

LAG Ba-OMER. GET THE POINT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

“Omer”	2
“Counting the Omer”	2
“Lag Ba-Omer,”	4
“Other Explanations for ‘Mourning’ and Omer”	6
“Lag ba-Omer: A Brief Review”	8
“War and Warfare: Archery and Slings”	9
“Rainbow”	10
“Arrowheads”	10
“David and Goliath”	12
“Slings”	14
“I Samuel 17: David and Goliath”	16
“Lag Ba-Omer On-Line Resources”	22

OMER (Heb. אֶמֶר, lit. "sheaf"), an offering brought to the Temple on the 16th of Nisan and thus the name of the period between Passover and Shavuot.

The Bible (Lev. 23:9ff.) prescribes that "when you enter the land which I am giving to you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest... the priest shall wave it on the day after the sabbath." After the waving, a burnt offering together with a meal offering and a libation were made at the altar and after that had been done it was permissible to eat of the new harvest: "Until that very day, until you have brought the offering of your God, you shall eat no bread or parched grain or fresh ears."

The exact meaning of "the day after the sabbath" in the biblical passage was a major point of controversy between the rabbis and the [*Boethusians](#) (Men. 65a–b) and, later, the [*Karaites](#). The latter argued that the ceremony was to be performed on the day after the Sabbath immediately following the first day of Passover whereas the rabbis argued that in this context the word "sabbath" was to be understood not as the weekly Sabbath but as a "holy day" and meant the first day of Passover itself. Since the passage quoted continues with the law "And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of wave offering—the day after the Sabbath—you shall count seven weeks" and the fiftieth day is Shavuot it follows that according to the sectarians the festival of Shavuot always fell on a Sunday. It has been suggested (L. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees* (1962³), 2, 641ff.) that this was a major factor in the dissidents' view, as having the festival always on a Sunday was far more convenient for the Temple cult.

The rabbis, in the light of Exodus 16:36 – "The *Omer* is a tenth of an *ephah*" – interpreted the word as a measure of grain and also ruled that it was to be brought of barley only. The *ephah* was three *se'ot* and thus on the 16th of Nisan three *se'ot* of barley were reaped, brought to the Temple, ground and sifted, and of this, one tenth (the *Omer*) was "waved" by the priest. The Mishnah (Men. 10) describes the ritual in detail. It was celebrated with a great deal of ceremony and festivity in order to stress the opinion of the rabbis that the 16th of Nisan was the correct date. The ceremony, including the reaping, took place even if the 16th of Nisan was a Sabbath; one opinion has it that on a weekday five *se'ot* were reaped since after sifting only three would remain but that on a Sabbath only three were reaped so as to avoid unnecessary work (Men. 10:1). If the barley was ripe it was taken from the vicinity of Jerusalem; otherwise it could be brought from anywhere in Israel. It was reaped by three men, each with his own scythe and basket. The grain was then brought to the Temple where it was winnowed, parched, and ground into coarse flour. It was then sifted through 13 sieves and one tenth was given to the priest who mixed it with oil and frankincense for "a pleasing odor to the Lord" and "waved" it "before the Lord." This was done by the priest taking the offering on his outstretched hands and moving it from side to side and up and down. This ceremony was interpreted as a prayer to God to protect the harvest from injurious winds and other calamities (Men. 62a). After the waving ceremony a handful was burnt on the altar and the rest was eaten by the priests.

COUNTING THE OMER

(Heb. סְפִירַת הָאֶמֶר, *Sefirat ha-Omer*). The injunction to count the 49 days from the 16th of Nisan until Shavuot is considered to be of Pentateuchal authority as long as the *Omer* itself was offered; thus at present time it is of rabbinic authority only. The 49 days are commonly known as the *sefirah*.

The counting is preceded by a special benediction "... concerning the counting of the *Omer*." Since the Bible states that "You shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete" and "You must count... fifty days," the counting must mention both the number of days and the number of weeks (Men. 65b–66a). Hence the standard formula runs as follows: on the first day, "Today is the first day of the *Omer*"; on the eighth day, "Today is the eighth day, making one week and one day of the *Omer*," and so on. The time for the counting, which is to be done standing, is after the evening service, that is, when the new day begins (Sh. Ar., OH 489:1). One who forgets to count in the evening may count during the following day, without however reciting the blessing. He may then count again the same evening, using the blessing. But if he fails to count for one complete day, he is not permitted to resume the utterance of the blessing for the whole duration of the *Omer* (Sh. Ar., OH 489:7–8). And since the sole stipulation of the commandment is that the number of the particular day of the *Omer* is to be spoken aloud, one should avoid uttering it inadvertently once the time for counting has arrived; for example, if one has not yet counted and is asked what the number of the day is, one should reply by giving the number of the previous day (Sh. Ar., OH 489:4).

The kabbalists used the 49 days (7×7) to form permutations of various *sefirot* denoting the ascent out of the 49 "gates" of impurity of the Egyptian bondage to the purity of the revelation at Sinai. In many prayer books these combinations are printed at the side of each day listed. Because the days counted "must be complete" it has become customary not to recite the evening service for Shavuot until after nightfall of the 49th day, whereas for other festivals it is permissible to start some time before nightfall (see [*Day and Night](#)).

In order not to forget the count of the day it was fairly common practice to have an "*Omer* calendar" in the home with movable numbers on it. These "calendars" even developed into an art form and several early specimens show intricate work and lettering.

A TIME OF MOURNING

From an unknown date during the talmudic period, the days of the *Omer* began to take on a character of semi-mourning; the solemnization of marriages was prohibited, then haircutting, and, later still, the use of musical instruments was banned. The mourning is normally associated with a plague said to have decimated the disciples of Rabbi Akiva, who died "because they did not treat each other with respect" (Yev. 62b; cf. Sh. Ar., OH 493:1). But this reason for the mourning is among the many uncertainties connected with the *Omer* period and with [*Lag](#) ba-Omer, the minor festival celebrated on its 33rd day. The Talmud alludes to the plague, but makes no mention of any commemorative mourning. This is first recorded in the eighth century, when Neutrino Gona issued a responsum confirming both the practice of mourning and the accepted reason for it (Levin, Ozar, Yevamot, 141). Subsequent codes and compilations of custom up to and including the Shulhan Aruch (OH 493) cite this reference; and most, although not all (e.g., *Toledot Adam ve-Havvah*, 5, 4; *Abudraham ha-Shalem* (1959), 245), presume that the custom did in fact originate with the death of Akiva's disciples. On the other hand, Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* and the Ashkenazi *Mahzor Vitry* appear unaware of its very existence.

LAG BA-OMER

NAME

Lag BaOmer is Hebrew shorthand for 33rd of [Omer](#) (Lag, or L"G ([Hebrew](#): ל"ג) is the [Hebrew numerals](#) for 33). It falls on the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer, as counted from the second day of [Passover](#) until the holiday of [Shavuot](#). This corresponds to the 18th day of the month of [Iyar](#).

Sephardi Jews have the [custom](#) of calling this holiday Lag LaOmer, which has been claimed to be more accurate according to the rules of Hebrew grammar. Lag La'Omer means the thirty-third day "of the Omer", as opposed to BaOmer - "in the Omer." In reality, Sephardim who follow the "Mechaber" or Rav [Yosef Karo](#) (Shulchan Aruch) celebrate "Lad BaOmer," or the 34th day of the omer.

This has been disputed with the argument that in Hebrew, the prefix used when counting is "B" or "Ba", as in [Tu B'Av](#), [Tisha B'av](#), etc. The "Ba" prefix in Hebrew can mean "relating to", as opposed to "la", which denotes "belonging to".

ORIGINS

The 33rd day of the counting of the [Omer](#) is Lag BaOmer. 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. There are a number of explanations for why the 33rd day is treated as a special holiday.

