

## The Story of Yoceph

It's time for you children to learn something and then you can prophesy, speak like a prophet and tell everyone what you heard in the story, tell the whole Body of Messiah. You can actually speak like a little prophet or prophetess. You'll get your chance. If you don't let anything hold you back, you can speak to the whole Body.

Last Shabbat something amazing happened. Our Father spoke to the people and we responded. Many of us went to the water, cried out and got washed of many things. Some people were baptized. We were serious about it. Our Father spoke to us something so important for our tribe here, and that word was *virtue*.

Now virtue is a big word, but Yônêq explained it to all your parents, that it means *valor*, strength of character to do the right thing. It really affected your parents. It affected your abba — he spoke! And your abba spoke, and yours! You see, your parents really responded. It was so wonderful. They said, "I don't have virtue, valor."

We have one example in the Scriptures, the best example of valor and virtue. Well, the second-best. But he is very important to us because he's the name of our tribe, Yoceph. You see there is a very clear story about the virtue of our father, Yoceph.

Yoceph is one of the sons of Israel. He started out small like you, and it wasn't easy for him. So, don't get it wrong; he didn't have it all easy. He didn't just turn out to be a good boy with everything going right for him. It was hard for him sometimes. Let's see how he gained his virtue.

When he was just a young boy, it was just him and his imma and a whole family full of half-brothers. He was the only son of his imma, Rachel. At first, things were always the same. He would be with his abba, taking care of the sheep and goats. Then all of a sudden, when he was about 9, everything in his world turned upside down. All of a sudden they were all headed out somewhere, moving out. "It's time," said Abba. "We're

going to the land. We're going back to the land of my grandfather, Abraham. Maybe your grandfather Isaac is still alive there."

"I've never met my sabba." It was an exciting thought to Yoceph.

"There'll be hardship — are you ready?"

"Yes," said Yoceph.

They took off, he, his imma, and the other brothers.

Now, the other brothers were the problem in the story. Brothers are supposed to get along really well, aren't they? Can you imagine having ten brothers? For some reason, Yoceph always had it hard with the brothers. I guess it's like the little chicken in the family. In the chicken house the little one gets pecked. Well, that's the way it was with Yoceph, the smallest in the family. So, on the way, it was kind of rough on him, even though he tried to fit in and get along with his brothers. His abba would talk to him and try to encourage him.

As they got into the land, one night everything changed: his imma died. His imma died giving birth to a little brother. Yoceph was excited about having a brother because he was quite a bit older and he didn't have one, but now his imma died! Yoceph cried. Jacob tried to show him his little brother to try and encourage him, but he wanted his imma. He cried. He took a walk outside, and let me tell you children, virtue starts young. If you think you're going to get it later on, don't think that. Now is the time. So, he decided, "Am I going to sit outside here and just cry and feel sorry for myself? No, I'm going to go back inside and try to encourage Abba. And I'm going to try and take care of my baby brother and I'm going to remember what my abba said about the stars. He said we had to go back to the land because our people were going to be like the stars and that was the promise of God."

He got his character together. He quit being a whiner. He quit feeling sorry for himself as the poor victim in the family and turned around, went back inside, and said, "Abba, I'll help you take care of Benjamin and it will be OK." His abba looked up and

heard Yoceph saying it would be OK. He looked at Yoceph and he was comforted. Yoceph could see that look on his abba's face that was saying, "You helped me so much," and it made Yoceph feel really good. "Wow, I'm glad I did that. I'm glad I didn't just go cry to myself for a few days or a few years. I'm glad I forgot about myself and decided to help Abba." It was *Step One* toward virtue, to becoming a man of valor.

"Okay, I'm just going to please Abba and try to encourage him."

The brothers turned and looked at him. Abba loved him so much because he had a son to encourage him. Now, when you choose to do the right thing, does it always go really well for you? NO. As the days went along, he just tried and tried to help, to encourage, and to work hard with the sheep, and the brothers started saying things like, "He thinks he's so good." They started making it a little bit hard. They were jealous. He was trying to do the right thing and they were going the other way. I'm talking about the forefathers of the twelve tribes of Israel! So we've got Yoceph, and we're specializing in him; we've got to learn from him.

