Hi, Rabbi David Fohrman back with you and I want to get to some other evidence that I think supports this in the Joseph story. I want to share with you a fascinating theory that I once heard but never actually saw in print, from Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik of blessed memory. A very fascinating insight that I want to share with you which really supports this point. It's certainly something which he believed, that Yaakov was treating Yosef as if he was a Bechor, and here's his evidence to support this theory.

It all begins - he argues - right over here in these verses in Bereishit Chapter 30 in which Yaakov tells Lavan his father-in-law that he's leaving him. Remember Yaakov is on the lam running away from Eisav, he comes and he meets this woman by the well, it's Rachel, he falls in love with her, marries her. But in the meantime he comes and before that he sees this man who is potentially going to be his father- in-law Lavan and Lavan offers to take him in, come into my house, hang out for a while, and says, you're related to me, you shouldn't really work for nothing. Before you know it, Yaakov is working in Lavan's household. Eventually it becomes backbreaking work and finally decides that the time has come where he's just going to leave.

Now that time comes - as I talked about before - Yaakov, remember has two wives, he has Rachel and Leah as his wives. He's got a lot more children from Leah, he has six children from Leah, at this point he's got one child from [Rachel 1:30], Yosef. I want to read you these verses that take place immediately after the very birth of this person we've been discussing about, Yosef - Joseph. Here are the verses.

Vatikra et shemo Yosef - so Rachel, who has finally had a child calls the name of this child Yosef. Why does Yosef get this name? Leimor - because she said; Yosef - there's that name again, but here it doesn't just mean his name it's a verb. Yosef Hashem li ben acher - she's so desperate for a child, let G-d add for me another child. Now keep on reading. Vayehi k'asher yaldah Rachel et Yosef vayomer Yaakov el Lavan shalcheini v'elchah el mekomi ul'artzi. Now if you look carefully at verse 25 over here you'll notice something kind of strange, you'll notice a linkage between the two ideas. VAYEHI k'asher yaldah Rachel et Yosef - AND IT WAS, it happened, just as Rachel gave birth to Yosef that Yaakov said to Lavan, let me go and I'm going to go back to my place and to my homeland.

You see the connection? Here is idea number 1; Rachel gives birth to Yosef, and idea number 2 is Yaakov says I want to leave. But the verse creates this linkage between the ideas; And it happened when Rachel had borne Yosef that Yaakov said unto Lavan. So what is this? What is this linkage? Why are these two ideas linked? It seems like there is something about the birth of Yosef that convinces Yaakov that it's time to go, what is that something?

Puzzle over that for a second. What do you think? What could that something be? Try to strain - if you're familiar with the earlier chapters in Bereishit, is there anything in Bereishit that Yaakov might be thinking about? If you think carefully you might just come up with Rabbi Soloveitchik's theory.

So here's what Rabbi Soloveitchik says. He says the answer comes from here, the answer comes from Bereishit Tet-Vav - from Genesis 15, from something that happened a long time ago between Abraham and G-d. What happened? Well what happened in Genesis 15 is what's commonly known as the Brit

Bein Ha'besarim - or in English the somewhat clunky name; The Covenant Between the Pieces. Now what happened here is that G-d had appeared to Avraham and had told him, had clued him in, on events that would take place a long time after his death.

What He said to him is the following, is a sort of prophetic nightmare. Vayomer l'Avram - and G-d says to Avraham; Yodo'ah teidah - you shall surely know; Ki ger yiheye zaracha b'eretz loh lahem - your children will be sojourners, will be strangers in a land not their own; V'avodum - and these people will enslave them; V'inui otam arbah me'ot shanah - and they will enslave them and oppress them for a very long time, for 400 years. V'gam et hagoy asher ya'avodu dan onochi - and indeed, the nation that does this; Dan onochi - I Myself will judge; V'acharei ken yeitzu b'rechush gadol - and afterwards everyone is going to leave, your children are going to leave with a lot of wealth. V'atah - and as for you; Tavoh el avotecha b'shalom - you'll die in peace; Tikaver b'seivah tovah - none of this is going to happen in your lifetime. Rather; V'dor revi'i yashuvu heinah - the fourth generation will return here; Ki loh shalem avon ha'emori ad heinah - because the Amorites have not become sufficiently evil to justify My kicking them off the land and giving it to your descendants until then, so we have to put this whole plan on hold for at least four generations.

Now if you think about this, this notation, this idea four generations will return here, Rabbi Soloveitchik says, Yaakov would have been aware of that. Remember, Yaakov is that not far from Avraham, Avraham gives birth to Yitzchak, Yitzchak gives birth to Yaakov, Avraham is the grandfather here. Everyone would have known about this prophecy that Grandfather had. It's kind of running around Yaakov's head, the fourth generation is going to return here, the fourth generation is going to return here. Well the question mark, who is the fourth generation?

So here's what Rabbi Soloveitchik suggests, that Yaakov could do math, and then he says, all right, well let's start with Abraham. Abraham so he is going to be generation number 1. Yitzchak my father - Isaac - so he's going to be generation number 2. Me, Jacob - Yaakov - I'm going to be generation number 3.

And my child - in this case Yosef - is going to be generation number 4. That's exactly what's going on

over here. Vayehi k'asher yaldah Rachel et Yosef - and it came to pass when Rachel bore Yosef, when

the fourth generation came, that Yaakov said to Lavan, okay it's time to leave, it's happening.

In other words, remember, nobody knows what's going to happen - we know, the readers of the Torah, we know in retrospect that what was G-d talking about over here? G-d was talking about Egypt, but remember Abraham doesn't know that, Isaac doesn't know that and Jacob doesn't know that. All G-d said was; Yodo'ah teidah ki ger yiheye zaracha b'eretz loh lahem - your people will be enslaved in a land not their own. Nobody knows exactly what it means to say that the children are going to be enslaved in a land not their own. The name of the land isn't specified. It comes to mean Egypt, but it didn't have to mean Egypt.

Yaakov thinks - Rabbi Soloveitchik suggests - that it means Lavan. Yaakov looks around and says, all right, I'm somewhere in a land not my own, have I been in slavery? Well yeah, I've been in slavery. So the prophecy is a stranger in a land not their own and they're going to end up serving them, I've been

doing this backbreaking work for Lavan all this time. Not 400 years but for a long time. By the way in retrospect, the Jews actually didn't spend 400 years in Egypt either, it was 210 years. So anyway 400 years just in the end seems like an exaggeration. Yaakov thought, oh I was here for a while, long time, fourth generation is supposed to return, maybe it's me? Maybe it's me?

Now of course we would argue in retrospect we know otherwise, but Yaakov didn't know otherwise, but isn't it interesting that if this theory is correct Yosef is the fourth generation? You can say, what do you mean Yosef if the fourth generation, he had all these children before then? But - Rabbi Soloveitchik would argue - in Yaakov's eyes, he didn't, right? Rachel was the wife he was always meant to have, the firstborn would always be the first child from Rachel. In the words of the Medrash; the woman that I had always been destined to marry, the woman that I had worked for, her first child is Yosef, that's my real Bechor. Of course it's true, Yosef is Rachel's first child and if Yaakov is looking at her that way, the wife he was always supposed to marry, Yosef is his real legacy. In a certain kind of way Yosef is my first child, my first child from Rachel. The wife, in his eyes, that he was destined to marry. This is Rabbi Soloveitchik's theory.

But it turns out there's actual even more evidence that this theory is true, which is to say, that Yaakov is viewing Yosef as his Bechor - as his firstborn child. There's another clue right in Chapter 37, right in the story of the sale of Joseph. A very subtle clue, but it's a clue pointed at by Rashi. Can you find that clue, which seems to really, really support this theory - and I think move it from the realm of mere theory to something which really I believe there's very strong evidence for? If you can, comb through the Rashis here, see what you come up with, and when we come back I'll clue you in on my thoughts on this.

Hi everybody, Rabbi David Fohrman back with you. So I want to come back and share with you an insight - an observation which I think takes this theory that Jacob was treating Joseph - Yosef - as his Bechor, kind of out of the realm of theory and moves it more towards the realm of pretty substantial suspicion - if not fact. So again, is there any other indication of this in the text? Are there any other pieces of evidence that would lead us towards this theory?

So I want to direct your attention actually to a little piece of text - in particular a comment by Rashi which, if nothing else, seems to suggest that Rashi believed that this was true. Here's the piece of text I want you to look at, it is the story of the sale of Joseph, it is the text's account of Yosef actually being stripped of his coat before he's thrown into the pit. Right before he's thrown into the pit the brothers take him and they strip him of his coat and here is what the text says. Vayehi k'asher bah Yosef el echov - and it happened when Joseph came to his brothers; Vayafshitu et Yosef et kutanto - they stripped Joseph his coat; Et ketonet hapasim asher alav - his multicolored coat, his special coat which he was wearing.

Now if you listen carefully to the text you'll see that the fact that Joseph was stripped seems to get repeated. It's not just that once, it seems to get repeated. So first you have this idea; Vayafshitu et Yosef et kutanto - the first time we hear it, Joseph is stripped of his coat right over here. He stripped Joseph his coat - in English. But then it again says one more time; Et ketonet hapasim asher alav - his coat which was upon him, the coat of many colors that was upon him.

Again, as I mentioned to you at the very beginning, this is why I really like the 1917 translation of the JPS. As archaic as it sounds, this kind of words over here; As it came to pass, but it preserves this kind of stuff over here, this kind of double language, which many other translators would be frankly tempted to kind of wash away and to take away these kinds of things and to make the text read easier. They would just put one in and they would eliminate the other. In fact, I believe that the JPS, the new JPS translation, actually does just this. The old translation is much better than this, the new translation reads much better but it reads better because it takes these awkward kinds of things out of the text, but the awkward kinds of things are actually windows into meaning. Here it's a very crucial window into meaning, the fact that the verse repeats twice this idea that Joseph is stripped.

So it turns out that we weren't the only ones who saw this, Rashi saw it and Rashi comments on it. Now I'm going to show you a Rashi that actually quotes a Medrash, and again, when I first show it to you you're going to say, oh, come on, that's kind of crazy, it just seems like a strange sort of thing. But again, I want to caution to you, when the Medrash says stuff it has its own way of talking, it talks to you with a wink and a nod and you really have to pay attention to what it is that it's saying. Because it will say things that sound trivial or strange or fantastic, but if you listen carefully you'll see that they are just kind of tapping you on the shoulder and nudging you in the direction of something very, very fascinating.

But it's up to you to figure out what it means.

So here is the Medrashic comment that Rashi quotes. So Rashi says the following - very, very briefly. Rashi says, the first time; Vayehi k'asher bah Yosef el echov vayafshitu et Yosef et kutanto - when it says that they stripped him of his coat, the first time it says it, it means; Zeh chaluk. It means that was kind of

his undershirt, that was his regular coat. That was the coat which all the brothers had. But when it then says; Et ketonet hapasim - when it says that he stripped him of his special coat, that actually refers to another coat, a second coat. Hu she'hosif lo aviv yoter al echov - this is the second coat that his father added upon him - a little play on words over here; Yosef literally means add - if you remember those were the words that Rachel said when Yosef was born; Let G-d add another child for me. So in other words, this coat was the coat that was added - that his father added for him more than all the brothers. In other words, all of his brothers had one coat but Yosef had two. He had this special coat too.

Now at face value when you listen to this Rashi, this seems like the most trivial Rashi in the entire Bible. Like, I don't care how many coats that Joseph had, why do I need to know this kind of trivia? Here I am, at the most climactic, the most disastrous moment in Genesis, there's brothers throwing another brother inside a pit and about to sell him off to slavery, and Rashi is concerned about telling me whether Joseph still had his undershirt on. Whether Yosef was wearing his undershirt, he wasn't wearing his undershirt, how many coats did they strip him of, what is going on? It's not really Rashi, it's really this Medrash over here - Bereishit Rabah over here, these parentheses indicate that this is actually quoted from a Medrash.

What is the Medrash telling me? Why do I care about any of this?

The answer is boy do I care. The Medrash is actually telling you something with a wink and a nod. Can you figure out what this Medrash is actually trying to tell us? Let's come back and compare notes in this.

Hi everybody, Rabbi David Fohrman back with you. I asked you how is it that we're going to try to understand this Rashi, why is this Rashi just not talking about the most trivial thing in the world in mentioning how many coats Joseph was stripped of? I think the answer is that what Rashi is doing here is reminding us kind of with a wink and a nod of a law later on in the Torah. Think about it for a moment. All the other brothers had one coat and Joseph has two coats, why would Joseph have two coats? Well let's think about that, why would Joseph have two coats? Or, let me put it to you this way, what law later on in the Torah does this remind you of?

So the answer is right over here in Devarim, Chaf-Aleph - Deuteronomy 21, this the law of the man with children from two wives. Of course the law which we're talking about in Hebrew is the law of Pi Shnayim - I'm just going to write it in Hebrew over here. Pi Shnayim over here means the double portion, and this is the law that has to do with inheritance, the law that a Bechor - this word we had before, you can even spell it with a Vav or without a Vav - that a Bechor, a firstborn child, receives a double portion in his father's estate. I'm just going to read through this law with you and I'm just going to show you the part right over here, it's just toward the end of the section of the text. Ki et habechor ben hasenu'ah yakir latet lo pi shnayim b'chol asher yimotzeh lo. The details we'll talk about in a moment, but the basic idea is that the father has to acknowledge the right of the Bechor whether he likes it or not, to the share of the double portion. A double portion of everything that he has.

It seems that that is what Rashi is referring to over here. All the other children had one coat but no, not Joseph; Hu she'hosif lo aviv yoter al echov - he had a second coat. It seems to be this reference to this idea of Pi Shnayim. It's as if the second coat, the special coat, is Yaakov's way of suggesting that Yosef you in fact are my Bechor, my firstborn child.

Now it's possible you might say, I hear the skeptic in you saying, well I don't know. Maybe that's a little bit of a stretch. It could be that Rashi is referring to the law of a Bechor, that Joseph has a second coat over here, and also could just be a coincidence, you know? Maybe Rashi likes talking about trivia, maybe Rashi is into just mentioning things like little details about how many coats Joseph lost, for no good reason. I mean it could be, I can't disprove that, but I think I can suggest quite strongly that this is actually not a coincidence. That in fact the links between the Joseph story and Joseph's second coat and these laws over here in Deuteronomy - in Devarim, are exceedingly strong. I want to just show you how strong they are, and what I'm going to show you is actually pretty mind-blowing, so kind of fasten yourself in.

Before I show it to you though, I just want to remind you of an idea which we talked about earlier, it's an idea that I referred to - or really a methodological tool which I think the Torah uses, which I called intertextuality. We used this earlier to talk about this mystery of these Akeidah parallels, these parallels that seem to link the story of the sale of Joseph to the Binding of Isaac, which we still have to come back to explain. Right now we're going to have another quick adventure into the fascinating world of intertextuality, this idea again that the Torah is in many ways kind of the original internet, that there are these links that seem to pervade the Torah which take the central idea and there are these various different expressions of it.

The way that you see these hyperlinks kind of coming to life is that you've got these two stories and you have these various different elements in these stories, and if you just chart out the elements one by one, you start seeing these fascinating connections, [which these 3:55] other stories seems to have these echoes of these kinds of elements. We talked about this being a kind of sign, seemingly, that Story 2 is kind of commenting on Story A in all of these different kinds of ways. So you can't really understand Story 1 without Story 2. You look for words, phrases or ideas in Story 1 that seem to be echoing in Story 2, seem to establish these kinds of - these hyperlinks, these kind of connections between the two stories.

What I want to do with you in our next video is come back to this section of text which we've begun to look at, Deuteronomy 21 - Devarim Chaf-Alef, where we have this law of the man with children from two wives, which is the source in the Torah for the idea that a Bechor gets Pi Shnayim - the firstborn is entitled to a double portion of everything the father has. We theorized - so far just a theory - that perhaps we're hearing the echoes of this, at least in Rashi, in the story of Joseph, that Joseph is being stripped of not one coat but two coats, and maybe it's a reference to this Pi Shnayim. Could we sort of prove it? To prove it what I want to do is show you that if we take a very close look at this section of text, just three verses over here, we're going to find that this just opens up to us in a three-dimensional way if we are sensitive to the intertextual references in here.

So what I want to challenge you to do is go through these three sentences and ask yourself - play this game; Where Have We Heard These Words Before? When I say where have we heard these words before, I don't just mean words, I mean words on the one hand, ideas, any kind of thing which peaks your interest, which sort of seems out of place, and you say, gee I kind of heard that before. Do those connections establish any kind of pattern? Is there some other text which as you go through these three verses just seem, I don't know, I just keep on getting these sort of constant reminders of that other text? What are those reminders? What is that other text? See if you can piece together any of this and then we'll come back and talk about it.

Okay, Rabbi David Fohrman back with you. I asked you to look at this text over here which is our source text from Devarim - from Deuteronomy, which has the law of the man with children from two wives. This is the source for the idea that the Bechor gets Pi Shnayim - a double portion. I was asking you to see if you could listen to this text and find any echoes of other text.

Here's what I came up with. So the first red flag over here - pardon the pun over here, because of my red pen - is this word right over here. Senu'ah. It turns out that that's actually a very unusual word in the Torah, it sounds even strange even as you listen to this - and one way you can find it by the way is just listening for the strange words here in this text. Ki tiheyena l'ish shtei nashim ha'achat ahuva v'ha'achat senu'ah - if a man will have two wives - at that in Torah law a man was allowed to marry two wives, later on the Rabbis prohibited it. So we're talking about a man who has two wives. Ha'achat ahuva - one wife that he loves, but there's another wife that; Senu'ah - means that he hates, a hated wife. It's just so jarring as you listen to this, a hated wife. I mean why has he married her if he hates her? Maybe she's not as loved as much, but hated? That's pretty strong. You see over here JPS 1917 translation actually preserves the word hated, as jarring as it sounds over here. So what's the deal with his hated wife? That's one of these jarring words.

There's other jarring words over here, other words that kind of seem out of place in this text. If you keep on reading; V'yaldu lo banim ha'ahuva v'hasenu'ah vehaya haben habechor laseni'ah - he has children from both of these wives, from the loved wife and from the wife that is not as loved. The wife that's, so to speak, hated - we'll put this kind of in quotation marks. It turns out; Vehaya haben habechor laseni'ah

- it turns out that the oldest child, the Bechor - the firstborn, ends up being born to the wife that he doesn't love as much.

Vehaya b'yom hanchilo et banav et asher yiheye lo - it shall turn out that on the day that he apportions his inheritance to the children that he has; Loh yuchal levaker et ben ha'ahuva al pnei ben hasenu'ah habechor - he shall not make the child of the loved wife - illegitimately consider him the Bechor - the firstborn, on the face of the; Ben hasenu'ah bechor - in place of the child of the wife that's not as loved. Rather - and here's where we get to some of these words that seem odd; Ki et habechor ben hasenu'ah yakir latet lo pi shnayim b'chol asher yimotzeh lo - rather, the firstborn child of the wife that he doesn't love as much; Yakir latet lo pi shnayim - he shall recognize him to give him a double portion in everything that is found to him. Ki hu reishit ono lo mishpat habechora - for he is the first of his strength; Lo mishpat habechora - literally the first of his loins; Lo mishpat habechora - to him, to that child, devolves the right of the Bechor.

Now there are a few unusual words, especially given the context over here. One of these unusual words is this one over here; Yakir. Ki et habechor ben hasenu'ah yakir latet lo pi shnayim. This word is really kind of extra. This whole phrase really is kind of extra. We could have really gotten the exact same idea across had the verse just said; Ki et habechor ben hasenu'ah yiten lo pi shnayim - rather, the child of the wife that he doesn't love as much he should give a double portion in all that he has. What is this idea; Ki et habechor ben hasenu'ah yakir - he must recognize? Recognize by the way is a better word than the English over here, acknowledge, it really means recognize, which is also kind of strange, I mean what

does it really mean he should recognize him?

But anyway, you should recognize him to give him a double portion; B'chol asher yimotzeh lo - and this word over here; Yimotzeh Lo is also a little odd, because if I was writing this in Hebrew I would have said; B'chol asher yesh lo - which really means in all that he has. In fact, by the way, this translation which usually is pretty good actually translates it that way; By giving him the double portion of all that he has. In Hebrew the way you would say all that he has is actually Yesh Lo. Go ask an Israeli, Modern Hebrew, all that he has, the words are Yesh Lo. Over here; B'chol asher yimotzeh lo - if you translate that literally, that word is going to mean found. So literally it is going to mean, in all that is found to him. The father has to give him a double portion in all that is found to him. What does that mean, all that is found to him? You give him a double portion of everything that he has.

