To this point, at this time of the year, we've been exposed to three dreams in the Torah. Ultimately, we'll be exposed to five. The three dreams, of course, are [Jacob's dream](https://www.alephbeta.org/playlist/jacobs-dream), [Joseph's two dreams](https://www.alephbeta.org/playlist/how-does-god-speak-to-us) and then next week we'll hear about [Pharaoh's two dreams](https://www.alephbeta.org/playlist/how-does-god-speak-to-us). Just right there, you have an interesting kind of symmetry in that the first dream occurs for Jacob and the second two dreams occur, of all people, with his son and then the third set of dreams occur with Pharaoh, who has a father-like relationship to Joseph. It's almost like you have father, son, father. Then, that's it for dreams. It makes you wonder whether at some level the dreams of these people are related to each other. They don't seem to be related at first blush, but I think a closer look yields that they might be.

When we start with the first dreams, first of all, what's interesting is that if the dreams of Jacob and the dreams of Joseph are related, the first most obvious thing to notice is that Jacob has one dream and Joseph has two. If at some level they're related, the question then is why one dream and two dreams. But why would we think that the dreams of Jacob are related to the dreams of Joseph other than the fact that simply the coincidence of the fact that father and son are both dreaming and we never hear of dreams really before or after so much in the Torah aside from that. A good reason to believe that they might be related is that some of the themes in Jacob's dream sort of reemerge in Joseph's dreams.

Let's just think about Jacob's dream. In Jacob's dream, what do you have? You have it up on the screen over here so let's take a quick look at the dream. "Vayachalom v'hinei sulam mutzav artzah v'rosho magi'a hashamaymah," he dreamt and there was this ladder that was stretching up to heaven and its head was in heaven and there were angels that were going up and down it. "V'hinei Hashem nitzav alav" and there was God on top of the ladder and God spoke to Jacob and said I am the God of Abraham, your father, and the God of Isaac. The land that I'm going to give you today "l'cha etnenah u'l'zar'echa" I will give it to you and to your children. "V'haya zar'acha k'afar ha'aretz," your children will be like the dust of the earth "u'paratztah yamah vakeidmah v'tzafonah vanegbah," and they will burst forth north, south, east and west. "V'niv'r'chu b'cha kol mishpichos ha'adamah u'v'zar'echa," and through you blessing will come to all of the world and through your children.

"V'hinei anochi imach u'shmarticha b'chol asher teileich," I will be with you. I will watch over you wherever you go. "Vahashivoticha el ha'adamah hazot" and I will ultimately bring you back to this land. "Ki lo e'ezavcha" because I will not abandon you "ad asher asiti eit asher dibarti lach" until I have done that which I have promised to you. That's the dream.

If you just think about that dream and if you just imagine that dream visually for a moment, what about that dream seems to get echoed in Joseph's dream? Here's this ladder and its head in the heavens and its feet are on the ground. Joseph seems to dream about different things. He dreams about these sheaves of wheat. He's dreaming about the sun, the moon and the stars. But if you think about it, in broad stroke, especially if you see Joseph's dream as two dreams almost like a split of Jacob's dream, how would you see Jacob's dream sort of splitting in two in Joseph's dreams?

Audience Member: Well, the sheaves of wheat are really connecting more to the ground so you have that part. And then the ladder going up to the sky.

Rabbi Fohrman: Right, isn't it interesting that one of Joseph's dreams seems to focus on the ground, specifically because there are these sheaves of wheat that are coming from the ground and people in that dream are bowing to the ground. Then in your next dream, you've got Joseph already with the sun and the moon and the stars all bowing to him so one dream is really about the heavens and the other dream is really about the earth, which is kind of interesting. Is it possible that Jacob's dream in a certain way is splitting between these two?

Along the way there are some questions that you might ask about Joseph's dream especially about Joseph's second dream. First of all, what do the dreams mean? What do all these dreams mean? Very strange dreams all of them they are full of all of these sort of psychedelic images, but if you think about Joseph's dream, one of the strange questions about Joseph's dream is what would it mean for stars to bow? Did you ever wonder about that? Think of a star. How would a star bow? A star is this little point of light. How could it bow? It's a little point of light. What would it even mean? Am I being persnickety? You think I'm being persnickety. Just, like, what would it even mean to visualize a star bowing? Do you know what I mean? It's even hard to imagine the sun and the moon bowing, but, like, for sure a star. How would stars bow, just technically how does it work? I think that question actually might give us a deep insight into the nature of the dream.

Let's stay with this idea, this possibility that Joseph's dream and Jacob's dream are connected. The real reason to believe that Joseph's and Jacob's dreams are connected, aside from the suggested aspect of the fact that Joseph's two dreams focus on heaven and earth, is a verb. The verb you can see right over here. It comes up twice in the Jacob story and it is the verb nitzav. You see it right over here. "V'hinei Hashem nitzav alav" God was standing on top of the ladder. Similarly, the ladder itself was a "sulam mutzav artzah" it was set upon the ground. So you have nitzav there in two forms, mutzav and nitzav. Lo and behold, that language shows up again in the Joseph dream.

Take a look at the Joseph dream for a second. Here's Joseph's dream. Dream Number 1, here we go. "V'hinei anachnu m'almim alumim b'toch hasadeh v'hinei kamah alumati" my sheaf got up "v'gam nitzavah" isn't that interesting? There's that word. My sheaf got up and it was standing up. Same words as Jacob's dream. Here's this ladder that stands up and here's the sheaf that stands up.

Now if you want to go further with this notion that Joseph's dreams sort of echo Jacob's dream, why don't you try this sort of psychedelic exercise of overlaying Joseph's dream visually on top of Jacob's dream and see what you get. Joseph's first dream. Just if you were to describe Jacob's dream as a modern art painting, you had to paint it, what would it look like? Let's actually just sort of paint the image. What happened?

"Hinei sulam mutzav artzah," there's this ladder. So the ladder is oriented sort of vertically. You've got this vertical orientation with the ladder. Then it's "rosho magi'a hashamaymah" its head is in heaven. Then there's these angels going up and down and it's affixed on earth. Then God comes and starts speaking to him. What's interesting is God starts speaking to him actually about the earth because what does God promise him? He says that this land that you're sleeping on, I'm going to give it to you and to

your children. He says you're going to have lots of children. So He's really making two promises here.

Let's just go back to Jacob over here. He really has two promises; the promise of land on the one hand and the promise of children on the other hand. Now so look at how comingled those promises are.

What's the metaphor that God uses to describe lots and lots of children for Jacob? What does He say? Right after He says you're going to have the land, He says "v'hayah zar'acha k'afar ha'aretz" what are your children going to be like? They're going to be just like the dust of the land. So not only are you having these two promises, children and land, but your children are going to be like the dust of the land. Almost as if those two are kind of mingled together.

Now think about projecting the image of Joseph's dream on top of Jacob's dream. How would the dreams look like each other, especially with this nitzav business? Can you imagine projecting the two? What would the ladder be in Joseph's dream? The ladder has switched and is now looking like a grain stalk. Whose grain stalk? Joseph's. If the ladder has become the grain stalk, which is vertically oriented now in the dream, so let's go a little bit farther. Here comes God in Jacob's dream and says "v'hayah zar'acha k'afar ha'aretz" you're going to have all these children. So now let's talk about historically when that happened.

Historically, when did "u'paratzta yamah vakeidmah v'tzafonah vanegbah" really take place? When did it happen that the children of Israel burst forth with this huge population explosion? The real truth is it happened in Egypt, which is strange because if you think about Jacob's dream, that's not the way it sounded like in the dream. In other words, in the dream it sounds like the land and children are sort of one. I'm going to give you the land and plus in the land, you're going to have all these children and the children are going to burst forth north, south, east and west and it's all going to be great. It is almost like you expect the promise of children and land to sort of come about simultaneously. But interestingly, that's not what happens historically.

What happens historically is our population explosion takes place in a different place than our land. The population explosion actually takes place in Egypt. And because it takes place in Egypt, it actually ends up being a mixed blessing. Almost as if that's not the way it was supposed to be. It was supposed to be that these two things happened together in the land, but that's not the way it eventually came to be.

Eventually the way it came to be is the population explosion happened in Egypt. That's the beginning of Exodus. "U'b'nei Yisrael paru vayishritzu vayirbu vaya'atzmu b'me'od me'od." Now there was a problem with the population explosion happening in Egypt. What was the problem? What did it lead to the fact that the population explosion happened there as opposed to happening in our land?

Because it happened in a foreign land, our population explosion led to paranoia on the part of the indigenous people leading Pharaoh to come together "hava nit'chakmah lo pen yirbeh v'hayah ki sikrenah milchamah v'nosaf gam hu al soneinu." Pharaoh becomes worried about this population explosion. It sort of becomes a mixed blessing leading you to wonder did something go wrong. And maybe it did.

Put yourself in Jacob's shoes. Jacob has this dream on his way to Laban's house. On his way to Laban's

house God comes to him and says everything's going to be great. You're going to have this land. You're going to have these children. It's going to be wonderful. So you're leaving, but don't worry about a thing because "lo e'ezavcha" I'm not going to leave you "ad asher asiti im asher dibarti lach" until I fulfill what I promised you. I'm not going to leave you.

If you're Jacob, therefore what do you think that means? When do you think the promise is going to happen? So you say to yourself, okay. I'm off to Laban's house. For how long am I off to Laban's house? Jacob, at this point, how long does he think he's off to Laban's house for? A few days. That's what his mommy told him. Mom said don't worry about a thing, kiddo. Esau's mad, but he's going to forget about it. Just go for "yamim achadim" just go for a few days and then don't worry about it. I'll call you back. You should go for "yamim achadim."

Then, what happens? Those "yamim achadim" stretch out and days become weeks become months and he begins to work. He begins to work for the hand of Rachel in marriage and literally as he works for her hand in marriage, it says that the years seemed in his eyes "k'yamim achadim b'ahavato otah." It seemed like just a few days. Which few days? The days that mommy told me about. It's like he's waiting for mom to call him. Mom's never sort of calling.

Then finally after 20 years, this angel comes to him in the middle of the night and says Jacob, it's time to go home. And he comes home. Here comes Jacob on his way home and what's he thinking to himself? This is the moment when the dream is coming true. I am coming home. God said that He would not leave me, that He would always be with me, that he would not leave me until I come home and it's finally happening. God is with me. Lo and behold, God appears to him on his way back in Bet El and in Bet El God comes to him at the end of Parshat Vayeitzei and says it's time for you to make an altar to the God who appeared to you in Bet El because the dream is coming true.

Now, if the dream comes true now, when does he get land and when does he get children? It's all going to be now. In other words, Jacob doesn't know history as we know it. In other words, history could have happened that way, as I think I have talked to you about before. Rav Soloveitchik's famous -- not so famous, but Rav Soloveitchik's theory that Jacob, in coming home thinks that he is the fabled fourth generation that was foretold in the Covenant of the Parts that God says the fourth generation will come home. It's up to me. It's my destiny to come home and to have all these kids.

Even, by the way, the language in the dream of "u'paratztah yamah vakeidmah v'tzafonah vanegabah" that your children will burst forth north, south, east and west, listen to that language u'paratztah, burst forth. What a strange turn of phrase. Well, who does that sort of kind of remind you of u'paratztah?

There's a guy by that name, Peretz. Almost as if that's the way it should've been. Who was going to be the one who would oversee the dawn of the Israelite nation in its land, the beginning of all these children? It was supposed to have been the child of Judah was supposed to have been Peretz. Now Peretz in the end becomes the 10th generation ancestor of Kind David, but it didn't have to be that way. It should've been, it could've been this way, but it wasn't. It wasn't because something got in the way.

The promise that was made to Jacob in Vayeitzei in this dream, the promise of land and children that was

supposed to be so intertwined that "vahayah zar'acha k'afar ha'aretz" that your children are literally going to be like the dust of the land, those promises of land and children end up splitting. And they split such that the population explosion happens at a different moment than the giving of the land. The population explosion ends up happening in Egypt when we really should've been in our own land. Because we weren't in our own land, the population explosion becomes a bittersweet blessing, ends up becoming the straw that breaks the camel's back that enslaves us which gets us put in Egypt for 400 years only eventually to come to the land.

