

## SPECIAL DAYS IN IYAR

**Nisan 30/May 5/Sunday**  
**First Day Rosh Chodesh**

**Iyar 1/May 6/Monday**  
**Second Day Rosh Chodesh**  
Plague of Blood. (Seder Olam, 3)

Foundation laid for **Second Beis HaMikdash**,  
3391 [537 BCE] (Ezra 3:8)

**Iyar 2/May 7/Tuesday**  
Birthday of our holy Master and Teacher **R. Shmuel**, "**The Rebbe MaHaRaSh**", fourth Chabad Rebbe, on Tiferes SheB'Tiferes of the Omer, 5593 [1833]. "His life and work is best summarized by his saying, "The world says if you can't go under an obstacle, you have to go over, and I say —go over in the first place." The simple meaning of this is that in Torah and Mitzvos we have to "go over in the first place": not make calculations, and when that's not enough, and you have to go above measure and limit, you go "over" —the Rebbe MaHaRaSh said "go over in the first place", in a way that's above calculations and limits." [Sichah, Tishrei 13, 5739].

**Shlomoh HaMelech** began building the First Beis HaMikdash, 2928 [833 BCE].  
Yartzeit of **R. Shmuel Shmelke of Nikolsburg**, student of the Mezeritcher Magid, author of Divrei Shmuel, and Nazir HaShem, 5538 [1778].

" . . . [The Alter Rebbe presented his Hilchos Tzitzis and Hilchos Pesach] to those two golden illuminators, the laudable brothers, the famous Geonim of highest holiness, pillars of the world, our Master R. Shmelke, and his brother, our Master R. Pinchas . . . they praised it and extolled it very, very much [and encouraged him to finish the Shulchan Aruch]" [Introduction of the author's sons to the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch].

Yartzeit of **R. Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk**, author of Pri HaAretz, a leading student of the Mezeritcher Magid, 5548 [1788].

From 1773 until 1777 he was the leader of the Chasidim of Russia and Lithuania. After the Magid's passing, the Alter Rebbe accepted R. Mendel, his former colleague, as his Rebbe. In 1777 R. Mendel moved to Eretz Yisroel (the Alter Rebbe had wanted to go with him) and insisted that the Alter Rebbe become leader of the Chasidim.



The Friediker Rebbe initiated the writing of the **Sefer Torah for receiving Moshiach**, 5702 [1942].

**Iyar 3/May 8/Wednesday**  
Yartzeit of **R. Yehudah Leib Pistiner of Kolomei**, student of the Baal Shem Tov, 5505 [1745].

**Iyar 4/May 9/Thursday**  
Yartzeit of **R. Yosef Teumim**, author of Pri Megadim, on the Shulchan Aruch, 5552/1792

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### **Iyar 5/May 10/Friday**

". . . The Early Authorities established, when the Beis HaMikdash stood, to teach publicly the laws of any holiday thirty days before, that is . . . from Iyar 5 and on, to study the laws of Shavuot . . . Because all who live in Eretz Yisrael must bring three Korbanos on the holiday, and every Korban must be clean of blemish and other disqualifications. The Chachamim enacted teaching the laws to remind the people of the holiday, so they wouldn't forget to prepare animals fit for the Korban, within thirty days . . ."[Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim: 429:1]

### **Iyar 6/May 11/Shabbos**

Yartzeit of **R. Levi b. Gershon (RaLbAG)**, philosopher, astronomer, and commentator on Chumash, 5104 [1344].

Yartzeit of **R. Leibish of Mezeritch**, student of the Baal Shem Tov, 5535 [1775].

### **Iyar 7/May 12/Sunday**

**"Day Of Yerushalayim Wall Dedication"**, once a holiday (Megilas Taanis, 2). Nechemiah dedicated new walls around Yerushalayim, 3426 [335 BCE] (Nechemiah, 12:27).

Years later the Jewish defenders of Yerushalayim surrendered these walls to the Romans on this day in 3830 [70 CE]. (Josephus, The Jewish Wars, 5:7).

### **Iyar 8/May 13/Monday**

**Jewish community of Speyer** was massacred in the First Crusade, 4856 [1096], commemorated in the Kinah "Mi Yitein Roshi Mayim", we say on Tisha BiAv.

### **Iyar 10/ May 15/Wednesday**

The **Aron HaBris** was captured by the Pelishtim. Yartzeits of Chofni and Pinchas, who died in the war, and of their father Eli, the Kohen Gadol and Pinchas' wife who died upon hearing the news of the Aron, (Shmuel I, 4) (Megilas Taanis).

Yartzeit of **R. Yitzchak Alfasi (RiF)**, codifier of the Gemara, author of Sefer HaHalachos, 4863 [1103].

". . . the RiF, the Rambam, and the RoSh, are the pillars of Jewish Law, which all of Israel bases itself on." [Introduction of the Beis Yosef to the Tur]

Yartzeit of **R. Meir Margolis of Lemberg**, author of responsa Meir Nesivim, student of the Baal Shem Tov, 5550 [1790].

