



### Torah, the Jew's Craft

18 Iyar, 5744-1984

One of the main reasons we rejoice on *Lag B'omer* is, as the Midrash relates, in celebration of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, one of Rabbi Akiva's greatest students.

When *Lag B'omer* arrived he said, "This is the day of my rejoicing" — this day is *his simcha*. Therefore, he **requests** and **expects** of each and every Jew to share in his joy.

His craft, his true profession, was Torah study — far more so than Rabbi Akiva's other students.

And this prompts the question: if even Rabbi Akiva's other students were not on the level where Torah was "their craft," as it was for Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, how can we expect even small children to learn from this?!

We've discussed this at length in the past. It is small children in particular, who have no worries — they don't have to make a living; their good parents provide them with all their needs, and free them for their mission: "From the age a child can speak, his father teaches him Torah": **saying** the words, and afterward, **understanding** Torah.

Particularly for small children, before they have to worry about *parnassah*, Torah can readily be their craft. They can utilize all their time to study God's Torah, and study it as God desires: "Great is study which leads to deed" — to the fulfillment of *mitzvos*.

And in doing so, they create a living example and influence their parents: "The fathers' hearts shall come back — through the children."

When parents see how their little son or daughter, whenever the child has a free moment, eagerly recites a verse in Torah or a teaching from Oral Torah, it makes a deep and broad impression. They, too, will do all they can to utilize every free minute, and make an effort to increase their leisure time and free themselves from their concerns, to have a few rewarding hours — with a peaceful mind and body — when Torah study can be their only profession.

As often mentioned, a craftsman also eats, drinks, sleeps, and is involved in other matters. Nevertheless, when one asks: "In *what* does he live?" "In *what* is his fervor?"; "In *what* does he express his talents and his abilities?" — they all find expression in his craft.

Likewise, everyone, including Jews — in accordance with Torah, and as God has arranged matters — must spend some time eating, drinking, sleeping and such.



## פרשת בהר-בחוקותי

But a Jew must remember his true “profession,” even when eating, drinking and sleeping. What does he dream of? As we see with a craftsman: whatever he thinks about during the day, he dreams of at night. “Your thoughts return on your bed” – he dreams of his craft.

Certainly when he eats or drinks, he knows that it is immaterial, “extra.” What’s important is his “profession.”

What is the profession of each and every Jew – even while eating, drinking, strolling or sleeping? His profession is “*his* Torah” – the Torah that God bequeathed him as an inheritance, a bequest. The Torah he learns becomes “*his*.”

Therefore, everyone – even one who works, and one who is extremely busy, and even one who, God forbid, suffers hardship – can, as the Rambam rules, pause at regular times during the day when his only “profession” is Torah.

And these times are the focus of the **entire** day, permeating the remaining hours as well, so that throughout the day he is a “professional.” And what is his “profession”? Torah.

