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## **A Shabbat Message from Rabbi Arthur Weiner**

Friday, April 30, 2021 ~ Parsha: Emor

Dear JCCP/CBT Family,

Today is a special day in the Jewish calendar. It's Lag B'Omer, the 33rd day of the Omer.

You may recall that at the second Passover Seder we began the counting of the Omer. That night, we began to fulfill the commandment to count each day, seven complete weeks. At the conclusion of those seven weeks is the holiday of Shavuot. In Biblical times, this season of the year was a festive time. Our ancestors would bring an Omer, a measure of grain as an offering each day to the Temple, symbolizing their gratitude for the spring harvest and the bounty of the land.

After the destruction of the Temple, this once happy period became a mournful one. We know that it was at this time of the year when the second revolt against Rome, the Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135 C.E.) came to a violent end, and with it the loss of thousands of lives and renewed persecution of Israel's remaining Jews. Later, during the middle ages, Jews especially suffered at the hands of the Crusaders during this season of the year as well. That is why many mourning like restrictions are observed during this season.

Lag B'Omer is a respite from this mournful season. The Talmud speaks of a plague that had killed 24,000 of Rabbi Akiva's students being lifted on this day. From a more historical point of view, however, given Rabbi Akiva's passionate support of the failed revolt against Rome, Lag B'Omer likely recalls a significant victory amidst the period of defeat.

On Lag B'Omer, we remember and celebrate of our ancestors, and their struggles to live their Judaism despite the oppression they endured, and pass it on to us.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi Arthur Weiner