

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter IX: Vayeishev (Gen. 37:1–40:23)

Essay 4. Joseph's beauty, and his father's preference for him

גמרא פֶּרֶק קָמָא דְתַעֲנִית אֲמַרָה לִיה בְּרַתִּיה דְקִיסָר לְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן חֲנַנְיָה: חֲכָמָה מְפֹאֶרָה בְּכָלִי מְכוּעָר! אָמַר לֵה רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן חֲנַנְיָה: אָבִיד בְּמֵאֵי רְמֵי חֲמָרָא וְכוּ'. וְהָא אֵיפָא דְשַׁפְיָרִי וְגַמְרִי, אִי [הוּו] סְנוּ, טְפִי הוּו גַּמְרִי.

There is a **Gemara in the first chapter of tractate Ta'anit:**

The daughter of the Roman emperor said to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya [who was unattractive]: “Glorious wisdom [such as yours], in an ugly vessel.” Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya said to her: “In what vessels does your father keep his wine?” She said, “In earthen vessels.” He said to her: “You, who are so important, [should] put it in vessels of gold and silver.” She went and said this to her father. He put the wine in vessels of gold and silver and it turned sour. [The servants] came and told the emperor [that the wine had turned sour], he said to [his daughter]: “Who told you to do this?” She daughter responded: “Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya.” [The emperor] summoned him and said to him: “Why did you say this to her?” He said to him: “Just as she said to me, so I said say to her” [to demonstrate to her that fine material is best preserved in the least of vessels]. [The emperor said to him:] **“But there are handsome people who are learned.”** [He replied:] **“If they’d been ugly [סְנוּ] [se’nu], they would have been even more learned.”**

- Ta'anit 7a–7b

וּפִירֵשׁ רַש"י, אִי הוּו סְנוּ: אוֹתָם נְאִים שְׁהֵם חֲכָמִים. טְפִי הוּו גַּמְרִי: שְׂאֵי אֲפֻשֶׁר לְנַאָה לְהַשְׁפִּיל דַּעְתּוֹ וּבָא לִידֵי שְׂכָחָה עַכ"ל. וְעוֹד פִּירֵשׁוּ הַתּוֹסְפוֹת שֶׁם (בד"ה אִי הוּו סְנוּ וְכוּ'), פִּירוּשׁ אִם הָיוּ שׁוֹנְאִים הַיּוֹפִי הָיוּ חֲכָמִים בְּיוֹתֵר. וְהַרְי"ף הַקָּשָׁה עַל פִּירֵשׁ רַש"י וְהַכְרִיחַ פִּירוּשׁ הַתּוֹסְפוֹת, וּפִירֵשׁ שְׂכַחְוֹנָתָם הִיא שְׂאוֹתָם הַנְּאִים כִּיּוֹן שְׁהֵם שׁוֹנְאִים הַיּוֹפִי הוּו לְהוּו פְּכַעוּרִים וְלָקַד מִתְקִימִים בָּהֶם דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה עַכ"ל.

Rashi explains: “ ‘If they’d been ugly [סְנוּ] [se’nu]: They are attractive in that they are wise. ‘They would have been even more learned’: It’s impossible for a handsome man to humble himself [to review his studies], and he’ll come to be forgetful.”

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The Tosafists further explained there, as they vocalize סנו differently: “ ‘If they’d been haters [סנו] [sa’nu]: Commentary: If they would hate beauty, they would be even wiser.” This is explained by the Rif,¹ who questions the explanation of Rashi and compelled the explanation of the Tosafists. He explained that [the Tosafist’s] intention was that since those [learned men] who are handsome hate beauty, they are [in their own eyes] as ugly men. Therefore, they are not proud and arrogant, but are humble and willing to review their studies, and thus the words of the Torah are fulfilled in them.²

וקשה טובא לפירוש זה דאם פן הוי ליה למימר משום דאינהו סנו משום הכי גמירי, שבזה היתה מתורצת קושיא דברתיה דקיסר בתירוץ הגון, ולא למימר אי הוו סנו וכו' דבלשון הנה קושיא הראשונה של ברתיה דקיסר במקומה עומדת, דאמרה לו חכמה מפוארה בכלי מכוער, וכונתה היא שרבי יהושע בן חנניה שנהיה כל כך חכם לא היה לו להיות כעור, ועדיין יכולה היא להקשות למה לא נברא יפה, שהואיל שנהיה לו להיות כל כך חכם בנדאי שנהיה שונא היופי ולא היתה חכמה מפוארה בכלי מכוער.