### **Iyar 12/May 17/Friday**

Yartzeit of **R. Yeshayaha of Yanov**, student of the Mezeritcher Magid, compiler of Tzavaas HaRiVaSh, [one of the first collections of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings], 5554 [1794]. In 1796 it was burned in the streets of Vilna; the Alter Rebbe wrote a letter to the Chasidim of Vilna about this [printed in Beis Rebbe, chapter 12] and wrote a letter [Tanya, Igeres HaKodesh, chapter 25] defending its ideas.

". . . The compilers did not know how to determine the exact phraseology . . . for the Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory would say Divrei Torah in Yiddish, not in Hebrew . . . but the intent is absolutely true". [Tanya, Igeres HaKodesh, 26].

He also compiled Or Torah, of the Mezeritcher Magid.

### **Iyar 13/May 18/Shabbos**

Yartzeit of **R. Nesanel Weil of Prague**, author of Korban Nesanel, commentary on the RoSh, 5529 [1769].

Yartzeit of **R. Yisroel Aryeh Leib Schneersohn**, of blessed memory, brother of the Rebbe, 5712 [1952]. He is buried in Tzefas.

### **Iyar 14/May 19/ Sunday**

#### **Pesach Sheini**

We don't say Tachnun. We eat Matzah today to commemorate Pesach Sheini.

The last day the Jews ate the Matzos they took out of Mitzrayim, which had in them the taste of the Mon, 2488 [1313 BCE] (Rashi,

Shemos 16:35) and thus, another reason for the custom of eating Matzah. [Sidur of R. Yaakov Emden].

"The theme of Pesach Sheni is that it's never too late. It's always possible to put things right. Even if one was impure or far away, and even when the impurity was deliberate, nonetheless, he can correct it". [HaYom Yom, Iyar 14].

Second imprisonment of the **Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe**, in Lubavitch, 5662 [1902].

Yartzeit of **R. Meir Baal HaNes**, 3881 [121] is observed in Teveria.

### **Iyar 15/May 20/Monday**

Hashem promised the Jewish people that they will receive Mannah from Heaven.

### **Iyar 16/May 21/ Tuesday**

First day the **Mon** fell in the desert; first evening the quail fell to supply Bnei Yisroel with meat, 2448 [1313 BCE]. That year this day fell out on a Sunday. (Shemos 16:1 Rashi)

Moshe Rabeinu composed the first Brachah of Birkas HaMazon, 2448 [1313 BCE], (Berachos 48b).

Yartzeit of **R. Meir (MaHaRaM) of Lublin**, commentator on Gemara, 5376 [1616].

### **Iyar 17/May 22/Wednesday**

#### **Erev Lag BaOmer**

No Tachnun at Minchah

Yartzeit of **R. Yechezkel Landau of Prague**, author of Noda BiYehudah, 5553 [1793].

Yartzeit of **R. Moshe Chaim Efraim of Sadlikov**, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, author of Degel Machaneh Efraim, 5560 [1800].

### **Iyar 18/May 23/Thursday**

#### **Lag BaOmer**

We don't say Tachnun.

The students of **R. Akiva** stopped dying.

Yartzeit of **R. Shimon Bar Yochai**.

" . . . There's a custom to eat carob, because R. Shimon Bar Yochai, hiding from the Romans in a cave for thirteen years, survived on carobs from a tree outside the cave" [Sichah, Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5742]

" . . . By the Mittlerer Rebbe Lag BaOmer was one of the special Yom Tovs. They would go out to the fields . . . at that time they would see many miracles, mostly about [having] children. The whole year they would look forward for Lag BaOmer..." [HaYom Yom, Iyar 18]

Yartzeit of **R. Moshe Iserles, (the ReMA)**, author of the Mapah, on the Shulchan Aruch, the definitive authority of Ashkenazic Halachic practice, 5333 [1573].

" . . . We follow the Shulchan Aruch, wherever the ReMA doesn't disagree " [Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch I:256:6]

" . . . The Gaon and Kabbalist, R. Moshe Iserles of Cracow, in his Sefer Toras HaOlah, explains in detail all aspects of the Beis HaMikdash below and in the higher worlds, and in the powers of Man. The early Chasidim, those of great intellect, would study the Sefer Toras HaOlah as one of the Sefarim of divine comprehension and service" [Likutei Diburim, p. 973]

Tenaim of **Rebbitzin Sheina**, youngest daughter of the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe with **R. Menachen Mendel Horenstein**, grandson of the Rebbe MaHaRaSh, 5692 [1932].

**Iyar 19/May 24/Friday**

Yartzeit of **R. Meir of Rotenburg**, teacher of the RoSh, outstanding Talmudic authority of his generation, author of commentary on the Gemara, and responsa. He died in the fortress of Eisenheim, 5053 [1293]. Held for ransom, he refused to be redeemed, saying it would put every rabbi in Europe in danger of being kidnapped.

Yartzeit of **R. Menachem Mendel of Rymanov**, student of R. Elimelech of Lyzensk, 5575 [1815].

