



Kol Sholom

BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN OF
CONGREGATION ANSHE SHOLOM



VOICE OF PEACE ■ MAY/JUNE 2023 ■ IYYAR / SIVAN / TAMMUZ ■ 5783



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SAVE THESE DATES

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- Julian Bernstein Distinguished Service Award May 9th
- Israeli Whiskey Tasting May 18th
- Learning-on-the-Lawn #2 May 13th
- Shavuot May 25th-27th
- Grimaldi Annual Ice Cream Party/
Kickball Game May 26th
- Celebrate Israel Parade June 4th
- Annual Testimonial Dinner June 11th



HAPPY SHAVUOT

חג שבועות שמח



FROM THE RABBI'S STUDY



Dear friends,

The next six weeks will be a hectic time at Anshe Sholom as we prepare for the Annual Testimonial Dinner scheduled for Sunday, June 11th. Sari and I are most grateful to the congregation for bestowing this honor upon us. (Actually, I think Eli is the most excited of all of us, because he is working on his speech/roast.) I want to congratulate Marlene and Armand Lerner for receiving the Allan Glick Memorial Service Award. They have done so much for the shul over many decades and are deserving of the recognition. Please make things easier for the shul's office staff by sending in your journal ads and dinner reservations in a timely manner. Don't wait for the last second. I want to thank David Tantleff for volunteering to chair this year's dinner. I am looking forward to an enjoyable evening of philanthropy, congregational solidarity, great food, politicians' cameos, and short speeches.

Shavuot is quickly approaching on Thursday night, May 25. We will have a learning session for Tikkun Leil Shavuot. We will start at 11:00PM and learn until 1:00AM. The topic will be "Ethical Challenges in an Unethical World." As in past years, I will be walking northbound to Young Israel to lecture later in the night. All are welcome to join me on the trek uptown and to stay for the sunrise Vatikin minyan. We will have sponsored dairy luncheons on the two days of Shavuot. If you plan to have guests for Yom Tov, please alert the office so we can prepare accordingly.

Please note the schedule for the final three sessions of my History of Jerusalem lecture series: May 2 (Yeshivot of Jerusalem), May 16 (Ben-Yehuda Street), May 30 (Old City Gates). Throughout the summer, we will have a Shiur on Shabbat afternoons 45 minutes before Mincha.

I kindly request that those who attend Friday night services please arrive on time. In past years, we scheduled Friday night services for 7:00PM. Unfortunately, the "early Shabbos" schedule is not realistic for many of our congregants. Instead, this year, Friday Mincha will be scheduled near the candle lighting hour. With the extra flexibility offered by the later start time, please be punctual so we don't have to wait any further.

In other news, I recently self-published another short book titled *Where did Cain find a wife? (And other challenging issues in the Torah)*. The book is available on Amazon and Kindle.

I want to thank AnnBeth Cohen and Joel Givertz for their hard work in putting together the communal Seder. I want to thank Meitav & Yochai Feldman for their efforts in arranging an extraordinarily meaningful and lively Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut program. And I want to thank Perry Kangoun and Liora Rubinstein for arranging the outreach Shabbaton at the end of April. And, of course, a sincere thanks to our custodian Flori Kajtazi for everything she does to keep the building running smoothly during major shul functions and every day.

Best wishes to one and all,
Rabbi Evan Hoffman

RETURN OF LEARNING-on-the-LAWN

at different homes in our community

starting

MAY 6th, 2023 @4:00 PM

at the home of

Miriam & Tom Grimaldi
17 Poplar Place, New Rochelle

AND ...

MAY 13th, 2023 @4:00 PM

at the home of

Yael Schulman & Shlomi Peretz
246 Kensington Oval, New Rochelle

**Join us for this social way to connect
outside of shul in a safe environment
and learn some Torah.**

Light refreshments will be served

All are welcome
Free-of-charge



THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE



Dear friends,

I am writing this message just as we are about to board the plane back to NY after 3.5 weeks in Israel. This trip was full of everything... family, friends, terror attacks, holidays, sadness, good food, missiles, and mourning. We felt it all. And with it all, we had a hard time packing up and returning to NY.

Israel is glorious. Israel is our homeland, and Israel truly is my home. After a couple of weeks in Israel, my vocabulary improved, and my accent melted away - nothing made me happier than when colleagues I hadn't met were surprised by how good my English was - they assumed I was a native Hebrew speaker. However, one thing we missed the most while in Israel was our home-away-from-home — New Rochelle and our dear Anshe Sholom family. While there was a lot of shul-going during our trip, shul in Israel is just a place to pray. It's not a community. It's not family.

