

“Yosef called the name of the firstborn Menasheh, for ‘G-d has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s household.’” (41:51)

Could Yosef have been so insensitive as to be happy that he was made to forget his father’s home? Certainly not! The commentators explain that since Yosef was bound by a *cherem*, ban, from communicating with his father, he was subject to an overwhelming emotional burden. His love for his father, coupled with the constant memories of “home,” surely dominated every “free” moment of his day. He thanked Hashem for easing this burden, for replacing his thoughts of home with other thoughts. He was grateful to Hashem for giving him the resolution to comply with the solemn oath against notifying Yaakov *Avinu*, so that Hashem could bring about the salvation in its due time.

V’Dibarta Bam renders a practical interpretation for Yosef’s behavior. Once a customer came into a butcher store and inquired to see the *kashrus* certification of the establishment. The butcher responded insolently, “You see the picture of the rabbi on the wall above me. That is my saintly father. Someone like me does not need certification!” The customer was not fazed by this response. He retorted, “If you were hanging on the wall, and it was your father who stood before me, you would be justified in your response. However, since you are here and it is your father who is on the wall, I am concerned about the store’s *kashrus*.”

A parallel to this story may be applied to Yosef and the manner in which he named his son. Regrettably, many of our co-religionists tell their children, “Your grandfather – my father – was a saint, a great *rav*, devout and pious.” They, however, have long reneged their personal commitment to religious observance. It is always their father who was *frum*, observant. They have acculturated with contemporary society and have, unfortunately, transmitted their way of life to their children.

When Yosef named Menasheh, he thanked Hashem for giving him the fortitude to triumph over the various challenges that presented themselves to him during the stage of his life when he was away from his father. He would be able to raise his children in the Torah way, without relying on relating to them about his father’s religious commitment. He could talk about his own commitment! Hashem gave him the opportunity to “forget” about his home; he would not need to constantly recall his father’s *frumkeit* in order to demonstrate his relationship with the religion of his ancestors. Yosef was proud of his “present.” Indeed, the present is the bridge between the past and the future.