

# Righteousness in the Joseph Story: Joseph Resists Seduction (Genesis 39)

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## The Literary-Historical Problem

The Joseph story has always been a particular challenge for pentateuchal criticism. It forms a literary unity of its own with a narrative profile that is unique within the book of Genesis. The design of this tale does not fit into current ideas about source criticism. Consequently, in the history of pentateuchal criticism, exegetes who did adhere to the Documentary Hypothesis – in the form of the so-called Newer Documentary Hypothesis, which sees the present text as composed of four sources: Yahwist (J), Elohist (E), Deuteronomy (D), and Priestly Code (P) – felt themselves forced to put the Joseph story in a strait-jacket in order to save their theories. Julius Wellhausen confessed: “It is to be suggested that this literary work was composed by J and E, as always; our earlier results lead to this assumption. They would be upset if this assumption were not corroborated.”<sup>1</sup> Scholars who read the Joseph story as a masterpiece of narrative art, as Hermann Gunkel and Gerhard von Rad famously did, fell into something like schizophrenia, between genre criticism on the one hand and source criticism on the other.<sup>2</sup> Herbert Donner rightly criticized: “One cannot have both: the Joseph story as a novella and as part of the pentateuchal sources J and E.”<sup>3</sup> For Martin Noth, who was more conscious of literary histo-

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<sup>1</sup> Julius WELLHAUSEN, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs* (4th ed.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963; orig. pub. 1876), 52.

<sup>2</sup> See Hermann GUNKEL, *Genesis* (trans. M. E. Biddle; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997), 381–87; IDEM, “Die Komposition der Joseph-Geschichten,” *ZDMG* 76 (1922): 55–71; Hugo GRESSMANN, “Ursprung und Entwicklung der Joseph-Sage,” in *EYXAPIΣ-THPION: Studien zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments für Hermann Gunkel* (ed. H. Schmidt; FRLANT 36; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923), 1–55; Gerhard VON RAD, “The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom,” in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966), 292–300.

<sup>3</sup> Herbert DONNER, *Die literarische Gestalt der alttestamentlichen Josephsgeschichte* (SHAWPH 1976, 2; Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1976), 14.

ry, the Joseph story was nothing but a redactional link between the patriarchal narratives and the story of the exodus.<sup>4</sup> He supposed that the Joseph story was composed in order to bring the Israelites down to Egypt. Judged by its elaborate nature and by the size of the narrative, this was an obvious mistake. Donner therefore suggested that the Joseph story replaced a former narrative link between Genesis and Exodus. "There is no indication to assume that the Yahwist incorporated the novella into his work essentially unchanged so that he would have turned from a narrator into an editor. If the novella belongs neither to the Yahwist nor to the Elohist, in the course of the development of the Pentateuch the editors must have put it in the place where J and E had formerly recounted the transition to Egypt."<sup>5</sup> In this way Donner produced an *argumentum e silentio* that by nature resists every attempt to prove it.

Recent research sees the patriarchal narratives on the one hand and the exodus tradition on the other as two competing traditions about the origins of the people of Israel.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the preeditorial shape of the patriarchal narratives, this is an obvious mistake. Scholars may have been unconsciously guided by Albrecht Alt's concept of peaceful conquest by seasonal change of pasture grounds in the early Iron Age, which Alt saw mirrored in the patriarchal narratives and which stands in sharp contrast to the conquest as it is told in the book of Joshua.<sup>7</sup> But in Genesis there is no conquest. The supposed rivalry between the book of Genesis on the one hand and the books of Exodus through Joshua on the other hand does not exist. Scholars who claim that Genesis was put in front of Exodus only at a late stage see no need for Donner's *argumentum e silentio* any longer. Konrad Schmid connects Gen 49 to Gen 36 and declares the Joseph story a late insertion.<sup>8</sup> However, he sees, as did Noth, that the connection to the book of Exodus is essential for the present shape of the narrative. Others claim that the Joseph story is only a late appendix to the patriarchal narratives that had no continuation, its purpose being to

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<sup>4</sup> Martin NOTH, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (trans. B. W. Anderson; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 208–13. See previously Bernhard LUTHER, "Die Persönlichkeit des Jahwisten," in *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme* (ed. E. Meyer; Halle: Niemeyer, 1906), 105–73, here 142.

<sup>5</sup> DONNER, *Die literarische Gestalt der alttestamentlichen Josephsgeschichte*, 24–25.

<sup>6</sup> See esp. Konrad SCHMID, *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible* (trans. J. D. Nogalski; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2010); Jan Christian GERTZ, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung: Untersuchungen zur Endredaktion des Pentateuch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Albrecht ALT, "The Settlement of the Israelites in Palestine," in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion* (trans. R. A. Wilson; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), 173–221.

<sup>8</sup> Konrad SCHMID, "Die Josephsgeschichte im Pentateuch," in *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (ed. J. Gertz et al.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 83–118.

provide the origins of the Egyptian diaspora in the Persian era.<sup>9</sup> However, a narrative that concentrates to such a degree on the fortunes of an individual – as well as his piety and moral behavior – cannot have the history of the people as its original focus.

Judged by genre criticism, the Joseph story in its very first shape is a traditional fairy tale. This is easy to see from the plot. Like many fairy tales, it begins with a rivalry within the family over the parents' love for their children. The son whom the father loves most becomes the victim of his brothers, but in the end he receives the kingdom – or at least the position of authority second to the king, which enables him to save the brothers from an impending catastrophe. In this respect the Joseph story is clearly distinct from the patriarchal narratives. It cannot have been sketched as an appendix, though the protagonists, Jacob and some of his sons, are identical.

The definition of genre is most clearly confirmed by the Egyptian Tale of Two Brothers<sup>10</sup> and a number of similar parallels. "It is true that the theme is not exclusively Egyptian ...; but the fact that the scene of the biblical narrative is in Egypt, and the close resemblance to the Egyptian tale, make it extremely probable that there is a direct connexion between them."<sup>11</sup> Especially in Gen 39, it is impossible to overlook the close relationship, even if the Joseph story cannot have been an immediate copy of the Egyptian version.