The [Talmud](#) (*Yevamot 62b*) states that during the time of [Rabbi Akiva](#) 24,000 of his students died from a divine-sent plague during the counting of the Omer. The Talmud then goes on to say that this was because they did not show proper respect to one another, befitting their level; they begrudged each other the spiritual levels attained by their comrades. Jews celebrate Lag BaOmer, the 33rd day of the count, as the traditional day that this plague ended. This is the view recorded in the legal code of the Kitzur [Shulchan Aruch](#), 120:1-10. Another possible interpretation of this legend is that the students died as part of the Roman attempt to wipe out Judaism after the [Bar Kokhba revolt](#).

After the death of [Rabbi Akiva's](#) 24,000 students, he taught just five students, among them Rabbi [Shimon bar Yochai](#). The latter went on to become the greatest teacher of Torah in his generation. The day of Lag BaOmer is also celebrated as the [Hillula](#) or [Yahrzeit](#), the anniversary of the death, of bar Yohai,^[2] who is believed to have authored the [Zohar](#), a landmark text of [Jewish mysticism](#). According to tradition, on the day of his death, he revealed the deepest secrets of the Kabbalah. Indeed this day is seen as a celebration of the giving of the hidden, mystical Torah through Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, as a parallel to Shavuot, which celebrates the giving of the revealed Torah through Moses. Indeed there is a source in the [Kabbalah](#) that Moses was [reincarnated](#) as Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai to give this mystical element of the Torah to the Jewish people.

The origin of Lag ba-Omer is likewise shrouded in mystery. It is not explicitly mentioned any earlier than the 13th century, when Meiri in his commentary to *Yevamot* (*Beit ha-Behirah*, Yev. 62b) described

it as the day when, "according to a tradition of the *geonim*," the "plague" surceased. Moreover there are differences of opinion as to how the date of Lag ba-Omer is to be calculated. Fundamentally, there are two approaches to the question, which in turn account for the different periods of time (according to various rites) when the mourning restrictions are held to be in force.

One school of thought sees the 33rd day of the *Omer* as the anniversary of the termination of the plague. The authority for this view derives from a Midrash, no longer extant, which was handed down by Joshua ibn Shu'aib in the 14th century, or possibly based on an unknown "Spanish manuscript" cited by Zerahiah b. Isaac ha-Levi of the 12th century (see Tur, OH 493). In place of reading "they died from Passover to Shavuot," this Midrash adds the word "*pros*," i.e., "they died from Passover until before (*ad pros*) Shavuot." Pros" is taken to mean 15 days before; and thus implies that the plague terminated a fortnight before Shavuot, and Lag ba-Omer is the anniversary of that day. Strictly speaking, however, 15 days before Shavuot would be the 34th day of the *Omer*; as indeed the Shulhan Arukh concedes.

The present custom, then, must be attributed to a different calculation which is given by Isserles in his gloss to the Shulhan Arukh. The explanation stems from a *tosafot*, also no longer extant, cited by Ibn Shu'aib and most fully elaborated on by Jacob b. Moses Moellin in the 15th century in his *Sefer Maharil* (1873), 21b. In this work, Lag ba-Omer appears not as an anniversary at all but as a symbol of the 33 weekdays that occur during the course of the 49 days of the *Omer*. After subtracting the days of Passover, and those of the Sabbath and of Rosh Hodesh, only 33 are left from the 49 in which mourning is permissible; this fact is symbolically observed by constituting the 33rd day as a minor festival. This second mode of interpretation gave rise to three divergent customs regarding the mourning period. Some communities observed it for the 33 days from Passover to Shavuot omitting the special days, others for the 33 between Passover and Lag ba-Omer, and others for the 33 from after Rosh Hodesh Iyyar to Shavuot excluding Lag ba-Omer itself. The kabbalists took an entirely different approach to the matter. As to *sefirah* days, they stressed the idea of spiritual preparation for Shavuot, the anniversary of the revelation on Mt. Sinai (*Hemdut Yamim*, 3, 41d). Lag ba-Omer itself marked the *hillula – the *yahrzeit* of *Simeon. b. Yohai, by tradition the author of the Zohar. It was either the day on which he was ordained by Rabbi Akiva, or when he emerged from the cave in Meron where he had been hiding from the Romans (Shab. 33b), or the day on which he died; and it is observed as a *hillula* – a festivity or a "wedding between heaven and earth." Hence the grand celebrations which take place at Meron (*Zohar Idra Zutra*, end of *Ha'azinu*). However, although the Zohar does speak of Simeon's death as a *hillula*, there is no recorded reference to its date earlier than that in *Peri Ez Hayyim* by Hayyim b. Joseph Vital (16/17th century; *Sha'ar Sefirat ha-Omer*, ch. 7).

While the celebrations at Meron excited enthusiasm among all sections of Jewish society and particularly from the kabbalists, they also provoked severe criticism. R. Moses *Sofer of Pressburg (d. 1839), after opposing the popular observance of lighting bonfires and questioning all of the reasons given above for the observance of Lag ba-Omer, offered his own explanation for the holiday. Lag ba-Omer is the day when manna began to fall in the wilderness (*Resp. Hatam Sofer*; YD 236). Since, however, the Talmud (Shab. 87b) and the *Sefer Olam* calculate that this happened two days earlier, there is, in the last resort, no unassailable determination of what actually took place on Lag ba-Omer; the only definite tradition is that the day is a holiday.

It has for a long time been considered—Nachman Krochmal (d. 1840) being the most notable to express this view—that the cryptic reference in the Talmud to the disciples of R. Akiva and their mysterious

death is in fact a veiled report of the defeat of "Akiva's soldiers" in the war with Rome (cf. Maimonides, *Yad Melakhim* 11:3; probably based on TJ, Ta'an. 4:5). As a result, a variety of new theories have arisen among modern writers as to the origin of Lag ba-Omer. R. Isaac Nissenbaum of Warsaw, author of several books on religious Zionism, suggested that Lag ba-Omer is the anniversary of some great but brief triumph by the Judeans in their forlorn war with the Romans—possibly the recapture of Jerusalem, for which special coins were struck (*Hagut Lev* (1911), 181). Y.T. Levinsky, in *Sefer ha-Mo'adim* (1955), 340–2, pursues this line further; he cites Josephus (Wars 2:402ff.) as authority for the fact that a Judean uprising commenced in 66 C.E. in the days of the procurator Florus. At the same time he concurs with the tradition associating the victory on Lag ba-Omer with Bar Kokhba 70 years later, as well as with the story that Julius Serverus' campaign against the insurrectionist Judeans was most severe during the period between Passover and Shavuot.

Eliezer Levi (*Yesodot ha-Tefillah* (1952), 232) advanced a hypothesis endeavoring to resolve another problem sensed by earlier writers; namely why we should mourn for the disciples of Rabbi Akiva, since they died as a punishment for their unseemly conduct? In view of the veiled references to the war with the Romans, he suggests, the judgment of the Talmud is to be understood not as condemning Akiva's disciples and their lack of respect for one another, but on the contrary as praising their dedication and teamwork. On the other hand, it may be that the phrases in the Talmud are to be understood in their literal sense: "Akiva's soldiers" were defeated due to a lack of coordination and unified command (see *Panim el Panim*, no. 574, May 22, 1970). The earlier traditions surrounding Bar Yohai's connection with Lag ba-Omer are entirely in accord with these theories, and one might then draw up a summary or composite theory in the following vein: Bar Kokhba's (i.e., Akiva's) men suffered an overwhelming defeat during the weeks between Passover and Shavuot; on the 33rd day of the *Omer* they enjoyed an important, though brief, change of fortune; and on this day Bar Yohai, one of the leading fighters in the uprising, either emerged from hiding in Meron, or lost his life in securing the victory.

OTHER EXPLANATIONS

Extra-rabbinic sources do not help to clarify the matter. Some students of folklore trace the mournful nature of the days of the *sefirah* to the Roman superstition against marriages in May. The fullest statement of this theory was made in the 19th century by Julius Landsberger of Darmstadt (see bibl.). The author cites Ovid (Fast 5: 419ff.), who explains that the Romans did not solemnize marriages in May due to the fact that this was the month of the *Lemuria* when the souls of the departed returned to wander over the earth and disturb the peace of the living. According to Landsberger, the Roman superstition was adopted by the Jews, who subsequently lost all recollection of its origin and found a new rationale for it in the tragedy of Akiva's disciples. Landsberger's theory leaves many questions unanswered. It does not explain why there is a ban on haircutting during the *Omer* as well as on marriage, or why the custom prevailed in geonic countries. But it does, however, offer an ingenious explanation of the origin of Lag ba-Omer. Among the Romans, the period of superstitious fear lasted for 32 days starting from Walpurgis Night (the last night of April) and continuing throughout the 31 days of May. In commemoration of this period of 32 days, its conclusion on the 33rd day was celebrated as a festival.