Let's move forward to when Yoceph was 17. A lot goes on in a boy when he's 17. Yoceph was going out to help with the sheep. He was helping his other brothers, Dan, Naphtali, Asher, and Gad. They were out taking care of the animals. He was working hard and, all of a sudden, he noticed that they were fooling around. He wondered what they were doing over there. Then he saw what they were doing. One side in him wanted to go over and join in the foolish game they were doing, and the other side said, "Abba wouldn't like that." A little war goes on, doesn't it, when you're really curious about what's going on? It might be exciting, but at the same time you know you were supposed to be milking the goats and working to clean the pens. Here comes *Step Two* in learning virtue and valor. What should he do?

He knows abba wouldn't like that. Keep on working, yes, and even one step further — tell Abba. Tell Abba on your other four brothers. That's going to make them mad at you, isn't it? What should he do? Tell Abba. That's exactly what he did. He went

and told his abba. He reported all the bad things. Not just that day, but a couple of days later he did it again, and a couple of days later. Not in a bad way, but knowing his abba would be really upset. He had to say it; he had to tell abba. So what did that do? It made the brothers mad. “Bad Yoceph,” they said. “He’s always saying what we’re doing.”

Sure enough, it made them more jealous because he was doing the right thing and they weren’t. Then it happened. The real character of our Abba came to Yoceph because he was doing the right thing. When you’re doing the right thing, something amazing will happen. Our Father might speak to you. He spoke to Yoceph. One night, he lay down to sleep and he got a dream. Sometimes dreams are just nonsense, but sometimes if you’re careful, our Father will speak to you in a dream. And you might not even understand what it’s all about, but if you ask our Father, He might show you. Or, you can tell your abba.

Yoceph had a dream. He woke up and said, “I had a dream. I dreamed that eleven sheaves were all bowing down to me.”

“Eleven, you mean like eleven brothers, bowing down to you?” said the brothers. Grrrr.

Maybe he shouldn’t have told them that dream. A short time later he had another dream, and in that dream the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars were bowing to him. So he went and told abba. “Abba, in my dream the moon and the sun and eleven stars were all bowing down to me.”

“Well,” said Abba, “you mean your imma and I and your brothers are all going to bow down to you?!”

“That dreamer!” said the brothers.

A few days later, his abba said, “You boys take the sheep over there. I’m going to keep Yoceph at home here with Benjamin. He’s going to help around the house.” So he stayed home and the other brothers went off complaining, “He gets all the good stuff.” You know, that jealous kind of talk.

Some days went by and the abba said to Yoceph, “You should go to where your brothers are.”

“By myself, all the way?”

“Yes, I think you can do it. You’re 17. Just check on how things are going and hurry back.”

So, off Yoceph went. He was going to try to do the right thing. Imagine taking a long hike. He went to where they were supposed to be. He looked around and he looked around and he couldn’t find them. “Where are my brothers?”

He went on and then he saw the big flock. “There are my ten brothers, taking care of the sheep.” He had on a special coat that his abba had made for him because he took really good care of Yoceph. He thought of him a lot. So Yoceph was running up to the sheep to see his brothers and his coat was flying in the breeze. Well, they saw him a long way off. There were the ten — Reuben, Judah, all the brothers. “Look who’s coming, the dreamer!” They grumbled together. Grumbling loves company. They talked about it together about how Yoceph was, so by the time he came up close, they had already come up with a plan.

Yoceph wants to do the right thing. Is it going to work out good for him? No!

When he got to them, they had a plan to hurt their own brother. They grabbed Yoceph and they had decided they were going to kill him. Kill their own brother! Kill him when all he was trying to do was the right thing? They grabbed him. And then one of them realized enough of what was right to do, and that was Reuben. “Brothers,” he said, “maybe we shouldn’t kill him. There’s a big pit over there to capture the animals. Let’s just throw him in there and cover it over. Let’s not shed any blood or we’ll be guilty of bloodshed.”

So, they grabbed him. “Brothers, what’s going on? What did I do?”

“You dreamer, always dreaming and thinking we’re going to bow down to you. You think you’re such a great person.”

“I just wanted to do the right thing, telling Abba what you did wrong... Reuben!” he yelled as they threw him in the pit. Reuben had it in his mind that he was going to save him later. He didn’t want to go against his brothers. He didn’t have enough character to stand up to them. All kinds of reasoning was going on.

Then Judah — this is important — Judah said, “You know, it doesn’t really do any good to just kill him. We could make a lot more profit, like money...” (Judah’s always been good at making a profit. Their minds are always working in good ways to make a profit. This wasn’t a good way, but you could see the seed of something that could be good, but right now it wasn’t being used for the good.)

So they decided to sell him. They saw a band of travelers coming along and got Yoceph out of the hole. “Finally, brothers! I thought you were going to leave me in that hole...”

