

לעילו נשמת: פייגה בת הרב אהרן ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
Rabbi Elimelech
Biderman
Shlita

Emor - Lag Bomer



לזכות רפואה שלמה,
מלכה בת רחל, מיכאל בן שולמית
יעקב משה בן דבורה שירה,
ואברהם יהודה בן שרה רבקה

PRINTED BY RAMAPOST.COM

RAMAPOST
MAKING THE TORAH COME TO LIFE

"ESSENTIALLY" ABOVE & BEYOND!

SPONSOR A DVAR TORAH

SPONSOR AN ENTIRE WEEK FOR \$360

Following Daas Torah, Ramapost is sharing the opportunity to sponsor weekly Divrei Torah.

The following publications are read by hundreds of people every Shabbos. Sponsor an individual Dvar Torah or the entire collection, in the zechus of a choleh, l'eiluy nishmas, or for someone in need. A small message can be put on the Dvar Torah of your choice which will be distributed across Monsey and online.



\$180

Ram HaTorah
150 WEEKLY*
Compilation of Divrei Torah
(English & Hebrew)



\$126

Meoros
Hatzadikkim
300 WEEKLY*
Dvar Torah &
Weekly Yahrzeits
(English)



\$100
(MONTHLY)

Divrei Chizuk
800 MONTHLY*
R' Garmiel Rabinowitz
(Hebrew)



\$100

Torah
Wellsprings
200 WEEKLY*
R' Elimelech Biderman
(English / Yiddish)



\$72

Sicha Hashavua
Hitkashrut &
Likutay Torah
125 WEEKLY*
(Hebrew / English)



\$54

Oneg Shabbos
50 WEEKLY*
Compilation of Divrei Torah
(English)



\$*

Arevim
400 WEEKLY*
R' Shmuel Cluck
(English)

*CONTACT
INFO@AREVIM.COM

*AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED

Table of Contents

Torah Wellsprings - Emor - Lag B'omer

<i>Sefiras HaOmer</i>	4
<i>Chol Ha'Moed</i>	6
<i>Desire</i>	8
<i>Pesach Sheini and Desire</i>	10
<i>Longing and Sefiras HaOmer</i>	14
<i>Lag b'Omer</i>	16
<i>The Joy of Lag b'Omer</i>	19
<i>Lag b'Omer Everywhere</i>	21
<i>Even for the Lowly People</i>	25
<i>Coming to Reb Shimon's Grave via Torah</i>	27
<i>Bonfires/Hadlakah</i>	31
<i>Salvations</i>	35
<i>Tefillos</i>	40
<i>Learning from his Ways</i>	50
<i>Don't give up</i>	51
<i>Judge Your Fellow Man Favorably</i>	54
<i>Teshuvah</i>	58
<i>Like Yom Kippur</i>	59
<i>Tzedakah and Chesed</i>	62
<i>Emunah</i>	66

Torah Wellsprings

Emor - Lag B'omer

Sefiras HaOmer

The holy *sefarim* teach us that the *korbanos* that were sacrificed at the beginning and at the end of *sefirah* symbolize the spiritual growth that occurs during these days. On the second day of Pesach we bring a *korban omer* made from barley flour, which is animal fodder. The *sefirah* culminates with the yom tov of Shavuot, when we bring the *שתי הלחם*, made from wheat flour – which is food that is fitting to be eaten by humans. This teaches us that during *sefiras ha'omer* we elevate ourselves from being on the level of animals to becoming proper human beings. That is how great our growth is at this time of year! (see *Aruch HaShulchan* 489:6).

The Mishnah (*Idiyos* 2:10) states, "[Reb Akiva] said: There are five things that lasted for twelve months: (1) The *mabul* (in Noach's generation) was for twelve months. (2) Iyov suffered for twelve months. (3) The ten plagues lasted for twelve months. (4) The punishment in the future for Gog and Magog will be for twelve months. (5) The *resha'im* are punished in Gehinom for twelve months... Reb Yochanan ben Nuri disagrees with the fifth occurrence. He says *מן הפסח ועד העצרת*, the *resha'im* are punished in Gehinom from Pesach until Shavuot..."

There are different explanations for the final words of this Mishnah.¹ The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* follows the *Shibolei HaLeket*

1. The *יבין ובונין* explains that *מן הפסח עד העצרת* means all souls are re-judged at this time. Even after the primary judgment was decided

(and other commentaries) who explain that *הפסח עד העצרת* is literal. Gehinom isn't always active. There are forty-nine days of *sefirah* – between Pesach and Shavuos – when Gehinom is active and the *resha'im* are punished.

The purpose of Gehinom isn't to punish, rather to purify. The Chidushei HaRim teaches that just as in heaven, the purification time takes place between Pesach and Shavuos, so too, we purify ourselves during these weeks. And, if people take advantage of this time, they won't need to be purified in Gehinom.

Each mitzvah has its own special *segulah*. The *segulah* of *sefiras ha'omer* is, as we say in the *tefillah* for

sefiras ha'omer, לתקן את נפשותינו ורוחותינו מכל סיג ופגם ולטהרנו ולקדשנו בקדשתך העליונה אמן סלה, "To rectify our *neshamos* from all blemishes; to purify and to sanctify us..."

Counting the *omer* is a fairly simple mitzvah. It's comprised of a *brachah*, a daily count, and a prayer, הרהמן, for the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash. Some add a few more paragraphs. Let us remember that this "simple" mitzvah purifies us. It polishes our souls and allows them to shine like the sapphire *luchos*. It connects us to our Father in heaven.

The Ohr HaChaim explains the words in the *pasuk* (stated in this week's parashah, 23:15), וספרתם לכם, to be originating from the

and determined, every year between Pesach and Shavuos the souls in heaven are judged again.

The Ra'v Bartenara *zt'l* explains that Reb Yochanan ben Nuri is saying the punishment of Gehinom is 49 days (the amount of days between Pesach and Shavuos) and not for twelve months. Those forty-nine days can be at any time of the year.

word ספיר, which is a sapphire stone. He writes, "Chazal say that the *neshamos* of Bnei Yisrael are like the *luchos*... [which] were made from sapphire stone. [Similarly, every Yid's *neshamah* shines like a sapphire stone]... But due to sin, the *neshamos* become dirty and they lose their shine.... Therefore, it says, וספרתם לכם [which hints to counting and to sapphire stone, because] by counting the *omer* their *neshamos* will shine again like sapphire stones."²

Chol Ha'Moed

The Gemara (*Chagigah* 18.) asks, "How do we know that it is forbidden to work on chol hamoed?"

Reb Yoshia replies, "It states, חג המצות תשמור שבועת ימים, 'Keep Pesach seven days.' This means, all seven days, it is forbidden to do work."

Reb Yonoson makes a *kal vechomer*³ and says that since chol hamoed has a *yom tov* before it when one is forbidden to work (the first day of Pesach), and a *yom*

2. The *rishonim* say that the *yetzer hara* becomes stronger in the summer months, when the sun shines brightly and the world becomes warmer. We count the *omer* at the beginning of the summer as a remedy that helps us overcome the *yetzer hara*. (This is also the reason we read *Pirkei Avos* at this time of the year.)

It can be compared to a child who is vaccinated shortly after birth so he won't become ill. Similarly, in the beginning of the summer HaKadosh Baruch Hu gives us *Sefiras Ha'Omer* to strengthen us, so we won't become ill and sin.

3. The *kal vechomer* is as follows: The first and the seventh day of Pesach don't have holiness directly before them, and yet they are *yom tov* and it is forbidden to work on those days. Chol hamoed has a *yom tov* directly before it and a *yom tov* directly after it. Certainly, one should be forbidden to work on those days in between.

tov afterwards (the seventh day of Pesach), we can deduce that the time in between, chol hamoed, one is also forbidden to work.

Following Reb Yonoson's explanation, the Ramban (*Vayikra* 23:36) writes that the days of *sefirah* are also like Chol Hamoed as they are in between two holidays: Pesach at the beginning and Shavuos at the end.

As the Ramban writes, "The days of the *omer* are

like chol hamoed. Chol hamoed are the days between the first and last day of a holiday. Similarly, the days of *sefiras haomer* are between Pesach and Shavuos" (*Vayikra* 23:36).⁴

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* writes, everything that happens to a man throughout his lifetime, is dependent on the days of *sefiras haomer*. Therefore, one should be careful to use these days wisely.

4. The *Shulchan Aruch* (489:1) states that we don't make *chasunos* during the *sefirah* because they are days of mourning.

The Rebbe of Ruzhin *zy"a* asks that there should be another reason we don't make *chasunos*. *Sefirah* is like chol hamoed. Just as we don't celebrate *chasunos* on Chol HaMoed, we shouldn't celebrate *chasunos* during *sefirah*.

The answer is, it really depends on the person, and how he treats the days of the *omer*. If he is involved in Torah, *tefillah*, etc. during the days of *sefiras ha'omer*, the days are like chol hamoed for him. He won't make weddings these days as one doesn't make weddings on chol hamoed. If someone doesn't sanctify himself on the days of *sefiras ha'omer*, and he isn't occupied in Torah, *tefillah*, etc., he will also refrain from making a wedding during the days of *sefiras haomer*, but for him, the reason will be because they are days of mourning.

The Torah connects the holidays to agriculture. Pesach is called, חג האביב, the holiday of bloom, because it falls in the season when the grains growing in the fields reach their full height. Shavuot is חג הקציר, the holiday of harvest, because it is celebrated when the crops have ripened and are ready to be cut. Succot is called חג האסיף, the holiday of ingathering, because it is celebrated when the produce drying in the fields is brought into the home.

It seems strange that such holy days should be so directly connected to the celebrations and events of the agriculture.

The Maharal therefore explains that indeed there is another intention. The happenings in the field mirrors what is transpiring with the spirituality of each individual. In the months between Pesach and Shavuot, the grains grow until they are ready for harvest. Accordingly, for

the individual this means that these days are ones of growth.

The Chida (in the name of Rabbeinu Efraim) writes that the fifty hooks on the covering of the Mishkan (ועשית חמישים לולאות, *Shemos* 26:10) represent the fifty days of the *sefirah*, days when the Jewish nation become connected and attached to their father in Heaven.

Desire

The Midrash (*Shmuel Rabba* 3) tells us that before Shmuel HaNavi was born, a *bas kol* (heavenly voice) announced that a child is about to be born. He will be called Shmuel, and he will be a *navi*. All the children born at that time were named Shmuel, as the parents hoped that their child would be the *navi*.

Only Shmuel, son of Chanah, became that *navi*. Nevertheless, all children named Shmuel at that time merited prophecy at least one time in their lives. The

Chida said that this is hinted at in the words (*Tehillim* 99:6), שְׁמוּאֵל בְּקוֹרָאֵי שְׁמוֹ, which implies "Since they were called Shmuel, they merited prophecy."

This Midrash shows us the power of desire. The parents wanted their children to merit prophecy, and they therefore did.

Here's another Midrash (*Mishlei* ch.12) that teaches the power of a good desire:

"Whoever lies in his bed and thinks, 'Tomorrow I will do a deed of kindness for *ploni*,' he will merit rejoicing with the tzaddikim in Olam HaBa." It seems that he is rewarded for his good desire, even if he didn't end up doing the good deed.

The Shem MiShmuel (*Korach* 5677) writes, "My father [the Avnei Nezer] told me that if a person desires Torah and mitzvos, it is impossible for him to go to Gehinom. If he does go to Gehinom, I guarantee

him that he will fly out of there like an arrow."

It states (*Tehillim* 105:3), הִשְׂמַח לֵב מִבְקֵשֵׁי ה', "Rejoice the hearts of those who yearn for Hashem." The pasuk is emphasizing ה' מִבְקֵשֵׁי ה', those who want to serve Hashem. It isn't referring to ה' עוֹבְדֵי ה', those who serve Hashem. Because even just yearning to serve Hashem is a very high level.

Someone said to the Nesivos Shalom zt'l, "I think that when I die, they will write on my tombstone, 'Here lies the person who wanted' (בעל השאיפות)." This man desperately wanted to serve Hashem, but always failed.

The Nesivos Shalom told him, "If I was in a cemetery, and saw a tomb with the inscription, 'here lies the baal hashe'ifos, I would stop there to stay a few chapters of *Tehillim*.'" Because desiring to serve Hashem is a wonderful level.

The Midrash tells about a drunk, whose children wanted to show him how bad his addiction is. So, one day, they got him drunk, and they placed him in the cemetery when he was sleeping. They figured that when he wakes up in the cemetery, he will realize that he is ruining his life and he will stop drinking.

