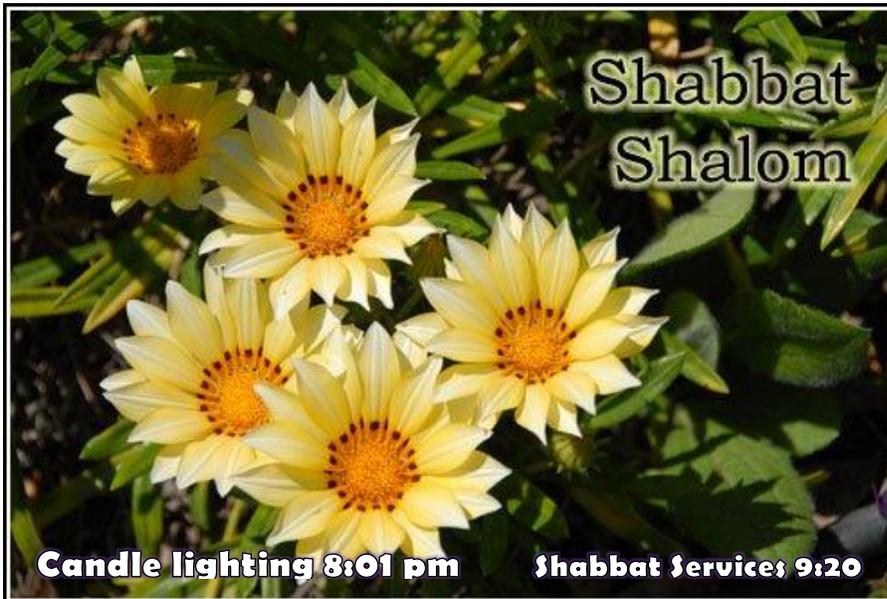




Carnegie Shul Chatter

May 3, 2018



Lag BaOmer

Did you know that today, May 3, is Lag BaOmer?

So what exactly is Lag Ba Omer and why do we celebrate it?

Here is an excellent explanation from Chabad.org:

Lag BaOmer, the 33rd day of the Omer count—this year, May 3, 2018—is a festive day on the Jewish calendar. It is celebrated with outings (on which children traditionally play with bows and arrows), bonfires, parades and other joyous events. Many visit the resting place (in Meron, northern Israel) of the great sage and mystic Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the anniversary of whose passing is on this day.

What It Means

Lag BaOmer is always on the 18th day of the month of Iyar. So what's up with the name? The word "Lag" is made of of the Hebrew letters lamed and gimel, which together have the numerical value of 33. "BaOmer" means "of the Omer." The Omer is the counting period that begins on the second day of Passover and culminates with the holiday of Shavuot, following day 49.

Lag BaOmer Lessons

As the feature article tells us, Lag BaOmer carries the theme of loving and respecting one's fellow Jew. But shouldn't we also love and respect each other regardless of race, creed, or national origin? I'm afraid that in today's world love and respect for one another is often lost in the translation.

Many of us speak a good game about love and respect, but do we really practice it?

Have you been on Facebook lately?
Have you watched the news lately?
Have you followed politics lately?

If someone disagrees with them, many believe that person is a racist, or a homophobe, or a damn liberal, or a deplorable conservative, or something awful. God forbid that we respect that others have opinions that disagree with ours and they exercise their freedom of speech or their freedom of religion.

Many of us talk a good game, but when someone disagrees with us, it is much easier to insult them than it is to actually listen to what they have to say and to respect their right to their opinion, even if it is different than ours.

So how about if today, on Lag Ba Omer, we actually try to respect the opinions of others who might disagree with us? It might actually help us begin to repair the world.

Hence Lag BaOmer is the 33rd day of the Omer count, which coincides with 18 Iyar. What happened on 18 Iyar that's worth celebrating?

What We Are Celebrating

Bonfires are a traditional Lag BaOmer feature.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who lived in the second century of the Common Era, was the first to publicly teach the mystical dimension of the Torah known as the Kabbalah, and is the author of the classic text of Kabbalah, the Zohar. On the day of his passing, Rabbi Shimon instructed his disciples to mark the date as "the day of my joy."



The chassidic masters explain that the final day of a righteous person's earthly life marks the point at which all their deeds, teachings and work achieve their culminating perfection and the zenith of their impact upon our lives. So each Lag BaOmer, we celebrate Rabbi Shimon's life and the revelation of the esoteric soul of Torah.

Lag BaOmer also commemorates another joyous event. The Talmud relates that in the weeks between the Jewish holidays of Passover and Shavuot, a plague raged among the disciples of the great sage Rabbi Akiva (teacher of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai), "because they did not act respectfully towards each other." These weeks are therefore observed as a period of mourning, with various joyous activities proscribed by law and custom. On Lag BaOmer the deaths ceased. Thus, Lag BaOmer also carries the theme of loving and respecting one's fellow Jew (ahavat Yisrael).