**Iyar 20/May 25/Shabbos**

Yartzeit of **R. Mordechai of Czernobyl**, 5598 [1838].

**Iyar 21/May 26/Sunday**

The previous Lubavitcher Rebbe founded **Kfar Chabad**, in Eretz Yisrael, 5709 [1949].

**Iyar 22/May 27/Monday**

In the year of Yetziyas Mitzrayim this date was the first Shabbos the Yidden kept in the Midbar, they did not collect the Mannah on Shabbos, but collected two portions on Friday.

**Iyar 23/May 28/ Tuesday**

**Jews of Worms** were massacred by Crusaders, 4856 [1096], commemorated in the Kinah "Mi Yitein Roshi Mayim", we say on Tisha BiAv.

**Iyar 26/May 31/ Friday**

Yartzeit of **R. Saadiah Gaon**, head of the Yeshivah of Sura, Talmudist and philosopher, author of Emunot VeDeiot, first philosophical presentation of Judaism, 4702 [942].

Yartzeit of **R. Moshe Chaim Luzatto**, Kabbalist, author of Mesilas Yesharim, Choker UMekubal, KeLaCh Pischei Chochmah, and other Kabbalistic works cited in the Chasidus of the Tzemach Tzedek, 5507 [1747].

Yartzeit of **R. Yitzchok Aizik HaLevi Epstein of Homel**, author of Chanah Ariel, and Shnei HaMeoros, one of the greatest students of the Alter Rebbe, Chasid of the Mittlerer Rebbe, and Tzemach Tzedek, 5617 [1857].

**Iyar 27/June 1/ Shabbos**

**Shabbos Mevarchim Sivan**

The only Shabbos Mevarchim on which we DO say "Av HaRachamin": it was written in response to the destruction of Jewish communities during the First Crusade, throughout Sivan of 1096.

Once a holiday, "The Day The Crowns Were Removed From Yehudah And Yerushalayim", a day of Greek idol worship, eradicated by the Chashmonaim, (Megilas Taanis, 2).

Yartzeit of **R. Shlomoh Zalman of**

**Kopust**, grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek, son of R. Yehudah Leib, author of Magen Avos, 5660 [1900] After his father's passing in 1867, he became Rebbe in Kopust..

**Iyar 28/June 2/Sunday**

**Yerushalayim** was liberated, including Har HaBayis and the Kosel HaMaaravi, in the Six Day War, 5728 [1967].

The **RaMBaM** celebrated this day as a Yom Tov: he found the Sefer Torah written by Ezra HaSofer and saw that it exactly paralleled the Parshah divisions he had copied for the Mishneh Torah, from the Sefer Torah in Egypt.

Yartzeit of **R. Yitzchok of Corbeil**, author of Sefer Mitzvos Katan (SeMaK), 5040 [1280].

**Iyar 29/June 3/Monday**

Yartzeit of Shmuel HaNavi 2882 [878 BCE]. (Megilas Taanis).

**Sivan 1/June 4/Tuesday**

**Rosh Chodesh Sivan**

# Beis Iyar / May 7 ~ The Birthday of the Rebbe Maharash

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After the fire in Lubavitch in 5592 (1832), though the Tzemach Tzedek's house wasn't burnt, he decided to purchase a large lot and build a house and Beis Medrash. Count Lubomirsky ordered his manager to provide all the wood and had the beams brought to the site and provided the labor for free.

The Tzemach Tzedek wanted to move in before Shavuos and the Rebbetzin wanted to give birth there. When labor began, she went to the new home. There were no furnishings, just the Pesach dishes. They brought straw and she laid it on the large wooden Shmurah flour sifter.

The Tzemach Tzedek hurried to his new home and remained until the birth. He asked his children to say Tehillim. He asked the midwife to immerse in the Mikvah before the birth and to receive the child in a special white cloth he provided. On Iyar 2, Tiferes SheB'Tiferes, one hundred years after the Ba'al Shem Tov's revelation, the Rebbe Maharash was born.

On the eighth day, the Tzemach Tzedek asked that Shachris be early. By ten in the morning the family gathered, with R' Chaim Avraham, the Alter Rebbe's son.

In the early afternoon the Tzemach Tzedek was still in his room. R' Chaim Avraham sighed, "The Rebbe is certainly involved with finer guests than us."

A half hour passed. The Tzemach Tzedek came out holding a hanker-chief. His eyes were red from tears; he was very serious. "The Bris will be today," he announced. He waited for a moment and returned to his room.

R' Chaim Avraham rested his head in his hands, deep in thought. The Tzemach Tzedek's children discussed Torah. The Rebbetzin wanted someone to ask the Tzemach Tzedek about the delay, but R' Chaim Avraham held the messenger back.

After three, the Tzemach Tzedek came out again and joyously told his guests to eat - the Bris would yet be. He returned to his room. At four he returned to the guests and told them not to daven Minchah yet, the Bris would be very soon. He returned to his room, left, and went to the Rebbetzin's room to discuss the child's

name with her. He announced that the baby should be prepared for the Bris.