Interesting, there was a promise of children and land for Jacob that was supposed to come together and Jacob has one dream, a dream about heaven and earth and children and land. Joseph has two dreams, a dream about heaven and then a dream about earth. Could it be that on some level Joseph's two dreams are also one dream, perhaps, is one dream about children and is one dream about land?

Think about Joseph's dream. Overlay, again, Joseph's first dream upon Jacob's dream. As you overlay that so again, as we said before the stalk of wheat seems to be the new ladder. Now let's get to what God says again. God says "v'hayah zar'acha k'afar ha'aretz" God said to Jacob. Your children are going to be like the dust of the land. Now, Joseph. What would that remind you of in Joseph's dream? What happens in Joseph's dream? Do Jacob's children become like the dust of the land in Joseph's dream and if so, how?

They bow down. And where do they bow down to? All the way to the ground. They have their faces in the dust, literally. So there's this one stalk standing up and then there are these other stalks that have all become -- that are all now down and literally like the ground, interestingly enough.

Now ask yourself so what did that dream end up meaning? It depends when you ask. At the moment when Joseph has that dream, nobody really knows exactly what the dream means. Everybody in the family sort of thinks it kind of means that Joseph's going to be in charge. They think maybe it's ego. They think that here's this kid with his imagination that's gotten a little bit out of control. But then, over time, Joseph seems to develop a new understanding of what the dream means. I talked about this in Aleph Beta course that we did on the Song of Ascents.

When does Joseph seem to begin to understand what the dream might mean, that it doesn't mean what everybody thought it meant when he was 17 years old, that there's this out of control kid that's just going to rule over everybody? Because if it meant that then why of all things would Joseph be analogized in a dream to a stalk of wheat? Joseph wasn't a wheat farmer. He was a cattle rancher. They were herdsmen. It wasn't their thing wheat. It was the one clue that the dream doesn't mean what you think it means.

When did the dream start to become an active issue for Joseph later in his life? When his brothers show up. Remember what happens when his brothers show up. His brothers show up and what's the first thing that happens? Let's actually go to that text for a second. Chapter 42. "Vayar Yosef et echav vayakireim vayitnaker aleihem vayidaber itam kashot." Joseph sees his brothers. He recognizes them and then he estranges himself from them. "Vayidaber itam kashot" he speaks harsh words for them. "Vayomer aleihem" and he says to them "mei'ayin batem" where did you guys come from. "Vayomru mei'eretz

Canaan lishbar ochel" we've come from Canaan to find food for ourselves. "Vayaker Yosef et echav v'heim lo hikiruhu" and Joseph recognized his brothers, but they didn't recognize him.

Now here's where you have to exercise one of my favorite principles, which is never read with the end in mind. The problem is you know the end of the story, but if you didn't know the end of the story, if you were reading the Torah for the very first time and you got up to here and then someone forced you to close the book and didn't let you read the next words and you had to play that famous Sesame Street game what happens next, what would you guess happens next?

Here's Joseph after all this time, the last thing that happened is the brothers threw him in a pit saying ah, here comes this dreamer. "Vayar Yosef et echav vayakireim" Joseph sees his brothers, recognizes them and then estranges himself from them. Notice how close vayitnaker is to vayakireim. It's just a little twist. He recognized them, but he estranged himself. He pulled back from them. He spoke harshly to them. He said where have you come from in an accusatory way. We've come from Canaan. And he recognized them and they didn't recognize him.

Now, what would you think is going to happen next? If you were thrown in a pit and you were Joseph and you recognize your brothers and then you estrange yourself from them, what's the rest of the story? Sorry, the safe is closed. Come back tomorrow and tomorrow there's some other guy. Franz Kafka The Trial go and bow all over these places. And you never talk -- he never sees them again. It's over. That's what you would assume would happen. But then something happens.

"Vayizkor Yosef et hachalomot asher chalam lahem." The next thing that happens is that Joseph remembers his dreams and then says "m'raglim atem lir'ot et ervat ha'aretz batem" you're spies, but then strangely even after he remembers his dreams, he's not any nicer. But then he sends them back with food despite the fact that he's not any nicer.

What happened when he remembered his dreams? Why did he remember his dreams? What did remembering his dreams do? What did that dream back then when he was 17 about the stalks of wheat, why all of the sudden is he remembering that dream? What's the trigger that's causing him to remember the dream? The answer is, the trigger is what happened in the verse before all of this?

The verse before all of this is right over here. "V'Yosef hu hashalit al ha'aretz" Joseph was in charge of all the land and then along comes the brothers of Joseph "vayishtachavu lo apayim artzah" and they bowed in front of him. Right before Joseph dismisses them, right as he's enraged with them and is going to say good bye to them last time, the last thing that happens to him is he's says oh, wait a second. They just bowed before me. If they just bowed before me, that crazy dream I had when I was 17, what do I now suspect is the case that I never knew until now?

Back when I was 17 everybody in the family thought that the dream just being the wild imaginations of a 17-year-old egomaniac kid was about a kid dreaming that he is destined to rule over his family and it's destined to happen then. No, no, no. There's a whole other possibility in the meaning of the dream. You see the dream wasn't coming true back then. The dream is happening now. The dream was talking

about now, which all of the sudden makes another thing click for Joseph. I get it. That's why I was a stalk of wheat. What am I in charge of now? All the wheat in the world. Now I understand why they're bowing. They're bowing because they're desperate for wheat and I'm the one person who can provide it. That's what the dream meant.

Now here's the interesting thing. If that's what the dream meant, what kind of guidance is it meant to give Joseph? Strangely, it doesn't give him any guidance at all. All the dream does is foretell a moment in time. This moment in time. The moment when Joseph is in charge of all the wheat and the brothers are desperate for wheat. But the question what should I do, how should I respond, the dream doesn't address.

It is interesting, you could imagine if you were the screenwriter and you could write the script for Joseph's dream and you want Joseph to have this dream now so he should know what he should do, he shouldn't have a dream of him being the stalk of wheat and all the people bowing to him. What should the dream be? The dream should be there's this big stalk of wheat, everyone's bowing and the big stalk of wheat is throwing wheat packages to everybody, giving, like, first-aid packages to everybody, Red Cross. That's what the dream should've been. Then Joseph realizes what he's supposed to do. He's supposed to take care of everybody.

If that's what the purpose of the dream was to give Joseph guidance at this moment in time, why wasn't the dream clearer? Why did the dream just portray the moment without portraying what Joseph is supposed to do? Leading, by the way, to some confusion because there is another possibility about what Joseph's supposed to do, which is what? If you were Joseph and you thought this is the moment foretold, but there was no guidance as to what you were supposed to do, you could imagine a world in which Joseph might think here are my lousy brothers that tried to kill me and now here's this moment where they're desperate, what should I do? Maybe this is my moment for revenge. Maybe this is my moment for God's sake revenge? Maybe this is it? Why doesn't the dream tell Joseph what to do? What's the answer to that question?

Audience Member: Because the first dream, I think, was just to revert back that the first dream was something that was going to happen, but now we need to look at the second.

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay, possibly. But I don't see the second dream necessarily gives him better information. Let's get answers to that question why doesn't the dream tell Joseph what to do?

Audience Member: He has to figure what to do.

Rabbi Fohrman: That's right. Because he has to figure out what to do. The dream can't tell you what to do. If the dream is predictive of the future, the dream can't predict what Joseph will do because it's not determined what Joseph will do. It's up to Joseph what he will do. All the dream, which is predictive, can do is explain outside factors. It can say one day you will find yourself in this situation. You are going to have to decide what you're going to do. However, the dream does help Joseph in one way because if you were Joseph at that moment when you saw your brothers and you were so angry at them, so angry at them that you were going to close the safe and take revenge and I stopped you and I interviewed you

and I said why are you so angry at your brothers. What would you say? Audience Member: They tried to kill me.

Rabbi Fohrman: They tried to kill me. Keep on going. Audience Member: They sold me.

Rabbi Fohrman: They sold me. They betrayed me. They ruined my family life. They uprooted me. I had a nice life as a kid in Canaan and my childhood is gone forever. They intractably ruined my life and now I'm off in a strange land. Yes, I have power, but I'd rather be in Canaan with my family with a nice life. That kind of thing. But what do you see in this dream that messes with that narrative?

The dream says that this moment was foretold. The dream says that one way or the other you're going to be in a position where you're the big stalk of wheat and where everyone else is desperate. At which point, as hard as you want, as angry as you want to be with your brothers, you have to come to grips with the fact that it wasn't just them who put you here. It was God too. And therefore how angry can you feel. Now you still don't know whether the right thing to do is to take revenge or whether the right thing to do is to give them food. You still don't have an answer to that question. But this takes enough of the edge off of your anger that you can see the possibility of feeding them. Then something else happens.

The next thing that happens is Joseph proposes a test. "B'zot tibacheinu chei Par'o" I'm going to test you. I want to see your little brother. I want to see whether you're spies. I want one of you to stay behind and the rest of you can go home. When that happens the brothers start speaking amongst themselves and say something fascinating, something which must've made an impression upon Joseph; Joseph, a brother whose name kind of means something.

What does Joseph's name mean? "Asaf Elokim et cherpati" his mother had named him. His mother shamed -- shamed perhaps by his father, felt shame at the hands of Laban and Leah, tricked on the night of her wedding. If you ever read Great Expectations by Dickens, a Miss Havisham moment. Spurned at the alter in your white dress in your wedding and having to deal with that perpetual sense of shame.

Finally "asaf Elokim et cherpati" has given her the child and you were the child named that is supposed to redeem your mother, Rachel's, shame.

Now you think what should I be doing? Should I be taking revenge against my brothers? These are the ones who wanted to bring further shame to the name of Rachel. Maybe I should take revenge. But now you overhear this conversation amongst your brothers and in that conversation they say to themselves the following.

"Aval asheimim anachnu al achinu asher ra'inu tzarat nafsho bit'chanino eileinu v'lo shamanu." We're guilty about our brother. We saw his pain in the pit. We saw his pain, but we didn't hear. That's why this terrible thing happened to us. "Vaya'an Reuven" and then Reuben said "halo amarti aleichem laimor al techet'u bayeled" didn't I tell you that you shouldn't sin against the child "v'lo shamatem" and you

didn't listen to me "gam damo hinei nidrash" now his blood is being sought "v'heim lo yad'u ki shomei'a Yosef" but they didn't know that Joseph was listening. They didn't know he understood Hebrew. Joseph went and cried and then took Simeon and imprisoned Simeon.

Why Simeon? Why Simeon of all people? The answer lies in the verses we just read. Why Simeon? What did Joseph just learn by overhearing this conversation? You see if you were Joseph who should you imprison? If you're going to imprison one person, you are going to imprison the party most responsible. Who would the party most responsible be if you didn't know anything else? It's the oldest kid. Who's the oldest kid? The oldest kid is going to be Reuben, but what did you just hear? You just heard Reuben pipe up and say I told you guys not to do it. So now you know Reuben was on your side. Who's the next guy down? Simeon. So he imprisoned Simeon. But it's more than that. Pay attention to the verbs here.

"Vayomru ish el achiv" one person said to another we are guilty of our brother "asher ra'inu tzarat nafsho bit'chanino eileinu v'lo shamanu" we saw his pain and we didn't listen to his cries. Listen to the verbs.

We saw his pain, we didn't listen to his cries. Reuben and Simeon how did they get their names? What was Reuben named for? Reuben was named for seeing. What was Simeon named for? Simeon was named for hearing. We saw his pain, but we didn't hear. It's almost like the see-er was responsive, but the hearer wasn't responsive.

"Vaya'an Reuven" and Reuben, the see-er said, I told you not to do it "v'lo shamatem" but you didn't listen. "V'heim lo yad'u" and they didn't realize "ki shomei'a Yosef" that this time someone else was listening. That's when Joseph imprisoned the listener, Simeon.

But it's more than that because if you think of the names Reuben and Simeon carefully, it's not just that one is named for seeing and one is named for hearing. What is Reuben named about for seeing and what is Simeon named about for hearing? Why exactly did Reuben get his name? What did Leah say when she named Reuben? What exactly did she say? "Ra'ah Hashem b'an'I," God has seen my suffering. God has seen my oppression. Simeon, what exactly did Leah say when she named Simeon, Simeon? "Sham'a Hashem ki snu'ah anochi" God has heard that I was hated.

