

# WORK STATEMENT

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### Lag B'omer

Mea Shearim is one of the oldest ultra-orthodox Jewish neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. The Orthodox Jews there live a very modest and predetermined life in absolute devotion to their religion. While men dedicate their time to studying the Thora, women are responsible for raising the kids and supporting and feeding the family.

Once a year they celebrate Lag B'Omer, a Jewish holiday that occurs on the 33rd day of the Omer Count, a period that begins on the second night of Passover and continues until Shavuot. It is mainly dedicated to the life and the teachings of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, a celebrated sage, and author of the great Kabbalistic work the Zohar, a landmark text of Jewish mysticism. Lag B'Omer also marks the day of the Rabbi's passing approximately 18 centuries ago.

In 2019 Lag B'Omer took place on Wednesday May 22nd, the second day of my first visit to Israel. It was unusually hot. The temperature hit almost 40°C and only a few people left their houses during the day. But as the sun slowly started to set people started to gather in the streets. By the time it was dark, despite the ban due to the extreme heat, the fires were lit mostly by young boys and the night turned into a giant celebration. Traditional Jewish Lag B'omer music was playing at different venues where men were dancing around the fires, while women and children gathered in the locally restricted areas that were designated for them.

As a woman who grew up in a liberal society in Germany this event seemed to me like from a different world. I felt like I was teleported to another century long before my time. While I couldn't really identify myself with the events I found a seductive beauty in the pureness and simplicity of this traditional celebration.