The Tzemach Tzedek was the Sandek. The baby cried and the Tzemach Tzedek took his left hand from under the pillow and patted him on the head, the baby stopped crying. Immediately after the brochos of the Bris the Tzemach Tzedek said to start Minchah. The chazzan was the Mittlerer Rebbe's son, R' Menachem Nachum, the Tzemach Tzedek's brother-in-law. The Seudah was after Minchah.

During the meal, R' Yehudah Leib asked the Tzemach Tzedek the source of the name Shmuel. "Perhaps," he asked "for Shmuel Hanavi?"

The Tzemach Tzedek said it was for a water carrier in Polotzk, and a Chacham is greater than a Navi.

[Sefer Hatoldos/ Rebbe Maharash]

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*The following is an excerpt from the Rebbe's Reshimos of 17 MarCheshvan 5693 (1932), in which he records the previous Rebbe's accounts of the Rebbe Maharash, and his wife, Rebbitzin Rivka.*

"The Rebbe Maharash greatly honored his wife, the Rebbitzin Rivka, and she showed him tremendous respect in return. For example, she never sat while he was standing.

The Rebbe Maharash would give money to his attendant, Reb Yosef Mordechai, for the household expenses, for the Rebbitzin Rivka did not tend to these matters. Whatever money was needed to buy wood, straw and so on, he would give to him and not to her.

He had her pay the salary for the children's teachers, but he did the accounting. I possess one year's income and expense account in his own handwriting.

Every six months, before the holidays (of Tishrei and Pesach), he would buy back her jewelry that she had mortgaged (to finance her projects of

providing dowries for poor brides, supporting Torah scholars, and the like.) There must have been some reason she financed these projects in this way, since she had enough money of her own to use for these purposes.

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The Rebbe Maharash used to go himself and test the children who learned in the classrooms surrounding the central courtyard in Lubavitch.

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The Tzemach Tzedek used to call his sons (and likewise his daughter Devorah Leah) into his study to consult with them on various matters. The Rebbe Maharash did not do this.

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It was the custom of all the Rebbes, from the Alter Rebbe on, to speak to their Rebbetzins after Minchah on the day before Rosh Hashanah, on their way to daven in the synagogue, to bless them and request their blessings. (By the way, the custom of reciting Psalms before the evening prayer of Rosh Hashanah is also very longstanding.)

On the day before his last Rosh Hashanah in this world (1882), the Rebbe Maharash went to see his wife, the Rebbitzin Rivka. After they spoke about the current outbreak of pogroms, he said to her: “My father (the Tzemach Tzedek) told me that the Divine decree has been broken, and that there will be no more physical pogroms. But there could still be spiritual decimation. Take care of the children.”

The Rebbitzin understood from this that he was telling her that he would soon pass away. She began to cry, saying that he would surely recover and they would together be able to care for their children.

He answered: “I have taken the severity of the decree upon myself (to expiate through my death). We will indeed be together, but from different worlds. I will ascend thirty-one spiritual steps, while you will ascend thirty-one physical steps. Don’t forget, my father assured you a long life.

My grandmother (Rebbitzin Rivka) told me all this in 1908. I didn’t understand what these “thirty-one physical steps” were until her passing, which occurred thirty-one years after this incident.

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When the Rebbe Maharash would travel, he would first go to the train station at Rudnia (which was the closest to Lubavitch). He would stay there a few minutes or a quarter of an hour, and visit his niece Fruma Zuckerman. If necessary, the train would wait for him.

Once, when he was visiting his niece, he asked for a cup of tea. He sent his coachman to the train station to tell the conductor he would not be traveling that day. He sent also a rider back to Lubavitch to tell the household not to worry, that he changed his mind and decided to embark on his journey the next day. So the train went ahead without him, and lo and behold, near Vitebsk there was an accident.

This incident did not become widely known, however, since we did not talk much about these kinds of stories out of fear of the government.

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On one occasion the Rebbe Maharash traveled out of Russia via Dvinsk, to the border town of Birballen. From Dvinsk, he was accompanied by a scholarly chassid by the name of Reb Yaakov Rashal. Reb Yaakov intended to get off the train when the Rebbe Maharash went to sleep that night, so he didn’t bring his tallis and tefillin with him. But the Rebbe told him: “Come with me as far as the border.” The Rebbe’s gabbaim, Reb Levik and Reb Pinye Leib, came too.

The Rebbe Maharash used to daven very early. He called Reb Yaakov Rashal into his compartment at 7:00 am. When he came in, the Rebbe was sitting with his eyes closed, smiling. Reb Yaakov stood, waiting. When the train reached the next station, a young, intelligent-looking man got on. The Rebbe’s compartment had six seats in it, and this young man sat down on one of them.

The Rebbe then opened his eyes and said to the young man: “What do you need to carry a dangerous item for? What’s in your pocket? Show me!”

When the young man heard this, he turned white. He took a revolver out of his pocket. The Rebbe took it from him and threw it out the window.