Concerning the coherence of the Pentateuch, I once recovered a non-Deuteronomistic and pre-Priestly editorial thread that served to link the former independent narrative units – that is, the primeval history, the patriarchal narratives, the Joseph story, the Moses story, the exodus narrative, the stories about the wandering through the desert, and finally the story of Balaam – thus forming the basic document of the Pentateuch roughly in the size of the former source J.<sup>12</sup> Following this observation, the Yahwist changed its identity, contrary to the former scholarly tradition, no longer a narrator or collector of oral tradition (as Wellhausen, Gunkel, and von Rad saw him, and as John Van Seters still holds),<sup>13</sup> but an editor who dealt with written sources, which had themselves experienced a long and sometimes complicated literary develop-

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<sup>9</sup> Reinhard Gregor KRATZ, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament* (trans. J. Bowden; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 278–79.

<sup>10</sup> *ANET*, 23–25; *AEL*, 2:203–11; *COS*, 1:40; *TUAT.E*, 147–65.

<sup>11</sup> John SKINNER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1930), 459.

<sup>12</sup> Christoph LEVIN, *Der Jahwist* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); *IDEM*, "The Yahwist: The Earliest Editor in the Pentateuch," *JBL* 126 (2007): 209–30.

<sup>13</sup> John VAN SETERS, *Der Jahwist als Historiker* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1984); *IDEM*, *The Edited Bible: The Curious History of the "Editor" in Biblical Criticism* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006).

ment.<sup>14</sup> Consequently the older of the two documents was proven to exist by means of redaction criticism – and together with it the earlier form of the Documentary Hypothesis, on the basis of J and P.

It is misleading to question the existence of the Priestly Code as some scholars did in the 1970s.<sup>15</sup> It is just as misleading to question the source J,<sup>16</sup> whose editorial shape is now well secured by redaction criticism. Most critics unconsciously still adhere to the concept of the Yahwist as a narrator instead of an editor. People who say farewell to the Yahwist are not sitting on the train, but rather are standing behind it, on the platform of unchecked traditional presuppositions.<sup>17</sup> The truth is that everyone who denies the Documentary Hypothesis as such will be drowned in the flood or, like the Egyptians, in the sea. Two and a half centuries of biblical research have shown that the literary nature of Gen 6–8 as well as of Exod 14 cannot be sufficiently explained except by the combination of previously independent narrative sources.<sup>18</sup> This observation inescapably determines our understanding of the narrative of the Pentateuch as a whole. Already in 1853 Hermann Hupfeld wrote: “The discovery that the Pentateuch was composed of different sources or documents, is indisputably not only most important for the understanding of the historical books of the Old Testament, with serious consequences for the concept of theology and history, but also one of the most secure discoveries in the whole field of critique and literary history. It shall maintain its hold and cannot be undone by anything, as long as there is something like critique,

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<sup>14</sup> Jean-Louis SKA, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch* (trans. P. Dominique; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 144: “J should be considered the product of redactional work that elaborated on older narrative cycles.”

<sup>15</sup> See esp. Rolf RENDTORFF, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch* (trans. J. J. Scullion; JSOTSup 89; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990). Most recently Christoph BERNER, *Die Exoduserzählung: Das literarische Werden einer Ursprungslegende Israels* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), tried to understand the literary growth without any of the former pentateuchal sources.

<sup>16</sup> GERTZ et al., *Abschied vom Jahwisten*; more differentiated, Thomas B. DOZEMAN and Konrad SCHMID, eds., *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (SBLSymS 34; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> See the criticism of the critics by Christoph LEVIN, “Abschied vom Jahwisten?” TRU 69 (2004): 329–44.

<sup>18</sup> For the flood story the Documentary Hypothesis is abandoned especially by Erhard BLUM, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 281–85; Jean-Louis SKA, “El relato del diluvio: Un relato sacerdotal y algunos fragmentos redaccionales posteriores,” *EstB* 52 (1994): 37–62. For Exod 14 see BERNER, *Exoduserzählung*, 343–65. The traditional view has recently been confirmed by Christoph LEVIN, “Die Redaktion R<sup>JP</sup> in der Urgeschichte,” in *Auf dem Weg zur Endgestalt von Genesis bis II Regum: Festschrift Hans-Christoph Schmitt* (ed. M. Beck and U. Schorn; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), 15–34, here 30–33; IDEM, “Source Criticism: The Miracle at the Sea,” in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen* (ed. J. M. LeMon and K. H. Richards; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 39–61.

that is, a sense of what is equal and what is contradicting, what is similar and what is dissimilar."<sup>19</sup>

This does not require leaving unchanged the Documentary Hypothesis, whose weaknesses have been observed since its very beginning in the eighteenth century. This is especially true for the Joseph story. In his study of this narrative, Wilhelm Rudolph came to the conclusion: "The reservations against source criticism, which I could not help thinking about the longer the more, do not turn toward the separation of sources in general: It seems to me unshaken and unshakeable that J is the oldest and P the youngest source of the Pentateuch. Rather it is the way of separating the sources that would not do in my eyes, that is, the method to sort out verse after verse in every section of the text and to attribute the single verses or even half verses or quarter verses to different written sources."<sup>20</sup>

Guided by insights like this on the one hand and the obvious compositional nature of the text on the other, the Supplementary Hypothesis, favored already by Abraham Kuenen in his debate with Wellhausen, becomes more and more predominant, and rightly so. It is the appropriate way to understand the process of literary growth of the texts, in the Pentateuch no more than anywhere else in the Old Testament.

What is also to be questioned is the chronological relationship between the sources as it became traditional in research. As far as I have observed, the two sources J and P were joined early, compared with the whole process of textual growth. Already in the primeval history, where the Documentary Hypothesis works best, I found that about seventy of 299 masoretic verses, that is, about one quarter of the present text, were added after the combination of the two sources.<sup>21</sup> In the patriarchal narratives the extent of the late textual levels is much greater (see Gen 12:10–20; 14; 15; 20–22; 23; 34; 38; 48; 49, most of the promises to the patriarchs, some of the genealogies, and many additions and comments in nearly every part of the present text). In the books of Exodus through Numbers, the late texts are predominant to such an extent that at least from Exod 19 onward it becomes difficult to identify the narrative strands of the two sources – which do nevertheless exist. One reason for present doubts about the Documentary Hypothesis is that in former research the size of the two sources J and P was greatly overestimated.

The so-called E source, however, should be abandoned in pentateuchal criticism. This hypothetical literary entity was first introduced by Karl David

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<sup>19</sup> Hermann HUPFELD, *Die Quellen der Genesis und die Art ihrer Zusammensetzung* (Berlin: Wiegand & Grieben, 1853), 1.

