

"And he blessed them on that day saying, 'with you Yisrael (Jewry) will bless (their children) saying: Hashem should make you like Ephraim and Menashe.'" (48:20)

This blessing has become the standard for blessing children throughout history. Yaakov's words express the hope that every Jewish child will follow in the path of Yosef's two sons. What traits did Ephraim and Menashe exemplify that distinguished them from any of the other *shevatim*?

Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita, makes a profound observation. The "way of the world" is that each ensuing generation digresses a bit more spiritually. As we become increasingly distant from the source of spirituality, we lose sight of our spiritual roots. Our ambitions no longer translate into lofty goals. We become complacent and settle for achievements consistent with the times in which we live. This was not the case with Ephraim and Menashe. Born into an environment of decadence, they were raised in a society totally opposed to their Patriarchal origins. Facing constant temptation, they remained loyal to the faith of their ancestors. Moreover, they grew spiritually and achieved the status of *Shivtei Kah*, to become one of the Twelve Tribes.

Ephraim and Menashe serve as an example to all generations of children. They grew in stature and superseded all expectation. Indeed, they ultimately attained the level of the generation before them.