

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • אחרי-קדושים תשפ"א • 615
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

LAG BA'OMER

AN AUSPICIOUS DAY

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

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

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

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

(זהר ח"ג דף רצ"א ע"ב, רצ"ו ע"ב)

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

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

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

CONSIDER

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

How did chassidim rejoice on Lag Ba'Omer?

HOLY CELEBRATIONS

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

(לקו"ש חכ"ב ע' 138)

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

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

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

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

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

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

BOWS AND ARROWS

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

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

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

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

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

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

(תר"מ תשמ"ז ח"ג ע' 209)

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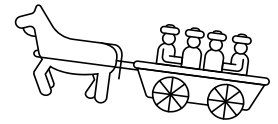
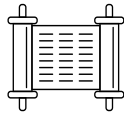
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REPRIMANDING A NEIGHBOR'S CHILD

If I see someone else's child doing a prohibited action on Shabbos, must I say something?

A father is obligated to train his child to perform mitzvos - both min haTorah and midrabanan - from when the child is old enough to understand and fulfil them.

Poskim debate whether a mother is obligated to ensure her children's mitzva observance, and the Alter Rebbe rules that she isn't. Yet she fulfills a mitzva when she does, and the Shelah writes that she must reprimand them when she sees them transgress.

The Rebbe adds that while overseeing specific mitzva observance is primarily the father's responsibility, the task of raising children to be pure and holy was entrusted to the mothers. This is because they often spend more time with the children and they naturally educate in a gentle and loving manner.

A teacher is required not only to teach Torah, but to educate his students in mitzvos. Some add that his salary is primarily for training students in mitzvos and midos, for Torah must generally be taught for free. There is debate whether the teacher's obligation is on behalf of the father or independent and some poskim conclude that it is independent.

There is a universal mitzva in educating any Jewish child, even if they aren't under one's responsibility. While the public or beis din are not obligated to stop a child from sinning for personal enjoyment, like eating non-kosher, they must admonish the father for failing to educate his child.

The Rebbe wrote and spoke extensively that in this generation every person should go beyond the letter of the law and do what ever they can to educate another Jewish child.

- 7. ראה ספר שבט מוסר לרבי אליהו הכהן האתמרי פי"ז.
8. ראה אג"מ יו"ד ח"ד סי' ל'.
9. ראה שו"ע"ר א"ח סי' קס"ז סכ"ג.
10. ראה שו"ע"ר א"ח סי' שמ"ג ס"א וס"ב (והחיוב למחות באב הוא באיסור תורה).
11. ראה רמב"ם נחלות פי"א ה"י. וראה פני" סוכה ב"ב ד"ה וכו' תאמרו. וראה תנא דבי אליהו ובה פי"א.
12. ראה התוועדות תשד"מ ח"ב ע' 625. אג"ק ח"ה ע' רנ"ד.

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

REB ZUSHA OF ANIPOLI

Reb Meshulem Zusha of Anipoli was one of the great talmidim of the Mezritcher Maggid and a brother of Reb Elimelech of Lizensk. After exiling himself for many years, he finally settled in Anipoli, where he began teaching the ways of Chassidus.

The Mezritcher Maggid once called in Reb Mendel Horodoker, Reb Pinchas Baal Hahafla'ah, and the Alter Rebbe, to ask them a question in nigleh. They left the Rebbe's room and discussed the matter among themselves.

Reb Zusha went to a side and began crying, "Ribono Shel Olam! Zusha does not have a part in the Torah; it does not belong to him..." Later, Reb Zusha

approached the Alter Rebbe, for he was ashamed to speak up in front of the entire group, and elucidated a possible explanation. Amazed, the Alter Rebbe declared that this was Torah from shamayim. The Alter Rebbe told over the explanation to the Maggid, in the name of Reb Zusha, and the Maggid accepted it.

(משיחת כ"ה חשוון תרצ"ה)

Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg asked the Maggid of Mezritch, "How is it possible to fulfill the words of our chachomim, 'A person is obligated to bentch Hashem for the bad the same way he bentches him for good'?"

Reb Shmelke went to Reb Zusha and told him that the Rebbe had sent him here to hear an explanation on the Mishna. Reb Zusha could not fathom why the Rebbe had sent the chossid to him. "Such a question you should ask to someone who had some bad experience, chas v'shalom. I, however, have had no such experience, for nothing bad has ever befallen me! How then would I be able to explain this concept?"

(סיפורי חסידים זיון ע' 203)

A Moment with The Rebbe



A TZADDIK DECREES, HASHEM DELIVERS

As a bochur at the yeshiva in 770, Reb Yaakov Mordechai Shpritzer kept a personal diary in which he recorded various happenings with the Rebbe. The following is an excerpt:

Lag BaOmer 5730.

At the parade, Louis J. Lefkowitz, the Attorney General of New York State,

stood at the Rebbe's side. He turned to the Rebbe and said, "Rabbi, it's going to rain soon."

The Rebbe said, "Don't worry."

After the sicha the Rebbe said to him, "Nu, I told you it won't rain. I postponed it until tomorrow."

(Shpritzer Teshurah, Adar 5759)

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