

# AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

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פרשת שמות  
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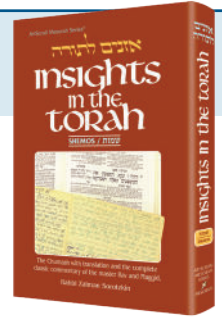
WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY  
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

## PARASHAH

## SUPERNATURAL

Oznajim LaTorah – Insights in the Torah by Rav Zalman Sorotzkin



ובני ישראל פרו וישרצו וירבו ויעצמו במאד מאד.

*The Children of Israel were fruitful. They teemed, increased, and became strong — very, very much so (1:7).*

“Every Jewish woman bore six infants with each birth” (*Shemos Rabbah*, Ch. 1). This is supported by the six terms used here, from פרו to מאד: they were fruitful, teemed, increased, became strong, very, very much.



Rav Eliezer Gordon

My father-in-law, Rav Eliezer Gordon, the *rosh yeshivah* of Telz, once defeated the arguments offered against this *Midrash* by a fool who imagined himself an “intellectual.” He rejected *Chazal’s* teaching as being too far-fetched, although he had no trouble believing that the *Bnei Yisrael* increased supernaturally in Egypt, because statistics proved it (and far be it from an intellectualizing fool to lose faith in statistics).

You see, the *Bnei Yisrael* came down to Egypt as seventy souls and spent 210 years there. By natural increase, upon leaving Egypt, they should have counted no more than 1,200 or at most 1,500 souls. Yet, statistics show that they left Egypt with “600,000 on foot” (12:37), meaning men of army age, between the ages of twenty and sixty. If we add about the same number of old men and boys, we reach 1,200,000. Adding the women, we reach at least 2,400,000. We are thus compelled to admit that the increase was supernatural.

What the *maskil* found difficult to accept, however, was the idea that Jewish women bore children six at a time. My esteemed father-in-

law brought him irrefutable proof of this from the statistics themselves, for we know that in the desert, the males between twenty and sixty years of age numbered more than 600,000, whereas the male firstborn of all ages numbered 22,273 (*Bamidbar* 3:43). Once again, adding in the children and old men among the males (but not females, since only firstborn males were counted) doubles the number.

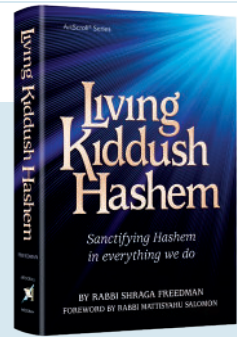
### EACH WOMAN BORE FIFTY-FIVE OTHER CHILDREN AFTER HER FIRSTBORN!

The result is quite puzzling in terms of the modern family. While the average family today numbers five children at most — one firstborn per four others — in the *Midbar* the figure was one firstborn per fifty-five others, approximately. Since only 22,273 women bore all these males (one for every firstborn), it follows that each woman bore fifty-five other children after her firstborn!

Now, since in Moshe Rabbeinu’s time the human life span averaged seventy or eighty years (*Tehillim* 90:10), no woman could become pregnant and bear children more than ten times. Thus, to achieve an average of fifty-five children per firstborn (counting, as I said, only the males), every woman must have given birth to six children at once.

When the skeptic heard these figures, he was dumbfounded. It is a *mitzvah* to publicize this. 📖

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If a person lives with the sense that he has a mission to accomplish even in the context of his (seemingly) mundane business dealings, he can be capable of performing earth-shattering acts of *kiddush Hashem*.

That is exactly what took place at the closing of one extraordinarily lucrative business deal on the West Coast of the United States after years of intense negotiations. The parties were about to conclude the deal, and the buyers and sellers had gathered in a conference room to work out the final details. One of the major investors was a Mr. Gershon Kamin (name changed) of New York, a man whose participation was critical to the deal and who stood to earn a fortune from its successful conclusion.