So over here what do you mean you have to recognize him to give a portion? Just give him a double portion. A double portion in all that he has, yeah, but how come it says, all that's found to him? So these kinds of words are strange

Finally, so if this word is strange - hated over here seems a little jarring. Over here this word kind of seems extra - recognize. Over here this word seems a little bit awkward, over here - found - this is going to be number 3. So number 4 is going to be right over here and it's this phrase over here; Reishit Ono - which literally means the first of his loins or the first of his strengths, the first fruits of his strength. This is

- it's all very fine, but this is poetry. The entire rest of this is all prose. The one little piece of poetry, the one sort of poetic flourish you get, is over here, it seems a little out place along with all this prose.

So it turns out that we have all this language over here, these four things that seem to not kind of fit, and what I want to show you is that these four ideas, these four phrases are actually lifted out of another story. These are intertextual references to another story. The Torah is linking us here, is linking this whole piece over here in Deuteronomy, this whole piece over here in Sefer Devarim, is linking it, seemingly, to a story that we're kind of familiar with from Sefer Bereishit. What story is that? So hang on and we'll figure that one out.

Okay so these over here were the phrases that we were focusing on that I argued seemed somewhat out of place but what's particularly interesting about them is that they seem to add up to a kind of pattern. By a pattern here's what I mean. Let's start with this first one right over here, Senu'ah. Not only is it a jarring phrase, but it also happens to be a very, very unusual phrase. To show you just how unusual a phrase it is, I'm going to use this kind of handy-dandy search program over here to actually search for it throughout the entire Five Books of Moses - throughout the entire Torah , the entire Chumash. So this is Judaic Classics Library Deluxe, a handy-dandy little program over here, and we're just going to type in this phrase over here, Senu'ah. It's going to show us how many times - where this phrase appears in the Torah. So we just click search and you'll see very quickly right over here that the phrase appears exactly three times in the entire Five Books of Moses.

This is the piece we've been looking at right over here in Deuteronomy where we talk about the man who has two wives. It turns out there's only one other context, or only one person in the entire Torah that this refers to. Both of these references over here, that take place in the exact same chapter, in Bereishit 29, refer to the same person. The only person ever described by the Torah as hated. It turns out that that person is Leah.

Leah, as you'll remember, is one of the two wives of Jacob. He hadn't expected to marry Leah, he was tricked by his father-in-law, who substituted Leah under the Chuppah. Leah was veiled, Yaakov thought it was Rachel, the woman he had always intended to marry, he found out in the morning and then ended up working seven more years for Rachel and found himself married to both. Here's the text right over here in both Hebrew and English, where you have this exact phrase over here, a Senu'ah, you have it actually used in reference to Leah. Vayar Hashem ki senu'ah Leah - that the L-rd then saw - G-d saw that Leah was hated. Over here by the way it doesn't really mean that Leah was hated, it means that she wasn't loved as much. If you actually go back to the text - and I believe the verse immediately before this says explicitly that when Yaakov married Rachel he loved Rachel more than Leah. Well if you're the wife that someone else is loved more, how do you feel? You feel hated. This is how Leah feels. So Leah's perception of this is that she is hated, even though it's not actually Yaakov's perspective. From Jacob's perspective - from Yaakov's perspective, he loves Rachel more than Leah.

Anyway, from G-d's perspective, G-d sort of ratifies Leah's perspective here and G-d saw that Leah was comparatively hated; Vayiftach et rachmah - and He opened her womb, and meanwhile; Rachel akarah - Rachel was still barren, Rachel still didn't have any children. Then, lo and behold, Leah has a child. This actually is the firstborn child of Yaakov and his name is Reuven. Reuven is Leah's firstborn child. So it's interesting that we hear of Leah being a Senu'ah immediately before she gives birth to a Bechor, and it kind of sounds suspiciously like this story over here. And as a matter of fact if we keep on reading; Ki tiheyena l'ish shtei nashim ha'achat ahuva v'ha'achat senu'ah - when a man will have two wives, one of which he loves and one which he hates - or doesn't love as much. So if you just do the math, so who is this? If the only person in the entire Torah who is referred to this way is Leah, so then who apparently is the man? Who is this fellow? Well seems to be that we're looking at Yaakov over here.

Again, I'm just kind of using the Hebrew and English interchangeably, you're just going to have to put

up with me on that.

We're looking at Yaakov over here, we're looking at Jacob. And it seems to be Jacob marrying two wives; Ha'achat ahuva - who is the one that he loves? That would seem to be Rachel, this one seems to be Leah, it almost seems like the story that's being told over here in Sefer Devarim - in Deuteronomy, is actually the story of Yaakov. He has children from both those wives. V'yaldu lo banim ha'ahuva v'hasenu'ah - he has children from the both the loved wife and the wife that's not as loved. It turns out that Ben Habechor - the oldest child, actually the firstborn child ends up coming from the wife that's not loved as much, which of course is what we saw right over here, right after we hear that Leah is Senu'ah we hear that she gives birth to a child, the Bechor, and that of course is Reuven. So this child over here, the Ben Habechor - this firstborn child, is going to end up being Reuven, if we follow this.

But you know, could be - just be a coincidence. We want to see more evidence that this whole section is linked to the story of Leah and Yaakov and Rachel. So what more evidence is there? Well let's keep on looking at some of our words that we found out of place. If you recall, the last word we found was this one over here; Reishit Ono, the one sounded like poetry, in an otherwise prose section. Ki hu reishit ono

- you have to give the real Bechor the double portion because he is the first of the father's strength, the first of his loins. It turns out that that phrase also actually appears only one other time in the entire Tanach actually - in the entire Hebrew Bible. Prophets, Writings, the Torah, the thousands of pages, it actually appears only one other time. Where is the only other time where that phrase Reishit Ono - actually the first of someone's strength, actually appears?

Well you may have guessed it, it actually appears right over here, at the very end of Sefer Bereishit, when Yaakov blesses - wouldn't you know it - Reuven, his actual Bechor. And at the end of his life, after the whole story, it actually says about him; Reuven bechori atah - Reuven you are my firstborn child; Kochi v'reishit oni - here are these words, you are the first of my strength, the first of my loins. Or in the JPS English, the first fruits of my strength. So the only other time we have this - just to color code it appropriately - the only two times in all of Tanach that we have this is right over here when Yaakov talks about Reuven. Coincidence? Hard to say so. Over here who is the Senu'ah? It's Leah. She has a child, the Ben Habechor, turns out to be Reuven. Later on the same phrase we call him Reishit Ono, really sounds like we're borrowing from the story of Yaakov, Rachel and Leah, and of course, the birth of their children.

But the truth is, there's more evidence that supports this. Let's get back to the other two phrases. Remember there were four phrases here that seemed to resonate with us? Here are the four, so let's come back to the other two, which we haven't looked at. We've looked at the ends - we've looked at the beginning phrase over here and the end phrase, now let's begin to look at these two phrases; Yakir and Yimotzeh - shall acknowledge and he has. Both of these, by the way, bad translations. Yakir is going to mean recognize, as we talked about before, and Yimotzeh means in everything that is found to the father. So we talked about that, why these strange phrases? That he should recognize the firstborn to give him a double portion? Just say he should give him a double portion. Recognize and found. Recognize and found. Where we do have the words recognize and found? Where do we have Yakir and Yimotzeh

together?

Well, you guessed it, it's actually the story of Joseph and his brothers. It's right over here. It's when the brothers after they put Joseph in the pit, after they sell him, and they're looking for an alibi, what are we going to tell Father, they then go and they slaughter the goat, they put the blood of the goat on the coat and they present it to the father, and what do they say? Zot matzanu - this we found; Haker nah - recognize please. Found, recognize. Found, recognize. It's like - what's going on? What's going on is that Devarim - Deuteronomy, is borrowing all of this from the Joseph story, and it's actually using the Joseph story as a kind of commentary to explain to you what's happening in Devarim. Or better, you might say, Devarim is acting as a kind of commentary to explain what's going on in Bereishit. You can actually read Devarim as a kind of commentary.

Let's go back and read the whole thing now; When a man will have two wives, one which he loves, one that he doesn't love as much. Who are we talking about? We're talking about Yaakov, we're talking about Leah. It turns out that Leah has the Bechor, that happens to be Reuven. Then what does the Torah say? It's as if the Torah is seemingly expressing its disapproval, sort of siding with the brothers. Then what does the Torah say? Vehaya b'yom hanchilo et banav - it turns out that on the day that the father - in this case Yaakov - portions his inheritance to his children; Loh yuchal levaker et ben ha'ahuva al pnei ben hasenu'ah habechor - he cannot make the Ben Ha'ahuva - the love child - who is this? This is going to be Yosef, the firstborn child of the loved wife, that's going to be the firstborn child of Rachel. He shall not make Yosef the Bechor; Al pnei ben hasenu'ah habechor - instead of the child of the Senu'ah, the child of Leah; Habechor - who is in fact the real Bechor, who is going to be Reuven. Rather; Ki et habechor ben hasenu'ah yakir - rather he must recognize - there are these words from the sale of Joseph - the true right of who? Of Reuven. To give him the double portion; B'chol asher yimotzeh lo - in all that is found to him. Yakir and Yimotzeh, the words that echo from the sale of Joseph.

What does that mean? If we go back again, let's just look at how those words are used in the sale of Joseph, and you're going to see that Devarim is actually telling you how to understand what's happening in the sale of Yosef. I'd actually like you to do that right now. Go back - let me put it up on the screen for you - and compare these phrases. Compare these words. How do you think that Sefer Devarim - Deuteronomy over here, is acting as a commentary to explain what it is that the brothers mean? It's almost like these are code words - it's as if Devarim is telling you how to interpret these words. Just plug the way these words are used in Deuteronomy and then take those meanings and plug them into here and you actually get a fascinating idea. What is it that emerges here?

Okay so let's read this phrase again, verse 32, what happened? The brothers, they've sold Joseph and now they're presenting the bloody coat. It's as if there's an elaborate double entendre here. So on the one hand they're deceiving their father, but, I want to argue, on the other hand they're actually telling the truth.

They're saying sort of backhandedly, without saying it, what's actually really on their mind. Let's listen carefully. Vayeshalchu et ketonet hapasim - they then send the striped coat, the bloody coat; Vayavi'u el avihem - and they bring it to their father, they send it to their father. Vayomru - and they say; Zot matzanu.

Now what does Matzanu mean? Let's borrow the meaning from the way it's used over here in Devarim. What it means over here is estate. Remember the father has to take - give the double portion to the Bechor; B'chol asher yimotzeh lo - all that's found to him, which really means his estate. So over here it means - we're going to say it means estate as well. So in other words the brothers are saying; Zot matzanu - this Dad is your stuff, this is your estate, this coat is your estate; Haker nah - recognize please - recognize also - let's borrow the meaning from over here, from Deuteronomy, from Sefer Devarim.

What did this phrase mean over here? Ki et habechor ben hasenu'ah yakir - you must recognize who your real Bechor is. The father has a responsibility to recognize that his Bechor is not the child of the wife that he loves the most, but he has to come to grips with the fact that it is who it is, even though it's the child of the wife that he didn't love as much. He has to recognize them. It's recognize your true firstborn.

That's what the phrase means over here in Devarim. Borrow that meaning over here and look what the brothers are really saying. Haker nah - Dad, recognize who your true firstborn is. They take the bloody coat, they say, Dad, this is your estate, this is your stuff, this is the double portion; Zot matzanu - we found this. Haker nah - recognize who your real Bechor is. Haketonet bincha hi - does this coat belong to your child Yosef? Im loh - or not? Maybe, it belongs to Reuven.

The brothers are saying - without saying it - exactly what's on their mind. They feel they can't say it to their father. But Devarim explains to us what it is that they're saying to themselves even as they present to their father. Father, how could you allow this travesty to happen? This isn't Yosef's coat, he doesn't get the double portion, he's not really the firstborn, it's the child of Leah, Reuven can't be ignored. And strangely or interestingly the Torah actually comes down on their side; this law, the man with the children of two wives, seems to ratify the brothers' perspective, they're right, you can't make Yosef the Bechor, Reuven in fact is the Bechor. It doesn't ratify throwing Yosef in the pit but it ratifies where they were coming from.

So it seems that there's substantial evidence that this is true, that Yaakov in fact is treating Yosef as his Bechor, as his firstborn.

Now I want to come back and try to solve some of the mysteries we talked about before. How does this change everything? Let's come back now to Yaakov's perspective on this story. We've been talking about the brothers' perspective on the story, how they saw it. Having gained some insight into that, let's come back to Yaakov perspective on the story and ask, now that we understand this, how does this change what Yaakov might have been thinking when all this was going on? I'll see you in our next video.

Hi everybody, Rabbi David Fohrman back with you. I want to start bringing this all together. I want to come back to Jacob's perspective here - to Yaakov's perspective, and I want to come back to a question - actually to put together a lot of the questions that I raised earlier. I want to come back to something I talked to you, I think, way back in segment 3 and it had to do with a very ambiguous, almost conflicted, reaction by Yaakov to his son Yosef's second dream. Let's just go over it again over here. Yosef has this dream; Vayachalom od chalom acher - and Yosef has a second dream and he tells it to his brothers, and he says, you know, I saw the sun and the moon, and 11 stars, they're all bowing to me. Then he tells the same dream to his father, as well as to his brothers, so he's talking to all [three 0:51] of them, and here is Yaakov's conflicted reaction.

Here's reaction number 1; Vayig'ar bo aviv - his father rebuked him, rebuked Joseph. So he was angry at him. Vayomer lo mah hachalom hazeh asher chalamtah - he says, what's this dream that you've dreamt? Havoh navoh ani v'imecha v'achecha lehishtachavot lecha artzah - are we all going to come bowing to you? So response number 1 on the part of Yaakov is that Yaakov is angry at Yosef for this dream.

But if you keep on reading in the next verse, you now have response number 2, you see it right over here; Vayekanu bo echov - the brothers were jealous of him; V'aviv shamar et hadavar. Now these words are a little bit ambiguous, I don't really like this translation over here; His father kept the saying in mind. Literally; Aviv shamar - his father watched over the thing. Now the question is, what's the thing?

Watched over the matter. You could understand it as his father is trying to keep the whole conflict between the brothers and Joseph from boiling over. Or more simply, it might just be referring to the dream. This is indeed how Rashi and many other - most of the other Medieval Commentators interpret it, most of them see Davar - the thing, as a reference to the dream. And most of them understand the sense of Shamar over here - watched over, in the sense of anticipated, which is to say that his father anticipated the realization of the dream. Sort of looked forward to the realization of the dream, to the dream coming true. In Rashi's words; Mamtin u'metzapeh matai yavoh - he was waiting for it to happen.

So how do we understand this? On the one hand Yaakov is angry at Yosef. On the other hand he's waiting and anticipating for it to happen. Right, so which is it? Does his father like what's happening or does he not like what's happening?

Okay so I think we're now in a position to answer this, and I think it all comes down to something which I'm going to call the riddle of the bowing moon. Remember of course in Yosef's second dream there is this moon; there's a sun and a moon and the 11 stars that bow to him. The riddle of the bowing moon is expressed over here with Rashi. Here's what Rashi says - I'm just quoting it in Hebrew, but I'll translate in English for you. Rashi is bothered by the sort of rhetorical question that Yaakov expresses in response to the dream. When he hears the dream he says; Havoh navoh ani v'imecha v'achecha lehishtachavot lecha artzah - are me, your mother and your brothers, are we all going to come and bow down to you? Because of course that's what it seems like is happening in the dream. What else would the sun and the moon and the 11 stars refer to? The sun would be Yaakov, the moon would be his wife - Yosef's mother, the 11 stars, well Yosef has 11 brothers. Are we all going to come bowing to you?

So here's what Rashi says about this, this was the nature of the question. What was troubling Yaakov, according to Rashi, is the fact that Rachel had already died, Yosef's mother was dead, she wasn't around anymore. Therefore, incredulously, according to Rashi, his question is, how can you have this dream, it doesn't make any sense? Haloh imecha kvar meitah - your mother is no longer here with us? Therefore what's really happening, according to Rashi - see Rashi changes the way we normally see it. Normally when you just read the verse you would think that Yaakov is just sort of expressing displeasure with the dream; is this really going to happen, do you really believe this is going to happen? But the sort of Medrashic overlay to this which Rashi is suggesting - this comes from Medrash over here, in Bereishit Rabah - the Medrashic overlay is that there's another sort of connotation to the rhetorical question. The connotation is that Yaakov is actually doubting the veracity of the dream. He thinks it actually might be nonsense.

The reason he thinks that is because he thinks it can't all be true. In other words, maybe I could come bowing to you, maybe your 11 brothers could come bowing to you, but what about the bowing moon? The moon is supposed to refer to your mother apparently, your mother is dead, how could she come bowing? Rashi says that what Yaakov didn't realize is that; V'hu loh haya yodeiah shehadevarim magi'in l'Bilhah - he didn't realize was that ultimately the dream would come true - and the dream wasn't actually referring to Yosef's mother Rachel, but rather to her handmaiden Bilhah. But Yaakov doesn't understand that so Yaakov is thinking and he's wondering, gee, does this dream really make sense, what's the deal with this bowing moon?

Okay, so let's add all this up and try to come to an understanding of a possibility of what Jacob's perspective on all this. Keeping in mind all of the sort of Binding of Isaac parallels that we saw a few videos ago, keeping in mind all the questions we asked earlier, putting it all together with this Rashi and the riddle of the bowing moon, if you add it all up, maybe here's what you get. Ask yourself this question. So say you are Yaakov, and you're looking at Yosef - at Joseph, as your Bechor - as your firstborn child. Now what's the role of the firstborn child? Carry your legacy forward in the family. He's going to be the point person, he's just like you, he reminds you of you, everything that he goes through is you. Yosef is like you in the next generation, he's going to be the one to take forward this dream, and to carry your dream forward into the next generation. Now you know in the back of your head that of course Reuven is your firstborn child, he's the oldest, but you're thinking, eh you were always supposed to marry Rachel, and the way you see it is that Yosef is your firstborn child, he's the firstborn child of the wife you were always supposed to marry. You think it's probably Yosef. But always in the back of your mind maybe you have these doubts, you wonder.

How would you relate to these dreams? Yosef's first dream, the second dream, the sun and the moon and the 11 stars are all bowing to you, the sheaves are all bowing to you. So if you take dreams seriously - and in Yaakov's family dreams meant something, dreams certainly meant something to Yaakov, he had these dreams, they were G-d's way of revealing Himself to him. If you take these dreams seriously, on the one hand the dreams seem to be a ratification of your choice. All of a sudden it's as if G-d is coming out of the clouds and He's actually ratifying - the Almighty Himself seems to be confirming in these dreams that it's really true, Yosef is going to lead the family. So on the one hand you're very happy. That

by the way, I think maybe accounts for that reaction which we talked about before, which was; Aviv shamar et hadavar - over here in Hebrew - his father watched over the thing, anticipated the thing. He was happy, he was waiting for it to happen.

On the other hand there's a part of Yaakov which, as we've seen before, is sort of not anticipating this, is nervous about this, is angry about it, is upset, rebukes Yosef for this. The rebuke comes from sort of the other hand. The other hand is, what am I doing bowing to him in this dream? If you think about what it is that the role of a Bechor is, again, what is a Bechor supposed to do in the family? The idea of a Bechor is the one who is supposed to carry the father's legacy forward into the next generation. Ultimately Bechor is really a servant of the father, is there to carry forward the father's vision. But in Yosef's dreams what is happening - especially in the second dream? The sun is bowing to Yosef. So that's disturbing.

Like, that's not the role of a Bechor, a Bechor is supposed to carry my vision forward, I'm not supposed to become subservient to his vision.

Then, compounded with that, there's this question, but one second, is this dream even really true? There's the riddle of the bowing moon. I mean, maybe the whole dream is invalid, maybe it's just nonsense, the moon can't be bowing, Rachel is already dead. Maybe that gives rise to the possibility that maybe the whole dream is false? In which case maybe it's not G-d communicating at all, maybe it's Yosef's own ego kind of getting the better of him and he has these dreams of grandeur. How do I know?

Therefore the second dream - both dreams really but the second dream in particular - casts this big question mark in Yaakov's mind, which is it? Is this G-d speaking and ratifying this in some sort of strange way, but what am I doing bowing to him? And the riddle of the bowing moon, and is it really even true? Is it really just Yosef's own imagination?

Then the question of course is, so what kind of Bechor is Yosef? Is Yosef my real Bechor? Or, is he sort of the anti-Bechor, or is he just sort of wanting power for its own sake? Wanting - not wanting to take my legacy and to carry it forward, but maybe he's interested in his own vision, maybe he's not really a Bechor in the true sense at all?