But they wrapped a rope around him and as soon as the Ishmaelites got close by, they dragged him out, “Look at this fine boy. What will you give us for him?”

They gave 20 shekels for him. Up onto one of the camels, and Yoceph was riding off into the desert with the Ishmaelites. What were those brothers doing?

The brothers had to figure out what to do now, so they took his coat, the pretty coat, and covered it with blood. They pretended that he had gotten eaten by wild animals. They rushed back to their abba and said, “Look, we found the coat of Yoceph.”

“It’s all bloody. He must have been killed by wild animals.”

How did it turn out for Yoceph trying to do the right thing? It turned out bad — so, it doesn’t really do any good to try to do good because something else bad always comes, right?

Yoceph was put up on the block for sale by the Ishmaelites. They probably got 50 shekels and they left Yoceph in Egypt. Someone bought Yoceph and took him home. It was a man in a big house. Now Yoceph was a slave in a big house. What should he do? He could have sat there and gotten depressed and said, “I tried to do the right thing,

now look at me. Poor me, I'm just a victim of my circumstances." And he could have just cried on and on about it. That wouldn't have been virtue. That would have been a waste of time. Victims just waste their time moaning about their circumstances.

He decided. He turned around. "I'm going to be diligent. I'm going to give myself to slavery 100%. I am going to do what is right." Virtue! Virtue came into him. He became so diligent. He had faith that our Father was going to somehow help him because he remembered those stars, the promise that our people would be multiplied and would rule like Abraham. "Until then, I am going to add to my faith. I am going to be diligent to add virtue to my faith."

And he did. He worked so hard, the slave master took note of him. "Did you see how he cleaned? How he swept up the kitchen? I just said, 'Sweep the kitchen' and wow, look at what he did. I just told him to take out the trash, but not only that, he also organized all the trash cans and wiped them all when they were empty! I think I'm going to make him the head of all the servants. He's such a good slave."

See what happens? When he gave himself, he became the best. Do you know our Father wasn't through testing him? The Word of YHWH kept on testing him. Yoceph, you better get ready for another test.

He was running back and forth; he was the head of everything. He was so diligent, the master said, "With a boy like this around I can take that long trip I was planning, because he can take care of the house and the slaves."

He went to Yoceph, "Listen, I want you to take care of things while I go on a trip. My wife's up in her room; she'll be fine. Watch everything. Good-bye."

Our Father was going to test Yoceph one more time. This is a big test, the first test: women. Women have been the downfall since the very beginning. He was going to test him the same way Adam got tested, but with a little bit different circumstances. This wicked wife of the master decided to try and tempt good little Yoceph to fall in the same way. She got all dressed up in her nicest clothes. She spent a lot of time combing her

hair and getting some clothes that weren't modest. Girls that do that, watch out for them! A good man who wants to be virtuous has to stay away from girls like that. Get out of there as fast as you can! If you can see they're messing with their hair a lot, fixing their clothes fancy, watch out!

Yoceph was on his way to his chores and the lady said, "Sit down, we'll have a nice talk together." Yoceph knew she was acting kind of weird. He knew he didn't want anything to do with this kind of girl because she had lost her virtue. "I'm staying away from that lady." So, it didn't take him long to decide whether he would sit there and have a nice chat or whether he would get out of there. What should he do? That's right, get out of there. Run, if you want to save your virtue, get away from that woman! He took off, just as she grabbed him. But those robes back then weren't really tight like a shirt, so he managed to keep on running and she kept the robe. He got out of there as fast as he could. He saved his virtue and he thought something good would happen because of that. He got away! He was safe! He got a different robe in his room. He was so relieved; he saved his virtue, now everything would be OK. What reward will he get for this?

YHWH tested him. There's nothing worse than a woman scorned. She got so mad at him for doing the right thing, just like the brothers. She got madder than them. As soon as her husband came home, she told the whole house. "This man came in here, into my room. Here's his robe. He was trying to do bad things to me!" She lied. She said he had done bad things. He hadn't done bad things. She was so offended because he didn't fall. "I'm going to get him."

Poor Yoceph. The master was so mad, "I trusted Yoceph! I thought he was such a good and diligent slave, and what does he do? He went after my wife! Throw him in prison." He didn't really believe Yoceph had done anything bad, but his whole name and reputation was ruined.

So into prison! He had shackles, metal rings, around his ankles. They hurt so bad, he was in terrible pain. He had a collar of iron around his neck and they locked him



against the wall. What were his thoughts there? “I tried to do the right thing. I chose to do the right thing. I’m a victim. I don’t deserve this! Justice!”