He then said to Reb Yaakov Rashal: “You haven’t davened yet. Take my tefillin and use them.” And he added: “but be careful not to think any stray

thoughts. This applies until one's last day." Reb Yaakov went out with the tefillin and davened.

When he later came back the Rebbe Maharash asked the young man if he would perhaps like to daven. The latter began to wail. The Rebbe patted him on the shoulder and said: "Someone who acts wickedly not of his own accord is not considered evil." Reb Yaakov found a tallis and tefillin for him.

When Reb Yaakov came again into the Rebbe's compartment, the Rebbe said to him: "King David said: 'If [G-d] will say thus, here am I.'" But one should in any case strive to be buried among Jews. Daven, and you can get off at the next station." The young man had already gotten off before this.

The Rebbe then delivered a short Chassidic discourse.

It became known later that the Maskilim had planned to assassinate the Rebbe Maharash, who fought them fiercely.

As for Reb Yaakov Rashal, in the years following the Rebbe Maharash's passing he followed (Rabbi Chaim Shneur Zalman of) Liadi, and later on (after the Rebbe Rashab began to assume various aspects of the leadership), he visited both Lubavitch and Liadi. Nonetheless, he was always considered a loyal Lubavitcher chassid. He had ups and downs in his business career, which took him as far as S. Petersburg. When he passed away, it was only through great effort that people succeeded in burying him in a Jewish cemetery.

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The Poritz of Batchkeckov in Vitebsk was a good hearted person and he provided the Jews on his estates with a livelihood. The poor Jews as well as the Rav, Chazan, Schochet and Melamdim were exempt from taxes. He provided free pasture for the poor.

As he became older and weaker he gave over the governing of his lands to his manager, an anti-semitic. A new priest arrived, also an anti-semitic. Jews could no longer earn a livelihood and the poor had to pay taxes. Most of the Jews were Chasidim of the Rebbe Maharash. They went to Lubavitch regularly and received the Rebbe's brochos, but no one wanted to tell the Rebbe

about the Poritz's manager.

A chosid, Reb Shmuel, still dealt with the Poritz himself. He had a good name as a trustworthy businessman and was learned, additionally he gave Tzedakah with a generous hand. In Yechidus, the Rebbe Maharash asked him about the Jews in his vicinity. Reb Shmuel said things were worsening from day to day. The Rebbe said Dr. Berteson told him that the poritz was very ill. Why didn't any of the Chassidim tell him?

He thought and said, "Go home, tell the poritz this: I know he is critically ill and the doctors have given up hope. Let him help the Jews in his cities, villages, inns and estates, and Hashem Yisborach will give him one month of healthy life for each Jewish family." R' Shmuel wanted to see the poritz but it seemed impossible. One summer day the doctors said that the poritz should be driven about in the fresh air. The poritz lay down (he couldn't sit up) for the ride. R' Shmuel saw this, and it hurt him to see how ill the old poritz was. The poritz asked R' Shmuel to ride with him.

R' Shmuel told him the message from the Rebbe. The poritz asked R' Shmuel to make a census of the Jews in the city and outlying areas. The list should be kept secret. In the city there were one hundred and sixty families and tens of families in the outlying areas. The poritz agreed to the terms that the Rebbe had outlined. The Jews regained their livelihood and the poritz returned to good health.

In the poritz's garden grew Lulavim and Hadasim. In 1881 he sent some to the Rebbe Maharash for Sukkos.

In 1894 R' Shmuel told the story to the Friediker Rebbe. He said the poritz is very old now and for fourteen years has been healthy, never sick or weak. Last week he felt poorly, and told me I must go to the grave of the Rebbe Maharash and tell him the poritz feels weak and according to his census he still has one year and seven months to live and the Rebbe should fulfill his promise.

*Sefer Hasichos 5703, Acharon Shel Pesach*

*Translated and adapted from Reshima 131 by Rabbi Moshe Wisniefsky*

How are R' Akiva and R' Shimon bar Yochai connected with Lag B'Omer?

## **Rabbi Akiva**

Rabbi Akiva was the son of Yosef, a convert. Born into poverty after the destruction of the Second Beis Hamikdash, he tended flocks for Kalba Savua, who was as rich and cultured as Akiva was poor and ignorant.

Kalba Savua's daughter Rachel heard of Akiva, who was known for his fine and gentle character. She said she would marry him if he would go to study in the Yeshiva. He agreed.

Kalba Savua disowned his daughter. Rachel, who had known only comfort and luxury, moved into Akiva's hut.

Akiva promised her, "One day I will buy you a golden brooch with Yerushalayim carved into it." That promise, made by the illiterate shepherd, was fulfilled years later by the Sage whose knowledge laid the foundation for the whole Mishkan.

He also kept his promise to learn Torah, but he was overcome by doubt. Once, he came to a spring. In the pool beneath the spring, he noticed that where the water splashed onto the stone, was a round smooth hole.

"Who cut the hole in the stone?" he asked. "The water made the hole by trickling onto it year after year. Torah is like water. If my brain is like stone, if the Torah trickles down on me, some of it must eventually penetrate."