<sup>20</sup> Wilhelm RUDOLPH, "Die Josefsgeschichte," in IDEM and Paul VOLZ, *Der Elohists als Erzähler: Ein Irrweg der Pentateuchkritik?* (BZAW 63; Gießen: Töpelmann, 1933), 143–83, here 145.

<sup>21</sup> LEVIN, "Die Redaktion R<sup>JP</sup> in der Urgeschichte," 18–23.

Ilgen<sup>22</sup> and later elaborated especially by Hermann Hupfeld<sup>23</sup> while he was clearing up the outline of the *Grundschrift* (basic document) – or, as it was also called at that time, the older Elohist – which we now, after the redating by Karl Heinrich Graf, Abraham Kuenen, and Julius Wellhausen, call the Priestly Code (P). When it became evident that a remarkable quantity of the Elohim texts did not belong to this older Elohist, it seemed a matter of course to attribute it to a source of its own, the younger Elohist, which later, after the redating and renaming of the Priestly Code, was retained as the only Elohist, or the Elohist *per se*. Already in 1933 Paul Volz and Hermann Rudolph rightly declared this Elohist a wrong track in pentateuchal criticism.<sup>24</sup> This source has been supposed only because the division of the sources worked so perfectly with what we today call J and P that scholars were inclined to attribute to the Documentary Hypothesis a general rule: “In the history of the Hexateuch this remarkable process (i.e., the joining of sources) was continually repeated.”<sup>25</sup> But the truth is that the combination of formerly independent sources has been an absolute exception within the literary history of the Bible. It can only have taken place under very special conditions. If applied again and again, the Documentary Hypothesis becomes absurd. It would be a victim of its own success.

Some texts formerly attributed to E are in fact preeditorial sources of the Yahwist. This is true of the stories of the founding of the cult sites related in Gen 28 and Exod 3. In these sections the expansions added by the editor J can easily be identified.<sup>26</sup> The Abraham stories in Gen 20–22 are fragments of a formerly independent Genesis midrash comparable to the *Genesis Apocryphon* of Qumran. This is the *granum veritatis* of the E-source paradigm. These three chapters relate to J and P as well. They were inserted after the two sources had already been unified for a long time.<sup>27</sup>

Other E texts are late additions mostly focusing on the piety and behavior of the patriarchs. This is also true of large parts of the Joseph story. They unite into an edition with a distinct theological profile, which I propose to call the “righteousness edition.” Additions with this purpose are to be found in most narratives of the Tanak. They serve to bring into line fate and behavior according to the Jewish belief in the unwavering righteousness of God. The

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<sup>22</sup> Karl David ILGEN, *Die Urkunden des Jerusalemischen Tempelarchivs in ihrer Urgestalt*, vol. 1 (Halle: Hemmerde & Schwetschke, 1798).

<sup>23</sup> HUPFELD, *Die Quellen der Genesis*.

<sup>24</sup> RUDOLPH and VOLZ, *Der Elohist als Erzähler*.

<sup>25</sup> Rudolf SMEND, *Die Erzählung des Hexateuch auf ihre Quellen untersucht* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1912), 343.

<sup>26</sup> LEVIN, *Der Jahwist*, 216–18, 326–30.

<sup>27</sup> See BLUM, *Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984), 418: “For me, there is no doubt that the sections referred to (i.e. Gen 20 and Gen 21 in part) count among the latest parts of the patriarchal narrative.”

story of Joseph and his brothers was especially suitable as a subject for this purpose, because righteousness was already the mark of the original fairy tale. The genre provided the perfect matrix to show how God was guiding human fate according to his purpose to perform righteousness under each and every circumstance.

In depicting Joseph as a wise and godly person, the late scribes also provided a portrait of how they saw themselves. In sharp contrast to the original plot, the brothers, as the representatives of the people of God, were later also depicted in a positive way. Reuben, the oldest of the brothers, was portrayed as a righteous person. When his plans to save Joseph failed because Joseph was stolen out of the pit by the Midianites, all the brothers truly mourned this terrible loss. Later on, the brothers are punished by Joseph in order to balance their bad behavior toward him – again to reestablish righteousness, so that in the end the brothers may participate in God’s assistance and blessings and the history of God’s people may go on.<sup>28</sup>

In this paper, we cannot treat the Joseph story in its entirety. The famous scene of Joseph’s seduction by the Egyptian woman in Gen 39 may serve as an example. It provides a suitable test case for several reasons: (1) The preeditorial source is secured by evidence from outside the Old Testament more clearly than any other part of the story. (2) Within the frame of the Joseph story the divine name Yahweh appears in this chapter exclusively. It is only in Gen 39 that some phrases of the present text can be ascribed to the source J, the Yahwist’s history, with obvious evidence. (3) The composite nature of the text is evidenced by numerous doublets and repetitions. This makes it easy to identify the later editorial strata of the text.

## The Original Shape of the Scene

The basic scene as part of the original Joseph story<sup>29</sup> comes to light by means of literary-critical analysis (which shall be presented in the course of this paper). It runs as follows:

(1) Joseph was taken down to Egypt. And ... an Egyptian bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ... (2) And he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ... (7) And after a time his master’s wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, Lie

<sup>28</sup> See Christoph LEVIN, “Gerechtigkeit Gottes in der Genesis,” in *Fortschreibungen: Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (BZAW 316; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003), 40–48.

<sup>29</sup> Donald B. REDFORD, *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 146–47; Hans-Christoph SCHMITT, *Die nichtpriesterliche Josephsgeschichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 81–87, and others claim that Gen 39 was added to the original story only later. But for the progress of the narrative, the seduction scene cannot be omitted. Most arguments brought forward by Redford relate to the later additions, not to the basic shape of the chapter.

with me. ... (12) And she caught him by his garment. ... But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house. ... (16) Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, (17) and she told him ... saying, The *apiru*-slave, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me. ... (20) And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison.<sup>30</sup>

More than any other, this short scene of the Joseph story is parallel to the Egyptian fairy tale of the two brothers. Even if it cannot be a direct copy of the Egyptian version, it is impossible to ignore the close relationship to it. The Hebrew version is a remake. This is to be seen in the fact that the case is not adequately executed: "Imprisonment would certainly not be usual punishment for such a crime as Joseph was believed to have committed; but the sequel demanded it, Joseph's further career depending on his being lodged in the *place where the king's prisoners were bound*."<sup>31</sup> Adultery would be adequately atoned only by the death penalty. Unlike the Egyptian narrative, the innocence of the male actor is never proven, nor is the punishment of the female actor recounted. Those details would have been indispensable if the narrative is original. In the Joseph story, the motive of the seduction serves only to move Joseph into prison, where he has the chance to decipher the dreams of Pharaoh's servants. The scene has no weight on its own.