After they put him there, wine merchants thought they heard war cries, so they hid their barrels of wine in the cemetery and ran away. When the drunk woke up, a trickle of wine was coming out of the barrel, directly into the grave where he was lying. He didn't ask any questions. He opened his mouth and drank the wine.

Three days later, the children realized that they didn't act correctly. They shouldn't have left their father in the cemetery. They went there to see how he was.

They found him drinking wine. They realized that Hashem arranged it for him. As the adage goes, "The way a person wants to go, Hashem leads him there." He wanted to drink, so Hashgachah led him to his desires. The children decided they would take turns supporting their father with wine. Each week, another son would give the wine.

The moral of the story is that when one wants something, Hashem will help it happen. Therefore, desire *ruchniyos*, and Hashem will help you succeed.

Pesach Sheini and Desire

Before Pesach, a group of people came to Moshe Rabbeinu and said (*Bamidbar* 9:7), אנחנו טמאים לנפש אדם למה נגרע, "We are *tamei*... Why shouldn't we be permitted to bring Hashem's *korban* [the *korban Pesach*]?"

Their question is hard to understand. They themselves answered their difficulty. They are *tamei*! That's why they can't bring the *korban Pesach*! This can be compared to a person who doesn't have an arm and he asks, "Why can't I wear tefillin? I also want to wear tefillin!" The answer is self-understood! How can he wear tefillin without an arm? Similarly, why are they asking to bring the *korban Pesach* when they are *tamei*?

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* answered that when they said, למה נגרע, "Why should we be lacking in regard to the *korban Pesach*," it wasn't an intellectual question, rather a shout that came forth from the

depths of their heart. They wanted so much to bring the *korban Pesach*, and so they asked for it, even though logically they knew it was impossible.

They said, "We know that we are *tamei* and that we can't bring the *korban Pesach*. But we so badly want to bring the *korban Pesach*! How can we miss out?"

Because of their request, Hashem created a new halachah. Hashem said: Whoever can't bring the *korban Pesach* on Pesach, may bring it a month later, on Pesach Sheni.

This is the only time in the Torah that a new halachah was created, in response to people's pleas.⁵

5. The story of Bnos Tzelafchad (*Bamidbar* 27) is very similar to the story leading up to Pesach Sheini. In that story, too, people came with a plea, Moshe didn't know what to answer, and Hashem said they are correct, and provided a solution.

But there is a major difference between the events. By the story of Bnos Tzelafchad, Hashem was going to teach this halachah eventually, even if the daughters of Tzelafchad didn't ask for an

The lesson for us is: If you yearn to do a mitzvah that you couldn't perform, and you shout from the depths of your heart, למה נגרע, "Why should I miss out on

performing this mitzvah," Hashem will grant you a second chance.⁶

Rashi (*Bamidbar* 9:1) asks why *Chumash Bamidbar*

inheritance. As Rashi (*Bamidbar* 27:7) writes, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, לפני כבר כתובה פרשה זו לפני "This is how it was written before Me in heaven." "כן בנות צלפחד דוברות," "They speak correctly.... Their eyes saw what Moshe didn't see." And Rashi (*ibid.* 27:5) writes, ראויה היתה פרשה זו, "This *parashah* should have been written by Moshe. But the daughters of Tzelafchad merited that it should be written through them."

Whereas, the halachah of Pesach Sheni is a brand new halachah, created by the desires of Yidden who didn't want to miss out on an opportunity to do a mitzvah. This teaches us that if you want to perform a mitzvah, Hashem will somehow enable you to succeed.

6. When the *tamei* people asked Moshe for a way to bring a *korban Pesach*, Moshe didn't tell them, "What do you want from me? You are *tamei*." Rather, he knew that a new halachah might be created due to their desires. He told them, עמדו ואשמעה מה יצוה ה' לכם, "Stay here and I will hear what Hashem responds to your request."

Rashi writes, כתלמיד המובטח לשמוע מפי רבו. אשרי ילוד אשה שכך מובטח שכל זמן שהיה, "[Moshe spoke] like a student who is certain that he will hear a response from his rebbe. Fortunate is a human being who is confident that whenever he wants, he can speak with the *Shechinah*!"

The Shinover Rav *zt'l* explains that Moshe was the humblest person. Generally, he wasn't certain Hashem would speak with him. But Moshe was certain that for the sake of those people who so much wanted to bring the *korban Pesach*, he would receive an answer.

doesn't follow the chronological order, and start with the *korban Pesach*, which happened in Nisan. Why does the *Chumash* begin with counting the Jewish nation, which happened in Iyar? Rashi replies, "מפני שהוא גנותן של ישראל, כל ארבעים שנה שהיו ישראל במדבר לא הקריבו אלא פסח זה בלבד" [The *Chumash* didn't want to begin with the *korban Pesach*] because the story of the *korban Pesach* implies a disgrace for the Jewish nation. For the forty years they were in the desert, they only brought this one *korban Pesach*."

The Gemara explains that this is because the north wind didn't blow in the desert. A north wind heals, and without a north wind, they were forbidden to perform a *bris milah* on their children. If a parent has a child that doesn't have *bris milah*, he may not bring the *korban Pesach*. This is what prevented the nation from bringing the

korban Pesach for 38 years in the desert.

The Torah therefore didn't want to open the sefer with the mitzvah of *korban pesach*.

The *rishonim* ask: Why is it a disgrace that they only brought one *korban Pesach*? They weren't permitted to bring more! The north wind didn't blow, and they therefore couldn't circumcise their children. It was *this* that prevented them from being makriv the *korban Pesach*. What should they have done? It wasn't their fault.

The Imrei Emes *zt'l* explains, that if they had truly wanted to bring a *korban Pesach*, Hashem would have somehow made it possible. The disgrace is that they didn't desire enough, and they didn't shout from the depths of their heart, למה נגרע, why should we miss out on making the *korban Pesach*? If they would have shouted, somehow, it

would be arranged for them, against all odds.

Longing and Sefiras HaOmer

Another reason we count the omer is to show our yearning for mattan Torah.

The Sefer HaChinuch (306) writes, "The simple reason for counting the *omer* is because the Torah is the essence of the Jewish nation. Heaven and earth were created for the Torah and for Bnei Yisrael... The primary reason we were redeemed from Mitzrayim was so we can receive the Torah and keep it... The Torah is the primary good, and it is more precious to the Jewish nation than their freedom from slavery...

"We are obligated to count the *omer* the day following [the first day of] Pesach until we reach the day we received the Torah to show our strong desire for this special day, that we so desire... It can be

compared to a slave who counts the days towards his freedom. He is always counting the days: 'When will the time come when I will be freed?' Because counting demonstrates his yearning and desire to reach that time."

The Chinuch asks, if we are counting to show our anticipation for Shavuot, when we will receive the Torah, why don't we count how many days are *left* to Shavuot? Why do we count how many days passed?

He answers that at the beginning of *sefiras ha'omer*, there are too many days left until Shavuot. If one were to say, "There are forty-nine days left until *mattan Torah*, this would distress him. Therefore, we count the days that already passed. This makes us happy, and it expresses our anticipation for *mattan Torah*. The Chinuch explains that when we get closer to Shavuot we continue counting the days that passed, because we

don't want to change the style of the counting in the middle.

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* offers another answer, to explain why we count the days that passed, and not the amount of days left until Shavuot. He explains that each day of *sefiras ha'omer* we rise to a higher level of purity. Thus, we aren't only excited about the approaching *mattan Torah*, but we're also happy with each day that passes, because each day that passes means we are further away from being like an animal and closer to being a proper human being.

The Ra'n (*Pesachim* 28.) quotes the following Midrash:

When the Yidden left Mitzrayim, Moshe Rabbeinu told the nation that they will serve Hashem at Har Sinai.

They asked, "When will that be?"

"In fifty days."

They then counted the days.

The Ra'n writes, "In commemoration of that count, the *Chachamim* established that we should count *sefiras ha'omer*."

The Ra'n concludes, "This explanation is a *דרש*. However, the primary reason for counting the *omer* is *זכר למקדש*, in commemoration of the Beis HaMikdash [when counting *sefiras ha'omer* was a Torah obligation]..."

The Yidden in the desert, who excitedly counted fifty days to *mattan Torah*, went through many spiritual ups and downs. In Eilam, where there was no edible water, *וילנו על משה*, the nation complained to Moshe (*Shmos* 16:2). In Refidim, they had doubts in *emunah* and then Amalek came. As it states, *ה'יש ה' בקרבנו אם אין ויבא עמלק* (*Shemos* 17:7-8). Similarly, there were different struggles the

Jewish nation went through during those fifty days. But they counted each one of those days with joyous anticipation for *mattan Torah*. This demonstrates that even when a Yid falls, and goes through ups and downs, he should never feel detached or lost. He can still look forward to *mattan Torah*, for the time when he will yet serve Hashem correctly.

Lag b'Omer

The topic of longing is very applicable in regard to Lag b'Omer, specifically this year. There are many people – from Eretz Yisrael and even from chutz le'arets – who generally go to Meron for Lag b'Omer, where they experience immense joy and feel spirituality uplifted. This year, due to the health situation, they can't go. Instead, we will have to suffice just with our desire to be there, and celebrate Lag b'Omer, with all our

heart and soul, wherever we are.

The *Zohar* writes a story that took place at the *levayah* of Reb Shimon bar Yochai. Reb Shimon bar Yochai was *niftar* on Lag b'Omer, and as his *levayah* passed through the village of Tzipori, en route to Meron, the residents of Tzipori came out with sticks, demanding that Reb Shimon be buried in Tzipori. They refused to let the people carrying Reb Shimon's body continue. The residents of Meron, on the other hand, demanded that Reb Shimon be buried in Meron. Suddenly, the bed of Reb Shimon bar Yochai ascended in the air. Surrounded by a divine fire, the coffin glided to Meron and that's where he was buried. At that moment, a *bas kol* came forth, "Go up and get together for the celebration of Reb Shimon."

Since then, a great celebration takes place in Meron, each year.

Over the generations (including our own) people who went to Meron on Lag b'Omer testify to the incredible joy they experience there. Everyone is joyous – even though it isn't clear why. No one is getting married, nothing changed in people's lives (at least, they don't know yet that something changed) but they feel in their hearts that they want to rejoice at this holy site. They want to be part of the incredible joy that prevails by this *hilulah* (celebration).

Reb Asher Zelig Margolies writes, "When we see the great joy at the holy *tzion* of Reb Shimon bar Yochai in Meron, we are certain that even today, a *bas kol* calls out on Lag b'Omer and says to the

heart of every Yid, "Go up and gather for the celebration of Reb Shimon."⁷

This year, the *bas kol* will probably say, "This year, don't gather in Meron," because it is a matter of *pikuach nefesh* r'l. But the *bas kol* will still tell us to rejoice with Reb Shimon's *hilulah*. Wherever one is, in America, Europe or in the holy cities of Eretz Yisrael, rejoice on Lag b'Omer. It is Reb Shimon's day, and Reb Shimon wanted us to be happy on this day.

The Chida (*Moreh b'Etzba* 223) writes, "Be happy in honor of Reb Shimon bar Yochai, because Lag b'Omer is his *hilula* [celebration] and it is known that he desired

7. Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zt'l* asked his *gabai* to awaken him when they were ready to begin their pilgrimage to Meron for Lag b'Omer. When the *gabai* awoke the Rebbe, he saw that the Rebbe's pillow and bed was soaked with tears.

As they traveled, Reb Shlomke urged everyone to be happy. He said, "We have to be happy also while traveling to Meron."

people to rejoice on this day."

During the days of sefiras ha'omer, the Chasam Sofer *zt'l* was teaching his students *masechtah Shavuot*, which has 49 blatt. He taught a blatt a day, the blatt that was associated with the *sefirah* of that day. When he came to דף ל"ג, the page he studied on בעומר ל"ג, he read, ר' שמעון מחכו עליה, במערבא, and translated, "In Eretz Yisrael, people are rejoicing with Reb Shimon."⁸

Meron, Lag b'Omer, is a pilgrimage going on for generations. Going back

about five hundred years, we have stories of the Remak and the Arizal going to Meron, and it is likely that the custom was practiced before that, too. But this year, when we can't go to Meron we can experience Meron in our own homes.

