from the [first](one.html) day of [Pesach](passover.html) all the way to [Shavuot](shavuot.html) there are a total of fifty-[one](one.html) days, or [three](three.html) segments of seventeen days each.) Lag Baomer marks the end of the second of these [three](three.html) segments. We [know](daat.html) from the Maharal that the [number](nchart.html) [three](three.html) represents a transition of states. The [first](one.html) of the [three](three.html) is connected to what was previously. The middle is an bridge, not touching either what came before the beginning of the transition or what is to come afterward. The [third](three.html) segment is already touching on, and connected to that which is being transitioned into.

## In The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) Alefbet

This mediating or connecting aspect can be readily seen in the numerical value of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [letters](letters.html) when divided into groups of [three](three.html):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ן-700 | ת-400 | ק-100 | ע-70 | ם-40 | י-10 | ז-7 | ד-4 | א-1 |
| ף-800 | ך-500 | ר-200 | פ-80 | נ-50 | כ-20 | ח-8 | ה-5 | ב-2 |
| ץ-900 | ם-600 | ש-300 | צ-90 | ס-60 | ל-30 | ט-9 | ו-6 | ג-3 |

From the above chart we can see that the average of the *values* of א and ג is ב. Thus we can see that the [third](three.html) mediates between the [two](two.html). This same pattern holds true for the entire alefbet, as can be seen from the above chart.

The [letters](letters.html) of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) alefbet are also naturally divided into [three](three.html):

1. [Three](three.html) mother [letters](letters.html) (Aleph, Mem, Shin),
2. [seven](seven.html) double [letters](letters.html) (Beth, Gimmel, Dalet, Kaph, Pay, Resh, Tav)
3. And [twelve](twelve.html) simple [letters](letters.html) (Hay, Vav, Zain, Het, Tet, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samek, Ayin, Tzade, Qoph).

## In Child [birth](birth.html)

The Torah says[[68]](#footnote-68), that a woman who has just given [birth](birth.html) to a child, must separate from her husband, as a niddah, for [seven](seven.html) days if it was a [male](male+female.html) child, and [fourteen](fourteen.html) days for a [female](male+female.html) child. Following that separation period, the woman waits another [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) days if she gave [birth](birth.html) to a boy, or sixty-[six](six.html) days if she gave [birth](birth.html) to a girl, and then she brings [two](two.html) sacrifices to [HaShem](hashem.html): An olah, a [burnt offering](korbanot.html), and a chatat, a [sin](sin.html) [offering](korbanot.html).

[*Birth*](birth.html) *represents the penultimate revelation of that which is hidden.*

The death of [Yeshua](yeshua.html) was also a [birth](birth.html), but without the niddah period because there was no [blood](body.html) from the “mother”. How can we equate a death with a [birth](birth.html)? Are these not polar opposites? In [Hebrew](hebrew.html), the word for a [*womb*](thebirth.html) is *kever*. The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for a *grave* is also *kever*. Thus we see that a [womb](thebirth.html) and a grave are the same thing to the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) mind. If we think about the [connection](connection.html) between a [*womb*](thebirth.html) and a *grave*, we realize that they are both portals to another [world](worlds.html). Thus we can understand that the death of the righteous is like a caterpillar which spins a cocoon and then dissolves in it, much as a [body](body.html) dissolves in a grave. Yet in the end we will see that the cocoon will open and the resulting butterfly is revealed. As a caterpillar, he was slow, earth-bound, and ugly. As a butterfly he is light, diaphanous, and beautiful. Thus we see that the creature which emerges from a grave is a beautiful recreation of the creature which went down to the grave.

*Re-*[*birth*](birth.html) *(*[*resurrection*](techiyat.html)*) represents the ultimate revelation of that which is hidden.*

After the [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) days, the [purified](purity.html) woman ascends to the [temple](temple.html) to bring her [offering](korbanot.html). Thus [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) days after the [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s death, we have Lag BaOmer, the ascension of a [purified](purity.html) [Yeshua](yeshua.html) into the heavenly [temple](temple.html).

This also helps us to understand why Hakham Luqas can call this [forty](forty.html) days, when it is only [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html). If the niddah period had been needed, then His ascension would indeed have taken place on the fortieth day.

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The [thirty](thirty.html)-[third](three.html) word in the Torah is TOV, GOOD, indicating that Lag BaOmer is a good day for us.