Now if you were a kid that had these names and the opportunity for the Sale of Joseph rolls around, what would you think your job is? Put yourself in Reuben's shoes. Here you are. You're named by your mother for her sense of suffering, for the fact that she feels that she got a raw deal in this relationship.

Then Father favors Joseph, the child of Rachel. You're the firstborn, but no, Father has his own ideas about who the firstborn is. Joseph gets this fancy coat and Joseph is second in charge and you are second fiddle because you're the child of Leah. But you were named for your mother's suffering.

Then one day the brothers finally rally to your side. They see the usurper Joseph coming and they say here comes the dreamer and they say let's get him. And they're going to throw him in the pit. At that moment, what are you thinking, you who were named God has seen my mother's suffering? Every fiber of your being is saying this is the moment for which you were named. This is the moment where you were there to vindicate the honor of your mother, where you were there to stand up and except the

crown of the firstborn given to you by all the brothers who were going to put the usurper in jail. "Ra'ah Hashem b'an'i" God has seen my mother's suffering. But that's not what Reuben did.

Reuben instead was the brother who wasn't listened to, who against the mob said "al techet'u bayeled" do not do this. You can't do this. Why? What about his name? How did Reuben understand his name, "ra'ah Hashem b'an'i"? Rueben took an alternative understanding of his name. Reuben had a choice about how to understand his name. The alternative understanding is if my mother named me for the terrible suffering that she felt and God saw that suffering and was on her side because she was suffering and I am named for that, then what's my job? My job is that when I see someone suffering, no matter who that is, I stand up and try not to allow it to happen. That's how I vindicate my mother's name even if it's the rival brother because right now he's screaming. That's how Reuben saw his name.

Simeon chose to see his name differently. "Sham'a Hashem ki snu'ah anochi" he saw it in a partisan way. God heard the suffering, saw that my mother was hated and therefore I am on my mother's side and it's up to me to choose vengeance.

Fascinatingly, the same choice Joseph has about how to deal with his brothers at this moment. He now sees played out in Reuben and Simeon, in their discussion right now, these are the two options. Revenge or no, if you see someone suffering, you act even though it's the other side. He looks at that and says I kind of like what Reuben did. Imprison Simeon and then what does he do? He's still not sure. He's still taunting his brothers, but he sends them back with food. He says I will be there for them and he sends them back with food.

Then later on when he reveals himself to his brothers in the beginning of Vayigash when he reveals himself finally to his brothers, listen to that language. "V'lo yachol Yosef l'hit'apeik" Joseph couldn't hold himself back anymore "l'chol hanitzavim alav" oh, there's that word again back from Jacob's dream, back from his own dream. He was the stalk that was standing. There was only one stalk that was standing and all the other stalks were bowing and now there's attendants who were also standing, Egyptians, and he says this is the moment where I reveal myself. There can't be anyone else standing. That's not the way it was in the dream and he dismisses all the other nitzavim alav. "Vayitein et kolo bib'chi vayishmi'u Mitzrayim vayishma beit Par'o" and he says "hotzi'u kol ish mei'alai."

I have to tell you something chilling, by the way. When I was researching this, I was researching this in a Google Doc and in a Google Doc -- the difference between a Google Doc and this setup over here is that in a Google Doc the underlying text is malleable so you can change the underlying text in the Torah, if you want to, because it's not a PDF that you can't erase things. So I'm working with this text and I accidentally hit the space bar and I erased the space between two words pushing them together to be one word. I noticed that and I was about to reinsert the space when I looked at the two words that I just put together accidentally. The two words were ish and mei'alai right here in this verse when he says "hotzi'u kol ish mei'alai" make everyone go away when he puts himself before the brothers.

Before I could put the space, I just read it as one word. When you read it as one word "hotzi'u kol ish mei'alai" Aleph-Yud-Shin-Mem-Ayin-Lamed-Yud what is it spelling? "Hotzi'u kol Ishma'eili" why

Ishmaelites? What does Ishmaelites have to do with all this? How did he get down to Egypt? It was the caravan of Ishmaelites.

What is he saying to himself as he reveals himself to his brothers? In "hotzi'u kol ish mei'alai" get all these people out. He's talking to himself and he's saying you can't be so angry at these brothers. He is about to say to them "al yichar b'eineichem ki m'chartem oti heina" don't be angry that you sold me. It was God. God did it. It wasn't just you. I know it. I know it from my dream.

The other thing he tells himself who's the other people he could have been angry at? The Ishmaelites in those caravans. "Hotzi'u kol Ishma'eili mei'alai" it's as if he is telling himself it wasn't the darn Ishmaelites either. It wasn't my brothers. It wasn't the Ishmaelites. It wasn't anything else. It was really God. I had to have been brought down here. He's wrestling with his feelings with his brothers and finally coming out on Reuben's side, for real. He's done with the taunting. He's done with the playing with them. He's just I'm here to take care of you. I'm here to take care of you.

Now coming back to Jacob's dream and Joseph's dream, if you overlay Joseph's dream on top of Jacob's dream, it's almost as if here is this image of how the Jewish nation is going to come to be. There's this ladder and in the next generation the ladder becomes the stalk, this upright stalk. "Hayah zar'acha k'afar ha'aretz" your children are like the dust of the land "u'paratzta" they're going to burst forth "yamah vakeidmah v'tzafonah vanegbah." Now maybe in one telling of that story, before the Sale of Joseph, that would've happened u'paratzta in the times of Peretz. It would've happened in Israel where land and children would've come together, but that wasn't to be anymore after the Sale of Joseph.

The Sale of Joseph brought the people down to Egypt and therefore these things would be split. It would be a long time until we got the land, but we would start becoming a nation except it would happen in someone else's land. That's part of what would enslave us. But in a way it's better than the alternative because the alternative was famine. How did we have the resources to be u'paratzta yamah vakeidmah v'tzafonah vanegbah" to burst forth? Where did that population explosion come from? How come we had so many kids? Why did we have so many kids?

The answer is actually found in Vayigash. If you look just a little before in Vayigash, the population explosion actually takes place -- remember at the end of Vayigash there's this moment where Joseph finally settles the people into the land. He gives them food. It says he gave them "lechem l'fi hataf" but then you hear about these poor Egyptians and they are starving and they're selling everything, but Joseph's giving this food to these 11 people. It's almost like Joseph makes this choice. It was a choice in which he expressed loyalty to his brothers.

At the time, it made sense which is, you know, if you were Joseph and you're in the castle and you have your Excel spreadsheet in front of you and you're figuring out how many metric tons of grain you have. You come to the conclusion that you've got enough grain to get everybody through with about 1400 calories a day with about a three percent mortality rate if you give everybody those 1400 calories. But then you say to yourself, I've got 11 brothers. Should I give them just 1400 calories a day or maybe I should give them 1600 calories a day, 1700 calories a day? You could understand giving your brothers

1700 calories a day.

In the end that's what Joseph did and with those extra calories, the text says "vayifru vayirbu me'od" they had lots of kids when nobody else did because they didn't have the food. Now at the time, the Egyptians were totally okay with it, but a generation or two later looking back on the population explosion, they're not okay with it anymore. Pharaoh looks and the Pharaoh who doesn't remember Joseph all of the sudden is worried "pen nosaf gam hu al soneinu" a Joseph word. It's almost like I'm forgetting Joseph, but I remember him and wasn't this population explosion because of Joseph. This is the last time we're going to need a Joseph and Jews to take us through a famine. He enslaves the people and what does he enslave them with? What does he make them do? Build storehouses. Why storehouses of all things?

Never again. Never again are we going to have to come onto someone else to take us through a famine.

At the time, it was an act of love. It was an act of loyalty that Joseph was doing for his brothers. In the end, Jacob's dream became actualized through Joseph's dream. The ladder became a stalk. The "zar'acha k'afar ha'aretz" the other people, they bowed. And when they were desperate for wheat, Joseph did not allow the instinct for revenge to take over to his great credit. He saw the example of Reuben and said I want to be like that. In the end, he chose to feed his brothers. Through his decision, and his decision only about how to interpret that dream, his own dream that said there would be this moment when they're desperate for wheat and his response in the affirmative and I will feed them and that's what I'm here for; to feed them. He became the engine of "v'hayah zar'acha k'afar ha'aretz" "u'paratzta yamah vakeidmah v'tzafonah vanegbah." He became the engine for the growth of the people.

I want to close with the notion that in so doing when the ladder became the stalk or the stalk became the ladder, think about what it means to become the ladder? What was the ladder? The heaven on top, there's earth on bottom, what does the ladder do? It connects them. Maybe that's the destiny. It's the destiny of the people. The people's destiny in one way or another, they're mission statement if you had to combine -- put the mission statement in one image, in one visceral image, an image that's worth a thousand words, the mission statement is the ladder. The mission statement is your job is to connect heaven and earth. It's not a job that God can do. God needs a nation to do it. God's up in heaven. Only people can connect heaven and earth.

The challenge for Jacob is -- right now you're Jacob and you see a ladder that's external to you, can you become the ladder? The very first person who did was Joseph. How did Joseph do it? How did Joseph connect heaven and earth?

The first thing he did is he took messages from heaven and he was able to interpret the dream of Pharaoh, something that was off in heaven that Pharaoh didn't know what it meant, and he was able to explain it. When he was able to explain it, he was able to concretize the meaning of what that dream is in terms of administrative details. Here's what we actually need to do to survive these years. He was able to take something ethereal in heaven and make it very concrete and earthly. Because he did, what did Pharaoh say? "Acharei hodi'a Elokim otcha et kol zot" if God made known all this to you "ein navon v'chacham kamocha" you are the great wise and intelligent man. You've been able to sort of connect

heaven and earth.

The next way Joseph connects heaven and earth is through a moral choice. He chooses to feed his brothers and to take care of them and to take abundance fertility coming from the heavens and to share it with his brothers rather than wreaking revenge on them and in that way becomes another connector between heaven and earth. When that happens all of the sudden the ladder isn't external to the people anymore; the ladder is the people. The ladder is Joseph. He is the first connecter between heaven and earth leading to his second dream and with this I'll close.

The image in the second dream. The riddle of the bowing stars. What a strange thing? What would it even look for stars to bow? But now think about it. If you became the ladder, if the ladder weren't external to you, but you were the first manifestation of someone becoming the ladder, what would it mean to become the ladder? According to Jacob's dream, what did the ladder look like? "Hinei sulam mutzav artzah" the ladder had its feet on the ground and where was its head? Its head was in heaven. Now think about Joseph's second dream.

How could you imagine stars bowing to you? When you're a regular person and you look at the stars, where do you look to see the stars? Up. But what if your head were in heaven? What if you were the ladder? Then where would you look to see the sun and the moon and the stars? You wouldn't look up anymore. You'd be in heaven. You'd look across. In the act of becoming of the ladder from your perspective -- it's a perspective switch -- would cause an optical allusion. What would it look like as you became the ladder? You would go from seeing the stars vertically above you, all of the sudden the stars wouldn't look vertically above you. What would they look like? They would look like they'd be coming down. All the stars and the sun and the moon, they'd be looking horizontal. What would it look like just happened to you? The stars and the moon and the sun all bowed to me. That's what it would look like.

The second dream says that when you actualize -- when you choose -- the first dream puts a choice in front of you. What are you going to do when the brothers come to you desperate for food? Are you going to take revenge or are you going to feed them? Only one of those answers will bridge heaven and earth, but if you choose the answer that bridges heaven and earth, you become the ladder and all of the sudden it looks like the sun and the moon and the stars all bow to you. It looks like your eyes are in heaven.

This is sort of part one of how the ladder becomes a recurring theme in our life. When I come back next time with you what I want to show you is that there's another moment in Jewish history involving Joseph and the sun and the moon and the stars. It actually involves -- when else in Jewish history do we meet the sun and the moon and the stars? When else is there a moment when it almost seems like the sun and the moon and the stars obey the word of man? When does that happen in Tanach?