Chazal (*Kiddushin* 40.) say, חשב אדם לעשות מצוה ונאנס ולא עשה, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו עשה, "If a person wants to do a mitzvah, but circumstances beyond his control prevented him from doing so, the *pasuk* considers it as though he performed the mitzvah..." This is the situation this year. We

8. Reb Chaim Vital tells that Reb Avraham HaLevi *zy'a* was always mourning for the Churban Beis HaMikdash. Every day, he would say נחם את אבלי ציון (which we say on Tisha b'Av) in *Shemonah Esrei* and in *birchas hamazon*. One year, he was in Meron for Lag b'Omer, and he said נחם there, too.

The Arizal saw Reb Shimon bar Yochai standing on his grave, as though he were alive. Reb Shimon said to the Arizal, "Ask your student why he said נחם on the day of my immense joy." Within a month, Reb Avraham HaLevi was *niftar*. Because it is important to be happy on Lag b'Omer, and particularly those who merit being by in Meron.

want to go to Meron, but our obligation is to refrain, to do the mitzvos associated with *pikuach nefesh*. Through our desires, though, it will be as if we are there.

So perhaps this year the Bas Kol will announce like every year "Go up and gather for Reb Shimon's celebration." But it won't mean that we should actually go to Meron, rather it means we should yearn to be in Meron, and then it will be as though you were there.

The Joy of Lag b'Omer

How does one connect to the holiness and specialness of Lag b'Omer? One way is with happiness.

The Mishnas Chassidim writes, "It is a mitzvah to be happy on this day, the

joy of Reb Shimon bar Yochai."⁹

The Maharil of Paltishan *zt'l* writes, "I had the merit to be in Meron on Lag b'Omer (approximately 170 years ago). Brothers and friends, I can't express in writing the great *simchah* that was there! Fortunate are the eyes who saw it! ... Whoever was there felt with certainty that the joy was in the merit of Reb Shimon bar Yochai who wants people to rejoice on this day."

Reb Avraham Rozen describes the Lag b'Omer that he saw (in תשכ"ז) "Until the morning, no one went to sleep - the joy was so great. Then, they went to sleep, and a new group came. The entire day, and the following night, the same things happened. I won't burden myself to

9. The Mishnas Chasadim concludes, "If you live in Eretz Yisrael, celebrate near his grave and be very happy there. Certainly, do so if you have a *chalachah yingel*, to make *peyos* for a child..."

write the details of the joy seen there each moment, in various ways. Whoever didn't see the joy that transpired there never saw joy in his entire life... Some are jumping like deer, some are singing, some are drinking, some are clapping their hands and dancing with all their might.... I don't know how to describe the joy, but I will tell you the feelings I had in my heart at the time. I was imagining that Moshiach had already come and I was watching the *simchas beis hashoavah* in Yerushalayim. It was wondrous!

The Bnei Yissaschar (*Iyar* 3:3) writes, "We heard... that the joy in Meron...is beyond nature. As it states (*Mishlei* 13:9), אור צדיקים ישמח."

Someone made a *neder* (vow) that he wouldn't eat outside of his home except for a *seudas mitzvah*. He did this as a *segulah* to be saved from an *eis tzarah* (troubles). His question was, what constitutes a *seudas mitzvah*,

which he will be permitted to partake in, outside his home.

The Maharil (החידושים ק"ד) replies, "A *milah, pidyon haben, siyum mesechta* [is a *seudas mitzvah*]. Furthermore, Chazal say 'Whenever *talmidei chachamim* are eating at a meal, partaking in that meal is like enjoying from the light of the *Shechinah*. Therefore, Lag b'Omer is also considered a *seudas mitzvah*." This means, Reb Shimon is at the celebration. It is definitely a *seudas mitzvah*.

The Chida writes:

Reb Akiva's students stopped dying on this day. Only five students remained — one was Rabi Shimon — and Reb Akiva taught them Torah and gave them *semichah* on Lag b'Omer.

Years later, Rabi Shimon was *niftar* on Lag b'Omer. Before his demise, on Lag b'Omer, he revealed many

divine secrets of the Torah to his students (written in *Idra Zuta*.) The sun didn't set until Rabi Shimon finished teaching the secrets. He said, *דהא כל יומא ברשותי קיימא*, "The entire day is in my possession."

Often, a *yahrtzeit* is a fast day. For example, the seventh of Adar is a *taanis tzaddikim*. Lag b'Omer is also a *yahrtzeit* - the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Shimon bar Yochai. So why is it a day of celebration?

Chazal tell us that on the day Moshe Rabbeinu was *niftar* many laws of the Torah were forgotten. Unlike the day Reb Shimon bar Yochai was *niftar*, many secrets of the Torah were revealed. This could explain why Lag b'Omer is a day of celebration while the 7th of Adar is a fast day.

The Taamei HaMinhagim offers another explanation:

Reb Shimon bar Yochai was unique because he annulled harsh decrees. Most *tzaddikim* fast in order to annul harsh decrees. But the *Zohar* tells us that Reb Shimon bar Yochai didn't fast. It was his joy that annulled harsh decrees. Therefore, on Reb Shimon's *yahrtzeit* we also eat and celebrate. It is through this medium of *simcha* that we will be *zoche* to annul all difficult *gezeiros* on this special day.

Lag b'Omer Everywhere

Rebbe Moshe of Razadov *zt'l* (son of Reb Eliezer of Djikov *zt'l* and grandson of the Ropshitzer Rav *zt'l*) would tell people who needed a salvation to come to him on Lag b'Omer. He said that this is hinted to in the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 84), *לבי ובשרי, ירננו אל א-ל חי*. He explained that *לבי* is *roshei teivos* for *ל"ב*, the 32nd day of the *omer*. Then comes the word, *בשרי*, which spells *רשב"י*, Reb Shimon bar Yochai. Because

on the 33rd day, we have the celebration of Reb Shimon bar Yochai. On this day, ירננו אל א-ל חי, we will sing and praise Hashem for the miracles that will happen to us.

Rebbe Moshe Razadover would say, "There's no better time in the entire year than Lag b'Omer."

One year, when nighttime was approaching, and Lag b'Omer was about to pass, he said, "If I could, I would hold on to the sun with my teeth so that it doesn't set, in order for us not having to part from Lag b'Omer."

One year, the Divrei Chaim of Sanz *zt'l* visited Reb Eliezer of Djikov *zt'l* around Lag b'Omer time. Rebbe Eliezer of Djikov told the Divrei Chaim, "Because of my weak state, I generally don't lead a *tish* anymore. But in your honor, I will lead a *tish* on Lag b'Omer. Just tell me when it's a good time for you."

The Divrei Chaim said that two o'clock in the afternoon is a good time for him.

Lag b'Omer arrived, it was two o'clock, and the Divrei Chaim didn't arrive.

A chassid of Rebbe Eliezer Djikiver went to call him to the *tish*, but the Divrei Chaim's *gabai* said to the chassid that the Divrei Chaim had closeted himself in a room for several hours and that he didn't have the courage to disturb him. The Djikivor chassid was also afraid to disturb the Divrei Chaim, so he left.

More time passed. Rebbe Eliezer of Djikov was waiting, but the Divrei Chaim didn't come.

Rebbe Moshe Razodover *zt'l* felt that he must act. His father was waiting, and *kibud av* demanded that he call the Divrei Chaim.

He knocked on the Divrei Chaim's room and

said, "My father is waiting for you."

The Divrei Chaim brought him into his room. People outside the room couldn't hear what they were saying. All they heard was pacing. After a long time, they both came out. Reb Moshe's face was burning like a torch.

Reb Moshe Razadover later said that at this time, the Divrei Chaim taught him the secret of Lag b'Omer.¹⁰

This story is a reminder that Lag b'Omer is certainly everywhere. It is in Djikov, in Razadavor, and anyplace else in the world. It is just up to each individual to rejoice and attach himself to the specialness of this holy day.

The Baal Shem Tov zt'l famously taught, "A person is where his thoughts are." Therefore, if you want to be in Meron, you are there.¹¹

Chassidim say: "You can be near and far, and

10. When Avraham Kalisker zt'l would go to the *mikvah* in honor of Lag b'Omer he would say, הרני מקבל עלי קדושת היום, "I embrace the holiness of the day."

11. Someone was at the bottom of a mountain, climbing up, and another person was at the top of the mountain, climbing down. It looks like the person on top is at a higher place. But soon he will be at the bottom and the person at the bottom will be on top. This shows that more important than where you are, is where you are headed and where you want to be.

There were rooms, *lishkos*, built alongside the walls of the Beis HaMikdash. The Mishnah (*Maaser Sheini* 3:8) states, "A *lishkah* that is built within the area of the Beis HaMikdash but its door faces to outside the Beis HaMikdash, that room doesn't have the holiness of the Beis HaMikdash... But if the room is built on the area that is outside the Beis HaMikdash, but the doors open to the Beis HaMikdash, that room is holy, like the Beis HaMikdash..."

you can be far and near." This means, a person can be by his rebbe, standing by the rebbe's tish, but if he doesn't want to be there, or if he doesn't believe in his rebbe, he is essentially far away. As well, a person can be far,

and be near. It all depends on where one's heart is. Similarly, Reb Shimon's influence is felt throughout the entire world. The holiness of Lag b'Omer is everywhere. And even if someone is far, he can be very close.¹²

This tells us that it isn't so much where one is, rather where one is facing. Reb Shalom Shwadron *zt'l* would teach this Mishnah in his *drashos*. He referred to the working class in contrast to those who sit in the beis medresh all day long. He explained that it all depends on one's focus. If he is outside the beis medresh, working and making a living, but he is always looking and yearning to be in the beis medresh (and when he has the opportunity, he goes there to learn Torah), then essentially, he is always inside the beis medresh. But if a person is in the beis medresh, but he wishes he could be outside the beis medresh, earning money, then even as he is in the beis medresh, he is outside.

12. There is a saying from tzaddikim, "If you go to Meron, that's a sign Reb Shimon invited you."

A family once spent a Shabbos in Meron. The head of the family said, "For the same amount of money we spent on this Shabbos, we could have gone to a luxurious vacation resort."

For the next three years, he didn't return to Meron. It wasn't that he didn't want to go. It was just that things didn't work out for him. For example, when his son turned three, he wanted to make the *chalachah* in Meron, but the boy was slightly ill so they didn't go.

His wife told him, "It seems that since you made that remark that it wasn't worthwhile coming to Meron, Reb Shimon isn't inviting us anymore."

There's a house right next door to an electric company, but the house is dark. This is because the wires aren't connected. The house of someone living on the other side of the city is bright and illuminated. That's because the wires of

his home are connected. We see that more important is your connection than your location.¹³

Even for the Lowly People

The Beis Aharon *zt'l* (p.212) famously said, כל מי

He realized she might be right, so he closeted himself in a room and cried and repented for the foolish words he said. After he washed his face and dried his tears someone knocked at his door. It was his neighbor who said, "I just bought a new car. I want that the first time I use the car it should be for a mitzvah. Do you want to come with me to Meron...?"

13. A Yid from America used to travel every year to Eretz Yisrael for Lag b'Omer. One year, in תשנ"ג, he was in prison, *rachmana litzlan*, and he couldn't go to Meron. Missing out on this special merit bothered him immensely. His son comforted him, "You can't go to Reb Shimon, but I'm certain Reb Shimon will come to you."

The father didn't know what his son was talking about.

That Lag b'Omer, a fire broke out in prison. The Jewish prisoners took advantage of the fire and danced "Bar Yochai..." The next day, due to the fire, they were all released. They couldn't go to Reb Shimon, but Reb Shimon came to them.

There's a Yid from Eretz Yisrael who was in prison around Lag b'Omer time. It bothered him that he couldn't go to Meron for Lag b'Omer. He made a vow that if he will be released from prison, he will go to Meron to praise Hashem for the salvation.

Not long after making this *neder*, a guard came to his cell and brought him to a court. He was found innocent and immediately

שיש לו אמונה בר' שמעון בר יוחאי יש לו חיזוק בר' שמעון בן יוחאי. כשם שהשם יתברך הוא ה' לכל כך ר' שמעון בן יוחאי believes in Reb Shimon bar Yochai receives support from Reb Shimon bar Yochai. Just as Hashem is for everyone, so too is Reb Shimon for everyone, even for the lowly people." The Beis Aharon emphasizes, בפחותים, that Reb Shimon is even for the lowly people. This teaches us that lowly people have a special connection with Reb Shimon, because Reb Shimon raises them and pulls them out of the lowliness that they fell into for many years.