### The Narrative within the Yahwist's History (J)

When the editor J put the Joseph story into the frame of his history, he added the statements of Yahweh's assistance to Joseph, thus telling how the promises to the patriarchs were fulfilled.<sup>32</sup>

(2) *Yahweh was with Joseph. ... And he was in the house of his Egyptian master. (3) And his master saw that Yahweh was with him. ... (4) So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him. And he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had, (5) ... and the blessing of Yahweh was upon all that he had, in house and field.*

As soon as Joseph arrived in the foreign land, the editor demonstrates the omnipresence of the god Yahweh. Yahweh blesses the house of Joseph's Egyptian master, thus fulfilling the promise given to Abraham that all families on earth he shall blessed for the patriarchs' sake (Gen 12:3).<sup>33</sup> In order to make this obvious to the reader, the editor says that the Egyptian became the wit-

<sup>30</sup> The version of the earliest literary layer given above resembles to some degree that of Cuthbert A. SIMPSON, *The Early Traditions of Israel: A Critical Analysis of the Pre-Deuteronomiac Narrative of the Hexateuch* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1948), 484.

<sup>31</sup> SKINNER, *Genesis*, 459.

<sup>32</sup> For fuller argumentation see LEVIN, *Der Jahwist*, 274–77.

<sup>33</sup> See Hans Walter WOLFF, "Das Kerygma des Jahwisten," in *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1964), 345–73, here 365–66.



ness of Yahweh's blessing of Joseph. As this is a central theme of the Yahwist's history, occurring frequently and with the same expressions, it is reasonable to attribute the passage to the source J. This judgment is supported by language as well as by the use of the divine name Yahweh, which in the Joseph story is to be found exclusively in Gen 39. Similarly to the reaction of Joseph's Egyptian master, the editor J recounts the reactions of Abimelech (Gen 26:28) and Laban (Gen 30:27), Jethro (Exod 18:10–11) and Balaam (Num 24:1). All these are presented as witnesses of Yahweh's assistance toward his people as well as toward its single members sojourning in foreign lands.

In v. 6b the editor J stresses Joseph's beauty:

(6) ... *Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking.*

The editorial origin of this description follows from the observation that in Gen 24:16; 26:7; 29:17, the beauty of Rebekah and Rachel is described in nearly the same way in different source contexts, and also on the editorial level. The editor, writing under the living conditions of the Jewish diaspora, is biased in favor of the members of his own ethnic-religious group.

When Joseph is put into prison, the editor J again demonstrates Yahweh's guiding assistance:

(20) *And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in prison. (21) But Yahweh was with Joseph ... and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ... (22) And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison.*

Here again, as in v. 2a $\alpha$ , the formula of assistance is used in combination with the divine name Yahweh. Joseph wins the favor of the keeper (v. 21b), as he won the favor of his former master (vv. 3a, 4a). This serves to underline that Joseph's humbling fate is none other than the way Yahweh leads his protégé to future success: put into prison, Joseph is united with the king's prisoners themselves.<sup>34</sup> Moreover – and in a sharp contrast to the older narrative – he is in charge of them (v. 22a), in the same way that he was made the overseer in the house of his former master (v. 4b), so that he easily had the chance to listen to their dreams, as the older source recorded, and could later be introduced to the Pharaoh himself. It is evident in the story's style as well as in its meaning that the same editor who was at work in the beginning of the chapter was at work here.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> REDFORD, Study, 30: "39:20, *mēqōm 'āšer 'āsīrē hammeleḳ 'āsūrīm*, 'the place where the king's prisoners were incarcerated,' a gloss on *bēṭ hassōhar*." Purposeful as it is, the addition cannot be a pure gloss but is part of the Yahwistic edition.

<sup>35</sup> The editorial nature of the framing verses of Gen 39 is emphasized by REDFORD, Study, 30; see also Friedrich TUCH, *Kommentar über die Genesis* (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1838), 508.

## The Righteousness Edition

As the story reads today, it differs remarkably from the usual Hebrew narrative style. Again and again the progress of events is interrupted by temporal clauses that – superfluously, as it seems – repeat what was told immediately before (vv. 5, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19) and proceed only after this repetition. Abraham Kuenen noted “the wordy style and constant repetitions by which this chapter is unfavourably distinguished from the other J-pericopes.”<sup>36</sup> The contrast is noticeable not only compared to the J source in general but also to the rest of the Joseph story, as Donald B. Redford observed: “In chapter 37, for example, there is no recapitulation. ... In the short chapter 39, by contrast, there is much recapitulation; and here, for the first and only time in the narrative, the device is used in a shoddy fashion.”<sup>37</sup> “There is nothing like this redundancy in the remainder of the story.”<sup>38</sup> The long-winded style makes the narrative falter. As a rule the Hebrew narrators carefully avoid such redundancy. The exception must therefore have a special reason.<sup>39</sup> The repetitions serve to change the narrative level. We might call this phenomenon a narrative step structure.

Verse 13 provides the most obvious example. As soon as v. 12 has narrated that Joseph “left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house” (וַיֵּצֵא בְגָדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיִּשָּׁרְדַּח וַיֵּצֵא מִן־הַבַּיִת), the action is interrupted by a circumstantial clause that repeats v. 12, taking the point of view of the woman: “and when it came to pass that she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house” (וַיְהִי כִּי־רָאוּתָהּ כִּי־עָזַב בְּיָדָהּ וַיֵּצֵא מִן־הַבַּיִת). The clause gives no additional information. It serves only to introduce the speech of the woman, which follows in vv. 14–15. Why did the speech need to be linked with the action in such an explicit manner? The answer is that the speech was not part of the original scene. It was added later. The circumstantial clause builds up an editorial link.

An expansion that was so elaborately inserted into the former text would not have been added without a purpose. In the speech to the servants of her house, the woman turns what happened upside down. Anticipating her report to her husband (v. 17b), she complains that her husband had employed a Hebrew man, and charges Joseph with having asked her “to lie with me” (לְשָׁכַב).

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<sup>36</sup> Abraham KUENEN, *An Historico-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch* (trans. P. H. Wicksteed; London: Macmillan, 1886), 147.

