

## "And Yosef called the name of his firstborn Menashe; for Hashem has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's household." (41:51)

Today, we equate "*forgetting one's father's house*," with an attempt to break with tradition. Ostensibly, this was not Yosef's intention. Yet, is it proper for an individual to boast about being able to forget the home of his youth? Is this a phenomenon for which one thanks Hashem? While it is true that Yosef's homelife left much to be desired, he did leave behind a grieving father. A more sensible way to view Yosef's statement reflects upon his refined character traits.

If we were to put ourselves in Yosef's shoes, bearing a grudge would probably be a restrained reaction. Indeed, we cannot begin to relate to his suffering. What seemed to be an idyllic life was tragically disturbed when he was only seventeen years old. He was raised in a home in which his *chavrusa* was his father, the *bchir ha'Avos*, chosen of the Patriarchs. Scorned by his brothers, he was spared from death and sold to a band of Arab traders who later sold him as a slave to the Egyptians. He was constantly challenged with trials and temptations, but he persevered. He triumphed over adversity, overcoming challenge and succeeding in maintaining his *bitachon* in Hashem. He emerged unscathed and pure from sin. What was the origin of his troubles? His home, his brothers and their jealousy, caused him twelve years of harsh suffering. The years in which he could have been with his father were transformed into years of suffering, loneliness and misery. Who caused it? Who sold him into this wretched life? His brothers.

Is it any wonder that Yosef might have felt animosity towards his brothers? Hostility is a normal reaction to such circumstances. Yosef *Ha'Tzaddik*, however, remained pure, bearing no grudge, feeling no hatred. He turned towards Hashem and declared his love for his brothers. He returned no ill will or resentment towards them. He abolished all rancor against them. This is the meaning of his thanksgiving to Hashem when he named Menashe. Thank You, Hashem, for giving me the courage to withstand my trials, especially for the ability to forgive and forget. Yosef was able to forget the suffering he underwent as a result of his brothers' errors.

Yosef teaches us an important lesson. Throughout life, we invariably, suffer pain at the instigation of others. Whether we suffer financial loss, job changes, shame or emotional pain, the worst mistake on our part is to permit reactive hatred to eat away at our lives. Nothing positive can emerge from hatred. Conversely, we only hurt ourselves by allowing animosity to gnaw away at our emotions. First, we must recognize that everything comes by the decree of Hashem; people are only Hashem's agents, employed to carry out His bidding. True, Hashem uses an evil person to carry out evil. Nevertheless, it is Hashem's will that we are criticizing. Second, for our own emotional and physical well-being, it is much healthier to ignore the evil around us and to go on living. Hatred only makes matters worse, granting more success to our detractors.