This explanation of the Tosafists that סנו should be pronounced as [סנו] [sa’nu], meaning haters, is very difficult, for if so, [Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya] should have said, “Because they are haters [of beauty], because of this they are learned.” For in this way, the difficulty of the daughter of the emperor would’ve been solved in a suitable answer. He should not have said, “If they’d been haters [of beauty],” because the word “if” suggests that maybe they didn’t hate beauty, and then we still have a case of men who are both handsome and learned.

Also, in that language the first question of the daughter of the emperor stands. For she said to him, “Glorious wisdom [such as yours], in an ugly vessel,” and her intention was that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya, who was so wise, should not have been ugly. She would still be able to follow up and ask why he hadn’t been created handsome, that since he was so wise, then certainly he would have hated beauty and then he wouldn’t have been glorious wisdom in an ugly vessel.

ומשום הכי נראה לומר שהתוספות לא באו לחלוק כלל עם רש"י, רק באו להוסיף פירוש על פירוש של רש"י, ומשום הכי כתבו בתחלת דבריהם תיבת פירוש, כלומר שאף אחר פירוש רש"י צריך פירוש על לשון ד"אי הוו סנו", ורוצה לומר אם היו שונאים היופי וכו', והיינו שמי שהוא יפה לא ישנא היופי. ואף אינו מחוייב לשנא היופי אלא חובתו כך היא שתהיה דעתו שפלה עליו ולא יתפאר ביופיו כלל, וזהו כמעט בלתי אפשר שישפיל דעתו לגמרי כמו שכתב רש"י ז"ל. אבל מי שהוא כעור אין הכי נמי ששונא היופי, ואם פן כשכתבו התוספות אם היו שונאים היופי, כוונתם ממש כפירוש רש"י דהיינו שאם היו כעורים, והשתא אמי שפיר לשון הגמרא והתירוץ של רבי יהושע בן חנניה כפשוטו.

That's why it seems most likely to say that the additions of the Tosafists didn't come to disagree with Rashi at all. They just came to add a commentary to Rashi's commentary, and that's why they wrote the word “commentary” at the beginning of their words. This is

¹ This is not the earlier and more famous “Rif” [Rabbi Isaac Alfasi (1013-1103)], but rather Rabbi Josiah ben Joseph Pinto (c. 1565–c. 1648), Syrian rabbi and preacher, a disciple of Rabbi Chaim Vital. He wrote *Me'or Enayim* (Venice, 1643), a commentary on Rabbi Jacob ibn Habib's *Ein Yaakov*.

² Thus too explains the Maharsha on Nedarim 50b.

as if to say that after the explanation of Rashi, an explanation is needed as to the Gemara's wording of, "If they'd been ugly," and wants to say, "If they had been haters of beauty, etc.," and we would say that one who is handsome would not hate beauty. He is not obliged to hate beauty, but his duty is to have a low opinion of it, and not to boast of his beauty at all, and this is almost impossible for him to completely lower his opinion of his own beauty, as wrote Rashi of blessed memory. But one who is ugly, it is indeed so that he hates the beauty, and if so, when the Tosafists wrote, "If they'd been haters of beauty," their intents were exactly as the explanation of Rashi, which is that if they were ugly, they would be more learned. Now the language of the Gemara is fine, and the solution of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya is as they have explained.

