

## You shall make two Keruvim of gold – hammered out shall you make them. (25:18)

*Rashi* teaches that the *Keruvim* had the image of young children. The *Mishkan/Bais Hamikdash* was the holiest place on the Jewish spiritual landscape. The *Kodesh HaKedoshim*, Holy of Holies, was the holiest place in the Sanctuary. The penultimate seat of holiness within the *Kodesh HaKedoshim* was the *Keruvim* which rested atop the *Ketores*, Cover, of the *Aron Hakodesh*. It was from there that Hashem's Voice would emanate out to speak with Moshe *Rabbeinu*. The *Keruvim* had the image of children. In *Sefer Bereishis*, when the Torah relates Adam *HaRishon*'s expulsion from *Gan Eden*, two *Keruvim* stood at the entrance to the holy Garden. Interestingly, in his commentary in the *pasuk* (*Bereishis* 3:24), *Rashi* defines *Keruvim* as *Malachei chabalah*, Angels of destruction. How are we to reconcile these contrasting definitions, especially in light of the fact that the *Keruvim* represented the holiest place on earth?

**Horav Moshe Mordechai Epstein, zl**, offers a classic explanation, which has often been realized. *Keruvim* symbolize children. Indeed, when they are young and full of potential, they are the essence of sweetness. In them lies the hope for the future, the aspirations that tomorrow will be a better, more productive day. If we educate them properly, by placing them above the Holy Ark which represents the Torah, they will serve as the realization of our dreams. The Torah will guide and mold them, shaping their lives so that they grow up into G-d-fearing, observant Jews, who are contributing members of the Jewish community. If, however, we are lax in fulfilling our responsibilities, we allow them to become angels of destruction. A Torah education makes the difference – as anyone who does not bury his head in the ground is aware.

When a child follows in the prescribed path of Torah, he brings merit to his parents and mentors. If he does not – and (I must add) it is most often due to their refusal to provide or support a Torah education – we have no idea of the damage and destruction they can generate. It is true, however, that some parents try to the best of their ability to guide their child properly, but, sadly, for a number of reasons (which are beyond the scope of this *dvar Torah*), it simply does not work. They will not be held accountable. It is only when parents ignore and/or undermine the work that others do to help our children that we pay dearly for their lack of achievement.

*Horav Shlomo Levinstein, Shlita*, quoted a powerful insight from *Horav Zalmen Sorotzkin, zl*, when he spoke at the inaugural dinner establishing *Chinuch Atzmai*, Torah schools for Israel. The *Rav* cited the *Talmud* 45b quoting Rabbi Yirmiyah in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai who said, "I have seen *bonei aliyah*, people of the highest level (spiritual elites), and they are few. If there are one thousand, then my son (Rabbi Eliezer) and I are among them; if there are one hundred, my son and I are among them; if there are (but) two, my son and I are they." *Rav Zalmen* wondered why Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai stopped with two. Why did he not go on, stating that if there is one who is able to receive the Countenance of Hashem – it is he.

The *Lutzker Rav* explained that Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai is teaching us that *Klal Yisrael's* purpose, its *raison d'être*, is fulfilled when its legacy endures. When a father successfully transmits his heritage to the next generation in such a manner that he can declare, "My son and I," our commitment to Hashem persists and is able to prevail over the vagaries of time and the challenges that arise with each generation. When it is "myself" alone, when there is no concern, no hope for a Jewish future, what really do we have to declare?