During the course of the final discussions, Gershon became very disturbed by one of the attorneys working for the other side. The man was simply unable to refrain from using vulgar language. Every other word he uttered was an expletive of some sort.

Gershon politely asked the lawyer to refrain from using profanities, and the man promised to do his best. But the use of such language was apparently deeply ingrained in his personality, and the lawyer continued to slip. Finally, Gershon grew incensed and warned the lawyer, “If you utter even one more profanity, the deal is off!”

It did not take long before the lawyer inadvertently let slip an offensive word again, and Gershon simply stalked out of the room, scuttling the entire, unimaginably lucrative, deal.

Larry Fisher (name changed), another religious Jew who was present at the proceedings, was shocked by Gershon’s abrupt departure. Larry was aware of the years of hard work that had gone into the deal. Where had Gershon derived the inner strength to make such a sacrifice? Larry lived with this question for several years, until he happened to hear a lecture from a noted *rav* that delivered the answer. The *rav* told a story about a man named Gershon who had been learning at the

Telshe Yeshivah in Cleveland, Ohio, decades earlier. As a *bachur*, he had demonstrated great promise, and he seemed to have a stellar future in the *beis medrash*. But Gershon’s parents wanted him to pursue a career, and with great reluctance, he agreed to leave the *yeshivah* to obtain a degree.

On his last day in the *yeshivah*, Gershon was learning diligently in the *beis medrash* when he was summoned to the office of the *rosh yeshivah*, Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz, for a last farewell conversation.

Gershon was certain that the *rosh yeshivah* would admonish him to maintain his learning *sedarim* or to continue to *daven* with a *minyan* when he entered the business world. But Rav Katz had something else in mind. “Gershon,” he said, “you are about to leave the shelter of the *yeshivah*’s walls and venture into the outside world, where every step you take will be a test.

You must always have one ambition, one concern above all else: to sanctify Hashem’s Name. Remember that everything you do will be either a *kiddush Hashem* or a *chillul Hashem*, and choose accordingly!”

Gershon took the *rosh yeshivah*’s words to heart, and that principle became the guiding light of his career.

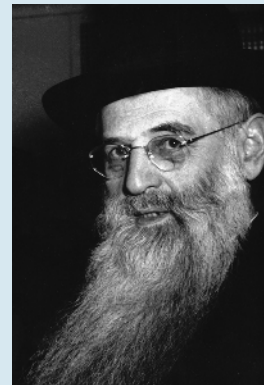
After the lecture, Larry approached the *rav* and asked, “By any chance, was the boy in your story Gershon Kamin?”

Shocked, the *rav* exclaimed, “How did you know that?”

“Because I saw with my own eyes just how deep an impact the *rosh yeshivah*’s message left on him,” Larry replied with feeling (as told by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer).

Years after that fateful encounter, Gershon was able to sacrifice the deal of a lifetime because the *rosh yeshivah*’s words had infused him with a sense of mission even within the context of his career. In any profession or field, every Jew can do the same. 🙏

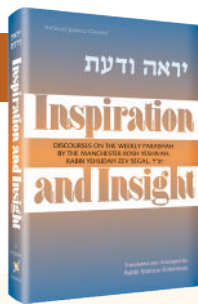
**GERSHON  
SIMPLY  
STALKED OUT  
OF THE ROOM,  
SCUTTling  
THE ENTIRE,  
UNIMAGINABLY  
LUCRATIVE,  
DEAL.**



Rav Chaim Mordechai Katz

## THE MIDWIVES' HEROISM

Inspiration and Insight from Rav Yehuda Zev Segal, written by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman



ותִירָאן הַמִּילֹדֶת אֶת הָאֱלֹקִים וְלֹא עָשׂוּ  
כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהִים מִלֶּדֶת מִצְרַיִם וְתַחֲיִין אֶת הַיְלָדִים.