ובנה יבואר מה שכתב רש"י על הפסוק "והוא נער" וכו', שמתקן בעיניו כדי שיהיה נראה יפה. וקשה איך אפשר שיורס הצדיק יתעסק בדברים בטלים הללו שאפילו קל שבקלים לא יעשה כן, ולכן כתב אחריו "וישראל אהב את-יורס" וכו', ארי בר חפים הוא ליה. ואם היה חכם על פרקה צריף לומר שלא היה חושב היפי, דאי לאו הכי לא היה לו לאביו לאהוב אותו מפני חכמתו, לפי שסופה להשתכח, שאינה מתקיימת אלא בפחות שבכלים, כדאמרנו התם בפרק קמא דמענית.

In this way we will understand what Rashi wrote on the verse, “Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, being still a lad even with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought evil report of them unto their father.”³ Rashi wrote that, “His actions were childish: he fixed up his hair, he touched up his eyes so that he should appear good-looking.”⁴ It is difficult to understand how it's possible that the righteous Joseph would engage in these idle matters that the commonest of people wouldn't engage in. Therefore it is written afterward, in the next verse, “Now Israel loved Joseph best of all his sons—he was his ‘child of old age’—and he made him a coat of many colors.”⁵ Onkelos translated this into Aramaic: “Israel loved Joseph more than any of his sons, for he was a wise son of his to him, and he made him a long, colorful cloak.”⁶ Rashi adds, based on Gen. Rabbah 84:8, that Joseph was wise, and that Jacob taught him all that he had learned from the yeshiva of Shem and Eber. **If he were wise, you necessarily must say that he didn't think of that beauty, for if not so, his father would not have loved him because of his wisdom, as in the end it would be forgotten, for [the wisdom] lasts only in the least expensive of vessels, as it says there in the first chapter of tractate Ta'anit.⁷ Thus, one can be handsome and still be learned, as long as he pays no heed to his beauty and is modest, able to review his learning and thus retain it so that he does not forget it.**

³ Gen. 37:2.

⁴ Rashi on Gen. 37:2, based on Gen. Rabbah 84:7.

⁵ Gen. 37:3.

⁶ Targum Onkelos on Gen. 37:3.

⁷ Ta'anit 7a: “And Rabbi Oshaya said: Why are matters of Torah likened to these three liquids: To water, wine and milk? . . . Just as these three liquids can be retained only in the least of vessels [e.g., clay pots, but not vessels of silver and gold, as they will spoil], so too, matters of Torah are retained only by one whose spirit is lowly.”

אֵלָא נִדְאֵי מוּכְרָחִים אָנוּ לוֹמַר שְׁמָה שְׁפַתְבּ "וְהוּא נֶעַר" וְכוּ' כִּדִּי שְׁיִהְיֶה נִרְאָה יָפֵה, אִינּוּ מוּבָן כִּפְּשׁוּטוֹ אֵלָא כְּמוֹ שְׁפַתְבוּ בְּמִדְרַשׁ רַבָּה עַל הַפְּסוּק "וַיְהִי יוֹסֵף יָפֵה־תֹאֵר וַיְפֵה מִרְאָה" וְסָמִיךְ לִיה "וַתֵּשֶׂא אֲשֶׁת־אֲדֹנָיו" וְכוּ'. שְׁאָמַר יוֹסֵף אֲבָא נְתַנְסָה, זְקַנִּי נְתַנְסָה, אָנִי אִינִי מְתַנְסָה, מִיָּד "וַתֵּשֶׂא אֲשֶׁת־אֲדֹנָיו" וְכוּ'. וּמִחֲשָׁבוֹתָיו שֶׁל יוֹסֵף לְמַשְׁמֵשׁ בְּעֵינָיו כִּדִּי שְׁיִהְיֶה נִרְאָה יָפֵה לֹא הָיוּ אֵלָא כִּדִּי לְהוֹסִיף פֶּחַ בְּעִבּוֹדָתוֹ יְתַבְרָךְ, שְׁבִנְיָה יוּכַל לְהִיּוֹת מְנוּסוֹ וְלַעֲמוֹד בְּנִסְיוֹנוֹ מִחֲמַת אוֹר תּוֹרָתוֹ הַמְּשֻׁמֵּר אוֹתוֹ.