It happens only once in the Book of Joshua in the battle right in the middle of the Book of Joshua. "Shemesh b'Giv'on dom v'yarei'ach b'Eimek Ayalon." In that battle, the text itself says something happens which never again happens which is that the army of heaven take their orders from a person.

Isn't it interesting that Joshua comes, of all people, from the tribe of Ephraim, from Joseph of all people? Was that what Joseph was dreaming about in the long term, that moment? If so, it would seem that that moment is a moment when we as a nation, not just Joseph as a person, but we as a nation begin to express the moral heroism that makes us that ladder with its head in the stars such that we would be equals with the sun and the moon and the stars, that they would listen to us, that they wouldn't be impervious to us. There was a hidden act of heroism at that moment that somehow mimicked the acts of heroism of Joseph, but on the international stage.

When we come back, I want to look at that story in the Book of Joshua and see it in relationship to Joseph's dream and Jacob's.

This is the second in a so far two-part series on the permutations of Jacob's dream throughout Tanach. We have a lot on our plate tonight so let me jump in and see if we can get started.

Last week or two weeks ago, I suggested to you the beginning of a theory that Jacob's dream, sort of, bifurcates into two dreams in the next generation. We talked about the possible relationships between Joseph's two dreams and Jacob's dream and I suggested to you that, in a way, Joseph's two dreams can almost seem as if Jacob's dream has fractured into two and broken apart into two.

If you think about the great promise of Jacob's dream, as we have it here, we can summarize it -- let's go back to the language of the dream. It's 28 -- there are these angels going up and down, there's this ladder that's "mutzav artzah v'rosho magi'a hashamaymah," with its top in the heavens and God is on top of the ladder and God makes him this promise. He says the land that I'm giving to you, the land which you're sleeping on I'm going to give to your progeny and your progeny are going to be like the dust of the earth and they'll burst forth north, south, east and west and through you, blessing will come to the world.

The two main promises here are the promise of land and the promise of children. In essence, they come together and they are the promise of nationhood. If you think about what nationhood is it's a sovereign people on a land. You can't have a nation without lots of people, you can't have a nation without land and you can't have a nation without those people having sovereignty over the land. It's really what God is promising Jacob here.

He also adds something else. "V'hinei anochi imach u'shmarticha b'chol asher teilech," I'll be with you and I'll watch over you wherever you go, "v'hashivoticha el ha'adamah hazot," and I will ultimately bring you back here, "ki lo e'ezavcha ad asher asati et asher dibarti lach," because I will not leave you until I'm finished doing that which I told to you.

Now, this is an interesting promise because Jacob right now is on his way out of the land. God is saying to him I'm going to give you the land, I'm going to give you the children, but it's not happening now. Now, you're leaving, but don't worry even as you leave I'm going to be with you. Again, what does he say? "Hinei anochi imach," I will be with you as you leave, "u'shmarticha," I will watch over you as you leave and, "v'hashivoticha el ha'adamah hazot," and I will ultimately bring you back. This is the promise; land and children. Not now, you're leaving, but I'm going to watch over you and I'm ultimately going to bring you back.

How long would it be until Jacob came back? Well, what does Jacob think at this point? His mom told him that you're just leaving for a few days. It's just going to be "yamim achadim," it's just going to be a few days until Esau cools down a little bit then I'll call for you. Of course, days stretch into weeks and weeks stretch into months and months stretch into years and Jacob works for seven years for Rachel and then another seven years for Leah. As he's working for her, the text goes out of its way to tell us "vayihiyu k'yamim achadim b'ahavato otah," it seemed like just a few days; those years that he was working for Rachel.

Which few days? The same words here are the words which were used to describe the few days that mom said it would be until I got you. Right? Mom said it was just going to be a few days. It seemed like those few days as the weeks stretched into months and the months stretched into years, but mom never called to him because presumably, Esau didn't get over it that quickly and years later Esau is still angry and Jacob finally comes home. Decades later, 21 years later, Jacob comes home and it looks like the promise is happening.

Let's fast forward to that moment if we can. God comes to Jacob on his way back from Beit El and says, "kum alei Beit El" -- on his way back from Laban's house -- and he says "kum alei Beit El," it's time to go up to Beit El, "v'shev sham," it's time to return there, to settle there and "va'asei sham mizbei'ach laKeil hanir'eh eileicha b'varchacha m'p'nei Eisav achicha," it's time for you to make an altar for the God who appeared to you when you ran away from Esau.

In other words, God is intimating that the promise is being fulfilled; you're coming home now. This is the moment. Jacob thinks this is the moment. He's coming home. So what happens? God appears to him, at that point, and says the following. You're getting a name change from Jacob to Israel and then he says these words "Ani Keil Shakai," I am the God Shakai, "p'rei u'r'vei," be fruitful and multiply, "goy u'kehal goyim yih'yeh mimeka u'melachim meichalatzecha yeitzei'u," a nation and many nations will come from you and kings will come from you. "V'et ha'aretz asher natati l'Avraham u'l'Yitzchak lecha etnenah u'l'zar'acha," the land that I promised to Abraham and Isaac I'm going to give it to you; I'm going to give you that land.

If you think about it, what is God promising him now in Beit El? Remember, he's in the same place now that he was before when he was running away from his brother; he's returning there. He's coming home and God is reiterating the promise. Which promise? The promise of children and the promise of land.

I'm going to give you this land and you're going to have children. Except if you look carefully God changes the promise slightly from the last time around in the dream.

How's the promise just a little bit different this time around, 21 years later, when Jacob is coming home? Listen carefully. "Vayomer lo Elokim Ani Keil Shakai," I am the God, Shakai, "p'rei u'r'vei," be fruitful and multiply a nation and many nations will come from you and kings will come from you and I'm giving you this land. What changed? How is this different than the promise at the time of the dream, the first time in Beit El? Anybody?

Audience Member: "U'melachim meichalatzecha yeitzei'u."

Rabbi David Fohrman: First of all, no mention of kings the last time so all of a sudden there's a mention of kings. Remember, nationhood really has, sort of, three parts to it. Part one, lots of people; part two, land, but lots of people and land does not a nation make. There's something else you have to have which is sovereignty over that land. You have to have some sort of system of governance which brings together. A million people milling around on a land is not a nation. Those people have to be organized politically in a way that gives them sovereignty over the land and some sense of governance in order to be a nation.

God is saying okay and I'm giving you that last piece also, "malachim meichalatzecha yeitzei'u," the kings are going to come from you. But here's the funny thing. These promises are now phrased as commands and in the future tense. You see, if you were Jacob that would have seemed, kind of, strange because how many kids does Jacob have at this point? He has --

Audience Member: Fourteen.

Well, he has actually 11 kids right now. Well, 11 plus Dinah, but there are 11 boys and the only one who hasn't been born yet is Benjamin. So if I'm Jacob, I'm thinking it's like I've gotten my kids, do you know what I mean? What do you mean "p'rei u'r'vei"? "P'rei u'r'vei" is a command; be fruitful and multiply.

It's, like, I've already done that. Hello? Do you see these kids, right? It's, like -- you know what I mean

-- how many kids do you want me to have? That's one question and the other is "u'malachim meichalatzecha yeitzei'u," kings are going to come from you. Listen to that future tense. Kings are going to come from you as if, like, they haven't been born yet.

Now, of course, if I'm Jacob then, this sounding like I should be having another kid or two or three. "P'rei u'r'vei," be fruitful and multiply; have lots of kids.

What happens next? What happens next is Rachel gives birth. Rachel gives birth to who? Audience Member: Benjamin.

Benjamin, and she dies in labor. Now, who is the first king of Israel? Audience Member: Saul.

What tribe does he come from? Audience Member: Ephraim.

Benjamin, actually. So this promise that kings are going to come from you is actually, sort of, happening right now because who's the next child that's born? Benjamin and, lo and behold, a king comes from him.

Well, the next thing that happens is Chapter 36, seemingly the most irrelevant chapter in the entire Torah. The toldot (chronology) of Esau. All of this chronology of Esau, but if you listen to the chronology of Esau carefully, you'll see something really interesting. Esau goes into his land and he gets all of these children. One, after another, after another and they take possession of this land, in Sei'ir, which is his inheritance and then you get this language "V'eileh hamelachim asher malchu b'Eretz Edom," and these are the kings that ruled in Edom, "lifnei meloch melech l'Bnei Yisrael," before the Jews ever had a king. Almost as if Esau -- it's also having this promise and his promise somehow materializes first and Chapter 36 is "eileh toldot Eisav," this is the chronology of Esau.

Now, if I'm Jacob, what am I going to expect is going to happen? I'm going into the land and it's time for me to kind of have the same thing. I'm going to go into the land, I'm going to have my kings and everything is going to be good. And indeed, Chapter 37 starts that way. "Vayeshev Yaakov b'eretz m'gurei aviv b'Eretz C'na'an," and Jacob settles in the land "b'eretz megurei aviv b'Eretz C'na'an." Look at that language. "Vayeshev Yaakov," Jacob settles. Where does he settle? "B'eretz m'gurei aviv" what does that mean? In the land that his forefathers had only --

Audience Member: Been strangers.

-- been strangers in. What's the message here? If I'm Jacob, I'm thinking it's happening, right? Until now, none of us have been able to make the promise happen. We've just been strangers in this land. Abraham, wonderful, but he was just a stranger in this land. My father, Isaac, same thing. But finally, "vayeshev Yaakov," I'm settling in this land and I am going to take possession of it and I'm going to have my kids and I'm going to have lots of kids and, lo and behold, "eileh toldot Yaakov." Just like there was an "eileh toldot Eisav", "eileh toldot Yaakov" and what would you expect to happen?

You'd expect to hear about all these kids. Right? That's what happened with Esau. Indeed, our Sages pick up on this and our Sages commenting on the words "vayeshev Yaakov" say "bikesh Yaakov," famously, "leshev b'shalvah." Jacob thought it was over. Jacob thought all he had to do was just settle down and just have his kids and the nation was going to unfold, but our Sages say what happened? "Kafatz alav rogzo shel Yosef," the trouble, the rivalry of Joseph caught him unaware. Indeed, that's reflected in this verse.

"Eileh toldot Yaakov." All you hear about is one kid -- Joseph -- and the text just interrupts at that moment and begins to tell you a story. "Yosef ben sheva-esrei shanah," Joseph was 17 years old and everything went off the rails and there are is no further chronology and there are no anything. There's no possession of the land. All there is is slow but surely exile down to Egypt.

So going back to that promise -- the promise of the dream -- I'll be with you. "Hinei anochi imach u'shamrticha b'chol asher teilech," I'll always be with you, I'll always watch over you, "ki lo e'ezavcha," because I will not leave you, "ad asher im asiti et asher dibarti lach," that promise is now -- right, Jacob's going to have to call in that promise for a long time. It's not going to be a few days like he once thought it was; when his mother sent him away. It's not going to be a few weeks or a few months. It's not even going to be 21 years because as he comes back, after 21 years, he goes into exile again. Now, it's going to be 400 years and 400 years later that promise begins to get called in.

Jacob intuits that more or less that is what's going to happen at the end of his life. That brings us to Parshat Vayechi, next week's parshah.

I want to read through Jacob's interaction with Joseph at the end of this parshah and let's try to understand what's happening. There are a lot of strange things, if you've ever noticed, in Jacob's speech in the beginning of Vayechi. You've probably wondered about some of them, if you have chatted about Vayechi around the Sabbath table. Let me show you some of the issues.

Issue number one -- the first thing that happens is Jacob wants to make sure that Joseph is going to bury him in the Land of Israel. If you look at that language over here -- let me see if I can find it for you. It's right here at the end of Chapter 47. We hear how long Jacob was in Egypt. He was there for 17 years.

I'm not clear exactly why we have to hear that, but he calls out to Joseph and says I'd like to ask you a favor please don't bury me in Egypt. I want to be buried in the Land of Israel. Joseph says fine, I'll do it. "Anochi e'eseh k'devarecha."

