

LAG BAOMER

A Holy Day

On the day that Rabbi 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* Rabbi Abba to write down what he was about to say, Rabbi 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 Rabbi 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.

Rabbi Abba recalled: "While I was in midst of writing, and Rabbi 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, Rabbi 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 Rabbi Shimon!" When they entered the cave in which he would be buried, another voice was heard, coming from within: "This man shakes up the world and all its kingdoms; many

adversaries in *Shamayim* are silenced because of his merit; *HaShem* glories in him daily. Fortunate is his portion, both Above and below!"

(זהר ח"ג דף רצ"א ע"ב, רצ"ו ע"ב)

On that Lag Ba'Omer, Rashbi was illuminated by the light of *Moshiach*, thereby attaining the highest level of his lifetime, and partially revealed that light to his *talmidim*. Hence, Lag Ba'Omer each year is a day of the revelation of *pnimiyus haTorah*, the inner, mystical dimension of the Torah.

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

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."

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

Celebrating Lag Ba'Omer

At a *seudas Shabbos* in the home of Rebbitzin Rivka before Lag Ba'Omer תרנ"ו (1897), the elder chossid Rashbatz described the Lag Ba'Omer celebration of תר"ט (1849), which was the last time the *Tzemach Tzedek* went out to the fields:

All the chassidim who had come to Lubavitch for Lag Ba'Omer arrived at the grounds of a chossid called Reb Shlomo, who had been organizing the Lag Ba'Omer celebrations since the times of the Mitteler Rebbe.

It was a joyous time for us. The elderly chassidim, despite their age, danced with their *tzitzis* showing, and we, the *talmidim* of the Yeshiva, pranced like rams. We then sat down to *farbrenge*, open-mouthed, listening attentively to every word said by the *eltre chassidim*.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the Rebbe arrived, delivered a *maamar* of *Chassidus*, and stayed for three hours. Before departing, he told us to sing the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*, the *Arba Bavos*. As we sang, he sat in deep *dveikus*, with eyes closed and tears on his face. When the *niggun* came to an end, the Rebbe stood up and declared that the *zechus* of the *baal hahillula*, the Rashbi, would assuredly protect all Yidden. We all spontaneously cried out in unison, "Amen!" The Rebbe smiled slightly and said, "Amen, *kein yehi ratzon*."

After he left, the *eltre chassidim* led by Reb Hillel gathered to *chazer* the *maamar*. They wondered why the Rebbe had asked for the Alter Rebbe's *niggun* to be sung and expressed their concern regarding his parting words.

On the following Monday, an urgent messenger came to Lubavitch with a letter from the printers in Zhitomir: the police had made an inspection regarding the recent printing of *Likkutei Torah*. They had checked where copies had been sent, sealed all the remaining copies in the press, and had ordered the owner, a chossid, to appear for interrogation on Wednesday.

The rumor spread quickly in Lubavitch, and in one short hour the story's details had twisted and grown.... The Rebbe's sons hurried to their father, who told them the exact story and assured them that the decree would be nullified.

On Wednesday, when the printer reported at the police station, he was threatened and arrested. On Thursday evening, however, he was set free, and on Friday, the *seforim* were released.

(סה"ש תש"ו-ה'ש"ת, הוספות ע' 412)

CONSIDER THIS!

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

OUR HEROES

Reb Pinchas Reizes



Reb Pinchas Reizes, one of the greatest chasidim of the Alter Rebbe, was an incredible *gaon*. The Rebbeim trusted him fully, often involving him in private and clandestine activities involving themselves or chasidim at large. Reb Pinchas was also a wealthy and influential resident of Shklov and did a great deal for the Alter Rebbe in that respect. While in the Rebbe's court, Reb Pinchas served as a *chozer*, renowned for the precision of his *hanachos* (transcriptions). The Mitteler Rebbe called Reb Pinchas the "field marshal" of *chasidei* Chabad.



Though Reb Pinchas's father was a great *gaon* in Shklov, his last name, Reizes, was taken after his mother-in-law Reizah. This came about after the following story:

His mother-in-law, an especially wealthy woman, was greatly impressed by the Alter Rebbe after his visit to Shklov. "Look," she said, "A *maggid* hailing from Vitebsk shows up riding a horse with no entourage, and yet, when he discussed Torah issues with the *geonim* of Shklov, he could respond to everything they asked, while they couldn't answer three of his four questions."

She had three sons-in-law and promised that whoever would spend time learning by the "Magid of Liozna" would inherit all her wealth, and Reb Pinchas agreed. When he arrived in Liozna he discovered that the Alter Rebbe was traveling through various towns to speak before the simpletons. He waited four months for the Alter Rebbe to return and then spent three months learning under the Rebbe. He brought his mother-in-law a letter affirming that he had learned by the Rebbe and true to her word, she gave him all her wealth.

Reb Pinchas took the money and gave it to the Alter Rebbe for public matters. The Alter Rebbe blessed him with Torah and riches.

(ס"ה ש"ת רצ"ו ע' 126)



The Alter Rebbe once complained to Reb Pinchas, "Pinchas, Pinchas! You say that I am a *tzaddik*, but if so, why do I feel so 'cold'?"

(למען ידעו ע' 253)

Quitting a Job

May an employee who committed to a job quit for better pay?

