

"And these are the names of Bnei Yisrael who came into Egypt." (1:1)

Rashi cites the *Midrash* which states that *Bnei Yisrael* were counted twice as a result of Hashem's great love for them. They were counted when they were about to go down to Egypt. They were counted a second time after their deaths. They made their mark both in life and in death. It is not sufficient to have lived and made one's mark only during one's lifetime. How many of us bequeath a legacy after death for our children and ensuing generations to inherit? People are born and die. During their lifetimes, many lead productive lives. Each individual must examine, however, whether he has transmitted an everlasting legacy for his children and others to follow. Has his life's endeavor served as an inspiration?

Our only true possessions are those which are eternal; *Torah* and *mitzvos*. Alas, we often journey through life gathering the ephemeral while rejecting the eternal. One must strive to bequeath an inheritance worthy of remembrance to his descendants. An individual whose accomplishments live on after him has not really died. The twelve tribes left their mark in life, as well as in death. Their legacy of faith and courage inspired their descendants, enabling them to cope with the anguish of Egyptian bondage.