At that point, Jacob, instead of saying thank you which is what you would assume he would say, says "hishav'ah li," which just sounds, like, not very nice. You know, swear to me that you'll do it. It's like I just said I would do it, dad. No, swear to me that you'll do it. Okay. So Joseph swears. At that point Jacob bows, for some reason. Our Sages say he bows because that's when he saw that Joseph was a righteous person. It's strange that that's when he saw that Joseph was a righteous person. Remember, he spent 17 years with Joseph. It's like this isn't the first time he saw that Joseph hadn't assimilated into Egypt. If there's going to be a moment where Jacob bows because he sees Joseph is a righteous person, you would have thought it was 17 years before that when he first saw Joseph, in Egypt, as a proud Jew, but no, for some reason.

Anyway, after this, there's a strange interaction around Manasseh and Ephraim and all of a sudden Jacob starts telling Joseph some weird stuff that just doesn't seem to compute exactly. I've wondered if you ever wondered why? God appeared to me and God told me the following things. He says I'm going to give you this land and then all of a sudden -- and now the two children "hanoladim lecha b'Eretz Mitzrayim ad bo'i eilecha Mitzrayim li heim." All of a sudden he wants possession of Manasseh and Ephraim as if they're his somehow. It's like why do you want that and what does that have to do with anything?

Because he's very important to Jacob.

He says these are my children. This is like my kids. Any children that they have afterwards are like your kids, but these kids -- any children that you're going to have after this are your kids, but Manasseh and Ephraim are my kids as if they're like Reuben and Simeon. A strange kind of thing and then all of a sudden he starts talking about the death of Rachel.

By the way, Rachel died and I didn't get a chance to bury her. She died on the way to Efrat, "b'od kivrat eretz," when there was a stretch of land until I got to Efrat, "va'ekbereha sham b'derech Efrat hi Beit Lachem," I buried her in Efrat and then all of a sudden he says who are these kids and then he says they're Manasseh and Ephraim. He starts blessing Manasseh and Ephraim. What's exactly happening here? It just seems like a bunch of random things, kind of, thrown together. Is there any rhyme or reason to how this speech develops?

What I want to suggest is a story beneath a story to be found here. Let me try to show it to you briefly. It ends, by the way, with his blessing to the children which aside from -- which is the famous Hamalach Hago'el Oti. Right? "Hamalach hago'el oti mikol ra yevarech et hane'arim v'yikarei vahem shmi v'shem avotai Avraham v'Yitzchak v'yidgu larov b'kerev ha'aretz."

The question is what exactly is that about? It makes for a nice song by Dveykus, right, but what exactly

was, you know -- and it's good to say underneath Kol Hane'arim and everything, but if you actually think about the words of that brachah, they're like a little weird. Let's just go through it again. It's just strange.

"Ha'Elokim asher hit'halchu avotai l'fanav Avraham v'Yitzchak ha'Elokim haro'eh oti mei'odi ad hayom hazeh. Hamalach hago'el oti," the angel that redeemed me, "mikol ra," from all evil -- like what angel is that? It's not clear what angel he's talking about. It's like I don't know there was an angel who redeemed Jacob from all evil, but I guess there was. "Yevarech et hane'arim," so that angel should bless these children, "v'yikarei bahem shmi," let my name be called upon them. What does that have to do with the angel blessing them? "V'shem avotai Avraham v'Yitzchak v'yidgu larov b'kerev ha'aretz," and what does that have to do with them having a lot of kids and then having a lot of kids in the land?

It's a little strange. So let's try to piece this together. Then, of course, there's this weird thing about how Jacob really insists upon blessing Ephraim with the right hand, with the wrong hand and he's blessing him and he says no, "yadati b'ni yadati," I know, "gam hu yih'yeh l'am v'gam hu yigdal," he's going to be great, "v'ulam achiv hakaton yigdal mimenu," but this one's going to be even bigger. You read this and you think, like, oh, come on. Really? Like, we have to get into the family -- which one's bigger than the other again. Like, that got us into so much trouble the last time around. And you're going to bless Ephraim because he's bigger than the other one and so what are you trying to do? Sow seeds of discontent? It just seems like a strange thing. Who cares about how big Ephraim is going to be and you have to put your hand on Ephraim before Manasseh.

"V'zar'o yih'yeh melo hagoyim," and his progeny is going to -- the word of what his progeny does is going to fill many nations. Everyone's going to be astounded. His fame will be international. Then, "Vayevarachem ba'yom hahu," and then he blesses them that day and he puts Ephraim before Manasseh. Then it ends when he says, "hinei anochi meit," I'm going to die, "v'hayah Elokim imachem," and God is going to be with you, "v'heishiv et'chem el eretz avoteichem," and God is going to return you to the land of your forefathers.

"Va'ani natati lecha Shechem achad al achecha," as for you, I'm giving you one shoulder or Shechem over your brothers, "asher lakach'ti miyad ha'Emori b'charbi u'v'kashti."

Okay. What's going on here? It all sounds very random. How does this fit together? There's a fascinating Rashi here on "v'zar'o yih'yeh melo hagoyim." Let me see if I can find the Rashi here; here we go. First of all, Rashi on "v'ulam achiv hakaton yigdal mimenu," but his younger brother -- the younger brother, Ephraim -- is going to be even greater than the other brother. The younger brother will be even greater than the older brother. Rashi gives us a clue as to why Jacob was so preoccupied with who is going to be greater. The clue actually comes from the Book of Joshua.

If you look at the Book of Joshua -- this is, kind of, the background of this Rashi -- if you look at the Book of Joshua so right around that moment where the Jordan River splits for Joshua you have a really fascinating phrase. God appears and says to Joshua, Chapter 3, Verse 7. "Vayomer Hashem el Yehoshua," and God says to Joshua, "hayom hazeh," today, "hacheil gadelcha b'einei kol Yisrael," I'm about to make

you great; I'm about to make you large in the eyes of all of Israel. And then, lo and behold, the sea splits and right after the sea splits God actually says -- appears to him -- you have Verse 14, now, in the next chapter. "Bayom hahu," on that very day, "gidal Hashem et Yehoshua b'einei kol Yisrael," God made Joshua great in the eyes of all of Israel.

Along comes Rashi and sort of puts two and two together. Seemingly, with these verses, in the Book of Joshua, in mind. Rashi now commenting on the blessing of Jacob where Jacob says, yeah, I know, "yadati b'ni yadati gam hu yih'yeh la'am gam hu yigdal v'ulam achiv hakaton yigdal mimenu," the younger son, Ephraim, is going to be even greater. Rashi says "v'ulam achiv hakaton yigdal mimenu sh'atid Yehoshua latzeit mimenu." He saw prophetically that Joshua was going to come from him because Joshua comes from who? From Ephraim. "Sh'yanchil et ha'aretz v'yilmad Torah l'Yisrael," he's going to bring Israel into the Land and teach Torah to Israel.

"V'zar'o yih'yeh melo hagoyim" and then, referring to Ephraim, he says his fame is going to be known internationally. Rashi, "kol ha'olam yitmalei b'tzeit sham'o u'shemo," the whole world will know of Joshua's fame. When? "K'sheya'amid chamah baGivon v'yarei'ach b'Emek Ayalon," when the sun stands still in Givon and the moon stands still in Emek Ayalon.

It's the moment where Joshua's fame -- where he's great not just in the eyes of Israel, which is the language of the verse in the Book of Joshua, but later on, his fame transcends even the eyes of Israel and is known internationally because if the sun and the moon stand still, that's an international event.

Everyone knows about that; that affects everybody. Now, at that point, the whole world knows about Joshua.

What does Rashi mean? These are commentaries which you read and you get this glassy look in your eyes and you say why is Rashi bringing up Ephraim and Joshua and this strange "shemesh b'Givon dom." That's the story I want to try, sort of, unfurl for you tonight. It's the story, I think, of the end of Jacob's dream. If you go back to Jacob's dream, again, there's sort of three parts to that dream. The promise of children, part one; the promise of land, part two and finally the promise that I will be with you no matter how long it takes and I will return you here.

Well, how long did it take? It took 400 years and who returned? Who was the one who finally brought us back? It was Joshua. It was Joshua around a climactic battle of "shemesh b'Givon dom." That's really the end of the dream. Coming back to an idea that I've begun to suggest to you. I suggested to you last week that Jacob's dream, sort of, splits in two in the next generation. Joseph has two dreams. Jacob dreamed about a ladder that was going up between heaven and earth. Joseph has two dreams. One dream is centered on the earth; the other dream is centered on heavens.

The dream that's centered on the earth is there's a stalk and everyone's going to bow to me. There's a second dream that's centered in the heavens. What is that dream about? The sun, the moon and the stars. And lo and behold, how do we get into the land? When the sun and the moon and the stars, all of a sudden, stand still. There's something about that event that resonates with Joseph's second dream.

Something about that event that's the culmination of Jacob's dream. "Hashivoticha el ha'adamah hazot,"

I'm going to bring you back to the land.

Indeed, what are the very next words that Jacob says, after he says Ephraim's going to be so famous internationally and Rashi says the sun and the moon and the stars are all going to stand still? The very next thing Jacob does after blessing him is say I am going to die, but "v'hayah Elokim imachem," God is going to be with you. Remember what God promised him? I'm not going to leave you. I will always be with you. Jacob is saying yeah, I'm dead. It's not going to be me anymore, it's going to be you, it's going to be these kids. "V'hayah Elokim imachem v'heishiv et'chem el eretz avoteichem," they're going to bring you home. That's the end of my dream. This is how my dream is going to happen.

If you go back to the beginning of Vayechi, very briefly, let me run through this with you. The last words before Vayechi starts -- here's Vayechi -- look at what we have right before that. What do these words remind you of? Listen. "Vayeshev Yisrael b'Eretz Mitzrayim," okay? Just replace Israel with Jacob and it sure sounds a lot like "Vayeshev Yaakov" -- where? "B'eretz megurei aviv, b'Eretz C'na'an." Right? So it's almost like the Jacob story has this moment where it was supposed to come to a culmination, where he was supposed to settle the Land of Canaan, where everything was supposed to be good and that was Chapter 37. "Vayeshev Yaakov b'eretz megurei aviv," where he's going to be returning to Canaan, settling down, everybody else were sojourners there, but he was going to settle down. At the end, that wasn't the reality of his life. This is the reality of his life.

Instead of "Vayeshev Yaakov b'Eretz C'na'an" it's "Vayeshev Yisrael b'Eretz Mitzrayim." Jacob is now in the land of Egypt, but a strange kind of thing has happened. Instead of being in the land where his parents were sojourners, he is in the land where his children are landlords because look at the very next words. "Vayeichazu bah vayifru vayirbu me'od," they took hold of the land and they had many, many children.

Now, what had just happened? In the verses right before this, what had happened? How did they become landlords? How did they have an achuzah (estate) in Egypt? They're strangers in Egypt. The same way that Jacob says my parents used to be strangers in Canaan, they by right should have been strangers in the land of Egypt. Indeed, when they come to Egypt what do say? "Lagur ba'aretz banu," we are coming here as strangers, but they don't end up as strangers. They take possession of the land of Egypt. "Vayochazu bah." It's theirs. How? How does that happen?

It happens because of Joseph. What does Joseph do? Joseph is vice president, he gives them an estate, he sees how broken up Jacob is over -- because Jacob tells Pharaoh, he says to him -- remember what he tells Pharaoh -- he tells Pharaoh and you think Jacob he's so depressed. It's like come on, just like, smile a little bit. Pharaoh likes making small talk and says so how old are you? So he says ah, it doesn't even matter how old I am. He says "Yimei," the years of my life have been "me'atim v'rai'm," they've been few and they've been bad, "v'lo hesigu yemei megurei," and the days of my sojourning have not even been as much as the years of my father's sojourning.

What does he mean? He means I failed. It was all supposed to happen in Canaan. I was not supposed to be a sojourner. I was supposed to be "Vayeshev Yaakov b'eretz megurei aviv," but I failed because look at

me. At the end of my life, I'm just a stranger in a strange land, I'm just a stranger in Egypt and nothing you can do will make it better, Pharaoh. Joseph overhears that and Joseph says gee, dad's really broken up about being a stranger in this land; let me see what I can do about that.