As the Rambam (*Pirush HaMishnayos Parah*) teaches:

There is no difference between a person who was never *tamei* to a person who was *tamei* and then became *tahor*. The one who became *tahor* has an added specialty because the Torah writes regarding him that he is *tahor*.

So, we can also say that since the Beis Aharon explicitly writes that even בפחותים, lowly people, have a connection with Reb Shimon, this means their connection to Reb Shimon bar Yochai is unique and special.

We see this happening in Meron, and especially on Lag b'Omer. Great tzaddikim go to Meron, but also very simple people, and they also feel a strong connection. They dance

released. He came home, dropped off his belongings, and set off for Meron. The family said, "You're tired. You went through so much. Stay home."

He told them about his vow.

He was able to spend several hours in Meron before Lag b'Omer was over, and he thanked Hashem for his salvation.

together with the great tzaddikim and feel right at home, because they feel in their hearts that Reb Shimon is encouraging them, elevating them, and giving them another chance to serve Hashem.

It states, *אדם ובהמה תושיע ה*, "Hashem saves man and animal." The *gematriya* of these words are *רשב"י* (*Magdil Yeshuos Malko*). This hints that in Reb Shimon's merit, Hashem will grant salvations for all people, and even for people who are on a low level, like animals.

In the year of *תרצ"ה*, tzaddikim of the Vizhnitzer family *zt'l* came to Meron. There were many people at the *tzion* at the time, so someone announced, "Make room for the Viznitzer Rebbe's children!"

A woman replied, "By Reb Shimon, we are all his children."

The Imrei Chaim *zt'l* was very pleased with this

woman's response. We are all Reb Shimon's children, and like a parent, Reb Shimon will daven for all of Klal Yisrael.

Coming to Reb Shimon's Grave via Torah

The Gemara Sotah (14. see Hagahos HaBach) asks, "Why is Moshe Rabbeinu's grave hidden from all mankind? It is because Hakadosh Baruch Hu knows that the Beis HaMikdash will be destroyed, and the Yidden will be exiled. [If they knew where Moshe is buried] perhaps they will go to Moshe's grave, and cry and beg, 'Moshe, get up and pray for us!' Moshe will stand up and pray and the decree of exile will be annulled."

This source hints to the great power of davening at the graves of if tzaddikim. Moshe's grave is concealed, because otherwise, the tefillos davened there would have ended the

galus prematurely. Although we can't go to Moshe's grave, most years we are B"H able to go to Reb Shimon's grave, and many miracles happen there. It is a wonderful location for tefillah.

What is the solution for this year? Klal Yisrael need yeshuos (salvations), and perhaps this year even more so, but can't go to one of the most ideal places for davening.

One solution is to study the divrei Torah of Reb Shimon bar Yochai. It isn't hard to find Reb Shimon's lessons, because they are found throughout Mishnayos, Gemara, and obviously, the Zohar. The Meor Einayim revealed

that studying the divrei Torah of a tzaddik is equivalent to being at his grave.

The answer, therefore, is to study the divrei Torah of Reb Shimon bar Yochai. It will be considered as if you are standing at his grave. Now ask from Hashem all your heart's desires. Your tefillos will be answered as though you davened in Meron, next to Reb Shimon's holy kever.¹⁴

As the Meor Einayim (Shabbos) teaches, "[Studying the divrei Torah of tzaddikim] is like השתמחות על קברי צדיקים, praying at their graves, because...the chiyus of the tzaddik is found [in his divrei Torah]..."¹⁵

14. No one would consider himself worthy to be in Reb Shimon bar Yochai's *heichel* (palace) in heaven. But in this world, when he opens a Gemara and studies the lessons of Reb Shimon bar Yochai, he is there together with Reb Shimon bar Yochai.

15. The Birchas Avraham said, "Studying the Torah of tzaddikim is a greater connection than going to their gravesite. When one prays on *kivrei tzaddikim* the souls of the tzaddik and of the person

Reb Shimon bar Yochai himself said (Yevomos 97.), "When you repeat divrei Torah [of someone who was niftar], his lips speak in the grave."

Similarly, Reb Shimon bar Yochai (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Sisa 3) says that tzaddikim don't rest even after their demise because when their students repeat their divrei Torah, the tzaddikim say it along with them from their graves. This creates a very close connection between the student and the tzaddik.

The Midrash teaches:

It states (Koheles 5:11), והשבע לעשיר אינו מנוח לו לישן, "The satiation of the wealthy doesn't let them sleep." "The wealthy" refers to those who are wealthy in Torah. They can't sleep because they have many students, and the students repeat, in the beis medresh, the lessons that he taught them. Thereby, they don't let him sleep in the grave...

Sefer Chasidim (224) teaches "Whoever repeats divrei Torah in the name of the scholar who originally

praying there connect. Since the soul of the tzaddik is bound to the Torah that he taught, it's possible to connect with tzaddikim everywhere through studying their holy teachings. This is hinted in Chazal (Yerushalmi Shekalim 2:5), אין עושים נפשות לדריקים דבריהם הם זכרונם, This means דבריהם, their *divrei Torah*, הם זכרונם, is how we can have a connection with them."

The son of the Sfas Emes (Berzhan) writes in the introduction, "I heard from my father zt'l that it is better to study the *sefer* of a tzaddik than to go to his grave. By studying his *sefer* in depth and by being connected immensely to the holiness of his *neshamah* above, holiness will be bestowed on him... The one studying is also bestowing goodness on the tzaddik, as it states רובב שפתי ישנים, he is causing the tzaddik to speak words of Torah from the grave. They are being *mashpia* on each other."

taught that divrei Torah, the scholar will pray for them in heaven..."

The Rebbe Reshab of Lubavitz zt'l says that when one studies the divrei Torah of a tzaddik, a malach from malach Michoel's camp goes to the tzaddik to tell him that someone is studying his sefer. Because the malachim know how happy tzaddikim are when they hear that someone is studying their divrei Torah.

The Yaaras Dvash (vol.2, drush 7) teaches, "When you repeat the divrei Torah that a tzaddik said, the neshamah of the tzaddik is clothed in those studies, and he is there, with you... Dovid therefore said, אגורה באהלך, עולמים, 'I will dwell in the tents of Torah in both worlds' (Yevamos 96:). Because he will live in the eternal world, and also in this world, whenever people repeat something he taught."

The Rebbe of Zalavitz zy'a in his sefer Bris Avram (end of Shabbos Hagadol) writes, "I heard from Reb Yisrael Baal Shem Tov zt'l that after a tzaddik's petirah (death), he is unable to rise from one level to the next before he is judged for even the smallest transgressions. Even after they judge him for the smallest aveiros (קלות שבקלות), he still can't go to a higher level. However, when people down below speak about his ways and they repeat his divrei Torah, then the tzaddik can rise to a much higher level. This happens each time people talk about a tzaddik who was niftar. The tzaddik is elevated, and so are the people who talk about him and repeat his divrei Torah."

The Beis Avraham (Noach) teaches, "At the yahrtzeit meals of a tzaddik, even those who never knew him and never studied any of his divrei Torah, are elevated..."

when people gather and speak about his ways, and they review his divrei Torah...they become connected with the tzaddik..."

The Yismach Yisrael zt'l teaches, "When you mention a tzaddik in this world, you bring goodness to all of Bnei Yisrael."

Additionally, going in the ways of the tzaddikim of the past, and serving Hashem based on the lessons they taught, is equivalent to going to their graves.

So, we don't have to worry. This year, we will be in Meron. If not in body, then in soul. Our tefillos will be answered. The Yeshuos that usually take place each year in Meron, will also happen this year, wherever we are.

Bonfires/Hadlakah

In Meron, and in all cities in Eretz Yisrael

where a Lag b'Omer celebration takes place, and in many communities in chutz le'aretz, there is a custom to celebrate with a hadlakah in honor of Reb Shimon bar Yochai.

The *sefer* מנע מירון describes the *hadlakah* in Meron eighty years ago (תרמ"ח): "Everyone buys olive oil and pours it in honor of the Tanah. Then those who will light it come forward [to the roof of the *tzion*] and with deep emotion, joy, and with a happy heart, they light a towel soaked with oil, and they throw it into the bowl of oil. Everyone stands by - their eyes watching, waiting for the fire. When the first flames come forth, everyone rejoices. The sound of their happiness is so loud, I never heard or seen any joy like it. The people of Eretz Yisrael say the *neshamah* of Reb Shimon bar Yochai is there at this *hadlakah*. At that time, I took out the names of my friends and family...

and I prayed for them, that the merit of the holy *tanah* should protect them, enlighten their candle, that they should have *hatzlachah* for their bodies and souls."

The Sadugeira Rebbe *zt'l* spoke about the specialness of the *hadlakah* on the roof of the *tzion*. He said 80,000 *neshamos* get their *tikun* at this time.

There were *tzaddikim* who would throw clothing into the fire in Meron, to increase the light and the joy of the day. Some *gedolim* disagreed with this custom because of *baal tashchis* (destroying clothing is a waste of money).

Reb Shmuel Heller *zt'l*, the rav of Tzfas, wrote a *sefer K'vod Melachim* on this subject, to prove that it is permitted, and he writes that the Or HaChaim

HaKadosh *zt'l* and other *tzaddikim* did that.¹⁶

Some throw their *yarmulke* into the fire. My father *zy'a*, and my grandfather Rebbe Moshe Mordechai of Lelov *zy'a*, would do that.

Someone told Rebbe Dovid Biderman of Lelov *zy'a* that his son was acting improperly, and that he takes off his *yarmulke*. Rebbe Dovid Biderman advised them to bring their son to Meron for Lag b'Omer.

The father followed this counsel, but it was very embarrassing for him. At every stop, they had to look for the child so they could continue on their way, because he always wandered off somewhere.

16. The *sefer Alef Kasav* writes, "The Or HaChaim would cry the entire night of Lag b'Omer at the *hadlakah*, and say 'How can I come near the fire, where the *neshamos* of Avraham Yitzchak, and Yaakov are there, together with all the holy *tzaddikim*?'"

When they finally came to Meron, and they lit the fire, the Rebbe took the boy's *kappel* and threw it into the fire. The boy immediately shouted, "My *kappel*! My *kappel*!" He changed in a minute. Before that, he was constantly throwing off his *kappel*, and now he wanted it.

The Zohar (Idra Zuta 291:) tells that on the final day of Reb Shimon's life, he revealed to his students the great, holy secrets of kabbalah. As long as he taught, the sun didn't set. The Bnei Yissaschar (Lag b'Omer 6) writes that this can explain the custom of lighting candles and bonfires on Lag b'Omer. It is in commemoration of the sun that continued to shine on the final day of Reb Shimon bar Yochai's life.

Another renowned custom in Meron, on Lag b'Omer is to give a child's first haircut there, to be mechanech the child with the mitzvah of peyos.

Reb Chaim Vital *zt'l* writes, "The Arizal came to Meron [on Lag b'Omer] with his young child and with his entire family, and they made peyos for his son there, as the custom is known. He made it a day of celebration."

The Mishnas Chassidim writes, "If you live in Eretz Yisrael, go and celebrate by Reb Shimon's grave, and be very happy there. Certainly, do so if you have a chalachah, and you will make peyos for your child..."

What is the reason for this custom?

Reb Yaakov Meir Shechter *shlita* explains that Reb Shimon bar Yochai promised, *כי לא תשכח מפי זרעו*, Torah will never be forgotten. The mesorah will be passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, when we make peyos for a child, and we are about to bring him to cheder to study Torah, we do it at Reb Shimon's grave,

for he promised the chain will continue eternally.

I heard another explanation from the Chernobyler Rebbe shlita:

The Gemara (Me'illa 17.) states, "The government decreed that Yidden may not keep Shabbos and they may not perform bris milah. Reb Reuvan Istrobuli sought to annul the decrees, so he cut his hair with a non-Jewish hairstyle (with long hair in the back and no hair in the front) so the goyim would think he is one of them. He sat among the politicians and asked them, "If you hate someone, do you want to make him wealthy or poor?"

They replied, "Obviously, we want that he should be poor!"

"So, they shouldn't work on Shabbos, so they will become poor."

The government officials agreed with him and they retracted the decree that

forced them to work on Shabbos.

Then he asked them, "If you have an enemy, do you want him to be strong or weak?"

They said, "Obviously, we want that he should be weak!"

"If so, you should let them circumcise their children at eight days, so they will become weak."

They replied, "You are correct," and they retracted their decree.

Sometime later, they realized that Reb Reuvan was a Yid, and that he tricked them, so they reinstated those two gezeiros.

