



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

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The Torah Spoke in Reference to Four Sons

In the **Haggadah of Pesah** we say:
"ברוך המקום ברוך הוא, ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל ברוך הוא. כנגד ארבעה בנים דיברה תורה..."
Blessed is the Omnipresent, blessed is He; blessed is He who gave the Torah to His people Israel, blessed is He. The Torah spoke in reference to four sons..."

The phrase "כנגד ארבעה בנים" means that the Torah addresses itself to each of the four sons individually, meeting each one where he is. This itself carries profound depth, as we will see.

EVERY JEW'S PORTION IN TORAH

Rav Haim Soloveitchik¹ explains that the intent of this passage is to praise Hashem, who gave the Torah not only to a nation - but to every single Jewish individual. Torah is unlike any other field of wisdom. In other disciplines, books are written for specific levels: children study from one set of books, adults from another; scholars read what the unlearned cannot grasp.

But the Torah, both Written and Oral, is designed for all ages and all levels. A child and a great Torah scholar may learn the very same Gemara or Rashi yet each will discover meaning according to his own depth and understanding. Torah belongs to everyone, at every stage of life.

1. Haggadah shel Pesach MiBeit Levi

"כנגד ארבעה בנים" This is the meaning of "דיברה תורה – the Torah speaks **to each son, to each Jew, on his level.**

DESTINED TO SPEAK WITH THE SHEKHINAH

Since the Torah is suited to everyone, we must recognize that every child has the potential to grow in Torah and to reach exalted spiritual heights. Thus, every Jewish child should be regarded as one who is "עתיד להיות גדול בישראל" – destined to become great in Israel.

The Rama rules in *Shulkhan Arukh*²:
לא יניקו תינוק מן הגויה, אם אפשר בישראלית, דחלב כותית מטמאם הלב

A Jewish child should not nurse from a non-Jewish woman if a Jewish nurse is available, for the milk of a gentile dulls the heart.

The source of this halakha is in the words of Hazal³. When Miriam said to Pharaoh's daughter⁴:

האלף וקראתי לך אשה מינקת מן העברית ותינק לך את הילד

Shall I go and call for you a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you?"

Hazal explain that Moshe refused to nurse from a non-Jewish woman, for a mouth destined to speak with the Shekhinah could not ingest something impure. Rashi there

2. Yoreh De'ah 81:7

3. Sotah 12b

4. Shemot 2:7

comments:

מלמד שהחזירתו על מצריות הרבה לינק ולא ינק,
לפי שהיה עתיד לדבר עם השכינה.

This teaches that they brought him to many Egyptian women to nurse, but he would not nurse, since he was destined to speak with the Shekhinah.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky⁵ raises a question: How can we derive a general halakha from Moshe Rabbeinu? After all, Moshe was unique, destined to speak face-to-face with the Divine Presence. Why should this apply to every Jewish child?

Rav Kamenetsky answers powerfully: Every child has the potential to speak with the Shekhinah. Therefore, we must raise and educate every child on a level befitting that destiny – with the awareness that each Jewish soul carries within it the possibility of becoming like Moshe Rabbeinu.

TORAH SPEAKS TO EVERY JEW

“כנגד ארבעה בנים, כנגד ארבעה בנים, דיברה תורה”
“דיברה תורה”, remind us that Torah speaks to **every Jew** – the wise, the rebellious, the simple, and even the one who cannot ask. No one is excluded, and every Jew has a portion in Torah.

Rav Haim Soloveitchik teaches that Torah is unique in that it meets each of us at our own level. Rav Kamenetsky expands this truth even further: we must see in every child the spark of Moshe Rabbeinu, one who is “עתיד לדבר עם השכינה”.

This vision transforms the way we view ourselves and others: no Jew is too far, too small, or too unworthy. Each of us is addressed by Torah, and each of us holds the potential for greatness. ■

5. Emet LeYaakov, Shemot 2:7



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