

נְאוֹת דֵּשֶׁה Neos Deshe

An Adaptation of Rabbi Shmuel Dov Asher Leiner's Neos Deshe by Rabbi Reuven Boshnack
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Neos Deshe Shemos

The Parsha begins with

“These are the names of the children of Isreal as they came to Mizrayim” (Shemos 1,1)

Rashi asks why we are seeing the names of the Bnei Yisrael again. Bnei Yisrael were already named and counted in ([Bereshis 46:8-27](#))

Although scripture has already enumerated them by name whilst they were living, when they went down into Egypt , it again enumerates them when it tells us of their death, thus showing how dear they were to God — that they are compared to the stars which also God brings out and brings in by number and name when they cease to shine, as it is said, ([Isaiah 40:26](#)) “He bringeth out their host by number, He calleth them all by name” ([Exodus Rabbah 1:3](#); Tanchuma Yashan 1:1:2).

Neos Deshe furthers his exploration of the list of names by quoting the following Midrash about the order of the Bnei Yisrael. (Shemos Rabbah 1:6)

Rabbi Yehshua said in the name of Rabbi Levi: Why is the sequence of the names of the tribes different in different places? To prevent the children of the Rachel and Leah from asserting they are dominant, rather all of them are equal.

Another interpretation – They are the roof of the world, and in order to make a roof stable it is necessary to notice where it is uneven and bolster it with a thicker part. Hence, they are in this sequence.

Why count the stars? Do we ever find them missing? When do we ever see the children of Bilha and Zilpa listed first? What is the Midrash saying?

Neos Deshe answers when we learn Rashi together with the Midrash about the different orders of Bnei Yisrael we learn an important idea. The stars each make their entrance and their exit in the sky. Similarly, Bnei Yisrael also make their entrance and their exit from the stage of prominence. Each one of Bnei Yisrael enters and exits in a different order.

When the Midrash develops the idea of counted stars it means that each one has its own importance and each star shines in a different order. Each star also begins to stop shining in a different order and every day it changes. Therefore, each one needs to be counted and to follow their script when they will shine.

So, when are the Bnei Bilha and Zilpa ever mentioned first?

Since Bnei Yisrael went down to Mitzraim and the Bnei Rachel and Leah descended first, their “stars rose first, and set first.” After they had set, the midrash alludes to the time afterwards, when the Bnei Bilha and Zilpa shone first.

A you can wonder when it's your time to shine, you may spend too much time wondering, and missing your opportunity.