Once again, the Jewish community needed a solution. Who will annul the gezeiros now? The chachamim sent Reb Shimon bar Yochai to the king, because "many miracles happen to him."

A demon called Ben Temalyon met with Reb

Shimon and offered his assistance. The demon went ahead of Reb Shimon and attached itself to the king's daughter, causing her immense pain. When Reb Shimon arrived Reb Shimon said, "Ben Temalyon, leave!" which it did.

The king was thankful to Reb Shimon and brought him into the treasury room. "Take whatever you want."

Reb Shimon found the documents of the decrees forbidding the Jewish nation from practicing milah and obligating them to work on Shabbos, and he tore up the document.

In this story, Reb Reuvan Istrobuli helped the nation dressed as a gentile, but Reb Shimon was able to

save the nation appearing like a Yid.

One of the purposes of a Jewish haircut is so it should be noticeable that we are Yidden. We therefore have a custom to make the chalachah in Meron, at Reb Shimon's kever, because Reb Shimon was able to annul the harsh decrees appearing as a Yid.

Salvations

The Tzvi LaTzaddik of Bluzhev *zt'l* said "It is impossible to know when the *geulah sheleimah* will come, but I think it will be on Lag b'Omer, on Reb Shimon's day, because it is a very pure day, a day of salvations."¹⁷

The *Zohar* tells us some of the miracles Reb Shimon

17. The Bas Ayin moved to Eretz Yisrael, and Rebbe Mordechai Chernobyler *zt'l* wrote to him the following:

"Pour out your eyes before Reb Shimon. If I could go to Eretz Yisrael, I would go to Reb Shimon's grave and I would storm the heavens until Moshiach comes."

performed. One story was how Reb Shimon stopped an epidemic, reminiscent of the plague in our times, today.

The *Zohar* (*Rus* 104) tells:

Reb Shimon traveled to Lud. People took him around the city and showed him several dead people lying about, due to a plague. Reb Shimon said, "How can it be that I am in this city and there's a plague? I declare that the plague should stop!"

A *bas kol* announced to the bad angels, "Leave this place, because Reb Shimon bar Yochai is here. Hakadosh Baruch Hu decrees in heaven, and Reb

Shimon annuls the decree on earth below."

Reb Chanina was in Lud when this episode happened, and he repeated it to Reb Meir. Reb Meir said, "Who can tell all the praises of Reb Shimon bar Yochai. He is like Moshe Rabbeinu, who 'stood between the dead and the living and stopped the plague.' Reb Shimon has an added aspect over Moshe Rabbeinu, because Moshe Rabbeinu had to stand between the dead and the alive people to stop the plague, while Reb Shimon annulled the plague with merely is words."¹⁸

18. A cholera plague hit Eretz Yisrael about a hundred years ago, and there's a famous story of a salvation that happened in Reb Shimon's merit.

The story is told by the great *mekubal* and *tzaddik*, Reb Asher Zelig Margolies *zt'l*, who witnessed it when it happened. It is also told by several other people who were in Meron on Lag b'Omer of תרפ"ג.

Three years prior, a childless couple prayed at the *kever* of Reb Shimon bar Yochai and promised that if they bear a child they will

We know of other times
that Reb Shimon saved the
world.

The *Zohar* relates that
Reb Shimon bar Yochai
once saw that a great

bring him to Meron on Lag b'Omer for the *chalachah* (to make *peyos*). They had a child, and when the child turned three, the mother came to Meron, as she promised. (The husband remained home.)

That year, Lag b'Omer was on Friday, so most people remained in Meron for Shabbos. On Shabbos, as Reb Asher Zelig was davening *Mussaf* he heard great screams and cries. It was because the three-year-old miracle child had become ill with the cholera epidemic. Everyone was panicking; especially the mother, whose cries could be heard above all others.

Reb Asher Zelig writes that he saw the child, "He was green and seemed to be dead." Everyone was distraught. The *tefillah* was over, but no one made Kiddush. A feeling of gloom reigned.

The mother took the child and placed him near the *tzion*. She said, "Reb Shimon! I brought my only son here. He was born in your merit. I kept my promise, and I made his first haircut here. Do not ruin my happiness and the happiness of my husband who is waiting for us to return. Reb Shimon! I'm leaving my son here. Don't embarrass me. Bring him back to health and life as I brought him here yesterday. Sanctify Hashem's name. Reveal before everyone that Hashem is here, and that there are tzaddikim."

She left her son near the *tzion*, closing the door behind her. Only the child remained inside. A few minutes later, the child's voice was heard. He was calling for his mother.

Reb Asher Zelig opened the door. The boy was standing on his feet, calling, "Mother, I'm thirsty. Bring me water."

A tumult of joy roared. The dead child came back to life. They all said the *brachah* מחיה המתים.

Shaar Yissaschar writes that שמעון בן יוחאי is *gematriya* מחיה המתים.

darkness was coming to the world. Reb Shimon said to his son, Reb Elazer, "Come with me and we will see what Hakadosh Baruch Hu is planning to do to the world."

They went and found a *malach*, tall like a high mountain, with thirty flames of fire coming out of its mouth. Reb Shimon asked the angel what it was planning to do. The angel replied, "Hashem said that in every generation there must be at least thirty tzaddikim similar to Avraham Avinu... But now, there aren't thirty tzaddikim like Avraham in the world, and therefore Hashem sent me to destroy the world."

Reb Shimon bar Yochai said to the *malach*, "Go back to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and tell him, 'The son of Yochai is in the world.'"

"The angel went to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and said, 'Master of the world, You certainly know what

Reb Shimon bar Yochai told me to tell You.'

Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "Go and destroy the entire world, and don't pay attention to what Yochai's son says."

The angel returned. When Reb Shimon bar Yochai saw the *malach* he said, "If you don't leave, I will decree that you will never return to your place in heaven. I will send you to a forsaken place. Therefore, listen to what I tell you. Go to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and say, 'Even if there aren't thirty tzaddikim in the world, twenty tzaddikim are also sufficient. As Hashem told Avraham (18:31), *לֹא אֶשְׁחִית בְּעֶבְרַת הָעָשָׂרִים*, 'I will not destroy if there are twenty tzaddikim.' And even if there are only ten tzaddikim, that is also enough to protect the world from destruction, because Hashem said (18:32), *לֹא אֶשְׁחִית בְּעֶבְרַת הָעָשָׂרָה*, that He will not destroy the world if there are ten tzaddikim. And

even if there are only two tzaddikim in the world – namely, Reb Elazar and me – it is also enough... And if there is only one tzaddik in the world, it is also enough. As it states, צדיק יסוד עולם, the tzaddik is the foundation of the world."

At that moment, a *bas kol* came forth from heaven and said, "Reb Shimon, fortunate is your lot. Hakadosh Baruch Hu establishes decrees in heaven, and you annul them from earth. About you it is written (*Tehillim* 145), רצון יראיו יעשה, 'Hashem does the will of those who fear Him.'"

We don't know all the stories, but we are certain that many salvations came to the world in Reb Shimon's merit. They happened in his lifetime, and they continue to happen after his demise. They will happen this year as well, for individuals and for all of klal Yisrael.

But there is one condition, and we mentioned it above in the name of the Beis Aharon: "Whoever believes in Reb Shimon gets *chizuk* from Reb Shimon."

Consider the following *vort*, taught by Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l*:

Rachel Imeinu said to Yaakov Avinu (*Bereishis* 30:1), רבו לי בנים ואם אין מתה אנכי, "[Daven for me and] bring me children, because otherwise, I can be compared to the dead." Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* notes that from the onset, Rachel suspected that Yaakov's *tefillos* might not be answered. As she said, ואם אין, "and if not..." She feared that it might not happen. Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* says that this is the reason Yaakov couldn't help her. As Yaakov Avinu told her, והתחת אלקים אנכי, "Am I in G-d's place...?"

This is because tzaddikim can help only those who believe in them.

Yaakov told Rachel, if you don't believe in me, I can't help you. *התחת אלקים אני*, I am not like Hashem. Hashem helps even those who don't believe in Him. I am a tzaddik and my ability to help you is dependent on your belief in me."

On Lag b'Omer we want Reb Shimon to daven for

us in heaven, and he will certainly do that. But a tzaddik's ability to help us is dependent largely on how much we believe in him.¹⁹

Tefillos

The Chazon Ish said, "Our generation has fallen immensely. Years ago, everyone knew that it is

19. The Divrei Shmuel of Slonim *zy'a* told the following:

A wealthy businesswoman from Eretz Yisrael was about to send out a ship filled with merchandise. Before the ship set sail, she went to Reb Shimon bar Yochai's *tzion* to pray that the ship, with all the merchandise, reach their destination.

She couldn't get close to the *tzion* because there was another woman in front of her praying loudly for three hundred rubles to marry off her child. The wealthy woman took three hundred rubles from her purse and gave it to her. The relieved woman thanked her immensely, left, and then this wealthy businesswoman was able to reach the *tzion*.

Standing before the *tzion*, she said, "Reb Shimon, the woman who was here before me received her request. She prayed for three hundred rubles, and she received that amount immediately. May my requests also be answered immediately."

The Divrei Shmuel repeated this story, and expressed his amazement in how much this woman believed in the *tefillos* by Reb Shimon's grave. She didn't take credit for the *tzedakah* she gave. She accredited it to the woman's *tefillos*.

possible to turn to Hashem in prayer, at any time, and in one's own words. Today, people are unaware of this simple truth. Ask a yeshiva *bachur*, 'Did you know we have the option to speak to Hakadosh Baruch Hu in the manner one speaks to his good friend? Do you know that we can ask for all our needs from Him?' The *bachur* will respond that he never heard of that before. 'I know that one can daven three times a day, but I didn't know I can daven all the time, in my own words.'

But that is the reality. One can pour out his heart in *tefillah*, using his own words, and Hashem will listen to his *tefillos*.

It states (*Mishlei* 12: 28), דאגה בלב איש ישיחנו, "When a person has a worry in his

heart, he should speak it over with others." The Beis Aharon *zy'a* explains, if one has a worry in his heart, he should speak it over with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He should tell Hashem everything he is going through.²⁰

Therefore, on Lag b'Omer, a day of salvations, fortunate are those who invest in prayer, utilizing the standard *tefillos*, *Tehillim*, and *tefillos* that pour forth from one's heart, in one's own words.

What should he pray for?

We'll offer some suggestions:

1] Pray for good children.

The Gemara (*Makos* 17:) states, "Rava said, 'When a

20. A benefit of davening in one's own words is that a person is able to express himself better, and say everything that is sitting on his heart. This is generally harder to do when the words are already written (such as in the siddur or in the *Tehillim*).

woman gives birth, she should pray that the child be like Reb Shimon..."

The Minchas Elazar (Shaar Yissaschar) says that the Gemara is referring to someone who is davening on Lag b'Omer. On this day, anything is possible. On this day, one can ask for the greatest things - even that one's child be like Reb Shimon bar Yocahi.

2] Daven for *parnassah*.

According to a Midrash, the *mon* started to come down on Lag b'Omer. Therefore, Lag b'Omer is an auspicious day to daven for *parnassah*.

The Chasam Sofer (Yorah Deiah 233) makes the following calculation: Chazal tell us that when the Yidden left Mitzrayim, they ate matzos for thirty days, and the nation finished the matzos on Pesach Sheini. The Midrash says that they didn't have food to eat for three days, and then the *mon* fell. According to this calculation, the *mon* first came down on Lag b'Omer.

The Taamei HaMinhagim writes, וַיִּשְׁפַּע רִבִּי בְּכָל הָעוֹלָמוֹת, "A great bounty should come down in all worlds" is *roshei teivos* רשבי.²¹

21. A Yid from America came to Meron for Lag b'Omer to daven at Reb Shimon bar Yochai's *tzion*. A poor man from Eretz Yisrael was standing next to him, davening loudly for *parnassah*, and his loud shouts were disturbing him.

The poor man was shouting, "Hashem! In the merit of Reb Shimon! Send me fifty thousand dollars!"

The wealthy Yid thought to himself, "I came all this way to daven at Reb Shimon bar Yochai's grave and this man's loud shouts for fifty thousand dollars are giving me a headache. He is ruining my concentration."

The Yerushalmi (*Brachos* 9:18) writes, "Whenever Reb Shimon needed money, he would say, 'Valley! Valley!

Fill up with gold coins' and it would happen."