What does Joseph do about that? Joseph feeds them, allows for this population explosion to happen because when you have food you can have children and, as it's written here, "vayifru vayirbu me'od." This is the population explosion and he gives them an estate. There's only one problem. The Egyptians have been made slaves and the Jews are taking possession of their land. It all might seem fine now, but a generation later what did that population explosion look like? These Jews are taking over our land.

Here's the odd thing. There were two parts to Jacob's dream. The promise of children and the promise of land. They were supposed to come together. It was supposed to be you come into the land and you have lots of children and you take over the land and everything is good. The problem is that once the sale of Joseph happened where did the population explosion take place? They weren't in Israel anymore. They were in Egypt. Well, it's dangerous when a population explosion happens in Egypt because what does the indigenous population think of that? The Jews are taking over.

Ironically, the blessing that Joseph brings, which is the blessing of children through providing the food, is actually bittersweet. It's a double-edged sword. It's actually the blessing that makes them slaves.

They're going to become slaves. They have an estate in the land now, but that's going to be overturned as the next generation becomes angry with them and makes them slaves.

Anyway, here you have "Vayeshev Yisrael b'Eretz Mitzrayim" an echo of those words of the way it was supposed to be back in Chapter 37, back in Canaan and now think about the next things I've heard in Vayeshev. The very next words after "Vayeshev Yaakov b'eretz megurei aviv b'Eretz C'na'an" what were the next words? "Eileh toldot Yaakov Yosef ben sheva-esrei shanah," Joseph was 17 years old dot, dot, dot.

Now, fast forward to Vayechi. Right after these words "Vayeshev Yisrael b'Eretz Mitzrayim" which is the reality of vayeshev Yisrael, look at the very next words. "Vayechi Yaakov b'Eretz Mitzrayim" for how many years? "Sheva-esrei shanah," 17 years one more time. It's fascinating. It sounds like the events that are happening now are almost like a retread of the events that were supposed to have happened then. Everything went off the rails the first time around when Jacob was in the land and Joseph was 17 years old. Jacob had spent exactly 17 years with Joseph. Then the two were separated for a long time. Finally, Jacob is reunited with Joseph. He spends exactly 17 years again with him. Now, there's a moment of crisis just like there was the first 17 years around.

What did the crisis look the first time 17 years around? What happened when Joseph was 17 years old? Audience Member: He was sold.

What happened was he started having these dreams of grandeur and before you know it he found himself at the bottom of a pit, in a hole in the ground and found himself being carried off to a foreign

land. Now, look at what Jacob tells Joseph this time in Egypt, after 17 years with Joseph.

"Vayikrivu yemei Yisrael lamut," the time was coming for Jacob to die so he called Joseph and he said I have a request for you. Don't bury me in Egypt. Instead "u'nesatani miMitzrayim," carry me from Egypt and bury me with my fathers. How do the events this time around, after 17 years, relate to the events last time around after 17 years? Do you see any similarities? What happened the first time?

Audience Member: Joseph was separated from his father.

Separation between father and child. What does he want now? Reunification between father and child. The first time around a father and child are separated. The second time around the one who was the father the last time around is now the child and he wants to be reunified with his parents. How will it happen? How does he want to be reunified?

Audience Member: To be buried.

By being put in a hole in the ground with them. How is Joseph separated? By being put in a hole in the ground, away from his father. After that happened, what happened to Joseph? He got down to Egypt, but when he got down to Egypt, how did he get down to Egypt? Because there was a caravan of Ishmaelites who did what? "Nos'im nichot u'tzri valot," they were carrying "u'tzri valot," they carried him down to Egypt. Now, what does Jacob want to do with his body? Carry it from Egypt back home to Canaan. It's the closing of a circle. It is the inverse of the sale of Joseph.

That's what he wants for himself. Joseph's response, I'll do it for you, father. Swear that you'll do it. He swears he'll do it and at that point, he bows. At that point, you, as a reader, are thinking what? In a story that I just told you, emotionally, how do you feel about that story? What's the open loop in that story, the part of it that feels kind of incomplete emotionally?

Isn't this a little bit -- I mean, I don't want to use the word unfair -- but almost like lopsided. In others words, like, okay so dad back when I was 17 years old, you sent me off in this darn fool mission to go check on my brothers in Nablus and that was the last anybody heard of me and my life was upended and I came down here and now you want to redo that for you?

Do you understand? It's like in other words maybe Jacob finds peace this way and Jacob somehow is buried at home and Jacob is saying, in a way -- two things are happening. He's finding peace because for him he's going home. That's the beginning, he hopes, of the promise of the dream. In other words, the dream isn't happening because we might have a lot of kids, but where are we? We're in Egypt. We're supposed to be in the Land. It's like at least bring me home, but if you bring me home what about everybody else. They're here and they're about to get enslaved. That open loop is what the rest of the conversation with Joseph is about. It's the part of the conversation about Ephraim and Manasseh.

Watch it unfold. "Vayehi acharei hadevarim ha'eileh," and after that, "vayomer l'Yosef," he says to Joseph, "hinei avicha choleh," your father is sick, "vayikach et shnei banav imo," so he brings Manasseh

and Ephraim to his father. At that point, Jacob starts telling them strange things. He starts telling them about Beit El. Well, Beit El's an interesting place, right? Beit El is where the dream happened. Beit El is where Jacob was on his way back from Laban's house when he thought the dream was being fulfilled and it was all going to be good.

Beit El was the last really good moment in Jacob's life. The moment where it seemed like everything was going to be good. Like, I was going to come home and I was going to build a nation and all of a sudden Jacob starts telling Joseph about Beit El and here's what he says. He says you need to know something. "Keil Shakai nir'ah eilai b'Luz b'Eretz C'na'an," God Shakai came to me in Beit El, in Luz, in Canaan and he blessed me and he said to me "hineni mafricha v'hirbiticha," I'm going to give you lots of children.

Remember that future tense; I'm going to give you these lots of future children. "U'n'naticha l'khal amim," I'm going to cause you to become this great congregation of people and I'm going to give you this land as an estate.

What is he saying implicitly? The last thing we know is that the Jews have an estate all right, but where do they have an estate? In the wrong place, in Egypt. So what is Jacob is saying? I just need to tell you, Joseph, I know you're an Egypt guy, I know you're a good Jew, but you're an exile Jew and you're in Egypt and things are good for you here. That wasn't the promise. The promise is we have an estate, but it's not here. It's back in Canaan. God promised me that we're going to have lots of children. You've helped us have lots of children, "vayifru vayirbu me'od," but there's another part of the dream; going home.

You have promised to take me home, but what about you? What about your children? What about the rest of Israel? When will they go home? He then turns to him and says "V'atah shnei banecha hanoladim lecha b'Eretz Mitzrayim ad bo'i eilecha Mitzraymah li heim." This seems like a total non-sequitur. Why does he even care? All of a sudden he's focused on Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim and Manasseh should be his and he's really focused on Ephraim, as we see later.

What is he even talking about? And all of a sudden he digresses and he talks about the death of Rachel. "Va'ani," but as for me, "b'vo'i m'Padan meitah alai Rachel b'Eretz C'na'an baderech b'od kivrat eretz," and as for me Rachel died as I was going, "b'od kivrat eretz lavo Efratah va'ekberehah sham b'derech Efrat hi Beit Lachem."

Focus on these words, on Rachel's death. What is strange about these words? There's a lot of trivia here. Let's read the trivia. We know exactly where she died as measured by the stretch of land before you get to Efrat. And then mentioned again, we're on derech Efrat. Who cares about Efrat so much rather than Rabbi Riskin? Why is so important that Rachel died on the way to Efrat? We don't know anything about Efrat right now.

Efrat. Alef-Pei-Reish, sure sounds a lot like -- Audience Member: Ephraim.

-- Ephraim, who he's focused on. The last thing he said was I want Ephraim and Manasseh to be mine. Let's add it all up. "Kivrat," over here, "b'od kivrat eretz." What other word in the verse does kivrat sound a lot like?

Audience Member: "Va'ekberehah."

"Va'ekberehah sham." It's a play on words. Kivrat is stretch of land. Add it all up and here's what Jacob is saying. God made a promise to me the last time I was in Beit El. What was that promise? There was a weird part of that promise. He seemed to reiterate the promise the first time as owed in Beit El. The promise of the dream, but He changed it. Instead of I had all these kids, but He came to me and said no, there were going to be more kids and kings were going to come from him.

Who were these other kids? These other kids were somehow crucial. Right? Then he says and I'm bringing you home, but I didn't get home. Maybe those other kids are somehow crucial to coming home. I didn't have those kids because of what happened. I had one, and what happened when I had that one kid?

Audience Member: Rachel dies.

Rachel died. I was supposed to have more. "P'rei u'r'vei." I was supposed to have more kids from Rachel, but Rachel died. Where did she die? "B'od kivrat eretz," when there was like this stretch of land. Until you get to where? Efrat.

Metaphorically, what is he saying? When did Rachel die? Think of it not as a stretch of space but a stretch of time; before she could give birth to Ephraim. Ephraim was supposed to be mine.

Why would it make a difference if Ephraim would be mine? Ephraim was supposed to be mine, but it wasn't because she died when there was a stretch of space, a horizontal stretch of space between me and Ephraim. In the end, instead of the kivrat eretz, va'ekbereha; there was another stretch of space, a vertical stretch of space and I buried her. Ephraim hadn't been born. Ephraim is mine.

Then when I bless him, I want to tell you a few things. "Yigdal," he's going to be great. The sun and the moon and the stars are all going to be what this kid is all about. Then Rashi from the Midrash -- the prophecy of Joshua; he's is going to somehow bring you home. How? Now the mysterious blessing. "Hamalach hogo'el oti mi'kol ra," the angel, the strange angel, "hago'el oti mi'kol ra yevarech et ha'ne'arim v'yikarei bahem shmi v'shem avotai Avraham Yitzchak v'Yaakov." What in blazes is he talking about, and why does he want Ephraim to be his?

We go back to two weeks ago when we talked, the theory I gave you two weeks ago is that when Jacob's dream breaks into two in Joseph's dreams, the dreams of the stalk and the dreams of the sun and the moon and the stars. The dreams of the stalk become the way through which the promise of children comes about. How do children come about? How do all these children come about? They come about through Joseph's magnanimity.

What does Joseph do when there's a famine? Joseph provides them will all of this food. He is the one standing stalk that replaces the ladder. When he is that standing stalk, instead of the ladder and all of these progeny bow to him and they're desperate for food and he feeds them, that's how everybody gets their food.

There was another part of the dream. The promise of land and children that Jacob had at the ladder became broken in two. Joseph, in his lifetime, was the stalk who helped make all of the children. But what about coming home? Coming home would happen with dream number two. Dream number two would be the sun and the moon and the stars.

All it is really, though, is a part of Jacob's dream. We talked about Jacob's dream was about heaven and earth, about a ladder with its top in the heavens. Joseph's dream is about somehow having the illusion of the sun and the moon and the stars bowing to you as if your head went from here on earth all the way up into the heavens. It looked like you were looking horizontally at the sun and the moon and the stars, and they were all bowing to you.

Such a strange thing, but how would it happen? The answer is there was one more part of Jacob's dream that we haven't really been talking much about. It wasn't just about a ladder that stretched between heaven and earth. What was on the ladder? Angels. "Hamalach hago'el oti." What is Jacob talking about?

Jacob remembers those angels on the ladder. It turns out that angels show up in Jacob's life a lot. How do they show up? They bring him home. In a dream in Laban's house, who comes to him? An angel comes to him and says it's time to go home. He goes home and as he goes home, who greets him as he's coming to Canaan at the end of Parshas Vayetzei? "Vayifge'u bo malachei Elokim." Malachei Elokim, angels of God come and greet him and he's like, oh my gosh; that was my angel from my dream.

Along the way, someone had threatened him. Who threatened him? Laban had threatened him. What did Laban say? Laban came and says to him, "Yesh l'el yadi la'asot imachem ra," I have it within my power to do bad to you, to wipe you out, but you know why I'm not doing it? Because what happened last night? He had a dream, and an angel of God came to him in a dream. Jacob is like, oh, I recognize that angel. That's the same one that came to me in my dream and told me to leave, the one who's protecting me, who's "go'el oti mikol ra."