- Hashem says in the Torah, "Ki li bnei Yisroel avodim," that *Yidden* are slaves to Hashem. *Chazal* explain this as a prohibition for a *Yid* to become enslaved to anyone but Hashem, and one may therefore back out of a job even if he committed for a certain time-period or project.¹
- What about backing out to accept a better paying job? Some say that he may only leave to be free and work independently, but not to accept another contract, even with higher pay.² Others argue that the choice of employer and job, is itself a part of the independence granted to the Jewish worker.³
- If leaving will cause the employer a direct loss (i.e. a failed project), the worker may not leave, and in many instances the worker will have to cover the loss he causes (except in situations of absolute duress, *onnes*).⁴ If other workers are available at the same rate, the employer can only have "complaints" (which have limited halachic value).⁵ If the *going rate* is now higher than what the worker is being paid, *poskim* are disputed whether quitting and causing the owner to hire new workers for the going rate is considered causing a "loss."⁶ However, if the cost of living drastically changed due to inflation, *acharonim* write that he is entitled to back out under all circumstances.⁷
- There is also a prohibition to retract one's word in monetary transactions, and one who does so is called "untrustworthy." *Poskim* are disputed whether one who drops a commitment due to market change is considered untrustworthy.⁸ However, an employee with a fixed long term contract who leaves after several years because of a significant economy change is not considered untrustworthy.⁹
- In conclusion: An employee should not leave in middle of a term to receive better pay elsewhere. If he leaves and thereby causes loss to the owner and there are other workers available at the going rate, the employer cannot collect payment for the price difference (since the employee can say he holds like those opinions who permit it – *kim li*).

1. ב"מ ע"ז ע"א, שו"ע חו"מ סי' של"ג סי"ג ונו"כ שם. וראה שו"ע חו"מ הלכות שאלה ושכירות סכ"א שגם קבלן יכול לחזור בו. וראה בכל זה למען ישמעו גליונות 290-292.
2. משמעות הרמ"א חו"מ שם ס"ד. וראה פת"ש חו"מ שם סק"ד.
3. שו"ת חו"י סי' ק"ו, תשו"ב מיום חיים חו"מ סי' כ"ו ערוה"ש חו"מ סי' של"ג סי"ז (אלא שבאם חזר בצורה כזה ידו על התחתונה). וראה בתשו' קרית חנה סי' כ"ה שמחלק באם עובר לבעה"ב חדש מותר אבל לתבוע תוספת מבעה"ב שלו אסור שאו נשאר עבד אצלו.
4. שו"ע חו"מ שם סי' ו. ובתנאי שכשכר אותם היה יכול למצוא פועלים אחרים, דא"ל שגוי מחלוקת – ראה שו"ת חו"מ סי' של"ג סקכ"ח. וראה למען ישמעו גליונות 292-290 לפרטים נוספים.
5. שו"ע חו"מ שם סי' ז. ונפק"מ לתרעומת – ראה שו"ע חו"מ סי' של"ב סי"ה.
6. המחנ"א שכירת פועלים סי' ז סב"ל שא"ז דבר האבד. אבל ראה חו"מ ב"ק סי' כ"ג סק"ל סב"ל שבאם הבעה"ב צריך לתוסף הר"ז דבר האבד.
7. שו"ת מהרש"ג ח"ב סי' רלה.
8. שו"ע חו"מ סי' ר"ד סי"ז, וברמ"א סי"א מנריע שיש בזה מחוסר אמונה. אבל בשו"ע שם סק"ח (ע"פ קצוה"ח סי' רכ"א סק"א) נראה מדבריו להקל. והרב י"ש שו"ת קריבצקי דייק מה שבשו"ע"ר הלכות מכירה ומתנה ס"א סותם בזה, ומזה יש סימוכין שס"ל כרמ"א. וצ"ע.
9. הלכה ברורה שכירת פועלים קונטרס ענינים שביתת פועלים הערה ב'.

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

לע"נ הרה"ח הרה"ח
ר' דובער בן הרה"ח נפתלי ע"ה יוניק
משמש בקודש קרוב ליובל שנים
נפטר ט' אייר ה'תשס"ה ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.
נדפס ע"י נכדיו אברהם ודבורה לאה שיי יוניק

לע"נ מרת שרה בת הרה"ח שניאור זלמן משה (היצחקי) ע"ה
אשת הרה"ח אברהם דרייזין (מאיאר) ע"ה
נלב"ע י"ט אייר ה'תשנ"ז
נדבת התנם ובתם הר"ר יעקב ורעייתו לאה שיחיו רובין

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Thirteen Hours a Day

As a recent *baal teshuvah*, Reb Dovber Klein was adamant about making up for lost time. Thirsty for *Yiddishkeit* and ever-hungry for Torah knowledge, Dovber was extremely ambitious to absorb as much Torah as possible.

When he went into *yechidus* for his birthday, he eagerly told the Rebbe that since he was behind where a *Yid* should be holding, he was prepared to eat less, sleep less, and dedicate every spare moment to learning Torah.

The Rebbe smiled and said, "There is no reason to be hard on yourself. A person needs eight hours of sleep a night. Certainly not less than six.

"Add to that another hour-and-a-half for eating, and another hour-and-a-half for trivial conversation and other matters. You will have thirteen hours left.

"With thirteen hours of learning and *davening* a day," the Rebbe concluded encouragingly, "you could become an accomplished *talmid chochom*, even a *gaon*."