3] Daven for refuah²²

He wanted to take revenge on this poor man, so he asked the poor man for his address, which he readily gave. "When I get back to America," he thought to himself, "I will write a check for fifty thousand dollars and sign it, 'Reb Shimon bar Yochai.' With this tease, I will pay him back for all the frustration he's causing me."

Some weeks later, this wealthy man was going through his bank statements, and saw he was charged fifty thousand dollars! He didn't understand. When did he write such a large check? Then he remembered the hoax he played on the poor Yid in Meron, at Reb Shimon's *kever*. He looked at the check, and he saw that he accidentally signed his own name, and not Reb Shimon bar Yochai.

The poor man's *tefillos* were indeed answered.

22. The Brisker Rav *zt'l* was ill in the summer of תש"ט, and he asked people to daven for him in Meron. He said that he heard from his father, Reb Chaim Brisker *zt'l* that Meron is a great place for *tefillah*.

Throughout the month of Elul of that year, Reb Shach *zt'l* was always by the Brisker Rav's bedside, and he heard the Brisker Rav request that people should daven for him in Meron. Rav Shach immediately went to Ponovezh, spoke with the *roshei yeshiva*, and fourteen outstanding *talmidei chachamim* (including the Steipler *zt'l*, who requested to come along) traveled to Meron, where they said the entire *sefer Tehillim*.

They were in Meron Thursday night. Sunday, Rav Shach was with the Brisker Rav again and the Brisker Rav asked him whether people davened for him in Meron. Rav Shach told him the details of the trip, and who was there. The Brisker Rav's eyes shone from joy and gratitude. (Rav Shach said that it was a *neis* that he arranged it, because otherwise, what would he answer the Brisker Rav?)

שמעון בר יוחאי is *gematriya*
 ורפאחיו, so Lag b'Omer is also
mesugal for *refuah*.²³

The Tzemech Tzedek
 taught that מרין (without the
 מ'לך ר'פא) is *roshei teivos*
 נ'אמן ור'חמן.

23. It is known that the *sefirah* הור is *mesugal* for *refuah*. Reb Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* said that Lag b'Omer, which is the *sefirah* הור שבהור is certainly *mesugal* for *refuah*.

Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz taught that if one needs to take a medication, he should begin to take it on Lag b'Omer, which is הור שבהור.

The Minchas Elazar was once walking to Meron. Reb Asher Zelig Margolis *zt'l* was at his right side, and the Minchas Elazar's *gabbai*, Reb Chaim Ber *z'l*, was at his left side. Someone approached Reb Chaim Ber, gave him a letter, and immediately left. Reb Chaim Ber opened the letter and he began to shiver from fear. Reb Asher Zelig asked to see the letter, and he was also very worried. The Minchas Elazar asked them to show him the letter. It said, "If the Minchas Elazar dares to go to the tzion in Meron, he will be killed there."

The Minchas Elazar was strongly opposed to the Zionist movement, which brought him many enemies. It wasn't farfetched to think the threat was real.

The Minchas Elazar calmed his companions. He said, "We are going to Reb Shimon, and the *malach hamaves* doesn't have any power there."

In תש"ט, because of the wars with the Arabs, the gates of Yerushalayim were opened only one day, in every two weeks.

There was a *bachur* called Meirovitz who was shot in the leg, but he couldn't get to Shaarei Tzedek Hospital for two weeks. By the time he got to the hospital, his leg was infected and the doctors said they need to amputate it.

Lag b'Omer was approaching and Meirovitz asked his friends to bring him to Meron, where he could pray for his health. "It's impossible," his friends told him. And indeed, it was almost impossible. In those days, a trip to Miron could take an entire day, with changing busses several times. Due to his condition, he needed to travel with his foot raised the entire time. How could they make the long trip with him, in his condition?

But the *bachur* begged that they bring him to Meron, until his friends agreed to do whatever they can. They rented a truck, so he could lie down, and they traveled to Meron.

At the *tzion*, the *bachur* said the following prayer, "My entire family was killed by the Nazis. Only I survived. I must marry and build a family so my family will continue to live on. But how can I get married if I lose my leg?"

Afterwards, they went to the *chatzer* (courtyard) for the dancing. The *bachur* Meirovitz wanted to dance, so he put his arms around the shoulders of two of his friends, and they danced with him. Suddenly, he began dancing on his own. From all the dancing, the dressing fell off and a healthy foot was revealed.

A young boy was smitten with a severe disease. Doctors tried some treatments, but the boy's body was too weak, and he wasn't responding well to the treatments. The doctors finally said that there is nothing they can do.

The boy's father said, "Until now the doctors did what they knew, now it is our turn, as Yidden, to do what we know." The father arranged a minyan to daven for the boy in Meron, and the boy was brought along, with them.

When the boy was at the *tzion*, he cried from his pains. This spurred the people davening there to cry and pray with even greater devotion, hoping the boy would finally get a *refuah sheleimah*.

At that time, the boy ate and drank intravenously. But when he sat there, near the *tzion*, he asked for water. Everyone was surprised. It was a sign of improvement.

4] Pray for the Barren to bear Children

The Shem Shlomo of Munkatz zt'l taught that to merit bearing children one

should have *kavanah* in the *brachah* רפאנו. Therefore, Lag b'Omer, הוד שבהוד, which is *mesugal* for *refuah*, is certainly also *mesugal* for bearing children.²⁴

When they returned, the father asked the doctors to check his son again. The doctors were astonished how much better he had become. He had a few more treatments and merited a *refuah sheleimah*.

Reb Asher Zelig Margolis zt'l tells that he had a lot of pain in his throat. The doctors recommended an operation, but he was very wary of doing so. He came to Meron and said the entire *Tehillim*. In the middle of saying the *Tehillim*, he began coughing violently, and blood and all the infections that were blocking his throat came out. He was healed.

24. The Midrash (*Shir HaShirim Rabba* 1) tells that there was a couple in Tzidon who didn't have children for ten years. They came to Reb Shimon for a divorce. Reb Shimon told them, "Just like you made a celebration when you got married, I want you to make a celebration when you divorce."

They made a grand party, and she gave him a lot of wine to drink. When the wine was wearing off, he told her, "Take whatever you love the most from this home, and bring it to your parent's home."

Then he fell asleep. She told her slaves to carry him, together with the bed, to her parent's home.

He awoke at midnight, and didn't understand why he was in her parent's home. She said, "You told me I can take whatever I like most. There is nothing I like more than you."

They returned to Reb Shimon. He davened for them, and they bore children.

5] Daven for Shidduchim

The Avnei Nezer *zt'l* told his chassidim that Lag b'Omer is *mesugal* for *shidduchim*, because it says about Reb Shimon, הצייל

הלחוצים, "He saves those who are stressed and worried," and who is more stressed and worried than someone who is waiting for their *shidduch*?²⁵

25. The following story happened six years ago:

There was an older *bachur* called Zelig. He was a good *bachur*, no one knew what was holding up his *shidduch*.

Lag b'Omer, Zelig's mother was traveling to Meron, hoping to merit a salvation for her son. As she was on the bus, she was thinking about her son, the past and the present, and then she reminded herself that before Zelig was born, she was barren. She and her husband davened in Meron for a child, and they promised that if a boy is born, they would call him Shimon. At the birth, somehow they forgot about that.

She immediately called up her husband and said, "Perhaps that is the entire problem! Maybe we should have called him Shimon!"

The father immediately called his rebbe who advised him that for now on, they should call their son Shimon Zelig.

The mother davened at the *kever* of Reb Shimon, requesting that her son Shimon Zelig should find his *bashert* and become engaged.

The next Shabbos, the *gabai* called up the *bachur*, "Shimon Zelig" for an *aliyah*. There was another man in this *beis medresh* called Zelig. He asked the *gabai*, "Why did you call this *bachur* Shimon Zelig? I thought his name was just Zelig."

The *gabai* said, "That's right. Until now he was called Zelig. But his father told me to call him Shimon Zelig. I don't know why?"

That Zelig always wanted this *bachur* Zelig for a *chasan*, but how could he take him, since they have the same name? Reb Yehuda

6] Daven for Ruchniyos

The Sfas Emes (*Emor* 5652) writes, "I heard from my grandfather [the Chidushei HaRim *zt'l*] that on Lag b'Omer one can attain *yiras Shamayim*." This is a wonderful statement, and one way we can attain *yiras Shamayim* is by praying for it.²⁶

We can pray for all kinds of success in *avodas*

Hashem, and our *tefillos* will be effective.

7] Daven for Salvations

The Minchas Elazar of Munkatch *zt'l* had a custom he practiced each year when he went to the *kever* of his father, the Darkei Teshuvah, at the time of his father's *yahrtzeit*. The Darkei Teshuvah wrote three *sefarim* on the *Tikunei Zohar* (which was written by

HaChassid taught that the names of father-in-law and son-in-law mustn't be the same. But now that their names weren't exactly the same, he was willing to go forward with the *shidduch*. Shimon Zelig became engaged to Zelig's daughter!

26. In *Tehillim* (chapter 19) there are five expressions, and each has five words, to praise Torah and mitzvos:

1. תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש
2. עדות ה' נאמנה מחכימת פתי
3. פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב
4. מצות ה' ברה מאירת עינים
5. יראת ה' מזהרה עומדת לעד

The fifth phrase is discussing *yiras Hashem*. It is five of five (five words of the fifth phrase) similar to the day of Lag b'Omer which falls on the fifth day of the fifth week (הוד שבהוד). This is a hint to the concept that Lag b'Omer is an ideal time to attain *yiras Shamayim* (Imrei Emes *zt'l*).

Reb Shimon bar Yochai), so the Minchas Elazar would go to his father's grave and sing **בר יוחאי** three times.

One year, after singing, the Minchas Elazar discussed the words, **אשרי** **העם** **הם** **לומדיך**, which literally means, "Fortunate is the nation *who teach you*." It seems it should say **לומדי** **תורתך**, "Fortunate is the nation who learn your Torah," or **לומדי** **ספרך**, "Fortunate is the nation who learn your *sefarim*." Why does it state **לומדיך**, that they teach Reb Shimon? What do they teach Reb Shimon?

The answer is, when there are harsh decrees in the world, the Satan often conceals the harsh decrees from the tzaddikim, so that they won't know about it and pray to annul the decree. But when Yidden come to a tzaddik's grave, they tell the tzaddik about the decrees that are taking place so that they can pray for Klal Yisrael. This is the intention of **אשרי** **העם** **הם** **לומדיך**,

"Fortunate is the nation *who teach you*."

After saying this, the Minchas Elazar fell on his father's grave, and told his father about the many *gezeiros* of his time.

The Zohar (*Idra* 296) says that when Reb Shimon was buried in Meron, a *bas kol* came forth said, "Many *kitrugim* are silenced on this day, in your merit." Tzaddikim say that this occurs every year on Lag b'Omer. The *malachim* that slander and seek to harm Klal Yisrael are silenced on Lag b'Omer.

The Zohar tells us that the gates of heaven are opened on Pesach Sheni, and they remain open an entire week. Afterwards, the gates close.

Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz *zy'a* asks, why can't the gates remain open?

The answer is that during this week we have Lag b'Omer, and on Lag

b'Omer everyone prays and subsequently receives everything they need. Since Klal Yisrael has already received all their hearts' desires, there is no reason to keep the gates open. The gates can be closed.

Learning from his Ways

On Lag b'Omer, we sing *בר יוחאי*, "the son of Yochai." We call Reb Shimon by his father's name. Why don't we call Reb Shimon by his own name, in this song?

Perhaps it's to remind us that Reb Shimon was a human being, born from human parents. It is written in *sefarim* that *שמעון* is *roshei teivos* for (Daniel 4:10), *עיר וקריש*, *מן שמיא נחית*, "A holy angel that came down from heaven." This is referring to Reb Shimon bar Yochai. Indeed, when we study Reb Shimon's ways and his superior knowledge one might think that Reb Shimon was a *malach*, in a literal sense. Because how could a human being

possibly reach such great levels. The song that we sing on Lag b'Omer reminds us, *בר יוחאי*, that Reb Shimon had a father and mother. He was a human being, which by default means he had many challenges in life. Yet he passed all his tests, and that's how he reached his outstanding spiritual heights, until he became like a heavenly *malach*.

On Lag b'Omer, when we discuss the greatness of Reb Shimon bar Yochai, the primary purpose of doing so is to learn from his ways and strive to do the same. If we dedicate ourselves to *avodas Hashem*, we can also reach very high levels.

People tend to think of tzaddikim as people who were born different than everyone else. Therefore, when they hear about a tzaddik's greatness, they shrug and say, "But who can be like him? He was like an angel. If I was born

a *malach*, I would also be like that."