So what happens really is that the dreams amplify whatever questions Yaakov had. If Yaakov had any questions, any doubts in his mind as to who the real Bechor was, and he was treating Yosef as the Bechor, but of course Reuven is my firstborn child, the dreams - and especially the second dream - amplify those questions and he must find an answer. How are you going to find an answer? You have to devise some sort of a test, you have to figure out some way of testing this. How am I going to find out what kind of leader Yosef really is? Well in Sefer Bereishit - in the Book of Genesis, if a father was creating a loyalty test for his son, are you the leader I really want you to be, are you devoted to my vision, if you're crafting some kind of test, what kind of test would this remind you of?

So immediately after this, hey, I'd love you to go to Shechem for me, would you go to Shechem? Shechem? A very dangerous place Shechem. Remember Shimon and Leivi had carried out a massacre of the inhabitants of Shechem. Would Yosef go there? Would Yosef go alone? Would he go there because his father asked him to? Yosef hears the question, hears the request and he answers those famous words;

Hineini, here I am. Hmm? Hineini in the Book of Genesis, what is Hineini, who answers Hineini in the Book of Genesis? Abraham in the Akeidah. Abraham in the Binding of Isaac. When doom is just around the corner. Yosef too senses doom is around the corner.

Rashi even says it. Rashi over here commenting on Yosef's response to his father when Yosef says Hineini; Lashon anava u'zerizut - it's a language of humility on the one hand, and Zerizut - alacrity, on the other. Nizdarez l'mitzvat aviv - he was ready and willing to go do what his father had commanded him. V'af al pi shehaya yodeiah b'echov sheson'in oto - even though he understood full well how much his brothers hated him, he knew the danger, he went anyway. What does this remind you of? It's another time when someone goes on a mission that is really a mission of doom. I'm ready to go because you asked me. Abraham. G-d says, go take Yitzchak [as a 11:14] sacrifice, and go to the top of the mountain. Avraham; Hineini - I'm ready to do it because You asked me. It's beginning to sound like another Akeidah story.

Remember before how we charted all of these parallels between the sale of Yosef and the Binding of Isaac? We're beginning to understand exactly what it might have been. There might have been a test going on, maybe Yaakov really was testing Yosef in some kind of way. But then if you look carefully, here's a list of all the kind of Akeidah connections - Binding of Isaac connections we found in the sale of Yosef. But the truth is, out of all these Akeidah connections, we actually missed one, there's a hidden connection as well, and it has to do with the angel. The story of the Binding of Isaac at the end an angel stops Avraham from sacrificing his child. An angel changes everything around. If there are all these connections between the story of the Akeidah and the sale of Yosef, is there a connection to the angel too? Can you find the connection to the angel? Is there any angel, so to speak, in the story of the sale of Yosef?

Well here's the hiding angel. Let's read these verses together. Remember we were talking about this very strange digression, what in the world do we have this digression of Joseph asking directions? He's going to Shechem, he's going to Dotan, what do I care? Here we are at the most dramatic, climactic moment of the whole story, Joseph is about to be sold, thrown into this pit, everything is going to pot, it's just a disaster, and I have to hear about how Joseph was on his way to Shechem but then he went and he asked directions and he went - what was going on? Why do I even hear all of this?

Well let's think about it. What I'm about to suggest to you is speculative, it's just a possibility, let's just consider it, possibly. Here's Yaakov sending Yosef on this very dangerous mission to meet his brothers in Shechem. Maybe Yaakov knows how dangerous the mission is? Maybe he's sending him on a dangerous mission on purpose? Maybe he wants to test Joseph's loyalty to him? But of course I love Joseph, I don't want to really to get Joseph in trouble, I don't want to really put him in danger, it's just a test, right?

I think we asked this question before, Yaakov's rhetorical questions, seem quite of strange, what's this question; Haloh achecha ro'im b'Shechem - aren't your brothers shepherding in Shechem? Haloh achecha ro'im b'Shechem - aren't your brothers shepherding in Shechem? I think I'll send [you to them 1:31]. And he says, I'll go. What do you mean, aren't your brothers shepherding in Shechem? Are they shepherding in the Shechem or are they not shepherding in Shechem? If they're there then just say, your brothers are shepherding in Shechem, please go to them. What's the aren't your brothers shepherding in Shechem?

Well the interesting thing is, they're not shepherding in Shechem, are they? As we find, they're not really in Shechem, they're in Dotan. They're going to Dotan via Shechem. So here's what you wonder, is Yaakov aware? Is it possible that Yaakov knows that they're going to Shechem - knows their itinerary, knows that they're going to Shechem and then they're going to Dotan? By the time Yosef gets to Shechem they're not supposed to be there anymore. It's like, aren't your brothers in Shechem? Yaakov is never really lying to him, they aren't in Shechem. But I'm telling you go to Shechem and then come on back, and it's perfectly safe, you'll never meet up with them, but I'll see your intentions, are you willing to go to them in good faith?

Yaakov by the way is aware of the tensions we saw, look what he asked him to do. Lech nah re'ei et shelom achecha v'et shelom hatzon - go, check on the peace of your brothers and the peace of the sheep. Remember earlier, if we go back earlier, what couldn't the brothers do? Joseph and the brothers were at odds so much; V'loh yachlu dabro l'shalom - they couldn't even speak in peace. Now here comes Yaakov, see if you can make some peace. Maybe there's this double entendre, maybe it wasn't just say hello to your brothers and check on the peace, maybe it wasn't such a trivial mission, it was an important mission, can you go and bring peace back in the family? Have you been sowing seeds of discord with all of these dreams that maybe aren't even really true but just the figment of your imagination with moons that don't really exist and mothers who are already dead? Can you go check on the peace of your brothers? Maybe bring peace back into this situation? It was an important mission. Bring me back word

- Hashiveini davar, see if you could really do it.

Here too by the way, maybe a kind of double entendre. Hashiveini davar - bring me back word, that's the test. Look at this word for word; Davar. Go back earlier; V'loh yachlu dabro l'shalom - the brothers and Yosef can't even speak in peace. So now Yaakov to Yosef; Hashiveini davar - bring me back word. Davar and Shalom together just like; Dabro l'shalom - not being able to speak in peace. Can you bring back peace? Can you make it happen? And it's a test, and it's a dangerous test. And maybe Yosef is not even supposed to meet them, but is he willing to do it? Yosef is willing to do it and Yosef goes.

So let's see what happens. Vayimtza'eihu ish - some mystery man finds him, some anonymous person. Who was the mystery man? V'hinei to'eh basadeh - he's lost in the fields. He's looking around for his brothers in Shechem, they aren't there. Vayishaleihu ha'ish - and he asks this anonymous guy saying; Vayishaleihu ha'ish - and this anonymous fellow asks him; Mah tevakesh - what is it that you're looking for? Vayomer et achai onochi mevakesh - I'm looking for my brothers, where are they? Who was this anonymous person that he met up with? Why are we hearing this completely irrelevant digression?

Maybe it's not a digression at all? Here's Rashi on who the man was. Vayimtza'eihu ish; zeh Gavriel - it was the Malach Gavriel - the Angel Gabriel. So what did G-d say when Yaakov Avinu was engineering his Akeidah-like test for Yosef? Test his loyalty, test what kind of Bechor he was? It was almost like, oh we're playing Akeidah? We can play Akeidah, every good Akeidah story comes with an angel. What was the role of an angel in the original Akeidah? I told Abraham to sacrifice his child, what did the angel say? Don't do it. The angel came and changed around the designs of the center. Well we're going to have an angel in this story too, what would an Akeidah story be without an angel? You told Yosef to go, and of course he's going to come right back to you, that's your plan, but that's not the angel's plan. You can't control the situation, what are you going to do when Yosef gets lost? Yosef gets lost and he finds this man, he finds the angel and he's supposed to come back, but he asked the angel where are my brothers?

They went that a way the angel says, they're in Dotan.

Now what? We'll have a full-fledged Akeidah, not just with the Hineini and the Lech and the Nah, but we'll have an angel too and we'll have a; Vayiru oto mei'rachok - right? The brothers see Yosef coming far afar and of course an echo of the Akeidah; Vayar et hamokom mi'rachok - Abraham sees the place from afar, there's going to be doom coming in both stories. And let's have a; Yad al tishlechu bo, maybe, just like the Akeidah. Remember how the angel staid Abraham's hand and said, don't do it, with; Don't send your hand against the child? We'll have that too. We'll have Yosef in the pit almost about to be killed but along will come Reuven, the angel that helps Yosef, and he's also going to say; Yad al tishlechu bo - let our hand not be upon him, just like the angel said don't put your hand upon him.

And then, remember how Avraham picked up his eyes and saw and he didn't have to sacrifice Isaac because there was an alternative? Vehinei ayil - there was ram, and therefore Isaac didn't have to die, there could be another substitute. We'll have another substitute also. Vayisu eineihem vayiru - let's have that too. They lifted up their eyes and they saw; V'hinei - and behold there was an Orchat Yishmaelim - there was another possibility, there was a caravan of Ishmaelites, we don't have to kill him. Let's just sell him instead. We're playing Akeidah? Let's play Akeidah in spades. Let's go for the whole thing.

What's the message? I don't know what the message is, but maybe it's you're trying to play Akeidah, human beings can't play Akeidah, only G-d plays Akeidah. You're going to try to manage things?

You're going to try to manage this testing, you think it's going to make it work out, what happens if he gets lost? What happens if he doesn't find his brothers in Shechem? What happens if he finds someone who says that a way? That someone is an angel, he's My messenger. Now I'll take everything you've done and use it for My aims, and Joseph will go down to Egypt, and now the story, G-d says, is in My hands. The sale of Joseph is an Akeidah story, but it's an Akeidah story gone awry, it's an Akeidah story hijacked by G-d. It starts with Yaakov, it ends with G-d taking Yaakov's beginning and using it, so to speak, for His own ends.

Hi there, Rabbi David Fohrman back with you. So I want to just give you a little bit of an epilogue to the idea which we were just discussing, expand it a little bit, flesh it out a little bit with you. We were focusing on these words over here; Hashiveini Davar. When Yaakov says to his son; Lech nah re'ei et shelom achecha v'et shelom hatzon - go, check on your brothers, the welfare of the sheep, the welfare of your brothers; V'hashiveini davar - and return me word. So what is it that he really meant with that? I suggested that there could be a sort of double entendre here based upon this idea that Yosef and the brothers really couldn't get along, they couldn't speak in peace and now Yosef is being sent to check on the peace of his brothers and the peace of the sheep.

So I just want to focus here with you on this word over here Davar. It's one of these words that can mean a lot of different things in Biblical Hebrew depending upon the context. The Shoresh - the root over here is these three consonants which basically are the Daled, the Veit [Beit 1:06], and the Reish - just over here in English they would correspond to D, V, R over here. If we ask what that root means it can mean a lot of different things based upon context. On the one hand it can mean the matter, a kind of subject matter, a bunch of things. It can mean words. It can also mean to speak. It can mean any of these three things over here depending on what the context is.

I want to argue that there's kind of a train or a chain of Davars over here in the story of Joseph, and you can kind of chart them, just look for this root. It actually appears four times in Chapter 37, you can find them right over here. These are the occurrences of the D, V, R - of the Daled, Veit, Reish root over here. If you look at them you can almost find a little chain and I wonder if they kind of all sort of relate to each other. The last one of course is over here - this is the occurrence we've just been talking about when Yaakov sends Yosef out to check on the welfare of his brothers and the welfare of the sheep; V'hashiveini davar - and bring me back Davar, bring me back word. I guess the question I'm asking is, is that is this Davar over here connected to all of the previous occurrences - one, two, and three? Let's look at those occurrences because I think if we do it sort of supports the theory that we've been suggesting.

So over here is the first occurrence when; V'loh yachlu dabro l'shalom - when the brothers and Joseph are at such odds with each other; V'loh yachlu DABRO l'shalom - they cannot SPEAK in peace with one another. Over here, in the context Davar is going to mean speak. The second occurrence over here, number 2, is going to be that when the brothers hate him, they again hate him not just for his dreams but; Al chalomatav v'al DEVARAV - and we talked about that before, it wasn't just bad enough that you had these dreams but you had to TELL us about them? So it's actually both of these Davars signify Yosef's behavior, the conflict which has arisen between Yosef and the brothers.

Finally, after Yosef tells the second dream to his father and his father becomes alarmed with this idea that we're all going to be bowing to you - this is number 3 over here in our list. So it says that the brothers were jealous of him; V'aviv shamar et HADAVAR - and his father watched over the THING, or watched over the MATTER. Over here it's going to mean matter, watched over the matter. Then finally, this last one is when he sends Joseph on this mission to bring me back DAVAR - bring me back WORD.

Well what if this mission over here is connected to all of these earlier things? In other words, when we think about say the third one over here, this idea that Yaakov was anticipating the matter happening, this idea that he was, as Rashi says, Mamtin u'metzapeh matai yavoh - he was waiting for it to happen, when would it happen that Joseph would in fact realize these dreams and become the head of the family?

Because remember he looks to Joseph as his Bechor. Well under that reading, so Yaakov who is here in the present is looking forward towards the future and anticipating and hoping that this Davar is going to happen.

But maybe it's sort of a double entendre that is suggested by these chain of Davars, is that perhaps, another secondary meaning of the verse is that he's also sort of looking towards the past, which is towards the other occurrences of Davar earlier. It bothers him this dream too even - as much as he anticipates the dream, the future, he's also bothered by the dream. Shamar et hadavar - he's watching over this Davar, this worrisome Davar, this idea that Joseph had these dreams and was really bothering the brothers by telling them and the brothers hating him; Al chalomatav v'al devarav. And they can't even speak in peace with each other.

Then there's this question, who is responsible for all this? Who is precipitating all of this? Are the brothers unjustly hating Yosef, or is Yosef sort of bringing this upon himself? Why does he have to tell all these dreams to everybody? Is the Yosef the one responsible for their inability to speak to each other? Again, it gets back to the riddle of the bowing moon. Is this dream just his own imagination? Maybe it's not G-d, maybe it's a lie, because how could the mother be bowing anyway? Is this prophetic or is this just Joseph imagining with these dreams of grandeur?

So when; Aviv shamar et hadavar in this other possible interpretation, he's looking not just towards the

future and anticipating it, but towards the past, the past occurrences of Davar, so the next thing that

happens is he sends him on this test. For what purpose? Hashiveini davar - bring me back Davar, let me know what the story with this Davar is. What's the deal with this Davar? And this is ultimately the test, bring me back word, can you go and seek out their peace? Earlier, remember the first verses of the Joseph story is that Joseph is always seeking out the brothers; [Vayaveih Yosef 6:00] et dibartam ra'ah el avihem

- and he's bringing back bad reports about the brother to his father. So now Yaakov says, go search out the brothers, but I'm not looking to hear bad reports, I just want to know one thing, I want to know what their Shalom is, how is it they're doing? V'loh yachlu dabro l'shalom - remember, you guys can't speak in peace with each other? Hashiveini davar - what's the story with this Davar? Can you go, can you speak in peace? Can you bring peace back into this situation?

This, by the way, is exactly how Samson Raphael Hirsch understands it. All I'm really doing is fleshing out the evidence, the textual evidence, really to support Hirsch's theory. Samson Raphael Hirsch is of course the great Biblical commentator in the middle of the nineteenth century in Germany, and Hirsch's view is that in fact that's what happened. Yaakov is essentially testing Yosef and saying, will you go out to your brothers and will you seek their peace? It's an Akeidah test, as it were, a test of can you be my real Bechor and do what it is that you expect [with me 7:01]? G-d tests Avraham and says can you be the one who carries My legacy forward, who affirms My values and does what it is that I need in the world?

Or is it all about you? The Akeidah test is meant to test that for Abraham, Yaakov's Akeidah test, as it were, is meant to test Yosef's true metal, it's an Akeidah test that goes awry, but maybe this is what it was about?

Okay, Rabbi David Fohrman back with you. We've seen these parallels in the story of the sale of Yosef that seem to take us back to echoes of the Akeidah - of the Binding of Isaac. We've talked a little bit about what the significance might be, but I want to explore a further mystery with you. That is that it is not just in this part of the story of Yosef, Chapter 37, that we find these very fascinating parallels to the Binding of Isaac, if we look much, much later in the story in Chapter 46 we actually find them too.

What's the deal?

Let me first show you that they're there and let's just explore that and then maybe try and figure out why they might be there, what is it telling us? Let's just skip ahead to Chapter 46 - actually the end of 45 - over here, it's the story when Yaakov finds out that Yosef is alive. Let's just read through the verses, and you're going to find the Akeidah parallels, I think, down here towards the bottom. But just to give you some context this is the story of Yaakov finding out that Yosef is alive. Vayedabru eilav et kol divrei Yosef asher diber aleihem, va'yar et ha'agalot asher shalach Yosef laseit oto vatechi ruach Yaakov avihem. So basically the brothers have found out that Yosef is alive, they come back and they break the news to their father, to Yaakov. It takes him actually seeing actual evidence of this to really believe that it's true.

He sees these chariots, these wagons, that Yosef had sent down to carry him back to Egypt and that convinces him it's really true, Yosef is alive, he can't believe it. Vatechi ruach Yaakov avihem.

Interesting by the way, pay attention to this word; Vatechi ruach Yaakov avihem - that the life of Yaakov was restored to him. But this word literally means that - it's like he came back to life, he was invigorated with life. It's sort of the verb form of the word life. If you look right in the next verse; Vayomer Yisrael rav od Yosef beni chai - and then Israel - Yaakov, said; Od Yosef beni chai - my child Yosef in fact is still alive. This word Chai of course is playing off of this word here, they both mean life, my child Yosef is living, and it sort of signifies kind of the close bond or the close relationship there is between Yaakov and Yosef, in the sense that when Yaakov finds out that his long lost child is in fact alive, his own spirit comes alive. Remember when Yaakov sees the bloody coat and thinks he's dead he says, I'm going to go down to my grave mourning Yosef, it's almost like he attains the status of Yosef; Yosef is alive unbeknownst to him and yet dead, and in a certain way Yaakov is alive and yet dead. His spirit comes back to life, is revived, when he sees that in fact Yosef is in fact alive.

This kind of connection between the two, between Yosef and Yaakov, you also see, remember in Yehuda's speech. When Yehuda approaches Yosef and doesn't realize that it's Yosef, he thinks that he's an Egyptian official and he makes this desperate plea to let himself be the slave instead of Benjamin. So he says my father loves these children of Rachel, he loved Yosef, he loves Binyamin. The language is; Nafsho keshura b'nafsho - his soul is bound up in the soul of Benjamin and in the soul of Yosef, and if you allow Benjamin to be taken from him he'll die. So Yehuda is talking about this sort of symbiotic relationship between Yosef and his father, the souls are bound up in each other, and you sort of see this over here in the language over here; Vatechi ruach Yaakov avihem and; Od Yosef beni chai.

In any case, immediately after this he says; Elchah v'erenu beterem amut - here's the opposite of course of life - let me go and see him before I die. I'm going to die soon, I must see my living son Yosef before I die. So; Vayisa Yisrael v'chol asher lo vayavo Be'erah Shova - so Israel - and remember Yaakov has been

called Israel and now there's two names for Yaakov, there's his sort of regular name Jacob and he also gets this name after he struggles with the angel and that is Israel. Generally speaking this name Israel is the name that Jacob gets when things are going well for him, when his life is shining, and this is the language that we have for his name when things are hard, when Yaakov is sort of in trouble. And you see it here also right before all this happens, so, Vatechi ruach Yaakov avihem - until now he had been Yaakov, and now all of a sudden he's Yisrael; Vayomer Yisrael. Once he realizes Yosef is alive his name changes over here and he's the Israel name.

And; Vayisa Yisrael - and Israel took his journey with him; V'chol asher lo - and he comes to Be'er Sheva; Vayizbach zevachim l'Elokei aviv Yitzchak - and he goes and he offers offerings to the G-d of his father Isaac. Now this is kind of interesting also because of course he has more than just a relationship with G-d through Isaac - through his father Isaac, he also has Avraham, how come Avraham isn't mentioned over here? Why is it specifically Yitzchak who is singled out? Why isn't He the G-d of Abraham and Isaac? So kind of an interesting question, but let's move on.