Rather, we must certainly say that what is written, Onkelos's interpretation of "being still a lad" as being in order that he should appear handsome, is not understood as the plain meaning. Rather, it is meant as it is written in Midrash Gen. Rabbah 87:4 on the verse, "Now Joseph was well built and handsome,"⁸ and adjoining that verse, "his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and said, 'Lie with me.' " The Midrash says that Joseph said, "My father has undergone trials, my grandfather has undergone trials; but I have not undergone trials." Immediately, "his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph."

Joseph's thoughts to touch up his eyes in order that he would appear handsome were only to strengthen his service of G-d, may He be blessed. For in that way, he would be able to be tried and to withstand his test because of the light of His Torah, which preserved him.

"וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֶהָב אֶת־יוֹסֵף מִכָּל־בְּנָיו" אָרִי בַר חַפְּזִים הוּא לִיָּה, שְׁבִיחֵיהוֹנוֹ חֲכָם עַל כְּרַחֲמֵי לוֹמַר שְׁיִהְיֶה דַעְתּוֹ שְׁפִלָּה עָלָיו אִף עַל פִּי שְׁהִיָּה יָפֵה, נִאִין הֵכִי נְמִי שְׁמַצַּד זֶה הִנֵּה שׁוֹנֵא הַיּוֹפִי, נִאִף מַצַּד אַחַר מָה שְׁמַתְקֵן שְׁעָרוֹ לֹא הִנֵּה כִּדִּי שְׁתַּזוּז דַעְתּוֹ עָלָיו אֵלָא לְכַוֵּנָה טוֹבָה.

"Now Israel loved Joseph best of all his sons," for he was a wise son to him, that in being wise, it must be said that he had a low opinion of himself even though he was handsome. It is indeed so that from this side, he hated beauty, and even from another side, the fact that he fixed his hair was not to raise his view of himself, but for a good intention.

עוֹד עַל הַפְּסוּק הַנַּ"ל, קִשְׁיָה דִּהְלֵא כָּל הַשְּׁבִטִים הָיוּ חֲכָמִים? וְלָמָּה דִּנְקָא יוֹסֵף נִקְרָא בְּן זְקוּנִים דִּהִינּוּ בַר חַפְּזִים כְּמוֹ שְׁתַּרְגְּמֵי אוּנְקֵלוֹס, נִאִף אִם נֹאמַר בְּן זְקוּנִים כִּפְּשׁוּטוֹ, הֲרִי הִנֵּה בְּנִימִין שְׁהִיָּה יוֹתֵר בְּן זְקוּנִים. וְעוֹד לָמָּה יַעֲלֵב שְׁנָה אֶת בְּנוֹ בֵּין הַבְּנִים וּבִפְרָק קִמָּא דְשִׁפְתֵי אֲמָרִינּוּ לְעוֹלָם אֵל יִשְׁנָה אָדָם אֶת בְּנוֹ וְכוּ', וּמָהוּ לְעוֹלָם, הִנֵּה לוֹ לוֹמַר לֹא יִשְׁנָה אָדָם וְכוּ'.

Further on the above verse, it is difficult to understand, for weren't all the tribes wise? Why was Joseph specifically called a son of [Jacob's] old age, which is a wise son as Onkelos translated? Even if we'll say "a son of his old age" according to the plain meaning, there was Benjamin, who was even more a son of his old age. So why was Joseph given that label, instead of Benjamin? Also, why did Jacob distinguish his son, Joseph, among his other sons, for in the first chapter of tractate Shabbat, it is said, "A person should never distinguish his son [from] among [the other] sons [by giving him preferential treatment]."⁹ Also, why does the Gemara say "never"? It could have said, "A person should not distinguish" etc.

⁸ Gen. 39:6.

⁹ Shabbat 10a.