Therefore, it is important to remember that tzaddikim are human beings, just like us. They also have challenges, and they become great and holy because they pass those tests. If we will pass our tests, we can also reach extremely high levels.

Don't give up

The Gemara says, "Reb Akiva had twelve thousand pairs of *talmidim* from Gavas until Antifras and they all died in the same time period because they didn't honor one another..." The Beis Yosef explains that they stopped dying on Lag b'Omer, and he writes that this is the reason Lag b'Omer is a day of celebration.

The Pri Chadash asks, the reason the students stopped dying on Lag b'Omer is mostly because there were almost no students left. Only five

students remained. Why should we be happy on this day?

The Pri Chadash answers, on Lag b'Omer, Reb Akiva took his five remaining students and began to teach them Torah. Those five students were: Reb Meir, Reb Yehudah, Reb Yossi, Reb Shimon and Reb Elazer ben Shamo'a, and from them the Torah continues to live on in Klal Yisrael. The continuity of Torah is certainly a reason to celebrate!

Only a short while before, Reb Akiva had twenty-four thousand students. Many funerals were held daily. The situation was tragic. Reb Akiva was left with only five students, but he didn't give up. He taught Torah to his five remaining students, and from them, Torah continues until today. Their teachings are repeated throughout the Mishnayos and the Gemara.

Torah survived because Reb Akiva didn't lose hope. He didn't despair and dwell on his sorrows. He forged ahead, and did what he could, and that is how Torah is perpetuated to this day.

Reb Shimon bar Yochai also didn't give up and lose hope. If he did, he wouldn't have reached his great heights.²⁷ For thirteen years he lived in a cave, alone with his son, and didn't stop studying Torah.

27. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 33:) tells that Reb Shimon bar Yochai, Reb Yosi, and Reb Yehudah were once discussing the Roman empire. Reb Yehudah praised them, because "they build marketplaces, bridges, and bathhouses." All these matters make life more pleasant, so people can serve Hashem better. Reb Yosi was silent. Reb Shimon disgraced the Roman Empire. He said, "They made everything for themselves..." Their intention wasn't to help others, just to earn wealth etc.

Yehudah ben Geirim was present when these scholars had this conversation, and he repeated it. Eventually many people were talking about their discussion, and it reached the ears of the Roman government too.

The Romans said, "Yehudah who praised us should be honored. Reb Yosi who was silent should be exiled to Tzipori. And Reb Shimon who disgraced Rome should be killed."

Reb Shimon and his son hid in a beis medresh, and Reb Shimon's wife would bring him bread and water, each day. When Reb Shimon realized that they are looking for him with greater earnestness, and he was concerned that they may torture his wife until she reveals where they are hiding, he went with his son to a cave, and no one knew where they were. What will they eat? A miracle occurred. A carob tree grew in the cave, and a spring opened up there. They wore their clothing solely for the *tefillos*, so they would last. Throughout the day, they studied Torah covered with earth, up to their necks.

No one would blame Reb Shimon if he lost hope, after he had to live in a cave, possibly interminably, removed from all Torah centers. But Reb Shimon continued to study Torah with all his might, and it was specifically there, in the cave, that he reached his outstanding heights. As we say, שם קניית הודך והדרך, "there [in the cave] you acquired your glory."

Once, someone was telling Rebbe Dovid Biderman *zt'l* about his son, who was ill. Rebbe Dovid Biderman advised him to daven in Meron. The man replied, "I was already in Meron, and my son is still ill."

Rebbe Dovid Biderman told him, "When a person goes to a doctor once, and he isn't healed, does he stop going to the doctor? He will go again. I advise you to go again and again to Meron, until your son has a *refuah sheleimah*."

Similarly, we should try again and again to grow in *avodas Hashem*, and we should continue davening for success (and for the success of our children) because if you don't give up, there is no limit to how far you will reach.

The Nachlas Avos writes that Yochai (Reb Shimon's father) was married for many years and didn't have children. Yochai told his wife that he wants to divorce her and marry someone else, so he can bear children. His wife didn't want a divorce. She prayed and she cried a lot to Hashem, asking to merit bearing a child.

On the night of Rosh Hashanah, Yochai had a dream. He was in an orchard. There were many trees there, some tall and some small. Yochai saw himself leaning on a small tree, without fruit. He understood that this tree represents him. It didn't have fruit, because he didn't have children. A

malach came into the orchard, carrying a bucket filled with water and he began watering the trees. Yochai understood that the *malach* was giving children for the upcoming year. A tree that was watered will bear fruit that year. How he hoped the *malach* would pour some water on his sapling, too.

The *malach* came to Yochai's tree, and put down his barrel of water. Then, the *malach* took out a small jug and poured its contents over the tree. The tree immediately sprouted flowers and grew beautiful fruit.

When he awoke, he told his wife about the dream. They understood that the dream bore good tidings.

On *motzei* Rosh Hashanah, Yochai repeated what he saw in his dream to Reb Akiva. Reb Akiva agreed that the dream meant that they would have a child that year.

Yochai asked, "Why didn't the angel water my tree from the barrel, as he watered all the other trees? What is the significance of that small jug?"

Reb Akiva answered, "This jug wasn't filled with water. It was filled with your wife's tears; the tears she shed to have children. In the merit of those tears you will have a holy child."

That year, Reb Shimon bar Yochai was born.

When one doesn't lose hope, and he continues to daven for a salvation, salvations will occur.

Judge Your Fellow Man Favorably

After twelve years of living in the cave, Eliyahu came to the cave's entrance and said, "Who will tell Bar Yochai that the king died, and the decree was annulled?"

Reb Shimon came out of the cave and saw people plowing and planting. Reb

Shimon said, "They are neglecting the eternal world and are occupying themselves with the temporary world?! [He reached very high levels, living in the cave for twelve years, and he couldn't understand how people can put aside the opportunity to be immersed in Torah and mitzvos.]

Due to their disappointment in people, wherever Reb Shimon and Reb Elazar looked, they burned with their eyes."

A *bas kol* came forth, "Did you leave the cave to destroy My world? Go back to your cave!"

They returned to the cave and stayed there for twelve months. They said, "*Resha'im* in Gehinom are punished for twelve months," we too, shouldn't be punished longer than that. Indeed, a *bas kol* came forth and said, "Go out of your cave."

This time, wherever Reb Elazar smote with his eyes, Reb Shimon cured.

Reb Shimon told his son, "My son, it is enough that there you and I are in the world, studying Torah."

Close to Shabbos, they saw an old person running with two bundles of *hadasim* (*myrtle*). They asked him, "What are these for?"

He replied, "They are *l'kovod Shabbos*."

"Wouldn't one bundle be enough?" they asked.

He replied, "It states *זכור ושמור*, "remember and guard the Shabbos". One bundle is for remembering Shabbos and one is for guarding the Shabbos."

Reb Shimon said to his son, "See how much Yidden love mitzvos!" At that moment, Reb Shimon and Reb Elazar calmed down and they weren't as critical with people as they were beforehand. They realized

that Yidden are special and they love the mitzvos.

Avos d'Reb Nosson (ch.16) states, "Reb Shimon bar Yochai taught: How do we know that Bnei Yisrael will never go to Gehinom? There is a *mashal* of a king who owned a field of very poor quality [bad for growing produce]. People rented it for ten *kur* of wheat per year. They plowed, sowed, fertilized, pruned, and irrigated the field for an entire year and all the field produced that year was one *kur*.

The king rebuked them. The deal was for ten *kur*!

They explained, "Our master, our king; you know that this field has never earned you any profit, and nothing grew on it. After we plowed, sowed, fertilized, pruned, and irrigated the field for one year, we enabled it to produce only one *kur* of wheat."

Reb Shimon bar Yochai concludes, "This is the same defense the Jewish nation says to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. They will say, 'Master of the world, you know that the *yetzer hara* lures us to sin. As it states (*Tehillim* 103), *כִּי הוּא יָדַע יִצְרוֹ*, 'Hashem knows our *yetzer hara*' and therefore, we have an excuse for our poor output."

Perhaps this is an example of Reb Shimon's new outlook on the Jewish people. When he and his son first left the cave, they couldn't understand anyone doing anything that isn't entirely *avodas Hashem*. But then they saw that Yidden love mitzvos. They saw their good side. Reb Shimon expressed that even if they produce little in the spiritual realm, it is also forgivable, because the King of the world gave us a very difficult 'field' to work with, and the *yetzer hara* lures us all the time to sin, so what can be

expected? We work very hard, we battle with the *yetzer hara* and after all of that, the produce is still little and few, but that is enough to free us from the judgment. כי הוא ידע יצרנו, because Hashem knows the *yetzer hara* that we are up against.

The Gemara (*Succah* 45:) states:

Reb Shimon bar Yochai said, "I can free all people from judgment [and they won't be punished for their sins]. If I add the merits of

my son, Reb Elazer, I can redeem people from judgment from the beginning of Creation until today. And if we take the merits of Yosam ben Uziyahu²⁸ along with us, we can redeem the entire world from judgment, from the day the world was created until the end of time."²⁹

The Chidushei HaRim *zy'a* said: Every year, on Lag b'Omer, Reb Shimon bar Yochai repeats his famous statement, "I can exempt the entire world

28. Rashi writes that Yosem ben Uziyahu "Was a tzaddik, more humble than other kings, and excelled in *kibud av*. About him it states (*Malachi* 1), בן יכבד אב, "a son honors his father." Because all the days that his father had *tzaraas* and Yosem judged the nation...he didn't place the crown on his head. He attributed all judgments that he ruled to his father."

29. יכול אני לפטור את העולם מן הדין is *roshei teivos* אל-הים, "I can redeem the entire world from judgment." Elokim is also the word of (Tehillim 67) למנוחה בנינו that kabbalist focus on, Lag b'Omer, after *sefiras ha'omer*.

This hints that on Lag b'Omer, even Elokim, Hashem's name for strict judgment, agrees to redeem the Jewish nation from the judgment.

from judgment and punishment!"³⁰

this claim, everyone is acquitted.³¹

How does Reb Shimon bar Yochai do this?

Teshuvah

Rashi writes: [Reb Shimon says], "I take their sins on myself. Thereby they are free from the judgment."

Reb Akiva Eiger *zt'l* (*Gilyon HaShas*) says that Reb Shimon saves us from sin because he proclaims that we have a "poor field" and we have a *yetzer hara* that disturbs us (as we quoted from *Avos d'Reb Nosson* 16), and therefore whatever we achieve is remarkable. With

Reb Yohonoson Eibshitz *zt'l* (*Yaaras Dvash* vol.2, 11) writes, "It is proper for every yirei shamayim to do teshuvah on Lag b'Omer because Reb Shimon's merit will help him purify himself. He shouldn't spend time this day with foolishness, which will be a tzaar for this tzaddik."

Rebbe Tzaddok HaCohen *zt'l* (*Tzikdas HaTzaddik* 127) writes, "The *Zohar* (*Chayei Sarah* 129) states

30. The Binyan Yehoshua says that Reb Shimon redeems solely those who are called ישראל. Therefore, everyone should seek to be a proper Yid, and then he will be redeemed from sin on Lag b'Omer.

31. The *Zohar* teaches, "Before Reb Shimon's *petirah*, he said, 'There are three courts in heaven: a *beis din* of 23 judges, of 71 judges, and there's a court where Hakadosh Baruch Hu rules, alone... Whoever is judged in Hashem's court will certainly be deemed innocent. In the other courts, some of the judges will say וְכַאֲ, merit, and some will say חַיִּיב, guilty. But by Hakadosh Baruch Hu there is pure good, *chesed* and compassion. As it states (*Tehillim* 130:4), בִּי עֲמֵךְ הַפְּלִיחָה, 'Atonement is with You...'"

that when a person, even a big rasha, does *teshuvah*, he rises up to the highest levels. I heard that Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa zt'l said that this is all in the merit of Reb Shimon bar Yochai. He accomplished with his toil in *avodas Hashem*" that a *baal teshuvah* should reach the highest levels.

There was a *bachur* who was falling spiritually. Many *mechanchim* (educators) spoke with the *bachur*, but they couldn't stop his descent. Rebbe Shlomke Zvhil zt'l said he wants to speak with the *bachur*. People told him, "It isn't worth the Rebbe's time. So many people tried and failed..."

