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The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.

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Rise to the Occasion

The beginning of Parashas Naso continues the instructions from the end of Parashas Bamidbar. There, the Torah began to outline the specific responsibilities of Kehas' family when the Jewish people traveled in the desert. Whenever the Jews were signaled by the Heavenly clouds to begin traveling, the Mishkan had to be dismantled. This task was assigned to the tribe of Levi, with different responsibilities delegated to the families of Levi's three sons. Each family had distinct roles—none were to perform another's duty. They had precise instructions regarding what to dismantle first, how to transport the pieces while traveling, and which elements to reassemble first upon arrival at their next destination.

After detailing Kehas' family's role, the Torah – in Parashas Naso – shifts to detailing the duties of Gershon's family, introducing them with the words: "Take a census of Gershon's family, they too, by their paternal families."

The Midrash wonders why Kehas' family's responsibilities are mentioned before Gershon's, considering Gershon was the firstborn (*Bereishis* 46:11). Would it not make sense for the Torah to assign responsibilities based on age?

The Midrash explains that the phrase "גם הם— they too" answers this question. While one might assume the order of responsibilities suggests Kehas' family's superiority over Gershon's, the Torah clarifies that this is not so. The additional words indicate that Gershon's family is equally valued alongside Kehas'. Though Gershon, as the firstborn, should have been mentioned first, Kehas' family's duty of carrying the Aron warranted greater prominence and respect.

Rav Yosef Binyamin Reich offers another perspective on the significance of the phrase "גם הם— they too." He notes that sometimes the word *gam* conveys confidence—even a sense of personal strength or haughtiness.

The Tanna Dbei Eliyahu teaches that each person should ask themselves: "How and when will I reach the greatness of our forefathers—Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov?"

Rav Yosef Binyamin wonders: how can one aspire to reach such heights? Isn't such ambition a form of arrogance?

He resolves this by explaining that recognizing one's innate potential is not mere haughtiness—it is necessary for growth. When a person acknowledges their own spiritual strength, they are driven to greatness, striving to realize their elevated potential. In this way, even someone who has sinned can have confidence in their ability to repent and achieve greatness once more.

According to this approach, the verse "Take a census of Gershon's family, they too, by their paternal families" can be read as follows: "נשא את ראש"—Lift up the head." A person must raise their head with confidence rather than shrink away in shame, even if they are among Gershon's family—those who have been distanced because of their transgressions (*gersh* shares a root with *geirush*, meaning exile). The phrase "גם הם— they too" encourages even those who feel spiritually displaced to use their internal resilience to strive for the greatness of their ancestors (למשפחותם לבית אבותם)—paternal families).

Having just celebrated Shavuot, this message is particularly relevant—we should begin expecting more from ourselves, aiming for greater spiritual heights.

ר' יוסף בנימין רייך

R' Yosef Binyamin Reich's (1834-1928) father, R' Shimon Yeshaya was a son in law of the Bnei Yissachar, who chose for him the name, Yosef Binyamin. R' Shimon Yeshaya was *dayan* in Ludmar, Dinov, Dolina and Ribatitz. R' Shimon Yeshaya's father, R' Meir was close with the Ropshitzer. R' Yosef Binyamin married the daughter of R' Shmuel Wilner of Holitsh (near Stanislov, passed away, Av 1854) eventually also becoming Rav there. The titles of his *sefarim Bnei Yosef* and *Bnei Binyamin* are because, "these are my children." R' Yosef Binyamin writes, "I saw the words of R' Chaim Vital: 'One who does not produce children will be forced to return to this world again,' and I was astounded. Is it fair? Until I saw that he wrote that the Torah that one produces is in lieu of descendants. His rebbi, the Arizal, is the basis for this idea. Therefore, as I see I am going in the physical way of the world, I decided to help my soul to have this *sefer* in lieu of my children. I realize it is not just the production of original Torah thoughts, but to ensure that the words are spread and studied. I beg those who know me to take this *sefer* and to learn from it for my soul."