King David reigned in [Jerusalem](city.html) for [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) years. This suggests that there is a [connection](connection.html) between Lag BaOmer and the reign of King David.

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***Kiddushin 38a*** *On the seventh of* [*Adar*](feasts.html) *Moses died, and on the seventh of* [*Adar*](feasts.html) *he was born. How do we* [*know*](daat.html) *that he died on the seventh of* [*Adar*](feasts.html)*? For it is written: [i] So Moses the servant of the Lord died there; [ii] And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of* [*Moab*](stages.html)[*thirty*](thirty.html) *days; [iii] Moses thy servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over [this* [*Jordan*](stages.html)*]; [iv] Pass through the midst of the* [*camp*](stages.html)*, and* [*command*](cmds613.html) *the people, saying: Prepare you victuals; for within* [*three*](three.html) *days ye are to pass over this* [*Jordan*](stages.html)*; and [v] and the people came up out of* [*Jordan*](stages.html) *on the tenth day of the* [*first*](one.html) *month; deduct the preceding* [*thirty*](thirty.html)[*three*](three.html) *days, thus you learn that Moses died on the seventh of* [*Adar*](feasts.html)*[[69]](#footnote-69).*

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[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XCV*** *AND* [*JACOB*](israelja.html) *SAID UNTO PHARAOH: THE DAYS OF THE YEARS OF MY SOJOURNINGS ARE A HUNDRED AND* [*THIRTY*](thirty.html) *YEARS; FEW AND EVIL HAVE BEEN THE DAYS OF THE YEARS OF MY LIFE (XLVII, 9). R. Abba b. Kahana observed: [*[*Jacob*](israelja.html) *said:] ‘Between me and Thee [God], I am not worthy (Gen. XXXII,11); between me and others, FEW AND EVIL,’ etc. R. Simeon b. Yohai said: Because he complained in* [*thirty*](thirty.html)*-*[*three*](three.html) *words, therefore* [*thirty*](thirty.html)*-*[*three*](three.html) *years were withheld from his life[[70]](#footnote-70).*

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Yocheved was the only survivor of the entire 210 year period of Egyptian captivity. She was conceived in Canaan and born as her family passed through the gates of Egypt. Yocheved thus [connects](connection.html) the [galut](galuyot.html) of Egypt to the period of the Patriarchs and the period of the [nation](nations.html) of the Children of Israel. She was the child who in [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition is [known](daat.html) as being born “between the walls.”

***Bereshit (Genesis) 46:8-15*** *And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came* [*into Egypt*](thebirth.html)*,* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *and his sons: Reuben,* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*’s firstborn. 9 And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. 10 And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and* [*Zohar*](orallaw.html)*, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman. 11 And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 12 And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zerah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul. 13 And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron. 14 And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. 15 These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *and* [*three*](three.html)*.*

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***Divrei Hayamim (1 Chronicles) 29:27*** *Thus David, the son of Jesse, reigned over all Israel. And the* [*time*](time.html) *that he reigned over Israel was* [*forty*](forty.html) *years;* [*seven*](seven.html) *years reigned he in* [*Hebron*](city.html)*, and* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *and* [*three*](three.html) *years reigned he in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*.*

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The "Tree of the Sephiroth", of the Kabbalah, has [thirty](thirty.html)-[three](three.html) elements, including the whole of it and it’s constituent parts.

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Vayikra, Section 3, Page 43b*** *‘Many myriads are brought forth at every hour, but they are not called souls until they are settled in a* [*body*](body.html)*, and this is only after* [*thirty*](thirty.html)*-*[*three*](three.html) *days.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 46:15*** *These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *and* [*three*](three.html)*.*

***Leviticus 12:1-4*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake unto Moses, saying, 2* [*Speak*](mashal.html) *unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived* [*seed*](flower.html)*, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean* [*seven*](seven.html) *days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. 3 And in the* [*eighth*](eight.html) *day the flesh of his foreskin shall be* [*circumcised*](circumcz.html)*. 4 And she shall then continue in the* [*blood*](body.html) *of her purifying* [*three*](three.html) *and* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the* [*sanctuary*](mikdash.html)*, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.*

## In The Human [Body](body.html)

Lag BaOmer is bound up in the meaning of the [numbers](nchart.html) “[thirty](thirty.html)” and “[three](three.html)”. In this section we will be exploring the meaning of the [number](nchart.html) “[three](three.html)”.

