

Ushpizin Info Sheets

Day 6: Yosef

Yosef's story:

Yosef is one of the 12 sons of Yaakov and the firstborn son of his mother, Rachel. After Rachel's death, Yosef became his father's favorite, receiving preferential treatment such as the *ketonet pasim* (a special coat) as a gift from his father, causing his brothers to feel very jealous. This jealousy was made worse when Yosef shared his dreams with them, which described him ruling over them in different ways. When Yosef turned 17, his brothers plotted against him and threw him into a pit, tearing his special coat. They then sold him to the Ishamaelites, who sold him down to Egypt as a slave. The brothers told their father Yaakov that Yosef had died, which broke his heart.

In Egypt, Yosef served Potifar, a minister of the Pharaoh, and became quite successful, until a misunderstanding with Potifar's wife put Yosef in jail. While in jail, Yosef became known as a dream interpreter, helping other ministers of Pharaoh learn their fates through the correct understanding of their dreams. One day, Pharaoh began having confusing dreams of his own and needed a dream interpreter – Yosef was called upon. After correctly interpreting these dreams as well as both predicting a widespread famine in the land and making a plan to prepare for how to handle it, Yosef quickly gained esteem in Pharaoh's eyes and was appointed as Pharaoh's second in command. The famine then spread throughout the area, affecting the land of Canaan (*Eretz Yisrael*) where Yosef's family still lived. Having prepared for the famine thanks to Yosef's advice, many people from all over the region came to Egypt to receive food, including Yosef's brothers. When they arrived, Yosef immediately recognized them but they did not recognize him. Yosef devised a series of tests to prove that the brothers had changed from their previous jealous ways, and once they had proven themselves, Yosef finally revealed himself to his brothers, asking, "Is my father still alive?" Yaakov was immediately then informed of the news and brought to Egypt, reuniting with his son and living out his final years in Egypt. Yosef married Osnat and had 2 sons, Ephraim and Menashe, who also became important characters in Tanakh.

Yosef's character traits:

Yosef is known as a dreamer, for his ability to interpret dreams, for his quick thinking, and ultimately, for his integrity and forgiving nature.