That's why I am excited to invite you to our upcoming Testimonial Dinner on June 11th, where we will honor Rabbi and Rebbetzin Hoffman and present the Alan Glick Award to Marlene and Armand Lerner. These four individuals have contributed immensely to our shul and community, and there are no people more deserving of these honors.

Rabbi Evan and Rebbetzin Sari moved to New Rochelle with baby Eli and got to work. The shul was very different back then in many ways. Other than the Grimaldi kids, Eli was the only youngster in shul. We honestly had no idea where Anshe Sholom would be in a decade-plus. Back then, we didn't know about the tremendous plans for growth for downtown New Rochelle, nor could we have predicted the global pandemic. But here we are today and thriving. People have been joining our shul monthly, enjoying our community, and being part of the Anshe Sholom family. So many have dedicated tremendous amounts of time, resources, and money to make this happen, but it could not have been successful without the unwavering commitment of the Hoffmans.

In Proverbs, it says, "Shammai would say: Make your Torah study a permanent fixture of your life. Say little and do much, and greet every person with a kind, cheerful countenance (Proverbs 3:18)". Without the Hoffman's kindness, adherence to serious Torah study, and a tremendous amount of work both forward-facing and even more so, behind the scenes, Anshe Sholom would not be here today.

As I mentioned above, so many people have worked tirelessly on behalf of Anshe Sholom, and my friends, Marlene and Armand Lerner, are at the top of that list. Marlene joined the shul in 1962 and has been a dedicated member ever since. Decades on the board in various positions, including VP, working on every project, the Testimonial Dinner, and anything asked of her — Marlene is always there. Armand has been a dedicated minyanaire for decades, and he is always by Marlene's side working on the Golden Group or other projects. Marlene and Armand volunteer with smiles and a "cheerful countenance." They are the dynamic duo beloved by congregants of all ages, their friends, family, children, and grandchildren.

As synagogue president, I have always known that anything I ask of Marlene and Armand will be received with a yes. Any crazy idea, any adventure — they are here for the ride. Their support and dedication are unparalleled, and we would not be the shul we are without these pillars of our community.

I am thrilled that Marlene and Armand have accepted the Allan Glick Memorial Award, which holds a special place in my heart. Allan Glick, z"l, was a great supporter of Anshe Sholom; his steadfast dedication, kind smile, and supportive words are deeply missed.

As our most significant fundraiser, the success of the Testimonial Dinner is necessary for our coming fiscal year. Please consider digging deeper and increasing your support this year so that we can continue to do all the outstanding work we do for South New Rochelle and the Jewish community.

Please join us on June 11th to celebrate the Hoffmans and the Lerner's and show our support for Anshe Sholom. Thank you all for your continued dedication to our community.

Wishing you all the best,

Yael Schulman,
President



A MESSAGE FROM SISTERHOOD



My dear friends,

The weather keeps see-sawing between gorgeous and icky (cold, rainy), but the plants and flowers and birds tell us it is indeed spring. It seems to rain every Saturday.

We are looking forward to Shavuot. Sisterhood will sponsor its annual dairy luncheon on Friday, May 26th, following services.

We are saddened at the loss of Gertrude Goldstein, a long-time Sisterhood Board member, who was attending meetings until Covid hit. She was a strong, opinionated and practical thinker, and a live wire at our meetings. May her memory be a blessing.

As you will see in the Sunshine Card listings, we thank and really appreciate those who go the extra mile to help Anshe Sholom and Sisterhood. We look forward to more happy celebrations.

Have a great spring!
Chag Shavuot Sameach!

Joanne Wiesner-Steiner

Sisterhood President



SUNSHINE CARDS

*To AnnBeth Cohen and to Honey Neier,
Thank you both for making Anshe Sholom celebrations festive,
meaningful and deliciously filling!— From: Lee Katz,
The Sisterhood of Anshe Sholom*

*To Constance Levi and to Phyliss Steinberg,
Thank you both for your help and contributions to our raffles to
raise funds for Shabbat luncheons! — From: The Sisterhood of
Anshe Sholom*

*Refuah shleimah to Debra Seltzer from your recent surgery—
From: The Sisterhood of Anshe Sholom*

*Refuah shleimah to Miriam Socoloff —
From: Joanne Wiesner-Steiner.*

*To Constance Levi, Thank you for being a great friend when I
really needed one — From: Joanne Wiesner-Steiner*