Vayomer Elokim l'Yisrael b'marot halailah - so then G-d appears to him; B'marot halailah - in a vision at night. Vayomer Yaakov, Yaakov, vayomer Hineini - and He says Jacob, Jacob - and by the way notice the change, right? What happened? I thought - like he saw Yosef, so shouldn't be Israel now? He was Israel now over here, he was Israel now over here, I understand over here he was Yaakov, he didn't quite realize - he was just learning that Yosef was alive, but all of a sudden he's back to Yaakov. Kind of strange. But in any case, if you look at this language, Yaakov, Yaakov, the angel calls out to him; Vayomer - and Yaakov responds; Hineini - here I am. Well where have we heard that before? Where else does G-d or a Divine voice call out to a man repeating his name twice and then the answer is Hineini? Of course the answer is the Akeidah - and here it is right over here. The angel of G-d called out to him from the heavens and said Abraham, Abraham and here I am.

Just in case you think this happens a lot, Divine voices calling out to people in the Book of Genesis, the very first time it happens is right over here in the Akeidah, the second and last time it happens in the Book of Genesis is right over here when the angel says Yaakov, Yaakov - or G-d, the Divine voice in this case, says Yaakov, Yaakov, and he says, here I am.

So this really does seem like - is this the beginning of another Akeidah connection? It could be a coincidence, might just be that it was coincidental He called his name twice and he answered Hineini - here I am. Or it could be another connection to the Akeidah. How would we know whether it's coincidence or not? Could this be coincidence? Could be coincidence. In order to determine whether or not this is a coincidence we would need to see other connections in the story to the Akeidah. So are there any other connections? Is this an isolated thing? If it's isolated, could just be kind of coincidental. If it's part of a pattern of connections between Genesis 45, 46 and the Akeidah, then maybe there's something real here and we have to think about it.

So coincidence or real? I want you to think about it, scan through this text by the way, look at 46 - the beginning of 46. If you can, look a couple of verses later and look at it, is there anything else about this

dialogue that reminds you of the Akeidah or is this all just our imagination? So let's come back and talk about that.

Okay, so I asked you to take a look at this text over here and see if you could find anything else that reminds you of the Akeidah - the Binding of Isaac, other than this kind of double exclamation Yaakov, Yaakov, and Yaakov's reply; Hineini. I think there is something else, and it is a place name, where is Yaakov going to? Vayisa Yisrael v'chol asher lo - Israel with going with all of his stuff, and where is he going? Vayavo Be'erah Shova. it turns out that Be'er Sheva plays a cameo role in the original story of the Akeidah - in the Binding of Isaac, it's where Abraham goes to after the story of the Binding of Isaac, it's kind of the very last thing in that story. You see it right over here. Vayoshov Avraham el na'arav vayakumu vayelchu yachdov el Be'er Sheva - they went together, Avraham and his lads, to Be'er Sheva immediately following the Akeidah. So you've got this place - Yaakov is going to Be'er Sheva, Abraham is going to Be'er Sheva in the Akeidah, right in connection with this double Yaakov, Yaakov; Vayomer Hineini. You know, it's sounding a little bit more Akeidah-like.

Then of course let's get back to this kind of question we asked before, it turns out that what does Yaakov do when he gets to Be'er Sheva, so he's offering offerings. Offering offerings specifically to who? Not the G-d of Abraham, the G-d of Isaac. What happens of course at the Akeidah, Yitzchak - Isaac is bound, it's the Binding of Isaac. So kind of interesting, you've got the Binding of Isaac, the offering of offerings - of course Isaac was meant to be offered as an offering, was saved at the last minute. Here Yaakov is offering offerings to [the G-d of 1:44] Isaac. He's doing it in Be'er Sheva, the place they went to at the end of the Akeidah, and then he hears Yaakov, Yaakov, and says Hineini.

What's also intriguing about this is that if this isn't a figment of our imaginations, if this was really real, there's also the beginnings of a pattern that seems to be emerging here. In other words, if we look at the sequence of events in the Akeidah, let's just plot it out, these things that we've seen. The first thing that happens, number 1, is that the angel calls out to Avraham with this doubled-language, Abraham, Abraham, and Abraham answers, here I am. Now the next thing that happens, number 2 over here, is going to be that Abraham offers offerings to G-d instead of Isaac. Isaac was supposed to be sacrificed but in the end he offers offerings instead. Remember there's that ram caught in the thicket and he sacrifices the ram instead of sacrificing Isaac, after Isaac is saved. Then the next thing that happens, number 3, is that Abraham arrives in Be'er Sheva.

If you don't believe me you can go back to the verses and you'll see, it's 1, 2 and 3. Abraham, Abraham, here I am. Then Avraham goes and sacrifices the ram and then he goes to Be'er Sheva. These are the order of events.

Now what we've seen over here in Yaakov's life actually is these same events but in exact reverse chronological order. Really kind of fascinating. The first thing that happens with Yaakov - number 1 over here - is that he arrives in Be'er Sheva. After that he offers offerings to the G-d of Isaac and then he hears this voice Jacob, Jacob, followed by here I am. That was our order. So we not only seem to have Akeidah parallels, we seem to have Akeidah parallels going in reverse.

Again though, so I guess theoretically you could say, well maybe it's a figment of our imagination, three parallels here, still could kind of be coincidental. Any more parallels? I actually think that there are. Let's

read a few more verses here in this text of Yaakov's encounter with this angel, let see what the angel says, and then interestingly, let's compare it to what the angel says over here in the Akeidah. I think if we compare it actually we're going to find a very, very interesting kind of relationship. So maybe if you get a chance, take a look at that yourself before we get together in the next video and then let's see what we find.

Okay so here are the next few verses here in this section. Yaakov is travelling to meet Yosef - it's Genesis 46 - and G-d appears to him on the way and calls out to him and says, Yaakov, Yaakov. Here's what G-d

says; Onochi ha-Kel Elokei avicha - I am the G-d of your father - that is of Isaac; Al tirah mei'redah

Mitzrayma ki l'goy gadol asimcha sham - don't be afraid of going down to Egypt for I will make you into a great nation here. Of course, if G-d is saying don't be afraid, so what can we assume? We can assume that there is some reason to be afraid. G-d is reassuring him and saying don't be afraid, but there is reason to be afraid, there is a reason why he would be afraid, and the question is, why? It's just a nice pleasure journey, he should be happy, this is the greatest thing in his life, he's going to visit his long lost son, why of all things would you think he would be afraid? So this is a question we want to come back to, why is there reason for Yaakov to fear, such that G-d should say, oh, no, don't worry, don't worry about going down to Egypt?

In any case; Al tirah mei'redah Mitzrayma - don't worry about going down to Egypt; Ki l'goy gadol asimcha sham - for I will make you into a great nation there. Onochi eired imcha Mitzrayma - I will go down to Egypt with you; V'onochi a'alcha gam aloh - I'll go back up with you; V'Yosef yasis yado al einecha - and Yosef is going to put his hands over your eyes. So don't worry about anything, you'll see Yosef, I'll go down with you to Egypt, I'll go back up with you, everything is going to be okay, everything is going to be wonderful.

Now of course, we know - because we've read the rest of Genesis - if you have read the rest of Genesis you know - especially if you've read Exodus - you know that everything is not so wonderful. Because when Yaakov is going down to Egypt the fact is he's not getting out of there so fast. As a matter of fact he's going to be enslaved there - his children are going to be enslaved for 210 long years. They're going to meet with hard labor and servitude, backbreaking - they're almost going to be destroyed; their children are going to be destroyed, there's going to be - little boys are going to be thrown into the river, and it's going to be awful 210 years in Egypt. It's almost like Yaakov is on a need-to-know basis, as it were. You know, I'll tell you what you need to know. Really Jacob all you need to know is I'm going to go down with you, I'll go back up with you. How long will it be? Let's not talk about how long it will be. What will happen in the interim? Let's not talk about what will happen in the interim. Oh you'll see Yosef, Yosef will be there, he'll put his hands on your eyes, everything will be wonderful, everything will be good, don't worry about a thing.

Of course, it's not so much in what G-d says over here, but in what G-d doesn't say that the dark message sort of comes across. This is the beginning of the long Egyptian exile. We talked before about why would Yaakov be afraid? Be afraid, be very afraid.

Even here by the way an oblique reference, as Rashi understands this, to the death of Yaakov. When is it that Yosef is going to put his hands on your eyes? Well at that time the custom was that someone would come and would close the eyes of the dead. After a person would die someone would come and close their eyes as kind of a final way of saying goodbye. And Yosef is going to be the one to close your eyes, he's going to put his hands over your eyes. So the idea is here that when I take you out it's not really Me taking you out, you're going to die, I'm going to take out your progeny. G-d is saying without quite

saying, you'll be there for a while. But still, doesn't quite sound so bad.

But what's really chilling about this is that if you look carefully at all this language you will actually hear echoes of the Akeidah here as well. We've seen three echoes of the Akeidah before; we talked about the Yaakov, Yaakov, and then Hineini, we've talked about the Be'er Sheva, we talked about offering offerings to the G-d of Isaac, all of that sort of sounded Akeidah-like. Could have been our imagination but over here the Akeidah really comes back to haunt us in spades. Where in these two little verses, 3 and 4, do we have references to the Akeidah? The clue is - by the way remember what's happening over here, Yaakov is receiving a Divine communication, he's hearing a prophecy. An angel, heavenly voice, something like that, is speaking to Yaakov. Think about when Abraham hears the voice of an angel, when he hears Divine communication, he hears the voice of an angel which is, don't kill Isaac - staying his hand. I want you to take a look at the angel talking to Abraham, don't touch Isaac, and take a look at the angel or the Divine voice talking to Yaakov up here and see if you can find any connections?

So over here on the right side of your screen in blue I have put the sections of text where the angel communicates with Abraham, so we're kind of looking at that point. Just to go back over here, the last thing we have is the angel saying, Yaakov, Yaakov, here I am. So I'm going to argue that that's going to correspond to this section over here in the Akeidah narrative, right after the angel comes out of the clouds and says, Avraham, Avraham, and he says Hineini and the angel says, don't do anything to the child. So I just want to read through that section with you and see if there's anything about it that reminds us about the Yaakov story we've been reading.

So the angel comes out and says; Al tishlach yadecha el hana'ar - of course at this point Isaac is bound, he's on top of the altar, Avraham has taken the knife and he's about to kill his son because G-d has asked him this. At the last moment the angel comes and says; Al tishlach yadecha el hana'ar - don't send out your hand against the child; V'al ta'as lo me'umah - don't do anything to him; Ki atah yadati ki yarei Elokim atah v'loh chasachta et bincha et yechidcha mimeni - I know that you are someone who fears G- d and you haven't withheld your son, your only son, from Me. So this is actually what the angel says.

Now what's interesting though is there's actually two appearances of the angel. I've indicated that over here with this little break over here, you see this little break between them? So the angel then comes out again - what happens in the interim is that Avraham actually doesn't touch Yitzchak and he's not going to hurt him and instead he sees a ram caught in the thicket and he goes and he offers the ram. Then the angel comes and appears again and this is the second appearance of the angel - and over here this is the first appearance of the angel and here's the second speech of the angel.

Vayikra malach Hashem el Avraham sheinis min hashomayim - an angel of G-d then called out again to Abraham and said; Bi nishbati ne'um Hashem - I swear by Myself, on My own name, G-d says; Ki ya'an asher asitah et hadavar hazeh v'loh chasachta et bincha et yechidcha - that because you have not withheld your child so this is what's going to happen. Because you've not withheld your child; Barech avarechecha

- I'm going to greatly bless you; V'harbah arbeh et zaracha kekochvei hashomayim - I'm going to greatly increase your children, they'll be like the stars of the heaven, like the sands of the sea; Veyirash zaracha et

sha'ar oyvav - and your children, your progeny, will inherit, will be victorious, will conquer the gates of their enemies. So they will come into the land victorious when they conquer their enemies, eventually coming into, again, the land of Canaan.

So these are the two things that the angel says, (a) don't touch your child, I see that you haven't withheld him. Then the blessing that comes from that because you've done this, I'm going to give you lots of progeny, you're going to have children, you're going to have very many children. And you're going to have land, you're going to conquer the land and go into the land of Canaan victorious ultimately.

So these are the promises that happen in the wake of the Akeidah, are there any echoes of this, over here in what G-d tells Yaakov over here in Genesis 46? In other words after G-d says to Yaakov; Yaakov,

Yaakov, vayomer hineini, does it remind us of what happens when the angel comes to Abraham and

says, Avraham, Avraham, vayomer hineini? Which was happened right over here in verse 11, immediately before verse 12.

Okay now here is the rub. The problem of course is, is that this is where actually the parallels seem to stop. Actually if you look at Genesis 46 it actually seems to have absolutely nothing to do with this text over here at all. Just a big X. Just seems to have nothing to do with it. Just listen again to what it is that G-d says to Yaakov; Onochi ha-Kel Elokei avicha - I'm the G-d of your fathers, don't fear going down to Mitzrayim, I'm going to make you into a great nation there. I guess you could say that the great nation there sort of parallels the idea of having lots of children, but that's kind of it. Onochi eired imcha Mitzrayma v'onochi a'alcha gam aloh - I'll go down with you to Egypt, I will come back up with you, that doesn't seem to have any echo over here, where do you hear anything about Egypt over here in the blue? Similar; V'Yosef yasis yado al einecha - and certainly this idea that Yosef is going to spread his hands over you and he's going to close your eyes when you die, you don't hear anything about that over here, in this blue section. So it seems like there's absolutely nothing about this - or very little about this - that reminds us of the Akeidah.

Ah, but appearances are deceiving. It depends how you look. If you look carefully, if you look with a certain kind of perspective, you actually see these echoes - as I mentioned to you before - sort of coming out in spades. What is that perspective which you have to take? So think about that. What sort of way do you have to kind of have to skew your perspective in order to be able to see, to look kind of through the kaleidoscope, with the right kind of lens, and then all of a sudden these parallels really jump out at you with a remarkable kind of focus?

What I mean by that, to give you kind of a physical analogy, so there's certain kinds of events that are really there but our normal eyesight doesn't allow us to see it. Either because the event is outside of the range of visible light or for some other kind of reason, there's too much light, there's too little light. You sort of have to adopt, sort of fit a special lens onto your telescope or glasses, to be able to actually see the thing that's really there. Once you put the lens there you actually see the thing, you see what's really there, it was there, it's just you didn't have the tools to see it before.

By way of analogy for example, here's a picture of the sun and that's the real sun with what was called

the transit of Venus, it's an unusual event where the planet Venus which you could see right over here, is travelling across the face of the sun. Now you never have a shot at actually seeing this, without special goggles that can actually block almost all of the light from the sun, because the sun is much too bright to be able to see it otherwise. But with the right kind of goggles you can actually see over here the transit of Venus. You can see a solar eclipse. These kind of people over here looking at the solar eclipse - you'd never really be able to see it without special glasses that block out most of the sun's light.

Alternatively, sometimes in very dim light situations, you have to do the exact opposite, you have to amplify the light; night vision goggles is a good example, used by the military and other kinds of things. In night vision basically what you do is you take goggles that are particularly sensitive to infrared light - normally we can't see infrared light - and can convert that light into light in the visible spectrum, into something which we can actually see. The principle behind night vision goggles.

So there are specialized kinds of lenses that can allow you to see what's really there, and I think the same thing exists in text. When we're looking at something like these two texts, texts which seem to have nothing to do with each other, but if you adopt the right lens you begin to kind of see how it is that they are connected. It sort of begins to jump out at you. So what is that lens?

Okay, so I want to come back to the first sort of little set of parallels which we saw that gave us the idea that Genesis 46, the story of Yaakov travelling to meet his son Yosef in Egypt might have something to do with the Akeidah. These parallels, remember there were three of them, just to put them up on the screen again, they were right over here. Event number 1 - and [that/what 0:34] tipped us off, it was really the confluence of each of these events, each one of them alone may be just a coincidence but if you put them together it doesn't really seem like a coincidence. Number 1 of course was Yaakov's arrival in Be'er Sheva followed by offering offerings to the G-d of Isaac, followed by this voice he hears from the heaven, Yaakov, Yaakov, to which he answers Hineini. That, as we talked about before, sounded suspiciously like this confluence of events over here; again a voice calling out from G-d, Abraham, Abraham, and Abraham answers, here I am. He offers offerings to G-d - instead of offering Isaac offers the ram, and then he arrives in Be'er Sheva.

These same events, number 1, 2 and 3 except they're happening in reverse chronological order. The event which happens first in the case of Yaakov, arrival in Be'er Sheva, actually happens last over here in the Avraham story. The event which happens third in the Yaakov story, Yaakov, Yaakov, followed by here I am, is the event which actually happens first over here in the Akeidah story. So these things are happening in reverse chronological order and that's the direction of the arrows over here, the direction of time is going this way in the Akeidah, the direction of time is going this way, the other way, in the story of Yaakov finding out Yosef is alive.

What I want to argue is that this begins to offer us a clue, because remember these - even though these parallels are here, they're not straightforward parallels, they're actually backwards parallels, these are parallels happening in reverse, maybe that's the lens? Maybe in order to see the parallels which happen later you need to adopt a backwards or reverse kind of lens. If you see things upside down or if you see things through reverse kinds of lenses then maybe these two texts start to look a lot more similar than they first appear. As a matter of fact, maybe the reason why you can't see that they're similar is because why would you see that they're similar? They're the opposites of each other. They're reverses.

So now, try to adopt an opposite lens and now look at these stories and see if you see any connections between them. Here's what I think some of them are. Let me begin actually at the end - a good place to begin, if we're talking about reverses, begin at the end. So if I begin at the end, the end of the communication by G-d to Yaakov, it's right over here, so maybe I would expect in reverse parallels that the end might mirror the beginning - which is to say the first thing that it is that G-d says to Abraham in the Akeidah story. Maybe. If we're dealing with reverse parallels, maybe the end would mirror the beginning. So just to keep the thing simple I'm going to get rid of the second thing the angel says, we're just going to look at the first speech, speech number 1 that the angel gives to Avraham, and we're going to ask if the beginning of the angel's words might mirror in any way the end of the angel's words - the end of G-d's words to Yaakov?

So let's look at it carefully - and when we do by the way, I want to suggest something else, which is that maybe if we're talking about really reverse parallels, they could be reversed in two kinds of ways. One way where something can be reversed is in its order and that might mean that the events which are first

in one story might end up being last in the other story. That's what we've been talking about over here with maybe verse 4 the last thing the angel is saying over here in this story mirroring the first thing that the angel is saying up over here. But another thing that reverse might mean is not that just that the order of events are reversed, but also that the significance of events are reversed. By that I mean for example, if let's say something was falling down in story number 1 so it would be going up in story number 2, that would be the reverse. If something were black in story number 1, it might be white in story number 2. If something were happy in story number 1, it might be sad in story number 2. The significance of events might actually be reversed.

So let's look at these two things, not just the order being reversed but also the possibility that significance might be reversed. Let's adopt this reverse kind of lens for order and significance and all of a sudden I think things will begin to jump out at us. I'm just going to try this with you right now, with just one element of the speeches, this last element over here, and kind of let's see how this works. It's a little tricky thinking backwards and reverse at the same time, you could try it by sort of staring at yourself in the mirror and noticing that what you see in front of you is not actually you but the mirror, the reverse image of you, but let's just try to do this over here. So let's clear the screen and see what we come up with.

Okay, so let's start with this, does the last thing that G-d tells Jacob - does that perhaps mirror the first thing that G-d tells Abraham over here? So let's just look at what this is. The last thing that G-d says to Yaakov is this, He says, I will go down with you to Egypt and I will come up, and now over here, this shaded area, He says; V'Yosef yashit yado al einecha. Now we talked about what that means before, that Yosef, your treasured child, you're going to go down, he's going to see you, and you don't have to worry because you may die in Egypt but Joseph is going to be there, your beloved son is going to be with you when you die, everything is going to be okay, he's going to be the one to benevolently touch you and close your eyes as you die. Therefore don't worry about a thing Jacob. I'm going to go down with you to Egypt, I'm going to come up with you, and Joseph is going to be there, what could be so bad?

As we talked about before, a lot can be so bad, you know Jacob is on a need-to-know basis over here, G- d is not telling him about the 400 years of slavery but by the time that Jacob or his family is going to emerge from this it's going to be a long, long time. But G-d is selectively telling him the good points over here, and the good point at the end is; V'Yosef yashit yado al einecha - Yosef is going to spread his hands over your eyes.

So does this last thing that G-d tells Yaakov mirror in any way the first thing that G-d tells Avraham, which is this; angel comes out of the clouds; Al tishlach yadecha el hana'ar - don't stretch out your hand against the child. Now when we say does the last thing mirror the first thing, does it mirror the first thing, which means, that it's going to be not the same thing but it's going to be the reverse. So we're going to have reverse in order, the last thing is going to mirror the first thing, but we're also going to have reverse in significance. We're going to look at the opposite of Yosef placing his hands upon your eyes, do we see the opposite of that over here in verse 12?