Theodor H. Gaster (*Festivals of the Jewish Year* (1953), 52) suggests that Lag ba-Omer, especially with its custom of children going forth with bows and arrows, is a Jewish version of the English and German custom of shooting arrows at demons on May day, i.e., the day after Walpurgis Night. In the view of

Joseph Naphtali Derenbourg (in REJ, 29 (1894), 149), Lag ba-Omer is a day in the middle of the *sefirah* period when mourning is to be relaxed, comparable to *mi-carême* observed midway during Lent. There were 34 (twice 17) bad days during the *sefirah*; a respite was needed and the first day of the second half was chosen. J. Morgenstern (in: HUCA, 39 (1968), 81–90) points out that the date of Lag ba-Omer is the approximate midpoint of the 49-day period for those dissidents who begin their *Omer* offering the day after Passover. L.H. Silberman (see bibl.) following H. Grimme, regards the day as commemorating an anniversary celebrated in honor of Marduk; and Gustav Dalman conjectured that it may have marked the first day of summer between the 13th and 25th of May, which was distinguished by the early rising of the Pleiades (cf. RH 11b).

BONFIRES

The most well-known custom of Lag BaOmer 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. As his passing left such a 'light' behind, many candles and/or bonfires are lit. The Bnei Yissoschor cites another reason for the lighting of bonfires. On the day of his death Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said "Now, it's my desire to reveal secrets...The day will not go to its place like any other, for this entire day stands within my domain..." Daylight was miraculously extended until Rabbi Shimon had completed his final teaching and passed away. This symbolized that all light is subservient to spiritual light, an particularly to the primeval light contained within the mystical teachings of the Torah. As such, the custom of lighting fires symbolizes this revelation of powerful light.

LATER EVENTS DURING THE OMER

If the origins of the mourning during the *sefirah* period remain obscure, more identifiable subsequent events add justification for its observance today. According to 13th-century authorities, the melancholy of the season was in remembrance of the victims of the Crusades in the Rhineland in 1096 and 1146 (*Sefer Minhag Tov*, *Sefer Asufot*). These Crusades are recollected in *piyyutim* of lament during the Sabbaths of the *sefirah*, together with mention of another series of massacres that took place in the springtime, i.e., those perpetrated in 1648–49 by the Cossacks and the Poles. Later and modern sources, such as the *siddur* of Jacob Emden and the *Arukh ha-Shulhan* (OH 493:1) include these together with the earlier events. And in J. Vainstein's *Cycle of the Jewish Year* (1953), 131–2, the revolt of the ghettos against the Nazis in the month of Nisan is included in the discussion of the *sefirah* and mention is made of the Knesset's decision to fix the 27th of that month as a memorial day for the victims. On the other hand, Israel Independence Day (5th of Iyyar) has the status of a half-holiday, and has been included among the days on which mourning restrictions are suspended (Resp. *Kol Mevasser* pt. 1, no. 21).

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

S. Goren, *Torat ha-Mo'adim* (1964), 346–58; J. Landsberger, in: JZWL, 7 (1869), 81–96; L.H. Silberman, in: HUCA, 22 (1949), 221–37; J. Morgenstern, in: HUCA, 39 (1968), 81–90; D.M. Feldman, in: *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly* (1962), 201–24; E. Munk, *World of Prayer*, 2 (1963), 137–42; S.Y. Zevin, *Ha-Mo'adim ba-Halakhah* (1963¹⁰), 292–304. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Eds. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 17. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007

LAG BA-OMER (Heb. לַג בְּעֹמֶר ל"ג), the 33rd (Heb. ל"ג) day of the counting of the *Omer, which is reckoned from the second day of *Passover until *Shavuot. It occurs on the 18th day of *Iyyar and has been celebrated as a semiholiday since the time of the *geonim (B.M. Lewin, *Ozar ha-Ge'onim*, 7 (1936), 140–1). On Lag ba-Omer the traditional mourning customs of abstention kept during the *Omer* period are lifted: haircutting and shaving are permitted, marriages are celebrated, and other sorts of entertainment, e.g., music, enjoyed (Isserles to Sh. Ar., OH 493:2). The Sephardi ritual permits haircuts and shaving only on the day following Lag ba-Omer, i.e., the 34th of *Omer* (Sh. Ar., *ibid.*).

According to talmudic and midrashic sources, 24,000 disciples of R. *Akiva died of a plague during the period between Passover and Shavuot because they did not sufficiently honor one another (Yev. 62b; Gen. R. 61:3; Eccles. R. 11:6). Some emended texts read that the students died *ad peros ha-Azeret* ("until close to Shavuot"). The plague ceased on the day of Lag ba-Omer which, consequently, became a holiday, especially for rabbinical students in the Middle Ages (the "Scholar's festival"). It was customary to rejoice on that day through various kinds of merrymaking.

According to the homiletic exegesis of Exodus 16, the manna began to fall on Lag ba-Omer (Moses Sofer, *Hatam Sofer*, YD (1841), no. 233), giving another reason for the holiday. The liturgy for this day is the regular prayer service for weekdays, except that the *Tahanun prayer is omitted. The kabbalists attach particular significance to Lag ba-Omer. They hold this date to be the anniversary of the death of *Simeon b. Yohai, regarded by them as the author of the *Zohar. Called *Hillula de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai*, it is celebrated in Israel in the village of Meron (near Safed) where Simeon b. Yohai is traditionally buried. The celebrations are carried out with songs and dances by the thousands who gather there. A special hymn, *Bar Yohai ... Ashrekha*, consisting of ten stanzas corresponding to the ten *Sefirot in the Kabbalah, is sung on this occasion. Three-year-old boys are given their first haircut (*halakah*) while their parents distribute wine and sweets. The same rites are observed at the grave of *Simeon the Just, in Jerusalem.

The custom of children playing with a bow (Heb. *keshet*) and arrows on Lag ba-Omer is traced, by certain scholars, to the legend that the rainbow (Heb. *keshet*), a symbol of peace (Gen. 9:11–17), did not appear during the lifetime of Simeon b. Yohai, because he was such a saintly man. Others associate this custom with the above-mentioned story about the students of R. Akiva who, it is suggested, actually fell fighting against the Romans in the revolt led by *Bar Kokhba. Lag ba-Omer in modern Israel is a school holiday. Youngsters light bonfires in open spaces in towns and villages and Students' Day is celebrated on the campuses of the different universities. The scores of weddings held on Lag ba-Omer add to the festive character of this semiholiday.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Margolis and S.L. Markowitz, *Jewish Holidays and Festivals* (1962), 104–11; H. Schauss, *Guide to Jewish Holy Days* (paperback 1968), index; J.T. Lewinski, *Sefer ha-Mo'adim*, 6 (1955), 72–101; Benayahu, in: *Sefunot*, 6 (1962), 9–40; A. Yaari, in: *Tarbiz*, 31 (1962), 72–101; Pearl, *Guide to the Minor Festivals and Fasts* (1963), 34–47; *Mahanayim*, 56 (1961); J. Morgenstern, in: HUCA, 39 (1968), 81–90. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Eds. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 17. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007

WAR AND WARFARE: ARCHERY AND SLINGS

The methods of offensive and defensive warfare developed side by side in the Ancient Near East. The development of weapons was dependent upon the supply of raw materials, such as stone, metal, and wood; the technical developments of the period, e.g., the development of a metallurgical industry, the manner in which wood was treated, and that in which different materials, such as wood and metal, were joined; and the need, i.e., whether methods of warfare developed by one country necessitated corresponding developments to counteract them by a rival country.