You said that you would inflict bad on me, "Yesh l'el yadi la'asot imachem ra." That angel who told me to go home, that's the angel who's protecting me from the bad. It's just like God said.

The last thing God said in my dream was "V'hineh anochi imach," I will be with you, "u'shmarticha b'chol asher telech," and I will watch over you wherever you go, "va'hashivoticha el ha'adamah ha'zot," and I will bring you back. Well, you were bringing me back. I was coming back from Laban's house, and the angel was protecting me. He was "go'el oti mikol ra."

What's the next part? "Hamalach hago'el oti miko ra," what are the next words? "Yevarech et hane'arim," let him bless the lads. Back in Laban's story, right after Laban said "Yesh l'el yadi la'asot imachem ra,"

after Jacob gets protected, what's the last thing Laban does as he leaves? He blesses his grandchildren.

Now, what had Laban wanted from those grandchildren? Remember that last scream of Laban when he's so frustrated? What's the last thing he says in frustration to Jacob? "Habanot bnotai v'habanim banai v'hatzon tzoni v'chol asher atah ro'eh li hu," it's all mine. The children are mine, the girls are mine, the boys are mine, it's all mine. These are his grandchildren, and how does he see them? As if Jacob is a nothing, as if they're his children.

There is precedence for a grandfather adopting grandchildren as if they were his own, assimilating them and canceling out the middle generation. It was Laban who wanted it all to be his, but God wouldn't allow it. The last thing that happened is that Laban blessed his children, his grandchildren and went home.

Now, Jacob says that angel who protected me from that moment, who protected me from an abusive grandfather who wanted to wipe me out and have all the children; I'm not that kind of grandfather. I am a benevolent grandfather, but I need your kids to be mine. Not for my sake but for yours because you've got to come home too.

It's not enough that you're bringing my bones back. How are you going to get back? You're only going to get back if my dream extends beyond me to your kids. The promise that God made me has to be your promise too. Your dream of the stalk ended up my being -- you lent me your stalk to become my ladder and that's how we have all of these children. Do you know what I need to do now? I need to lend you my angels because it's going to be a long time until you come home. Those angels are going to have to wait around. Those kids have to be my kids. Ephraim needs to be mine, to have the protection of those angles.

"Hamalach hago'el oti." The blessing I have is that the angels that protected me when God said I will be with you always, I now realize that it's not 21 years, it's 210 years. Therefore, it's not good enough for God to promise me that I will always be with you. He's got to promise Ephraim too. It has to carry transgenerationally. I'm lending you my angels; they will take you home. They took me home; they're going to take you home too.

"Hamalach hago'el oti mikol ra yevarech et hane'arim v'yikarei bahem shmi." They have to be my kids. "V'shem avotai Avraham Yitzchak v'Yaakov," why? "V'yidgu la'rov," because it's a foregone conclusion that we've got a nation here. We have lots of kids, but the question is where are we going to have lots of kids? Right now, all I see is Egypt. We have to get home. "V'yidgu la'rov," where? "B'kerev ha'aretz," you've got to become a nation in your land and Ephraim with the sun and the moon and the stars, Joshua is going to bring you home.

When did it happen? When did the angel of Jacob show up? Did the angel of Jacob ever show up, this blessing hamalach hago'el oti mikol ra? When does it actually happen? Well, think about it. As the Jews are coming back again -- as they're leaving Egypt, when is the first time you see an angel? The first time you see an angel? The first moment where the Jews are enslaved, at the first moment you know that

they're going to be coming home. When does an angel appear? At the burning bush. The burning bush, there's an angel and the process of redemption begins.

Watch what happens with that angel. "Vayeira malach Hashem eilav b'labat eish mitoch ha'sneh." An angel shows up and Moses looks at that angel. God calls out to him. The first thing that the angel says is, "al tikrav halom," don't come so close, "shal na'alecha mei'al raglecha," take your shoes off, "ki hamakom asher atah omed alav admat kodesh hu," because the place that you are standing upon is holy ground.

Then He introduces Himself. "Anochi Elokei avicha Elokei Avraham Elokei Yitzchak v'Elokei Yaakov." Remember what Jacob had said with hamalach hogo'el oti, "v'yikarei bahem shmi v'shem avotai Avraham Yitzchak v'Yaakov." So you're part of this chain. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

What have I seen? I have seen the oppression of my people, and it's time for them to go home. Remember these words, though. Take off your shoes because the place that you are standing on is a holy place. That was the first angel. That was the beginning of the process.

When does the process begin to conclude? Is there another angel when the process begins to conclude? Think about the Book of Joshua. "Vayehi bih'yos Yehoshua b'Yericho," Joshua is encamped on the outskirts of Jericho, "vayisa einav vayar," and he lifts up his eyes and sees, "v'hinei," what does he say? "Ish omed l'negdo," there's this man standing opposite him, "v'charbo shelufah b'yado," and his sword is outstretched before him, "vayelech Yehoshua eilav," and so Joshua goes to him, "vayomer lo," and says to him, "halanu atah im l'tzareinu," hey, brother, are you on our side or are you on their side? Whose side are you on?

The answer is neither. "Vayomer lo," no, "ki ani sar tzva Hashem," I am the officer, the general of God's armies, "atah bati," now, I have come; I have finally come, "vayipol Yehoshua el panav artzah vayish'tachu," he falls upon his face, "vayomer lo mah adoni medaber el avdo," what, master, do you have to say to your servant? "Vayomer sar tzva Hashem el Yehoshua," the angel of God says to Joshua, "shal na'alecha mei'al raglecha," take off your shoes, "ki hamakom asher atah omed alav kodesh hu vaya'as Yehoshua ken," because the place that you are standing is holy ground and Joshua does it.

Which angel is this? This is the same angel. This is the angel of the burning bush. The angel of the burning bush is back to finish the job. It's a new generation. It's Joshua now, but here I am sar tzva Hashem; I am the head of God's hosts, the head of God's armies.

If you think about God's armies, the phrase "of God's armies" is a strange phrase. Did you ever wonder what it means when you call God Hashem Tzvakot, the God of legions, the God of armies? What are the tzvakot? What are those tzvakot, Hashem Tzvakot?

I'd like to share a theory with you that actually my daughter, Shalva, came up with last week and here is Shalvah's theory. There's a phrase that we often say. We say it in Shalom Aleichem on Saturday nights, "mi'melech malchei hamelachim," that God is the melech malchei hamelachim. What does melech malchei hamelachim mean? If you're to translate melech malchei hamelachim, what would you think it means? You would say the King who's the King of Kings, right?

That's not what melech malchei hamlachim means. Listen carefully. What does malchei mean? The word malchei -- what does malchei mean? Kings of. That's what malchei means. Malchei ha'Emori would be the kings of the Amorites. So if malchei means kings of, what does malchei hamelachim mean? Kings of kings. Which means melech malchei hamlachim means? The king of kings of kings. Literally, melech malchei hamlachim means the king of kings of kings. Three kings, three levels.

Who are all these levels? Who are all these kings? What does that even mean to say that God is the King of kings of kings? Shalvah suggested that kings in the ancient world had an absolute power, but they only had absolute political power and military power. There was one thing they couldn't control. What's the one thing that a king with absolute political and military power; even with the finest army could not control? The weather. The one thing you can't control is the forces of nature. The forces of nature are not controllable by a king even with absolute power. Nature, the forces of nature rule even over kings.

This is to say that if a tornado comes along, it doesn't matter if you're the king. The kings of kings are the forces of nature.

What's the first time you have the Tzva'ot that God seems to be, Hashem Tzva'ot mentioned in the Torah? The first time you have that language; anyone remember where? It's right after the story of creation. You say it every Kiddush on Shabbos. "Vay'chulu hashamayim v'ha'aretz v'chol tzva'am." Did you ever wonder what "v'chol tzva'am" meant? All right, "Vay'chulu hashamayim v'ha'aretz," I'm done; heaven and earth were done. What's "v'chol tzva'am," and all of their hosts, and all of their armies?

The answer is "and all of their armies" if you look at the creation story, there is one thing in creation which is described as being a natural force, which rules. It was created on day four. "V'limshol ba'yom u'balaylah, the rulers of day and night on heaven and earth, they are the sun and the moon and the stars. The sun and the moon and the stars are the rulers of nature, the rulers over heaven and earth, the one thing that kings can't control.

But there is one being who controls even those, who controls even nature. There is a lawgiver for the laws of nature. The One who put into place the laws of physics and all of the laws of nature, and that is God. He is the melech malchei hamelachim.

Along comes the person in Joshua, this sar tzva Hashem and says I am the head of God's armies. What are God's armies? God's armies are the sun and the moon and the stars. I am the head of that; I am sar tzva Hashem, I am above all of this. There will come a time when the sun and the moon and the stars will come to fight on Joshua's behalf.

I'm basically out of time with you, so let me just take a couple of minutes to wrap up what really should be a lecture on its own, which is too bad, but I'll try to do this in really abbreviated form, in five minutes. I want to take you briefly into the story of "shemesh b'givon dom v'yarei'ach b'Emek Ayalon," the story of the sun, the moon and the stars standing still.

If we're right, then that story of the sun, the moon and the stars is really the fulfillment, historically, of Joseph's dream about the sun and the moon and the stars. The sun and the moon and the stars all came

bowing to Joseph. There would be a child of Joseph to whom the sun and the moon and the stars would bow, would find themselves subservient. It would happen only once in history, but that child of Joseph would be the child of Ephraim of all people; that would Joshua.

What happened for that fulfillment of the dream to take place? If our theory is right, then what would you expect the Torah to do in the Book of Joshua, in the story of the sun and the moon and stars? If we're right, that that's the fulfillment of Joseph's dream, what would you expect to find if you looked at the language of "shemesh b'Givon dom v'yarei'ach b'Emek Ayalon"? You'd expect to find hints to the story of Joseph in a second dream or something like that.

So I went to check out this theory and I actually began to look at this story of "shemesh b'Givon dom v'yarei'ach b'Emek Ayalon" in Chapter 10, looking for hints of the story of Joseph to see if this if this theory might even work; is it borne out by the text? I found none. I was basically ready to give up. This is a nice theory; it just doesn't seem like the text is corroborating it. But on a lark, I looked at the chapter before that, Chapter 9 in the Book of Joshua. In Chapter 9, in the Book of Joshua, they were all over the place; the hints that brought you back to the Joseph story. Then I looked at Chapter 9.

If you read Chapter 9 and 10 together, you understand why. Chapter 10 is really the denouement of the story, is the conclusion of the story. The story really begins in Chapter 9. What story is it, the story of the sun and the moon and stars? It's the story of the Gibeonites. Let me just show you a little piece of this. I'm not going to have enough time, unfortunately, to do it all with you. But just to give you a sense of it, let me show you a little document I put together. Here you have on the screen the Book of Joshua on the left-hand side of the screen and the Joseph story on the right-hand side of the screen, the story of the Gibeonites. What happened in the story of the Gibeonites?

After the conquest of Jericho and after the conquest of Ai, the Jews came and they were faced with people from Gibeon who came and masqueraded as if they had come from far away. The people from Gibeon misunderstood. They thought that if they sought a truce and they sought peace with Israel, that Israel wouldn't listen and would destroy them anyway. Therefore, they pretended that they came from afar, that they were from some faraway place, some sort of nomadic people from a faraway place -- and even though they were part of the seven nations that were supposed to be destroyed, the Hivites, they came and they begged for a truce. They deceived the people of Israel. We fell for the truce and we made a truce with them.

As you listen to that story, you hear all these resonances of the Joseph story. Without getting into it, I'll show you just a couple of them. Here's the moment when they come. They come and they're wearing these worn-out clothes, these fake worn-out clothes and this moldy bread. It looks like they've been traveling forever when, really, they've been nearby. They say could you please make a covenant with us?

So Joshua says how do we know you're telling the truth? So look at this word. "Vayomru el Yehoshua," so they say to Joshua, "avadecha anachnu," we're your servants, "vayomer alehem Yehoshua," so Joshua says to them, "mi atem u'mei'ayin tavo'u," who are you and from where do you come?