Okay, so let's sort of do this element by element, and see what we come up with. We can actually break down this verse, this idea; V'Yosef yashit yado al einecha, to a few parts. Fascinatingly, each part, I think, is going to find its opposite in the other verse - very, very elegant, kind of complex, so stay with me.

What's the opposite of a father not touching his son? There's three elements over here, a father, element number 1. Not touching, element number 2. Your son, element number 3. Because that, by the way is what's going on over here. Al tishlach yadecha el hana'ar - the angel is saying, father, don't stretch out your hand to touch your son. So what's the opposite of a father not touching his son? And, do we see it over here? The answer is we absolutely do. Let's just do this one by one. The opposite of father; opposite of father is going to be son. The opposite of not touching is going to be touching. Opposite of son is going to be father. So if we look at it through that lens, son touch father, oh look, that's what we have right over here. Son, Yosef; Yashit yado - is going to touch; Al einecha - you, father. Yosef is going to touch you. Interestingly. A father not touching his son over here is going to get mirrored with a son touching father over here.

So let's just put this up on the screen for you. The opposite of a father not touching his son is a son touching his father, but it actually goes more than this, exactly how is the father not supposed to touch his son over here? We might say, the father is not supposed to touch his son malevolently, causing your son's death. Remember, Abraham here he's got this knife, he's going to kill Yitzchak, and the angel says, no don't touch him, don't touch him in this violent way to kill your son, which would cause his death. Don't do that. Okay let's play the opposite, reverse game now, right over here. Opposite of malevolently is going to be benevolently. The opposite of causing - causing is something that happens before an event, so the opposite of that is going to be something that happens after an event, after. The opposite of son's death over here is going to be after father's death, perhaps - which might be exactly what we have right over here.

Because the opposite of a father not touching his son malevolently, causing your son's death, which is what we're talking about over here, angel; Don't touch Yitzchak, don't kill him, would be Yosef your son benevolently touching your father after father has already died, closing his eyes, lovingly closing his eyes. So literally - if you just put this up on the screen a little bit more efficiently, it looks like this. A father not touching his son malevolently causing his son's death, the opposite would be a son touching his father benevolently after father has died, closing the eyes of Jacob. Don't worry, your son Yosef is going to be here, everything is going to be perfect.

So literally in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 elements all over here, this is like the exact reverse of this, it's amazing. Makes you sort of wonder whether the first thing that happens over here maybe mirrors the last thing - and by the way not exactly the same but maybe the opposite? An interesting thought. Let's come back and explore that.

Hi everybody, this is Rabbi David Fohrman. I want to welcome you back to this course again. I hope we will have a delightful time together here. We are going to be looking at the story of Joseph and his brothers that occupies really the second half of the Book of Genesis. It’s the second major saga in the Book of Genesis; the first one being the story of Abraham, the second one, really, the story of Joseph and his brothers. A very painful story, a very tragic story, and I think a very surprising story in many, many kinds of ways.

What I want to do with you just to begin, is just kind of lay out some very basic questions. I often talk about, when you study the Bible, you want to look at questions. Questions are going to be your window into unlocking deeper layers of meaning in the texts. And there are little questions. “How come the verse uses this language instead of that language?” Then there are big questions, questions that are so powerful that until you really have answers to those questions, so large, that you can’t really say to yourself that you have an understanding of the story or how it fits together; and I think there are a number of such questions in general when you look at the story of Joseph and his brothers. And, basically, I think the large questions, in my mind at least, revolves around really the issues of “What were they thinking?” For every major sort of character in the story, you can really just ask in an astounded kind of way, “What is it that they were thinking? What did they really think was going to happen here?”

Well, let’s just go through this story. You know what happens.

It all starts very nice, you know. Once upon a time, there are these brothers. Jacob has his family. He’s got these twelve children. But the twelve children came from two different mothers. Originally Jacob had only wanted to marry Rachel; he had fallen in love with Rachel and wanted to marry her. And yet, his father in law, Lavan tricked him and substituted a veiled Leah under the chupah, under the bridal canopy, for her sister Rachel. Rachel and Leah were sisters. And Jacob was deceived, and in the morning he says “What did you do? How come you deceived me?” And Lavan comes back and says, “Well, we don’t do it that way in our place, giving the younger before the older; and Leah is older and she deserves to come first.” Of course, it’s kind of like a veiled dig that Lavan is giving to Jacob over here.

Of course, Yaakov in his own life had substituted the older for the younger when he had gone to his father for the blessings. Remember, he was the one who deceives his father Isaac about the identity of who he really was. His father wants to bless the older and not bless the younger, and he wants to bless Esav and not bless Jacob and Jacob deceives him and dresses up for the blind Isaac, dresses up as Esav and now Yaakov is deceived in a very similar way. But this time it is the father or father-in-law who deceives son, and this time, it is the father-in-law who dresses up a child as someone they are not, to deceive the unseeing Yaakov.

In any case, you kind of hear the dig in Laban’s words, lo yaaseh chen bimkomanu-latet hatzeirah lifnei habechirah – “We don’t do it that way at our place, to give the younger before the older. Maybe where you come from Jacob they do that, they give younger before older. But over here, the older comes first.”

So here is Yaakov. He has worked for seven long years in this deal to marry Rachel. He works for another seven years; now he has Rachel and he has Leah. He has these two sisters that he is married to

and he has children from them, more children from Leah than from Rachel; ultimately six children from Leah. And then he has a child, Joseph, and ultimately another child, Benjamin, from Rachel. And what happens is he begins to favor those children. He favors Joseph and he gives him this special coat of many colors; not quite clear if it’s a coat of many colors. In Hebrew, its ketonat pasim. Pasim has many kinds of translations. One possible translation is “coat of many colors”, but there are others, so we’ll just call it a special coat for now. He gives him this special coat and eventually the other brothers begin to get jealous and Joseph starts having dreams. The dreams seem to be these dreams of grandeur, these dreams that indicate that others in the family will bow to him, that Joseph will rise to power.

In the first dream, Joseph has this dream that there are these sheaves of wheat. He and his brothers are out in the field, and his sheaves are standing and the bother’s sheaves of wheat are bowing before his sheaves. And when he tells this to the brothers, the brothers are kind of upset about it. But then he has a second dream, and the second dream is about the sun and the moon and the stars; eleven stars, conspicuously the same numbers as Joseph’s brothers, of eleven other brothers other than him, and they are all bowing to Joseph. And finally, Jacob is upset by this havo nevo ani l’imcha v’achreicha lehishtachot lecha artzah – “What’s the meaning of these dreams? Tell me Joseph, are we all going to come down to your knee, me and your mother and your brothers?” And, there is tension in the family. But the real tension is not just between father and son, it’s really between the brothers and each other. As the tension grows, the other brothers hate Joseph. They can’t even speak to him in peace. They are jealous of him.

And finally, Jacob sends Joseph on this mission to go check on his brothers one day, and it’s the final straw. The brothers see him coming, they jump him, they kidnap him, they strip him of this special coat, they put him in a coat and sell him off to Egypt and Joseph’s life is change forever. He’s sold as a slave to Egypt and, as fate would have it, overtime, he rises, rises in power through a fascinating series of events, and then eventually successful interprets the dreams of Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh elevates him. He is in charge of everyone and then he is in charge of all the wheat and there are these years of famine in Egypt. Famine strikes the world and lo and behold the brothers come down to Egypt looking for food. Who do they meet? Joseph.

Joseph recognizes them. Joseph is the one who is in charge of dispersing food to everyone at this time, the other brothers do not recognize Joseph and Joseph plays with them and sort of make their lives very, very difficult. He doesn’t reveal himself. He is angry towards them. He is upset towards them and plays these long series of practical jokes, “Bring me your other brother. Until you show me this other brother you left behind I don’t believe you. You’re spies.” And eventually he reveals himself to his brothers and the brothers reunite. This is just a very quick thumbnail sketch, sort of summary, of the story. So, I would encourage you to go back and just read through the stories. We will be reading through the story bit by bit more carefully.

But just as we begin to read the story, it seems to me a few questions jump out at you and I just want to call attention to them here and just put them on the table. Basically, the questions are, “What was everybody thinking?”

Let’s start with the brothers. It’s not such a nice thing to do to take your brother and strip him of this clothes and throw him in a pit and sell him as a slave. That’s really mean. That’s really not such a nice thing to do. How are we supposed to understand that? What were they thinking? Did they justify that to themselves? Was it just a blind act of jealousy? Did they have some rationale for it? And even if they justified it, even if they hated their brother so much to do such a thing, but still, what about their father? Didn’t they love their father, Jacob? How did they think he was going to react to all of this? They ruined his life, taking his most favorite child and if they didn’t love their brother enough, what about their father? How do we understand what it was that the brothers were doing and what it was that they were thinking? So question number one is, what were the brothers thinking when they were doing all this?

Question number two: Joseph. As Joseph is in Egypt and he sees the brothers, he really torments them. Their family is starving and instead of revealing himself, he goes and he plays with them and sends them back and more than that, he never even reveals himself to his father. Once he rises to grandeur, he is in second in charge to the King, what about sending a post card back to dad, you know, "Wishing you were here. The weather is beautiful in Egypt. One day come to visit me." Just show some love to his father and much as his father loved him. Even if he didn’t care so much about his brothers, even if he is going to torment them. What about his father? We are not the first one to ask this question. The Ramban asked this question. Nachmanides, the famous medieval commentator. These are serious questions. “What were the brothers thinking? What was Joseph thinking?

What was Jacob thinking? Why did Jacob, after all of these tensions in the family, choose to send Joseph that day, immediately after he became aware of just how jealous the other brothers were? After Joseph has the second dream, just after that second dream, he just happens to send him off to check on how their brothers were doing in Shechem. It’s a dangerous kind of mission. You’re sending him alone and unguarded, a long way from home just when you know the tension has broken into the open. You know how much it is that the other brothers hate him.

Maybe in hindsight, it’s twenty-twenty. We know now what happened to Joseph. But it seems like he was naïve. Was he benighted? Did he not realize that this was a potentially dangerous mission? Why was he doing that? And I think, part of the temptation we have is to look at Jacob and maybe think, “Oh he is such a naïve guy. He didn’t know what was going on with his family; if only Jacob had known, if only Jacob had been a little bit more aware, maybe this terrible stuff would not have happened.” So is that view of Jacob as the naïve father, unaware of just how deep the tensions run in his family, is that a justified kind of vision of Jacob?

Finally, the fourth major persona so to speak in the story, not persons but persona, is God. What does God think of all of this? Do we have any clue? God doesn’t react. It’s not like these lightning bolts came from heaven or anything. And of course, generally in the Bible, God doesn’t always react. People do their thing, and we find out in more subtle ways what that divine approach to it all was. Here, are there any clues to what God thinks of all this? What does God think of the brother’s rationale, if there is one, for putting Joseph in the pit? What does God think of what Joseph is doing, what Jacob is doing? Does this pass by without notice? Does God have better things to do? Is he distracted by something going on,

like drama in the galaxy or something like that? Are these major issues? They are major enough to take up the entire second half of the Book of Genesis. What is the divine approach? Do we have any clues from the text itself to try to understand how it is that God is seeing it?

So I want to kind of frame things with that, “What were they thinking?” “What were the brothers thinking?” “What was Joseph thinking?” “What was Jacob thinking?” “What was God thinking?” It’s very difficult to go back three thousand years and try to piece together theories on this, but I do think that we get some clues in the text. I think that if we look carefully as the story develops in Chapter 37, the text goes out of its way to give us very significant clues about all of these things and I want to begin to unearth them with you. And I want to challenge you to read through Chapter 37, be attentive for clues; do you see any clues as to what they were thinking? Let’s start with Jacob. Was he really benighted? Was he really naïve? Do we have any clues from the text that would indicate “yes”, that would indicated “no”? See what you think, let’s come back and compare notes.

Okay. So I asked you before, "What were they thinking, all the main protagonist in this story?" And we talked about four of them:

•We talked about the brothers on the one hand: They throw Joseph in the pit, not such a nice thing to do. Even if they don't care so much about Joseph, what about their father?

•Joseph himself, later on in Egypt: Not such a nice thing to do. Estranges himself from his brothers and really torments them for a long, long time. And again, even if Joseph doesn't care so much about the brothers, what about their father? Why not just write a postcard; "Dad, the weather is just wonderful here in Egypt. Wishing you were here." If he really loves his father so much, why not let him know that he is alive once he rises to prominence in Egypt? Instead, Joseph keeps that a secret for years, for years.

•Jacob: Was he benighted and naïve when he sends Joseph out immediately after he seems to realize how much the tensions have escalated in the family?

•And finally God: What's God's perspective on all of this? Is God silent? Does God have an opinion, so to speak, or is it possible for us to discern that opinion from the text?

These are some of the questions which we raised last time and I want to come back and talk about them. And I want to begin by focusing on this question over here, "Jacob, was he benighted and naïve?" I want to take a quick look through the text with you, with an eye towards Jacob's perspective, and I am just going to use this as a chance also to raise a bunch of other observations, a bunch of other questions which I think emerge from the text of the sale of Joseph; a very difficult text. So as we go through it, I am going to call attention to some of those questions in your mind. Before I get a chance to go through this, you might want to take a stab at it yourself, read through the text of Chapter 37. What are some of the questions which provoke you as you read this text?

So, without any further ado, let me jump in and share with you some of what's on my mind. Okay. So let's start reading. Here is the beginning of Chapter 37. "These are the generations of Jacob." Eleh toldot Yaakov. I think I am just going to read it in Hebrew, and you can follow along in the English over here. The English over here is coming from the 1917 translation of the JPS edition of the Bible. You can really use any translation you like. I picked this one because (a) it's convenient and (b) I kind of like it. It's sort of archaic sounding, so you have to get use to that. But, at least it is fairly literal, close to the Hebrew, and therefore it suits our purpose well because it gives you as close as I think, you will to kind of can in translation, a sense of what the Hebrew is saying. Of course, no Hebrew translation into English is going to give you a sense of what the Hebrew is really saying, so it's a good idea to try to consult a couple

different translations if you have the ability. I found this [www.mechon-mamre.org,](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/) and you are free to consult that or any other site to find a translation that you can work with if the Hebrew is not immediately accessible to you. But, I am going to be reading the Hebrew, and you can follow along in either Hebrew of English.

Okay. Eleh toldot Yaakov, Yosef ben-sheva-asrah shana haya roeh et-achav batzon. Really, the first sentence here is a little bit strange, isn't it? "These are the generations of Jacob." So, if these are the generations of Jacob, what would you expect to happen next? If you had a sentence here and you didn't know what the next sentence was and the sentence began, "These are the generations of Jacob," you would expect to hear about the children of Jacob. How many children did Jacob had? Jacob had twelve children. Well you don't hear about that here. It's very strange. This is a really odd, "these are the generations of Jacob," because the only thing you hear about is this guy, Joseph, who was seventeen years old, he was shepherding with his brothers' sheep. You hear about the brothers, but you hear about the brothers in an ancillary kind of way. They are ancillary. They are almost tangential to Joseph; the spotlight is on Joseph.

Now, the rationale for that could simply be that Joseph is the main character in the story. He is the

character in the events that unfold, but there may be a more subtle rational here, which is that perhaps in Jacob's eyes, Joseph really was his main descendant; it was all about Joseph. You begin to get a hint of that, even in the very beginning. The later verses are going to talk about a kind of favoritism. Jacob is going to give Joseph this special coat. He is going to love him more than the other brothers. But even before you get any of that, just in the way the narrator lays this out, "These are the generations of Jacob, Joseph," you get this sort of jarring sense, "What, Joseph is the only guy?" But somehow, Joseph has that primacy. Joseph, seventeen years old, shepherding with his brothers the sheep, but then brothers come into the picture, but they come into the picture almost as secondary, and perhaps in some ways that foreshadows what's about to happen, which is, in Jacob's eyes, Joseph really is primary.

So anyway, you hear about Joseph. He is seventeen years old. He is shepherding with his brothers, and the first sense we want to chart, this is what I really, really want to do, just chart the building tensions in Jacob's family and just sort of almost list, how the tensions build. So the first sense explicitly of tension which you get in the text, you have right over here in verse 3, "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all of his other children," v'Yisrael ahav et-Yosef mikol-banav ki ben-zekunim hu lo - "because he was the child of his old age, and he makes him this special coat of many colors." Again, ketonet pasim could mean "a coat of stripes," "a coat of many colors," It's unclear exactly what it means. For the time being, we will call it a "coat of many colors." So this is the first indication of favoritism, the first indications of tensions in the family, the fact that Jacob, otherwise known as Israel, he has second name, is favoring Joseph and gives him this special coat. Okay, so we're just going to put a number one over here – Joseph gets special coat.

Now actually, to be a little bit more precise, at this point, in this verse 3, you actually don't get the sense yet that this has lead to any tension in the family. It's actually only in the next verse over here that you get that sense. Vayiru echav ki-oto ahav avihem – "And the brothers saw that Jacob loved Joseph more

than all the other brothers," Vayisnu oto v'lo yachlu dabru shalom – "And they hated him and they couldn't speak in peace to him." Notice that the contrasts here in verbs is love and hate, it's almost like this inverse relationship. The more Jacob loves Joseph, the more the brothers hate him. And this is where you see the fruits of that favoritism where the tensions begin to build; Joseph gets a special coat and the brothers hate him for it in verse 4.

The Seforno asks us to focus on these words, Vayiru echav ki-oto ahav avihem mikol-echav - "that the brothers saw that father loved Joseph more than the others," and the Seforno's point was that the problem over here was not so much verse 3. It wasn't the fact that Jacob loved Joseph more. You can live with that. Children can come to grips with the idea that a parent has a soft spot in their heart for one child. It's the showing of that and the favoritism, it's when that gets expressed externally in the coat, that's the problem; we're not being treated fairly, the brothers have Vayiru echav ki-oto ahav avihem – that they saw that the father treated Joseph differently than the others. And this leads to the first moment of real tension in the family, the hatred expressed by the brothers as result of this act of favoritism. So if we continue kind of chronicling these tensions, as we said before, we had this special coat, or more accurately, the brothers seeing that Father loves Joseph more. So let's put that up here.

So the next thing that happens, in verse 5, is the dreams. Joseph has two sets of dreams. In Joseph's first dream, again, he dreams of these sheaves of wheat, but let's read the text. Vayachalom Yosef chalom – "Joseph dreams this dream," Vayaged l'echav vayosifu od sno oto- "and they hated him even more." One point I want to make to you over here, is this word vayosifu in Hebrew and it's literally, "and they added hatred upon him even more," is a play on what? What does this remind you of? Well, the Hebrew of course for Joseph's name is Yosef, right? It's a play-off of Joseph's name. So – vayosifu od sno oto, "They hated Joseph even more," with the word vayosifu.

In any case, what's kind of interesting about this is that you haven't even heard what it was that was in his dreams and you've already heard that they hated him even more. And again, they've hated him not just for the fact that Joseph had the dream, the Ramban argues, Nachmanides now, but for the fact vayaged, that he told them. In other words, it's kind of interesting, which is that, remember the Seforno's point, which is that what angered the brothers was not so much what was in Jacob's heart, but it was the expression of that in the world of action, when the brothers can see through Jacob's action that Father loved them more. Here too, it's one thing to have a dream, Joseph, even if it's a provocative dream, even if it's a dream that suggests that you might rule over us, it's one thing for you to have that dream, that's not something which we would hate you for necessarily, but, you have to go and tell us? What do you go on telling us for? When you express that in the world of action, that's where the hatred comes and vayosifu od sno –"they hate him even more." So they hated him because they saw that Father loved him, and then number two, they hated him even more because Joseph is telling them these dreams.

Okay, so reading on, Joseph says, Vayomer aleihem: shemu-na hachalom hazeh asher chalamti – "Listen please to this dream I had. Here we were in the field, we all had these sheaves in the field and your sheaves bowed down to my sheaves, my sheaves stood up and your sheaves all bowed down to my sheaves." Well, that's you know, a pretty provocative dream and the brothers answered, Vayomer lo

echav hamaloch timloch aleinu im-mashol timshol banu – "What, you think you're really going to rule over us?" And then, look carefully at the words, vayosifu od sno oto, there is that word again that plays off of Joseph, "They added hatred; they hated him even more." Why? Al-chalomotav v'al-devarav. And here is Nachmanide's point, the Ramban, that they hated him not just for him dreams, al-chalomotav, but they hated him al-devarav – "for his words." It was not just for mental idea that Joseph had, but for his expression of that idea in the world of action. That's what provokes them; the fact that he tells the dreams. Okay, so this is point number one and point number two in the building of tensions in Jacob's family. If we continue, it gets even worst.