ונש לומר דאמרינו במדרש על הפסוק "אלהים מושיב יחידים ביתה", כל הנושא אשה לשם שמנים ומהוגנת לו הקב"ה מוציא מהם בנים בעלי הוראה. וכתב הפרשת דרכים (דף ג) שהמבחן לדעת אם אדם נשא אשה הגונה לו ולשם שמנים ולא לשם יופי ולשם ממון הם הבנים הנולדים מהם.

It can be said, as it's said in the Midrash Num. Rabbah 5:6 on the verse, "G-d restores the lonely to their homes,"¹⁰ everyone who marries a woman for the sake of Heaven and she is proper for him, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will bring forth from them sons who are masters of instruction. The author of the *Parashat Derachim*¹¹ writes (page 3, in the section By the Way of the Scouts, the first essay, at the words "the rising rule"), that the test to know if a man has married a woman suitable for him and for the sake of Heaven, and not for the sake of beauty or for the sake of money, this is to consider the children born from them.

ובכר ידוע שהעולם יש לו ערעור על יעקב שנשא שתי אחיות דהיינו שנשא רחל בעבירה, או דילמא שלקחה לשם נוי כדכתיב "וירחל היתה יפתתארא" וכו'. ומעתה אין הכי נמי שיעקב לימד תורה לכל בניו וכלם היו חכמים, אבל על יוסף היה מקפיד יותר ומסר לו כל מה שלמד משם ועבר, לפי שבהיותו חכם איגלאי מילתא למפרע שיעקב נשא רחל בהיתר ולשם שמנים, ולכן היה אהבו מכל בניו בשביל שבר חכים הוא ליה, והחכמה של יוסף מועלת הרבה בכבודו של יעקב. ומשום הכי "עשה לו כתנת פסים", לא לשנותו משאר בניו חס ושלום, אלא כדי שהעולם יראו שגוי זה וישאלו הטעם ובין כך ובין כך יראו שהוא חכם ויודו למפרע שיעקב בהיתר נשא רחל.

It's already known that the world has a complaint against Jacob, that he married two sisters, that is, that he married Rachel through a sin, or perhaps that he took her for the sake of enjoyment, as it is written, "Rachel was shapely and beautiful."¹²

Now, it is indeed so that Jacob taught Torah to all of his sons, and they were all wise, but for Joseph, [Jacob] was more careful and he passed on to him everything that he had learned from the yeshiva of Shem and Eber. That is because being a wise man, it is clear retrospectively that Jacob married Rachel with permission and for the sake of Heaven, as we have learned above from Midrash Num. Rabbah 5:6 and *Parashat Derachim*. Therefore, [Jacob] favored [Joseph] more than all his sons, because he was a wise son to him, and the wisdom of Joseph greatly exalted Jacob's honor, as it countered the claims of those who said that Jacob was wrong in Rachel after having been tricked into marrying Leah.

Because of this, "he made him a coat of many colors," not to distinguish him from his other sons, G-d forbid, rather in order that the world would see this difference and would ask the reason, and either way, they would see that he was wise and would know retrospectively that Jacob had permission to marry Rachel.

¹⁰ Ps. 68:7.

¹¹ Yehuda Rosanes (1657-1727), Rabbi of Constantinople, *Parashat Derachim* (Venice 1742).

¹² Gen. 29:17.

וְשָׂמָא זֶה הַכְּתוּנָת הָיָה כְּמוֹ הַסוּדְרָא דְאִמְרִינֵן בְּשֵׁבֶת פְּרָק הַמּוֹצִיא זֵין סוּדְרָא סוּד ה' לִירֵאָיו, וּפְרֵשׁ רַשִׁי דְרָב תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים לְעֵטוּף סוּדְרָא. וְאֵף עַל פִּי כֵן מְצִינֵנוּ שְׁגָרָם שְׁנָאָה לְאַחֲיוּ, וְלִכְּן קָאָמַר הַגְּמָרָא לְעוֹלָם אַל יִשְׁנֶה אָדָם וְכוּ', כְּלוּמַר אֵף אִם יִהְיֶה לוֹ טַעַם הַגּוֹן לְשִׁנוֹת אֶת בְּנוֹ כְּמוֹ שְׁהֵי לִיעֲקֹב, אֵף עַל פִּי כֵן לֹא יִשְׁנֶה.