<sup>37</sup> REDFORD, *Study*, 77.

<sup>38</sup> REDFORD, *Study*, 78.

<sup>39</sup> Robert ALTER, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 109, sees “the verbatim repetition of whole phrases and clauses” as “crucial to the story.” Of course the many repetitions are meaningful. However, this is true for the present shape of the narrative only.

עמי). Finally she maintains that she had “cried with a loud voice” (וַאֲקָרָא בְקוֹל) (גְדוֹל). This cry is the detail in focus. The reason why the woman stresses that she cried out is to be found in Deut 22:23–24: in case of adultery, the female party is obliged to cry out in order to go unpunished. The editor depicts the Egyptian woman as being familiar with the relevant details of the Torah. That is, he himself interprets the incident according to the Torah. At the same time he tells the reader unmistakably that the woman is the guilty party – and Joseph the innocent one – by portraying her as a liar. On the narrative level there is no doubt that the woman cried out only after Joseph had fled. In her speech, which follows in v. 15, she nevertheless pretends that he had fled after she cried out.

This statement again is introduced by a circumstantial clause: “And when it came to pass that he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried” (כִּי־הִרְיַמְתִּי בְיָקוֹלִי וַאֲקָרָא וַיְהִי כִשְׁמַעוֹ). The woman speaks as if she were giving a statement in court. That is indeed the case: she justifies herself by falsely declaring that her behavior was in accordance with the rules of the Torah. In fact the whole speech is a later addition. This can ultimately be seen in the possessive suffixed form בְּגָדוֹ in v. 16: “*His (garment) in 16 refers back somewhat awkwardly over 13–15 to 12.*”<sup>40</sup> The editor’s style shows his way of thinking. He conceptualized what was related in the earlier narrative in categories of biblical law. The woman’s demand עִמִּי, “lie with me,” made him think of the law against adultery (see Deut 22:23). Stressing the wickedness of the women, he emphasizes Joseph’s innocence.

In her speech, the woman repeats the narrative of v. 12 with a meaningful change: Joseph should have left his garment not בְּיָדָהּ, “in her hand,” but אֶצְעָלִי, “at my side.” So she pretends that Joseph himself had taken off his garment in order to sleep with his master’s wife. In this detail the narrative sequence is confused, for originally it was revealed only afterward, in v. 16, that the women spread the garment אֶצְעָלָהּ, “at her side.” Another detail also shows that the literary level differs: the social term עֶבֶד עֲבָדִי, “a slave of the *apiru*-status,” known from Exod 21:2, is replaced by the ethnic term אִישׁ עֲבָדִי, “a Hebrew man.” This mirrors the situation of Judaism as it existed within ethnically mixed societies in the Second Temple period and in the diaspora.

Originally, the woman tells only her husband what she pretends has happened (v. 17). The editor now underlines that the woman repeated what she had already told her servants, with the expansion הָאֵלֶּה כַּדְּבָרִים, “according to these words,” which is obviously redundant beside the following לְאָמַר, “saying,” which opens the direct speech.<sup>41</sup> What is referred to by הָאֵלֶּה is nevertheless given by word. This reads like a narrative mistake, but in fact it

<sup>40</sup> SIMPSON, *The Early Traditions*, 131.

<sup>41</sup> See SIMPSON, *The Early Traditions*, 131, and others.

serves to integrate the addition of vv. 13–15. It again proves that vv. 13–15 were added later.

The editor did not leave the speech unchanged but expanded it in v. 18 in order to stress his own point. Again he makes the woman emphasize that she cried out, and again he leaves his mark in the form of a circumstantial clause: וַיְהִי כִּהְרִימִי קוֹלִי וַאֲקֵרָא וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגָדוֹ אֶצְלִי וַיֵּנָס הַחוּצָה, “but when it happened that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled out of the house.” In this way, what is told in v. 12 is repeated a third time – of course using the term of v. 15, אֶצְלִי, “with me,” instead of בְּיָדָהּ, “in her hand,” of v. 12.

Finally the reaction of Joseph’s master in v. 19 is explained by one more circumstantial clause: וַיְהִי כִשְׁמַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־דִּבְרֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִבְרָה אֵלָיו לֵאמֹר וַיִּבְרָא אֵת־כֶּהֱרִים הָאֱלֹהִים עֲשָׂה לִי עַבְדְּךָ וַיַּחַר אַפּוֹ אֵת־יֹסֵף, “When it happened that his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, saying, According to these words your servant did me, his anger was kindled.” The editor stresses that Joseph’s master was angry because of the false accusation, again using הָאֱלֹהִים, “according to these words,” to refer to the woman’s speech. This serves to show Joseph’s innocence. The punishment he experienced had no cause in his behavior. The narrative sequence of v. 19 and v. 20 is stumbling. There is no reason to introduce the unchanged subject יֹסֵף אֲדֹנָיו, “Joseph’s master,” and there is even less reason to refer to Joseph’s master in the first instance in v. 19 by אֲדֹנָיו, “his master,” and in the second instance in v. 20 by יֹסֵף אֲדֹנָיו, “Joseph’s master.” “The explicit *Joseph’s master* would be expected in 19 rather than in 20.”<sup>42</sup> This disturbance disappears if v. 20 connects immediately to v. 17.

We encounter a similar stylistic unevenness in v. 8. When Joseph addresses his master’s wife, she is introduced to the full extent as אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲדֹנָיו, “his master’s wife,” though she was already on stage in v. 7. After v. 7, וַתֹּאמֶר וַיִּמָּאן עִמִּי שִׁכְבָה עִמִּי, “and she said, Lie with me,” we should expect the sequence וַיִּמָּאן אֵלֶיהָ, “but he refused and said to her.” The woman is introduced anew because in v. 8 the editor begins his extension.