THE EARLY BRONZE AGE (C. 3150–2200 B.C.E.)

The beginning of urbanization and the consequent development of more sophisticated armies in the Early Bronze Age also brought about the development of more sophisticated weapons, and the first metal weapons appear at this time. Several types of bows (Heb. קֶשֶׁת, *keshet* (*qeshet*)) are known in this period: the simple double-convex Egyptian bow; the early Mesopotamian bow, shaped like a simple curve; and the composite bow, developed by the Akkadians in the second half of the third millennium. Arrows (Heb. חֶז, *hez*) were hollow reed shafts, their bases usually feathered. Arrowheads were at first made of flint and later of metal.

THE LATE BRONZE AGE (1550–1200 B.C.E.)

The composite bow, made of wood from birch trees (?), tendons of wild bulls, horns of wild goats, and sinews from the hocks of bulls (Aqhat A, tablet 6, lines 20–23; Pritchard, Texts, 151), was the only type of bow used by archers in this period. The highly technical skill required for its manufacture made it the weapon of the armies of the empires and of the wealthy ruling class of the city-states.

THE IRON AGE (THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM; 1200–900 B.C.E.)

The Philistines brought with them weapons that had been developed in the Aegean. In the wall reliefs of Ramses III at Medinet Habu, each group of Sea Peoples wore slightly different helmets and armor, perhaps as a tribal distinction. The Philistines wore feather-crested helmets, while the other groups wore horned helmets or helmets with disks and horns. The body was protected by a coat of armor made of numerous metal strips laid at angles to each other, thus forming inverted V's or V's, depending upon the tribe. The Philistine army fought in groups of four, each soldier armed with either a long sword or a pair of spears. In hand-to-hand combat, the duelist, like Goliath, was protected by a man-sized shield carried by a special shield bearer (I Sam. 17:7). The bow and the battle-ax were not included in the Philistine arsenal.

While the Egyptian army continued to use the same type of chariot as was used in the Late Bronze Age, the Philistines employed a heavy chariot with six-spoked wheels and a crew of three, armed with hurling javelins like the Hittite charioteers. The Israelite tribes, when settling in the hill country, "drove out the inhabitants of the hill country, for he [Judah] was unable to drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron" (Judg. 1:19). The tribal army of Deborah and Barak was victorious over the chariots of Sisera in a battle in the Jezreel Valley (Judg. 4:13–15). David and Solomon were the first to form chariot squadrons in the Israelite army, and Solomon built special cities for chariots (I Kings 10:26; II Chron. 1:14). At the same time, Solomon was the main trader in horses and chariots between Egypt and the Hittites (I Kings 10:28–29).

RAINBOW, "bow" (Heb. קַוֵּץ), "in the cloud" (Gen. 9:13–14, 16; Ezek. 1:28). In the sequel to the Flood Story (Gen. 9:8–17) God sets His bow in the clouds as a sign to the people and as a reminder to Himself that no deluge shall again destroy the earth. According to the rabbis this rainbow was created during the eve of the Sabbath of Creation at twilight (Pes. 54a). Nahmanides similarly explained that the rainbow had existed previously but was now designated to serve as this symbol (to Gen. 9:12). However, Ibn Ezra held that the bow was first created by God after the Flood (to Gen. 9:13). The bow symbolized that God's wrath had ceased since the end of the bow pointed downward just as the warrior lowers his bow on declaring peace (Nahmanides to Gen. 9:12).

The rabbis held that the rainbow need not appear in the lifetime of a saint whose merit alone is sufficient to save the world from destruction (Ket. 77b and Rashi ad. loc.). Since the rainbow was the reflection of "the glory of the Lord" (Ezek. 1:28), it was considered injurious to gaze directly at it (Hag. 16a). It was reported that R. Joshua b. Levi declared that upon seeing the rainbow one should fall on his face as did Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:28). Nevertheless, in Erez Israel, the rabbis disapproved of such action since it appeared as if the person was bowing down to the rainbow. They, however, approved of reciting a blessing upon the rainbow's appearance. The text of this blessing as it is today recited is "Blessed are Thou O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who remembers the Covenant, is faithful to His Covenant, and keeps His promise" (Ber. 59a; Sh. Ar. OH 229:1). The blessing is to be recited even if a rainbow is seen twice within 30 days *Mishnah Berurah* to Sh. Ar., loc. cit.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Idelsohn, Liturgy, 126, note j; ET, 4 (1952), 358. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Eds. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 17. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007

ARROWHEAD

An **arrowhead** is point of an [arrow](#), or a shape resembling such a point; as [archaeological artifacts](#) arrowheads are a subclass of [\[1\]](#). Arrowheads are found all over the world. Archaeologically they are usually made of stone: primarily being flint, obsidian, or cherts; however in many excavations bone, wooden and metal arrowheads have been found. Arrowheads are attached to arrow shafts and may be "thrown", with by means of such as an [Atlatl](#) (similar to a spear thrower), or fired from a bow.

In [archaeology](#), a **projectile point** is an object that was [hafted](#) and used either as [knife](#) or [projectile](#) tip or both, commonly called an [arrowhead](#). Occasionally, projectile points made of worked [bone](#) or [ivory](#) are found at [archaeological sites](#), but generally the term is reserved for a refined chipped-stone [biface](#). Projectile points fall into two general types: dart points and arrow points. Dart points are defined as those bifaces which were used to tip spears and [atlatl](#) darts. Arrow points are smaller and lighter than dart points, and were used to tip arrows. In North American archaeology dart and arrow points come in an amazing variety of shapes and styles, which vary according to time and geographic area. The question of how to distinguish an arrowpoint from a point used on a larger weapon is non-trivial; the best indication is the width of the [hafting](#) area, which will correlate to the width of the shaft (Wyckoff 1964).

DAVID AND GOLIATH: 1 Samuel 17

The account of the battle between David and Goliath is reported in 1 Samuel, chapter 17:[1]

[Saul](#) and the Israelites are facing the [Philistines](#) at [Socoh](#) in Judah. Twice a day for forty days Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, comes out between the lines and challenges the Israelites to send out a champion of their own to decide the outcome of the battle in single combat, but Saul and all the Israelites are afraid. [David](#) is present, bringing food for his elder brothers. When told that Saul has promised to reward any man who will defeat the Philistine champion, David declares he is not afraid. Saul reluctantly agrees and offers his armour, which David declines in favour of his [sling](#) and five stones he takes from a brook.

David and Goliath confront each other, Goliath with his armour and shield-bearer, David with his staff and sling. "And the Philistine cursed David by his gods." But David replies: "This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that Yahweh saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is Yahweh's, and he will give you into our hand."
[2]

David then strikes Goliath in the head with a stone from his sling; the Philistine falls on his face to the ground. David seizes Goliath's sword and kills him, then cutting off his head. The shocked Philistines flee and are pursued by the Israelites "as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron". David puts the armour of Goliath in his own tent, and takes the head to Jerusalem. Saul sends [Abner](#) to inquire whose son this is who has routed the Philistines and killed their champion. Abner brings David before Saul, who asks him whose son he is. "And David answered, 'I am the son of your servant [Jesse](#) the [Bethlehemite](#)'."

