

## Yosef called the firstborn Menashe, for “G-d has made me forget all my hardship and my entire father’s household. (41:51)

Unquestionably, Yosef’s home life was difficult. Being reviled and shunned by his brothers, regardless of its appropriateness or misguided nature, did not provide the setting for a happy home life. He had every reason to want to forget the hardships that he had endured in his father’s home. Yet, he did not remonstrate over it, because he understood that it had been Hashem’s will, as part of a larger Divine Plan. He bore his brothers no ill will and carried no grudge. As the *Baal Akeidah* explains, he thanked Hashem for enlightening him concerning his difficult past. Now, it all made sense. How could he place blame on anyone if, in fact, they had all been pawns carrying out the will of the Almighty?

Yet, Yosef did carry an emotional burden. He was acutely aware of his Father’s pain. To lose a child that was so dear to him, so much a part of his life, was, for Yaakov *Avinu*, an unbearable tragedy – one that continued to haunt him during this entire time. Surely, Yosef was not belittling his father’s pain when he offered his gratitude to Hashem for allowing him to forget his past. No, Yosef carried the emotional burden throughout his exile from his father, because of the ban his brothers had imposed on him, preventing him from informing Yaakov. Hashem helped him to forget the pain by giving him other things to think about. Otherwise, Yosef would have literally broken down from emotion, out of empathy for his father’s pain.

*Horav Eliyahu Baruch Finkel, zl*, quotes *Horav Raphael Soloveitchik, zl*, who heard from the **Brisker Rav, zl**, that Yosef was grateful to Hashem for allowing him to forget his home. If Yosef would have remembered Yaakov’s home, he could never have survived Egypt. The culture – with its moral depravity, its paganism and licentiousness – was in stark contrast to the idyllic spiritual utopia that permeated Yaakov’s home. When one remembers the spiritual beauty and refinement of character that characterized Yaakov’s home, confronting the Egyptian lifestyle could cause one to snap! Imagine taking someone who had been raised in a delicate, spiritually and morally pristine environment and placing him in contact with the lowest of the low, making him spend a week with a biker group during one of their periods of cultural depravity, when they do whatever pleases them – without shame, no holds barred. The person would literally go out of his mind. This is what would have happened to Yosef if he would have faithfully remembered his father’s home. This is why Hashem allowed him to forget. For this, he was grateful. Sometimes, what we do not know cannot hurt us.