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## פרשת שמות

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### פרק א פסוק יב

וּכְאַשֶׁר יַעֲנֶנּוּ אֹתוֹ כֵּן יִרְבֶּה וְכֵן יִפְרֹץ וַיִּקְצֹוּ מִפְּנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

### רש"י

וּכְאַשֶׁר יַעֲנֶנּוּ אֹתוֹ. בְּכָל מָה שֶׁהֵם נוֹתְנִין לֵב לַעֲנֹת כֵּן לֵב הַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְהַרְבּוֹת וּלְהַפְרִיץ: כֵּן יִרְבֶּה. כֵּן רְבֵה וְכֵן פִּרְץ. וּמִדְרָשׁוֹ, רוּחַ הַקְּדוֹשׁ אוֹמֵר כֵּן. אַתֶּם אוֹמְרִים "כֵּן יִרְבֶּה" וְאֲנִי אוֹמֵר "כֵּן יִרְבֶּה".

### מושג

רוח הקדוש אומרת כן. אתם אומרים "כן ירבה" ואני אומר "כן ירבה".

### Translation:

*Ruach HaKodesh* is saying: You say “Lest they multiply”, I say, “Yes, they will multiply.”

### Explanation:

The Egyptians thought they could outsmart the Jews by enslaving them. They thought that by making the Jews suffer they would cause the Jews to decrease in number. Hashem is telling the Egyptians that no matter what your plans, and in fact precisely *because* of them, the Jews will continue to grow<sup>1</sup>.

### Looking in the Pasuk:

The Chazal that Rashi quotes is bothered by two issues. First, how exactly do we translate the word כֵּן? If we were to say that the word means ‘so’<sup>2</sup>, meaning by the same measure, then the following word ירבה should be in the past tense רבה<sup>3</sup> and not in the future tense, ירבה.

Rashi brings two answers. The first answer says that the above translation is correct. Rashi explains, “In the same way they intended to inflict suffering, so did Hashem intend to increase them”. As for the tense of the following words ירבה, יפרוץ, Rashi answers that they should be read in the past tense as if it was written ופרץ<sup>4</sup>.

Rashi, in his second comment (ומדרשו) quotes a Midrash Aggadah which says that the word כֵּן does not mean ‘so’ but rather ‘yes’. The Pasuk is not telling us that they grew in measure to their suffering, but rather it is Hashem answering the Egyptians who said כֵּן to which Hashem answered, כֵּן ירבה<sup>5</sup>.

### Musag Learning Outcomes:

Know: Possible meanings of word כֵּן and possible understandings of future tense verbs.

Understand: How Hashem ensures that the actions of our enemies have exactly the opposite of their planned effect.

Think: Analyzing Rashi to understand differences in multiple explanations (פשוט and מדרשו).

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1 See note #1

2 “As they inflicted it so did it increase...”

3 Because if we are talking about a measure for a measure it would be nonsensical to put the Pasuk in the future tense.

4 Here the future tense should be read as a present tense, they did increase, not they will increase.

5 See note #2

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## NOTES

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1. This theme is repeated many times in Chazal. Yisro tells Moshe (יתרו יח:יא) 'יא עתה ידעתי כי גדול ה' מכלי האלהים כי בדבר אשר זדו עליהם: The Talmud in Meseches Sotah (11a) has a unique understanding of what אשר זדו עליהם means. While we would have thought the word זדו means to act with intention (such as the term מזיד means intentionally) the Gemoroh explains: *בקדירה שבישלו בה נתבשלו*, *In the pot in which they cooked, they themselves were cooked.* (The Gemoroh explains that the word זדו is to be compared to the meaning of cooking as we find by ויזד יעקב נזיד.)

There is a beautiful *מלך חדש אשר לא ידע את יוסף* which explains this to be the meaning of יוסף. Yosef's brothers did all they could to rid themselves of Yosef, and thought that their actions would lead to destroying his dreams. Only later did they realize that everything they did to destroy him was actually helping his dreams come true. Pharaoh did not take heed to the story of Yosef. If he did, he would have realized that everything he was doing would only play into the hands of Hashem. In effect, he was digging his own grave.

2. Rashi's second explanation is found in the <sup>6</sup>מדרש אגדה on the words *פן ירבה*. It reads:

אמרה להם רוח הקודש אתם אומרים פן ירבה, ואני אומר כן ירבה וכן יפרוץ

It is interesting to note the use of the term *רוח הקודש* instead of *הקב"ה*. It is possible to explain that the intention of the Midrash was not simply to employ a play on the words *פן* and *כן* but rather to drive home the point stressed in Note #1. Every act the Egyptians do to enslave and destroy the Jews will have the exact opposite effect. Hashem is telling us how to understand their words. They are saying *פן ירבה* but it is as if they had *רוח הקודש* and what they are really saying is *כן ירבה*.

3. Questions for further thought:

- a. Can you think of other instances in history where the plans of רשעים were turned into the salvation of the Jews?
- b. At the beginning of Note #1 we brought a Pasuk in which Yisro says, *עתה ידעתי כי גדול ה'...* *כי בדבר אשר זדו עליהם* 'ה', *Now I know that Hashem is great... because the thing they planned was brought on them*". Why was the fact that *אשר זדו עליהם* that which brought Yisro to this realization?

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<sup>6</sup> Many Chumashim attribute Rashi's second explanation to the Gemoroh in Sotah. It is not found there but in the מדרש אגדה.