



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

NCSY ISRAEL



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Sefer Sh'mot opens up by going through the names of Bnei Yisrael at the time of entering Egypt. It lists each one of the Shevatim and then collectively totals them to 'seventy souls that emanate from Yaakov'. A question, though, begs to be asked. In Parshat Vayigash Perek 46, the Shevatim are already listed and named, why does the Torah repeat their names here?

Rashi explains that when the Torah listed the names in Parshat Vaiyigash, that was during their lifetime. However, in our Parsha, it enumerates them at their death. Why is it important to enumerate them at their death? It is to show how dear they are to Hashem as they are compared to the stars, which according to Sefer Yeshayahu, Hashem counts every night as they come out and every morning as they go away.

It's a beautiful idea that Rashi is teaching us, how dear the Shevatim were to Hashem, but we can be compared to many things, why does Rashi choose to compare us to the stars? The Sfat Emet, second Rebbe in the Gur Chassidic dynasty, answers that Bnei Yisrael need to know that Hashem loves them. Just as Hashem created the

stars in order to penetrate and illuminate the darkness, so too is our purpose. We as Jews were created and sent by Hashem in order to illuminate all places of darkness in this world.

Whenever we see darkness which represents bad in this world, we have a responsibility to penetrate those dark depths and do something about it. Hashem did not only give this responsibility on a national level, but rather He counts every light, every Jew, one by one. Each one of us has the responsibility to dispel darkness wherever we find it. Even more so, each one of us has a Godly given strength in order to accomplish that. May we merit the dispersion of all darkness and the coming of Mashiach speedily in our days.

Shabbat Shalom!



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One Decision Can Make the Difference

In this week's parsha, we learn of the beginning of the enslavement of Bnai Yisrael in Egypt – and the beginning of their redemption.

A fundamental question can be asked: How did the enslavement begin? How did the Jewish People – a vital component

of Egypt's thriving economy – become enslaved to the Egyptians, and why did the Egyptians bother enslaving them?

The Midrash says that the enslavement began when the Jewish people made the decision to stop giving their children circumcisions. Recognizing that the exile of Egypt had first begun after Yosef's death, and that it was going to be a long and spiritually challenging exile, the Jewish people felt that becoming closer to the Egyptians and trying to find favor in their eyes would ultimately save them from destructive exile. They were wrong. As Rabbi Shalom Rosner says: "if the Jewish people don't make kiddush, the gentiles will make Havdalah." Our historic attempts to assimilate in society have been our undoing.

Instead, the key to our success is embracing what makes us special and different: Torah. We must not be embarrassed of our rich history and of our value system, we should celebrate them.

Like the fateful decision to stop circumcision – which led to terrible hardships for our people, we, too, can make the fateful decision to turn things around for good. One decision can make all of the difference. ■

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