Perhaps this coat was like the turban that is spoken about in tractate Shabbat, chapter 8 entitled “who takes out wine”: “[The head covering of Torah scholars is called] *sudara*, [which is an acronym for *sod yareh*, referencing the verse]: ‘The counsel of the L-rd is with those who fear Him [*sod Hashem lire’av*].’”¹³ **Rashi explains that it was the way of Torah scholars to wrap a scarf around their heads.**

Yet we found that he caused hatred for his brothers, and therefore the Gemara said, “A person should never distinguish his son [from] among [the other] sons [by giving him preferential treatment].” That is the answer to the question of why the word “never” is included. **It is as if to say, even if he had a decent reason to distinguish his son, as Jacob had, nevertheless he should not distinguish him.**

וְעוֹד בְּדִרְבָּר אַחֲרָת, אִידֵי אֶפְשָׁר שְׁיַעֲקֹב שְׁנֵה יוֹסֵף בֵּין הַבְּנִים בְּכַתוּנַת פְּסִים שְׁעָשָׂה לְיוֹסֵף, וְהֵלֵא הָיָה לוֹ לְחַוֵּשׁ פֶּן יִתְקַנְאוּ בוֹ אַחֲיוּ, כְּמוֹ שְׁהֵי. וְיֵשׁ לומר שְׁיַעֲקֹב הָיָה סוֹבֵר דְּמֵאֵי דְאִמְרִינֵן אַל יִשְׁנֶה אָדָם אֶת בְּנוֹ בֵּין הַבְּנִים הוּא מְטַעַם שְׁהַשְׁנוּי מוֹלִיד קְנָאָה בְּשָׂרָה הַבְּנִים, וְהַקְנָאָה גּוֹרָמַת לְעֵין הָרַע. וּבְפֶרֶק [ט'] דְּמַצִּיעָא אִמְרִינֵן תְּשַׁעִים וְתִשְׁעָה בְּעֵינוּ, וְנִמְצָא זֶה הַבֵּן בְּסַפְּנָה, אִמְנָם עִתָּה שְׁיַעֲקֹב לֹא עָשָׂה כִּדְ לְיוֹסֵף אֶלֶּא לְאַחַר שְׁנִיצוּל מַעֲשׂוֹ. וְכִבְּר זָכָה יוֹסֵף לְבִרְכַת "בֵּן פֶּרֶת עֲלִי-עֵינִי" מִחֲמַת הַמַּעֲשָׂה שֶׁל "וְאַחַר נִגַּשׁ יוֹסֵף וְרַחֵל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ", לֹא הִנְתָּה לוֹ שׁוּם קַפִּידָא לְשִׁנוֹתוֹ מִשָּׂרָר אַחֲיוּ, הוּאִיל שְׂאִין הָעֵין שׁוֹלֵט בוֹ.

Also, in another way of looking at it, how is it possible that Jacob distinguished Joseph among the sons with a coat of many colors that he made for Joseph, for wasn't he worried lest his brothers would be jealous, as happened? It can be said that Jacob was of the opinion that what was said, “A person should not distinguish his son [from] among [the other] sons [by giving him preferential treatment]” was for the reason that the preference would lead to jealousy among the other brothers, and the jealousy would cause the evil eye.

In the ninth chapter of tractate Bava Metzia, it is said: “Rav went to a graveyard, [and] did what he did [i.e., he used an incantation to find out how those buried there died, and he] said: **Ninety-nine** [of these died] **by the evil eye**, and [only] one [died] by [entirely] natural means.”¹⁴

This [preference] placed the son in danger, although now Jacob did not do this to Joseph, i.e., endanger him by showing preference, until after [Jacob] was saved from Esau, as recounted in Gen. 33:1–16. Joseph had already merited the blessing, “Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine by a spring [*alei ayin*], its branches run over a wall,”¹⁵ because of the incident of “and last, Joseph and Rachel came forward and bowed low.”¹⁶ Rashi explains, based on Gen. Rabbah 78:10, that the other matriarchs approached Esau before their children, but in the case of

¹³ Shabbat 77b, quoting Ps. 25:14.