The human [body](body.html) is also divided into sets of [three](three.html): The [head](body.html) which is not clothed, the upper [body](body.html) [connects](connection.html) the [head](body.html) to the lower [body](body.html) and is clothed, and the lower [body](body.html) which is also clothed but is divided from the upper [body](body.html) by a belt or a different kind of cloth.

The [head](body.html) is then subdivided into [three](three.html) parts: The right [brain](brain.html), the left [brain](brain.html), and the mid-[brain](brain.html) which [connects](connection.html) the left and right brains to the [body](body.html).

The upper [body](body.html), like the [head](body.html), is also subdivided into [three](three.html) parts: The right arm, the left arm, and the torso which [connects](connection.html) the left and the right [arms](body.html).

Finally, the lower [body](body.html) is subdivided into [three](three.html) parts: The right leg, the left leg, and the organ of procreation which Kabbala calls the [*third*](three.html) *leg*.

We see that the arm is further divided into composed of [three](three.html) parts: The upper arm, the lower arm and the [hand](fourteen.html).

Finally, each of the [fingers](body.html) is divided into [three](three.html) parts: The part which is connected to the [hand](fourteen.html), the part used for touching, and the mediating part which [connects](connection.html) them.

This pattern of [three](three.html) repeats itself throughout the [body](body.html).

## In The Life of [Yosef](joseph.html) HaTzaddik

[Shavuot](shavuot.html), on day fifty (50) of the [omer](omer.html) count, is seventeen (17) days after Lag BaOmer (33+17 =50).

[Yosef](joseph.html) HaTzaddik was seventeen years old when he descended [into Egypt](thebirth.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 37:2*** *These are the* [*generations*](toldot.html) *of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*.* [*Joseph*](joseph.html)*, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives: and* [*Joseph*](joseph.html) *brought unto his father their evil report.*

[Yaaqov](israelja.html) spent the last seventeen years of his life in Egypt:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 47:28*** *And* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *was an hundred* [*forty*](forty.html) *and* [*seven*](seven.html) *years.*

In Egypt the sons of Israel became a [nation](nations.html). They forged the unity that changed them from a family into a [nation](nations.html).

## The [Number](nchart.html) [Thirty](thirty.html)

Lag BaOmer is bound up in the meaning of the [numbers](nchart.html) “[thirty](thirty.html)” and “[three](three.html)”. In this section we will be exploring the meaning of the [number](nchart.html) “[thirty](thirty.html)”.

The famous 12th century commentator Rashbam explains that at age [thirty](thirty.html) [one](one.html) is "worthy of leadership." What is so significant about being [thirty](thirty.html) and being ready to lead?

The Code of [Jewish](gen-jew.html) [Law](law.html)[[71]](#footnote-71) instructs congregations to seek certain qualities when choosing a cantor to lead the services on the High Holidays. [One](one.html) of these qualities is that he should be at least [thirty](thirty.html) years old. Why? The [Mishna](orallaw.html) Brura explains that it is because a [thirty](thirty.html) year-old is humble and broken hearted, and can thus sincerely "[pray](prayer.html) from the [heart](body.html)."

[Thirty](thirty.html) is for strength. It the age at which a man's strength is at its peak, both [physically](physical.html) and emotionally. At that age, we see our lives ahead of us, and we feel up to its challenges. [Thirty](thirty.html) is an age where it is said in the [Midrash](orallaw.html) that when reached, a person can begin influencing the [world](worlds.html). Before that age, a person is preparing by building [knowledge](knowledge.html) and character.

The [number](nchart.html) [thirty](thirty.html) is significant, for as Pirkei Avot states, "Kingship is acquired through [thirty](thirty.html) attributes."

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From this brief introduction, I learned that Lag BaOmer is intimately associated with the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) and His mission. His mission is to be a mission of bringing the light to the [world](worlds.html) and bringing love between His Talmidim. Because Lag BaOmer deals with the secrets of the [future](future.html) messianic age, it is not discussed openly or understood as clearly as the descent to Egypt or other Torah [events](feasts.html) of the past.

Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai, [one](one.html) of the [five](five.html) remaining students of Hakham Akiva, revealed the secrets of the [Zohar](orallaw.html) on Lag BaOmer. And in the mysteries of the [Zohar](orallaw.html) lie the mystical secrets that will bring about the Messianic age.

