

LAG B'OMER MESSAGE TO YESHIVAH STUDENTS

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AT STUDENTS' RALLY, LAG B'OMER, 5713

We are in the midst of the days of Sefirah, and today, Lag B'Omer, is the dividing day between ~~between~~ the somewhat more numerous days before Lag B'Omer, and the fewer days after Lag B'Omer. Lag B'Omer itself is, ~~a holiday~~ *in certain respects, a day of rejoicing.* The days of ~~the~~ Sefirah, and particularly Lag B'Omer, remind us of the experiences of Rabbi Akiba and his disciples, and bring a very important message, especially for Yeshivah students.

*was the turning point in, how did he become such a great man?*  
What ~~happened~~ *Life?* to Rabbi Akiba? The Talmud tells us that when Rabbi Akiba set out to begin a life of learning, he was not at all ~~in~~ certain how far he would go. Moreover, he was faced with great hardships, being very poor. However, some drops of water and a hard rock taught him a lesson. Observing the effect of constantly dripping waters on the hard rock, he said to himself: ~~Harder than the rock~~ The rock is hard, and the water is soft, and the drops are small. Yet, even soft and small drops of water, falling on the hard rock steadily, day after day, ~~month~~ week after week, month after month, and year after year, break through the hard rock! *25 NY* *this led him to the certain conclusion* In the same way, no matter how difficult it may seem to become a scholar, yet if one begins to study with a firm will, with determination and perseverance, steadily without let-up, turning days into weeks, and weeks into months, and years of diligent study, one is eventually bound to triumph, and become a man of learning. Rabbi Akiba took heart from this lesson, and, as you know, he did become one of the greatest Tannaim. The Talmud tells us further, that although Rabbi Akiba had been very poor, he ~~later~~ *also a* was blessed with great riches. This was ~~the~~ reward for devoting himself to study, with no thought for anything else.

The lesson to all Yeshivah students is clear. When they set out on the road to learning, and the road seems to them long and difficult, and they begin to doubt whether this road is for them, ~~or~~ whether they will ever succeed, or whether this road will be useful to them in their later life ---

The Sefirah days should dispel all such doubts and discouragement. For

these days teach us and remind us of the experience of Rabbi Akiba: Where there is a ~~firm will and~~ sincere desire to learn, where there is a firm will and determination to succeed, success on the road to learning is certain. Moreover, in time this brings also success in other things, and blessings of true happiness, as we are taught also in this week's Sidrah: ~~Rashbi~~ "If ye shalt walk in My statutes," which Rashi explains to mean, If you shall <sup>your utmost</sup> truly make ~~an effort~~ to learn the Torah, then you will be blessed with all those Divine blessings which are enumerated in the Sidrah.

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So much for the lesson which Rabbi Akiba <sup>life-story</sup> teaches us. What do we learn from the experience of Rabbi Akiba's students?

Rabbi Akiba had two kinds of students. Those whose fate was linked with the days before Lag B'Omer, ~~and they were in the majority~~; and those whose fate was linked with <sup>and</sup> the days after Lag B'Omer. Both types ~~existed~~ had the very same teacher, Rabbi Akiba; both kinds lived at the same time, and under the same circumstances. Yet, of the first kind, nothing was left; we do not even know their names. The second type, however, that is, the students associated with the days after <sup>and</sup> Lag B'Omer, although they were fewer in number, yet they succeeded most wonderfully: their teachings, their names, continue to shine brightly in our life to this day; they are immortal.

What was the cause of such a radical difference between them? What was the secret of success of those <sup>other</sup> disciples of Rabbi Akiba? Their success was due to the fact that they had applied themselves to study with all their efforts and determination, ~~they studied, moreover~~ with Ahavath-Israel, with mutual love, ~~with~~ and peace, and respect for one another. The first lot of students, on the other hand, did not consider these things important; that proved their undoing and failure.

It is expected and demanded of Yeshivah students in general, <sup>and particularly</sup> of those attending a Yeshivah full of the spirit of Yirath-Shomaim and Chassidism, ~~and~~

that they should know and remember always, that their future is in their own hands: If they will endeavor to study the Torah with Ahavath-Israel, live in peace with their fellow students, and with mutual respect for one another, their names, too, will be an honor and credit <sup>to</sup> ~~for~~ the Yeshivah, and they will become good Jews, great Jews, and be a credit and pride to the whole Jewish people.

*to make such a firm resolution, and to succeed,*  
May G-d help you in your determination to learn the Torah; ~~and~~ to learn it in accordance with the wishes and hopes of its great founder, my father-in-law of saintly memory, <sup>all</sup> ~~from whom we derive strength~~ *who blessed every one of his students* to succeed in this trodden path. Then we may be sure that you will, indeed, succeed in your learning, and also in your later life. It will then be possible to proclaim: "See the <sup>seedlings</sup> ~~fruits~~ we have grown!" Such is the fruit of a true Yeshivah ~~training~~ upbringing. They learned properly, *therefore* and they have succeeded in everything!"

Lag B'Omer indicates the road, and inspires courage. Lag B'Omer brings an end to the pre-Lag B'Omer days and ways, and introduces a new order, the order of determination to learn, ~~of learning~~ <sup>also</sup> with Ahavath-Israel which is ~~the necessary~~ <sup>also</sup> step and ~~determination~~ <sup>will</sup> preparation for Ahavath-Ashem and Ahavath-Hatorah. Then G-d sends blessing and success, from His full and ample hand, to each and every one of you, your parents and all around you.

G-d bless you with much success

*on B. Hatzpocho.*