Now, if I just took that language and you had to lay it on top of another story, what does that language remind you of? Where is there a moment where there's a group of people who come to someone and they say, "avadecha anachnu," we are servants and the question is, "mei'ayin tavo'u," where do you come from? That's exactly the language of the confrontation between Joseph and the brothers.

You see it at the bottom of your screen over here. Do you see this, the blue over, "mei'ayin tavo'u" over here, that blue? If you look on the right-hand side, that's over here. "Vayomer alehem," when Joseph says to the brothers that exact same language, "mei'ayin batem." What do the brothers say? "Avadecha ba'u", "shneim asar avadecha achim anachnu," we are your servants. It's, like, exactly the same language.

What claim do the Gibeonites make? "M'eretz rechokah me'od ba'u avadecha," we've come from very far away. What claim do the brothers of Joseph make? We came from very far away, from Canaan. We need food; that's what the brothers say. What do the Gibeonites say? They show them their moldy bread and by inference, what do they say? We need food. We're stuck. We're out of provisions. It's like the same story happening again.

If you had wonders about it, listen to this. "Vayomru elenu z'kenenu v'chol yoshvei artzenu," the Gibeonites say our elders told to us, "k'chu b'yedchem tzeidah la'derech," take provisions on the way. Well, where's the last time you heard tzeidah la'derech in Tanach? The last time you heard tzeidah la'derech is actually in the story of Joseph and his brothers. I don't have it outlined in green here, but it's when Joseph gives them provisions on their way.

What happens? What happens is Joseph then says okay, I don't believe you guys, but the truth will come out. I'm going to put one of you in prison for three days and then the rest of you go home and bring back this other brother. Lo and behold, with Gibeonites, what happens? The truth comes out after three days. The same kind of thing, which is they then go and they check out the story and they find out that the Gibeonites were lying. The only problem is that, in the meantime, they had already made a truce. In the meantime, they had already promised, they had sworn in the name of God.

Joseph, by the way, swears in the name of Pharaoh; "chei Pharoah," by the life of Pharaoh. Joshua swears in the name of God that he will not hurt them. At this point, what do you do? So at this point, there's dissension in the ranks. The people are angry, and the people complained to the elders. The elders say we're sorry, but we made them a promise and we can't go back on the promise. It would be a chillul Hashem. We can't attack them; we can't do anything with them. Even though it was entered under false pretenses, a promise is a promise. We swore in the name of God; we cannot touch them.

That would've been one thing, they honor that promise, but then something else happens, something that no one could have ever imagined; just like something else happens in the Joseph story, something that no one else imagined. It's hinted to by the name of these of people, the Gibeonites. Spell Gibonim; Gimmel-Bet-Ayin. What is about to happen in the Joseph story that no one could have ever imagined? The story of the Gimmel Bet Ayin, the story of the silver goblet, the gavi'a. Benjamin is about to get framed.

If you look carefully at the next thing that happens in the Gibeonites story, all of it resonates with the story of the framing of Benjamin. All of sudden, Joshua finds himself in a different role. All of sudden, Joshua now is playing Judah in that story and the Gibeonites are playing Benjamin, the ones with the goblet, the ones who are in trouble. What happens?

Again, I'm just skipping just to give this to you very quickly. So here's what happens. What happens is all of the regional kings of Canaan fear Joshua. Joshua has had successes at Ai; he's had successes at Jericho. If you're a Canaanite King, you're shaking in your boots. But now, do you see an opportunity? You've heard about what happened with the Gibeonites. You've heard about the shaky truce between Israel and the Gibeonites. You've heard about the deception. You've heard that one among you, an Amorite Tribe from the Hivites has made peace with the Jews.

If you wanted a chink in Joshua's armor, what would you do next? The dirtiest of dirty tricks. Five kings gang up and afraid of Joshua, who do they attack? The Gibeonites. They attack the Gibeonites, and now the question is, okay, Joshua, what are you going to do now? You've got a treaty with one of our own, with an Amorite Tribe. What's going to happen? So they gang up to attack them and as they attack them, "Vayishalchu anshei Givon el Yehoshua," the people of Gibeon send word to Joshua and they say, "al teref yadecha," do not abandon us, "aleh eileinu meherah v'hoshiah lanu," please come to our aid and save us.

Now think about it; if you're the Gibeonites, it's like lo dai, it's not bad enough that you entered into a truce on false pretenses, but now, all of a sudden when you're attacked, you want Joshua to risk their lives to honor this truce? It's one thing that you're not killed, but it's another thing -- it's like Joshua should put everyone in danger just to save you?

Look at that language, "al teref yadecha," do not abandon us. Think about Joseph; what does teref kind of remind you of? "Tarof toraf Yosef." These are the words which Judah is going to come along and say Joseph was destroyed.

By the way, Benjamin, who is the character who is framed in the goblet story, do you remember the blessing that he gets from Jacob? "Binyamin ze'ev yitraf." It's almost like having witnessed the brother who's tarof toraf. Benjamin is like filled with memories of the abandonment of Joseph and is like a wild wolf that will destroy, with memories of that.

If you think of Benjamin at that moment -- think of Benjamin at that moment. Benjamin is framed. Put yourself in Benjamin's shoes. With this, I'll let you go. Put yourself in Benjamin's shoes. You were framed. You remember what happened to your brother Joseph, and now it's happening to you. You're going to get taken captive, and it's not even true. It's a lie. Judah was the one who framed Joseph -- who got rid of Joseph last time and now they're getting rid of me.

What happens if Judah abandons Benjamin now? Benjamin goes crazy in a suicidal rage. It would've been "Binyamin ze'ev yitraf," the one who goes down in suicidal rages, which, by the way, happens in history when? When does Benjamin go do that almost? This suicidal civil war when Judah won't stand

by their side, Pilegesh b'Givah (Battle of Gibeah). There's that word again; Gimmel-Bet-Ayin. It's the civil war that didn't happen now.

So here's this moment of gevah with the Gibeonites. All of the sudden, here's that resonate word; "al teref yadecha," don't abandon us. Don't let us go; please be with us. The Gibeonites, i.e. the Benjamin figure, says to Joshua who's now the Judah figure, what will Judah do? Judah had that question; what will he do? Now, if you think about it -- put yourself in Judah's shoes. What are you going to do?

See, here's the thing. You don't know something. What don't you know if you're Judah when Benjamin gets accused? You don't know whether he did it. For all you know, Benjamin did it. So if for all you know Benjamin did it and you promised that you would bring Benjamin safely back to Father, what dilemma confronts you now? What are you going to say to yourself? Should you be held to that promise? I don't know.

Nobody asked Benjamin to steal the darn cup. That was a stupid thing to do. He should've known better and now he's going to get himself killed. But Joseph, in a moment of magnanimity, says no, it's okay; he'll just be a slave. Okay. You know, I come home to Jacob, I say look, it could've been worse. He could've been killed. Do you know what I mean? Let's just count our blessings. What was I supposed to do? The man stole a cup. I didn't think he was going to do that. It was crazy. You have to tell Benjamin to be more careful next time if we ever see him again. I left him there. You can't hold me to it. But that's not what Judah did.

Judah said I made a promise to Father; I'm standing by that promise. I know I have a way out; I'm standing by that promise. I'm putting myself at risk. Benjamin is supposed to be the slave? I made Joseph the slave? I'm going to be the slave.

Enter Joshua. The Gibeonites, they tricked us. They're going to be our slaves. We're going to make them "chotvei eitzim v'sho'avei mayim." They're going to serve us. All of a sudden, the Gibeonites start screaming "save us" and you do know who the slave is? Joshua. Joshua turns into the one who serves them.

Look at the next verse. "Vaya'al Yehoshua min ha'Gilgal hu v'chol am ha'milchamah imo v'chol giborei he'chayil." Joshua says we have to defend them. We have to put our lives at risk to defend them. We have to serve them just like Judah says we have to defend Benjamin. That word vaya'al echoes with the exact words that Judah himself said.

Judah, in his heroic speech in this week's Torah portion that heard today in synagogue -- look at the red

-- "V'atah yeshev na avdecha tachas hana'ar," let me be the servant instead of him, "v'hana'ar ya'al im echav," and let the boy go up with his brothers. Joshua, "Vaya'al Yehoshua min ha'Gilgal," and Joshua went up to Gilgal to prosecute the war on behalf of Gibeon, to put himself at risk just like Judah puts himself at risk. Then what happens? A moment of revelation.

God comes out of the clouds. "Vayomer Hashem el Yehoshua al tira mei'hem," don't worry about a

thing, "ki b'yadcha netatim," I put them in your hands, "lo ya'amod ish mei'hem befanecha," no one will stand before you. What does "no one will stand before you" remind you of in the Joseph story? What's the very next thing? There's another amazing revelation. Not God out of the heavens in the Joseph story but Joseph reveals himself. As Joseph reveals himself, "v'lo amad ish ito b'hitvada Yosef el echav," no man was standing when Joseph revealed himself. There's that moment of revelation, the moment of God's revelation.

What had Judah said? Judah said I made to promise to Father. In the Joseph story, Father was Jacob. What did Joshua say? I made a promise to Father, but in the Joshua father, who is Father? Father is Father in heaven. I made a promise to God that I wouldn't touch the Gibeonites, and I'm going to stand by that promise. I have a promise to God on the line.

Enter the Joseph character. The first thing he says is "ha'od avi chai," is my father still alive. Who's the Joseph character? The one who would've prosecuted the Benjamin character. Who is the Joseph character in -- the one who would prosecute Benjamin in the Gibeonites story? It's the five enemy kings. It's as if the five enemy kings of that moment are asking this question, "ha'od avi chai," is Father still alive? But who's the father in their story? God. Is God still alive? What's God's answer?

"Vay'hi benusam mipnei Yisrael," as the five kings began to run away from Israel, something strange happened, "va'Hashem hishlich alehem avanim gedolot," God started raining down these great stones from heaven upon them and many of them died; more of them died by the hand of God than died by Joshua's sword.

Then Joshua says, "shemesh b'Givon dom v'yarei'ach b'Emek Ayalon," let this day last so I can fully prosecute the war. Let the sun and the moon stand still. "Vayidom ha'shemesh v'yarei'ach amad ad yikom goy oyvav," and at that point the sun and the moon stood still. Who? The sar tzva Hashem, the angel of God, the one who's in charge of the sun and the moon and the stars acts.

"Hamalach hago'el oti mikol ra," the angel from Jacob's dream is there at the end and is there for Joshua. Where and why? Because there's been a replay of the Joseph story, the heroism of the Joseph story, not on the familial stage but on the grand stage of history. There's been a brother who deceived, for all you know is dishonest and you made a promise to Father and you stood by it anyway.

When that happens, great things happen. When that happens, that's the moment when Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. That's the moment when Joseph pledges to take care of them and make them into a great nation where dream number one of Joseph is fulfilled where we can make all those children a great nation. But it's also the moment on the grand stage of history when Joseph finally comes home, when Joseph's body comes home. Joseph promised that he would bring his father's body home; now his body is coming home.

There was another part of the dream, not just children but land. This is the moment that the five kings are defeated and Joshua wins decisively over the center of Israel and is able to actually take possession of the land. This is the crucial battle that allows the land to be won. What happens? At that moment of

heroism, when you emulate the heroism of Joseph and his brothers again, the second dream of Joseph comes true; the sun and the moon and the stars bow to you.

It's like I talked to you about two weeks ago; when does it look like the sun and the moon and stars bow to you? When you become the ladder that connects heaven and earth. When you stand by a promise that you made to God not to harm another person who may well have deceived you, but you stand by that promise anyway and you show your good faith to gentiles and you put yourself on the line because they're your brothers too, then you're acting on the international stage, the way Judah and his brothers acted on the familial stage. That's when God smiles upon you and that's when God says you've really become the ladder. You've actually connected heaven and earth.

When you become the ladder, where is the ladder's head? "Rosho magi'a hashamaymah." What optical illusion happens to you? You go from being a regular person who looks up at the sun and the moon and the stars to someone whose head is in heaven, who looks horizontally at the sun and the moon and the stars, and it seems as if the sun and the moon and the stars are bowing to you as indeed they do. For one moment in history, Joshua actually commands the sun and the moon and the stars, the legions of God and they listen to a human being because we have successfully become the ladder.

Thank you very much. Good night.