*To Helaine and Brent Culter,
Thank you for your generous donation to Sisterhood —
From: The Sisterhood of Anshe Sholom*



MEMORIAL CARDS

*To Joel Goldstein and the Goldstein Family, in loving memory
of Gertrude Goldstein, beloved mother, grandmother
and great-grandmother— From: Honey & Sol Neier, The
Sisterhood of Anshe Sholom*

*To Joel Goldstein: In loving memory of our Aunt, Gertrude
Goldstein. She will be sorely missed by her nieces and
nephews. She was a powerful inspiration to us all —
From: Madelyn & Albert Katz, Jerome & Judith Kroot*

*To Jerry Millman & family, In loving memory of long-time
member Cheryl Millman. May her memory be a blessing —
From: Bobby Mehler,
The Sisterhood of Anshe Sholom*

*To Yael Schulman & Shlomi Peretz: In loving memory of your
cousin Jessica Rana (Yehudit Elisheva). May her memory
be a blessing — From: The Sisterhood of Anshe Sholom*

*To Debra & Steven Neustadter: In loving memory of Debra's
mother, Lila Mamberg. May her memory be a blessing —
From: The Sisterhood of Anshe Sholom*

*To Lenore Levin, on loss of brother Alvin Gladstone —
From: Joanne Wiesner-Steiner.*

TO PURCHASE SUNSHINE OR MEMORIAL CARDS
contact: **Joanne Wiesner-Steiner**
joannewiesnersteiner@gmail.com



**\$5
EACH**



SHUL DONATIONS

In Memoriam

To Walter and Joel Goldstein, on loss of beloved mother, Gertrude Goldstein — From: Ellen & Michael Breslaw, Ruth Grayson, Jerome & Judith Kroot, Charlotte & Jerry Lovich, and Rose Lipshitz.

To Elliot Kracko, on loss of brother-in-law, Herb Jeremias — From: Fran & Earl Kabnick.

To Lenore Levin, on loss of brother Alvin Gladstone — From: Anshe Sholom Board of Trustees, Ruth Grayson, and Honey & Sol Neier.

To Jerry Millman on loss of beloved wife Cheryl — From: Honey & Sol Neier, Anshe Sholom Board Of Trustees, Marlene & Armand Lerner, and Charlotte & Jerry Lovich.

To Debra Neustader, on loss of beloved mother Lila Mamberg — From: Anshe Sholom Board Of Trustees, Ruth Grayson, and Honey & Sol Neier.

David Evan Hirsch Library

To Mrs. Henny Goldstein, on loss of sister Sandy — From: Marlene & Armand Lerner

To Debbie Lerner, on loss of father and mother — From: Marlene & Armand Lerner

To Lenore Levin, on loss of brother Alvin Gladstone — From: Marlene & Armand Lerner.



BUY GIFT CARDS THROUGH SISTERHOOD

Some participating well-known retailers are:

- Bed, Bath & Beyond • Starbucks
- Stop & Shop • Shop Rite • Macy's • Staples
- Gap & Old Navy ... and many, many more!

No extra charge to you! Great gift idea! Anshe Sholom gets the dividend!

Call Ruth Grayson, 914-632-4555, or the office, 914-632-9220.

מזל טוב וכל הכבוד!
 Mazal Tov & Kel Ha Kavod
 to our own
 Morris Schoeneman
 A Recipient of the 2023
 28th Annual Julian Y. Bernstein
 Distinguished Service Award

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2023

7:30 PM — 9:30 PM

@ TEMPLE ISRAEL CENTER OF WHITE PLAINS



THE NEW ROCHELLE JEWISH COMMUNITY-
 PLEASE JOIN US

ISRAELI WHISKEY TASTING

* Paired with a selection of Kosher Charcuterie by the Wandering Que

THURSDAY, MAY 18TH

7:30-9:00 PM

BETH EL SYNAGOGUE CENTER
 1324 North Ave, New Rochelle, NY 10804
 \$36 per person

Tickets- bit.ly/41SaiWd



For more information-
 ShacharL@jafi.org



A Taste of Purim 5783 @ Anshe Sholom



מצוה גדולה, להיות בשמחה
DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY



Yom HaZikaron ... Yom HaAtzmaut





SAVE THE DATE



**CELEBRATE
ISRAEL**

The parade is BACK! Kulanu B'Yachad (We're all together)! Westchester Jewish Council invites you to join us at the 2022 Celebrate Israel Parade on

Sunday, June 4th 2023

The parade runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. along 5th Avenue in Manhattan (between 57th and 74th Streets)

For more information, contact Donna at donna@wjcouncil.org or 914-328-7001

<https://celebrateisraelny.org>



ANNUAL SHAVUOT
Ice Cream Party & Kickball Game

Bring your sneakers!
The game is on rain or shine.