Again the editor emphasizes Joseph’s moral integrity: וַיִּמָּאן, “but he refused.” In his speech, Joseph first repeats what is already told in vv. 4–6a: Joseph is fully in charge of all the house, and his master does not look after anything anymore. The statement of v. 6a was inserted by the same editor: וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ בְּיַד־יֹסֵף וְלֹא־יָרַע אֹתוֹ מֵאוֹמְתָהּ כִּי אִם־הִלָּחֵם אֲשֶׁר־הוּא אוֹכֵל, “so he left all that he had in Joseph’s charge; and having him he had no concern for anything but the food that he ate.” This means that Joseph had every opportunity

<sup>42</sup> SIMPSON, *The Early Traditions*, 131.

to allow the seduction – but refused. In the course of the narrative, this is “a doublet to 4b, and coming too late after 5.”<sup>43</sup>

In order to show Joseph’s integrity, the editor, in v. 9, makes him teach the woman – and the reader, respectively – the Torah, referring to the law of adultery: בְּאִשֶּׁר אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ, “because you are his wife” (see Deut 22:22; also Lev 20:10). Joseph confesses that he decided to obey: וְאִיךָ אֲעִשֶׂה הַרְעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה: הִיאֵת וְחָטְאתִי לְאֱלֹהִים, “and how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God.” His piety is setting an example. How much Joseph resisted the temptation, the editor shows by letting the woman repeat her attempted seduction day after day. Again this is introduced by a circumstantial clause, וַיְהִי יוֹם אַחֵר, “and when it happened that she spoke to Joseph day after day.” But finally on one such day no witnesses are in the house, and the woman catches Joseph by his garment. At this very point in v. 12 the threat of v. 7 is taken up so that the narrative continues.

There are linguistic peculiarities that show that vv. 8–10 go back to the editor. In the book of Genesis the verb חָשַׁךְ, “withhold,” occurs in 20:6; 22:12, 16 in narratives that tell about the righteousness of king Abimelech of Gerar as well as of Abraham.<sup>44</sup> Causative בְּאִשֶּׁר is only to be found in Gen 39:9, 23; Jon 1:8; Qoh 8:4.<sup>45</sup> שָׁמַע אֶל פֿ, “to obey someone,” is to be found “otherwise in P.”<sup>46</sup> All these stylistic features are alien to the original story.

Joseph’s pious behavior is not without reward. This is what the editor relates at the beginning and at the end of the chapter. Verse 2 offers three sentences introduced by וַיְהִי. The clumsiness of style has often been noticed. As it reads now, “2a before 2b is premature – Joseph must first be in the house of the Egyptian before he can have success in all things.”<sup>47</sup> The narrative itself proceeds only in the third sentence: וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲרֹנִי הַמִּצְרַיִם, “and he was in the house of his Egyptian master.” It is certain that this sentence was part of the original story because it closely resembles v. 20b at the beginning of the next scene: וַיְהִי־שָׁם בְּבֵית הַסֵּהר, “and he was there in prison.”<sup>48</sup> The confused order proves that the other two וַיְהִי sentences are later additions. The first one is the

<sup>43</sup> SIMPSON, *The Early Traditions*, 131; cf. Heinrich HOLZINGER, *Genesis erklärt* (Freiburg i. B.: Mohr Siebeck, 1898), 231. Also Horst SEEBASS, *Geschichtliche Zeit und theonome Tradition in der Joseph-Erzählung* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1978), 79 n. 3: “6a repeats 4b.”

<sup>44</sup> August DILLMANN, *Die Genesis* (11th ed.; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1892), 406.

<sup>45</sup> See DILLMANN, *Genesis*, 406; HOLZINGER, *Genesis*, 231.

<sup>46</sup> HOLZINGER, *Genesis*, 232, referring to his *Einleitung in den Hexateuch* (Freiburg i. B.: Mohr Siebeck, 1893), 349: “In P to listen to someone is not שָׁמַע לְקוֹל פֿ but שָׁמַע אֶל־פֿ Gen 23:16; Exod 7:13, 22; 8:15; 9:12; 11:9; 16:20. It is also to be found in Gen 39:10 with J, however within the Joseph story ... which is to be suspected to have experienced late editions.”

<sup>47</sup> HOLZINGER, *Genesis*, 231.

<sup>48</sup> ALTER, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 111: “‘He stayed in the jailhouse’ (end of verse 20) just as ‘he stayed in the house of his Egyptian master’ (end of verse 2) before.”

formula of assistance, which in many cases goes back to the editor J: וַיְהִי יְהוָה אִתּוֹ, “and Yahweh was with Joseph” (v. 2a $\alpha$ ).<sup>49</sup> The second one in v. 2a $\beta$  tells how Yahweh’s assistance is effective: וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצַלִּיחַ, “and he became a successful man.” Joseph is the man whom Yahweh granted full success in all that he did. Exactly the same is stated about the righteous man who studies the Torah all the time, as he is portrayed in Ps 1:3b: וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ, “in all that he does, he prospers” (see also Josh 1:8). Horst Seebaß rightly speaks of “an edition in the sense of Ps 1:3 (to have success!),”<sup>50</sup> that is the righteousness edition.

The statement is consequently repeated in v. 3b in the sight of Joseph’s master. Where in v. 3a the editor J let him be aware of Yahweh’s assistance to Joseph, v. 3b now adds that he observed “that Yahweh caused all that he did to prosper in his hands” (וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר-הוּא עֹשֶׂה יְהוָה מְצַלִּיחַ בְּיָדוֹ). In v. 5a it is stressed that the blessing of Yahweh came into the house of the Egyptian because of Joseph, that is, because of his pious observance of the Torah: וַיְהִי מֵאִזּוֹ הַפְּקִיד אָתּוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ וְעַל כָּל-אֲשֶׁר יָשָׁלוּ וַיְבָרֶךְ יְהוָה אֶת-בֵּית הַמִּצְרַיִם בְּגַלְל יוֹסֵף, “and it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, Yahweh blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake.” Again the editor left his mark in the form of a circumstantial clause, which repeats what was told before in v. 4b, and anticipates v. 5b.

After Joseph is put into prison, the editor J again immediately adds that Yahweh was with him. The formula of assistance in v. 21a $\alpha$  is the same, word for word, as in v. 2a $\alpha$ . Again as in v. 2 the righteousness editor set out the effect of Yahweh’s assistance: וַיֵּט אֵלָיו חֶסֶד, “and he (Yahweh) showed him steadfast love.” The grant of חֶסֶד, which in some respect may be read as a doublet to the formula of assistance, serves the editor to show that Joseph’s behavior – suffering from unjust punishment – nevertheless does not remain without retribution.<sup>51</sup>

This interpretation of the story is continued in vv. 22b–23, which obviously repeat vv. 2a $\beta$ , 3b, 5a, 6a by meaning and partly by word: וְאֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה שָׁם הוּא הָיָה עֹשֶׂה אֵין שָׂר בֵּית-הַסֶּהַר רָאָה אֶת-כָּל-מַאוּמָה בְּיָדוֹ בְּאֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אָתּוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר-הוּא עֹשֶׂה יְהוָה מְצַלִּיחַ, “and whatever was done there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph’s care, because Yahweh was with him; and whatever he did, Yahweh made it prosper.” Again it is said that Joseph was responsible for all that was done and that Yahweh’s assistance granted him success in every respect – despite the fact that there was no occasion for it while he was in prison. There is no

<sup>49</sup> See above, and Gen 26:3, 28; 28:15; 31:3; 39:2, 3, 21. Cf. LEVIN, *Der Jahwist*, 405.