GOLIATH'S HEIGHT

There are significant differences between the [Masoretic](#) (Hebrew), [Septuagint](#) (Greek), and [Dead Sea Scrolls](#) versions of 1 Samuel 17.[3] One of the most interesting of these relates to Goliath's height: 4QSam(a), the Dead Sea Scrolls text of Samuel, gives the height of Goliath as "four cubits and a span," (approximately 200 cm or about six feet seven inches), and this is what the 4th century AD Septuagint manuscripts and the 1st century AD historian [Josephus](#) also record. Later Septuagint manuscripts and the oldest Masoretic texts ([Aleppo Codex](#), 10th century AD) read "six cubits and a span," which would make him about 290 cm or nine feet six inches tall.[4]

DAVID'S AGE

Early biblical manuscripts such as the 4th century AD [Codex Vaticanus](#) do not contain the verses describing David coming each day with food for his brothers, nor 1 Samuel 17:55-58 in which Saul seems unaware of David's identity, referring to him as "this youth" and asking Abner to find out the name of his father. The narrative therefore reads that Goliath is challenging the Israelites to combat, the Israelites are afraid, and David, already with Saul, accepts the challenge.[5] The shorter Septuagint version removes a number of ambiguities which have puzzled commentators: it removes 1 Samuel 17:55-58 in which Saul seems not to know David, despite having taken him as one of his shield-bearers

and harpist; it removes 1 Samuel 17:50, the presence of which makes it seem as if David kills Goliath twice, once with his sling and then again with a sword;^[6] and it gives David a clear reason, as Saul's personal shield-bearer, for accepting Goliath's challenge. Scholars drawing on studies of oral transmission and folklore have concluded that the non-Septuagint material "is a folktale grafted onto the initial text of ... 1 Samuel."^[7]

ELHANAN AND GOLIATH

2 Samuel 21:19^[8] tells how Goliath was killed by "[Elhanan](#) the son of Jaare-oregim, the Bethlehemite." The 4th century [1 Chronicles](#) 20^[9] explains the second Goliath by saying that Elhanan "slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath," apparently constructing the name Lahmi from the last portion of the word "Bethlehemite" ("*beit-ha'lahmi*").^[10] The [King James Bible](#) translators adopted this into their translation of 2 Samuel 21:18-19, although the Hebrew text makes no mention of the word "brother". 2 Samuel 21 appears to be an extremely corrupt passage: "Jaare-oregim," the name of Elhanan's father, means a nonsensical "forest of weaver's beams", and seems to have been copied from Goliath's weaponry (Goliath has a spear "with a shaft like a weaver's beam"). Dr. Baruch Halpern believes that David's opponent probably had no name originally, being referred to simply as "the Philistine" (the name Goliath is applied to him only twice in 1 Samuel 17): "Most likely, storytellers displaced the deed from the otherwise obscure Elhanan onto the more famous character, David."^[11]

GOLIATH AND THE PHILISTINES

Potsherd inscribed with the two names "alwt" and "wlt", etymologically related to the name Goliath

[Tell es-Safi](#), the biblical Gath and traditional home of Goliath, has been the subject of extensive excavations by Israel's [Bar-Ilan University](#). The archaeologists have established that this was one of the largest of the Philistine cities until destroyed in the 9th century BC, an event from which it never recovered. An important find relating to Goliath is the discovery of a potsherd, reliably dated to the 10th to mid 9th centuries BC, inscribed with the two names "alwt" and "wlt". While the names are not directly connected with the biblical Goliath, they are etymologically related and demonstrate that the name fits with the context of late-10th/early-9th century BC Philistine culture. The name "Goliath" itself is non-Semitic and has been linked with the [Lydian](#) name "Alyattes", which also fits the Philistine context of the biblical Goliath story.^[12] [Aren Maeir](#), director of the excavation, comments: "Here we have very nice evidence [that] the name Goliath appearing in the Bible in the context of the story of David and Goliath ... is not some later literary creation."^[13]

GOLIATH AND THE GREEKS

In 2004 [Azzan Yadin](#) suggested that the armour described in 1 Samuel 17 is typical of Greek armour of the 6th century BC rather than of [Philistine](#) armour of the 10th century, and that narrative formulae such as the settlement of battle by single combat between champions is characteristic of the Homeric epics (the Iliad) but not of the ancient Near East. Yadin also suggested that the designation of Goliath as אִישׁ הַבִּינְיָיִם, "man of the in-between" (a longstanding difficulty in translating 1 Samuel 17) appears to be a borrowing from Greek "man of the *metaikhmion* (μεταίχμιον)."^[14]

[Martin Litchfield West](#) has pointed out that a story very similar to that of David and Goliath appears in

the [Iliad](#), where the young [Nestor](#) fights and conquers the giant Ereuthalion.[\[15\]](#) Each giant wields a distinctive weapon - an iron club in Ereuthalion's case, a massive bronze spear in Goliath's; each giant, clad in armour, comes out of the enemy's massed array to challenge all the warriors in the opposing army; in each case the seasoned warriors are afraid, and the challenge is taken up by a stripling, the youngest in his family (Nestor is the twelfth son of [Neleus](#), David the eighth son of [Jesse](#)). In each case an older and more experienced father figure (Nestor's own father, David's patron Saul) tells the boy that he is too young and inexperienced, but in each case the gods (or in David's case, God) comes to the young hero's aid and the giant is left sprawling on the ground. Nestor, fighting on foot, then takes the chariot of his enemy, while David, on foot, takes the sword of Goliath. The enemy army then flees, the victors pursue and slaughter them and return with their booty, and the boy-hero is acclaimed by the people.[\[16\]](#)

LATER TRADITIONS:

The authors of the [Babylonian Talmud](#) gave Goliath a pedigree suited to his character as the adversary of David: [Sotah](#) 42b tells that he was a son of [Orpah](#), the sister-in-law of [Ruth](#), David's own grandmother. The [Ruth Rabbah](#), a haggadic and homiletic interpretation of the [Book of Ruth](#), makes the blood-relationship even closer, considering [Orpah](#) and Ruth to have been full sisters. Orpah was said to have made a pretense of accompanying Ruth but after forty paces left her. Thereafter she led a dissolute life, and what happened later is described in the [Jerusalem Talmud](#)[\[17\]](#): Goliath was born by [polyspermy](#), and had about one hundred [fathers](#).

The Talmud stresses Goliath's ungodliness: his taunts before the Israelites included the boast that it was he who had captured the [Ark of the Covenant](#) and brought it to the temple of [Dagon](#); and his challenges to combat were made at morning and evening in order to disturb the Israelites in their prayers. His armour weighed 60 tons, according to rabbi [Hanina](#); 120, according to rabbi [Abba bar Kahana](#); and his sword, which became the sword of David, had marvellous powers. On his death it was found that his heart carried the image of Dagon, who thereby also came to a shameful downfall.[\[18\]](#)

In [Pseudo-Philo](#), believed to have been composed between 135 BC and 70 AD, David picks up seven stones and writes on them the names of his fathers, his own name, and the name of God, one name per stone; then, speaking to Goliath, he says: "Hear this word before you die: were not the two woman from whom you and I were born, sisters? and your mother was Orpah and my mother Ruth..." After David strikes Goliath with the stone he runs to Goliath before he dies and Goliath says, "Hurry and kill me and rejoice," and David replies, "Before you die, open your eyes and see your slayer;" Goliath sees an angel and tells David that it is not he who has killed him but the angel. Pseudo-Philo then goes on to say that the angel of the Lord changes David's appearance so that no one recognizes him, and thus Saul asks who he is.[\[19\]](#)

References

1. [^ Isam 17.](#)
2. [^](#) English translations give "The LORD" at this point for the Hebrew YHWH, which is not normally written in full.
3. [^ Outline of then textual history of Samuel.](#)

