

ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרים (א:א)

"Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came into Egypt." (1:1)

Why the need to count the children of Israel again if they were just counted in Parshat Vayigash (46:8) with the same words, as they descended to Egypt?

Rashi explains that G-d counted them again after their death, to make known His love for them. For they were compared to the stars which He takes out and brings in by number and by their names (Isaiah 40:26). Rabbi Moshe Feinstein in his sefer "Drash Moshe" points out the significance of the Rabbis comparing Israel to the stars. Perhaps, this comes to emphasis that although we were granted free will, that allows us even to sin against G-d, we can reach a higher level of spirituality upon understanding the harshness of such an act. The paramount level one can reach is realizing that in essence we really don't have the ability to transgress against the Torah. This level was achieved by the tribes. Like stars which are taken out and returned in the same number, name and same cycle, without any free will. The children of Israel who secured such a height in spirituality, are worthy of being counted and named again, after their demise, like the stars. He brings a proof from the verse (Devarim 12:13) "You will not be able to eat within your gates." As Rashi explains: You may be able, but you are not permitted. - Shabbat Shalom

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