<sup>50</sup> SEEBASS, *Geschichtliche Zeit und theonome Tradition*, 79 n. 3.

<sup>51</sup> In LEVIN, *Der Jahwist*, 402, I attributed the use of חֶסֶד in Genesis in most cases to the editor J: Gen 19:19; 24:12, 14, 27, 49; 39:21; 40:14; 47:29. In the meantime this proved to be wrong throughout.

doubt that this contrafactual account, which maintains the righteousness of Yahweh's retribution under each and every circumstance, goes back to the same editor.

### Further Traces of the Righteousness Edition

It goes without saying that the righteousness edition of the Joseph story was not restricted to Gen 39. Its traces are to be encountered throughout the whole story – no less than throughout the whole narrative of the Pentateuch. The editor thought carefully about the religious problems the text presented to him and submitted the narrative to a thorough revision in the light of his study of the Torah. The additions constitute a commentary on the transmitted text. Again and again the pious behavior of Joseph is emphasized, as is the fact that his fortune was due to his piety, obedience, and wisdom.<sup>52</sup> Joseph is portrayed as an example to the reader: “Can we find anyone else like this – one in whom is the spirit of God?” (Gen 41:38). The same is true to some degree of the brothers who finally represent God's people. They are punished severely for having betrayed Joseph (Gen 42 and 43), but in the end their sin is balanced, so that their statement becomes true: “we are honest men” (כְּנִים אֲנַחְנוּ, Gen 42:11).<sup>53</sup>

The righteousness edition culminates in the famous scene that tells how the brothers, after their father's death, became reconciled to Joseph.<sup>54</sup> The brothers' consideration of their guilt, framed by vv. 15, 18–19, 21b, forms an appendix. This can also be seen from the narrative link in v. 15a: וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶחָיו יוֹסֵף כִּי-נָמַת אָבִיהֶם, “when Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead.” “The topic of the original narrative had reached its end with the reunification of the family,” that is, in Gen 45,<sup>55</sup> or at the latest with Jacob's burial, the report of which comes to a close in Gen 50:14. In the appendix, vv. 15–21, the righteousness editor was at work. He solves the errors of humankind in the famous conclusion: וְאַתֶּם חָשַׁבְתֶּם עָלַי רָעָה אֱלֹהִים חָשְׁבָה לְטוֹבָה, “as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good” (v. 20a). Many exegetes read this statement as the most important key of the Joseph story.<sup>56</sup> In fact it is far away from the original version of the narrative. But it fits perfectly the purpose of the editor in showing how God guides his people and its single members by means of his righteousness.

<sup>52</sup> The righteousness edition is to some degree identical with the late “elohistic” edition of SCHMITT, *Die nichtpriesterliche Josephsgeschichte*, 178–84.

<sup>53</sup> See for more details my preliminary analysis in LEVIN, *Der Jahwist*, 271–300.

<sup>54</sup> See LEVIN, “Gerechtigkeit Gottes in der Genesis,” 47.

<sup>55</sup> GUNKEL, “Die Komposition der Joseph-Geschichten,” 69.

<sup>56</sup> Emphatically, VON RAD, “The Joseph Narrative and Ancient Wisdom,” 296.

## Appendix

The three stages of Gen 39: (a) The seduction scene of the original Joseph story; (b) *Contributions of the Editor J (Yahwist)*; (c) Righteousness Edition. Later additions are put in square brackets.

<sup>1</sup>Joseph was taken down to Egypt. And [Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard] an Egyptian bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

<sup>2</sup>*And Yahweh was with Joseph.*

And he became a successful man.

And he was in the house of his Egyptian master.

<sup>3</sup>*When his master saw that Yahweh was with him,*

and that Yahweh caused all that he did to prosper in his hands,

<sup>4</sup>*Joseph found favor in his sight*

and attended him.

*And he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.*

<sup>5</sup>And it came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, *and the blessing of Yahweh was upon all that he had, in house and field.*

<sup>6</sup>So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge; and having him he had no concern for anything but the food that he ate.

*Now Joseph was handsome and good-looking.*

<sup>7</sup>And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, Lie with me.

<sup>8</sup>But he refused and said to his master's wife, Lo, having me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my hand, <sup>9</sup>[In this house he is not greater than me.] and has kept back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? <sup>10</sup>And when it came to pass that she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her [to lie with her] to be with her. <sup>11</sup>But it came to pass on one such day that he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house.

<sup>12</sup>And she caught him by his garment,

saying, Lie with me.

But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and got out of the house.

<sup>13</sup>And when it came to pass that she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house, <sup>14</sup>she cried to the men of her household and said to them, See, he has brought among us a Hebrew man to insult us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice; <sup>15</sup>and when it came to pass that he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment at my side, and fled and got out of the house.

<sup>16</sup>Then she laid up his garment at her side until his master came home, <sup>17</sup>and she told him according to these words

saying, The *apiru*-slave, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to insult me.

<sup>18</sup>But when it came to pass that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment at my side, and fled out of the house. <sup>19</sup>When it came to pass that his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, saying, According to these words your servant did me, his anger was kindled.

<sup>20</sup>And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison,  
*the place where the king's prisoners were confined.*



And he was there in prison.

<sup>21</sup>But Yahweh was with Joseph

and showed him steadfast love,

and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. <sup>22</sup>And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's care all the prisoners who were in the prison.

And whatever was done there, he was the doer of it. <sup>23</sup>The keeper of the prison paid no heed to anything that was in Joseph's care, because Yahweh was with him; and whatever he did, Yahweh made it prosper.

