

DECEMBER 20, 2019

Parashat Vayishlach (Genesis 37:1–40:23)

Taught By: Dahlia & Ethan



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.



1) Why do you think Yosef's brothers hate him? Are they more jealous about his dreams or about his dad liking him more?

ETHAN: I think they're probably more jealous of his dreams that make *Yosef* feel special. *Yosef's* brothers don't understand what makes him any more special than they are.

DAHLIA: I think they're probably more jealous that their father loves *Yosef* more than he loves them. There's no reason that they have to be jealous of *Yosef's* dreams. Dreams might come true, but they might not come true. They do definitely see that *Yaakov* likes *Yosef* better, so that is probably the main reason, and it comes out when *Yosef* tells them his dreams.

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?

DAHLIA: Maybe he did this because he is favored by his father and he just expects everyone to love him and give him whatever he wants, so this is his way of telling his brothers that he is going to demand all their attention and love and respect, too.

ETHAN: I'm not sure *Yosef* was trying to get his brothers all angry or riled up--maybe the dream and the idea that he would be powerful was just exciting for him and he just wanted to share it with his brothers.

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?

DAHLIA: I think dreams are ideas or pictures of things that we think might happen or that we hope will happen. When someone tells you their dreams, you don't have to be jealous--you can be happy for them and share their excitement about what could happen for them in the future.