So what we celebrate is our rescue from despair, our faith that the Messianic [dream](dreams.html) of peace for all did not die, but was only postponed, that it was still possible, there was still enough spirituality left, to eventually bring the [Mashiach](mashiach.html). And why flames? Why all the bonfires? The word ‘[Zohar](orallaw.html)’ means brilliant light. According to tradition, [fire](fire.html) symbolizes a passionate striving to reach for [HaShem](hashem.html). The [Mishna](orallaw.html) tells us,

***Avot 2:15*** *Warm yourself by the* [*fire*](fire.html) *of the Sages.*

And on LagBaOmer, as we sing songs of Shimon bar Yochai and celebrate the fact that the Messianic [dream](dreams.html) is still alive and possible, we prove that the Messianic hope is still alive in us. Thus we see that the Messianic age truly begins on Lag BaOmer!

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For Further [Study](study.html):

**Nitei** [**Gavriel**](angels.html) **- Chinuch Yeladim, Halachot & Minhagim (Upsherins).** By: Rabbi [Gavriel](angels.html) Zinner | Publisher: Hotzaat Shemesh | Language: [Hebrew](hebrew.html)

\* \* \*

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1. The Romans became more opressive. They sought out the leaders of the revolt. One of Akiba’s students, Simeon Ben Yoni, was sentanced to death. He took his son, Eleazar, and hid in a cave in Galilee at Meron. They took Torahs and other scrolls and he continued to study and teach. His students would dress as hunters with bows and arrows to fool the Romans when they brought food and studied at the cave. When the Romans were defeated it was on the 33rd day of the Omer. Thirteen years they had studied and taught in the cave. This is the reason that Lag B’Omer is called the scholar’s festival. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. R' Tzadok HaKohn in *Pri Tzadik*, page 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rabbi Akiva is the essence of the Oral Law. Moses brings the written Law down to the world; Rabbi Akiva is the nucleus around which the Oral Law is transmitted and generated within the world.