Friday May 26 2023
3-6 PM

The Grimaldi Home
17 Poplar Place
New Rochelle NY 10805

RSVP dr.grimaldi@gmail.com



SHAVUOT

Thursday, May 25th—
Saturday, May 27th 2023

THURSDAY EVENING • MAY 25th

8:00 PM **Mincha/Ma'ariv**
11:00 PM-12:30AM **Shavuot Learning at Anshe Sholom***

FRIDAY MORNING • MAY 26th

9:15 AM **Shacharit Dairy Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Sisterhood**
7:30 PM **Mincha**

SATURDAY MORNING • MAY 27th

9:15 AM **Shacharit**
10:30 AM **YIZKOR**
Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Irit Tzemach
7:50 PM **Mincha**
9:01 PM **Havdalah**

Join Us To Celebrate
The Giving of The Torah





The Origins of Lag Ba'Omer

By Rabbi Evan Hoffman

The earliest Geonic and Rishonic sources make no special mention of the thirty-third day of the Omer. There is no indication in the responsa and halakhic writings of Natronai Gaon, Hai Gaon, or Rabbi Isaac ibn Ghayyath that the ban on weddings during Sefirah is either completely suspended or temporarily relaxed at any point during the Omer; rather, the prohibitive custom appears to be in force continuously from Passover until Shavuot.

The earliest mention of Lag Ba'Omer is an annotation to Machzor Vitry likely written in the 1170s by Rabbi Isaac ben Durbal (Vitry 261). It notes that, in a given year, Purim and Lag Ba'Omer always fall on the same day of the week. The mnemonic device for this calendrical tidbit is “the name of the first one was Peleg (Genesis 10:25).” The name of the Biblical character Peleg פלג is used as an acronym for Purim & Lag Ba'Omer. While this rabbinic text makes clear that Lag Ba'Omer is a day of religious significance, it provides no clue about the character or origins of the holiday.

Rabbi Abraham ben Nathan Ha-Yarchi of Lunel, writing in 1204, noted that the custom in Northern France and Provence was to allow marriages from Lag Ba'Omer through the end of Sefirah (Sefer Ha-Manhig Hilkhoh Eirusin v'Nisuin 538). He cited his colleague Rabbi Zerachiah Ha-Levi, who claimed to have seen an ancient Spanish manuscript in which the recorded timeline for the deaths of Rabbi Akiba's students was מִפְסָה וְעַד פְּרוּם. Ha-Yarchi interpreted פְּרוּם *pros*, which -- assuming it is a Hebrew word -- means half, to refer to half of the allotted thirty-day period for pre-holiday questions and answers (Megillah 29b). If Akiba's students stopped dying fifteen days before Shavuot, then, posited Ha-Yarchi, that would account for the relaxation of funerary practices on Lag Ba-Omer.

Was Ha-Yarchi's explication of the phantom Spanish recension correct?

Temple authorities would, thrice annually, take Shekel donations and deposit them in bins so that the coins were available to purchase sacrificial animals. The procedure was done before pilgrimage festivals, at times identified as בְּפְרוּם הַפְסָה בְּפְרוּם

(Mishnah Shekalim 3:1). Rabbi Jose ben R' Judah understood פְּרוּם to mean “not fewer than fifteen days” prior to the holiday (Tosefta Shekalim 2:1). Another Mishnah identifies those very same three times a year as deadlines for setting aside the animal tithe (Mishnah Bekhorot 9:5). The Talmud cites Rabbi Jose ben R' Judah's view that פְּרוּם means fifteen days, and then cites Rabbi Avin who justified it by noting that it corresponds to half the pre-holiday study period (Bekhorot 58a).

While the above sources support Ha-Yarchi's reading of פְּרוּם, it is clear from many other rabbinic texts that פְּרוּם does not usually mean fifteen days before a holiday. If a person vows to abstain from something “until Passover,” the vows remains

binding until the time the Paschal Lamb is slaughtered on the eve of Passover (Tosefta Nedarim 4:7). As for such a vow taken in the post-Temple era, Rabbi Jose held that the vow expires upon the conclusion of 14 Nisan, whereas Rabbi Meir held that the vow expires earlier in the day. The Yerushalmi notes that the Tannaitic dispute concerns פְּרוּם הַפְסָה, meaning that פְּרוּם is the day immediately preceding the holiday (Yerushalmi Nedarim 41b). Other sources indicate

