



## Vayeshev

*Beresheet* (Genesis) 37:1 – 40:23

As *Parshat Vayeshev* begins, Jacob's favoring of his son Joseph, for whom he makes a "coat of many colors," arouses the anger and jealousy of his other eleven sons. Their anger increases as Joseph relates his unique dreams, in which he appears to have supremacy over his family. Even Jacob can't ignore the implication of Joseph's dreams.

Later Jacob sends Joseph to meet his brothers in Dothan where they are grazing their father's flock. As they see Joseph approaching, the brothers plot to kill him. Reuben asks them not to kill Joseph, but to throw him into a pit instead. (Reuben plans to rescue Joseph later.) The brothers cast Joseph into a pit, but take his coat. Then, unbeknownst to Reuben, they sell Joseph to merchants who, in turn sell him in Egypt to Potiphar, an Egyptian noble. Believing Joseph to have been killed by a wild animal, Jacob mourns bitterly.

After the interlude of the story of Judah and Tamar, the *Parshah* continues with Joseph in Egypt. Soon, Potiphar entrusts his entire house and holdings to Joseph. Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph, but Joseph spurns her. (Pay special attention to the Torah cantillation as Joseph refuses her advances.) In retaliation, she accuses Joseph of attempting rape, for which Potiphar has Joseph imprisoned. Even in prison Joseph is successful and is put in charge of all the prisoners.

In the same prison as Joseph are Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker who had committed offenses against Pharaoh. While in prison, each has a dream which Joseph interprets. As he foretells, the cupbearer is restored to his former position, while the baker is put to death. Joseph asks the cupbearer to remember him, but he is forgotten.



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