Joseph dreams another dream. Vayisaper oto l'echav vayomer. In his new dreams he says, V'hineh hashemesh v'hayareach v'achad asar kochavim mishtachvim li – "The sun and the moon and the eleven stars are all bowing." Now of course, Joseph has eleven brothers, so what does this sounds like? It sounds like a pretty self-evident dream. The sun represents Father, the moon represents Mother, the eleven stars represents all of the brothers and everyone is bowing to him and that's exactly how Jacob interprets the dream. Vayisaper el-aviv. Notice that over he tells the dream not just to his brothers but to his father, presumably because his father is actually a participant in the dream. His father seemingly would be the sun over here. So, anyway, he tells his father and his brothers. Now, notice that Father is now in the picture, whereas before, everything that happened was just the brothers. Father is now in the picture. He is hearing these dreams. There is a three-way conversation here: Joseph, brothers, and father. That's going to be important so let's keep that in mind.

And now, for the first time, Vayigar-bo aviv – Father is angry with him, with Joseph. Vayomer lo mah hachalom hazeh asher chalamta? – "What is this dream that you've dreamt?" Havo navo ani v'imcha v'acheicha lehishtachot lecha arthzah? – "Shall I, your mother and your brothers, are we all going to bow down to you?" Now, one of the interesting things here, if you actually pay attention to the text, remember we talked about before that there are two mothers in the family; there is Rachel and there is Leah. Rachel had actually died already. So, one strange part of the dream is that if the dream is really true, what's the mother doing in the dream? The mother is already dead, and Rashi brings that up as something which causes Jacob's some consternation; is the dream really true? What's going on with the bowing moon? Your mother isn't here anymore. But anyway, here is what Jacob says, "Shall we all come to bow before you?" And Jacob is angry at Joseph.

And finally, this is point number three, Vayikanu-bo echav – "and the brothers were jealous of him," V'aviv shamar et-hadavar. I will get back to the second part of the verse in the moment, but the brothers are jealous as a result of the second dream. Now, when I say the result of the second dream, what do I really mean? Again, the brothers are jealous not just when Joseph tells the dream. That's over here. But the brothers are jealous after verse 10, when Father responds to dream. Their jealousy, interestingly, is a response to the father even more than it's a response to Joseph. Notice also, that this is the first time the word jealousy is used. What was the word that was used before? The tensions were described in terms of hatred; the brothers hated Joseph, they hated Joseph, but all of a sudden now they are jealous. So, something new has entered the mix. All of a sudden they are jealous of Joseph. Why are they jealous of Joseph now? And why in particular, as a result of verse 10, not just what Joseph has done, in telling the

dream, having the dream and telling it, but Father's response to the dream? Why would Father's response to the dream, somehow, make them jealous? But this is number three: Father's response to the dream provokes jealousy on the part of the brothers.

So, I want you to think about that and we will come back next video and examine this. But what do you think? Why would it be that all of a sudden for the first time, jealousy enters the picture rather than hatred? What really is the difference between jealousy and hatred? And why would jealousy enter into the conversation, enter into the escalating build up in tensions specifically right here? Think about that. I have some thoughts about that I will share with you in our next video. I'll see you then.

Okay, hi everybody. So I had asked you to consider this idea over here, what's all of a sudden making the brothers jealous? The brothers are jealous as a result of what their father had done; the father's rebuke. If anything, you would say the father rebuking Joseph, that's a good thing maybe, in the brother's mind, they want to see Joseph being taken down a notch. Why all of a sudden are they jealous? So then the answer is, Father has a choice over here. Well, what is Father's choice? If you're a father, and Joseph comes to you with this dream, and the dream is this dream that seems to suggest the possibility that Joseph is going to rule over everyone.

So you have really two possible choices. Choice number one actually, is you could just dismiss it all as foolish, and you could just laugh it off and who cares, and not even bother with anything. That's one possibility. But the other possibility is you could be upset with the implications. Well, that's what happens. But if I am upset, what does that suggest? It suggests that I am taking this seriously. If I am taking this seriously, you see before, when the brothers have these dreams, and it was just talking about it with the brothers and the father is not involved, at that point, the brothers hate Joseph; they hate him but they are not necessarily jealous. When do you become jealous? You become jealous when you think that there might be something going on. When seriously, when "Oh my gosh! There might be something going on." When Father ratifies this, almost unwittingly by his behavior, by becoming upset with what happens and chastising Joseph, then all of a sudden "Oh, Dad really thinks this is for real"; all of a sudden the brothers are jealous, not just hatred, but they are jealous of him. There might be something actually going on to be jealous about. Vayekanu-bo echav.

Now, what was the father's response to all of this? The father's response has an interesting double edge quality to it. Aviv shamar et-hadavar– "His father kept watch over the thing." He kept it in mind. The commentators, almost universally, Rashi and others, suggest that this means that, in Rashi's words, Haya mamtin umetzapeh matai yavo– "Jacob took note of it and anticipated the thing happening"; anticipated the moment when it would happen. Why? Because of course, Jacob favors Joseph, so Jacob privately waits for it to happen. He wants it to happen. But the strange thing, though, is that Jacob also chastises him. Vayigar-bo aviv – Jacob expresses anger at Joseph. "What are you doing? What is this dream that you've dreamt? Is it really going to happen?" How do you understand this? These two things are in kind of in contention with each other? Which is it? Is he happy about this? Is he anticipating it? Does he hope it is going to happen? Or is he unhappy? Is he angry? Is he chastising?

So there is one possible solution to this, it could just be that the anger is for show, and Rashi kind of suggests that this might be the case; may be that the anger is just for show, that he is not really angry, but he is just trying to reassure the brothers. So Father expresses this anger but really deep down he hopes it all happens. But I want to at least consider the other possibility, just the plain meaning of the text which

is that the anger is real; this is real, and the anticipation is real. Both of these things are real. Which leads to an interesting, if it's true, kind of double edge in Jacob's reaction. On the one hand he wants it to happen, on the other hand he is angry. So how does those two go together? Why is he angry in one sense, and waiting for it to happen in another sense? I want to come back with that with you and I want you to think about that. How would you understand the double edged part of Jacob's reaction? What is there to be angry about? What is there to be happy about? If you're angry, how could you be happy? If you're happy, how could you be angry? How could those things live together? Think about that and we're going to come back to them in a little bit.

Okay, let's pull back our zoom lens. We were asking about Jacob's perspective on these events and really the $64,000 question, which we have been wondering about is "Is Jacob aware of the tensions that are going on in his family when he sends Joseph to check on his brothers?" And over here, in verse 11, if we just look at this carefully, if we just read the text, it seems pretty clear that the answer to this is, "Yes, Jacob is aware." Vayekanu-bo echav. This is like the ultimate, the third stage. Tensions have been building, they burst out into open, the brothers are jealous, and father is over here, and he is watching over this thing. He sees what's going on. He is angry, perhaps the anger is even an attempt to try to calm things down. He is trying to take control over the situation. It's very clear this is a three-way conversation; the brothers are in it, Father is in it and Joseph is in it, everything is on the table and father sees what going on. Well, Father sees what's going on, that makes what happens next all the stranger.

The next thing that happens is that Jacob sends Joseph away, down to Shechem, to check on the brothers. Okay. So you just became aware that the brother's hate him, they are jealous, and they can't even speak in peace to him and the next thing you do is send Joseph alone to check on the brothers, far away. In retrospect, it certainly seems like dangerous mission. Did it look like a dangerous mission on the way? No one could have known what exactly what would have happened, but, seems odd that immediately after becoming aware of just how things have deteriorated between the brothers and Joseph and the family, Jacob sends Joseph all alone and unguarded to go and check on them and where of all places? In Shechem. Well, what has been happening in Shechem lately?

If you've been paying attention, this is right after a massacre carried out courtesy of Shimon and Levi. Shimon and Levi are actually children of Leah. Remember, there are two wives in the family; Jacob is married to Leah, Jacob is married to Rachel. Shimon and Levi, children of Leah, comes to the defense of their sister Dinah and ultimately end up wiping out a whole city in a commando raid that the ground is soaked with blood. The brothers are in Shechem. The brothers are in this place where they took this act of vengeance for the sake of this child of Leah, the honor of a child of Leah. And now here is this child of Rachel, going down to check on them, all alone and unguarded. It seems kind of ominous. Rashi by the way comments on this. Let me actually bring this up on the screen for you so that you can see. So here is Rashi on Shechem, commenting on makom muchen lepurenot– "Shechem, the place where bad things happen." What bad things? Rashi quotes three historical happenings that happened in Shechem that were really awful.

Sham kilklu hashvatem– "This is where the brothers ended up selling Joseph," right here in our story. Sham inu et Dinah– "This is where the massacre of Shechem took place when Dinah was raped," in the previous story which I just mentioned to you. And finally later on Sham nichlakah melchot beit David shenemar v'yelech rechavim – "And this is ultimately the place in the Book of Kings where the Northern

Kingdom ends up splitting from the Southern Kingdom." One of the interesting thing to do over here when you have, Rashi quotes three ideas, when you have these three kind of ideas, or three ideas put together like this, kind of ask yourself, "How do these three things relate?" Interestingly, they really do seem to kind of relate. When Rashi says, "Bad things happen in Shechem", what kind of bad things happen in Shechem? Sham kilklu hashvatem– "and this where the brothers ended up selling Joseph, this is where Dinah was raped, this is where the kingdom was split. Well, how did the kingdom split?

The kingdom split actually along the lines of the children of Rachel and the children of Leah. It's almost like the split that happens in the family, it happens at the sale of Joseph, the split between the children of Rachel and the children of Leah; that's a family split but it becomes a national split later on in Shechem where the northern kingdom secedes from the southern kingdom. The southern kingdom of course, the Kingdom of Judah from the children of Leah, and northern kingdom, the kingdom of Ephraim from Joseph, from Rachel, and interestingly, the third piece of this, the very beginning of it, sham inu et Dinah– "this is where the brothers Shimon and Levi comes to the aid of Dinah, a fellow child of Leah". Perhaps Rashi is suggesting the possibility that the beginning maybe of even the tensions in the family occurred then when the brothers feel it's up to them to defend a fellow child of Leah. That's the beginning of the tension, of the kind of sectarian split in the family with children of Leah on the one hand siding with children of Leah. When Father was silent, they thought it was up to them. They angrily protest to their father Hachzonat yaaset otenu– "We couldn't have allowed this to happen." You hear the beginning of a fissure in the family at that point, that fissure sort of explodes in the family scene of the sale of Joseph and that conflagration ends up engulfing the nation and the split between the kingdom were literally the kingdom of Ephraim and the kingdom of Judah, when the children of Rachel, children of Leah begin to go separate ways in two separate kingdoms; it all happens in Shechem.

So, Joseph is being sent to this place again, which historically is not a good place. But Jacob is sending him there, aware of what's happening. Why is he sending him to Shechem, alone and unguarded, immediately after becoming aware of just how bad things are? This, I think, is the real question. What is happening in the story? It's not tenable to argue that Jacob is simply naïve, that he doesn't know what's going on, that if Jacob had just paid a little more attention in his family he would have been aware and there never would have been the sale of Joseph. He was aware and he sent Joseph anyway. And note also, why he sends him. Is it for any great overriding purpose? Is there any incredibly important reason to send Joseph? Let's look at the text, 13, Vayomer Yisrael el-Yosef. So, "Jacob says to Joseph," Halo acheicha roim bishechem– "Aren't your brothers shepherding in Shechem?" Lecha v'eshlachcha aleihem– "I think I will send you to see what's going on with them." Vayomer lo hineni – "Joseph says, here I am." Well, that doesn't seem to be much of an overriding purpose, "Oh, your brothers in Shechem, why don't I send you there?" Actually, the purpose comes later.

The second thing that Jacob says over here, Vayomer lo–"Okay, now that you have agreed to go to

Shechem," Lech-na re'eh et-shalom acheicha v'et-shalom hatzon– "Why don't you check and see on the peace of your brothers and the peace of the sheep?" Notice of course, the irony over here which is this word "peace" being repeated twice, "Check on the peace of your brothers, the peace of your sheep", doesn't seem to be this incredibly important mission, but also remember earlier V'lo yachlu dabro leshalom, right over here in verse 4. The very first thing we hear and the first level of tensions in the family is when the brothers see that Father loves him more than everyone else. V'lo yachlu dabro leshalom – "They were so angry and they couldn't speak to him in peace." Well, isn't that ironic; they couldn't speak to him in peace and now what is Joseph being sent to do? "Check on the peace of your brothers and the peace of the sheep." They can't even speak in peace. What is going on here? It seems the most trivial of missions and yet the most dangerous of missions at the same time. It seems like Jacob isn't even thinking about any mission when he first dispatches him. "Why don't you go be with your brothers?" Halo acheicha roim bishechem – "Aren't they in Shechem? Why don't I send you there?"

So, if it's so trivial and he doesn't really have a purpose in sending him until Joseph said, "Okay, I will go", and then he says, "Well, why don't you go and check on your brothers in Shechem?" Something seems to be happening. There is something weird apparently happening with Jacob's motivation. What could that possibly be? How do we understand that? There are too many things that fall into place. It's almost like a perfect storm of danger and it happens when Jacob is aware of how much the brothers and Joseph are in tensions with each other, how much the brothers are jealous of him. So the idea that Jacob is naïve doesn't seem to hold water, but, what was he really thinking? That's the challenge we need to figure out. So we're going to work on that when we come back.

Hi everybody, we're back. Just before we leave this section over here of tensions, 37 vs 12-14, "And Jacob sends Joseph…", I just want to call your attention to one other thing which always struck me as strange over here about this verse, verse 13, and that is this rhetorical question, this apparently rhetorical question; like, what's the deal with this? And Jacob says to Joseph, Halo acheicha roim bishechem – "Aren't your brothers shepherding in Shechem?" What's the deal with that question mark? Why not just say, "Your brothers are shepherding in Shechem. I am going to send you to them."? Is he not sure they are shepherding in Shechem? What exactly is happening with that? It seems to me when he sends him there, Joseph seems to think they're going there. So what's the idea with the question? How do we understand the question mark then? – "Aren't your brothers in Schehem?" So I want to come back to that as well. What's the idea behind this question?

Anyway, so let's continue. So he says, "Go check on the peace of your brothers and bring me back word." – V'hashiveini davar. And so he sends him from Hevron vayava Shechemah– "And Joseph comes to Shechem." So now, what's going to happen next? We are about to hear, this is the climactic moment when the brothers are going to see Joseph coming and we're going to have the sale of Joseph, and you can hear the kettle drums in the distance and the tension is building and it's all going to happen. But strangely, it doesn't happen. Look at the next verses.

In the next verses, we get one of the strangest digressions in the entire Book of Genesis, it seems to me. We get verses right at the juicy part of the story when the tension is going to break that just doesn't even belong here at all, just this complete digression of incredibly trivial materials. Watch what happens over here in verses 15-17.

Basically, Vayimtzaehu– Joseph is looking around, he is in Shechem, he can't really find his brothers, and he finds a certain guy and he asks for direction V'hineh toeh basadeh. Joseph is wandering around in the field, he is kind of lost, Vayishalehu haish, So the guy asks him, Mah tevakesh?– "Who are you looking for?" So Joseph says," Vayomer et-achai anochi mevakesh – "I'm checking out my brothers. I want to see where they are." Hagidah-na li eyfoh hem roim– "Did you see my brothers? Do you know where they are?" To which the man says, "Oh, your brothers? -Nasu mizeh– They are not here anymore. Ki- shamati omrim nelchah Dotayna – I heard them saying they are going to Dothan." So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

Why am I hearing about all of this? Why is there anything important here? Who cares about the geography lesson now? So he found them in Shechem, he found them in Dothan, he went a little bit

further, saw this guy, he asked for direction. I mean, if the Bible would record all the time when someone stops to ask for direction, you know how long this book would be? Why am I hearing about someone checking his map and seeing, "Am I in Shechem? Am I in Dothan?" I mean, who really cares? The geography seems to be incredibly irrelevant. Why do I have this digression here? It's just a big question I think. And immediately after that, you get to the actual story of the sale of Joseph.

I think all of these clues add up to a very fascinating possibility, a possibility which we are about to hear echoes of in the next few verses. I want to show you those echoes in a moment; they are really quite bone-chilling I think. We will see what we make of them. If you want to try them yourself, start reading from verses 18 through the end of the story and ask yourself this question, "Where have we heard this before?" Do you hear any echoes in the language of the sale of Joseph that reminds you of another story in the Book of Genesis? I think the echoes are there, the echoes are very strong; and the question is, "What does it all mean?" So let's come back and we'll talk about that, maybe research it if you can and we'll come back and compared notes.

Hi everybody, Rabbi David Fohrman back again, and before I reveal to you what I mean by these echoes which we're about to hear in the Joseph story, I just want to give you an introduction to this idea because this piece of literary methodology is going to come up over and over again in our analysis of the Joseph story. So I want to introduce you to it. It's something I talked about a little bit before in another course I put together called "Genesis Unveiled" but I want to reintroduce it. The fancy name for it is intertextuality. The more common sounding, maybe juvenile name, the Sesame Street kind of name we might call it is "Where have we heard these word before?" These kind of resonances, these echoes, in Biblical texts. But let me just introduce this kind of piece of methodology which we are calling "intertextuality" to you with this kind of analogy. The Torah, I am going to suggest, is actually the original internet.

Okay, when we think of two things like the internet and the Torah, we think of two things that probably could not be more unlike each other; the Torah is this scared code of law, the internet is neither sacred, nor is it a code of law, but I think there is something essentially internet like about the Torah and let me give you an example of what I mean. I mean that the Torah was the original internet three thousand years ago without electricity, without computers, without anything. Before all that, there was the Torah and in many ways, it was the original internet and here is what I mean by that. When you think about the internet, if you go back before the internet, and I am thinking not that long ago, to let's say 1989. So back in the beginning when the earth was formless and void, when there was nothing, there was no World Wide Web, there was no Netscape, there was no HTML, there was no email; back then, there was Al Gore.

Al Gore at the time was running for president and if you recall his early speeches as a youthful Al Gore over here, he use to have a metaphor for the coming information revolution. Everybody sort of knew that an information revolution was brewing, that something was coming down the pike in 1989. But, nobody knew exactly what it was going to be like.

So at that time, Al Gore was actually campaigning on this sort of platform that whatever this was that was coming, that it needed to be accessible to everyone. And he had a favorite metaphor that he would use for this. I wonder if you remember his metaphor. I remember it. He used to talk about an 'Information Super Highway', and he used to say that the 'Information Super Highway' needs to be accessible to everyone, we need to make sure there is all these on ramps and off ramps and all these sort of highway metaphors. And what's interesting is that as the internet actually developed, nobody actually called it an 'Information Super Highway', when was the last times you've heard those words, 'Information Super Highway'? People talk about the internet; people talk about the World Wide Web; nobody talks about the 'Information Super Highway'.

So how come, this sort of metaphor for what the internet became never caught on? Or to put that another way, why is this sort of image, over here you can kind of see the 'Information Super Highway', and I think in our mind's eye when we think about an 'Information Super Highway', this is kind of what we think of, those images like this one, where there's time light photography at nights and see the speeding car going off in this direction and that direction. And the problem with this image, on the one hand you get this sense of this image of information racing along kind of at the speed of light in various different directions, and that's very good in that it's kind of internet like, but the problem with it is, it is too linear. The image of an 'Information Super Highway' in your mind's eye, is like six lanes of traffic going this way, and then six lanes of traffic going this way, but it's kind of all in a straight line and that's not actually what the internet is. The internet is what we call a World Wide Web, or we call it an inter- net. If you think about the common denominator with these ideas, the common denominator is this sort of like interconnectivity, it's not linear at all; it's web-like. And the truth is that a web is a far more powerful means of connecting information than straight lines.

To give you an example of what I mean, here is an example of an airline route map. You find these things that are in the magazines that are in the seat back in front of you when you fly on these long flights. Now, if you just took a quick glance at these route maps and you knew something about geography, even if you ignored these sort of Asian characters over here at the top of the map, you would be able to figure out what kind of airline you're looking at, right? You're probably not looking at American Airlines. You're probably not looking at United Airlines. You're probably looking at something based out of China. In fact, you're looking at the map for China Airlines. And the reason why the reason why it is so easy to see that this is the map of China Airlines, is because the hub all centers around here, all centers around China. This is where all the flights are coming from. That's actually the way, that if you think about the way companies like Google, or companies that have really made a lot of money on the internet, they've done it by mapping the web in this sort of way; by finding the hubs.