4. [^ Variants of Bible Manuscripts.](#)
5. [^ Compare texts of short and long versions of 1 Samuel 17.](#)
6. [^ 1 Samuel 17:49](#) describes how David "took out a stone, and slung it, and struck (נכח) the Philistine on his forehead ... and he fell on his face to the ground;" 17:50 describes how "David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him;" 1 Samuel 17:51 describes how David "took [Goliath's] sword and drew it out of its sheath, and killed (מת) him, and cut off his head with it."
7. [^ See end of section, "The Effects of Oral Tradition"](#)
8. [^ 2 Samuel 21](#)
9. [^ 1 Chronicles 20](#)
10. [^ Ralph W. Klein, Narrative Texts: Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, see section "Representative Changes in Chronicles of Texts Taken from Samuel-Kings"](#). Compare 1 Samuel 16:1, "I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite (beit-ha'lahmi), for I have found among his sons a king for me."
11. [^ David's Secret Demons](#), Baruch Halpern, 2004.
12. [^ Tell es-Safi/Gath weblog.](#) and [Bar-Ilan University](#); For the editio princeps and an in-depth discussion of the inscription, see now: Maeir, A.M., Wimmer, S.J., Zukerman, A., and Demsky, A. 2008 (In press). An Iron Age I/IIA Archaic Alphabetic Inscription from Tell es-Safi/Gath: Paleography, Dating, and Historical-Cultural Significance. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*.
13. <http://www.smh.com.au/news/science/tall-tale-of-a-philistine-researchers-unearth-a-goliath-cereal-bowl/2005/11/14/1131951099130.html?oneclick=true>
14. [^ Azzan Yadin's 'Goliath's Armor and the Israelite Collective Memory,'](#) appeared in *Vetus Testamentum* 54:373-95 (2004). See also [Israel Finkelstein](#), "The Philistines in the Bible: A Late Monarchic Perspective", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 27:131:67. For a brief online overview, see [Higgaion](#), a blog by Christopher Heard, Associate Professor of Religion at Pepperdine University.
15. [^ Homer, Iliad](#) Book 7 ll.132-160
16. [^ M.L.West](#), *The East Face of Helicon. West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1997 pp.370,376
17. [^ Yebamoth, 24b](#)
18. [^ For a brief overview of Talmudic traditions on Goliath, see Jewish Encyclopedia, "Goliath"](#)
19. [^ Charlesworth, James H. 1983. The Old Testament pseudepigrapha vol 2. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday. ISBN 0-385-18813-7 Page 374.](#)

BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS OF SLINGS

The sling is mentioned in the [Bible](#), which provides what is believed to be the oldest textual reference to a sling in the [Book of Judges](#), 20:16. This text was thought to have been written about 1000 BC, but refers to alleged events several centuries earlier.

The Bible also provides one of the more famous slinger stories, the battle between [David](#) and [Goliath](#) from [The First Book of Samuel](#) 17, probably written in the [7th](#) or [6th century BC](#), describing events alleged to have occurred around the [10th century BC](#). In this story, the shepherd David, unarmoured and equipped only with a sling, defeats the warrior champion Goliath with a well aimed shot to the

head. The story serves to emphasise two important aspects of the sling: it is a low-status weapon, but in the hands of an expert it is not to be underestimated.

The sling was the weapon of choice for shepherds in the field due to its usefulness for fending off other animals. This fact is reflected in [The First Book of Samuel](#) 17:34-36 as David convinces [Saul](#) to let him fight Goliath on behalf of the Israelites. Saul must have been convinced of his great skill with the sling for he knows if David is defeated so is the Israelite army. The sling may have been a low-status weapon among the Philistines but it was a perfect weapon for the Israelites for it required little resources and was easily produced. Due to this fact this was a commonly used weapon by the Israelite militia.^[5] Use of the sling is also mentioned in Second Kings 3:25, First Chronicles 12:2, and Second Chronicles 26:14 to further illustrate Israelite use.

COMBAT

It is clear that many ancient peoples used the sling in combat and that organised armies included specialist slingers as well as equipping regular soldiers with slings as a back up weapon. As a [weapon](#), the sling had several clear advantages. In general, a sling bullet lobbed in a high trajectory can achieve ranges approaching 600m^[6] — significantly farther than what could be achieved by bows in any period, including the famed [longbow](#). Arrows were typically loosed along relatively flat trajectories that seldom managed to send them beyond 100 meters. The current [Guinness World Record](#) distance of an object thrown with a sling stands at 477.0 m, set by David Engvall in 1992 using a metal dart. Larry Bray held the previous world record (1982), in which a 52 g stone was thrown 437.1 m. Modern authorities vary widely in their estimates of the effective range of ancient weapons and of course bows and arrows could also have been used to produce a long-range arcing trajectory, but ancient writers repeatedly stress the sling's advantage of range. The sling was light to carry and cheap to produce; ammunition in the form of stones was readily available and often to be found near the site of battle.

Caches of sling ammunition are frequently found at the sites of [Iron Age hill forts](#) of [Europe](#). 40,000 sling stones were found at [Maiden Castle](#) in Southern England. It is proposed that Iron Age hill forts of Europe were designed to maximise the effectiveness of defending slingers.

The hilltop location of the wooden forts would have given the defending slingers the advantage of range over the attackers and multiple concentric ramparts, each higher than the other, would allow a large number of men to create a hailstorm of stone. Consistent with this, it has been noted that, generally, where the natural slope is steep, the defences are narrow and where the slope is less steep, the defences are wider.

CONSTRUCTION

A classic sling is braided from non-elastic material. The classic materials are [flax](#), [hemp](#) or [wool](#); those of the Balearic islanders were said to be made from a type of [rush](#). Flax and hemp resist rotting, but wool is softer and more comfortable.

Braided cords are used in preference to twisted rope because a braid resists twisting when stretched. This improves accuracy.

The overall length of a sling could vary significantly and a slinger may have slings of different lengths, the longer sling being used when greater range is required. A length of about 120 cm (4 ft) would be

typical.

At the centre of the sling, a cradle or pouch is constructed. This may be formed by making a wide braid from the same material as the cords or by inserting a piece of a different material such as [leather](#). The cradle is typically diamond shaped and, in use, will fold around the projectile. Some cradles have a hole or slit that allows the material to wrap around the projectile slightly thereby holding it more securely; some cradles take the form of a net.

At the end of one cord, a finger-loop is formed; this cord is called the retention cord. At the end of the other cord it is common practice to form a knot; this cord is called the release cord. The release cord will be held between finger and thumb to be released at just the right moment. The release cord may have a complex braid to add bulk to the end, this makes the knot easier to hold and the extra weight allows the loose end of a discharged sling to be recovered with a flick of the wrist.

The simplest projectile was the humble stone, preferably well-rounded; suitable ammunition may frequently be found in a river. The size of the projectiles can vary dramatically in size from pebbles weighing no more than 50 g (2 [oz](#)) to fist-sized stones weighing 500 g (1 [lb](#)) or more.

Projectiles could also be purpose-made from [clay](#); this allowed a very high consistency of size and shape of the shot that would be an aid to range and accuracy. Many examples have been found in the archaeological record.

The best ammunition was cast from [lead](#). Leaden sling-bullets were widely used in the Greek and Roman world. For a given mass, lead, being very dense, offers the minimum size and therefore minimum air resistance. In addition, leaden sling-bullets are small and difficult to see in flight

1 Samuel Chapter 17

א וַיֵּאסְפוּ פְּלִשְׁתִּים אֶת-מַחְנֵיהֶם, לְמַלְחָמָה, וַיֵּאסְפוּ, שָׁכָה אֲשֶׁר לַיהוּדָה; וַיִּחַנוּ בֵּין-שׁוֹכָה וּבֵין-עֶזְקָה, בְּאֶפְסַי דָּמִים.

ב וַשָּׂאוּל וְאִישׁ-יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶאֱסָפוּ, וַיִּחַנוּ בְּעֵמֶק הָאֵלָה; וַיַּעֲרֹכוּ מַלְחָמָה, לְקִרְאת פְּלִשְׁתִּים.

ג וּפְלִשְׁתִּים עֲמָדִים אֶל-הָהָר, מִזֶּה, וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל עֲמָדִים אֶל-הָהָר, מִזֶּה; וְהָיָה, בֵּינֵיהֶם.

ד וַיֵּצֵא אִישׁ-הַבָּנִים מִמַּחֲנוֹת פְּלִשְׁתִּים, גִּלְיָת שָׁמוֹ מִגַּת: גְּבוּהוֹ, שֵׁשׁ אַמּוֹת וְזֶרֶת.

ה וְכֹבֵעַ נְחֹשֶׁת עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ, וְשָׂרְיוֹן קֶשֶׁתִּים הוּא לְבוּשׁ; וּמִשְׁקַל הַשָּׂרְיוֹן--חֲמִשָּׁת-אַלְפִים

1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and they were gathered together at Socoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched in the vale of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

3 And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side; and there was a valley between them.

4 And there went out a champion from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

5 And he had a helmet of brass upon his head, and he was clad with a coat of mail; and the weight of

שקלים, נחשת.

