

FRUITFUL LIVING

by Rabbi Label Lam

And these are the generations of Aaron and Moshe on the day that HASHEM spoke to Moshe at Mount Sinai. And these are the names of the children of Aaron. The first born Nadav, and Avihu, Elazar and Ithamar. (Bamidbar 3:1-2)

These are the generations of Aaron and Moshe: It only mentions the children of Aaron and they are called the generations of Moshe because he taught them Torah. We learn that whoever teaches the son of his friend Torah the verse considers as if he actually bore him. (Rashi)

Our sages tell us in Tractate Shabbos (31A) that one of the six questions a person is asked after 120 years is "Were you busy with being fruitful and multiplying?" What is expected of us? Is it a straight numerical question? How many children? The Maharal says that this question is a test to determine if the person was "self" or "other"- oriented. With a little research we can find multiple ways to being fruitful.

1) We see that Aaron's children are credited also to Moshe because he taught them Torah. This too is a credible approach to being productive if not prolific, as the Mishne in Avos mandates, "Stand up many students!"

2) The Bnei Yisaschar, Rabbi Tvi Elimelech from Dinav says the following about the Mitzvah of being fruitful and multiplying: "To be fruitful and multiply in Torah, to continually give birth to new Torah insights. And with this he will be able to fulfill the Mitzvah at each moment and at all times. This is the main way of being fruitful and multiplying, only that HASHEM, commanded us also to give birth to physical children."

3) The Chofetz Chaim writes in Shem Olam, "The entirety of a person's life he is engaged in a war with the negative inclination... and the children that a person bears and brings to service of HASHEM are compared to arrows as it says in Tehillim (127:4) "Like arrows in the hand of a strong man so are young children." They help in the actual war to achieve victory. And the victory is ultimately credited to him because of the known concept; "a child can bring merits to a father". Now what if a person doesn't have arrows of his own? It makes sense that he should acquire with his money arrows of others for serving HASHEM, and his victory in the battle will certainly be credited to him as well because he is like a soldier battling with another's arrows. In many ways these arrows may be superior even to one's own...because the bow and the arrows that he possesses for battle are sometimes are not so effective. However he can search for better arrows, because in this world one

can always find quality arrows."

Rabbi Freifeld ztl. had recounted a story about an elderly woman on an austere budget that realized that she could save a few hundred dollars each month by being a little more frugal. She approached a Rabbi and asked if he would seek out a worthy Talmud scholar in Israel to whom she could lend support. Even a meager sum could do much more in those days. A match was found and for the duration of her latter- years the father of a family was able to dedicate himself to learning because of her stipend. He became a prominent scholar and raised a large family with children who themselves became scholars and teachers of Torah. For sure her tiny investment in fertile fields yields today a fruitful living. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).