



## *Parshas Vayeishev 2022, coat of armor*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Leah Mintche Bas Ya'akov Yosef, Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.*

Our Parshas begins with Ya'akov Avinu settling down in Chevron with his four wives and twelve children. The Pasuk writes that Ya'akov loved Yosef, the firstborn of his favorite wife, Rochel, more than the rest. He even made him a unique colored coat to signify his fondness and love.

At night, Yosef would dream of his brothers bowing down to him, and he told them about his dreams and their part in them. Yosef's persistent nagging and preferable treatment infuriated his brothers and caused them to hate him with a vengeance.

Once his brothers were away tending to their sheep, Ya'akov asked Yosef to see how his brothers were doing. When the brothers saw Yosef approaching, they were enraged by his presence and decided to kill him. Reuven implored them not to kill him and instead throw him into a pit nearby. His plan was to return there later and save Yosef.

When Yosef arrived, his brothers immediately took him off his unique coat and threw him into a pit. Yeudah then sold him to a caravan heading to Egypt, who sold him to Potiphar, Pharaoh's chief butcher.

The brothers dipped Yosef's coat into animal blood, brought it to Ya'akov, and told him that a wild beast had eaten Yosef. Ya'akov ripped his clothing and began to mourn for his beloved son. However, when his sons or daughters tried to comfort him, he ignored them and refused to be comforted.

However, a question comes to mind: The Torah tells of the beautiful and unique coat that Ya'akov made for his most beloved son, Yosef. The coat was called Ketones Passim, loosely translated as a full-sleeved robe, and was made from multiple colors of fine wool.

But immediately following, the Torah clearly states that the brothers despised and detested Yosef because of the extra attention their father gave him. So why did Ya'akov make Yosef a Kesones Passim and instigate hatred between his children? What was Ya'akov's intention behind making Yosef a coat?!

The Rabbienu Bachya (*Rav Bachya Ben Asher*) gives a rational explanation. He first comments that the coat was not the instigator of hatred and jealousy between the brothers, rather Yosef's dreams. As previously mentioned, Yosef had two vivid dreams which depicted his rulership over his brothers. Yosef was not shy in sharing these dreams in immense detail, even with his father, Ya'akov.

The Rabbienu Bachya explains that the Ketones Passim was not the root cause of the animosity between the brothers, rather Yosef's visions of dominance and rule. Especially when their father entertained and listened to Yosef's so-called fantasies and did not shut them down.

But the Rabbienu Bachya continues and quotes the Talmud in Shabbos (10a) that Ya'akov made a serious mistake by giving extra love to Yosef. Therefore, the Talmud concludes that a father should not treat his sons differently so as not to stoke hate between them.

However, Rashi (*Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, the leading commentary*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that the word פסיים - Passim is an acronym for the tests Yosef would face. The פ - refers to Potiphar and the test he would encounter while working for him.

The following three letters refer to the three caravans Yosef was sold to - סוחרים - *ישמעאלים*, *מדינים*. Yosef was first sold by his brothers to a group of Arabs. They, in turn, sold him to a group of merchants passing by. They eventually traded him to a group of Midianites heading toward Egypt.

(It is important to note that although the Torah does not write about the merchants, the Midrash Rabbah includes the merchants caravan when detailing Yosef's journey to Egypt.)

Rashi explains that Ya'akov made Yosef this special coat to hint at the many tests he would singularly face. While his other sons faced challenges, none came close to the struggles Yosef would experience. Therefore, Ya'akov created this beautiful and unique coat to represent Yosef's tests.

The super commentary on Rashi, the Sifsei Chachamim explains that the coat was not just a representation but a shield to protect him while encountering those challenges. Ya'akov made a spiritual shield to safeguard Yosef throughout his many years of isolation and separation.

So when he faced a test, this protection helped him prevail and succeed beyond all expectations. This coat was not the root cause of his brother's hatred but rather one of the reasons Yosef overcame the many challenges he faced.

The Sifsei Chachamim's powerful explanation of the purpose of the Ketones Passim is ever more relevant as we begin Chanukah, the festival of lights.

**The purpose of the Menorah is not to give physical illumination but rather spiritual energy and strength.**

To supply us the power to supersede the immense darkness of this world and see the G-dly light that is shining bright. The story of Chanukah is not about defeating the Romans in battle. But rather, overcoming the charm and attraction of their philosophy and lighting the Menorah once again.

In our daily life, it is imperative to realize that we are witnessing the decay of our society. From the lack of morals and principles to the degradation of family values, the future of our world seems gloomy and bleak.

But the Torah is our shield from that decline; it guides us and shows us the path in a world filled with misdirection and distractions. The Mitzvahs we do is armor that defends us from outside influence and control. They are a barrier and buffer to the wickedness that surrounds us and those who wish to destroy us.

**"The story of Chanukah is about a small candle that gave a little light,  
but led to another candle, and then another  
and ultimately illuminated the world."**

*Have an inspirational Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*