that פְּרוּם can mean, not before the holiday, but on the holiday itself. According to tradition, the three angels visited Abraham on Passover, a time identified in multiple Midrashic texts as פְּרוּם הַפְסָה (Genesis Rabbah 48:12). The interregnum between Solomon and Rehoboam lasted for 36 days, beginning on Rosh Chodesh Iyar and concluding on 6 Sivan, identified by the text as פְּרוּם הַעֲצָרָת (Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer 5). Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem בְּפְרוּם הַפְסָה (Seder Olam Rabbah 23), a time identified by other Aggadic sources as Passover night (Midrash Panim Acherim 6). The incident in which Judah ben Nehemiah disrespected Rabbi Tarfon is described by Rabbi Judah ben Ila'I as having taken place on פְּרוּם הַפְסָה (Menahot 68b). Yet a different recension has the event take place on Passover proper (Sifre Numbers 148), an indication that פְּרוּם can refer to the holiday itself. Rabbi Joshua Benveniste (17th century Constantinople), in his Yerushalmi commentary, noted that פְּרוּם is a Greek word meaning “before,” similar to the English prefix “pre-” (Sdeh Yehoshua Kiddushin 39a).



Likely Ha-Yarchi did not put much stock in his own explanation of the origins of Lag Ba'Omer. He was confronted with an existing practice and had to put forth a plausible explanation. Later scholars, while fully accepting Ha-Yarchi's theory that Akiba's disciples stopped dying at some point during Sefirah and that that moment ought to be commemorated by easing the mourning practices then being observed, identified a flaw in Ha-Yarchi's calculations. Subtracting fifteen from the total of forty-nine Sefirah days would mean that Akiba's disciples continued dying through the 34th day, and that only on the 35th day was there respite from these fatalities. By utilizing the Talmudic principle, often applied to the laws of mourning, that a partial day is considered a full day (Moed Katan 19b), it might be possible to reckon the 34th day of the Omer as the bittersweet day on which the plague came to an end. On the basis of these revised calculations, Rabbi Joshua ibn Shauib (Drashot al Ha-Torah Yom Rishon shel Pesach), and Rabbi Simon ben Zemach Duran (Shu"t Tashbetz 1:178) ruled that the mourning rites of Sefirah are relaxed on the morning of the 34th day. Rabbi Joseph Karo codified this ruling in his Code of Jewish Law (Shulhan Arukh Orach Chaim 493:2). This is an astounding example of halakhic development. Lag Ba'Omer, a late holiday of uncertain origins, was changed to *Lad* (ל"ד 34) Ba'Omer so that a speculative theory about the holiday's origins might suffer from fewer mathematical shortcomings.

Other Rishonim accepted without reservation the historical claim that Akiba's disciples stopped dying on Lag Ba'Omer. Meiri wrote that the Geonim had an historical tradition to that effect (Bet Ha-Behirah Yebamoth 62b). Likely, Meiri did not mean "Geonim" in the technical sense of the term; he was probably referring to the earlier Rishonim cited above. Tur also mentioned that he found written in an old text that Akiba's students ceased dying on Lag Ba'Omer (Tur Orach Chaim 493). Because these Rishonim, and other later authorities, plainly recorded the matter as historical fact, and not as speculative theory, the notion that the plague afflicting Akiba's students ended on Lag Ba'Omer gained wide acceptance over the centuries.

Sefer Minhag Tov, an Italian work written around 1273, authorized a one-day relaxation of Sefirah mourning practices on Lag Ba'Omer because of the miracle that happened on that day (Minhag Tov 61). To which miracle does the author refer? The matter is unclear. It would make sense for Lag Ba'Omer to have its origins in the commemoration of some favorable event, possibly other than the end of a plague – which, after all, is not itself a positive but instead the cessation of a negative.

Several modern scholars, beginning with Nachman Korchmal in his classic *Guide for the Perplexed of the Time*, have theorized that Akiba's disciples were soldiers in the army of Bar Kokhba and that they died in battle (Moreh Nebukei Ha-Zeman, 109). On the premise that Sefirah mourning practices

recall their deaths, the easing of such practices could recall some favorable temporary development in an otherwise doomed war. Rabbi Isaac Nissenbaum, an early 20th century religious-Zionist preacher, theorized that on Lag Ba'Omer the Jewish army captured Jerusalem from the Romans, struck new coinage marking their liberation of the Holy City, and promulgated an annual holiday celebration of their victory (Hagut Lev, 181). Others speculated that on Lag Ba'Omer Rabbi Simon Bar Yochai emerged triumphantly from his hiding place in the caves of Judea (see Shabbat 33b).

