



**Emily Stemp
ChashModiin
Madricha**

The Colors of Complexity

In Parshat Vayeshev, Yaakov presents Yosef, his favorite son and “*ben zekunim*”, with a special cloak called a *ketonet passim*. Rashi quotes the midrash in Bereishit Rabbah to explain that the term “*Passim*” is an acronym signifying Yosef’s future troubles, specifically that he would work for Potiphar and be sold between *Socharim* (merchants), *Ishmaelim* and *Midianim*.

This Midrashic depiction of the *ketonet passim* runs counter to the “technicolor dream coat” we may imagine. Was Yosef’s cloak a symbol of Yaakov’s love for his favorite son, or a somber allusion to the suffering that Yosef was destined to endure?

The Midrashic understanding of the *ketonet passim* need not contradict our positive perception of the robe; rather, the uniqueness of the *ketonet* lies in its dualism. The cloak can be viewed as *both* a token of Yaakov’s profound emotional attachment to Yosef and also as a symbol of the strength and support that Yosef

would need when facing the challenges that awaited him.

If Yosef’s brothers had understood this deeper meaning of the *ketonet passim*, and that Yosef’s *ketonet* was also a necessary tool for him to withstand the imminent challenges, perhaps they would have been able to curb their envy.

We must always remind ourselves that even when others seem to possess attributes or assets that we lack, jealousy is not a logical or effective method to improve our situation. Each gift comes with an array of challenges that, sometimes, may be the very reason for the gift. We must recognize that Hashem bestows gifts upon each of us that are laden with meaning and exactly suited for our individual needs. Instead of coveting the gifts of others, let us strive to understand and use our own God-given talents and qualities while valuing the experiences that allow us to develop and shape them.



**Adira Marcus
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History Changed by a Fly

Hashem works in mysterious ways. If I told you that Hashem could change the world by using the most insignificant of creatures... like a fly, you’d think I was crazy.

Jonathan Rosenblum, DPM

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In this week's Parsha, the Torah describes the events that led to Yosef becoming the viceroy of Egypt. It begins with Yosef being sold by his brothers and then taken down to Egypt. There, he worked for Potiphar, and eventually he was thrown in jail. While imprisoned, Yosef met Pharaoh's butler, who was jailed because of a fly found in Pharaoh's cup. Yosef helped interpret the butler's dream, and thereafter the butler was freed. In next week's Parsha we see Pharaoh needing help interpreting his dream. The butler, knowing Yosef's skill, told Pharaoh to summon him from jail. Eventually, after interpreting Pharaoh's dream correctly, Yosef became the viceroy of Egypt. Years later, due to a famine in Eretz Canaan, Yosef's brothers went down to Egypt. All of these events eventually led to enslavement, redemption, and the establishment of our great nation.

If we think about it, the course of history was changed by one little, seemingly insignificant, fly. If that one fly had not landed in Pharaoh's wine cup, the butler would not have been in jail. He would not have met Yosef. Yosef would not have been freed, and the whole redemption from Egypt would not have happened in the same way. This shows how Hashem's smallest of acts, using the tiniest creatures, changed the course of history, the future, and the world as we know it.

Shabbat shalom! ■

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