How does Google do it? How can Google in a second find you exactly what you're looking for? It's because they've mapped the interconnections. They see, for any given word or idea, where the hubs are, where everybody is linking to, where most websites are linking to, and they point you to there.

If you are looking up 'llama,' if you want to know, what is a llama, in a second, right? in .17 seconds, Google is going to show you these are the main things you want to look at for figuring out llama.

You're going to look at Wikipedia, that's because Wikipedia has the most number of links in it; when websites want to show you llamas they link to Wikipedia. The second site is going to be National Geographic. This is the other place that people link to. So, Google will show you all this and they are able to do this because of the web-like nature of the internet, because it really is a World Wide Web. They can map the information much like China Airlines maps its own route, and they can show you the

really important places, the hubs, for what it is that you are looking for.

So when I say that the Torah is the original internet, what I mean is that there is this same kind of web- like linking mechanism at work in the Torah as a way of sort of multiplying the information effect. The same way that on the web there is sort of an unlimited amount of information, there's a lot of information, there is actually the linkages between information, the cross-referencing between information that gives the web it's power and it's that way with the Torah too.

So on the web, as you know, there are these things called hyperlinks, these things in blue are going to be hyperlinked and if you move your mouse over them, and you click on one of them, it's going to actually take you to Wikipedia and if you click over here, it's going to actually take you to National Geographic. I want to argue that the Torah also has hyperlinks. So you say, "That's crazy there was no electricity.

What would hyperlink look like before electricity?" Well, what would they look like before electricity?

So I want to argue that the hyperlinks are here. The hyperlinks are what I am calling intertextuality, and again, it's a fancy word but here is what it means. So let's say you're reading story #1, over here. As you're reading story #1, you notice that there is this Element A, and there is a certain idea over here and it's followed by Element B, C, D, E and F. And imagine that each one of these is very distinctive; there might be a distinctive word, there might be a distinctive kind of idea, there might be a distinctive kind of way of phrasing something, but something catches your eye as you're reading and you say "Hmm, you know that sounds like an unusual sort of element, that Element A," and then lo and behold you say, "You know, I've heard that somewhere," and you start playing this game. And the intertextuality game basically goes like this. It's just a matter of playing this game, "Where have we heard these words before?"

Just kind of ask yourself this as you're going through the Torah and you say "Gee, Element A, I remember Element A. Element A appears in this other story over here, you know, like fifteen chapters earlier or something, and there is something that reminds me of Element A, not exactly the same. It's like

a different version of it, but that is like the same word." And lo and behold, you look at that and it's that

same kind of phrase that's appearing right over here. But then you notice that "Gee, there is this Element B over here and there is another version of Element B appearing in that same story #2, and then the same thing starts happening with a whole bunch of these elements. And pretty soon you're saying, "Right around here, await a second, this can't be coincidental; these are the links, these are the hyperlinks."

What the Torah is really telling you is, you want to understand what's really going on over here in story #1, and you've got to understand story #2. Story #2 is acting as a kind of commentary in story #1, and in that kind of way, it's giving you something I call, sort of binocular vision, a stereo way of looking at things.

If you imagine binoculars, and I give this analogy in my other course, I just want to revisit over here, so you have story A over here, then you have story B over here, and what's happening is that story B is shedding light on story A. But what happens is the way our minds create a sensation of depth. Do you ever wonder how you sort of see things in three dimensions? How do we have that sense of depth? It's because, why do we even have two eyes? And the answer is because with one eye, we can basically see the same thing as the other eye. But each eye gives us a slightly different perspective on something, because our eyes are placed in different places in our head so we see two slightly different images. Our brain doesn't show us slightly different images; our brain actually merges these two images together. And when you merge two images together, each one kind of acting as a sort of commentary on the other, each one is sort of an anchor for your understanding of the other, that creates a sense of depth in your mind. And I think the same thing is happening in text.

What happen in story A is only in story A. How does story A become deep? This was really Joe's question. Where is there depth in these sentences? But there is plenty of depth in it, right? If story A is linked to story B, maybe there is this whole web of linkages, maybe there are other stories that's also linked too. There is a tremendous amount of depth, almost an infinite amount of depth. If you can imagine the Torah being a series of World Wide Web of interconnected webs with these hyperlinks. Each one of these is shedding light on various different stories, with all these different stories kind of acting as commentaries upon each other.

Now this may sound a little bit abstract, because I am just sort of laying out the theory for you. But, as we continue in this course, we're going to see this over and over again. This happens in spades throughout the Joseph story, and what unfolds is a magnificent series of hyperlinks that create this fascinating meta-commentary that the Torah is giving us on the Joseph story. I believe this is going to be a fascinating journey. I wanted to just get our feet wet here by again challenging you, as you continue to read from where we were up to in Chapter 37, as you continue to read the next verses, are there any echoes of any other narrative in the Book of Genesis that happened previously? I believe that there are.

Let's come back next video and try and uncover them.

Okay. So here we are. This is the narrative of the actual sale of Joseph. Here, let's listen for those resonances. Do we hear any echoes of previous stories, earlier stories, in the Book of Genesis?

Okay, so let's read. We're up to verse 18 over here. Vayiru oto merachok– "So the brothers saw him coming from far away," U'biterem yikrav alehem vayitnaklu oto lahamito – "And before Joseph actually came to them, they started gathering together or plotting to try and kill him."

Now, here is the first of the echoes, the first of the echoes is going to be right here in verse 18, and it is going to appear in this opening salvo, the very first words in the actual story of the sale of Joseph, over here in verse 18, Vayiru oto merachok – "and they saw him coming far away." What other narrative has that very phrase - seeing something from afar? Where else do we have that in the Book of Genesis? So I am kind of tickling here at the edges of your experience, if you're familiar with Genesis, you may already have gotten it. But if not, maybe the accumulation of hints may kind of give it away to you. So let's keep on reading. That's one connection over here; we're just going to mark this, 'Connection#1'. Vayomru ish el-achiv hineh baal hachalomot halzeh ba- "So then one brother says to another, 'Oh, the dreamer is coming.'" V'atah lechu v'nahargahu– "Let's go and let's kill him," V'nashlichehu b'achad haborot– "and let's cast him, his corpse, in one of the pits around here in the deserts." V'amarnu chayah raahachalathu– "Our alibi will be that a terrible beast has devoured him," V'nireh mah-yiheyu chalomotav – "and we will see what will become of his dreams."

So there is actually an evolution in what they want to do. The first thing they want to do is, they are plotting to kill him. However, that gets foiled by Reuben. V'yishma Reuven. Reuben is the oldest of the children, the oldest child of Leah, the bechor, the first born child over here. So Reuven hears this, Vayatzilehu miyadam, and he actually saves Joseph from the hands of their brothers by saying the following, Vayomer lo nakenu nafesh– "No. Let's not actually kill him." Vayomer alehem Reuven– "Reuven says to them," Al tishpechu-dam – "Let's not actually spill his blood." Hashlichu oto el-habor haze hasher bamidbar– "Let's throw him in this pit like you've said, but let's do so alive." V'yad al tishlechu-bo – "Let's not let our hands be upon him," Lemaan hatzil oto miyadam lahashivu el-aviv. So the quotation marks end over here. This is what Reuben said, this phrase over here, and then this over here is the narrator talking.

Why did Reuven say this? Reuven said it, Lemaan hatzil oto miyadam lahashivu el-aviv – "In order to save Joseph from their hands, to return him to their father." In other words, all of this is subterfuge. The reason why Reuven is saying this is in order to return him to their father because Reuven is pretending that he is going along with the idea to actually kill Joseph, but what Reuven wants is, Reuven wants Joseph's body in the pit alive so that, he's saying, "We'll leave him there to die." Why not just leave him

there to die, that we won't be guilty of murder outright." At least that's what he is telling the brothers.

But Reuven's own plan is that he is going to sneak back in the middle of the night and bring him back to his father; Lemaan hatzil oto miyadam lahashivu el-aviv – "In order to return him to his father," Reuven is planning on going back.

So this is the next evolution of the plan, they are not going to kill him outright. They're going to leave him in the pit to die. At this point, at least that's what the brothers think; Reuven has other plans. Okay. So that's verse 22.

Now, talking about the resonances. Let me just get a little different color marker out here. So, here are other words which resonate in the Book of Genesis. Yad al-tishlechu-bo – "Don't stretch out your hand upon him, upon this kid." That phrase, also a very distinctive phrase, that's going to be phrase #2 that appears earlier in the Book of Genesis. So where does it appear? Well fascinatingly, it's going to appear in the same story elsewhere in the Book of Genesis.

There is a story X which appears elsewhere in the Book of Genesis, and story X is going to have the reverberations of idea #1, Vayiru oto merachok – "They saw him coming from afar," and reverberations of idea #2, Yad al-tishlechu-bo – "Let's not stretch out our hands upon him."

Okay, do you get any hints so to speak yet? Do you understand what narrative I am talking about? Can you go further and see anything else in this narrative that echoes earlier in the Book of Genesis in the same narrative X? Okay, so the mystery deepens. I am going to look a little bit more in the story of Joseph being cast in the pit after verses 23, 24 and keep on reading 25, 26. Read the rest of the story and do you hear anything else? Are you going to hear a third resonance? Are you going to hear any more resonances of this other earlier mystery story, which I have been calling 'X', earlier in the Book of Genesis? See if you can come up with anything. I am kind of teasing you here and then let's reconvene the next video and I will share with you my thoughts on this.

Okay. So let's read a little bit more and see if we hear any more echoes. We were up to verse 23, if I am not mistaken. Vayehi ca'asher ba Yosef el-echaiv – "And Joseph came to his brothers," Vayafshitu et- Yosef et-kutanto – "they stripped Joseph of his coat, they stripped Joseph of his special coat" et-ketonet hapasim asher alav – "special coat that he was wearing." Vayikachuhu – "They grabbed him", Vayashlichu oto haborah– "They cast him into the pit," V'habor rek, ein bo mayim – "and the pit was empty. There was no water in it." Let's go a little bit further to the next verse, verse 25, Vayeshvu le'echol lechem– "They sat down to eat bread," Vayisu eineihem vayiru– "and then they lifted up their eyes and they saw," V'hineh orchat Yishmelim baah migilead– "and behold, there was a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead," Ugemaleihem nosim nechot utzeri valot – "and their camels were carrying all sorts of incense," holcim lehorid mitzraymah – "to bring them down to Egypt."

Vayomer Yehudah el-echav– "Yehudah then speaks up and says to his brothers," Mah-betza ki naharog et-achinu v'chisinu et-damo? – "What do we really gain about killing our brother and covering up his blood?" Remember, Yehudah doesn't know that Reuven is planning on saving him. Yehudah assumes that the plan is that we are going to kill him, just not directly; we're going to leave him to die in the pit. So Yehudah says, "Why should we let him die? Why should we let him die at all? What do we really gain? What profit do we have out of it?" Lechu v'nimkirenu layishmelim – "Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites," V'yadenu al-tehi-bo – "That way our hand won't be upon him." It's true, we won't be directly killing him anyway; we'll only be indirectly killing him according to Reuven's plan. But why should our hand be upon him to kill him at all? We can get rid of him in other ways. After all, Ki-achinu besarenu hu– "He is after all, our brother, and if he is our brother, it wouldn't be right to kill him." Vayishmeu echav– "And the brothers listened to him and they agreed with him." So Judah now creates plan number three, right? If plan number one was to kill him, and then plan number two was Reuben's plan which is, "Let's not kill him directly, but we will leave him in the pit to die." Plan number three is Judah's plan which is, "No, we're not going to kill him at all. Let's change the plan and let's sell him to this passing caravan of Ishmaelites."

Now, right at the beginning of plan three over here, you have these words which resonate earlier in Genesis. Vayisu eineihem vayiru – "And they lifted up their eyes and they saw," V'hineh – "And behold, the caravan of Ishmaelites were coming." Turns out that this is the third resonance of that other story we were talking about; the X story. Vayisu eineihem vayiru – "And they lifted up their eyes and saw," Hineni– "and behold." The only thing that's happening in this other story is that we're not talking about groups of people; we're talking about single people. So therefore, since we're only talking about one person, you're not going to get the 'vav's over here. All this language is going to convert to singular verbs and singular nouns as opposed to plural, so that can throw you off a little bit, but I am giving you a hint. If you look back on this language that we have seen, one, two and three, here is one and two again, and here is three again; as you look at all that language, what else in the book of Genesis does it reminds you of? What other story in the Book of Genesis does it remind you of?

I will give you one other hint and this will help you perhaps get it. If we go back to the earlier verses when Jacob first sends Joseph we'll hear, again, echoes from earlier in the Book of Genesis, of that same story X. Can we find them over here? Let's read one more time, Jacob sending Joseph out to check on his brothers. Vayomer Yisrael el-Yosef halo acheicha roim bishechem– "Aren't your brothers shepherding in Shechem?" Lechah v'eshlachacha aleihem– "I will send you to them." And then Joseph says, "Here I am." "Here I am." – Hineni. What does "Here I am" remind you of in the Book of Genesis? If we are counting, that's going to be our fourth echo. And actually, the truth is, the echoes continue even further in verse 14 over here. Vayomer lo– "And then Jacob says," Lech-na re'eh et-shlom achecha v'et-shlom hatzon– "Would you please go, go and see and check on the peace of your brothers and the peace of the sheep." This language over here, Lech-na– "go please" also is going to have its echo in our mystery story X. That's going to be our fifth echo of mystery story X.

So it's like, when you see the first echo, well maybe it's a coincidence, the second, you know, I don't know, the third, doesn't seem to be, but three, four, five echoes, it seems like something is going on. So have you identified, can you figure out what this other story is? What is this other mystery story, mystery story X? Come back next video, I will reveal it to you in case you haven't figured it out already, and let's see what we make of it all.

Well, drum roll please. It turns out that the other story that we have been referring to as 'Mystery Story X' is right over here. It's the story of the Binding of Isaac; one of the most inscrutable stories in the Book of Genesis.

Back in Genesis, Chapter 22, God tells Abraham one day to take his son, his beloved son, his only son, and take him atop a mountain and to slaughter him; to kill him and yet it is only a test. God tells him to offer him up as an offering, but then at the last minute, stays Abraham's hand. Abraham goes and travels there and binds Isaac and puts him at the top of the altar and takes out the knife, he was about to kill him and this Angel calls out from the clouds and says "Abraham, don't do it! Don't stretch out your hand against the child. Let go. Don't kill him." And at the last minute, he is spared; Isaac is spared. Abraham opens his eyes and he sees the ram and he sacrifices the ram and not Isaac.

What's going on in the story? How do we understand that? Why would God ask of a man to kill his son and to give him back when he doesn't really mean it? This is very difficult stuff and it is not the subject that we are talking about today. So I am not going to get into the theology of the Akaida, of the Binding of Isaac. We will by the way, occasionally use the word Akaida to talk about this with you. Akaida is the Hebrew word for the "Binding of Isaac". Kind of colloquial, comes from this word over here binding.

Akaida means to bind. But the story of the Akaida, the Binding of Isaac, is Mystery Story X. It's the one that we have all of these echoes and parallels from the story of Joseph. Let's go through it and you will kind of see.

I have just begun and highlighted in blue, one of these over here which is the word hineni. If you recall back in the Joseph story, we had that word; that word really resonates in the Book of Genesis, because of the Akaida. Here is the hineni over here. When Jacob says, "You know, I think I will send you out to your brothers to check on them," Joseph's response, hineni "Here I am," is an echo of Abraham's response to God, "Here I am." Two people being sent out on a mission, little known to each of them, the mission is a very, very scary mission; a very dark mission. In both cases, hineni is the response. Hineni is the response here. Hineni is the response there.

Okay. Could be a coincidence, right? Maybe there are not actually the only times hineni appears; who knows? And perhaps you could chalk it up to coincidence, except that the parallels keep on happening. Remember how Jacob had said to Joseph, Lech-na, r'aei et shalom achecha v'et shalom hatzon– "Will you please go?" Well, these innocent words over here, "please go", again find their echo again in the story of the binding of Isaac where we have this, God talking to Abraham over here, Kach-na et-benecha

et-yechidecha asher-ahavta et-yitzchak v'lech lecha – Again, "Please go." Take, please and go. Take Isaac and go. Again here, "Go please," same kind of language; not just same language, same exact language getting mirrored from the Binding of Isaac, again over here, the sale of Joseph, a good fifteen chapters later. But it continues.

And here, the resonances really come out in spades. Vayiru oto meracho. Where else in the Torah do you have that language? No other time in the five books of Moses you have that language except for right over here in the story of the Binding of Isaac. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and he sees the place from afar; he sees the place of doom. And now the brothers see Joseph coming, same language. They see him coming from afar.

And then it continues. Reuben Yad al-tishlechu-bo – "Let's not set our hands against the child." We don't have to kill him. "Let's not stretch out our hands against the child," the exact same words appearing in the Binding of Isaac when the Angel says these words to Abraham, "Don't harm him. Don't stretch out your hand against the child." Reuven, regarding Joseph, "Don't harm him. Don't stretch out your hand against the child." Again, the only time in the Book of Genesis you have this formulation.

But then it continues. There is this fifth echo. They see the caravan of Ishmaelites. Vayisu eineihem vayiru v'hineh orchat yishmelim baah miGilead – "They see the caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead and behold Joseph is saved," right? So they lift up their eyes and they see and behold; exact same language in the Binding of Isaac. Remember the end of the story, Abraham lift up his eyes and, behold, he sees something. What does he see? He sees a ram.

And the cool thing is that it's not just the language in all these cases that are similar, it's not just that there are blind phrases that echo each other. The meaning of the phrases, the context of the phrases, is all the same. In other words, exactly what these phrases are doing from a narrative standpoint, these phrases are doing. In other words, the significance of all of them is precisely the same. Let me chart it out for you.

It's not just that the words and phrases are the same, the significance of the phrase in the larger context of each story is exactly identical. What each phrase means in the larger picture of the story is the same.

For example, let's take the Sale of Joseph on the one side and the Binding of Isaac on the other. Hineni. When Joseph says, "Hineni," what was he doing? He was expressing readiness for a mission that's going to end in doom. But that's exactly the same thing that Abraham is doing when Abraham says, "Hineni"

he is doing the same thing, he is also expressing readiness for a mission that, little does he know, is going to end in doom.

And then it continues, right? Vayiru oto merachok – "When the brothers see Joseph coming from afar," what does that really mean? You have the kettle drums playing, doom is approaching. This is the dark moment of confrontation when Joseph stands and was threatened and almost killed, and similarly here. A doom is threatening; Isaac is almost killed. When Abraham sees the place from afar, what's the place? The place is the place of doom.

Similarly, when Reuven says, "Don't stretch out your hands against him," what's the significance of that? The significance is, Joseph is saved. Joseph isn't going to will not die. These are the words, it's almost like Reuven is playing the same role as Angel. What did the angel do? The angel said, "Don't stretch out your hand against him," that was the exact same thing. Isaac is saved the moment the angel says that.

And similarly over here, when they lift up their eyes and they see and behold the Ishmaelites were coming, because Yehudah thinks the plan is they are still going to kill him, but what did the Ishmaelites offer? The Ishmaelites offer an alternative; there is an alternative to death. There is another possibility.

There is something we can do instead. We can sell him as a slave and it won't be lethal and we won't kill him. Well, there is another non-lethal alternative, at least for Isaac here, too. What's the alternative? "Abraham lifts up his eyes and behold." The significance of what's happening with the lifting up his eyes and behold, is exactly the same. We are finding an alternative; an alternative to death. Isaac is not going to be killed, instead the ram will be sacrificed, not Isaac. So it's not just that we have identical phrases, we have the identical phrases mirroring the identical significance.

In both the story, the sale of Joseph, and the story of the Binding of Isaac, it seems like the Torah is going out of its way and again, in this kind of internet web-like fashion, the Torah is saying, "You want to understand the sale of Joseph? Look over here. Look at the story of the Binding of Isaac. You will see everything you need to know." How would the Binding of Isaac give us everything we need to know about the sale of Joseph? How is the Binding of Isaac offering as a commentary in the sale of Joseph?

What could that possibly mean? Is it suggesting that the sale of Joseph was some kind of test, just like Abraham was being sent out by God. It was almost like a test and everything was supposed to work out fine, that Joseph was being sent out by Jacob on some kind of test that was also to work out fine? It didn't really work out fine, right? What does it really mean? How do we understand the nature of these connections? Very, very odd. But the connections really do seem to be there. We've got to figure out, what does it mean? Do we have an inkling as to what it means?