Shall he sit there and get bitter and whine about his circumstances? It hurt! And he was in a stinky prison! What is his virtue going to tell him? That’s right, keep on going!

“I remember the promise and I have faith. I have to add to my faith virtue, and to do that I have to be diligent. I can’t change the circumstances, but I can change the environment. So I’m going to be thankful and try to make the best of it.”

So, when they let him free from the wall, he swept his cell and cleaned up. (They say Alanah Zedekah does that.) He fixed up the wall and pretty soon the head jailer took notice. “Hey, you’re pretty diligent. In fact, I’m going to put you in charge of all the prisoners.” What was that! It turned out to be good because virtue ruled and he was diligent. Now, he was in charge of all the prisoners in all the prison, and not much later than that, young Yoceph found himself sitting in the Pharaoh’s very court.

It had gotten out that this boy could figure out dreams. When Pharaoh had a dream that puzzled him, the people knew that Yoceph could tell the meaning of dreams. Remember, he was in that pit, and now 13 years later, he was all in jewels, sitting on the throne of Egypt, ruling next to Pharaoh. He figured out Pharaoh’s dream and Pharaoh rewarded him. “Sit right here by me and rule. I’ll give you the nicest woman in the kingdom for your wife. She’s a very nice girl, a virgin.” Yoceph was 30 years old when he got his wife. And then he had two sons. It was all changed by his character, by his virtue. Remember, something that looked bad turned out good.

One day, who comes knocking at the door, hungry? The brothers. The brothers didn’t recognize Yoceph with the crown on his head. They told the story of how bad things had gone, how they were really hungry and they came to Egypt to look for food. Yoceph realized that his brothers didn’t recognize him. The last time he had seen them was when he was on a camel all those years ago. They all walked in and they bowed

down just like in the dream. His dream came true! He looked up to heaven, “The dream came true!”

Yoceph worked it out in the most amazing way. It is such a long story. You’re going to hear it many, many times because it is such an important story. Ask your parents all the things that happened here, because it was incredible how he tricked them to go back and get Benjamin and how they came back with Benjamin. He sat them all down and served them supper, but he gave five times more to Benjamin than to his brothers. They brought out a heaping portion for him. Yoceph was testing them. He wanted to see if they were going to treat Benjamin the way they treated him, if they were jealous of him. But those boys had gone through enough. Those ten brothers weren’t jealous anymore. They had been humbled, because they had been bad. They got disciplined over and over. They weren’t about to be upset with Benjamin for getting the best portion. They were just glad he had the big portion.

So when Yoceph saw and heard them talking, he could not stop from crying out, “I am Yoceph. I am Yoceph, your brother!” And everything turned around.

Yoceph managed to keep his virtue and our Father set him free. What can you learn from that?

Finally his abba Jacob ended up coming. Yoceph had a wonderful place prepared for him. The brothers apologized and said they were sorry so many times. “Sorry!” Even until the day their father died, they could not keep from regretting what they had done to Yoceph. Jacob died and the brothers said, “Now that Abba is gone, Yoceph will be mad. He’s been holding off being angry because Abba was around, but now that Abba is gone, Yoceph is going to remember our sin, how we put him in that pit. He’s going to come against us. What if Yoceph still has a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?”

Do you think that Yoceph was still carrying a grudge? So they all got around him. “We forgot to tell you something that Abba said right before he died. Abba gave specific

instruction before he died, ‘Say to Yoceph, “I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.” So therefore, please forgive the crime of your servants of the God of your father. Please forgive our crime.’”

Yoceph just looked at them, and this is the heart of Yoceph — he cried. He knew that this was just them making this up because they were still thinking that he was holding a grudge. He cried. His brothers saw him crying and they all started crying. All the twelve brothers were crying. They fell down before him and said, “We’re here as your slaves, Yoceph. We just want to be your slaves.”

And Yoceph said, “Don’t be afraid, brothers. Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good. YHWH our Father intended it for good in order to preserve a great people as He is doing today, so don’t be afraid. I myself will take care of you and all your little ones. You meant it for harm but God worked it out for the good.”

So that’s the lesson of virtue. That’s your forefather Yoceph. Never forget about him because he’s just like our Master Yahshua. He went through death and suffering, but did it work out bad in the end for our Master Yahshua? No, He was resurrected!

Yônêq — All things work together for the good for those who love our Father and are called according to His purpose. Paul knew that story, too. He said, “All things work together for the good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.” So we can’t bear our grudges.