The 33rd day of the counting of the Omer is Lag B’Omer. The origins of the Omer count are found in the Torah itself, in Leviticus 23:15-16, which states that it is a commandment to count seven complete weeks from the day after Passover night ending with the festival of Shavuot on the fiftieth day. The 49 days of the Omer correspond both to the time between physical emancipation from Egypt and the spiritual liberation of the giving of the Torah at the foot of Mount Sinai on Shavuot, as well as the time between the barley harvest and the wheat harvest in ancient Israel.

The most well-known custom of Lag B’Omer is the lighting of bonfires. Some say that as bar Yohai gave spiritual light to the world with the revelation of the Zohar, bonfires are lit to symbolize the impact of his teachings. It is also Jewish custom to light a candle in honour of the deceased on the day of the Yahrzeit.

In Israel, Lag B’Omer is a school holiday. Youngsters and their parents light bonfires in open spaces in cities and towns throughout the country. Students’ Day is celebrated on the campuses of the various universities. Hundreds of weddings are held on Lag B’Omer, adding to the festive character of this holiday.

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