A MESSAGE

From the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

Rabbi Akiva and his students play an important part in the story of Lag B’omer.
Let us see what we can learn from the life of Rabbi Akiva.
Our sages tell us that Rabbi Akiva didn’t begin to learn Torah until he was forty years old. When he began, it was very difficult for him, and he wondered if he would ever succeed.
Then, Rabbi Akiva learned a lesson in a very unusual way. One day, he noticed water dripping onto a rock. He realized that the water had worn away part of the rock, creating a hole. Rabbi Akiva wondered, “How is it possible for the soft water to break through the hard rock?” Rabbi Akiva understood that the water had been dripping day after day, week after week, and month after month, until it had finally worn through the rock.
Rabbi Akiva realized that if water could penetrate hard rock, then surely, if he learned Torah with all his might, he would be able to overcome all the challenges and become a true Torah scholar.
And so it happened. Rabbi Akiva became one of the greatest teachers of Torah of all time.
Additionally, our sages relate that Rabbi Akiva was a very poor man. But when he devoted his life to learning Torah, without being distracted by anything else, G-d blessed him, and he became very wealthy.
There is much for us to learn from this story. When we begin to learn Torah, we may find it very hard, and think that the Torah just isn’t for us. We think that we might not succeed, or that Torah won’t help us in life.
Lag B’omer teaches us, that if we really try, with a sincere effort, we will succeed in our studies and other endeavors.

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