

The King of Mitzrayim has a problem.

**הָבָה גַּתְחַכְמָה לּוֹ פֶּן־יִרְבֶּה וְהָיָה כִּי־תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה וְנוֹסַף גַּם־הוּא עַל־שְׂנְאֵינוּ וְנִלְחַם־  
בְּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ:**

“Come! We shall be wise to it [the Bnei Yisroel]. Lest it multiply and it will be because it shall happen upon war and it will add also upon our enemies and will wage war in us, and it will rise from the land.” (Shmos 1:10).

It is clear that the King of Egypt had a problem with the great multitude of the Bnei Yisroel living in Goshen. Yet, this pasuk needs clarity and with the clarity we will understand their situation in that specific time in history. First, who was he talking to? It cannot simply be his people. He should command them of what to do. If it his advisers then just say he asked his advisers for advice. There is something being pointed out in the wording. Further, why did he say they will happen upon war? Why not just say they will war themselves? Also, what is the expression “war in us?” It should have said *imanu* with us. Finally, how can they rise from the land?

Bnei Yisroel prospered for a time in peace. (Shmos 1:7). Then came a time when a new King of Mitzrayim arose. (Ibid 1:8). This was not Pharaoh. Pharaoh is not mentioned, explicitly, until pasuk 11. The King of Egypt is mentioned one previous time. This is in regards to Yoseph’s rise to power. The wine pourer and the baker for the King of Mitzrayim both erred. (Bereishis 40:1). Yet, Pharaoh punished their supervisors, the respective chamberlains. (Ibid 40:2). When reading the pesukim finely it comes to light the power dynamic that Pharaoh – the ruler of the entire Mitzrayim (and at that time, it was a small country, only lower Mitzrayim) – punished the chamberlains when their underlings erred before Pharaoh’s underling. Yoseph was later raised to Viceroy and he became king of Mitzrayim. “וַיֹּסֶף בֶּן־שְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּעַמְדוֹ לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם. “And Yoseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh as King of Mitzrayim.” (Ibid 41:46). It is not *stood before Pharaoh, King of Mitzrayim*. Pharaoh was ruler of the Land of Mitzrayim, the entire country. Yoseph stood before Pharaoh, *as King of Mitzrayim*, ruler of the district of Mitzrayim, that is located near Goshen. “A new king rose on Mitzrayim.” (Shmos 1:8). This new king rose to power over Mitzrayim district, not the Land of Mitzrayim, the country.

The King of Mitzrayim had a major problem. Bnei Yisroel were multiplying greatly in number and wealth. He did not know Yoseph. (Ibid). If he did then he would know two things. First, Yoseph was responsible for the entire creation of this great and wealthy combined country of upper and lower Mitzrayim. Second, Bnei Yisroel had no interest in ruling Mitzrayim but were waiting for a time when they can go up and take the Lands of Canaan.

This can also be the inherent problem of how Bnei Yisroel went from the promise of ruling Canaan to bondage in Mitzrayim. Since they grew numerous and did not go up it led to their subjugation. Yoseph was holding onto the promise given to Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, that was given to his son Ephraim – they will grow numerous and settle Canaan, and rule. However, he and his entire generation died. The pasuk can be read like this: *And arose a new king over Mitzrayim, that did not know Yoseph*. It is not the king that did not know Yoseph. It is Mitzrayim, i.e. Goshen, i.e. Bnei Yisroel. They forgot Yoseph, they forget the avos, and they forget the purpose. They were to grow numerous and wealthy and then go up and settle Canaan. Instead, they lingered in Mitzrayim.

He says to his people that Bnei Yisroel are too numerous and strong for them. (Ibid 1:9). Then he turns his problem to the attention of Pharaoh. Pharaoh is sitting in the south, in Upper Mitzrayim, in Thebes. Pharaoh did not care for the local problem; he wanted his nomarchs to deal with them. However, the King of Mitzrayim made it Pharaoh's problem with clever politics.

"Come!" Pharaoh, come from the south and see how the problem in the north is going to affect your reign.

"Let us deal wisely with it." How else can they deal with this nation? King of Mitzrayim was pleading with Pharaoh to understand the problem. Do not be short-sighted. Do not just simply eject them from the country or make peace with them. This is a problem in the long-term.

"Lest they increase." They are already numerous. We need to slow down their numbers to a manageable amount. They are useful to the country but their numbers are a problem.

"And it will be because they will happen upon war." Mitzrayim is often at war with neighbors and foreign enemies. If war should happen upon the Land of Mitzrayim, then their numbers will become a problem.

"And it will add also upon our enemies." It will add to the number of our enemies. This is twofold. Either they will not fight for Mitzrayim, they will be an impediment to the defenses. Or they will join the enemy and add to the enemy's numbers. War is a lot about numbers of soldiers.

"And it will war in us." They will make war from within. Goshen is on the northeast borders of the Land of Mitzrayim. They can rise from within and create war. If an enemy attacks one place they can rise from within to join them, now adding another army that is already inside the land's borders.

"And it will rise from the land." Bnei Yisroel will then not only take Mitzrayim and the Lower Mitzrayim but will head south and take Upper Mitzrayim. They will rise up to Thebes (higher elevations).

Pharaoh was now on board. (Ibid 1:11). It still remained a Mitzrayim (local) problem. Pharaoh finally himself got involved when he ordered all newborn males (Yisroel and Egyptian) be thrown into the Nile. (Ibid 1:22).