We are going to ponder that and think about it and we'll come back and explore it. Before we do that, we have other work to do. I want to go back and try to gather some more evidence to putting together this text. We've been looking together at the verses here, and we've been focusing really on Jacob's perspective. We asked a lot of questions about Jacob. What was he doing? What did his perspective look like? He doesn't seem to be naïve, so why is he sending him out? Is it some kind of test in some sort of way? What would he be testing? These are the questions with which we have been struggling with.

Now, I want to switch gears and look at a different perspective of the whole story with you. Instead of looking at the perspective of Jacob, let's look at the perspective of Joseph's brothers. What did the story of the sale of Joseph looks like from their perspective, from the brother's perspective? Do we get any hints as to the unique kind of perspective that they may have had. Let's come back to our question, what was their rational? How did they sleep at nights? What were they doing? Did they have any kind of way of rationalizing themselves, anyway of making sense out of what it was that they were doing? I do think they had such a way. I think the text gives us some inklings to what that might have been, and when we look at the brother's point of view, we may find keys that will help us to understand what the Binding of Isaac has to do with this whole story. So let's come back and explore that.

Okay. So I want to take you back to one of our very first get togethers, of many videos ago, when we said that we were going to take a look at four perspectives on the story of the sale of Joseph. We were going to look at four different vantage points to the story. You can view the story from the viewpoint of any of the four major personas in the story and these were Jacob; what does the story look like from his perspective, what does the story look like from the perspective of the brothers who sold Joseph, what did the events look like if you were Joseph himself and then the question is, what does God have to think about all of this?

So these are the four perspectives. About all these four perspectives we'll be talking about and sort of ask what were they thinking? What was Jacob thinking when he sent his son into such dangerous circumstances? Was there like a plan there? What were the brothers thinking? How they think they can get away with it? Why were they thinking they really needed to do this? What was Joseph thinking?

What did the events seem like from his perspective? How did he view what was happening to him? And then, what was God thinking about everything that was happening? So this is the general structure of what we are going to be doing here.

Until this point, we have focused on this piece of it: What's Jacob's perspective on the story? In order to get a better perspective of Jacob's view of the story, I want to start focusing on this over here, which is, what is the brother's view of the story? Okay. So we're going to start looking at events from the brother's perspective. What were they thinking? How did they understand the events of which they were a part that led up to the sale of Joseph?

Okay, so let's ask this very simple question, a very simple question of which there may be a layered answer. What cause the brother's animosity towards Joseph? Why is it that they resented him, hated him, were jealous of him? So there is kind of two levels of answer to this. There is kind of what the text says, and there is kind of what the text doesn't say, and I am going to talk a little bit more about what I mean by 'what the text doesn't say,' but let's first talk about what the text says.

So the first thing we learn, reading chapter 37, is that "Joseph brought back bad reports about the brothers," Vayave Yosef et-debatam raah el-avihem and this piece over here is certainly something which did not endear Joseph to the brothers. The text does not comment after this and say that the brothers hated him, but we can sort of surmise that it was not a good thing. The next thing that happened is that the brothers saw that their father loved Joseph, Vayiru echav ki-oto ahav avihem mikol- echav v'yisnu oto l'lo yachlu dabro leshalom. And after this it says that the brothers hated him and

couldn't speak in peace with him.

So, then the next piece in this drama as it were was when Joseph tells the brothers the first dream, the dream would seem to suggest that he is going to be ruling over them because their sheaves are bowing to his sheaves. And when he tells that dream, it says "they hated him even more." And finally, what seems to be the last piece of the puzzle, almost the straw that breaks the camel's back, is when Joseph tells the brothers and his father the second dream. And in this dream again, the second dream of rulership, this time he is telling his father, and we talked about how maybe his father's reaction solidifies the reality of this in the mind of their brothers. Father is taking this seriously and they responded with jealousy. They were jealous of him.

So, over here on the right hand side, we've got the responses of the brothers as the text gives them, and over here on the left hand side, we have the events that causes these responses; the response is they hate him, they hate him even more, they were jealous. So all of this over here, this is all what the text says. The next question is, what did the text not say. That's a part of the story, too. Okay. So what I mean by that, of course, is were there any covert concerns that the brothers had about Joseph? We've been talking about the overt concerns, the ones that are explicit in the text. Are there any covert, implied sort of concerns, things that you've learned by sort of reading between the lines, if you read carefully, but aren't explicit in the text?

So what I want you to do is go back to the beginning of Chapter 37, maybe even focus just on the beginning of it. I think you can even see it in the first two verses. It's as if the text is sort of tipping its hat. The narrator is giving you a foreshadow of sort of one of these covert concerns. Read it through and see what you think and let's compare notes.

Okay, so I had asked you to kind of read the beginning of Chapter 37 again, looking for this, some of the implied reasons for animosity that seems to sort of emerged from the text that aren't actually explicit . So let's see what we find. Again, just want to go back to the beginning of the text, beginning of Chapter 37 here. Vayashav Yaakov b'eretz megurei aviv b'eretz kenaan – So Jacob was dwelling in the land that his fathers had only sojourned in, the land that his father was gerim, were strangers in b'eretz kenaan Canaan, and Jacob was settling down and he hoped that he would the one, he would be the forefather who would be able to sort of fulfill this promise of Abraham that he was going to inherit the land. Of course, little did he know that he was on his way down to Egypt, but that's the story that we are reading here that begins in Chapter 37.

So we get this interlude eleh toldot Yaakov– "These are the generations of Jacob; Joseph, Yosef ben sheva esreh shanah, and I mentioned this to you back at the very beginning how jarring this is, that when you originally hear this point, "these are the generations of Jacob", you expect to hear about all of his children but you don't; you only hear about one child, and that one child is Joseph. Yosef ben sheva esreh shanah – "Joseph was seventeen years old", haya roeh et-echav batzon – so the brothers are mentioned over here but they are mentioned in an ancillary way. Joseph is the focus; the spotlight is on him. And that seems to sort of presage everything which comes next, which is that in fact the spotlight is on Joseph from Jacob's perspective.

Now, it turns out that we weren't the only ones who noticed this; the Midrash, the most ancient form of rabbinic commentary, picks up on this also; Rashi actually quotes it. And the Midrash actually asks this question, which is, "why is it that the text focuses specifically on Joseph this way? Why is it that the text looks at Joseph as the prime descendent, so to speak, the prime child so to speak, so to speak, of Jacob?" And the Midrash gives a very interesting answer. I am going to quote it for you in Hebrew over here, I am actually going to quote Rashi comments on it, and let's kind of go through it.

One of the things you are going to see as we go through this, is that the Midrash talks about three different reasons for why the verse would do this, why the verse would hang this idea of the generations of Jacob being specifically on Joseph. Here is a general rule I think when approaching something like this in the text, when approaching something like this in Rashi, which is that whenever you have a whole bunch of explanations of something, you can do one of two things. Let's say you have an idea over here, and then say a commentator or text or something, are going to give you like three different explanation of the idea.

Now this is point, there is a couple of interesting things you can do. One of the things we typically do is we talk about how these three explanations are different; how do they differ from one another. Another really interesting thing you could do is, you could talk about how they are all the same which is that even though overtly this is different, this is an X and this is a Y and this is a Z, sometimes what's fascinating to ask, "is there a common set of assumptions which is shared by both X Y and Z?" This circle is going to equal what we are going to call a 'common assumption'. Is there any common denominator between all of these? Sometimes if you look carefully, you will find the stuff, and sometimes that's more interesting than what's different about the various explanations because what you are

showing is that even though there are arguments, that the arguments are more superficial than they seem because there is a certain unstated common assumption which all of these explanation are sharing. And I think that's the case here when we get to these three things in Rashi. So I am going to read through this and I want to ask you, what you, what do you think the common thing that emerges from all of them are?

So here are the three reasons why according to Rashi, why according to the Midrash, the verse hangs the generations of Jacob specifically on Joseph. Midrash Aggadah Doresh – The Midrash Aggadah Doresh says, I am reading right over here, teleh haketuv toldot Yaakov b'Yosef– I don't have a ready, handy translation here, so I am just going to translate it freely, you just have to put up with the Hebrew if you are not a native Hebrew speaker here. Teleh haketuv toldot Yaakov b'Yosef – The reason why, this word is hang over here, the reason why the verse hangs specifically, the generations of Jacob specifically upon Joseph mipenei kamah devarim for a lot or reasons.

Here is the first reason. Shekol otzmu Yaakov lo avar etzel lavan ele berachel – Because look, Jacob in the first place, he had always worked for Laban specifically for Rachel. Rachel had been the wife that he had wanted to marry from the beginning and Joseph is Rachel's child, he's never been trying to marry Leah, he was tricked into marrying Leah. That is one reason why the verse sees Joseph as the toldot, the generation of Jacob in particular.

Here is reason number two over here. U'shehayah ziv ukunin shel Yosef domah lo– This is a fancy Aramaic term that really means that the way his facial features, the face contours of Joseph looks just like him. This over here is a play on words of something a later verse says, which is that Joseph was loved because he was a ben zekunin, because he was a child of his old age and this is a Midrashic play on words which is that his features, the features of Joseph looks like Jacob.

And here is the third reason over here. This over here is reason number one, this over here is reason number two, and here is reason number three. Kol mah she'ira l'Yaakov ira l'Yosef – historically, as Jacob was looking at Joseph, he notices that everything that kind of happened to Jacob himself in his life, also happened to Joseph in his life, v'zeh nistam v'zeh nistam - "this one was hated by his brother and this one was hated by his brothers", of course Jacob was hated by Esau, and Joseph is hated by the other brothers. Also in particular, this particular language for 'hate', of course in Hebrew you can have the regular language for 'hate' which is sone, and that's a very common word in the Bible, but a very uncommon word is this word over here, which is satam, let me spell it for you right here, sin, tet, mem .שטםAnd satam, a very kind of vigorous hatred, a hatred that sort of simmers over time and doesn't go away, actually seems to be used only twice in the Book of Genesis; one of course with Jacob and Esau and that story, and one with Joseph and the story of Joseph with his brothers. So the Midrash picks out v'zeh nistam v'zeh nistam, this one was the victim of sitmah which is Jacob and then Joseph is also the victim of that particular kind of hatred. Zeh echav mevakesh lehorgo v'zeh echav mevakshim lehorgo – This one, his brothers tried to kill him. In other words, I , myself Jacob, my brothers tried to kill me, the brothers tried to kill Joseph, and then there are other examples of this, of various things that happened in Jacob's life, that seems to echo in Joseph's life.

So these are the three things, the three reasons why according to the Midrash, the verse goes and specifically sees Joseph as the generations of Jacob; (a) Jacob always wanted to marry Rachel (b) the facial features of Joseph were just like Jacob's and (c) everything that had happened historically in Jacob's life is happening now in Joseph's life. So what I want you to think about is how are these three things not different, we talked about how they're different, but how are they kind of all the same? What's the common denominator of all these things? So think about that for a moment and let's come back and talk about that.

So I had asked you to speculate about a common denominator that seems to emerge from these three things that the Medrash says about why it is that the Torah ascribes in particular the generations of Jacob to Joseph. What is that common denominator? Let me just give you what it is that I think. Rachel had been the only one that Jacob had always wanted to marry and here Joseph is the child of Rachel. Then I look at Joseph and, gee, he just looks just like me. I look in the mirror and it's like I'm looking at myself. Then these events that are happening in Joseph's life, they just sound eerily similar to these events that happened in my own life. So when I'm looking at Joseph what am I really looking at? The answer is Jacob is looking at himself. But he's looking at himself in the next generation.

It's as if here's Jacob up here and then a generation later here is Joseph and Joseph just reminds Jacob of himself. It's as if Joseph is, like, destined to carry forward Jacob's legacy. Maybe that's a really good word here: legacy. Jacob sees Joseph as his legacy, the one who is going to, sort of, fill his shoes in the next generation. He looks just like me, he's the child of the woman I always wanted to marry, and strangely, everything that happens to him seems to have happened to me. It's as if I'm looking at him and kind of looking at myself transported forward kind of into the next generation.

Now, of course, there's a word for this in Hebrew, and the word for it is Bechor. In Hebrew, especially in the Book of Genesis, in the Book of Bereishit, the theme of Bechor is almost the overriding theme in the whole book. Almost all of the conflict revolves around it, and seemingly, that the final conflict in the book, the conflict between Joseph and his brothers, also revolves around it. You have the story of Cain and Abel. Cain is the Bechor. He's the oldest one. Abel seems to supersede him. You have Yitzchak and Yishmael - Isaac and Ishmael, later on, the children of Abraham. Once again, who is the oldest? It's Ishmael. But once again who carries on the legacy, it's Isaac. A generation later of course you have Yaakov and Eisav - Jacob and Esau themselves. One of the best-known examples of this, of course, Esau, the firstborn, Jacob the one who ends up carrying on the legacy of Father. Then, Jacob's own children. It seems to like be happening again. There's Joseph and then there's the other brothers. Reuven is the oldest brother, a child of Leah, but once again it seems like Joseph is the one who is being treated as the firstborn, being treated as if he's the one who is going to carry on Jacob's legacy.

Maybe one of the tensions or questions in Sefer Bereishit, in the Book of Genesis, is always this question of what does it really mean to be firstborn? Can you be firstborn without actually being the first one who was born? That's really the question in all of these stories.

Then when you think of this question which is, is Joseph the firstborn, is Joseph the Bechor, that's

actually not such an easy question to answer. It's actually a little bit murky, isn't it? Why is the answer to this so unclear? Well, on the one hand, Joseph is clearly not the firstborn because Jacob has children who are older - notably his firstborn child, as I mentioned before, is in fact Reuven. But viewed in another kind of way, you could really sort of, kind of, make the argument that Joseph is the firstborn, that he in fact is the firstborn. Why? Because remember Jacob has two wives, so his firstborn child from Leah, the wife that he first marries, actually ends up being Reuven. But - and here's the rub - his firstborn child from Rachel, the wife he had always wanted to marry, the wife that he married second, that ends up being Joseph. So, in a way, sort of, kind of, Joseph is the firstborn. He is the firstborn of Rachel, the wife that Jacob always wanted to marry.

Again, coming back to the Medrash, I had always wanted to marry Rachel, the Medrash is saying. It's almost as if Jacob says, "Well yeah, this doesn't really count, this - I was tricked into this, but this is the child that I was always meant to have. This is the woman I was always meant to marry. Joseph is my real firstborn.

So is it possible that Jacob is treating Joseph as his real firstborn? This, I think, is the really intriguing question, and if you think about the implications of all of this, I think the implications, as far as the question of animosity between Joseph and his brothers, are really pretty significant. It almost all comes down to that first sentence of the story; These are the generation of Jacob: Joseph. You wonder well what about everybody else?

Especially if you put yourself in the shoes - we're talking about the brothers' perspective - put yourself in the shoes of the brothers, if it's really true that Jacob is treating Joseph as his firstborn, as almost like this is what the coat symbolizes - you remember the special coat - that you're going to be my firstborn, if that's true, if you are Reuven, or one of these older children of Leah, what does that mean to you? If you think about it, to give a very - almost crass - analogy, the only thing worse than insulting a kid on the playground is insulting their mother. It's like, I feel like I have to stand up for the rights of my mother.

It's like you're telling me that Joseph is the firstborn, that it's like you didn't have any children before Joseph? Like all of us are chopped liver, we don't count? Not just that we don't count, is that Leah doesn't count. It's that it's almost like she doesn't matter. She didn't even exist. That the only one here is the woman that you were always supposed to marry, Rachel, and this is your firstborn child. Like none of us existed and Leah didn't even exist?

So if this is really true, if this theory is really true, that Jacob is treating Joseph as his firstborn, it's a pretty significant deal. Now the question is, is this true? There's a Midrash that suggests it's true, but only suggests it's true. Is there any other evidence for this? I actually think there is. I want you to look carefully at the story, read through Chapter 37 again. Is there any other evidence for this idea that Jacob

seems to be treating Joseph as his firstborn? We're going to come back and talk about this further, I'll see you then.

Hi everybody in a second I want to get back to this question that I left you with, which is are there any other indications perhaps that Yaakov - Jacob - is treating Joseph as if he is his Bechor - his firstborn son? But before we do, I want to just show you some kind of interesting wordplay, just about the significance of this idea of Bechor - of firstborn child. First of all before we even get to that wordplay it really is significant later on, for example in Yetziyat Mitzrayim - in the Exodus from Egypt, when the Jews come out of Egypt even then in Exodus, G-d refers to that kind of situation of redemption actually in terms of this very same idea of Bechor; Beni bechori yisrael - you, Israel are My firstborn child. There is this word.

There too by the way, it can't mean it literally, I mean, is it literally true that the Jews are the firstborn child of G-d? Are they the first nation that ever exists in the world? It's not even true, it's just like the same pattern that we have in Genesis, which is that the Bechor is not always the Bechor, is not always the firstborn, the Jews are not really the firstborn nation in the world, so to speak. But they occupy the role of the firstborn within G-d's family. Again, so to speak - that is to say, the family of nations.

What I mean by that is, again, what do we really mean when we talk about a firstborn? Talk about a firstborn what's the role of a firstborn? We talked about it in terms of legacy, and if we kind of extrapolate that to sort of the Divine and mankind, if we view mankind as the child so to speak, and the Divine so to speak as the father. So what does really G-d want to do? G-d wants to pass on His legacy or values to the next generation, to the people in the world, but how do you do that? The challenge of course is that in any family there is an inherent desire on the part of children to emulate the parents. The problem is what does it really mean to emulate the parents? If I'm a child how is it that I emulate my father? My father goes to board meetings, my father drives a car, I can't drive a car, so what do I do? In real life how do I try to be like my parent? Here is where you have the crucial of a Bechor, here is where you have the crucial role of the firstborn. What the firstborn does is provide a kind of bridge, to bridge the generation gap. The firstborn takes the parent's agenda and lives it in the world of the child. This is what it means to be like our father in a child's world, so to speak. Then other children can say, oh that's what it means.

So the Jews are meant to be - the Jewish people is meant be G-d's Bechor in the world, which is to say, G-d cares about a relationship with all of mankind, it's not just the Jews, there's all these siblings and any parent wants to have a relationship will all of his children. The problem is what does it mean to be G-d- like? If it's a problem for any child to imitate a parent, all the more so with people trying to imitate a transcendent G-d that you can't touch, that you can't feel. So G-d says no, here's my rules, here's my laws, try to live these values in your world, the world of the child, and thereby demonstrate for the rest of the siblings kind of what it's like. That's the role of the Bechor in the world, of kind of taking the parent's legacy and bringing it to the family at large.

Here's by the way where we get to the wordplay. Let me just take you into this wordplay that I think dramatizes this within the very letters of the Hebrew words themselves. So as you may or may not know Hebrew letters have a numerical value that's known sometimes as Gematria. Now I'm not a big Gematria guy, but this is kind of interesting, so I just want to share it with you for what it's worth, you can take it

with a grain of salt, but I do want to show it to you. If you take this word over here, the word for Bechor in Hebrew and you spell it, it looks like this. The three-letter root here; Beit, Chaf, Reish. Now every Hebrew letter has a numerical value. Aleph has a numerical value of one, Beit has a numerical value of two, Gimmel three. So Beit over here which is the second letter in the Hebrew Alphabet is going to have a numerical value of two. It turns out that Chaf has a numerical value of 20, and Reish a numerical value of 200. You see the pattern over here? 2, 20, 200. These are all the twos.

Now what's kind of interesting about this is if you look at the Bechor in relationship say to father, the legacy of the father in the next generation, so of course how do you spell father in Hebrew? Aleph, Beit. Numerically of course, what is that? 1 and 2. So you see kind of the pattern over here. It's really kind of interesting. If you would graph this, you'd almost see it as the following. It's kind of like this parabola that goes like this. It starts with the singularity, the Aleph, but then goes to the Beit, our first 2, and then the connection between this Aleph, Beit and this Bechor, it goes to 2, to 20, to 200, and it kind of expands out. What happens is that the Bechor becomes the vehicle through which this expansion happens, this sort of geometric expansion of the values of father towards the world at large.

So just kind of an interesting wordplay, I just think it's kind of curious and interesting, and for what it's worth want to share it with you.

But I want to come back to the question which I left you with, having talked here a little bit about the significance of Bechor, are there any textual implications that suggest that this theory which I've suggested to you, which at this point is really just speculation, that Yaakov was looking to Yosef as his Bechor in the family, that this idea is actually true? Is there any other evidence that would support this? To take it out of the realm of just sort of interesting speculation coming off of this Medrashic comment.

So I want to come back to that with you in our upcoming video and I'll see you on the other side.