

The Lord will cause the Increase!

This weeks reading, from Parashat Shemot (*Shemot / Exodus 1:1-6:1*), the opening verses detail the sons of Israel who had come to Egypt, that Joseph and all of his brothers had passed away and a new king arose in that did not know Joseph (*1:1-7*). This king feared the children of Israel and placed them into slavery (*1:9-14*). The narrative continues with Pharaoh commanding that all boys of the Hebrew's to be killed, and Moshe is born (*1:15-2:10*). According to the Scriptures, Moshe grew up knowing who he was, born from the Hebrews (*2:11-12*) and one day he protected his brethren by killing an Egyptian man. Out of fear for his life he fled from Egypt to Midian (*2:13-15*). At this time God heard the cry of His people and remembers the covenant that he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and God calls to Moshe from the midst of the burning bush (*2:24-3:10*). The Lord gives Moshe signs, the staff that turns into a serpent (*4:3-5*) and a hand covered in Tzaraat (*4:6-8*). The Lord tells Moshe that He will be with him and his brother Aaron to give them words to speak to Pharaoh and the ability to perform signs before him and all of Egypt. Moshe went to Goshen, assembled all of the elders of the sons of Israel and spoke to them the words of the Lord and performed the signs God had given them before the people. Moshe and Aaron then spoke to Pharaoh but Pharaoh would not let the people go and Pharaoh said the people are lazy in their request to make a sacrifice to their God (*5:7-9*).

כתבי הקודש / The Holy Scriptures	
<p style="text-align: center;">ספר שמות פרק א</p> <p>ז ובני ישראל פרו וישרצו וירבו ויעצמו במאד ומאד ותמלא הארץ אתם:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">מדרש רבה שמות פרשה א סימן ח</p> <p>ח וימת יוסף וכל אחיו וכל הדור ההוא, ללמדך שכל זמן שהיה אחד מהם קיים מאותן שירדו למצרים לא שעבדו המצרים ביש"אל, ובני ישראל פרו וישרצו וע"פ שמת יוסף ואחיו אלהיהם לא מת, אלא ובני ישראל פרו וישרצו, ד"א כל אחת ואחת ילדה ששה בכרס אחד, שנאמר ובני ישראל פרו וישרצו וגו', וי"א שנים עשר דכתיב פרו שנים, וישרצו שנים, וירבו שנים, ויעצמו שנים, במאד מאד שנים, ותמלא הארץ אותם שנים, הרי י"ב, ויעצמו יש אומרים ששה בכרס אחד, ואל תתמה שהרי עקרב שהיא מן השרצים יולדת שבעים</p>	<p>Shemot / Exodus 1:7 <i>1:7 But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them. (NASB)</i></p> <p>Midrash Rabbah Exodus 1:8 <i>The Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation, to teach for all time that one sustains them going down to Egypt so they would not serve the Egyptians in Israel, and the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased though he died Joseph and his brothers, but their God is not dead. The sons of Israel were fruitful and multiplied, and following this each girl had six children in one belly, and thus the children of Israel were fruitful and multiplied, etc. And some say they had twelve, it is written because fruitful implies two, multiplying two, and increasing two, and grew two, and exceedingly two, and the earth was filled with them, two. Behold the children grew, this was the saying, there were six in one belly, and do not be surprised because the Scorpion gives birth to seventy.</i></p>

In Parashat Shemot, it is interesting to read the report that is given in *Shemot / Exodus 1:7* which says *1:7 But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them. (NASB)* What is interesting is that within this verse there are six verbs that imply the fruitfulness of Israel and how the Lord was working in their lives to increase their number. The description of the fruitfulness of the people reveals to us how Pharaoh saw the children of Israel. The Hebrew text states that they were so fruitful that they looked like “*Swarming things*” (וישרצו) that covered all of the land. According to *Midrash Rabbah Exodus 1:8*, the rabbis pick up on these verbs and say that Israel was so fruitful that each woman bore six children at one time. Others say they bore twelve at every birth and their reasoning comes from the six verbs used in this verse to refer to the fruitfulness of Israel. They say that the word “*fruitful*” (פרו) implies two, “*multiplied*” (וישרצו) implies two, “*increased*” (וירבו) implies two, “*grew*” (ויעצמו) implies two, “*exceedingly*” (במאד מאד) implies two, and “*the land was filled with them*” (ותמלא הארץ אתם) implies two, making a total of 12 in all. The rabbis say that the reader should not be surprised about this because the scorpion (*considered one of the swarming things*) gives birth to 70 offspring at a time, note the reference to 70 that corresponds to the 70 who went down to Egypt (*Shemot / Exodus 1:5*). The Aramaic Targums (*Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan*) say essentially the same thing “*And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation; but the sons of Israel increased and propagated, and became great and very mighty, and the land was filled with them.*” It is interesting how the rabbis embellish on these six verbs and describe the Lord increasing Israel in an unbelievable and miraculous way. The point about this weeks reading is to observe that no matter the circumstance, the Lord is able to multiply for good and for His purposes. If we give the Lord our time, he multiplies it, our money or energy, he multiplies those, too. According to *Isaiah 55*, we read *55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (KJV)* The Lord says His word goes forth and does not return void! Telling others about Word of God and our testimony is like planting seeds into the hearts of men. Farmers know that seeds must be buried in the ground; they must be planted in order to produce fruit. If one keeps a seed in a sack, it does no good, but if you plant it, it multiplies. In the same way, the Lord God Almighty multiplies whatever you give Him and He will do so in even the most miraculous of ways. Have you shared your testimony with anyone recently? Do you believe these Scriptures apply to you today, that God can give an increase in your life? If you want to see the power of God at work in your life and in the lives of others, take the message of Yeshua the Messiah and go forth and spread the good news and see the glory of God at Work!