At Yavneh, Akiva entered even greater poverty. Rachel, barely able to support herself, sent him the money she obtained by selling her long hair.

Twenty-four years later, Rabbi Akiva returned home with twenty-four thousand disciples. People lined the street to honor him. Rachel pushed her way through to approach him. His attendants leaped forward to prevent her, but Rabbi Akiva restrained them, "All you have learned from me and everything I know, belongs to her."

## **Rabbi Shimon**

R' Shimon was wanted by the Romans for the crime

of criticizing the Emperor, punishable by death. R' Shimon fled with his son, R' Elazer, to a cave in the desert near Teveriah. They studied there for thirteen years, until Eliyahu HaNavi came to tell them the Emperor was dead.

The Torah they studied was the basis of Kabbalah.

During the Omer period, several thousand of R' Akiva's disciples perished in a plague visited upon them because of their failure to treat each other with complete respect. The plague continued until the thirty-third day of the Omer. Therefore, during the Omer, Jews mourn, avoiding music, marriage and festivities, among other restrictions. On the thirty-third day, the restraints are lifted, and we celebrate.

Lag B'Omer is also the Yartzeit of R' Shimon bar Yochai.

Before he died, R' Shimon commanded that the anniversary of his death be a day of rejoicing, to commemorate the day he was reunited with his Creator.

On Lag B'Omer, thousands of Jews go to R' Shimon's grave at Miron, to celebrate.

We tell children about R' Akiva and R' Shimon to bring them to a love and mastery of Torah.

A child could respond: "Am I smart enough to be like R' Akiva, or even one of his students? If my father were like R' Akiva, maybe I could learn something from him."

On the other hand, the father says, "I'm too old. Besides, R' Shimon lived in a cave for thirteen years, but I have to make a living. I don't have time to learn Torah."

R' Akiva and R' Shimon provided the answer.

R' Akiva's father was a convert to Judaism. He was poor. He was ignorant. He couldn't give his son a Jewish education. It was up to the son to start from scratch.

Thus, it is up to every Jew to break with past weaknesses and limitations and forge a new path.

R' Akiva was forty before he could read or write. But it is never too late to start learning. We all want to see



a miracle. But R' Akiva was inspired by nature, not by a miracle. He saw a stone with a hole in it, carved and smoothed by a trickle of water. From this he learned the power to achieve any goal through diligent and continuous application.

Most of us don't have enough time to devote to learning. The Sages said of R' Shimon that "the Torah was his livelihood," because he devoted the same time and energy to the Torah that a businessman would devote to his business.

This teaches us that even if we have only a short time each day to devote to Torah study, during that time we have to devote the same energy, attention and concentration to our learning as we would to our business. During that time, nothing exists outside of Torah: no telephone, no disturbances, no responsibilities and no distractions. That time has to become for us like the cave of R' Shimon bar Yochai, in which nothing else matters but the Torah.

In this way, may we become worthy of the legacy left to us by R' Akiva and R' Shimon, and thus hasten the revelation of Moshiach speedily in our days.

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## A Lesson in Unity

Only after true Achdus and unity could B'nei Yisrael receive the Torah. But people are different. Each has his/her own way. How can we experience true unity?

The answer is provided by Lag B'Omer.

The historic significance of Lag B'Omer dates back to the time of the Mishnah. Rabbi Akiva's students were struck by a plague, and 24,000 died between Pesach and Shavuot. The plague stopped on Lag B'Omer, which came to be celebrated as a day of life and brotherhood.

The Talmud says the students were punished because they didn't respect each other. How are we to understand this? Lack of respect is inappropriate and unbecoming for any students, especially Torah scholars. It would certainly be out of character for students of Rabbi Akiva, who taught "Loving of another Jew is the basis of the whole Torah."

There must be more to this. Certainly the students of Rabbi Akiva must have respected each other.

Indeed, it was their love and concern that created the problem.

The dynamic, broad, and creative force of Rabbi Akiva's teachings raised a diverse group of students that represented the full spectrum of Yiddishkeit.

They were all dedicated students of Rabbi Akiva, but they were not a monolithic group.

Rabbi Akiva allowed each student to develop his own approach to serving Hashem.

There was room in Rabbi Akiva's Torah for diversity of opinion and ideology in a Halachic framework. Within Torah, there are many valid ways of serving Hashem. One Jew may emphasize love of Hashem, the other fear of Hashem. One person serves Hashem through joy, the other through study and meditation.

Rabbi Akiva taught his students to believe in their convictions. He exemplified absolute devotion to his beliefs, as he said when he was martyred by the Romans, "All my life I wanted to serve Hashem fully and make this sacrifice..."

Rabbi Akiva's students emulated his dedication. But they had become so obsessed by their own ways, they had no tolerance for a different perspective. Each student felt his way was the only one.

They believed strongly in Ahavas Yisroel. They loved their fellow to the extent that they couldn't rest until their friends shared their perspective. They tried to change their opinions so they too could see the truth they perceived.

