

## He called to Moshe. (1:1)

In this *pasuk*, the *Torah* spells Hashem's summons to Moshe with a miniature *aleph*. The smaller size of this letter makes it stand out as if it were a word by itself. **Horav Yosef Zundel Salant, zl**, interprets the *aleph's* size in a novel manner. He cites the *Midrash* in *Sefer Eichah* in which *Chazal* extol the significance of young children in the eyes of Hashem. They say that when the *Sanhedrin* was exiled from Yerushalayim, the *Shechinah* did not accompany them. Likewise, when the *mishmaros*, who were the various "watches" of *Kohanim* that served in the *Bais Hamikdash*, were exiled, the *Shechinah* remained. Only after the *tinokos shel bais rabbon*, young school children, were driven into exile, did the *Shechinah* cease to dwell in *Klal Yisrael*. It was only in the merit of the *Torah* studied by such pure souls as the young children that the *Shechinah* continued to abide in *Klal Yisrael*.

*Horav* Salant suggests that this is the underlying interpretation of the *pasuk* in *Shemos 25:22*, "*It is there that I will set My meetings with you, and I will speak with you from atop the Kapores from between the two Keruvim that are on the Aron.*" *Rashi* explains that when Hashem spoke to Moshe, the Voice came from Heaven to the top of the *Kapores*. It emanated out from between the *Keruvim* to Moshe *Rabbeinu*. Apparently, a strong spiritual significance is attributed to the *Keruvim*. *Chazal* teach us that the *Keruvim* looked like little children. This implies that in the *zechus*, merit, of little children, Hashem constricts the *Shechinah* in order to teach *Torah* and *mitzvos* to *Klal Yisrael*.

We find this idea connected to the giving of the *Torah*. Referring to the *pasuk* in *Tehillim 8:3*, "*Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have established strength*", the *Midrash* relates that when Hashem was about to give the *Torah* to *Klal Yisrael*, He questioned who was to guarantee its observance. The people responded that they would be responsible to uphold the *Torah*. Hashem did not accept them as guarantors, noting that they were themselves too heavily in debt to Him. "Who is there that is not indebted to You?" asked *Klal Yisrael*. "The young children whose commitment is pure and virtuous. They will serve as security that the *Torah* will be observed. I will give you the *Torah* through the medium of their mouths. If you do not heed the *Torah*, I will collect from you the security--the young, innocent children."

Thus, as Hashem's voice emanates from between the *Keruvim*, it begins with a miniature *aleph*. At times, the word "*aleph*" is defined as, "to teach." This implies that Hashem speaks to us in the merit of the "little *aleph*"--our commitment to teaching *Torah* to young children. The *aleph zeira*, is a metaphor for Jewish education. Our resolve to see to it that every Jewish child is provided with a Jewish education is the catalyst for the *Shechinah's* choice to repose among us. Indeed, we may be so bold as to posit that Hashem's relationship will be manifest with us commensurate with the type and manner of education we avail our children. We will receive in accordance to that which we commit.