ו ומצחת נחשת, על-רגליו; וכידון נחשת, בין כתפיו.

ז וחץ (ועץ) חניתו, כמנור ארגים, ולהבת חניתו, שש-מאות שקלים ברזל; ונשא הצנה, הלך לפניו.

ח ויעמד, ויקרא אל-מערכת ישראל, ויאמר להם, למה תצאו לערף מלחמה: הלא אנכי הפלשתי, ואתם עבדים לשאול--ברו-לכם איש, ויורד אלי.

ט אם-יוכל להלחם אתי, והכני--והיינו לכם, לעבדים; ואם-אני אוכל-לו, והכיתיו--והייתם לנו לעבדים, ועבדתם אתנו.

י ויאמר, הפלשתי, אני חרפתי את-מערכות ישראל, היום הזה; תנו-לי איש, ונלחמה יחד.

יא וישמע שאול וכל-ישראל, את-דברי הפלשתי האלה; ויחתו ויראו, מאד. {פ}

יב ודוד בן-איש אפרתי הזה, מבית לחם יהודה, ושמו ישי, ולו שמנה בנים; והאיש בימי שאול, זקן בא באנשים.

יג וילכו שלשת בני-ישי, הגדלים--הלכו אחרי-שאול, למלחמה; ושם שלשת בניו, אשר הלכו במלחמה--אליאב הבכור ומשנהו אבינדב, והשלשי שמה.

יד ודוד, הוא הקטן; ושלשה, הגדלים, הלכו, אחרי שאול. {ס}

טו ודוד הלך ושב, מעל שאול, לרעות את-צאן אביו, בית-לחם.

טז ויגש הפלשתי, השכם והערב; ויניצב, ארבעים יום. {פ}

יז ויאמר ישי לדוד בנו, קח-נא לאחריך איפת

the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

6 And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a javelin of brass between his shoulders.

7 And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-bearer went before him.

8 And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them: 'Why do ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

9 If he be able to fight with me, and kill me, then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.'

10 And the Philistine said: 'I do taunt the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.'

11 And when Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. {P}

12 Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons; and the man was an old man in the days of Saul, stricken in years among men.

13 And the three eldest sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle; and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the first-born, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

14 And David was the youngest; and the three eldest followed Saul.-- {S}

15 Now David went to and fro from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.--

16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. {P}

17 And Jesse said unto David his son: 'Take now

הקליא הזה, ועשרה לחם, הזה; והרץ הממנה, לאחיר.

יח ואת עשרת חרצי החלב, האלה, תביא, לשר-האלף; ואת-אחיר תפקד לשלום, ואת-ערבתם תקח.

יט ושאל והמה וכל-איש ישראל, בעמק {האלה; גלחמים, עם-פלשתים. }ס

כ וישכם דוד בבקר, ויטש את-הצאן על-שמר, וישא וילך, כאשר צוהו ישי; ויבא, המעגלה, והחיל היצא אל-המערכה, והרעו במלחמה.

כא ותערך ישראל ופלשתים, מערכה לקראת מערכה.

כב ויטש דוד את-הכלים מעליו, על-יד שומר הכלים, וירץ, המערכה; ויבא, וישאל לאחיו לשלום.

כג והוא מדבר עמם, והנה איש הבנים עולה גלית הפלשתי שמו מגת ממערות (ממערכות) פלשתים, וידבר, כדברים האלה; וישמע, דוד.

כד וכל איש ישראל, בראותם את-האיש; וינסו, מפניו, ויראו, מאד.

כה ויאמר איש ישראל, הראיתם האיש העלה הזה--כי לחרף את-ישראל, עלה; והיה האיש אשר-יכנו יעשרנו המלך עשר גדול, ואת-בתו יתן-לו, ואת בית אביו, יעשה חפשי בישראל. }פ

כו ויאמר דוד, אל-האנשים העמדים עמו לאמר, מה-יעשה לאיש אשר יכה את-הפלשתי הלז, והסיר חרפה מעל ישראל: כי מי, הפלשתי הערל הזה, כי חרף, מערכות אלהים חיים.

כז ויאמר לו העם, כדבר הזה לאמר: כה

for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to thy brethren.

18 And bring these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and to thy brethren shalt thou bring greetings, and take their pledge;

19 now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, are in the vale of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.' {S}

20 And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the barricade, as the host which was going forth to the fight shouted for the battle.

21 And Israel and the Philistines put the battle in array, army against army.

22 And David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the army, and came and greeted his brethren.

23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke according to the same words; and David heard them.

24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

25 And the men of Israel said: 'Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to taunt Israel is he come up; and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.' {P}

26 And David spoke to the men that stood by him, saying: 'What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the taunt from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should have taunted the armies of the living God?'

27 And the people answered him after this

יעשה, לאיש אשר יכנו.

כח וישמע אליאב אחיו הגדול, בדברו אל-האנשים; ויחר-אף אליאב בְּדוֹד ויאמר למה-זֶה ירדת, ועל-מי נטשת מעט הצאן ההנה במדבר--אני ידעתי את-זדנך ואת רע לבבך, כי למען ראות המלחמה ירדת.

כט ויאמר דוד, מה עשיתי עתה; הלוא, דבר הוא.

ל ויסב מאצלו אל-מול אחר, ויאמר כדבר הזה; וישבהו העם דבר, כדבר הראשון.

לא וישמעו, הדברים, אשר, דבר דוד; ויגדו לפני-שאול, ויקחהו.

לב ויאמר דוד אל-שאול, אל-יפל לב-אדם עליו; עבדך ילך, ונלחם עם-הפלשתי הזה.

לג ויאמר שאול אל-דוד, לא תוכל ללכת אל-הפלשתי הזה, להלחם, עמו: כי-נער אתה, {והוא איש מלחמה מנערו. }ס

לד ויאמר דוד אל-שאול, רעה היה עבדך לאביו בצאן; ובא הארי ואת-הדוב, ונשא שה מהעדר.

לה ויצאתי אחריו והכתיו, והצלתי מפיו; ויקם עלי--והחזקתי בזקנו, והכתיו והמיתיו.

לו גם את-הארי גם-הדב, הכה עבדך; והיה הפלשתי הערל הזה, כאחד מהם, כי חרף, {מערכת אלהים חיים. }ס

לז ויאמר, דוד, יהוה אשר הצלני מיד הארי ומיד הדב, הוא יצילני מיד הפלשתי הזה; {ס} ויאמר שאול אל-דוד לך, ויהוה יהיה עמך.

manner, saying: 'So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.'

28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said: 'Why art thou come down? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy presumptuousness, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.'

29 And David said: 'What have I now done? Was it not but a word?'

30 And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke after the same manner; and the people answered him after the former manner.

31 And when the words were heard which David spoke, they rehearsed them before Saul; and he was taken to him.

32 And David said to Saul: 'Let no man's heart fail within him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.'

33 And Saul said to David: 'Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.' {S}

34 And David said unto Saul: 'Thy servant kept his father's sheep; and when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock,

35 I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36 Thy servant smote both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath taunted the armies of the living God.' {S}

37 And David said: 'The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.' {S} And Saul said unto David: 'Go, and

לח וַיִּלְבַּשׁ שָׂאוּל אֶת-דָּוִד מִדָּוִד, וַנִּתֵּן קוֹבֵעַ נְחֹשֶׁת עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ; וַיִּלְבַּשׁ אֹתוֹ, שָׂרִיֹן.

לט וַיַּחְגַּר דָּוִד אֶת-חַרְבּוֹ מֵעַל לְמַדְיוֹ וַיֵּאָל לְלַכֵּת, כִּי לֹא-נִסָּה, וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-שָׂאוּל לֹא אוֹכַל לְלַכֵּת בְּאֵלֶּהָ, כִּי לֹא נִסִּיתִי; וַיִּסְרֵם דָּוִד, מֵעַלָּיו.

מ וַיִּקַּח מִקְלוֹ בְּיָדוֹ, וַיִּבְחַר-לוֹ חֲמֹשֶׁה חֲלָקִי-אֲבָנִים מִן-הַנַּחַל וַיִּשֵּׂם אֹתָם בְּכִלְי הָרַעִים אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ וּבִילְקוּט--וַקְלָעוּ בְּיָדוֹ; וַיִּגַּשׁ, אֶל-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי.

