

Lag BaOmer Traditions and Customs

By [Naftali Silberberg](#)

- It is traditional to light bonfires on Lag BaOmer eve. These commemorate the immense light that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai introduced into the world via his mystical teachings. This was especially true on the day of his passing, Lag BaOmer, when he revealed to his disciples secrets of the Torah whose profundity and intensity the world had yet to experience. The Zohar relates that the house was filled with fire and intense light, to the point that the assembled could not approach or even look at Rabbi Shimon. By far, the largest Lag BaOmer celebration takes place in and around Rabbi Shimon's tomb, located in the northern Israeli village of Meron. Hundreds of thousands attend the festivities, and the round-the-clock celebration, singing and dancing are unparalleled.
- Children customarily go out into the fields and play with imitation bows and arrows. This commemorates the midrashic tradition that no rainbow was seen during Rabbi Shimon's lifetime. Rainbows first appeared after Noah's flood, when G-d promised to never again devastate the world. When the world is deserving of punishment, G-d sends a rainbow instead. Rabbi Shimon's merit protected the world, rendering the rainbow superfluous.
- The Lubavitcher Rebbe encouraged the practice of arranging children's parades on Lag BaOmer in celebration of Jewish unity—a [major Lag BaOmer theme](#).
- In some circles it is customary to eat carobs on Lag BaOmer. This commemorates a [lifesaving miracle that Rabbi Shimon experienced](#). For a period of thirteen years, Rabbi Shimon and his son were fugitives from the Roman regime, in hiding in a cave in northern Israel. Miraculously, a carob tree grew at the entrance of the cave, providing nourishment for its two holy occupants.
- All the [Omer mourning practices](#) are suspended on Lag BaOmer. Permitted are weddings, haircuts,¹ music, etc.