

**Then you shall call out and say... “An Aramean tried to destroy my forefather... the Egyptians mistreated us and afflicted us...” You shall rejoice with all the goodness.
(26:5,6,11)**

I met someone the other day who a number of years ago had been at the brink of bankruptcy. His financial profile was in such serious straits that, at one point, he could not afford food on the table. Hashem blessed him, and he flowered exponentially; today, he is a very successful, wealthy man. We began talking about “old times,” and the topic of his not so recent past came up. When I alluded to how far he had come, he practically became indignant and said, “We do not talk about those times. What was – was, and it is nothing more than a bad memory, a nightmare from which we have woken up. The pain and shame that enveloped us then is gone, and I refuse to bring it back.”

While I understand how this man feels, the Torah does not seem to agree. In the *Bikurim* declaration, the farmer reiterates his ancestor’s past-- from the wily attempts of Lavan to destroy Yaakov *Avinu*, to the misery, persecution and death which were a daily part of our lives while we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. Why bring up the past? Today, *Baruch Hashem*, the farmer has his own plot of land in the homeland of his dreams, surrounded by family in the spiritual center of the Holy Land. Why should we rehash what once was? Perhaps this is when it is especially valuable to remember the past, or else we might become so complacent in the present that we might endanger our future. We must always look to the future, but keep an eye on the past. Who we are and what we have become are born of the fabric of the past, present, future continuum. We should never ignore this reality.