But Rebbe Shlomke tried. He told the *bachur*, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu has immense *nachas ruach* from a Yid when he battles with the *yetzer hara*, even if he loses the fight. Hashem enjoys the Yid's attempts. He enjoys watching him put up a fight against the

yetzer hara. Hashem has more pleasure from the Yid's skirmish than He derives pleasure from the *malachim*.

"The *yetzer hara* is called מלך זקן וכסיל, an old, foolish king. I request one thing from you. Don't make your *yetzer hara* king. When a king decrees something, everyone must listen immediately. I request that you don't listen immediately. When he asks for something, push it off for later..."

The *bachur* followed this advice, and he did *teshuvah*. He became from the respected Yidden of Yerushalayim.

Like Yom Kippur

Someone described the Lag b'Omer experience in Meron to the Ruzhiner zt'l as follows: "Inside, by the tzion, it is like Yom Kippur, and outside, in the courtyard, it is like Simchas

Torah." The Ruzhiner praised this description.³²

There are sources that compare Lag b'Omer to Yom Kippur.

The sefirah of Lag b'Omer is הור שבהור. The Gemara (Brachos 58.) says that the Beis HaMikdash is called הור.³³ Apparently, הור שבהור is the Kodesh Kadoshim. On Lag b'Omer, הור שבהור, we come to the Kodesh Kadoshim, as the Cohen Gadol does on Yom Kippur.

The Sar Shalom of Belz was speaking about the greatness of Lag b'Omer,

and his son, Reb Zundel zt'l, said that Lag b'Omer is like Yom Kippur. His father said that he is correct.

The Chasam Sofer (Drashos vol.2 280.) also writes that Lag b'Omer is like Yom Kippur. His words are kabalistic, but here is a few of the ideas: He writes that הור שבהור represents Keser, which represents Yom Kippur. And the Chasam Sofer zt'l writes, "Lag b'Omer, spelled out is זקן למ"ד גימ"ל is gematriya, which represents...Yom Kippur."

32. Rebbe Shlomke Zvhiler zt'l said (ברוך צחות) that all yomim tovim are alluded to in the celebration of Lag b'Omer in Meron. Many sefardim have a custom to slaughter sheep near the tzion. This reminisces the korban Pesach. The mountains that surround the tzion remind us of Shavuot (when Hashem gave the Torah on Har Sinai). And the tents that people camp in around the *tzion* remind us of Succos.

Based on the description that was told to the Ruzhiner, we can add to the list two more holidays that are experienced in Meron, on Lag b'Omer: Yom Kippur and Simchas Torah.

33. The words of the Gemara are: תנא משמיה דרבי עקיבא לך ה' הגדולה זו קריעת ים סוף והגבורה זו מכת בכורות והתפארת זו מתן תורה והנצח זו ירושלים וההוד זו בית המקדש

On Yom Kippur we become pure and clean from our sins and this happens on Lag b'Omer as well. As the Beis Aharon writes הצדיקים במעשיהם מוככין את ישראל ור' שמעון בר יוחאי מוכך גופן של ישראל לעולם, "Tzaddikim, with their good deeds, purify Bnei Yisrael, and Reb Shimon bar Yochai purifies Bnei Yisrael always."³⁴

Rebbe Yehoshua of Kaminka zt'l taught:

Aharon had the attribute of הוד. On Yom Kippur, he went to the Beis HaMikdash, which is also הוד. Therefore, הוד שבהוד is the holiness of Yom Kippur.

Chazal (Bava Kama 9) say, הידור מצוה עד שליש. This means, when one performs a mitzvah, it is recommended that he pay a third more for the mitzvah than its minimal price, so he can

buy a more beautiful mitzvah. As Rashi explains, "If he finds two sifrei Torah for sale, and one is more beautiful than the other, he should add a third more money and buy the more beautiful one. As it states (Shabbos 133:) זה א"ל ואגורו, do beautiful mitzvos before Hashem. Make a beautiful sefer Torah, buy a beautiful lulav, a beautiful talis, and beautiful tzitzis." The Sar Shalom of Belz zt'l asked, Hashem keeps the entire Torah (see Brachos 6). How does He keep the concept of adding a third onto the mitzvos?

The answer is, a Yid does 2/3rds of his fight against the yetzer hara, and Hashem completes for him the final third end of the battle. Because the Gemara (Succah 52:) states, יצרו של אדם מתגבר עליו כל יום ומבקש להמיתו ואלמלא הקב"ה עוזרו אינו יכל לו

34. Reb Naftali Katz zt'l writes (*Siddur Beis Rachel*) that singing Bar Yochai purifies the *neshamah*, even for those who don't know the secrets of this song.

"The yetzer hara attacks a person every day and seeks to kill him. If Hakadosh Baruch Hu wouldn't help, he wouldn't win the battle." Hashem helps him by completing the final third part of the battle.

The Sar Shalom added: Sefiras Ha'omer is 49 days, and on the 33rd day, two-thirds of the omer has passed. During the first two-thirds of the omer, we counted the omer, and we strove to purify ourselves. On Lag b'Omer Hashem completes the mission and we become totally clean from all sins.

Rebbe Shalom Kaminka zt'l and the Tzanzer Rav zt'l were present at the Sar Shalom's Lag b'Omer tish, when the Sar Shalom taught this lesson and for the next forty-five minutes, they thought about this vort with immense hislahavus. Throughout this time, the Tzanzer Rav leaned on the table, with his two hands over his forehead, and Rebbe

Shalom of Kaminka cried copiously.

Tzedakah and Chesed

The *Zohar* (*Beshalach* 61) tells that Reb Yitzchok was traveling and he met a pauper soliciting tzedakah. Reb Yitzchak replied, "I only have a half *mah*. How would this help you? What could you buy with a half *mah*?"

The poor man replied, "I also have a half *mah*. Together I will have one *mah*, which is sufficient to buy a loaf of bread for my family."

Reb Yitzchok gave him the half *mah*.

That night, in a dream, Reb Yitzchok saw himself drowning in a raging ocean, and he was shouting and praying to Hashem for a salvation. Suddenly, he saw his holy rebbe, Reb Shimon bar Yochai, was standing nearby on dry land. Reb Shimon bar Yochai put out his hand to

him, but Reb Yitzchak was too far away, and he couldn't reach.

The pauper (whom he helped earlier that day) arrived, and he bridged their hands. In the merit that Reb Yitzchok helped the pauper put together the two half-*mah*, the pauper came and connected their hands, and Reb Yitzchok was brought to safety.

When Reb Yitzchok awoke, he said the *pasuk*, 'אשרי משכיל אל דל ביום רעה ימלטוה' "Fortunate are those who pay attention to the needs of the poor. On a bad day, Hashem will save him."

Rebbe Moshe of Savran zy'a taught that this dream occurred when Reb Yitzchok was ill, which is another episode stated in the *Zohar*.

The *Zohar* (*Idra Kadisha*) tells:

Reb Yitzchok was very ill, almost about to die. Reb Shimon came to visit him, and Reb Shimon asked,

"Did you see your father?" He was referring to his father who was already in Gan Eden. If Reb Yitzchak saw his father, that meant he was about to be brought up to heaven.

Reb Shimon said, "If you saw your father, there is nothing I can do to save you."

Reb Yitzchok replied that he didn't see his father.

Reb Shimon bar Yochai decreed, "Whoever is in this room may stay. But no one else may enter." This was a technique, to prevent the *malach hamaves* from entering the room.

Reb Shimon said to Hashem, "I need Reb Yitzchok. He helps me in our studies of Kabbalah."

Heaven replied, "Reb Yitzchok will live, but when Reb Shimon bar Yochai will die, Reb Yitzchok will leave the world together with him."

On the last day of Reb Shimon's life, a spiritual fire surrounded him. Reb Shimon called Reb Yitzchok and told him to prepare for his death. Then Reb Yitzchok's father appeared, and Reb Shimon and Reb Yitzchak returned their *neshamos* to heaven.

When Reb Yitzchak was ill (the first time) Reb Shimon prevented the *malach hamaves* from coming in, and he prayed for him, and that saved his life. Rebbe Moshe of Savran *zt'l* added that it was also the mitzvah of tzedakah that Reb Yitzchak performed, which saved him (as stated in the other story of the *Zohar*, which we mentioned).

The *Zohar* (vol.2 198.) states, "Fortunate is the person who meets up with a pauper. This meeting is a gift from Hakadosh Baruch

Hu..." because when you do kindness with a pauper, you earn the better half of the deal. Your tzedakah will protect you and grant you many blessings.³⁵

When Yaakov was saved from Eisav, he expressed his gratitude to Hashem by doing something for society. There is a *machlokes* in the Gemara exactly what he established – either a new coin, a bathhouse, or a marketplace – but he did something to show his appreciation to Hashem.

When Reb Shimon bar Yochai was saved from the Romans, and was able to leave his cave, he sought to follow in Yaakov Avinu's ways and to do something that will help people. (In particular, he wanted to do something for Teveria, because when he left the cave, his skin

35. The Bnei Yissaschar (*Iyar* 3:1) teaches, the 49 days of the *sefirah* are *gematriya* ל"ט טוב, a good heart. Lag b'Omer is the beginning of the final 17 days of the *omer*, the *gematriya* of ט"ז.

was very sore, and he was cured in the hot baths of Teveria.)³⁶

He asked people what was needed.

People told him there's an area in Teveria where there are random graves, and no one knows exactly where the graves are. This causes *cohanim* who want to pass to take a long route around the entire area. They requested from Reb Shimon that he find a way to help the *cohanim*, so they don't have to make this long detour.

The first thing Reb Shimon checked into is whether the graves in the

area were placed there randomly, or whether it was once a cemetery. (If the grounds proved to be a cemetery, there was nothing Reb Shimon could do to enable the *cohanim* to pass).

An elderly person testified that there was never a cemetery in the area. The few graves that were there were dug randomly, not as though it was a graveyard.

The old man testified that Reb Yochanan ben Zakai planted *turmos* beans of *terumah* in the area, which proves that it wasn't a cemetery. (It would be

36. Reb Pinchas ben Yair heard that his son-in-law, Reb Shimon, was freed and he went to see him. He brought him to a bathhouse, and saw all the wounds that were on his body. Reb Pinchas ben Yair cried when he saw this and his salty tears burned the wounds even more. Reb Pinchas ben Yair said, "Woe to me that I see you in this condition!"

Reb Shimon replied, "You are fortunate that you see me this way." Because previously, when Reb Shimon bar Yochai would have a question, Reb Pinchas ben Yair answered it in twelve ways. Now, when Reb Pinchas ben Yair had a question in Torah, Reb Shimon bar Yochai answered it in twenty-four ways.

forbidden to plant terumah in a cemetery).

After clarifying that it wasn't a cemetery, Reb Shimon had to discover where the graves were, to enable the *cohanim* to pass through.

He took *turmos* beans; spread them out over the area. Wherever there was a grave, the body moved up, which softened the earth. Reb Shimon then marked the soft areas as areas whereh the *cohanim* couldn't go, and he marked the hardened areas as pure, and the *cohanim* can pass.

This is what we say in the song of Lag b'Omer, *טוהר את עיר מבריה*, "he purified the city Teveria..."

Emunah

The Midrash (*Bereishis Rabba*, 79) states that after thirteen years of being in the cave, Reb Shimon bar Yochai and Reb Elazar came out and sat down at

the entrance. They still weren't certain that it was safe for them to leave.

They saw a hunter, hunting birds.

[The hunter probably thought that his success was entirely dependent on his talent. When he succeeded, he was proud of himself, because he did well. When he missed and the bird escaped, he rebuked himself for not being better at his vocation. But Reb Shimon knew that there was more going on.] Reb Shimon could hear the *bas kol*'s announcements from heaven. When the *bas kol* said *דימום*, free, it meant the bird would escape. When he heard the *bas kol* say *מפקולא*, caught, this meant the bird will be captured.

This episode taught Reb Shimon that he can leave the cave, and he doesn't have to be afraid of the Roman Empire. He said, "Even a bird isn't caught if

it isn't destined. Even more so the life of a human being."

He understood that the Romans won't catch him if it isn't destined from Heaven. With that

awareness in mind, he and his son left the cave.

Because everything is destined from heaven. One's successes and losses, and everything else that happens to man is destined from Above.

WE ARE YOUR
ONE-STOP-SHOP
TO MARKETING SUCCESS



**WE ARE A ONE-STOP ADDRESS FOR ALL YOUR
MARKETING, GRAPHIC DESIGN, PRINTING & MAILING NEEDS.**

We take care of all details from start to finish - under one roof.



MARKETING



DESIGN



PRINT



MAIL