This misplaced idealism was their undoing. They didn't understand that Rabbi Akiva's dedication was tempered by a peaceful tolerance and respect for another's view. The Talmud says Rabbi Akiva was able to enter the Heavenly paradise of Torah study in peace, and then also to exit in peace.

Lag B'Omer celebrates the triumph of brotherly love and unity over death and division. "Unity" doesn't mean a unity of clones who think alike. Ahavas Yisroel means not merely to love and show kindness to another person, but to respect his unique opinion and attitude in serving Hashem.

\*\*\*\*

## Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai had to run away from his family and hide out from the Roman's with his son for 13 years.

The Gemorah teaches us that one of the first things



that Rabbi Shimon did upon leaving the cave, was to help a community. There was a road in the city that ran through an unmarked cemetery. The Kohanim were not able to use that road, and they had to travel a long distance around it. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai came and he marked the places under which were graves, and that way the Kohanim were able to use this road.

This teaches us the level of Ahavas Yisroel that we should have. Even if we are only helping a minority (the Kohanim) and even if we are only making things easier for them and it is not a life-threatening situation, still we should and must go out of our way to help others. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai was one of the students of Rabbi Akiva and he made it his life's work to correct the imbalance that existed among Rabbi Akiva's students.

*From Sichos of the Rebbe - Lag B'Omer*

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## PESACH SHEINI IYAR 14/ MAY 19

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When you've missed the boat there's nothing you can do but wave to the passengers. If the train has already left the station, you might as well sit down and wait for the next one to arrive. There are many things in life that depend on being in the right place at the right time; if you're late, you've missed that opportunity forever.

Likewise, the Torah tells us that there are specific times for doing specific mitzvot. There is a proper time to put on tefilin, a proper time to light Shabbat candles, a proper time to eat matza, and a proper time to sit in the sukkah.

The Torah's narrative about Pesach Sheini - the "Second Passover" (always on 14 Iyar), thus expresses a very radical concept in Judaism.

In the first year in the Midbar, Hashem commanded us to offer the Passover sacrifice, on the 14th of Nisan. One of the requirements, however, was that a Jew had to be in a state of ritual purity. As a result, not everyone was permitted to bring an offering, and the Jews who were excluded felt terrible. "Why should we be left out?!" they demanded of Moshe. They were so eager to observe the mitzva that Hashem relented, granting them another opportunity to bring an offering one month later, on the 14th of Iyar.

This story reveals the unfathomable depths of the Jewish soul and the infinite power of teshuva, repentance. It teaches us that every Jew is so intimately connected to Hashem that when he makes a sincere and heartfelt demand, it "forces" Hashem, as it were, to open up new channels through which to send us His abundant blessings.

As the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe explained, the lesson of Pesach Sheini is that it is never too late to correct the past and return to Hashem. It also emphasizes the power of a Jew's initiative. When a Jew cries out, from the depths of his soul and with a genuine desire to fulfill

Hashem's will, Hashem listens to his plea and grants his request.

There is an additional message of Pesach Sheini. What, in fact, was the cause of the ritual impurity which excluded some Jews from participating in the sacrifice? The Torah states: "There were people who were defiled by contact with the dead and were unable to offer the Passover sacrifice on that day." According to one opinion in the Talmud, these Jews were involved in the mitzva of burying a dead person found on the roadside who had no known relatives to do so. Even a kohen (priest) and even a High Priest - neither of whom is normally permitted to come in contact with the dead - is obligated to defile himself by burying the dead person.

This concept applies on a spiritual plane, as well. When we encounter another person who is spiritually "lifeless" we are obligated to get involved with him, even if it takes us away from our own spiritual pursuits.

Ultimately, Pesach Sheini teaches us that we must never despair or give up on ourselves, on others, and especially in bombarding Hashem with our demand that He send us Moshiach immediately

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## Pesach Sheni ~ When Jews Make Demands of G-d

During many lectures about Moshiach I've been asked, in America, a Jew is free to assert his Jewishness without fear and without persecution. We're free to be successful, engage in the profession of our choice and to espouse social and political causes. So, what's missing?

To many Jews, this sounds more like the Messianic Age than Exile. Why do we need Moshiach and await his coming every day?

And surely G-d has a timetable when it should happen. How do we have the audacity to tell G-d to change his calendar and bring Moshiach now?

Good question.

A year after leaving Egypt, the Jewish people brought the Pesach offering in the desert. Some Jews had become ritually unclean (by carrying Joseph's coffin, or by preparing the bodies of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, for Jewish burial). They couldn't bring the Pesach offering. They complained to Moshe and Aaron: "Why should we be deprived of bringing the offering of the Lord among the children of Israel?"

G-d answered: "If any person of you or your future generations shall be impure or on a distant journey, he shall still make the Pesach offering on the fourteenth day of the second month (Iyar)."

A Jew who couldn't offer the Pesach sacrifice was given a second chance a month later. The essence of Pesach Sheni is thus (in the words of the Lubavitcher Rebbe): "It's never too late. It's always possible to put things right. Even if one was impure or far away, and even when the impurity was deliberate, nonetheless, he can correct it."