How Is Lag BaOmer Celebrated

- Since this is the day of joy of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, there are major festivities in Meron, the mountain village in northern Israel where he is buried, with tens of thousands of pilgrims pouring in from all corners of the world to rejoice together in unity.
- All over the world, it is customary to spend the day outside, enjoying the natural beauty of G-d's world. During these outings, it is customary to play with bows and arrows.
- The mourning practices of the Omer period (see above) are lifted for this day. As a result:
 - music is playing and people are singing and dancing with abandon.
 - little boys who turned three during the Omer period but did not have their first haircut (upsheren) due to the mourning laws, have them today, often at Meron.
 - weddings are held.
- Recognizing the fiery spirit of the mystical teachings that are celebrated today, bonfires are kindled. Get some friends (and a guitar) together, and it becomes a wonderful opportunity for singing, sharing and enjoying each other's camaraderie.
- Customary foods for the day include carob (which miraculously sustained Rabbi Shimon and his son when they were hiding from the Romans) and eggs (a sign of mourning).

Yahrzeit Plaques

Commemorate a loved one by dedicating a yahrzeit plaque in his or her memory at the Carnegie Shul. These beautiful plaques, mounted on the sanctuary walls, are lit on the loved one's yahrzeit, Yom Kippur, and days when Yizkor is recited. The names are also read aloud from the Bimah during services on the Sabbath of the yahrzeit and on Yom Kippur. To purchase a plaque, for only \$175, please email Mike Roteman at mrmike7777@yahoo.com.



Please consider sponsoring a Kiddush in honor or in memory of a loved one, for only \$36. Your sponsorship will be announced from the bimah and in the weekly Chatter. To sponsor a Kiddush, email mrmike7777@yahoo.com.



A BAG OF MARBLES
Sunday, May 6 – 1:00 p.m.
Hollywood Theater - Dormont

Two young Jewish brothers, forced to escape Nazi-occupied Paris, must separate from their family and find their way to safety, relying only on their courage and cunning, a bit of luck, and the occasional kindness of strangers.

Winner of Audience Award for Best Film at the Boston and Miami Jewish Film Festivals, the family-friendly film was called "...one of the best movies told about the Holocaust from a child's point of view..." – Jerusalem Post.

TICKETS ADULTS \$12* YOUTH (18 & UNDER) \$6*

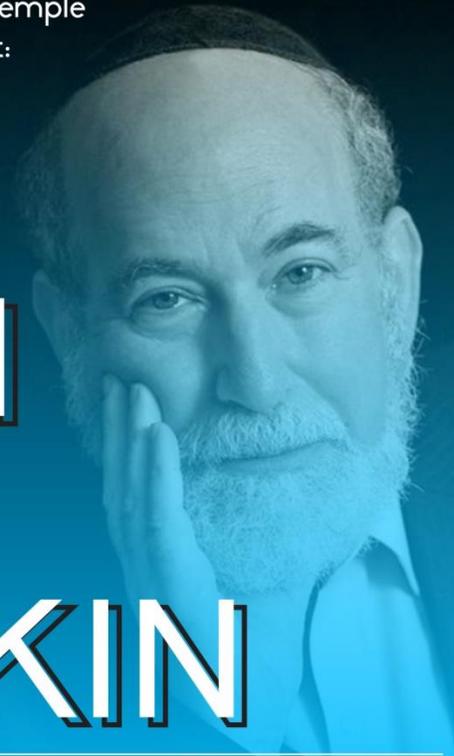
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OR 412-426-FILM (3456)**

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The Rabbi William Sajowitz Endowment Fund of Temple Emanuel and South Hills Jewish Pittsburgh Present:

AN
EVENING
WITH RABBI
JOSEPH
TELUSHKIN

A portrait of Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, an older man with a white beard and mustache, wearing a suit and tie. He is resting his chin on his hand and looking directly at the camera. The portrait is overlaid on a blue gradient background.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: A MORAL VISION, ONE DAY AT A TIME

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2018 / 7:30 PM

Upper St. Clair High School Theater

1825 McLaughlin Run Rd, Pittsburgh, 15241

General Admission tickets / **\$5**

Limited VIP seating / **\$36**

VIP seating includes pre-event reception with Rabbi Telushkin at 6:30 p.m.

RSVP: www.templeemanuelpgh.org

In partnership with Beth El Congregation, Congregation Ahavath Achim (The Carnegie Shul), and South Hills JCC.



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A service of South Hills Jewish Pittsburgh

All You Need is Love...
and a simple saliva test.

1 in 2 Ashkenazi Jews is a carrier of at least one preventable genetic disease

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