



1 DEFINITION AND CONTEXT

Desde el segundo día de Pesaj (cuando comenzaba la cosecha en Israel) y Shavuot (cuando se traían las primicias de las cosechas al Templo) Am Israel acostumbra a realizar “la cuenta del Omer”. Este período se caracteriza por contar con costumbres de duelo, pero el día 33 de la cuenta del Omer (“Lag” en gematría), se sucede una excepción: la tristeza da paso al festejo y alegría. Algunos de los motivos que se adjudican a este evento son: la finalización de la peste que terminó con la vida de miles de los alumnos de Rabi Akiva, el día de fallecimiento de Rabi Shimon Bar Yojai y el comienzo de la Rebelión de Bar Kojva frente a los romanos en el año 132, evento que habría logrado conseguir un Estado, aunque lamentablemente solo por un lapso de poco más de tres años.

? DID YOU KNOW?

- The Shichva of Gilim uses Galilee as its educational base. In the history of the Jewish people, the spirit of rebellion against oppressive regimes was born in Galilee. The aniva of the Gilim is green, a color which symbolizes the natural wealth of Galilee and scouting. The semel of the Gilim comprises a white circle with a green fleur-de-lis. At the center of the semel appears a sword surrounded by a laurel, and behind it are mountains and sunbeams. The sword surrounded by the laurel represents the rebellion and glory. The mountains and sunbeams symbolize elements characteristic to Galilee.



- The holiday of Lag BaOmer is a clear example of the creativity and creation of Am Israel, as it places the human being at the center of the cultural production of our people. This creativity is reflected in the way in which, although there is no obligation in our sources to celebrate Lag BaOmer, the different Jewish communities had developed customs around it over time, thus consolidating this date as a celebration in the broadest sense of the word.
- In 1916, the Zionist Movement began a tradition of celebrating in Lag BaOmer the “Day of Zionist Youth Movements”. This day granted each tnuva the opportunity to highlight its own educational signature by creating different events that allowed to manifest the greatness of each one of the participating tnuot. An example of this can be seen in Belgium, where the tnuot choose the day of Lag BaOmer to conduct a super inter-tnuati competition, which is one of the most exciting events of the year!



SELF-MANAGEMENT



THE HOLIDAY'S VALUES

RESPECT OF OTHERS INDEPENDENCE
SPIRIT OF REBELLION AND CHANGE
CONTINUITY

CRITICAL THINKING
SOVEREIGNTY
SANCTITY OF LIFE
RESPONSIBILITY



SYMBOLS AND CUSTOMS

• BONFIRES, BOWS AND ARROWS

One of the symbols of this holiday is the bonfires which are lit in every corner of Israel. Children, adolescences and adults gather around the fire, giving it a unique meaning. For some, the fire relates to the mystical aspect of the chag, and therefore it will be associated with the image of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. Others will associate this fire with the torches that were used to declare the victory of Bar Kochva over the Romans. Others, while remembering these messages, add their own, granting new meanings to this custom.

During Lag BaOmer, it is also common to see children play with bows and arrows. When the Romans forbade the Jews from studying Torah, they did so secretly. They used bows and arrows to disguise their Torah studies from the Romans. In memory of these acts of bravery, rebellion and determination to preserve the culture of our people, we use these elements as clear symbols of this chag to this day.



HOLIDAY RELATED QUOTES

"You shall love your fellow as yourself; this is a great principle in the Torah." Rabbi Akiva.



HOLIDAY RELATED ARTICLE

"THE STRENGTH OF LAG BAOMER STANDS IN OUR SENSE OF UNITY" Sammuel Mesguich, Roch Chinch Hanoar Hatzioni B'Belgium

Lag Baomer is a Jewish holiday celebrated on the 15th of Iyar, the 33rd day of the Omer, a calendar separating Pessah from Shavuot. There are different ways of celebrating it. The important aspect of this holiday is that it should mark a separating point between the period of semi-mourning due to the plague that killed Rabbi Akiva's students, and the "hillula" of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai, source of great happiness and celebration amongst Jewish communities around the world. Our tnu'a in Belgium celebrates Lag Baomer in a very specific and original way. Indeed, instead of the traditional bonfire symbolising the enlightenment of Bar Yohai's teachings, a huge outdoor sports tournament opposing Belgium's five Jewish youth movements is organised, as a way of strengthening our bond to nature and bring us together as Belgium's Jewish youth.

"A STORY THAT UNITES PESACH, LAG BAOMER AND TODAY'S YOUTH" Romi Morales, Mazkirut Olamit of Hanoar Hatzioni

In Lag BaOmer we celebrate, among other things, the fact that Rabbi Akiva's students stopped dying of a magefa (epidemic) that had emerged. However, there are those who believe that this magefa was no more than a revolution against the Romans, that the Jews, led by Bar Kochva, initiated. They achieved, even though for a short time, a return to the Jewish independence. True, this will not be the first or the last time that youths decide to place themselves at the forefront when it came to ensuring the continuity of our people. The same attitude we saw with the students of Rabbi Akiva, we had also seen in Leszno 27 during the Shoa, with Dvora, Yaakov, Abraham and Moshe (z"l), members of our movement who gave their lives to defend our young state, and we continue to see it to this day, with our beloved olim proudly deciding to join Tzahal, The Israel Defense Forces.

"ABOUT FIRE AND FLAMES"

G. Mhillel, recovered by Yojanan Cohen

We lit the bonfire, the first bonfire in the colony. Tongues of fire rise and illuminate our surroundings. In the bonfire, we warm our spirits. At this moment we will remember the fire which was set two times in the Temple of Jerusalem and symbolized our two exiles from our land. (...) Unlike these flames are the flames before us. Our fire warms, and those mentioned burn. Our fire illuminates, and those bring darkness to the world. We lit the fire of peace, the encompassing fire, which refines and purifies us from corrupt traits; a fire which unifies and increases friendship and brotherhood; the fire which strengthens our souls and desires toward redemption.



ZMAN LE PEILUT

HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE LAG BAOMER IN YOUR KEN?

Take a picture and share it with the rest of the chaverim of hanoar hatzioni across the world

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR THE COMPLETE
VERSIONS OF THE ARTICLE:

www.hholamit.org.il