Pesach is the only festival for which such a second chance is given. Pesach Sheni is the only Mitzvah given in response to the demands of Jews. This is because the festival of Pesach is inextricably bound up with the Exodus from Egypt, the birth of the Jewish nation. Without the Pesach offering, the Exodus would not have been whole. Without

the Exodus, there could be no Jewish existence. A Jew who could not bring the Pesach offering could not feel whole.

A Jew may think himself unworthy of making such demands of G-d, and that his demands would not be accepted anyway. Pesach Sheni teaches otherwise. Jews demanded, their demand was accepted, and Pesach Sheni was granted.

Because we are in exile and the Holy Temple doesn't stand, we are very much in the same position. Because of those same things, we can't offer the sacrifices or perform the Temple services G-d commanded us.

Pesach Sheni poses these questions:

How can any Jew feel whole when the Temple services are prohibited to us? How can any Jew feel whole when somewhere there are Jews who still live in daily terror? How can any Jew feel whole when we are in the middle of a second Holocaust, a spiritual holocaust of assimilation and intermarriage.

How can the Jewish people feel whole when there is still war, cruelty, bloodshed, deceit and poverty in the world, and innocent people and children are made to suffer?

We are taught that all this will be healed by the revelation of G-dliness which will follow the revelation of Moshiach. Pesach Sheni teaches us that we have the power to demand that which we need to carry out G-d's Mitzvos. Thus, it is the duty of every Jew to cry out and demand, Why should we be deprived? Why should we be deprived of serving G-d in the manner He Himself commanded? Why should a human being be deprived of the opportunity to live out his or her lifetime in grateful fulfillment of his physical and spiritual needs? End the darkness. Fulfill Your promises now. We've waited long enough.

**We want Moshiach now.**

# Iyar 5779 Calendar

CALENDAR TIMES ARE FOR LOS ANGELES

**Rosh Chodesh Day One**  
**Nisan 30/May 5/Sunday**

**Rosh Chodesh Day Two**  
**Iyar 1/May 6/Monday**

**Kedoshim**  
**Iyar 6/ May 11**  
Light Candles Friday May 10: **7:25**  
Shabbos Ends: **8:28**  
Last Time To Read Shema: **9:22**  
Pirkei Avos Chapter 2

**Emor**  
**Iyar 13/ May 18**  
Light Candles Friday May 17: **7:31**  
Shabbos Ends: **8:34**  
Last Time To Read Shema: **9:19**  
Pirkei Avos Chapter 3

**Pesach Sheni**  
**Iyar 14/May 19/Sunday**  
No Tachnun is said  
*Don't forget to eat Matzah*

**Lag B'Omer**  
**Iyar 18/May 23/Thursday**  
No Tachnun is said

**Bahar**  
**Iyar 20/ May 25**  
Light Candles Friday May 24 **7:36**  
Shabbos Ends **8:39**  
Last Time to Read Shema **9:17**  
Pirkei Avos Chapter 4

**Bechukotai**  
**Shabbos Chazzak**  
**Shabbos Mivorchim Iyar**  
**Iyar 27/ June 1**  
Light Candles Friday May 31: **7:40**  
Tehillim **8:15**  
Shachris **10:00**  
Shabbos Ends: **8:43**  
Last Time To Read Shema: **9:16**  
Pirkei Avos Chapter 5

**Molad of Sivan**  
**Monday, June 3,**  
**2:54 (1 *chelek*) AM**

**Rosh Chodesh Sivan**  
**Sivan 1/June 4/ Tuesday**

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**Directives of the Rebbe for Iyar - המעשה הוא העיקר**

**Beis Iyar** - we should make a farbrengen in honor of the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash. We should learn the Torah/Chassidus of the Rebbe Maharash making sure to bring in the quality of “Lechatchilah Aribar” going above and beyond in all aspects of Torah and Mitzvos in our daily life.

**Pesach Sheini** - We should publicize to all the guidance and power that was given to this utilize the strength that this day gives us; to correct that which is missing and to add. We should make a farbrengen of Simchah in honor of this day. To emphasize the power given to this day of correcting the negative and strengthening the positive.

**Lag B’Omer** - Prepare for Lag B’Omer; Do this by making parades or rallies, especially for children and the theme should be “Yachad kol yaldei yisroel” - All Yidden should be united together. Many times the Rebbe stressed the importance of preparing for Lag B’Omer in a public way.

*“I have received many questions from people concerning crossing the International Dateline during*

*Sefira. Those going to and coming from Australia after Pesach. The questions included girls who don’t count Sefiras Ha’Omer: Is there a problem concerning them? We present here a written answer from the Rebbe. (All those who crossed the international date-line should consult a Rav concerning how to count Sefirah and the Yom Tov of Shavuot)*

*“I’ll mention the above [in prayer] at the resting place [of my father-in-law]. The enclosed should be returned.*

*Attention should be called to the inappropriateness of crossing the International Dateline during Sefiras Ha’Omer (even for one who does not fulfill the mitzvah of Counting the Omer...)”*