*But the midwives feared G-d and they did not do as the king of Egypt had instructed them; rather, they kept the children alive (1:17).*

As the bondage of the *Bnei Yisrael* in Egypt intensified, Pharaoh ordered the Jewish midwives to murder every newborn Jewish boy. The midwives, who *Chazal* tell us were Yocheved the mother of Moshe Rabbeinu and his sister Miriam, ignored the king's orders. Not only did they allow the infants to live, but they even went so far as to provide them with food and water (see *Rashi ibid.*).



Rav Yehuda Zev Segal

The heroic behavior of Yocheved and Miriam is surely a classic illustration of *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice. The persecution of the *Bnei Yisrael* was by that time severe. "A new king arose ... and said, 'Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they increase...' They set over them taskmasters in order to afflict them with their burdens... They made their lives bitter with mortar and bricks..." (1:8-14). Then came the decree to murder the infant boys. Ignoring a king's command is a great risk in any situation, let alone amid the climate that then existed. Yocheved and Miriam were equal to the challenge.

In telling of their heroism, the Torah makes a point of relating that which inspired their behavior: "But the midwives feared G-d." Their self-sacrifice did not stem from an innate compassion that would not allow them to carry out the brutal genocide of infants in order to save their own lives. Rather, their deeds were rooted in pure, lofty *yiras Shamayim*, Heavenly awe. Their recognition of Hashem was so deep, their awe of Him so penetrating, that they much preferred to die rather than do that which was obviously the antithesis of His will. 📖

**THE TORAH  
MAKES A  
POINT OF  
RELATING  
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THEIR  
BEHAVIOR.**

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CAN DO IT!**

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**PLEASE LEARN  
לז"נ ר' שלמה בן ר' אליהו ז"ל**

**כ"א טבת IS WHOSE YAHRZEIT**

**THIS WEEK'S MISHNAH YOMI SCHEDULE:**

DECEMBER / טבת															
SHABBOS	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY									
25	כ"א	26	כ"ב	27	כ"ג	28	כ"ד	29	כ"ה	30	כ"ו	31	כ"ז		
<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>	<b>Berachos</b>					
1:1-2	1:3-4	1:5-2:1	2:2-3	2:4-5	2:6-7	2:8-3:1									

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# Parashah for Children

## פרשת שמות

### Baby Moshe

**A**fter Amram and Yocheved remarried, Yocheved gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. The whole house was filled with a heavenly light when he was born. She named him Tov, which means good.

Afraid the Egyptians would find him, Yocheved put her baby into a waterproof basket. She put the basket in the Nile River, where it floated on the water. She left her daughter, Miriam, to see what would happen. Miriam stood close enough to keep an eye on her baby brother.

Miriam noticed Pharaoh's daughter, Princess Bisya, walking to the river. Bisya had a skin disease called tzaraas. Bathing in the river's cool waters made her skin feel better.

Bisya saw the basket. Why was a waterproof basket floating on the river?

She stretched out her hand toward the basket — but she couldn't reach it! She stretched as hard as she could, trying to grab the basket before the river would sweep the baby away! Suddenly, a miracle happened. Her hand *strrrrrreeetched* out far enough to grab the basket!

And then another miracle! When Bisya touched the basket, her skin disease disappeared!

The princess looked into the basket and saw a baby crying. She said that this must be a Jewish baby. She pitied him and decided to take care of him as if he were her own son. She named him "Moshe" because she pulled him out of the water. (The word "mashah" means to pull out.) It was the perfect name for the baby, who would grow up to "pull out" the Jews from Egypt!



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## THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Parashas Shemos:

**Which person mentioned in this week's parashah never committed an aveirah in his entire life?**

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to [shabbosquestion@artscroll.com](mailto:shabbosquestion@artscroll.com) by this Wednesday to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name, city, and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition. HINT: The answer can be found in *The Jaffa Family Edition Weekly Parashah*.



**The winner of the Parashas Mikeitz question is: MOSHE ROSENBERG, Lakewood, NJ**

The question was: Which language did Yosef Hatzaddik know that Pharaoh did not? The answer is: Lashon Hakodesh/Hebrew