Alternatively, some writers looked for origins of Lag Ba'Omer in the broader historical sweep of Jewish-Roman relations. The First Jewish-Roman War broke out as a rebellion against the Procurator of Judea, Gessius Florus, on 17 Iyar 66 CE (Josephus, Wars of the Jews 2:15:2). The attempt to rebuild the Holy Temple during the reign of Julian the Apostate occurred on 17 Iyar 363 CE (Letter Attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem). The weakness of these suggestions is that both episodes ended in utter failure. The Great War ended with the sacking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. Julian's bid to rebuild the Temple was scuttled after a devastating earthquake and fire. It would seem illogical to commemorate historical folly – with even the curtailment of funerary practices, let alone engaging in joyous celebration. Moreover, Lag Ba-Omer falls out on 18 Iyar, not 17 Iyar.

Julius Landsberger posited that Jews borrowed the aversion to springtime weddings from the Roman custom of Lemuralia. In his understanding of Roman paganism, the restricted period extended from April 30 (Walpurgis Night) through May 31. In the Jewish reworking of the practice, the 32-day restricted period was followed by a celebratory 33rd day auspicious for nuptials. Lou Silberman partially dismissed Landsberger's theory, and especially its Lag B'Omer angle, noting that the pagan restricted period lasted six weeks through mid-June, not 32 days.

Julian Morgenstern theorized that Lag Ba'Omer was an ancient holiday dating back to the mid-first millennium BCE, when the Israelites utilized the pentecontad calendar. In his view, 18 Iyar was a one-day mid-harvest respite falling out on the twenty-fifth, or middle, day of the Omer as reckoned by the sectarians who interpreted the "morrow of the Sabbath (Leviticus 23:15)" to mean the Sunday after Passover (Menahot 65a). Gustav Dalman theorized that Lag Ba'Omer marked the first day of summer, occurring in mid to late-May in a year that featured the early rising of Pleiades (Seven Sisters). Possible support for this theory is found in a Tannaitic embellishment of the Flood narrative. Scripture reports that the upper and lower waters burst forth on the 17th day of the second month (Genesis 7:11). Rabbi Joshua said that 17 Iyar is typically the day for the setting of the constellation Kima and the diminishing of the earth's waters, but that, because humanity engaged in sinfully aberrant behavior, the cosmos, too, would engage in aberrant behavior resulting in a catastrophic flood (Rosh Hashanah 11b).

Hatam Sofer was displeased with the evolution of Lag Ba'Omer into a wild Kabbalistic celebration of Rabbi Simon bar Yochai's *yahrzeit*, featuring dangerous bonfires. He sought to establish a different historical basis for Lag Ba'Omer that could steer the holiday away from the theologically pernicious direction that it had taken. He posited that the manna first rained down on the Israelite wilderness encampment on 18 Iyar (Shu"t Hatam Sofer Yoreh Deah 233). The weakness of this explanation is that it seems to contradict the Talmud's exposition of Exodus 16, according to which the manna first came down on 6 Iyar (Shabbat 87b).

There is compelling reason to suggest that Lag Ba'Omer does not commemorate any historical event predating the 10th century CE, which saw the beginnings of Sefirah mourning customs. In the first millennium CE, some Jews observed 18 Iyar as a fast day marking the *yahrzeit* of Joshua bin Nun. The great liturgical poet Elazar Kalir (early 7th century) made mention of Joshua's *yahrzeit* in his piyyut *Ohali Eichah Gilu Kadishim*. Pinehas ben Jacob Ha-Kohen (8th century), too, mentioned Joshua's *yahrzeit* in the Iyar section of his piyyut *Kiddush Yerachim*. However, not all versions of the list of minor fasts circulating in the Jewish world were alike. According to some recensions of what came to be known as "Megillat Ta'anit Batra," Joshua's death occurred on 26 Nisan (Seder Rav Amram Gaon and Machzor Vitry 271). Shulhan Arukh codifies 26 Nisan as the date when especially pious people should fast (Orach Chaim 580:2). It is worth noting that Machzor Vitry, the earliest rabbinic text to reference Lag Ba'Omer, records Joshua's *yahrzeit* as being on a day other than 18 Iyar. Had that not been the case, one might subjectively argue that no holiday of Lag Ba'Omer would ever have come to exist. Mitchell First, in his 2015 *Hakirah* article "The Mysterious Origin of Lag Ba-Omer," advances another argument against the notion of viewing Lag Ba'Omer as an anniversary celebration. "The name of the holiday is not tied to a particular historical event. This supports the idea that we are looking for some type of mathematic or calendrical basis for a leniency, and not a historical event."

