

## פרשת שלח

למטה אפרים הושע בן נון...למטה יוסף למטה מנשה גדי בן סוסי. (פרק יג' ח, יא)  
(The agent) for the tribe of Ephraim, Joshua son of Nun...For the tribe of Yosef, for the tribe of Menashe, Gaddi son of Susi.

The Meshech Chochma, among other Mefarshim, questions why Yosef is coupled with Menashe and not Ephraim. No one feels that it is simply because Menashe was the chronological first born. Before providing his explanation it is worthwhile noting that Ramban, earlier in במדבר א' on the pasukim relating the first census of the בני ישראל, also deals with this issue. There the pasuk writes ...למטה יוסף לבני אפרים תולדתם למשפחתם... and **follows it** with ...למטה מנשה לבני מנשה תולדתם למשפחתם... He asks, "Why is Yosef's name associated with Ephraim and not with Menashe and why is Ephraim mentioned here first, before his older brother, Menashe?" With regards to the order, Ramban explains that "since (Ephraim) was chief of the division and he was 'the primary one' as per Yaakov's blessing," Ephraim received precedence over Menashe. "Another reason for the reversed order is because the children of Ephraim (at this point in time) were more numerous than the children of Menashe." In the second counting, later in פרשת פינחס, the sequence returns to the birth order because Menashe's population is greater than Ephraim's. Ramban continues: "Furthermore, (half of Menashe) took its territorial inheritance first, in עבר הירדן. So that with regards to the second census and when listing there the leaders of the Land who acted on behalf of the tribes to take possession of their respective territorial inheritances, the Torah places Menashe first and associates Yosef with him. But by the מרגלים, the Torah puts Ephraim first yet attaches Yosef to Menashe?" Ramban answers: "What seems to me to be (by way of homiletic explanation) is that on account of the evil report that Yosef brought against his brothers, the pasuk links him with the one who issued the evil report about the Land of Israel, the tribe of Menashe. Alternatively, we can explain that in fact the Torah bestowed honor upon both of them-Menashe by being linked with Yosef, and Ephraim, by being listed first in order."

The Meshech Chochma tells us that רוח הקודש revealed to Moshe that in the future, half of Menashe (together with Reuven and Gad) would stay on the eastern side of the Jordan River, whereas the other half would cross over with the rest of their brethren and settle in ארץ ישראל proper. That half of Menashe that was taking its territorial inheritance in ארץ ישראל is linked with their father Yosef, to announce to us all, that just as their father Yosef, they had a tremendous love for the Land. He supports this with a poignant מדרש דברים רבה ב' which discusses Moshe Rabbeinu's attempt at convincing Hashem to allow him to enter ארץ ישראל or at least be buried there. It relates: Yisro's daughters described Moshe to their father as איש ראו הביא לנו איש מצרי הצילנו מיד הרעים/An Egyptian man saved us from the shepherds. Hashem said to Moshe, "One who identifies himself with the Land, should be buried there. One who does not, does not deserve that honor." The Medrash explains that even while in Egypt, Yosef's persona remained so equated with ארץ ישראל that he was referred to by the wife of Potiphar as ראו הביא לנו איש עברי/Look! He brought us a Hebrew man, with עברי connoting "a man from ארץ ישראל." And

similarly later, when Yosef was imprisoned, he tells the **שר המשקים מארץ**, **כי גונב גונבתי מארץ**, **שר המשקים**, **העברתי** *For indeed I was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews!* Hashem tells Moshe, “Yosef’s entire essence was inseparable from the Land and therefore he deserved to be buried in **ארץ ישראל**. You, on the other hand, heard yourself referred to as **איש מצרי** and remained silent, therefore **לא תעבר את הירדן הזה** *.../...you shall not cross this Jordan.*” So too in our pasukim. The Torah associates Yosef with the part of Menashe that inherited **ארץ ישראל** proper to acknowledge their love of the Land, a trait they received from their father.

I might add that perhaps Moshe was also sending another message. Just as he added a *yud* to Yehoshua’s birth name **הושע**, and as Medrash Tanchuma explains, **may י-יה יושיעך מעצת מרגלים**, **Hashem** save you from the plot of the spies, as a prayer to strengthen Yehoshua’s resolve before embarking on this dangerous mission, he may have been also attempting to help at least one of the **מרגלים** avoid what became one of the most tragic sagas in the history of our people. By drawing on the memory of his **סבא** Yosef and his tremendous love for the Land, perhaps **גדי** **בן סוסי** would be prevented (and possibly convince the others) from participating in and delivering the infamous narrow-minded and faith-lacking report. Unfortunately, as Rav Meir Simcha concludes in his piece, **לא הועיל להם** none of these attempts prevented them from their tragic outcome.

לזכר נשמת אבי מורי ישראל מנחם בן שלום ז"ל  
ולזכר נשמת הרב יהודה בן אברהם שמחה (קופרמן) זצ"ל