

Efrayim-Menashe

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Ohr Hahayyim

The descendants show there is something greater in Efrayim (the fact of Yehoshua vs. Gidon shows that Efrayim had something greater).

Keli Yakar - the Katnut of Efrayim, Hashem always prefers Katnut.

Malbim: Kamut vs. Eichut (Yehoshua, who by his wisdom is like the whole nation)

Shem MiShemuel: Gidon, has no tradition, is in his own strength (which is Yosef, too, his wisdom is internal, stems from himself), whereas Yehoshua is a *uiféã îüä*.

Haamek Davar is similar to Shem miShemuel in that he, too, notes that Gidon wasn't of stature of his own (*kalei olam*), gets it from gathering the 300 worthy people together, whereas Yehoshua was already a *gadol*, and then it extended from there. Translates that into contrast between being involved in Torah or *öøëé öéääø*, the former is the greater of the two.

I was trying to answer 2 questions: First, what is it that we are wishing our sons when we say they should be like Efrayim and Menashe, and 2) how is that a *beracha* for Efrayim and Menashe (that's a more general question, as Rashi points out-- Hashem promises Yitshak that his descendants will be a *beracha*, and the Sotah that she will be a *kelala* for future generations. Why should they care?).

For the first, I wanted to show that the Torah doesn't quite tell us, that we could either base our answer on what was going on right then (Efrayim studied Torah with Yaakov, Menashe was the interpreter), or on the descendants whom Yaakov uses as the reason to give them a *berachah* (Yehoshua and Gidon, with Y. being more impressive). As the Ohr HaHayyim points out, Yaakov is assuming that the greatness of the descendants shows something about E. and M. right then. For Rashi, that something seems to be their skill at making the world know of God-- Gidon has a miracle done for him, but Yehoshua will teach Torah, settle the Jews in Eretz Yisrael, and his miracle will be known the world over. For Rashi, then, both E. and M. are forces for increased and direct knowledge of Hashem in the world.

Other *peshatim* quoted (in the brief English notes) see E. and M. as representing different characteristics, either modesty, or the difference between being self-made (Gidon) or trained by tradition (Yehoshua), between basing one's success on gathering followers (Gidon) or one's own qualities (Yehoshua).

Whichever one of these appeal to a reader or listener, they share the aspect of seeing E. and M.

as representing differing qualities, in which case we are wishing for our sons the ability to combine them in a productive way. We are asking Hashem to make this boy in front of us the perfect combination of the two.

How is that a beracha to them? Without direct sources, I intend to argue that the Torah is telling us that our job/goal in life is not only to live as best we can, but to leave a lasting positive impact, a legacy that continues beyond us (this is what we really care about with nahala, with kaddish, etc.). Yaakov is telling Yosef, and E. and M. that they have succeeded at that, that they will, indeed, be the standard of blessing for the future, one pinnacle of what one hopes for in living one's life.