¹⁴ Bava Metziah 107b.

¹⁵ Gen. 49:22.

¹⁶ Gen. 33:7.

Rachel, Joseph preceded her, afraid that Esau would desire her. Because he stood in front of her and prevented Esau from gazing at her, he was rewarded with the blessing *alei ayin*.¹⁷ The word “*ayin*” can represent either “an eye” or “a spring,” and the Gemara includes the homiletic interpretation, “Don’t read *alei ayin*, “a vine by a spring,” but rather *olei ayin*, “above the eye,” i.e., beyond the influence of the evil eye.¹⁸ Thus, Joseph and his descendants are not at danger of the evil eye. **There was no particular fear against distinguishing him from the other brothers, since there was no evil eye ruling over him.**

עוד פתב בעל הטורים ד"ב-ו"קנים" ראשי תיבות ז"רעים ק"דשים נ"שים ו"שועות מ"ועד. וקשה דהא סדר טהרות ליפא. ונראה דזה רמז הכתוב באמרו "ועשה לו כתנת פסים", דרצה לומר עשה לו בגד לעצמו, על דרך "בגדי אוכלי תרומה מדרס לקדש".

Also, the author of the Ba'al HaTurim¹⁹ wrote that for the phrase “*ben zekunim*” [“son of his old age”], the word “*zekunim*” [“old age”] [represents] the initial letters of the words of five of the six orders of the Mishnah: *Zeraim*;²⁰ *Kodashim*;²¹ *Nashim*;²² *Yeshuot* [“salvations, which Shabbat 31a says refers to the order of *Nezikim*];²³ and *Moed*.²⁴ A difficulty is that the order of *Tohorot*²⁵ is missing. It appears that the end of the verse hints at this sixth order by saying, “and he made him a coat of many colors.” That intended to say that he made for him a garment for himself, a hint that he should not share garments because of the risk of ritual impurity. This is in the way that the Mishnah states, “The garments of those who eat *teruma* [a portion of produce given to the priests, which can be eaten by them, their families, and servants, but only in a state of ritual purity, are nevertheless like an object trodden on by a *zav*, someone suffering from gonorrhea] with regard to sacrificial [food, which has a higher level of holiness].”²⁶

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¹⁷ Rashi on Gen. 33:7.

¹⁸ Berachot 20a, 55b; Sotah 36b; Bava Metzia 84a; Bava Batra 118b.

¹⁹ Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher (Cologne, 1270–Toledo, Spain c. 1340) (“Ba'al Ha-Turim”). His commentary on the Torah, *Rimzei Ba'al ha-Turim* (Constantinople 1500), includes this teaching at Gen. 37:3.

²⁰ *Zeraim* [“seeds”] is the first order of the Mishnah, dealing with prayer and blessings, tithes and agricultural laws.

²¹ *Kodashim* [“holy things”] is the fifth order of the Mishnah, dealing with sacrificial rites, the Temple, and the dietary laws.

²² *Nashim* [“women”] is the third order of the Mishnah, dealing with marriage and divorce, some forms of oaths and the laws of the nazirite.

²³ *Nezikim* [“damages”] is the fourth order of the Mishnah, dealing with civil and criminal law, the functioning of the courts and oaths.

²⁴ *Moed* [“festival”] is the second order of the Mishnah, dealing with the laws of the Sabbath and the Festivals.

²⁵ *Tohorot* [“purities”] is the sixth order of the Mishnah, dealing with the laws of purity and impurity, including the impurity of the dead, the laws of food purity and bodily purity.

²⁶ Mishnah Chagigah 2:7, 3:1; Chagigah 20b; Chullin 35a.