I began this essay by noting that the original Sefirah custom was to refrain from solemnizing weddings for the entire seven-week period of the Omer. Lag Ba'Omer represents but one attempt to liberalize the custom – whether by offering a one-day reprieve or by ending the prohibitive custom altogether, seventeen days before Shavuot. A different leniency, predating the earliest known reference to Lag Ba'Omer, was popular in late 11th century Germany. This version of the custom permitted weddings between Passover and Rosh Chodesh Iyar and then prohibited weddings from Rosh Chodesh Iyar until Shavuot (Maaseh Ha-Geonim, 51; Sefer Ha-Pardes 264). Mitchell First argues, compellingly, that this proves that Lag Ba'Omer has its origins in France or Provence in the late 11th or early 12th centuries.

Joseph Derenbourg, writing in 1894, was the first to suggest that Lag Ba'Omer is simply an attempt to relax an onerous religious practice. He compared it to the Catholic *Mi-Careme* festivities on the middle day of Lent. It is difficult for people to handle too many consecutive days without joy. Noting that there are 34 days of mourning during Sefirah (a number reached by excluding Sabbaths, Passover days, and New Moons from the overall total of 49 days), he posited that a one-day reprieve was granted on the middle such day. First rejects Derenbourg's theory because, unlike with Lent, the Sefirah restrictions expire on Lag Ba'Omer. First theorizes that 18 Iyar, Lag Ba'Omer, is the point at which a majority of the Sefirah days would have been observed as days of mourning (if one excludes Passover, when mourning is prohibited). Consistent with the Talmudic principle of *רובו ככולו*, the majority is akin to the entirety (Nazir 42a), and in deference to the popular desire for a truncated mourning period, Lag Ba'Omer is the day when one could throw off the yoke of mourning.
































In our generation it is clear that even traditional Jews are annoyed by prolonged Sefirah restrictions. There was once a time when, in traditional Jewish communities, the only day during Sefirah when weddings were held was Lag Ba'Omer. Over the decades, especially in America, the custom has been observed less and less. Weddings are held in Nisan from after Passover until Rosh Chodesh Iyar, and then again after Lag Ba'Omer until Shavuot. The double leniencies at the communal level are inconsistent with each other, though each family arranging a wedding could claim to be following its own ancestral *minhag*. The result is, of course, a boon for the wedding caterers, who need shut their operations only for the seventeen-day interval between Rosh Chodesh Iyar and Lag Ba'Omer.

While a scholarly analysis might well conclude that Lag Ba'Omer is not at all an historic anniversary, most Jews celebrating this minor holiday prefer to embrace ahistorical memories of pitched battles between yeshiva students and Roman Legionnaires or of the mystical significance of Bar Yochai's passing. In celebrating Lag Ba'Omer, what is of practical importance is staying safe. Reckless archery and pyrotechnics are to be avoided. Good clean fun is to be encouraged.



MAY 2023

IYYAR/SIVAN 5783

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 10 Iyyar 25  Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	2 11 Iyyar 26  History Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15 PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	3 12 Iyyar 27  Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	4 13 Iyyar 28  Talmud Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 7:30 PM	5 14 Iyyar 29  7:38 PM  Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 7:40 PM	6 15 Iyyar 30  EMOR Learning on-the-Lawn 4:00 PM GRIMALDI HOME Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 7:30 PM Havdalah 8:41 PM
7 16 Iyyar 31  Shacharit 8:00 AM	8 17 Iyyar 32  Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	9 18 Iyyar 33  LAG BA'OMER Shacharit 7:00 AM	10 19 Iyyar 34  Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	11 20 Iyyar 35  Talmud Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	12 21 Iyyar 36  7:45 PM  Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 7:45 PM	13 22 Iyyar 37  BEHAR/BECHUKOTAI Learning on-the-Lawn 4:00 PM SCHULMAN/PERETZ HOME Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 7:40 PM Havdalah 8:48 PM
14 23 Iyyar 38  Shacharit 8:00 AM	15 24 Iyyar 39  Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	16 25 Iyyar 40  History Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15 PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	17 26 Iyyar 41  Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	18 27 Iyyar 42  Talmud Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	19 28 Iyyar 43  7:52 PM  YOM YERUSHALAYIM Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 7:55 PM	20 29 Iyyar 44  BAMIDBAR Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 7:45 PM Havdalah 8:55 PM
21 1 Sivan 45  ROSH CHODESH Shacharit 8:00 AM	22 2 Sivan 46  Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	23 3 Sivan 47  Shacharit 7:00 AM	24 4 Sivan 48  Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	25 5 Sivan  7:57 PM EREV SHAVUOT TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT 11:00 PM-12:30 AM Shacharit 7:00 AM Mincha 8:00 PM	26 6 Sivan  7:58 PM SHAVUOT I ANNUAL SISTERHOOD SHAVUOT LUNCHEON Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 7:30 PM	27 7 Sivan SHAVUOT II Shacharit 9:15 AM Yizkor 10:30 AM Mincha 7:50 PM Havdalah 9:01 PM
28 8 Sivan Shacharit 8:00 AM	29 9 Sivan MEMORIAL DAY Shacharit 8:00 AM	30 10 Sivan History Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15 PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	31 11 Sivan Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM Shacharit 7:00 AM	 DAF YOMI via ZOOM Sundays – Friday 10:30 AM		 Daily Services MAY Sundays 8:00AM Mondays–Fridays 7:00AM Saturdays 9:15 AM

