

Parashat Vayeshev

Genesis 37:1–40:23

DECEMBER 20, 2019



SUMMARY

Ya'akov is living in the land of *K'naan* with *Rahel* and the rest of his family. *Rahel's* first-born son, *Yosef*, is *Ya'akov's* favorite, and *Ya'akov* gives him a special coat.

Yosef has two dreams--one with connected to harvest and farming--which his brothers interpret to mean that they will bow down to him. They interpret his other dream--of the sun, moon, and 11 stars bowing down to him--as the brothers and their parents bowing down to *Yosef*. After sharing his dreams with his brothers, *Yosef's* brothers hate him more and become more jealous of him.

A little later *Ya'akov* sends *Yosef* to check on his brothers while they are out taking care of their sheep. When he arrives, *Yosef's* brothers say to each other, "Let's kill him and throw him into a pit and say that wild animals ate him and *then* we will see what will happen to his dreams." *Reuven*--the oldest--speaks up and convinces them instead to throw him into a pit alive, so he can check on him later and bring *Yosef* back to his father, *Yaakov*. Soon after putting *Yosef* in the pit, *Yehuda* comes up with the idea of selling *Yosef*. The brothers agree to sell *Yosef* to Midianites who then sell *Yosef* into slavery in Egypt.

Yosef rises to power in Egypt, falls from power, and rises again to a position of even greater power and influence--in large part because of the connection he has to God which allows him to interpret dreams so well.

From Our Commentators:

Seforno

הנה בעל החלומות שספר לנו
את החלומות להקציפנו כדי
שנתקומם עליו ונחטא לאל ית'
או לאבינו או לשניהם ונאבד

HERE IS THAT DREAMER: The one who told us about his dreams in order to make us angry so that we would rise up against him and sin against G'd, the blessed one, or against our father or both of them and we will be destroyed.

FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) Why do you think *Yosef's* brothers hate him? Are they more jealous about his dreams or about his dad liking him more?
- 2) According to the commentator Seforno, *Yosef's* brothers think that *Yosef* shared his dreams just to make them angry and jealous. Can you think of any reason that *Yosef* might have wanted to get his brothers all riled up and angry at him? Why would anyone want to do this?
- 3) When someone tells you their dreams and these dreams involve their success or power or a different vision for the world, does it have to make you jealous? How else could you feel or react when someone shares their dreams?