מא וַיֵּלֶךְ, הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, הַלֶּךְ וְקָרַב, אֶל-דָּוִד; וְהָאִישׁ נָשָׂא הַצֶּנֶה, לְפָנָיו.

מב וַיִּבֹט הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּרְאֶה אֶת-דָּוִד, וַיִּבְזֶהוּ: כִּי-הָיָה נָעַר, וְאֲדָמְנִי עִם-יָפֶה מְרָאָה.

מג וַיֹּאמֶר הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, אֶל-דָּוִד, הַכֶּלֶב אֲנֹכִי, כִּי-אַתָּה בָּא-אֵלַי בַּמַּקְלוֹת; וַיִּקְלַל הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי אֶת-דָּוִד, בְּאֵלֵהוּ.

מד וַיֹּאמֶר הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, אֶל-דָּוִד: לֵכָה אֵלַי--וְאַתָּנָה אֶת-בְּשָׂרְךָ, לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְבֵהֶמֶת הַשָּׂדֶה. }ס

מה וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד, אֶל-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, אַתָּה בָּא אֵלַי, בְּחַרְבַּ וּבַחֲנִיִּית וּבַכִּידוֹן; וְאֲנֹכִי בָּא-אֵלֶיךָ, בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, אֱלֹהֵי מִעֲרֹכֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר חָרַפְתָּ.

מו הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִסְגְּרֶךָ יְהוָה בְּיָדִי וְהִכִּיתֶךָ, וְהִסְרֵתִי אֶת-רֹאשְׁךָ מֵעַלְיָ, וְנָתַתִּי פֶגֶר מַחְנֵה פְּלִשְׁתִּים הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, לְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְחַיֵּי הָאָרֶץ; וַיִּדְעוּ, כָּל-הָאָרֶץ, כִּי יֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים, לְיִשְׂרָאֵל.

מז וַיִּדְעוּ כָּל-הַקְּהָל הַזֶּה, כִּי לֹא בְּחַרְבַּ וּבַחֲנִיִּית יְהוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה: כִּי לַיהוָה הַמַּלְחָמָה, וַנִּתֵּן אֹתְכֶם

the LORD shall be with thee.'

38 And Saul clad David with his apparel, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail.

39 And David girded his sword upon his apparel, and he essayed to go[, but could not]; for he had not tried it. And David said unto Saul: 'I cannot go with these; for I have not tried them.' And David put them off him.

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his scrip; and his sling was in his hand; and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came nearer and nearer unto David; and the man that bore the shield went before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance.

43 And the Philistine said unto David: 'Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?' And the Philistine cursed David by his god.

44 And the Philistine said to David: 'Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.' {S}

45 Then said David to the Philistine: 'Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast taunted.

46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel;

47 and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD'S, and He will give you into

בַּיָּדָנוּ. }ס

מח וְהָיָה כִּי-קָם הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּקְרַב לַקְרָאת דָּוִד; וַיִּמְהַר דָּוִד, וַיֵּרֶץ הַמַּעֲרָכָה לַקְרָאת הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי.

מט וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד אֶת-יָדוֹ אֶל-הַכֶּלִי, וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁם אֶבֶן וַיִּקְלַע, וַיַּךְ אֶת-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, אֶל-מִצְחוֹ; וַתִּטְבַּע הָאֶבֶן בְּמִצְחוֹ, וַיִּפֹּל עַל-פָּנָיו אֶרְצָה.

נ וַיִּחַזַּק דָּוִד מִן-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי בַקֶּלַע וּבָאֶבֶן, וַיַּךְ אֶת-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּמְתְּהוּ; וַחֲרַב, אֵין בְּיַד-דָּוִד.

נא וַיֵּרֶץ דָּוִד וַיַּעֲמֵד אֶל-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי וַיִּקַּח אֶת-חַרְבּוֹ וַיִּשְׁלֹפֶה מִתַּעֲרָה, וַיִּמְתְּתֵהוּ, וַיַּכְרֵת-בָּהּ, אֶת-רֵאשׁוֹ; וַיִּרְאוּ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים כִּי-מַת גְּבוּרָם, וַיִּנְסוּ.

נב וַיִּקְמוּ אַנְשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיהוּדָה וַיִּרְעוּ, וַיִּרְדְּפוּ אֶת-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים, עַד-בּוֹאֵךְ גַּיָּא, וְעַד שַׁעֲרֵי עֲקֵרוֹן; וַיִּפְּלוּ חֲלָלֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים, בְּדֶרֶךְ שַׁעֲרִים, וְעַד-גַּת, וְעַד-עֲקֵרוֹן.

נג וַיָּשְׁבוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִדֶּלֶק אַחֲרֵי פְלִשְׁתִּים; וַיִּשְׁסוּ, אֶת-מַחְנֵיהֶם.

נד וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד אֶת-רֵאשׁ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, וַיָּבֵאֵהוּ }ס
{יְרוּשָׁלַם; וְאֶת-כְּלָיו, שָׁם בָּאֵהָלוּ.

נה וַכִּרְאוֹת שְׂאוֹל אֶת-דָּוִד, יֵצֵא לַקְרָאת הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, אָמַר אֶל-אַבְנֵר שֵׁר הַצָּבָא, בֶּן-מִיזָה הַנֶּעַר אַבְנֵר; וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְנֵר, חִי-נִפְשֶׁךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ אִם-יִדְעֵתִי.

נו וַיֹּאמֶר, הַמֶּלֶךְ: שְׂאֵל אֶתְּהָ, בֶּן-מִיזָה }ס
{הָעָלָם.

נז וַכְּשׁוּב דָּוִד, מִהַכּוֹת אֶת-הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, וַיִּקַּח אֹתוֹ אַבְנֵר, וַיָּבֵאֵהוּ לִפְנֵי שְׂאוֹל; וַרְאֵשׁ הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי, בְּיָדוֹ.

our hand.' {S}

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

51 And David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their mighty man was dead, they fled.

52 And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou comest to Gai, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53 And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their camp.

54 And David took the head of the philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent. {S}

55 And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host: 'Abner, whose son is this youth?' And Abner said: 'As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.'

56 And the king said: 'Inquire thou whose son the stripling is.' {S}

57 And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

נח וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו שְׂאוּל, בֶּן-מִי אַתָּה הַנָּעַר;
וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד, בֶּן-עֶבְדְּךָ יֵשׁוּ בֵּית הַלְחָמִי.

58 And Saul said to him: 'Whose son art thou, thou young man?' And David answered: 'I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.'

LAG BA-OMER RESOURCES ON-LINE

1. JTSA HOLIDAY IMAGE DATABANK

http://www.jtsa.edu/News/JTS_Holiday_Image_Databank.xml

2. THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE OF CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM: HOLIDAY RESOURCES

http://www.uscj.org/Lag_BOmer7445.html

3. JEWISH AGENCY FOR ISRAEL: DEPARTMENT FOR JEWISH ZIONIST EDUCATION

<http://www.jafi.org.il/education/festivals/shavuot/lagba.html>

4. THE HOMER OMER CALENDAR [for counting the Omer]

<http://homer.jvibe.com/>

5. THE NATIONAL JEWISH OUTREACH PROGRAM

<http://www.njop.org/html/lagbaomermain.html>

6. THE SEFORIM BLOG: Moadim le-Simcha, by R. Tuviah Freund

<http://seforim.blogspot.com/2008/05/lag-ba-omer-and-upsherins-in-recent.html>

7. CAJE CURRICULUM BANK

http://www.caje.org/learn/fs_pin.html

8. JACOB RICHMAN'S HOT SITES: LAG BA-OMER

<http://www.jr.co.il/hotsites/j-hdayla.htm>

Archery Equipment

Hall's Archery Sales
291 Middle Tpke W
Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 646-0443
www.hallsarrow.com