   There are many parallels between Moses and Rabbi Akiva (Sifrei, Devarim 357; both lived 120 years...); but Moses comes from within, Rabbi Akiva from without (he is the offspring of converts; Moses descends from Jacob, Rabbi Akiva from Esau). Jacob is the root of the Written Law, Esau is the root of the Oral Law (Genesis 25:28 *ki tzayid b'piv*). Jacob and Esau are twins; at one level Esau is the firstborn, at another Jacob fulfils that destiny. (This is also the root of Moses’ apparent inability to understand the Torah of Rabbi Akiva and his suggestion that the Torah be given through Rabbi Akiva; in fact, in a very deep way, it was.) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Thomson Gale. (n.d.). *Encyclopedia Judaica,* (2 ed., Vol. 12). (F. Skolnik, Ed.) 2007: Keter Publishing House Ltd. p. 438 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The real name of the supposed [Messiah](mashiach.html) was Bar Kosba, see below, after the failure he was known as Bar Koziba, this is how the Maimonides refers to him in *Melachim 11:3*. The name Bar Kochba as such is not found in Talmudic literature, cf. Buber edition of [Midrash Eicha Rabba](orallaw.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Yevamoth 62b [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Wars of the Jews II, 15, 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The reason for Lag B'Omer is that there are 24 days including Lag B'Omer where one doesnt say tachanun in the omer. Each day 1000 talmidim died. On the 24th day Lag B'Omer R Akiva was also supposed to die. But because of him not dying the gezairo stopped and no more died. That is why we keep Lag B’Omer. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Berachot 8a, Pesachim 105a [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [Midrash](orallaw.html) Kohelet Rabbah 11:10 quotes the words of Hakham Akiva who said, "'I had 12,000 disciples from Geves to Antiperes, all of whom died during my lifetime [between [Pesach](passover.html) and [Shavuot](shavuot.html)]. In the end, I had [seven](seven.html) disciples, Hakham Yehuda Bar Ilai, Hakham Nechemiah, Hakham Meir, Hakham Yosi Ben Chalafta, Hakham Shimon Bar Yochai, Hakham Eliezer the son of Hakham Yosi HaGalili and Hakham Yochanan HaSandlar. The earlier [disciples] died because they envied the Torah accomplishments of their colleagues. You [the later disciples] must not repeat their error.' Immediately, they succeeded in filling all of [Eretz Yisrael](city.html) with Torah." [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. This teaching is also found in Yoma 9a, but the [Talmudic](orallaw.html) discussion clouds the authorship of Rav Yochanan ben Torta. A careful reading of that source will yield the same conclusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Shabbat 33b [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The bonfires on this day are intended to recall Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai’s gaze, which was said to be as powerful as fire and would vaporize anything that earned his disfavor. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Shir Rappaport, the well-known historian of the 19th Century. Orah Haim 493,7 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Midrash Rabbah - Shemot 29:9 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ta’anith 23a [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. HaTikkun HaKlali [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Yeremiyahu (Jeremiah) 25:11-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Midrash Rabbah Shemot 1:32 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Bereshit (Genesis) 2:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Malachi 2:25 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *Shabbat* 33b [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *Aruch HaShulchan* [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Hebrew: כף החיים‎; translation: "the palm of life") is the title of two widely cited codes of Jewish law. A work by Rabbi Yaakov Chaim Sofer, and a work by Rabbi Hayim Palaggi. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Likutey Halahkot, Hekhsher Keilim 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. HaShem changed it in Shemot 2:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Bereshit (Genesis) 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Bereshit (Genesis) 8:14, and 9:12-13 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. This day falls close to Shabbat Behar-Bechukotai, the day we read about the Shmita or Sabbatical year. Both the Rainbow covenant and Shmita teach us about our relationship with the Earth. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The 42nd day of the Omer on which to say, “Today is Forty Two Days, that is Six Weeks for the Omer” (Malchut within Yesod ~ Majesty within Foundation). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. <https://www.betemunah.org/tishri83.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. If you line op the first cycle of 3 ½ years with the second cycle of 3 ½ years. This is based on having the first cycle of readings, line up month by month with the readings for the second cycle. Because each cycle is 3 ½ yeards, this will naturally line the readings up in a bimodal fashion. <https://www.betemunah.org/rains.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The word, keshet, in Hebrew means both “bow” and “rainbow. The rainbow is the sign that G-d will not destroy the world again (Gen. 9.11-13). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Taken from the writings of Hakham Rebbe Ya'aqob Menashe [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Shabbat 33b [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Yevamoth 62b [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 493:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Sanhedrin 109b [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Shemot 2:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Marqos 16:19, II Luqas 1:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. **Shemot 16:1-5**, Seder Olam 5; Kiddushin 38a, Rashi. Chatam Sofer, Y.D. 233 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Saadia Gaon’s *Emunot Ve-De'ot*, tenth section, Kafih ed., p. 315 [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Mechilta, Shemot 16:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Shaar Yisaschar [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Torah Insights on the Weekly Parsha, by Efraim Levine, **The Reisha Rav, HaGoan R' Aaron Levine zt"l** [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Orach Chaim 428 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. 2 Luqas (Acts) 1:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. 2 Luqas 1:6-11 [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Marqos 16:19, II Luqas 1:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Pesachim 74a [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Jason Aaronson, 1996 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Yahrtzeit, יאָרצײַט, means "Time (of) Year" in Yiddish. The word is also used by non-Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews, and refers to the annual anniversary of the day of death of a relative. Yahrtzeit literally means "time of [one] year". [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Rashbi [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. By Hakham Pinchas Winston [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Vayikra (Leviticus) 27:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. What need therefore is there to place the mothers outside? [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. No other device being adopted except that of placing the mothers outside the shed. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Because an animal bought or orphaned is exempted from tithing, and the placing of the mothers outside is a reminder that an animal bought and not born to him, or one whose mother died during or soon after confinement, is exempt from tithing; whereas if some other plan were adopted of inducing the young to go out, orphans and animals bought might enter the shed and thus cause the rest to be exempted. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Where, for example, its leg from the knee and upwards is broken. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Even in the instances just mentioned. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Not having been counted. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Mitzrayim = Egypt [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. legal acquisition by right of possession) is a Midrashic and Talmudic concept, the presumption of ownership of a personal status (such as being of kohen or levite status) or of land, or tangible property. The word is the Hebrew word חזקה, a feminine version of חזק, which can be translated as “strong holding”. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Chachma = Wisdom [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ad Loc. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. ex nihilo-out of nothing. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Avot 3:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Vayikra 12:2-4 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. From Adar 7th to Nisan 10th are 33 days. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. He lived 147 years, 33 years less than Isaac. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. O.C. 581:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-71)