JUNE 2023

SIVAN/TAMMUZ 5783

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div style="font-size: small; text-align: center;"> <p>שבת ראשון פרק אהרן השבת</p> <p>השבת הראשונה של חג שבועות. בשבת זו נקראת פרשת אהרן, פרשת השבוע הראשונה של חג שבועות. בשבת זו נקראת פרשת אהרן, פרשת השבוע הראשונה של חג שבועות.</p> </div>  <p style="text-align: center;">DAF YOMI via ZOOM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sundays – Friday 10:30 AM</p>				<p>1 12 Sivan</p> <p>Talmud Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>2 13 Sivan</p> <p>8:03 PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 8:00 PM</p>	<p>3 14 Sivan</p> <p>NASO</p> <p>Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 7:55 PM Havdalah 9:06 PM</p>
<p>4 15 Sivan</p> <p>Celebrate Israel Parade</p> <p>Shacharit 9:15 AM</p>	<p>5 16 Sivan</p> <p>Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>6 17 Sivan</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>7 18 Sivan</p> <p>Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>8 19 Sivan</p> <p>Talmud Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>9 20 Sivan</p> <p>8:08 PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 8:00 PM</p>	<p>10 21 Sivan</p> <p>BEHA'ALOTECHA</p> <p>Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 8:00 PM Havdalah 9:11 PM</p>
<p>11 22 Sivan</p> <p>Annual Testimonial Dinner 5:00PM</p> <p>Shacharit 8:00 AM</p>	<p>12 23 Sivan</p> <p>Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>13 24 Sivan</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>14 25 Sivan</p> <p>Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>15 26 Sivan</p> <p>Talmud Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>16 27 Sivan</p> <p>8:11 PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 8:00 PM</p>	<p>17 28 Sivan</p> <p>SHELACH</p> <p>Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 8:00 PM Havdalah 9:14 PM</p>
<p>18 29 Sivan</p> <p>Shacharit 8:00 AM</p>	<p>19 30 Sivan</p> <p>ROSH CHODESH</p> <p>Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>20 1 Tammuz</p> <p>ROSH CHODESH</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>21 2 Tammuz</p> <p>Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>22 3 Tammuz</p> <p>Talmud Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>23 4 Tammuz</p> <p>8:13 PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 8:00 PM</p>	<p>24 5 Tammuz</p> <p>KORACH</p> <p>Shacharit 9:15 AM Mincha 8:00 PM Havdalah 9:16 PM</p>
<p>25 6 Tammuz</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>26 7 Tammuz</p> <p>Hebrew Class w/ Yochai 7:30PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>27 8 Tammuz</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>28 9 Tammuz</p> <p>Parshah Class w/ R. Kracko 7:00PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>29 10 Tammuz</p> <p>Talmud Class w/ R. Hoffman 8:15PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM</p>	<p>30 11 Tammuz</p> <p>8:13 PM</p> <p>Shacharit 7:00 AM Eve. Service 8:00 PM</p>	<p>Daily Services JUNE</p> <p>Sundays 8:00AM Mondays–Fridays 7:00AM Saturdays 9:15 AM</p>

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Sunday-Friday 10:30 AM

(ONLY VIA ZOOM)

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@ Anshe Sholom/ Every Other Tuesday 8:15 PM

(or via Zoom link above)

TALMUD CLASS W/RABBI HOFFMAN

@ Anshe Sholom/ Thursdays 8:15 PM

(or via Zoom link above)