<sup>1</sup>וְיוֹסֵף הוֹרֵד מִצְרָיִם וַיִּקְנֶהוּ [פּוֹטִיפָר סָרִיס פְּרַעֲהוּ שֶׁר הַטַּבָּחִים] אִישׁ מִצְרִי מִיַּד הַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵלִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹרְדָהוּ שָׁמָּה:

<sup>2</sup>וַיְהִי וַיְהוּהוּ אֶת־יוֹסֵף

וַיְהִי אִישׁ מְצֻלִיחַ

וַיְהִי בְּבֵית אֲדֹנָיו הַמִּצְרָיִ:

<sup>3</sup>וַיֵּרָא אֲדֹנָיו כִּי יְהוּהוּ אִתּוֹ

וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה וַיְהוּהוּ מְצֻלִיחַ בְּכֹדוֹ:

<sup>4</sup>וַיִּמְצָא יוֹסֵף חָן בְּעֵינָיו

וַיִּשְׂרַת אִתּוֹ

וַיִּפְקְדֵהוּ עַל־בֵּיתוֹ וְכָל־יִשְׁלֹו נְתָן בְּכֹדוֹ:

<sup>5</sup>וַיְהִי מֵאֵז הַפְּקִיד אִתּוֹ בְּבֵיתוֹ וְעַל כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלֹו

וַיִּבְרַךְ יְהוּהוּ אֶת־בֵּית הַמִּצְרִי בְּגַלְל יוֹסֵף

וַיְהִי בִּרְכַת יְהוּהוּ בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלֹו בְּבֵית וּבִשְׂדֵהוּ:

<sup>6</sup>וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לּוֹ בְּיַד־יוֹסֵף וְלֹא־יָדַע אִתּוֹ מֵאוֹמֶה

כִּי אִם הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר־הוּא אוֹכֵל

וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף וַיִּפְה־חָאֵר וַיִּפַּה מְרָאֵה:

<sup>7</sup>וַיְהִי אַחֵר הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַחֲשָׂא אֶשְׁת־אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ אֶל־יוֹסֵף

וַחֲתָמָר שִׁכְבָּה עִמִּי

<sup>8</sup>וַיִּמָּאֵן וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־אִשְׁת־אֲדֹנָיו הֵן אֲדֹנִי לֹא־יָדַע אִתִּי מֵה־

בְּבֵית וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁלֹו נְתָן בְּכֹדִי: <sup>9</sup>[אֵינְנו גְּדוֹל בְּבֵית הַזֶּה

מִמֶּנִּי] וְלֹא־חָשַׁךְ מִמֶּנִּי מֵאוֹמֶה כִּי אִם־אוֹחֵךְ בֹּאֲשֶׁר אֶת־

אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאִיךְ אַעֲשֶׂה הַרְעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְחֲטָאתִי לֵאלֹהִים:

<sup>10</sup>וַיְהִי כַּדְּבָרָה אֶל־יוֹסֵף יוֹם יוֹם וְלֹא־שָׁמַע אֵלָיָהּ [לִשְׁכַּב

אֶצְלָהּ] לְהוֹיֹת עִמָּה: <sup>11</sup>וַיְהִי כַּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיָּבֵא הַבֵּיתָהּ לַעֲשׂוֹת

מֵלֶאכְתּוֹ וַאֲיֵן אִישׁ מֵאֲנָשֵׁי הַבֵּית שֶׁם בְּכֹחַ:

<sup>12</sup>[וַחֲחַפְּסָהוּ בְּכֹדוֹ

לֵאמֹר שִׁכְבָּה עִמִּי

וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגֹדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיִּנָּס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה

<sup>13</sup>וַיְהִי כִּרְאוּתָהּ כִּי־עֲזֹב בְּגֹדוֹ בְּיָדָהּ וַיִּנָּס הַחוּצָה:

<sup>14</sup>וַחֲתָמָרָא לְאֲנָשֵׁי בֵיתָהּ וַחֲתָמָר לָהֶם לֵאמֹר רֹאוּ

הַבֵּיא לָנוּ אִישׁ עֵבְרִי לְצַחֵק בְּנוּ בָּא אֵלַי לִשְׁכַּב עִמִּי

וְאֶקְרָא בְּקוֹל גְּדוֹל: <sup>15</sup>וַיְהִי כַּשֶּׁמְעוּ כִּי־הִרְיַמְתִּי קוֹלִי וְאֶקְרָא

וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגֹדוֹ אֶצְלִי וַיִּנָּס וַיֵּצֵא הַחוּצָה

<sup>16</sup>וַתִּנָּח בְּגֹדוֹ אֶצְלָהּ עַד־בּוֹא אֲדֹנָיו אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ: <sup>17</sup>וַתְּדַבֵּר אֵלָיו

כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה

לֵאמֹר בֹּא־אֵלַי הָעֵבֶד הָעֵבְרִי אֲשֶׁר־הִבֵּאתָ לָנוּ לְצַחֵק בִּי:

<sup>18</sup>וַיְהִי כַּהִרְיַמִּי קוֹלִי וְאֶקְרָא וַיַּעֲזֹב בְּגֹדוֹ אֶצְלִי וַיִּנָּס הַחוּצָה:

<sup>19</sup>וַיְהִי כַּשֶּׁמַּע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר דְּבָרָה אֵלָיו

לֵאמֹר כַּדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה עֹשֶׂה לִי עַבְדְּךָ וַיַּחֲרַךְ אָפוֹ:

<sup>20</sup>וַיִּקַּח אֲדֹנִי יוֹסֵף אִתּוֹ וַיַּתְּנֵהוּ אֶל־בֵּית הַסֵּהֵר

מִקּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אֶסְוִרִי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶסְוִרִים

וַיְהִי שֵׁם בְּבֵית הַסֵּהֶר:

<sup>21</sup>וַיְהִי יְהוָה אֶת־יוֹסֵף

וַיֵּשׂ אֵלָיו חֶסֶד

וַיִּתֵּן חֲנּוּ בְעֵינֵי שֵׁר בִּיחֵה־סֵהֶר: <sup>22</sup>וַיִּתֵּן שֵׁר בִּיחֵה־סֵהֶר בְּיַד־יוֹסֵף

אֵת כָּל־הָאֲסִירִים אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית הַסֵּהֶר

וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עֹשִׂים שָׂם הוּא הָיָה עֹשֶׂה:

<sup>23</sup>אֵין שֵׁר בִּיחֵה־סֵהֶר רָאָה אֶת־כָּל־מְאוּמָה בְּיָדוֹ

בְּאֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אִתּוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר־הוּא עֹשֶׂה יְהוָה מִצְלִיחַ: