Rabbi David Fohrman: Yesterday we finished our look at the story of Adam and Eve. Actually, we didn't quite finish it, but we basically finished it. We are going to revisit some of those points today, but we are going to move on to the story of Cain of Abel. In the last 15 minutes of yesterday's class we answered and dealt with a lot of the questions that we had entertained over the previous few hours. However, there were a number of questions that we left hanging, that we did not yet deal with and that we still need to deal with. We're going to deal with them in the context of the Cain story and we are going to come back and refer to the Adam and Eve story.

Let me revisit to you what I feel are the points outstanding that we've not yet covered from the issues that we raised from the Adam and Eve story. One point which we did not touch on at all is -- which we've not come to answer at all yesterday was the issue of how the Tree of Life fits into the picture. We did not talk about that yet, that is an outstanding issue. We noted the curiosities of the relationships between these two trees. We don't know how to understand it.

For some reason before you eat from the Tree of Knowledge, you can eat from the Tree of Life, after you eat from the Tree of Knowledge have to be expelled from Eden. God for some reason doesn't want us to have this Tree of Life after we eat from the Tree of Knowledge. The Tree of Life has something to do with Torah, Torah seems to be some sort of replacement for the Tree of Life, we don't quite understand why that should be so. These are all issues that we have not yet dealt with.

Another issue that we have not yet dealt with, we don't really understand what it means to say that by eating from the Tree of Knowledge we became like God's. Right? That is problematic, because if Maimonides is right that eating from the Tree of Knowledge created a degradation in man's capacity for an immoral knowledge. That before we have this pure capacity, so to speak, to respond to God's will either correctly or incorrectly and then that was tainted as it were by the elevation of desire within the matrix of the human being and such that now we can longer perceive categories of truth and falsehood, but we looked at morality in terms of good and evil, the categories of desire.

If it's true, as Maimonides suggested, that is a degradation of our capacity to choose, so why does God seem to characterize it as something that elevates us, by saying, oh, boy, now mankind has become Godly, "like one of us" having eaten from this Tree of Knowledge. He hasn't become Godly, he has been degraded, right? Which is it, are we being degraded or we've become Godly? This is an issue that we haven't yet touched upon and if we do become Godly why doesn't God want us to become Godly, what's wrong with Godly? This is another issue which we have not yet gotten back to.

There is a third issue that we've not gotten back to. That is the following. We noticed yesterday the prominence of nakedness in the narrative of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, we were talking about the importance of nakedness. We suggested yesterday, based on Maimonides, that in eating from the Tree of Knowledge mankind elevated the role of desire in their lives.

The problem is this. Why is that nakedness in particular should be the flashpoint, someone asked me this, by the way, yesterday after class. Why is that that nakedness in particular should be the flashpoint or the

symbol for that, that all of a sudden they realize the desire was out of place so they became embarrassed of nakedness?

The desire is a very general term, right? I've all kind of desires, I have aesthetic desires, I have tastes desires, I've lots of desires. Why isn't it that they became embarrassed of their mouths? Wow, now I have this great desire to eat and delicious food, but they are not embarrassed of their mouth, they're embarrassed of their body, of sexuality in particular. Why in particular is their focus on nakedness, of all desires? Is it because it's the strongest desire? It's not really strong -- I mean you can argue about that, depends on the stage of life. Why nakedness in particular if the theme is desire in general?

There's really at least three major outstanding issues that we've not yet addressed from yesterday that we still need to address today. That is how does the Tree of Life fit into the picture? What does it mean "you would be like God" by eating from the Tree of Knowledge? And why nakedness in particular? Those are three issues that we have yet to address.

In a moment we're going to look -- you're going to look at the story of Cain and Abel. I'm going to give you some time to read the story in chavrusa setting, in pairs. I want to ask you, I want to point out three things that I would like you to look for as you read the story, really three issues that you need you to grapple with a little a bit.

The first issue is, I think one of the elephants in the middle of the room in the story of Cain, one of the big questions in the story of Cain. Now, I believe that although this is a big question that bothers most people when they look up the story, however I do not believe that it is a valid question. Okay? I believe that it's an invalid question because it is based on a mistaken reading of the text. The reason why it's mistaken is not so clear, it's a little subtle, so I'm going to throw out the question and just be aware that I believe that this question is a red herring. Okay? Here is the question and it's going to be up to you to try and figure out why it's a red herring. Here is the question.

One of the favorite criticisms of the Cain story is the following. What's the story? You got two brothers, Cain and Abel. One's a farmer, farms the land and one herds sheep. Then all of a sudden they decide to offer some offerings. Cain brings his offering and Abel gives his offering. What does God do? God likes Abel's offering and doesn't like Cain's offering. Right? All right. God accepts Abel's offering and doesn't accept Cain's offering. Cain is very upset by this. God responds to Cain, doesn't seem to work. Cain goes out and kills his brother. Cain gets punished, end of the story. This is your thumbnail sketch of the story of Cain and Abel.

What's wrong with this picture? Here's what's wrong with the picture. You might suggest that God is lousy parent. For example, imagine for a moment that you had two kids, Bobby and Debby. They decided it's your birthday and they want to give you presents for your birthday. They both draw you pictures. Bobby draws you a very nice picture and Debby's picture isn't quite as nice as Bobby's picture. Nice picture, but not quite as nice as Bobby's picture. Bobby is a real artist he puts together a very beautiful picture. They then present you with these two pictures. You look at the two pictures. What is the correct as a parent to respond to those two pictures? Do you say -- what do you say?

Audience member: Wonderful!

Rabbi David Fohrman: They're both wonderful. That's what you say and then Bobby asks you, but Mom, which one do you like better? What do you say?

Audience member: I love them --

Rabbi David Fohrman: I love them both, they are each nice in their own way. That's what you say, right? But what if you said, Bobby, what a beautiful picture, look how you drew the rainbow and, boy, I see those really nice people there. Then you say, Debby, oh, man, you just can't draw, Debby, that's really unfortunate. Debby, what's going on with this picture?

You would say this is not good, right, we are back to basics with parenting for this one, but this seems to be what God does. Then it gets even worse, it gets even worse. You can imagine somebody can make a mistake in parenting. We couldn't imagine God makes mistakes, God is supposed to not make mistakes. If you can imagine a human parent making mistakes in parenting.

What happens when, as a human parent, you make a mistake in parenting and then your child catches you on it? How do you feel? You feel terrible, you feel guilty, it's awful. This has happened to me before. One of my daughters, especially. You'll do something and you stepped out of line, you weren't as sensitive as you could have been or something and she'll catch you on it. She's only six, you know, and she says something -- she once said something that really made my heart melt. You know, Aba, you yelled at me for something I didn't do. Abas aren't supposed to do that to their kids.

When a girl looks at you with tears in her eyes, after you've done something wrong and says Abas aren't supposed to do that to their kids, what do you do? You melt, you melt at the tears, you hug her up, you know, you say I'm so sorry, you're absolutely right, Abas aren't supposed to do that, even Abas sometimes make mistakes, please forgive me, right? What happens if you looked at her and you said, hey sometimes life isn't fair.

Audience member: Abas aren't supposed to be Republicans.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Then what do you do? Sometimes you have this little girl in tears and you tell her hey, grow up, sometimes life isn't fair, that's just the way it is. Then you call social services on this parent. This is really disaster. I mean this is just the pits and the child's on the psychiatrist's couch for the next 20 years. Later on -- you just put this child down the tubes.

If you look at God's response to Cain it gets even worse because when Cain complains and he's downcast, God says look what He says. "Lamah charah lach velamah naflu panecha?" How come you're so angry? "Halo im teitiv se'es ve'im lo teitiv lapesach chatas rovetz." You know, hey, if you do good things, if you make nice pictures, then I like them. If you make lousy pictures I don't like them. That's just the way it is, grow up. Right, and then Cain goes out and murders his brother. It doesn't look like a very happy story.

This is the problem that many people have with the Cain and Abel story. Why is this actually a false reading of the story? That's is task number one as you read the story. As you look through the text, what clues to give -- in other words, I believe that I've rigged a false picture of this story with this analogy to give you, but at face value this analogy seems to make sense as you go through the story. What clues do you have in the text that my analogy was flawed? Prove me wrong from the text as you read through the story. That is challenge number one.

A couple of other things I want you to look for. I've said yesterday or maybe the day before that I believe that you can't really understand the story of the Tree of Knowledge without looking at the story of Cain and Abel. I also believe you can't really understand them both without looking at the story of the flood, but we're not going to get there, so we are going to pretend that's not true.

The question is this. As you read through the story of Cain and Abel, ask yourself, is there any connection between this story and the story that immediately preceded it, the story of eating from the Tree of Knowledge? There's obviously a chronological connection, this is the story that happens next. But beyond there being a chronological connection, are there any broader thematic connections between the stories? Are there any things that seem to get repeated in this story? Are there any links between this story and the last story? Look for links between this story and the last story, and see what you can identify. Okay? And then ask yourself, what's the meaning of those links? But first, just look for the links, don't worry so much about the meaning of them. Are they there? That's issue number two.

Issue number three is just a general issue, there's some strange stuff in the Cain story. What's strange? In particular, God's talk with Cain before he murders his brother is a strange talk. What's strange about God's talk with Cain? What makes it inexplicable? God uses the most explicitly psychological language that, one could arguably suggest, exists anywhere in the entire Five Books of Moses in talking to Cain. Yet, exactly what He's saying seems maddeningly unclear. One of the connections to the previous stories you'll find in that discussion that God has with Cain. What is He trying to say here, what is problematic with what He's trying to say here?

In general, what is strange or what observations need to be made about this story? What strikes you as odd or noteworthy as you go through the story? So, three issues. Why is my Bobby and Debbie analogy wrong, A? Two, what are the links between this story and the previous story? And three, what general observations and difficulties just reading this story alone would you have in reading this story? Okay, take about 15 minutes, break yourselves up into partners and I will see you then.

Okay, let's start with question number two that I gave you. Question number two was can you find any links between this story and the last story? By the way, if you hadn't figured it out yet, the Torah is, I noticed the folks over here talking about that, is a great example of very impressively constructed minimalist document. Right, you've got stories written in very, very compact form with only the barest minimum of detail. But the detail is sketched in in words, in phrases and ideas and patterns and that's where -- it's almost like a DNA of a whole story you've got to unpack. So what do you say? What are the connections between this story and the last story? Any connections? Yes?

(Interposing.)

Audience member: It leads to exile

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, excellent. Exile. Okay. Hold on one second. So we have the punishment, one minute, slow down, we have the punish -- what you guys are screaming out is that the punishment is parallel on two levels. Level number one is Adam and Eve are exiled from their home and Cain is exiled from his home as well. Now, not only is Cain though -- let's just read it. Verse 10, "Vayomer meh asitah," G-d says to him, what have you done? "Kol dimei achicha tzo'akim eilai min ha'adamah," the voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. "V'atah," and now, "arur atah min ha'adamah asher patzisa es piha lakachas es dimei achicha miyadecha," cursed are you from the land that has opened up its gaping maw to take the blood of your brother from you. "Ki ta'avod et ha'adamah lo tosif teis kocha lach," as you work the land it will not continue to give its power to you, "na vanad tihiyeh ba'aretz," you will be a wanderer throughout the land.

You mentioned that Cain's being a wanderer through the land sounds a lot like Adam and Eve being exiled from their home, okay? Right, what else? Now the second level in which the punishment is similar is?

Audience member: The difficulty of tilling the ground.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The difficulty of tilling the ground. Adam and Eve were told they're going to have difficulty tilling the ground -- Adam is told he's going to have difficulty tilling the ground and now Cain is told he's going to have difficulty tilling the ground. That doesn't seem coincidental. Now, moreover, one might say okay, the punishments are parallel, but is there any degree of intensity which you can distinguish between the punishments to Cain and the punishments to Adam and Eve? Which is more intense?

Audience member: Cain's

Rabbi David Fohrman: Cain's, right. Why? How are the punishments in the case of Cain more intense than the punishments in the case of Eve?

(Interposing.)

Audience member: (Inaudible) but they still stayed in one place. Audience member: Cain wanders forever.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Exactly. The exile becomes more intense. Adam and Eve are kicked out of Eden, but they can settle everywhere else. Cain can't settle down anywhere. Likewise, when it comes to agriculture it's the same thing. Before, right? Okay, hold on, I'll let you disagree in a minute. Likewise, with agriculture it's the same thing, I think. That Adam and Eve were told that -- Adam was told that he

would till -- that whereas before he sinned the implication is the land would simply provide for him, now he would need to work the land. Cain is told, even if you work the land, "Lo tosif teit kocha lach," it's not going to give its energy to you. So the punishment with farming becomes more intense, as well. In other words, what might that suggest to us? If we find this pattern, what might that suggest about these two stories?

Audience member: (Inaudible.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. It suggests to you that this is chapter two. That it must be that on some level what happens, in order for this to make sense, is that the story of Adam and Eve and what they did wrong set up the story of Cain and Abel. It's only in a world that's post Adam and Eve that you have the set-up for Cain and Abel and it sort of sets up a new challenge. You can now succeed or fail in that challenge. If you succeed, fine, but if you fail, it's like you've gone a step down on the same ladder.

You've gone a step down on the same ladder, what's your punishment? It's just an intensification of the punishment that you had before.

It seems like not only is there chronological link between the stories, but there is this thematic link. That it seems like somehow there's a ladder here and the sin of Adam and Eve put us down one rung on the ladder. We now struggle at this point, and the issue is, how are we going to deal with that?

By the way, that mirrors life in general, if you think about free will for human beings as general rule. How much free will do you really have? I mean this is something that modern psychology has brought to life and modern psychologists make a point of sort of stuffing this in religion's face whenever they can. But, you know, what do you mean you have free will, you're conditioned from birth, you're conditioned by your environment. You're conditioned by all of this, so how do you have free will? So what's the answer?

Let me put that question in a religious context for you. Let's say I had complete free will. All right, so here's what I should do. I can find my way, here's a good -- don't try this at home, but I can find my way to get the perfect entrance ticket to the World to Come. Here's what I should do. I should give up all of the difficult tasks which I'm involved in and whatever it is and I can just do the following thing. I can stand on the corner of Arastradero and El Camino Boulevard all day long. All right? And whenever I find a little old lady with a cane walking across the street, I can decide not to mug her. Because there is a principal in the Torah that if you refrain from transgressions, it's the same thing as doing good things.

We all know that. So what I just do, I just sit there on the corner and I rack up these brownie points. All day long, and the more old ladies the better, you know, I just sit there. I don’t do anything all day, I come home from -- my wife says how was your day, I say I'm a real tzaddik, you know? Fourteen more brownie points today.

By the end of my life, right? I come upstairs and what's God going to think of all this? He's not going to be very impressed. Why not? The answer is, because I didn't really have free will to do that. Meaning to say that, yes, obviously I had free will technically, as to whether I was going to mug the old lady. But that's not where my challenge lies, right? You can view things -- the Michtav Me'eliyahu, Rabbi Eliyahu

Dessler makes this point quite clearly. He coined the phrase nekudat hebechirah, the point of free will. He says it's an illusion that human beings have a vast range of free will. We, in fact, have a very narrow range of free will that centers at whatever struggle you're in now.

You could simplistically view it as a kind of ladder, much like the ladder we're talking about with Adam and Eve. Which is to say that there's certain things that may be above me right now, and there's certain things that may be below me right now and I'm at a certain place of struggle. And what God judges me on is how I deal with those struggles. But I'm not judged upon what's above me. I'm not judged upon what's below me. Now, this ladder is not static, I can change. I change by my actions. If I succeed in where I -- in dealing well with the struggles that I am, I then move a rung up the ladder, and something which used to be above me now becomes a struggle for me.

So for example, you know, I doubt very much that when I get to the next world, God is going to look at me and say, how come you didn't fast every day of the 30 days before Rosh Hashanah like some of the great rabbis in Poland did 200 years ago and contemplating their deeds 30 days before Rosh Hashanah.

Why? Not that that's such a bad thing to do, it's just that's not quite where I am yet. By the same token, God is not going to award me brownie points for not mugging old ladies in the street because that's also not where I am. I have my discrete areas, struggles. Certain things that I'm struggling with, certain things that and as I succeed in those I go up, or if I consistently fail in those, so I go down, I go down and I go down.

Similarly, which is why you can never say, by the way, in Judaism that oh gee, you know, I would love to be more Jewishly involved and Jewishly involved, but to be that I have to be all the way up here, right? No, God's not judging you on that, he's judging you on where you are. You take one step at a time. Nobody expects you to go bounding up the ladder by leaps, you go crawling up the ladder and then you deal with that issue there.

I think it's the same thing with Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel. Adam and Eve were in one place on the ladder, they messed up. They then went down a rung and it set up Cain and Abel. Cain goes down a rung and ultimately it sets up the flood, I think. But we'll get to that later. Yes. Maybe.

Audience member: Would you say that Cain had a bad background because of what Adam and Eve did?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh, sure. But you see, this gets into the genetics of, for example, why can't I say, you know, when, if he grew up in a slum, right, why can't you go up to God and say well, you know, I grew up in the slums. So don’t blame me. The answer is yeah, I don’t blame you for not getting up to X, Y and Z in the ladder. But still, even in the slum you've got your area of, your area in which you're struggling and that’s where you're -- that's where it comes from. So it's not so much that you're judged objectively, perhaps, by what rung of the ladder you're on. You're judged by how well you do wherever you are on the ladder are you going up or are you going down and what've you done with your life?

Audience member: And Cain, he failed his task at his level.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Exactly. He didn't fail anybody else's tests, he failed his test at his level, yeah. Audience member: Well, if you were a mugger, and then you went sat on Arastradero and El Camino --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh yes, then I could rack up lots of brownie points. Oh sure. I'm not saying that you can't.

Audience member: And then the next step would be to help those old ladies for the mugger I wonder if

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Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh no, that's true. I'm not saying that you can't rack up brownie points on the corner of Arastradero and El Camino. I'm just saying I can't currently do that.

That’s all I'm saying. Yeah yeah.

Audience member: Let's say you wanted to make a connection between the stories. It's sort of a strange one, at the end of the Garden of Eden story they're exiled east of Eden. Here Cain is supposed to be wandering about it says he settled in his town of Nod, east of Eden. That’s very strange.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's very strange.

Audience member: It's very strange, I thought your punishment was you're going to wander around, and then it says vayeishev, and he settled.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Good. Your point is very good. What the rabbis -- now, there is a difficulty here because on the one hand, God says you're supposed to be wandering, but the next thing Cain does is settle down and build a city. What could be less wandering than building a city? But, look at the verb. What does it say Cain was doing? In the English, you translate it, how does it translate it, Cain what?

Audience member: Built a town. Rabbi David Fohrman: Built what? Audience member: (Inaudible.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Cain built a city? Audience member: Cain built it.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The problem is, in the Hebrew that's not what it is. It says, "Vayehi Kayin boneh ir" in the present tense. Okay? Cain was building a city, in the present tense. What verse is that? 17. The Ramban, Nahmanides, picks up on the present tense and says that doesn't make sense. If you wanted to

record that Cain built a city, you say Cain built a city. Why are you recording thousands of years after the fact that Cain was building a city? Nahmanides answers Cain never finished building it. He was obsessed with the notion of settling down and he tried and tried to build, but he could never complete it. And that was his curse, that he can never overcome that sense of wandering. Despite his best efforts to settle down, he was thrust into the situation where all he could do was build and build and build. That's what Nahmanides says.

Furthermore, where did he settle? He settled in the land of Nod. That's a strange name. Do you know what Nod means? "Na vanad yihiyeh ba'aretz," a wanderer you shall be in the land. He settled the land of Nod. Right? The place that he settles is the land of wandering, the land of exile. Even the land's name is exile. This is where he ---what?

Audience member: A man without a country.

Rabbi David Fohrman: A man without a country, that's right. And he is there trying to settle down. But he does seem to be trying to redeem himself in some way. He has this child just like the story begins with Eve having a child, it ends with Cain having a child. He names the child Hanoch and he dedicates the city to his child. The name Hanoch means chanukah, dedication. So he names the child dedicate for dedicating the city to the child. And it almost seems like one could argue that what Cain is trying to do, if you look at Cain's act of murder, the act of murder is the ultimate anti-social act. Right? It's where I try to seek to wipe out other's existence. You cannot have a society built upon murder.

What Cain is desperately trying to do at the end of his life is to rebuild a society. To have a child, to have another child, some sort of replacement and to build a city for that child. To build a society and to repopulate it with life. Whether he succeeds is an open question. That's the --

Audience member: Should have named it Abel.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Should have named it Abel, yes. That's a really good point. Other connections between the stories, one second, we have two. We have a parallel in punishment, exile and, what do you call it, desire. We have desire rearing its head in the story. When God speaks to Cain, he sees a desire in Cain. We'll look at that in a little bit more detail. So desire is the test. What else? Yes.

Audience member: The pseudo-rhetorical question.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Good. The question. God's pseudo-rhetorical question. Not only does God make a pseudo-rhetorical question, but what is the pseudo-rhetorical question? It's "ai," it's a short form of the word "ayei." So God's question ayei repeats itself as well. God asks ayei in both stories. Is there any other connection between the stories?

Audience member: Protection that at the end he makes the garment (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's interesting. I didn't even think of that. That's a very good connection. I

didn't think of that, but you're right. The notion of God's protecting you even after you sinned, right? There's a myth that the mark of Cain was a curse. The mark of Cain was not a curse. If you look carefully at the text, the mark of Cain was a protection so that Cain would not be killed. Cain is worried that "hein gadol avoni minaso," my sin is greater than I can bear. Anybody that sees me will kill me, the animals will kill me, Rashi says. And God says don’t worry, I'll give you this mark, anyone who sees this mark will back off from you.

So just like God gives clothes to mankind to live in the new world of his own making, God gives the mark to Cain to live in his new world of his own making. Very good. I didn't notice that. Yes.

Audience member: On that thought why can't (inaudible), really it's almost as though (inaudible) I killed, so the natural thing is to kill, so someone will kill me.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh, that's interesting. Okay.

Audience member: God doesn’t say someone is going to kill you, Cain is the one saying, and the other thing is that God never says Cain, you're going to leave my presence. That's a connection to the story of Adam and Eve is that here, Adam and Eve were sent out of God's presence. Here, he sinned (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, excellent. That's a contrast and a connection. But the other connection is that well, he says "Hein garashti" -- no no, say it one more time. Say what you said again.

Audience member: What I said is that, in this story, God never says to him, you're going to leave my presence. He said you're going to be wandering. He's already out of the Garden of Eden. He was trying to say, I am being made to leave your presence.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, okay. Good. So in other words -- actually, it's even closer than that. If you look at the words that he uses, what are the words that Cain uses when he is complaining to God about the incredible import of the punishment? He says, "Hein gerashta oti hayom mei'al pinei ha'adamah" here you have cast me away from the earth, "umipanecha esater." You know what that means? And from Your face I will hide. That's what it means "umipanecha esater," form your face I will hide. What does that remind you of? Adam hiding from God, too. Intuitively, both beings, in the wake of the sin, understand that they're going to be spending time hiding. Adam hides from God and Cain hides from God. It's a very fascinating set of connections between these stories. Not just chronological, but more than that.

We have the punishments on two levels are linked. We have the question, where are you, where is your brother is linked. We have God's response to the sin, as you said, clothing and the mark of Cain link.

And we have, finally, the last one you just said which was the hiding. The notion of continually hiding from God seems to be the same.

Now the question is, why? In other words, how is this true? Granted these stories seem to be linked in this way, but how is it, exactly, that the story of the Tree of Knowledge sets up Cain. I mean, whatever

knowledge you get, how does it deal itself? In other words, if you look at Cain, superficially, you're looking at the story of fratricide, you're looking at the story of sibling rivalry, of jealousy. At least superficially. Why is it that the Tree of Knowledge specifically sets up that kind of issue? The link between the two does not seem clear, but the Torah seems to be telling us there is that link. That's one thing which we'll want to figure out.

So what we've done is, we've outlined parallels between the stories. The challenge now is what explains the parallels between these stories. Okay? So much for point number two that I asked you to research, which was what are the connections between these stories? Now let's go, and we've had a little bit of point three which is some of your observations on other things in the stories, but I think there's still a couple things that you haven't touched upon yet. But let me go now to point number one that I asked you to consider.

Point number one that I asked you to consider was, why was it that my analogy about Bobby and Debbie is wrong? If you were going to come to the defense of the Bible here and I am the cynical skeptical doubter who comes in and tells you that this is all a bunch of nonsense. So what would you tell me? Based upon the text, how can you disprove my Bobby and Debbie analogy form the text? What do you say? Yes.

Audience member: In the text there's no reference to the quality of the two offerings. It's simply two offerings.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, but there actually -- you're right and you're wrong, I think. If you look carefully at the text there is something about the quality, at least implied. Let's read the text carefully, what's the relevant verse here?

Audience member: Four.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, listen up. "Vayehi mikeitz yamim," verse three, and it happened after some days, "vayavei Kayin mipri ha'adamah minchah laHashem,"

and Cain brought from the ground an offering to God. "ViHevel heivi gam hu mibichorot tzono u'mechelbeihen," and Abel also brought an offering from the first of his flocks and from their fats. "Vayisha Hashem el Hevel v'el minchato," and God -- you know, it's from their best things, and God then turned to Abel and to his offering, but he did not turn to Cain.

Now, my question here is this. Is there an implication here about the quality of the offerings? Yeah, there is an implication. In other words, the implication was, it just says that Cain brought an offering from stuff, but when it gets to Abel it says that Abel brought the best of the stuff that he had. So you might suggest that it is implied that Abel brought better stuff. But my Bobby and Debbie question still stands, right? Because, just because Bobby drew her a better picture, doesn't mean that the parent says I don't like the -- responds in that way. So now my question is --

Audience member: Cain brings the offering first and then the gam hu for Abel, I mean, you could read that as, Abel sees that Cain brought an offering to God and says, that's a great idea, I want to give a present to God, too. The counterargument might be okay, so Cain might not have brought the best offering, possibly, but he did initiate an offering.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's a very good point. Most people, when they read this text, okay? Most people when they read this text miss a fascinating, obvious point in this. Which is that you tend to think, as you gloss through the text, that Abel was the first person to bring the offering and Cain was the lousy copycat. But it's not true. Cain was the first person to bring the offering. It sounds like Abel is the copycat. Now, that already is strange. Why would Bobby, who's drawing the worse picture, be the first picture to think about giving presents to the parents at the birthday party? But that itself doesn't quite disprove it. We're almost there, but that's an important point, we'll get back to that later. There's one more --

Audience member: He doesn't know --

Rabbi David Fohrman: One second, hold it, there's one more conclusive disproof, I think, I believe it's conclusive, from the text that is the flaw to the Bobby and Debbie analogy. Look carefully again at the two offerings and tell me why are the Bobby and Debbie -- remember the Bobby and Debbie analogy? I draw this picture, you're a better artist, you draw a nicer picture, God responds. Yeah.

Audience member: Your assumption was that Bobby and Debbie each drew the best picture at which they were capable.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Excellent and that's the answer. My assumption was, my implied assumption of the Bobby and Debbie story, was that Bobby and Debbie both drew the best picture of which they were capable. Once that happens, the parent has to accept them both. And anything other than that you call the social services for.

Now, in this text, although it says, what does it say -- in other words, what does it say? In other words, what does the parent do wrong? Here's what the parent does wrong. If they both bring the best offering of what they are capable and the parent then goes and compares the two and says, but your picture is nicer than this you call social services because that's not the issue. The sin of the parent is to compare the two offerings and to say this picture is not as nice as that picture.

If you look in the Torah the offerings are never compared; never compared. God never makes a judgment that one offering is better than the other. The judgment that He makes is whether each offering is what it could be. For example, when it says that Abel's offering is good it doesn't say that Abel's offering was better than Cain's offering, it says that Abel's offering was the best relative to what Abel had. Do you understand? The standard is Abel. Abel's offering is best relative to what he had.

It's "mibechoros tzono u'meichelbeihen," it's the first of his flocks and they're fat. It's quite possible, reading the text, it's quite possible that if you would take both of these offerings to market it could well

be that Cain's offering would fetch thousands of dollars and Abel's offering would fetch $37.99. It's quite possible, because it could be that the fats of his flock was worth $37.99 and Abel's average crop, average bumper crop of peaches that he brought was $1,000. I mean, it's quite possible. The point was, seemingly, that Cain just brought stuff whereas Abel brought the best of what he had. To that the parent then responds.

In other words, the correct Bobby-Debbie analogy is if you get pictures from your kids on your birthday and you know your kids and one picture that you get shows that Debbie spent as much time as she possibly could carefully constructing a picture. Whether it's the most gorgeous picture in the world is not the issue, the issue is that she really spent time constructing a beautiful picture. Bobby's picture, your analysis based upon his artistic talents, is that he was watching TV and as he was doing that he was scribbling together some lines and it might be quite talented because he's a good artist, but it's not what Bobby's capable of. You say Bobby looked distracted when he was making this picture and Debbie looks like she really put her all into the picture. Then the parent is right to turn to Bobby and say what's going on, this isn't the kind of picture that you make, what's happening here.

The problem is this. The problem is the rabbi's question which is that this all works just fine if Cain is the copycat, but Cain wasn't the copycat, he was the originator. That makes Cain a very complex person indeed because we would understand -- Cain's psychology makes a lot of sense if we say, well Abel is a really good guy, he was putting his all, he was making mommy a picture and then Cain said oh, he's making mommy a picture, I'd better make a picture too and I'll throw together some scribbles. But, it usually doesn't work the other way around where the one who originates the idea is the one who just throws together some scribbles and don't originate the idea and then the other one's the copycat.

See, you have to understand, that it may seem like a simple thing what they're doing, but these are the very first offerings that are ever brought in the Torah. Offerings in the history of religion are what you might call a classic; they've endured the test of time. The first person to dream up something like that, we call a genius.

Wheels are things we all take for granted, but the first person to come up with a wheel is a genius when you're just lugging things around on slats, right? So, the offering is a genius, it's a new way of relating to God. Cain is a religious innovator. He is the first person to dream up this notion of bringing an offering to God, yet the offering that he brings is not the best of his stuff.

That makes Cain a very complicated person indeed and what I might title the first part of our talk today is understanding Cain's world. What is it that makes Cain tick? Where he is coming from in trying to bring this kind of offering is very ambivalent. He's the one who comes up with the idea yet doesn't bring the best of his stuff. Is it just that the first time around on an idea you never get it exactly right? It's the second and third time that you work out the kinks. I don't think so, that doesn't ring true to me. I think there is something more here than that, but that is the issue that I want to deal with.

Audience member: My question is, can it be that God's is just judging them each independently based on who they are?

Rabbi David Fohrman: I think it is but --

Audience member: He's the bechor. So maybe, if he's the genius who came up with this and then -- it's almost like the inventor who comes up with the idea and then somehow he betters it, so it was his idea, it was his (inaudible), he was the one who did it and on his own merit and his own brainwork. Maybe his brother was a simpler person, he

came --

Rabbi David Fohrman: It could well be. Abel certainly is a (inaudible) is probably the simpler of the people and Cain is the more interesting of them. I had a teacher in Ner Yisroel who did a fascinating thing. He once gave a talk at one of the girl's schools in Baltimore. It was before Passover. He asked the girls, these are all nice, frum, Beis Yaakov girls in high school. He says to them so tell me, in his impeccable English accent, which is your favorite of the four sons, from the Hagaddah. A lot of hands went up for the wise son; some thought that the simple son is nice. He said, tell you the truth, I've always had a soft spot in my heart for the wicked son. (Laughter). He goes and gives a whole talk about the wicked son who he thinks is the most interesting of all the characters.

In that kind of thing Cain is the more interesting. Abel just dies; we don't know anything more about him. Cain is what the story is really about. The question is what makes Cain tick? Why is it that he brings this offering first and yet doesn't bring the best that he has.

It's time to get to Point 3 that I asked you about. Point 3 that I asked you about is other strange things in the story. Here's what we can do. We might say, if we're looking to try and perceive Cain's motivation we can look at a couple of things. We can look at God's speech to Cain. We can also look at all the information that we know about Cain and Abel before they brought their offerings. Maybe that would help us. Let me ask you this. What information do we know about Cain and Abel before the murder?

What do we know about these people?

Audience member: That there is a difference between how they were born. Cain was (inaudible), Cain was --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, that's a good point.

Audience member: -- born with the help of God or with God. Audience member: Eve thinks that.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Eve thinks that and -- well, we'll get to that in a moment. You're touching on the two things that we know. You said we know their occupations. That's true. We know each one's profession. We know that Abel is a sheep herder and we know that Cain is a farmer of the land, he's an oved adamah, he works the land. One thing that we know, we know their professions.

The other thing we know is -- everyone with me? We know their professions, what else do we know? We know one more thing.

Audience member: We know why Cain -- Cain has a reason for his name.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Exactly, and this is what you said as well. We know their names and in particular we know the reason why Cain got his name. We have this very strange declaration that Eve makes for which Cain receives his name. So, we know their names and their professions. What?

Audience member: What does Eve say?

Rabbi David Fohrman: What does Eve say? "Vatomer kaniti ish et Hashem," Eve says, I have acquired a man with God when she has the child and therefore she named the child Cain. For those of you reading in English you have no idea why the child was named Cain just because she said I acquired a man with God. The answer is because you have to look at the Hebrew because Cain, Kayin, sounds a lot like koneh or kinyan. When she says "kaniti ish et Hashem," I've acquired a man with God, Cain is named for that word kaniti, Kayin. That's where Cain gets his name so now we have the following. We know their names and their professions and now let me ask you --

Audience member: What does Hevel mean in Hebrew?

Rabbi David Fohrman: What does Hevel mean in Hebrew? Not quite empty, what does Hevel mean? Audience member: Vapor?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Vapor, excellent. What Hevel actually means is vapor. There is a Megillah which we read which starts with those words. "Hevel havalim amar Kohelet, hevel havalim vehakol hevel." The whole theme of Ecclesiastes is that everything is hevel. There it's sometimes translated as vanity, vanity of vanities, but that's really a borrowed translation, or futility of futilities. What it really means is vapor and the reason why the borrowed meaning is vanity is because what happens to vapor? It disappears. If you think about Kohelet, Ecclesiastes, that's really Solomon's problem with the world. Solomon's problem with the world is, here's a man who's successful, he has everything, but then the great problem with success is?

Audience member: It's fleeting.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's fleeting, how do I make it last? I have all this stuff, but then I'm going to die and some fool is going to move into my palace. I have all this stuff, but then 100 years later, a 1,000 years later nobody will remember my name. When Solomon introduces himself to you in the very beginning of the book he says, in an ironic way, "Ani Kohelet ben David, hayiti melech al Yerushalayim." Introducing himself to the future generations he says I am Kohelet, the son of David, the preacher of the son of David, I used to be king over Jerusalem.

Think how silly that is. Here's the most famous man in the world. The guy who's in charge of the empire of empires, at the time the greatest empire that the Jewish People had and he has to introduce himself to you like a nebach on the street who comes up to you and says, I just want to tell you my name. I used to be king over Jerusalem. He's very cognizant that future generations may not know who he is because everything is fleeting, everything just vanishes. That's his problem.

So, what hevel means is breath, breath that vaporizes and goes away. What does Kayin mean? Kayin gets his name from kinyan, acquisition. Think about those two names, the difference between Hevel on the one hand, fleeting breath, and on the other hand acquisition. What does acquisition stand for to you?

Audience member: Capitalism.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Capitalism or rootedness, to acquire, to have, to possess, it's where you're very rooted as opposed to very fleeting. So, that is an interesting difference between the names.

We know their names, we know how they got their names and we know their professions. Yes?

Audience member: Just a couple of things. One is, perhaps Eve didn't know where children came from so with the first child she says -- because it's so strange what she says, "et Hashem," that means we translate it as with the help of God but that's just --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, good.

Audience member: She might actually think it is through God, God's a creator and also kaniti doesn't necessarily mean acquired, it can mean koneh shamayim which means to create. Sometimes it's parallel to boreh, that's one point. This also tells us something about their psychology which is, again in a story that's so terse, this might be there's a sense of Eve's relationship became (inaudible) with Abel's so that Abel might not be -- I don't know if you want to read a lot into it, might not have the same sense of being beloved that Cain does. He's just Abel, but she makes this explanation about him, since it's not a parallel we know that she doesn't say anything about Abel.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, interesting. Let's spend some time now and focus on these two things that we know about them. Let's focus on Cain's name and how he got the name and let's focus on Cain's profession. Let me ask you this; can you see any link between the profession that Cain chooses and the way he got his name? Those are the two things we know about him. Is there any link between the profession that Cain chooses and the way that he got his name? Eve says, "kaniti ish et Hashem," I've acquired a man with God.

What she says is a little strange, as the rabbis pointed out. What she seems to be saying, in idiomatic terms, if I would just paraphrase what she's saying -- what is she saying? Give me an example of what Eve's saying. Imagine you're a woman; you've just experienced the very first childbirth in the history of the world. This has never, ever happened before. You've just experienced the very first childbirth in the history of the world. You now then say, my goodness, I've acquired a little man with God. What is it

that Eve is saying here? Audience member: (Interposing.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, what she's really saying is that me and God -- hey, me and God were partners; we've created this little man. There's an exclamation point at the end of that sentence, it's a declaration of wonder, she's just experienced something amazing. It is science fiction. Any woman can tell you, my wife can tell you, that the experience of childbirth is wondrous, it's that experience of some miracle taking place, but even a woman whose experienced childbirth for the first time knows about the concept intellectually. She's been told by her mother, you read in biology books, but imagine if you didn't have a mother and this is the very first time in history. Imagine the sense of wonder that you would have at pregnancy and childbirth and then seeing this little child. It's an amazing things and that's what Eve says, there's this declaration of wonder, "kaniti ish et Hashem."

Audience member: Particularly, since everything that she has seen before God created.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, exactly. What she's really saying is that in the past God created everything and wonder of wonders I am now a partner in creation. I and God are partners in creation; He's brought me into the act. God is not the only creator anymore; I am one of the creators, too.

Audience member: This is a new thing. A child, there's never been a child.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, there's never been a child. I was created from God. Eve could have expected that that's the way it would always happen, every other human being gets created by God, but no, she was now brought into the act, she's a co-creator with God. That's an amazing, amazing thing and she responds to that by saying "kaniti ish et Hashem," I've acquired a man with God, but what she says is still strange. Because if we were saying it we would have said I've created a man with God, right? That's not what Eve says, there's a word there that she uses that is strange, two words which are strange.

One word is et instead of im. The easiest way to say it is, now that I mention this to you, is to say "kaniti ish im Hashem." Normally when you say with you would say I've acquired a man with God, et -- what does et mean in Hebrew?

Audience member: (Interposing.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Et is nothing but a direct object marker, it has no translation in English. Et seems to be the wrong word. Now, there are times in Hebrew where et can be used in place of im. It's a less common way of saying im, but we would expect im here, it seems a surprise to get et. That's one thing we want to notice from the declaration. There's another part of the declaration that's strange. "Kaniti," I've acquired a man with God. How would we say it? I've created, barati, yatzarti, I've created a man with God, I've formed a man with God, I wouldn’t say I've acquired a man with God.

Audience member: (Inaudible.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: I was given a man by God, but she doesn't say any of that. She says I've acquired a man with God and it's that strange terminology that gives Cain his name. Cain gets his name from that strange term. Kaniti, I've acquired, is where the word Kayin comes from. So, something funny is going on with Eve's declaration and what that funny thing is, is something that we'll have to analyze, but we're not there yet.

Lets' go back to the question I asked you before; is there any link between Cain's profession, what he decides to do with his life and the way that he got his name?

Audience member: One of those words that you used when you were discussing Cain's name was (inaudible), of course, immediately reminds me of the ground which is what he does for his living.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Very good, elaborate on that thought. So, now answer my question. How is what Cain does with his life similar to the declaration for which he gets his name?

Audience member: I was (inaudible) because he is the tiller of the soil which is much more creative. Rabbi David Fohrman: We're getting warm.

Audience member: God planted the Garden of Eden.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. We're getting really warm. One second, I'm going to ask you one more time, I want a very simple answer. It's an SAT question; you only get one sentence to answer it, okay? Here's the question, the question is, how is Cain's name and how he gets his name similar to what he decides to do with his life? Think about what he decides to do with his life and think about what Eve's declaration of wonder when she has this child.

Audience member: In the same content as the fact that man was born whole, he is tilling the soil and he's creating, in actual fact new fruits or new vegetables which is the same thing as -- when she gave birth this is the first time that she gave birth and she was creating it, he's sort of creating everything that he's --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, so now to put it all in one sentence. How is what he decides to do with his life similar to what she does when he's born and for which he gets his name?

Audience member: I can't imagine really, it's sort of like (inaudible) like. She's giving birth, he's growing vegetables.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. How do you -- okay, yes. Audience member: Hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. How do you farm, what do you do when you farm? Tell me what you do?

Audience member: Plant a seed.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Plant a seed in a fertile environment, then what happens? What does this sound like? The seed grows, hidden from view germinates in the ground and then after a while, wow, science fiction, there's fruit. How does all this happen? Imagine that you were the first farmer. Imagine the science fiction process of farming. You plant a seed in the ground and this makes no sense at all.

When my kid was very small, when Moshe was like three-years old, we planted tomatoes once and he was very taken with planting tomatoes and how it all worked. I used to tell him the story where -- this is a really weird story so don't think I'm too strange. He had this fan that he liked, that went around in his room and so we used to pretend that the fan was his friend. We had this whole series of stories; Moshe and the Fan stories. There was this story about how Moshe went planting one day and he really loved the story, and the fan came along and said what are you doing with those seeds? I actually borrowed it from a Gemara that talks about this story too, so it's not an original story -- what are you doing with those seeds? Moshe goes I'm planting them; we're going to have tomatoes soon. So, he says, well, if you want tomatoes why are you taking the seed, ruining it and throwing dirt on top of it. Then Moish says, no, no you'll see, don't worry about it.

Then he comes along with a pail of water and pours it over the seed and the fan says what are you doing? Now you're making mud out of this whole thing. It's crazy. Moish says, you be patient, we're going to have a whole lot of tomatoes out of this. He says, you're crazy, where's the tomatoes, I don't see a tomato. Moish says, no, no, you have to be patient so they come back tomorrow and look and there's no tomato. So, the fan says you see I was right, Moish says, no, be patient.

They come back day after day, week after week, no tomatoes. Finally Moishe gets discouraged and then the fan sees this little sprout coming out of the ground and says look, there's a sprout, something's happening and it grows into a tomato tree and the fan is very impressed. Moishe thought this was a great story. Why? Because a child has this sense of wonder, which we as adults lose, at agriculture. It really is wondrous. Now, what has Cain done with his life? He has created in partnership with God, just like his mom creates in partnership with God.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The same way when you do, in childbirth. You create, but you do it all yourself? Where did the DNA come from? Who did all the blueprint work? That's God. But you're a part of it.

That's childbirth. The same thing in planting, you do the stuff but where did the DNA of the seeds and all of the biochemistry come from? It comes from God. There's a sense that I've been brought into God's miracle.

Cain's name and his profession mirror each other. It's no coincidence that he's named for his mother's declaration, because that's what he devotes his life to. He devotes his life to the thrill of creating and partnership with God. Now, we're getting back to our problem. The problem is this. Eve doesn't quite say I've created a man with God. What she actually says is that I've acquired a man with God, which as we said, is strange. Indeed, Cain is named for that strange word, acquire.

The question is this; if we were Eve, we would have said I've created a man with God. Eve says I've acquired a man with God. What's the relationship between what we think Eve should have said and what she actually said? What's the difference between being a creator and an owner? To be one who acquires, who has, who possesses. What's the difference between creation and ownership? Are these two concepts out of the blue that have nothing to do with each other or is there some relationship between these concepts? They are obviously not the same but they do seem to be related. How are these concepts related?

One leads to the other, or one can lead to the other. For example, we would intuit that if I create something I own it. Or, we might say, I could own it. I do not necessarily own it, but I could own it. For example, I might decide to create software and then say that its shareware and then anyone can use it. So, I don't own it, but I have created it. Or, we intuit, that I do have the right if I want to insert intellectual property rights and say that this is not shareware and if you want to use it you have buy it from me. In other words, with creation comes the option of ownership.

Let's now discuss what does that mean, what does it mean to own something? What is my motivation for ownership? What is my motivation to move from seeing myself just as a creator, but towards one who acquires and owns that which I have created? Tell me that. Why would I do this?

Audience member: Exclusivity.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. What ownership means is exclusivity. In other words, if you want to define ownership, ownership means that I assert exclusive rights to this and I keep you out. That's what ownership means. For example, in the Torah, if you want to convey ownership of something, if I'm selling you a field, you have to perform an act of kinyan, which is you have to perform an acquisitory act to seal your ownership over the field. What is that act? Invariably the act is -- or the act can be something that asserts your exclusive rights over the field.

For example, one of the ways of doing it is chazakah, no'al goder u'poretz, where if I nail the gate closed to the field. I assert my ownership, gader, I set up a fence around the field, so I assert ownership by

exclusive rights or porat, I break down your fence around the field. Either way, I'm saying this is now my territory that I can keep you out from and no longer your territory that you keep me out from.

That's what it means to be an owner.

Why would I do that? Why, psychologically, would I move from creating something and not be satisfied with simply creating it but then say it's mine exclusively. Why do I do such a thing?

Audience member: Future. Rabbi David Fohrman: Future?

Audience member: Personal benefit.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Good, personal benefit and future. I assert control because of personal benefit and future. What does that mean? It means the following, it's primarily two motivations. One, there's a utilitarian motivation, which is certainly personal benefit. In other words, if I have to make a living in life, so then I will obviously want to assert intellectual property rights over my software so that I can sell it and I can make a living. That's one reasoning on something, but it's not the only reason why a creator might decide to be an owner.

For example, you can imagine Bill Gates or you can imagine somebody who is very rich and doesn't need any more personal benefit from money, still deciding that he is not just going to be creator over what he has devised, he is going to be owner, he is going to assert his exclusive property rights over that. Now why would you do such a thing? Is that bad? Is there a healthy motivation for that? Why is it that

-- that you would say greed. Is there any motivation other than greed? Imagine somebody who is not greedy, in other words I grant you that greed could be a motivation, but imagine somebody who is not greedy, I am a really worked out person, I am not greedy; is there any reason why I might still copyright that thing that I've created?

Audience member: That you know best how to deliver -- Audience member: (Interposing)

Audience member: My father wrote a book that he never got any money for, why did he put his name on it?

Audience member: Because he was proud of what he wrote.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, exactly. Because you're proud of what you wrote and it's yours and you don't want to disassociate the thing which is so profoundly yours. You've put your all into this, it's the expression of you in the world, and its human pride, a natural human pride -- I mean, creative and it's not necessarily an issue of money. You put your name on the book even though you're not going to make any money out of it. Or future, it's a sense of legacy that I leave the world, or the sense of control

that I want it to be my legacy and I don't want it to be corrupted. I make this invention; this is my imprint on the world. I don't want it to come and other people to make it.

Audience member: It's strange that you didn't include Adam at all in any of this, she just says kaniti, she says I --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, that is strange. Eve doesn't include Adam because Eve says that -- Eve seems to think that Adam's contribution to this whole business relative to hers and God's is so miniscule as to be almost nothing. That seems to be the way --

Audience member: She may not know. Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience member: She may not know.

Rabbi David Fohrman: She may not know. Or even if she does, what does he do anyway? A momentary act, I'm the one who carried the child for nine months, God is the one who made the DNA, basically we're the creators around here.

Okay, moving on. When you move from creation to ownership, there are two reasons why you could do it. Either you could do it for utilitarian reasons, but you can also do it as a mark of pride, right?

I can tell you that of my own personal struggles that I'm going through is whether to spend some time actually writing some of the material I've been putting together and putting it into book form --

Audience member: Yes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: In examining my motivations for it, a lot of it is what you're talking about, which is that I've been doing some education of educators and stuff like that, and doing some material with that, and I love doing it, and it's great. The down side of it is that you put this material out there and then everybody does what they want they want with it, which is fine, everybody can do what they want with it. But there's this feeling that you want your definitive sense of how you think it is out there and then everybody can do what they want with it, just so that it's out there. As you said, control over the product, but at least what it is that you've created is out there in real form and you're happy with it.

Audience member: The teachers will appreciate having it so they can work with their students on this material.

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, thank you. So much for the first thing that Eve says, kaniti. Let's move to et. She says et instead of im. The two words for im, there's with and there is et. What is the difference between et and im? I'm going to take you to the blackboard.

Audience member: Im is joining two things and they might be equal. Rabbi David Fohrman: Excellent, very good! I am impressed.

Audience member: Et, you have a verb and then you follow it with an object, so there's a sense of, I guess progress, you're doing something and then it's what is being done.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Excellent. Boy, I am impressed. Give that lady a free Coke! You're absolutely right, that is the difference. See, you guys just got your homework done for you. That is the difference. Let's look at this carefully. If there's two Hebrew words for with, it must be there's two kinds of with. There are two kinds of ways that you can be with someone. The difference between im and et is the following.

Et is really borrowed terminology for with. What it really is is a connector between a verb and a direct object. In Hebrew, we have a device which we don't have in English, which is that in English verbs and direct objects don't need connecters. I say I hit the ball, so all I need to say is -- there doesn't need to be a connecter between hit and ball. Makes sense to just go hit and ball. If you said that in Hebrew, you'd have to say hikeiti et hakadur, you'd say I hit the ball, and there'd be an et, between the verb and the direct object.

Sometimes that connecter word et is borrowed to mean with. That should tell you something about the different kinds of 'with' that we're talking about. There's regular with and then there's borrowed with. There's with borrowed from et, how are the two different? Well, you can look at a couple of examples in the Torah. I haven't gone through the Torah exhaustively on this point to know whether it always works, but one example that comes to mind is Joseph and his brothers.

The very beginning of the Joseph and his brothers story, in Parashas Vayeishev, begins as follows, "VeYosef ben sheva eisreh shanim veYosef hayah ro'eh et echav batzon". What does it say? Joseph was 17 years old and he was shepherding with his brothers the sheep. It should have said "hayah roeh im echav batzon", he was shepherding with his brothers, instead it uses et, "hayah ro'eh et echav batzon". Why would we use et there instead of im? Why would you use a 'with' that comes from a direct object, the verb that links the direct object and particularly that kind of 'with'? It's exactly as you've suggested. What was Joseph doing? The next word, later on, is "vehayah motze es dibasam ro'ah el avihem", that he would give all the gossip back from the brothers back to his father and sort of tattle on them and tell the father what was going on.

What was really going on? Listen carefully. What if you read et as a real et there? Listen to how the verse would read. "VeYosef ben sheva eisreh shanah hayah ro'eh", he was shepherding, "et echav", who was he shepherding? The brothers, "batzon", through the medium of sheep. In other words he was using the sheep, but what he was really doing was toying around with them, he was shepherding them like sheep. In other words, you use this direct object, so what he was really doing was he was shepherding with the brothers, but there was a direct-object kind of 'with'. It wasn't like an equal partnership, he was toying with them, much like the way a subject uses a direct object. Its subject does something with a direct

object, but it's a different kind of 'with' then we normally mean.

For example, you might say, I dug a hole with a shovel. That's not the kind of 'with' that we normally -- that is the using kind of with. There is a situation where, what does the subject do to a direct object? It acts upon it, is uses it. There is an et kind of with which displays one kind of relationship, which is a using kind of 'with', and then there's another kind of 'with' which is two equal co-subjects working together. For example, you might say, I with Bob dug a hole, then you have two co-subjects doing an object, digging a hole. Or, I might say, I dug a hole with a shovel and then the shovel is on the other end of the sentence. It is the thing that I use, as opposed to the thing that's truly with me. These are two kinds of 'with'.

Eve uses the second kind of 'with', kaniti ish et Hashem, God is on the other side of the direct object. What does that imply? Let me suggest the following to you. Let me give you the following possibility. Somebody raised before the issue that Eve's situation is a little bit more complicated than average because Eve is not just creating; she's creating in partnership with someone. Remember, Cain and Eve are both fascinated and entranced with this incredible act of creation that God has brought them into. God used to be the only Creator in the universe, now He's brought me along to be a creator too. That so influences Cain that he emulates his mother in the only way that a man can, he can't have childbirth, but he can have the next best thing, he can plant and he can create life in partnership with God through planting. They're both named for acquiring.

Let's get back and put these two together. Kaniti and et, acquiring and et. Let's go to acquiring for a moment, back again. We said the move from creator to acquisition happens because of pride, because of identification with what I have, this is what I really want to do with my life. Then I move from creator, just creator, and leave it out in the open to someone who asserts control over that creation. Is that bad? No. There's nothing wrong with that. It is not bad. It is, however, risky. Here's why it is risky.

It's especially risky when I'm not the only creator. What if I create in partnership with someone? Let me give you an example of this. Not only that, what if I create in partnership with someone and I'm not really an equal creator with them. What if I set my life's sights, my life's goals, to become part of something, but I don't have the talent to completely do it on my own. Someone else makes that possible, and I create in partnership with him. What happens then and what happens when I identify so strongly with what I create and I say that this is my life's meaning, but its only happened through this person. It's a very dangerous brew. It's okay, but it's dangerous. Let me give you an example.

Imagine Thomas Edison. You are Thomas Edison's neighbor or Bob is Thomas Edison's neighbor. Edison is frantically working on trying to create a lightbulb. In the very last days of Edison's work in trying to create a lightbulb, he had problems with creating a filament that would not just burn out and that would burn long enough and steady enough to actually create a lightbulb.

One of the things he also needed was a glassblower. He needed somebody to just blow the glass to fit it around the lightbulb to make sure he had a lightbulb there. Now, imagine yourself as follows, or imagine Bob as follows. Bob has a great interest in science. He realizes it’s the Industrial Revolution and he

realizes -- he wants to be on the cusp of technology. He has moved to Silicon Valley. What? Audience member: And he just happens to be a glassblower.

Rabbi David Fohrman: He just happens to be a glassblower, it's the wrong profession. He sees there's this guy Edison and he knows this man is really making progress. Although he's a glassblower, he always has this hobby on the side, this scientific interest, and his great yearning is to somehow leave his mark in history in some technological way. One day he meets Edison and they have a chat and Edison says you know, he's really looking around for a glassblower. Here's his chance, right? He offers his services and he blows glass for Edison's first lightbulb. Then the coming-up party happens, they invite all their friends, they have the whole party, the big thing, and they turn on the lights and now there's these lightbulbs and the first illuminated thing, and he feels this surge of pride, right?

Now, how does Bob relate to Edison after this? There are two ways that you can relate. The truth of the situation is, who is the main creator and who is the sub-creator here? Bob is the sub-creator. Now how does the sub-creator then relate to the main creator, there are two ways he can relate. One thing you can do is be jealous; the other thing you can do is what? Be grateful. The two possible responses are gratefulness or covetousness, right? What's the word for it? Covetousness? To be covetous. There you go. So, what does that mean? Let's take the grateful response first.

What should Bob do? If Bob is grateful, here's what he says to himself. He recognizes the truth of the situation and he says, you know, Edison is the main man here, but I am so grateful that he's given me a chance to be a footnote in history, to be part of history. My dream to leave an impact on the world will finally be realized because I've been part of this great creation, and I'm grateful to him for bringing this, for allowing this to be a possibility in my life. That is the courageous response and the correct response. But there is another possible response. What's the other possible response?

Audience member: He couldn't have done it without me.

Rabbi David Fohrman: He couldn’t have done it without me. That's right. The other response is a failure to be able to be satisfied with that small portion and to trick oneself and one's mind into saying, ah, come on, we all know that it's the glassblower that makes the lightbulb, I mean if you don't have the glass just fitting over the lightbulb exactly, you wouldn't have a vacuum and the whole thing would explode and you couldn't do it at all. Yeah, filament, shmilaments, light bulbs are really about glass, right? I'm the creator, right? In his mind, he puts Edison as the subcontract below the line and its Bob Jones, the glassblower, creator of the lightbulb, who creates with the shovel called Edison, right?

Eve was faced with that same choice. If you look at childbirth or you look at planting, who is the great creator and who is the co-creator? Who's the Great Creator? It's God! He's the one who makes the DNA. What is Eve? Eve is the tool through which that works in the world. In other words, their having set up the entire DNA so it actualizes itself through the woman. She is an important part of the process, it couldn't have happened without her, but she is a co-creator that God brought into that. The danger is that when Eve says kaniti, identifies herself so profoundly with this, I'm not just a creator but this is mine

and it's an expression of me, she then runs into that problem that who's the co-creator and who's the main creator, and she puts God as the co-creator. Kaniti ish not im Hashem, et Hashem. God is on the other end of the direct object, and now think of Cain.

Cain is named for that word. Cain is named for that word, acquire. Cain devotes his life to the same thing that his mom devotes her life to, to planting and to creating life with God in the only way that he can. He devotes his life to creating life with God, which is what gives him breath.

Now, ask yourself, why is it that Bob -- whichever path chooses, imagine that Bob, after the party for the lightbulbs, would decide to give a present to Edison? What might be the motivations that motivate that present? What's the good motivation?

Audience member: Gratitude.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Gratitude. One possibility is, Bob, I can't believe you've brought me into this wonderful thing. You've given me the chance to be part of history; I can't imagine what to give you. I am overflowing with gratitude. I give you whatever I can, the best of what I have. You're overflowing. But there's another possible motivation for giving the gift. Why else might Bob be motivated to give that gift? What is Bob worried about? He's the glassblower, Edison is now moving into the history books

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Audience member: Oh, okay! He'll find another glassblower!

Rabbi David Fohrman: He'll find another glassblower! I'm expendable. If I realize in my heart of hearts that I need you, that basically this is about you, but I need you so desperately in order to continue in my life -- there is a darker side to a gift too, which is, instead of giving the gift out of gratitude, I can give the gift because I need to buy you off. I need to make sure that I cement that relationship with Edison to make sure that I'm Edison's glassblower. If you think about it in contemporary terms, imagine you've worked to put your kids through medical school and your son comes back from his residency with his engaged fiancé. You met her and that's fine and all that. Now, you've spent all this money and time and raised him and put him all through the school, and now they're coming together for the first Thanksgiving at your home, or the first Hanukah at your home. They've come and they've brought you a gift and you're still supporting them through residency, given them $30,000 dollars a year, whatever.

They then bring you this gift. There are two kinds of gifts that they can bring you. What are you looking for in that gift? There is a gift -- how is the gift different? A gift of gratitude is one kind of gift. The gift of gratitude is, we don't have much money, but we're buying this box of roses, it's the best box of roses that we can afford, and we know that it's only a token of appreciation, but the best way that we can express that is just to give you the nicest possible thing that we can. That's one kind of gift that you can get.

Or, you can get another kind of gift. Another kind of gift is; there's another motivation. Another motivation was, I still need my parents. I have to make sure they keep on supplying this lifeline to allow

me to actualize my dream of becoming a doctor. When you're motivated by that kind of motivation, you're not coming from an overflowing kind of place that you're just overflowing with gratitude.

You're coming from a very contracted place.

When you're coming from that contracted place, you're struggling with the following thing. I need to retain what's mine, but I have to give something in order to get something, so I start making calculations. I give a very calculated gift. I say what can I afford? Well, I can afford, I mean -- I have --I can't give them bubkes, I have to give them something good, but I can't give -- I have to have food on my table, I'll give them $23 dollars of roses. I think I can afford $23 dollars. It's a calculated gift.

What if you get a calculated gift from your kids? What do you say when you get a calculated gift? Can you imagine the horror that you'd get? What do you say? You'd say this is how you understand our relationship? This is the kind of gift you bring me? Your dream is to get the gift that expresses gratitude. That's your greatest hope. To get the other kind of gift, that is a very difficult gift to receive at all. That perhaps is the gift that Cain gives.

He's the first one to give a gift, but there are two motivations for giving a gift. One motivation is gratitude, but then there's a calculated gift. Cain gives average stuff; he doesn't give the best stuff. In Hebrew, there's a word for offering, the word that we have for offering is korban. Rav Hirsch suggests that it comes from kurvah, it's supposed to bring people close. It's a way of bringing, of actualizing the relationship and bringing a relationship close. Gifts brought the wrong way can also destroy a relationship and then create a barrier in the relationship. Perhaps what God is saying is that's not the kind of gifts that I want from you. When He looks at what Cain has brought, this is what he is saying and this explains God's response to Cain after the gift, why He rejects it. It's a parent's obligation, when you get a gift like that, to go back to the kid and say this is not what I want from you. I want a different kind of relationship with you. That perhaps begins to explain Cain -- however, we're not done yet. How much time do we have left?

Audience member: Twenty minutes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh good. Okay. Now, there's a second part to this, and with this we'll conclude. In truth, the second part really should take us all of tomorrow, but we don't have all of tomorrow, so we're going to have to try and condense it in 20 minutes, so I'm going to try and do this as fast as I possibly can with you.

Now we look at the second half of the Cain story. The second half of the Cain story is God's discussion with Cain and Cain's response. There are some difficulties with that discussion. This will end off our view of the Cain story and will also hopefully answer some of the remaining problems that we had from yesterday's session. Let's read God's words. What is God basically saying here? Here's what He says.

Where is it? What verse?

Audience member: Six.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Six. "Vayomer Hashem el Kayin lamah charah loch", why are you so angry, "velamah noflu panecha", and how come you're so upset? "Halo im teitiv se'eis ve'im lo teitiv lepetach chatot rovetz", if you do good then lift up, "ve'im lo teitiv", but if you don't improve, you don't do good, then sin lies crouching at the door, "ve'elecha techukato", its whole desire is unto you, "ve'atah timshol bo", yet you can rule over it.

Now, there's a lot packed into the speech. Let's just take it apart a little bit. What is the general tone of the speech? I agree that in general the tone of the speech is optimistic. The general tone of the speech is the following. What's Cain's problem? Cain is depressed, right? Verse Five. "Ve'el Kayin ve'el minchato lo sha'ah", that God did not turn to Cain's offering, "vayichar leKayin meod vayiplu panav", and Cain became very angry and his face fell.

How has Cain interpreted this rejection by God? God doesn't like me. So, he's missed the point here. God then has to address that. God is basically saying, the tone of God's speech, if you listen to the tone carefully, God is basically saying, look Cain, here's the deal. Why are you angry and why are you depressed? There's no room for anger and depression here. Anger and depression are out of the question. Why? Because "halo im teitiv se'eis", is it not the case that if you do good then everything is fine but if you don't do good, then we have problems, and sin lies crouching at the door and its whole desire is under you, yet you can rule over it?

Basically, what he seems to be saying to Cain is look, Cain. The ball is in your court and since the ball is in your court, anger and depression do not make sense. Why do we get angry and depressed? We get angry and depressed when we feel that the ball is not in our court; when we feel that we're victims of circumstances, then we get mad and we rail at our situations. If it's within your power to change, then there's no anger and depression. I either change or I don't change, but it's up to me. That's what God seems to be saying.

Let's give just a very quick, contemporary analogy to that. Imagine you've got two cats at home and you go to sleep at night. You're woken up in the middle of the night -- you have a roommate. You are woken up in the middle of the night by the sound of your cat's meowing, and the cat sounds sick. So then you wake up your roommate and you say the cat sounds sick, I think we should call the vet. Your roommate takes a look at her watch and she says its 2:30 in the morning, what do you mean call the vet? For a cat you're going to wake up the vet in the middle of the night? So you say, yeah, I really think we should wake up the vet. You're crazy! Just call the vet in the morning and everything will be fine. Wait a few hours. I really think she's sick. Well, look, just wait in the morning, you don't go waking up vets in the middle of the night. Is he your private vet? You say, all right, fine, you're right. You go back to sleep. In the morning you wake up, and there's a dead cat. Now, what's your response?

Audience member: Anger at --

Rabbi David Fohrman: You're mad at your friend, right? One minute, you convinced me not to call the vet, if I hadn't listened to you -- I mean why did you do that? If you weren't so adamant we'd have a live cat, now we have a dead cat and it's all because of you. Is she right? No, she's absolutely wrong. Why?

Because you have the free choice, you can choose to call the vet if you want. It's your problem for listening to her. Oftentimes, it's very easy to take anger and project it that it was the other guy that did it to me.

Oftentimes, it's very easy to take anger and project it that it was the other guy that did it to me. It's very rarely the other guy that did it to you, sometimes it is. It's more often that we gave up our control and allowed someone else to dictate it. That seems to be what God is saying to Cain. God says you're seeing your problem out there, the problem isn't out there, it's in here, it's with you, you can change it. Cain doesn't listen, he goes and kills his brother, and thinks his brother's the problem. Again, the problem's out there. The problem wasn't the brother; the problem was with Cain, but he didn't address that.

Now, let's look at the speech carefully. What does God really say in the speech? There are a couple of strange things about the speech. "Halo im teitiv se'eis", if you do good, then lift up, literally that's what it means in Hebrew. What do you mean, lift up? If you do good, then lift up? The Ibn Ezra says that what it means is what was down before on the previous verse?

Audience Member: His face.

Rabbi David Fohrman: His face. "Vayiplu panav". So lift up means lift up your face. In other words, what He's saying is if you do good then you can lift up your face, you can look yourself in the mirror in the morning. You can have self-respect, but "ve'im lo teitev", if you don't do good -- now listen. In Hebrew, what's the opposite of doing good? Doing bad, doing evil, It doesn't say that though. It doesn't say "im teitiv ve'im tirsha, it doesn't say if you do good, then x, if do evil, then y. Instead it says, if you do good, then x, if you don't do good, if you fail to do good, then y. Failing to do good is not necessarily the same as doing evil. That's an important point to point out.

God says to him, if you do good, then x, then you can lift up your face. What about failing to do good? We might say if you do bad, you're punished, right? Actually, there's no punishment here. Listen carefully to what it says. "Ve'im lo teitev", if you don't do good, "lapetach chatat rovetz", sin lies crouching at the door. You're vulnerable to sin. "Ve'elecha techukato", and sin's whole desire, transgression's whole desire is for you, yet you can rule over it. You're vulnerable to sin. Listen to the set-up here.

He's not saying if you sin, you'll be punished. What He's saying is that if you fail to do good, if you fail to grasp the good actively and you just stay where you are, then you're vulnerable to sin. It's only a matter of time before sin grabs hold of you, but that doesn't have to happen. Its whole desire is unto you but you can rule over it. You can grab the horns and rule over it. He's basically saying to Cain don't be so passive here. You have to be active, you have to be good -- you have to be actively good. If you're not actively good, you're vulnerable to sin. It doesn't have to be that way. You can rule over it.

That is a very short version of the speech, but we're not done yet. Now, let's get back to the rabbi's question from yesterday. The rabbi asked me yesterday to make sure that I get back to this point. We have ten minutes left and I'm going to get back to this.

Where have we heard these words before; there's one final connection between the Adam and Eve story and the Cain story, and it's right here in God's speech. There's something that God says that reminds us of something we've heard before in the Adam and Eve story. What is it?

Audience Member: Teshuka.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Teshuka. Listen to these words, where have we heard these words before? I'm going to read them to you. "Ve'elecha teshukato ve'atah timshal bo". Its whole desire is unto to you, yet you can rule over it.

Audience Member: A woman's desire will be for her husband yet he will --

Rabbi David Fohrman: "Elishech teshukatech vehu yimshol boch", God says to Eve in the wake of the sin, your whole desire will be unto your husband, yet he can rule over you. It's a direct quote. God is lifting a direct quote out of what He told to Eve and is now imposing it on this story in Cain. Now, listen carefully.

God says to Eve -- you've got to pay attention here -- God says to Eve, your whole desire will be to your husband yet he can rule over you, right, he's stronger than you, he can rule over you. And he says to Cain, transgression, the evil inclination, its whole desire is unto you, yet you can rule over it. Now, there's something very disturbing about these two verses. What is so disturbing about these two verses? It's monstrously disturbing, because --

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right! Because it sounds like the Torah is equating the evil inclination and womanhood. I mean, this is the biggest -- if you want do a misogynist a favor, all you have to do is point to these two verses in the Torah. It sounds like the Torah hates women, that the evil inclination is the same as woman. You see, because if you create the analogy, so the evil inclination in Cain is like Eve and Adam. The evil inclination equals woman.

I believe that's a false reading of the text. Why? Because if you look at the text carefully, what the parallel really means is the following. First of all, are you all with me, have I lost you yet? You're with me. Okay. Listen carefully.

If you read the text carefully, here's what the parallel is saying. What's actually parallel is the following. The relationship that Eve has to Adam is parallel to the kind of relationship that the evil inclination has with Cain. The relationship between the two is parallel. Do you understand? It's not the case that Cain is like Adam, is the same as Adam, and Eve is the same as the evil inclination. What it's saying here is that the relationship between these two entities in this story works with the same dynamics as the relationship between these two entities in this story. Now, let's figure out what that relationship is. Let's figure this out.

Let's talk about the evil inclination first. Evil inclination is a strange thing. It seems pretty evil, right? There's conflicting midrashim about how evil it really is. Let me give you one midrash that says an interesting thing. It generally says in the Creation story that after God created stuff it was good, but in the last days it says and it was very good. What does it mean it was very good? One midrash says that refers to the creation of the evil inclination. That was very good.

That's pretty strange. Why is the evil inclination very good? Right, it's one of the things that's very good. Now, that's a very strange thing to say about something that's evil. Clearly, we do not accept the Christian view that the evil inclination is the devil, or some sort of anti-God force in the world. So, what's so good about the evil inclination? Let me tell you a Gemara in Kiddushin that says the following, in Folio 31-ish, in Kiddushin.

It says the following; a famous declaration of the Sages. They say, God says to mankind in the words of the Gemara, "barati yetzer hara", I've created the evil inclination, "u'barati Torah tavlin", and I've created Torah that's its antidote. If you take the Torah, you'll be fine and if not, you're in trouble. "Barati yetzer hara ubarati Torah tavlin", I've created the yetzer hara, I've created Torah as its antidote. Listen carefully to those words. Those are not actually an accurate interpretation of those words. I gave you an inaccurate interpretation. That is the way that most people translate those words.

However, in Hebrew, barati Torah tavlin, I've created Torah as its antidote, tavlin does not mean antidote. For those of you who know Hebrew, what does tavlin mean? Spice. What tavlin means is spice, that's literally what it means. What you actually have here is the following crazy thing that God says.

Barati yetzer hara, I've created the evil inclination, barati Torah tavlin, I've created Torah which is its spice.

Audience Member: It's like garlic (inaudible) vampires.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Which is the main thing? Well, first of all, if Torah is the spice, then what is the yetzer hara?

Audience Member: The main thing.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The main dish, right? It means that what life is really about is the yetzer hara? It's just that it's bland unless you have some spice with it. To make it really taste good you need some Torah to spice it up. But Torah is the spice of life, right, it's not the other way around. It's not that the evil inclination is the spice of life. The evil inclination is the main dish. Torah is the spice of life. These are very strange views of the evil inclination. What does this really mean?

The evil inclination is food and the Torah is spice. The evil inclination is fuel and the Torah is the spice that makes it taste good. What does that really mean? What does spice do to food? Besides making it taste good, it can also make it taste bad, if you put the wrong spices in. What does spice do to food?

Audience Member: It makes it interesting or --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Interesting, it makes food interesting. If I put tarragon in my meat, it's going to taste different then if I put cumin in my meat, right? So what does spice do? It takes something that is an essentially bland flavor and directs its flavor. It says now it's going to taste basically like this. In other words, the spice is the most flavorful part of the food and directs the flavor in a certain way. It gives it many different textures of flavor. That's what spice does.

What Torah does with the yetzer hara, is it takes something that is food and it then directs it. "Elishech teshukatech", your whole desire will be to your husband, yet he can rule over you. To Cain, your whole desire, the evil inclination's whole desire is to you, yet you can rule over it. What does it mean to rule in this case? What does it mean to have desire in this case? Let's look at desire and ruling for a moment.

Desire, teshuka is the word used in both verses. Teshuka means desire. What kind of desire is teshuka? Boy, we really need another hour and a half but we're going to do this really condensed style. What kind of desire is teshuka? Listen carefully to a midrash. Perek Davar quotes this; the Netziv says the following thing. The midrash says "arba tshukos yesh ba'olam", there are four primal teshukot in the world, four primal desires, there are only four. Then the midrash lists the four and gives a verse to support each.

There are four basic times in the Torah that the word teshuka is used and the midrash says that they represent four different kinds of basic desires. Listen to them all and tell me what they all have in common.

Desire number one; Eve for Adam. The first desire that we know of, the first teshuka is, that Eve is told that she will have a desire for Adam. Teshuka number two, the yetzer hara, the evil inclination's desire for Cain. That's the second time we have teshuka. In other words, the Sages saw this parallel. The next one; the third tshuka is the desire that rain has for land. The fourth desire is the desire that God has for the Jewish people. What kind of desires are these?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) completion.

Audience Member: Together they make a whole idea. Audience Member: (Inaudible) without them.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The problem with desire as the translation of teshuka is the following. When we normally think of desire, we normally think that I have some sort of lack that I need you to fill in --

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. These are opposite kinds of desires. Think about it for a moment. We normally think about desire that I need something to fill this lack and therefore I desire it. The Torah says no, rain desires land. Does rain need anything? Land needs rain. What kind of desire does rain have for land? Does it have a desire for land? Yes it does. What kind of desire does rain have for land? What kind of desire does God have for the Jewish people?

Audience Member: To give.

Rabbi David Fohrman: To give. The desire to give. When you have so much potential, you have so much energy, so much life force, but you can't give it. It's the greatest frustration to not be able to give, so I have a desire called a teshuka, to give. The rain has the desire to give to land; without land, what good is it? God has the desire to give to the Jewish People, but if there's nobody on earth that I can give anything, if I can't give to humanity, if the whole plan doesn't work out and it's all bottled up inside.

The Gemara says "yoiser mishehatinok rotzeh laneik, more than the infant wants to suckle from the mother, the mother wants to suckle the child. It’s much more painful not to be able to suckle the child than the first. What does that mean? It means that the desire to give is infinitely stronger than the desire to take, a desire that comes from lack.

The yetzer hara had the desire for Cain and Eve has the desire for Adam, a teshuka for Adam. What does that mean? What it means, I think, is the following. What it means is that the yetzer hara has got something to give. Eve has got something to give. There's some deep life force that femininity has that wants to give to man. If it can't give to man, then that desire of femininity is frustrated.

Likewise, the yetzer hara has some deep life force that it needs to give to man too, and it therefore seeks a relationship with man in order to be able to give it just like Eve seeks a relationship with man, in order to give her life force to him. What then is Cain's role vis-a-vis this life force? What does he do? What then is Adam's role vis-a-vis this life force? It is to be moshel? What does it mean to be moshel? Moshel is the same root as mashal. What is a mashal? A parable.

Why do you need parables? Why can't you just understand reality as it is? Why do I need a parable to understand reality? You know what a parable does? A parable takes reality which can be interpreted in so many different ways and gives it a specific interpretation and says cut out all the extraneous details.

Here's what I want you get out of it; it's just like this parable.

A parable directs the meaning of the experience. A ruler directs the energy of his people, that is what a ruler does. A good ruler, a good president, puts out -- says we've got all this energy here, we have this thing called the GNP, we have this big energy here, and now what are we going to do with it? What are our national priorities? Are we going to go this way, are we going to go that way or are we going to go that way?

What it seems to be saying is that the question pointed to Adam is okay, you have this great gift of this woman seeking a connection with you and giving you the sense of life force. Now, Adam, what are you going to do with it? You have to take this unit that you've created and this life force, and now do something constructive with it. You can't just sit on your haunches, direct it, do something constructive in the world with this new gift that you have and this family and this whole life force that you've united with.

The same question is put to Cain. The question to Cain is what is your yetzer hara? It's not some little

angel sitting on your left shoulder telling you to do the wrong thing. That's not what an evil inclination is. What's really the evil inclination? You know what the evil inclination is? What is it? It's desire. The evil inclination is desire. What would life be without desire?

Audience Member: Bland.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It wouldn't be life. Desire is food, its fuel. It's what makes life go. It's the main course; the main course of life is desire. That's what it's all about. If you don't have any of it, you are dead. But, desire isn't the end of the story. You can't just be filled with desire. What if you're filled with desire, you're just filled with it and then you just let go randomly? What happens? Then you're very dangerous. You're not directing your desire. Take the Torah and use it as tavlin. It's the spice that directs desire.

You say take all of that desire, be filled with life force and now channel it constructively and use the Torah to tell you how to channel it constructively. Go this way, go that way. Use it this way, but take that desire, take that engine and use the steering wheel of your mind and the Torah, and steer it and direct it so that you do good things with it. That is the challenge to Cain.

What God is really telling Cain is the following. He is saying Cain, lamah charah lach ve'lamah naflu panecha? You can't be depressed. Halo im teitiv se'eis, if you do good, then you can lift up your face. What do you mean do good? It means if you take the horns of this desire and you channel it, you're doing good. Ve'im lo teitev, not that if you do evil but you fail to do good, what does it mean to fail to do good?

It means you just sit there, it means you allow yourself to be filled with desire but you don't do anything to channel it. Then, "lapetach chatat rovetz", sin lies crouching at the door. It's only a matter of time before you'll drive off the cliff. You're like a car that has an engine and no steering wheel. It's very nice but it's a murderous weapon. It's going to run people over. Your desire is going to run amuck. It's only a matter of time before sin crouches out and you run into something.

"Ve'elecha teshukato", you should know that the whole desire of that evil inclination is to form a relationship with you and to fill it with you. That's its job. ve'atah, but what's your job? Timshal bo. You have to rule over it, you have to guide it. You have to make sense of it and you have to make it go somewhere constructive. Why does God have to tell Cain this now? What is Cain going through that he has to hear it now? Here is what Cain is going through, and with this I'd like to conclude and I think bring together -- I'm probably out of time, right?

Audience Member: That's okay.

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right. Okay. I'd like to bring together this piece with Cain and the tree of knowledge piece, put it all together. Why does Cain need to hear it now? I'll tell you why Cain needs to hear it now. What's the deepest desire that there is? What does the word yetzer hara mean? What does yetzer mean? What's the root? Yatzar, yotzer, to create. To create. The deepest desire is to be creative.

The sexual expression of that is sex. That's why it is the strongest physical desire; it's the biological expression of the desire to create.

The deepest existential desire is to be creative, to leave my mark on the world, somehow to be creative. Cain feels this deepest desire just like his mother did. He wants to create in partnership with God. That's what it's all about, to create in partnership with God. God is not the only creator out there. I'm a creator too. I'm betzelem Elokim, the Nefesh Hachaim says -- Rav Chaim Volozhin -- that what does it mean to be an image of God? God is a creator, I'm a creator too. I can be a creator just like God. It's the greatest desire that you have.

Then, is that bad? It's not bad, it's just undirected. You've got to direct that desire to create. What happens with Cain? What is Cain struggling with? Cain is struggling with this. He's filled with that desire to create. He wants nothing more than to create in partnership with God, but he is Bob Jones looking at Edison. The question that he has to ask is exactly the question that God poses to him and it is this.

You have this great energy called the desire to create. What are you going to do with it? Are you going to let it rule over you or are you going to rule over it? It's the same question that the parents ask the kid coming home from medical school. That question is that there are two things that you can do with desire. If you let it rule over you, then you will sacrifice anything to create in partnership with me, anything, even your relationship with me.

You'll make even Me a tool for the realization of that drive and therefore you're willing to buy Me off anything because you intuit that you need Me to keep this falling; that it's not going to happen; you can't plant, you can't farm without Me. If you do that, it's the greatest tragedy in the world because you've taken this great gift that I've given you and you've turned it on Me and you've destroyed our relationship. What do I want from you? I want you to rule over it.

If you can rule over it means you feel possessed with this desire, you feel it's the thing that you want most in your life, to be able to create, and you say but I'm just the co-creator here and God is the main creator. What does it mean to rule over that desire? It means to look at God and to say to God, You know what? I only got this from You and I am so grateful. That's what it means.

Will Cain be able to say that or not? In the end, he kills his brother. Cain doesn't get the message but we can get the message. If you look at the story of Adam and Eve and the story of Cain and Abel, it really is one story. The story is about the deepest desire there is; the desire to be creative. On some level, maybe all desires come from that. That's why they're naked and they're so embarrassed of their nakedness, because it's the sexual desire which is the biological manifestation of the desire to create that overwhelms them. That's why Adam is afraid of his nakedness.

He senses that there is such a great desire out there, this nakedness, that how can I possibly control it? It's scary to be able to control it. You've got this little steering wheel and this big desire. How do I possibly do that? God says you know what? I want you to be godly. I want you to be godly. If you could just eat

from the Tree of Life it would be a wonderful thing, but when you eat from the Tree of Knowledge, you become godly, you become more creative, just like Me. I'm a Creator, you elevate your creative drive, but the problem is that you're only half a creator because your steering wheel still isn't where it needs to be.

I created you with a certain steering wheel and a certain engine, you've made a larger engine. Look at your steering wheel. What are you? You're like half-gods. What is God? God is the desire to create, but just the desire to create? No. The very delicately balanced desire to create. God knows when to cut it off. If you look at every act of creation that God involves in, from modern biology to physics all the way down the road, it's not just creative energy. It's also cut off when it needs to be cut off.

When you just have creative energy alone, we call that cancer; when cells just multiply out of control, that's cancerous. The cell also has to die sometimes; it has to know when to say no. When God created the big bang, it wasn't just this big, huge bang of energy. There was a very -- it was regulated. You look at modern physics, book after book after book, they talk about the conditions that existed in the first milliseconds after the big bang where there was this incredible expansion, but it was balanced against gravitational force to a factor of one part in ten to the 55th power. If you were off by one part in tenth of the 55th power, too much gravity, it all sucks back in and there's no universe.

If you're off one part the other way, one part in ten to the 55th power, too much expansion, there's no stars and we have no universe. It has to be fine-tuned down to one part in ten to the 55th power. You've got this great creative energy but you know when to rein it and you know when to pull it back, and the balance between those two things is what creates life. It's the balance between creative energy, and knowing when to cut it off.

Mankind, by eating from the tree, elevated that role of desire but not their capacity to know when to cut it off. The tragedy of after eating from the tree is that they have to live with that great elevated desire and somehow be able to wrestle with it and that sets up the story of Cain, because the next story down the road is what do you do with this elevated desire? You want to create so much. Now, what are you going to do with it? Are you even going to sacrifice your relationship with God because of it?

That is the path that Cain begins to tread down. In the end, both Cain and Adam and Eve were punished. If you look at the punishments, what are they? In addition to everything that we said yesterday, they are another thing too. Cain hides from God, Adam and Eve hide from God, but Cain is also alienated from land, he's exiled from his home, just like Adam and Eve were exiled from Eden and they can't farm any more, just like Adam and Eve couldn't farm any more.

Who are man's parents? God and the earth. God said to the earth na'aseh adam, let's create man together, you contribute the body, I'll contribute the soul. What happens in the wake of mankind saying I elevate desire in my own life? What happens is this. What is mankind supposed to do? What mankind is supposed to do is try and figure out what God's desire is; truth and falsehood. You try and figure out what God wants from you.

There is another path too and that is to say, but I have my own independent desire. That's the trick, do you follow that own independent desire? If you do, who do you alienate yourself from? You alienate yourself from your source, from your parents. You are trying to figure out what your parents want, what that world was like, but you're doing your own thing now.

In the wake of the sin, there is an alienation from source, an alienation from God; you hide from God, an alienation from earth. Earth gives me two things. It gives me a home and it gives me produce. Mother Earth is not an empty idiom. Mother Earth comes because the earth gives us anything that a mother gives us. It gives us a home, like mom, like a womb, and it gives us nourishment, like a home, like womb. That's what earth gives for us.

Mankind, after leaving Eden, is alienated from that source and with Cain, it goes one step further. That alienation gets stronger, and it gets stronger and stronger, until in the Flood -- and here's my reference to the Flood -- until in the Flood, the earth provides no home at all, and there's no place left to go, and the earth destroys man. You're completely alienated from earth. What is the resolution? God says I can't let you eat from the Tree of Life because to eat from the Tree of Life would immortalize you in a half god-like state.

You are godly but you're only half-gods. Vehayisem keElokim, you've become like gods, knowing good and evil, but you're only halfway there. I have to set up the angels to make sure you never get back to this Tree of Life. Like a good parent, I always you want you need and I give you a second tree of life, and what's that? I set up those same angels around the Torah, because the Torah is the other half.

What does the Torah do? It gives you the tavlin. It gives you the spice that allows you to direct where it is that you're going to take this energy. You have this great creative desire. If you then grab hold of that tree of life, then what you're doing -- and you fashion your life, you fashion those desires according to Torah, you've grabbed hold of what it really means to be godly. Now, you don't just have a big engine, you have a big steering wheel too, and you can take them both together, and then you're truly like gods, with desire and with control both hand in hand and both harmonious. Thank you very much.

The following series of lectures is entitled; Paradise Lost: From Eden to the Great Flood. The lectures were delivered by myself before live audiences at The Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. The recordings of these classes were then edited, creating the series you have before you now. The tapes in this series provide a conclusion of sorts to ideas we began to develop in another series of lectures entitled; Serpents of Desire: Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden. That earlier set dealt with the stories of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel, this current set relates the overarching themes in those stories to the narrative of the Great Flood. There are two tapes in this series, this is the first of themThis is a very difficult story to deal with. When we think of the flood we tend to think of it in terms of fairytale, Noah and the ark. If you go through your average children store you're likely to find some happy picture of Noah with the animals and coming out with the rainbow [unclear 1:01], right? The whole thing. So that's our association with the story. But the truth is if you actually lived through it, it wouldn't have been such a happy thing. I mean you're talking about the cataclysmic destruction of virtually all of mankind, not to mention a lot of animals. So there are a lot of questions that the story raises, not all of which I feel prepared to answer, but I'll raise them anyway in the interest of raising them.

I think one of the questions that bothers a lot of people is that the story seems horrifying; there's thousands of people - hundreds of thousands of people - die at the hand of their creator, what could have brought it about? How do we understand this story? Is it a brutal story? I think that's one problem. If you want to ask a slightly different angled question, you can say well what did the animals ever do wrong, why do they have to be killed even if the people were bad? Was Noah really such a good guy that he was the only one that could be salvaged from a whole world, this one guy? Those are sort of some of the general questions. There's a lot of other specific questions to raise, but those are sort of some of the general questions.

I just want to say one or two remarks about those questions at the very beginning, and maybe we can revisit them at the end - and again, I don't know that I have really satisfactory resolutions to any of those, but just a couple of things to think about. One is that if you look at Noah as he's described in the very beginning, so how is he described? He's described as an Ish Tzadik - as a righteous man. He's described as an Ish Tam, I think also. As a Tzadik - a righteous person; Tamim - who is whole; Hayah b'dorotav - in his generations. He's described as someone walking with G-d.

Yet what's interesting is that what you see in the very beginning of the story - actually even just before the very beginning, because when we tend to look at the story we tend to think of it as beginning - or at least I do - tend to think of it as beginning in Chapter 6, verse 9. But if you look in Chapter 6, verse 8 when G-d talks about His decision to destroy the world, we have the following verse which is interesting. V'Noach matzah chen b'einei Hashem. Immediately after G-d decides to destroy the world it says; V'Noach matzah chen b'einei Hashem. Literally the way that's translated is; And G-d found - how do you translate Chen in your verses? Grace, favor. Found grace or favor in the eyes of G-d. I'd say grace is probably a good translation. Chen is a tricky, little word.

Oftentimes if you would - I think if we would ask the average person on the street why was Noah saved from the flood and you would have to give your really quick answer, you would say because he was

righteous, because he was good, because he didn't deserve to die. That opens up a whole questions which is, and everybody else has gone completely - I mean, animals deserved to die? Noah didn't deserve to die, the animals deserved to die? But that's actually not what the text says. The text does not say that Noah was righteous and he didn't deserve to die. The text makes no claim that Noah deserved to live. What it says instead is that he was an Ish Tzadik - he was a righteous person but he was; Matzah chen b'einei Hashem - he found grace in the eyes of G-d.

I don't know exactly what this means, but Chen, as I said, is a very tricky idea, this notion of grace. I guess grace is a good way of interpreting it; grace implies something which you have that's not really deserved. In Hebrew the word Chen comes from the three-letter root Chanan - it literally means to give something freely. In other words, to give something freely without any sort of compensation. G-d, for example, is described in the Book of Exodus in the famous passage where immediately after the Golden Calf G-d appears to Moses and describes, so to speak, these sort of character traits of the Divine. So He describes Himself as Chanun v'Rachum - as compassionate and - how do you say Chanun? Graceful, not the word, but as someone who has Chen, or someone who bestows Chen, someone who gives grace.

Grace and compassion are two different things. I think compassion is more linked to the specific person, in other words - I think I may have said this before here, I'm not sure. But the Hebrew word for compassion is Rachum - comes from the three-letter word Rechem, which also doubles for womb, interestingly. In other words, Racheim as a verb is the same root as Rechem in noun form, which suggests that if you want to understand what compassion is, it's the verb form of being a womb.

So if you think what it means to be a womb as the essence of compassion - by the way, another Jewish philosopher who was not a religious - well not an observant Jew, but probably a religious Jew, Emmanuel Levinas, a French philosopher, argues - he has an essay called - it's in his book, I think, [Nine Talmudic Essays 6:24], or something. But he has one of those essays on Judaism and femininity which is very interesting, and in one of those essays he writes something which I think really is true, which is that he argues that - he says that traditionally we have associated compassion with femininity, and we tend to think that women are by nature compassionate. Or we tend to think of it as a feminine quality. But what he argues is that compassion is not the core quality, the core quality is actually femininity and compassion is derivative from femininity. In other words, there is no such thing as compassion - there's femininity and an expression of femininity is compassion.

I would argue that the Hebrew language agrees with that when it argues that compassion is nothing but the verb form of the noun womb. That compassion is derivative of being a womb. What does it mean to be a womb? Or what does it mean to be compassionate? What it means to be compassionate is to provide the services of a womb. What does a womb do? A womb nurtures and it nurtures life and it gives sustenance and it gives a perfect environment and it gives a safe environment. Everything needed for something to grow into what it possibly can be.

The womb is very hands-off kind of organ - we haven't succeeded yet in replicating a womb by the way, scientifically. You can have test-tube babies but you can't have a baby born without a womb. You

think what does a womb do already? It provides sustenance, provides a place to live, big deal. But the subtlety of what the womb provides and how difficult it is to provide that perfect environment, perfectly calibrated to what the fetus needs at every moment, is a very, very difficult thing to do, and modern science hasn't succeeded in doing it. But it's a very hands-off kind of thing where you allow something to develop.

But interestingly, the womb is also a critical organ. By critical I mean, critical in the sense of discriminate, it's a discriminating organ. In the sense that studies have shown that most pregnancies actually end in miscarriage - even though we don't realize it, a woman just experiences it as a heavy period - but 80 per cent of pregnancies actually end in miscarriage. What happens? The womb, so to speak, asks a questions of a fetus before it allows a fetus to implant in the womb. What is the question, so to speak, that the womb asks? The question that the womb asks is - what? Is are you viable? If you're viable so then I'll nurture you and I'll give you what you need to be. But if you're not viable then I'll expel you. So in that sense the womb is discriminate, really only one out of five fetuses answer that question correctly. But if you can answer that question that you're viable then I'll allow you to become whatever it is that you can be.

So interestingly, compassion also is not an indiscriminate virtue. In other words, when you ask for compassion - when a person throws himself upon the mercy of the court, what really is he asking if he's asking for compassion from the court? So compassion stands at an opposite pole from justice. If you're looking at a prosecutor, so a prosecutor who stands in justice has a question for a defendant, the question is not are you viable, the question is what have you done? If I know what you've done, I know how to treat you. The question of the womb or the question of the defense attorney or someone seeking compassion, is not what have you done, because even if you've done something wrong I can still extend compassion to you if you're viable, if you can make something of yourself. The question is not so much what you've done in the past, it's what you can become in the future. But it's still a critical question, what can you become?

If you can't make an argument that someone can make something out of himself, then even compassion doesn't have an argument. At that point compassion doesn't have an argument but there still is one other argument that could be made, and that's the argument of grace - that's the argument of Chen. The argument for Chen can still be made. And that is another one of G-d's attributes, so to speak; He's not only Rachum - compassionate, but He's also Chanun - He also gives grace which is fully undeserved, which seems to be very close to an uncritical free gift, which is also - seems to be a possibility. It's interesting that despite the fact - and you find Biblical characters asking for Chen now and then. There's that - even that phrase which is ubiquitous in the Bible; If I found favor in Your eyes, really is, if I found grace in Your eyes - it doesn't really mean favor it means if I found grace in Your eyes. People ask occasionally for Chaninah - for a free gift, for something that is very close to undeserved.

It's interesting that Chen would be the quality which the text associates with Noah. Because here you have Noah and you think of him as a righteous person and the way we would tend to think of it is that G-d is as critical as possible and the one person who rises above the critical bar of this G-d is Noah. That

bar is set very high and Noah is like the best guy in the world and he just makes it over the bar where everyone else dies. My Rabbi - the Rabbi of the Synagogue that I go to - once gave a talk where he argued that if the world is being destroyed there's no such thing as being righteous enough to be saved. In other words, if there's a cataclysm happening on that scale you can't make an argument that you're righteous enough in justice to be saved, there's no such thing. The only thing that can save you in such a situation is Chen. And even if you are a righteous guy - Noah wasn't saved because he managed to get over the bar, Noah was saved because it was part of G-d's plan that somebody had to be saved, and you might as well pick Noah. But from Noah's perspective it is grace. I mean that's all it is - when you're wiping out the world.

That also has implications for everyone else by the way, because if Noah didn't deserve to be saved it might also be that not everybody deserved to die. And the animals might not have deserved to die either. Nevertheless, everyone died except for Noah, who even he, didn't deserve to live, he just got grace. Why then does everyone get wiped out if not everyone deserved to die?

So I'm not going to get into this in detail and I don't know if I have a really satisfactory resolution for this, but again, just something to think about. When we think of ourselves as people, more often than not I think, we think of ourselves as individuals - especially in America which is a very individual place; we prize individual rights and the ability of the individual to manage his own destiny. Yet I think there's no denying that human beings operate on more than the level of just individuals, they do operate on the levels of community as well. We have levels of community which are real.

A fellow by the name of Grier wrote a book called Living Systems - available in the Hopkins' library if you're interested, it's a very expensive book, very thick. But in Living Systems what Grier argues is that in any living system you could find, on whatever level you find it, there are certain components that always exist in living systems. There is a source of energy production, there is some sort of central command structure, there is locomotion, there's various different levels. What he argues is that they exist at different levels and - it's interesting, he's goes through seven levels of organization in living systems.

The smallest of which he argues is the cell.

So if you look at a cell for example and you say to a cell, who are you cell? So take your average skin cell, so who is a skin cell? So there's really two ways that a skin cell can answer that question. One way that a skin cell can answer that question is, I'm a cell, look at me, I do perfectly fine on my own. I've got my nucleus, I've got my messenger RNA, I've got my DNA. I can replicate myself, I have a perfect reproductive capacity. I have my [cilium 14:14] in case I need to get anywhere. I've got my lysosomes - my garbage disposal units, I have my mitochondria - my energy-producing units. Everything that I need is pretty much right here, I'm a self-sufficient system. And it's true by the way, the cell is one of the most spectacularly organized systems in the world. If you would look at it under an electron microscope it would dwarf in its manufacturing capacity, in just its output, what even the largest industrial center such as New York City put out over the course of a year. And it's an amazing thing, it works on its own.

Yet it's not true that the skin cell is only a skin cell, because the skin cell is only telling you half the story,

if that's what he says. Because he's also part of the skin and he's not being honest about his identity if he doesn't realize that he's part of the skin. Now if you look at the skin and you say, who are you? So skin can say, I'm skin. But skin isn't being honest unless skin says, I'm part of a body too. And that's another level of self in which skin operates.

What Grier argues as well, is that when you look at any individual body then it's also the case that the body operates at different levels. Who am I? So I can say I'm Fohrman, I do just fine on my own, I can go forage for food, I can teach classes, people will give me pay checks, I can do all sorts of things and survive. But Fohrman is not really being honest if that's all he's says about his identity, because he is part of a larger system. Part of that system is family, part of that system is community, his town, part of that system is country. There are levels of community - part of that system is humanity, being part of humanity as a whole.

I think that in an individual society such as we live in we tend - I think we intellectually realize this, but we tend to err on the side of individual more than we err on the sides of community. When we think about ourselves we tend to think of ourselves as individuals more than as members of community, when in fact both are true and neither negates the other. But to really understand who we really are, we have to understand that both exist.

By the way, a lot of things in life don't make sense - maybe this is an obvious point - but a lot of things in life simply don't make sense unless you understand that you exist at the level of community. I mean, for example, imagine a skeptic comes along in the Jewish faith and asks the following question. I don't understand why I should be obligated to observe the commandments of the Torah. Why? Because the Torah was given at Mount Sinai 3300 years ago, and everyone went and said yes, we'll accept this. G-d appeared at the mountain, 600,000 people stood around - 2.1 million people stood around and said, okay we hear, we'll accept it, we'll do it. Now why does that obligate me? Did anyone ask me? Was I there?

Did I - I wasn't there, I'm born 3300 years later, I never said yes, why am I obligated to do this?

Now the Commentators, by the way, struggle with this. So some commentators say well because everyone's sort of disembodied souls existed and were there at the time and the whole community was there. So then if I still want to be a skeptic, what would I say? I'd say okay, fine, let's say my soul was there, but what seat did my soul get at this event? Like, was I a voting member, or was I up in the mezzanine watching? Well if I was up in the mezzanine watching and I never said yes, so why am I obligated to be a part of this thing? I mean that's a reasonable question. And it's something which the commentators really struggle with.

I'll tell you my own opinion on this, although I haven't seen it anywhere. But my inclination would be that the answer to this is - I'll give you another example. Let's say occasionally black leaders will demand an apology for slavery from who? From President Bush. Now let's say I'm President Bush, why can't President Bush say, how could I apologize - let's say I wanted to apologize for slavery, how could I apologize? I never owned slaves, slaves was a long time ago, what do I have to do with apologizing for slavery? You could argue such a question, how could any leader of a community apologize? The answer

really is it's that both of these questions come from a misunderstanding of self. Because there's different levels at which I operate, and there really is an organism called a community.

In other words, it's not just fake, it's not that a community is a lot of people who decide to live together and they put up a gate around their community and they hire a police force and this is their community. That's not what a community is. A community really is an entity, it is an organism, the same way that an individual is an organism. The same way that a cell operates at two levels of organism, so it's not just a cell. A body is an organism, a community is an organism. Community - the same way that, by the way, I'd say, who are you? Well for the last - if you look at your body, how many of the cells that are in your body existed 15 years ago? None. So now - so you aren't the same person, so you're not responsible for what you did 15 years ago, right? Wrong. Because even though any individual - and indeed all individual cells can die but the community is more than just a conglomeration of its individual cells, it has a reality which outlasts the life of any - indeed all of its individual cells.

The same thing is true for the Jewish people. Why is any Jew obligated by what somebody said 3300 years ago? The answer is he's not obligated to observe the Torah because of anything individually that he said, it's not an individual obligation. He's part of a community and the community is obligated, and to the extent that he's part of that community, he's obligated by that. Ah, he didn't like it, ah, he was born into it, all right, that's part of life is being part of a community. Why is it that it would make sense for a president to apologize for slavery - I'm not arguing whether they should or they shouldn't - but the concept would even make sense? The reason why it makes sense is because there is a community called the American Nation and the head of it can make statements and apologize effectively for things that weren't in his lifetime. It's just - that's part of what makes sense.

So too I think when you look at something called the flood and you say, okay, what happened in the flood? Was G-d mad at a whole bunch of individual people that really ticked Him off and He decided to get rid of them, except that the really good ones He saved? No. What was happening was happening on a communal - I would argue, what was happening was happening on a communal level, [unclear 20:41]

- by the way, it's an interesting question, and I don't give you any answers to this question, but I'm going to raise this. Which is, that if we think about humanity's relationship with G-d or any individual's relationship to G-d, when we tend to think about building a relationship with G-d, we tend to think of that as a very individual thing. And it certainly is a very individual thing. But I would argue it's not only an individual thing, because G-d relates to individuals but He probably also relates to communities as well. There's a communal relationship that - there's a one-on-one sort of relationship that G-d establishes with communities. And that's part of my relationship, that's why it makes a difference that I'm part of a community, that I care about the community, because it's part of myself.

I think G-d looking at the community of humanity made a decision and the decision was probably a decision to shut down the operation, that the experiment failed. Experiment A, Plan A for creation, failed. Now what's interesting is that He didn't just completely destroy creation, He decided to preserve one little piece of creation and to start again with that - which is interesting. Why, I don't know. But it seems to be that G-d looking communally at the entire thing says, some people deserve to live and some

people don't deserve [to live 21:56], this is not an individual thing, the community that My relationship to this experiment is, it didn't work, I am shutting it down.

There's great personal tragedy in shutting down an experiment and it's interesting to ask what responsibility does the Creator have for evil that happens on His watch, even if it is a result of human beings' freewill. G-d gave them freewill, what responsibility does the Creator have for that? Leaving that question aside, I think the context for asking that question is understanding that the flood was, I think, an issue of humanity as a community vis-à-vis G-d, and G-d's decision that this thing wasn't working.

It's in very broad brushstrokes, but the truth is there is many problems with the flood story that I'd like to bring - many problems that I have beyond this with the flood story that I'd like to bring to your attention and discuss with you.

I'm going to begin with what I consider the most serious problem, a problem that if it's really a problem I think is - we talked before about elephants in the room, and big questions and little questions, to me this is a big question. This is a question that's big enough that if it's a real question - in other words, maybe it's just a mistaken question - but if it's a real question, it's a question that's big enough that I think that it almost gets in the way of understanding the whole story. But here is the problem.

If you ask yourself why is it that G-d decided to destroy humanity? How come? If you look at the text and say according to the text what happened that made G-d decide to destroy humanity, you can find the answer in the text. You would look in Chapter 6, verses 5 to 8, where G-d seems to come to that decision and you would come to a description of what happened, what was it about man that G-d decided enough is enough, it's time to close down the operation, it's time to destroy the world. What is it that G-d says?

Chapter 6, verse 5?

[Response from audience member: Wicked.]

Okay wicked. And specifically the wickedness is described in a very specific way. What it says is; Vayar Hashem - and G-d saw; Ki rabah ra'at ha'odom ba'aretz - that the evil of man was great in the world; V'kol yeitzer - and now this is the very specific explanation; V'kol yeitzer machshevot libo rak rah kol hayom - and the inclination of the thoughts of his heart was just evil all day long. So that is why G-d decides to destroy the world because mankind has been evil and the inclination of his heart is evil all day long.

Here's the problem. Actually, let's see if you can see the problem. I'll point you to a verse and you tell me if you think there's any problem with this verse. Look at for a moment, Chapter 8, verse 21 - and let me set the scene for you. The flood is over, the ark has rested on top of Mount Ararat, Noah comes out with all the animals, Noah builds an altar, offers an offering, and G-d responds. This is G-d's response when G-d thinks to Himself the following thing. Vayomer Hashem el libo - G-d says to His heart; Loh osif l'kallel od et ha'adamah ba'avur ha'odom - He says, you know, gee, this is a really bad idea, I'm never

again going to curse the earth like this on account of man and destroy everything. As He says later; V'loh osif od l'hakot et kol chay ka'asher asiti - I'm never again going to destroy all living things as I've done now. Why? Ki yeitzer lev ha'odom rah min'urav - because the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth, all the time.

Now think about that. Listen to this for a second. The reason that G-d decides to destroy the world is virtually the same reason that He decides never again will He destroy it! One second, hold on, I just want you to realize how fantastic this is - how fantastically difficult this is. I mean, this is really problematic. G- d says, oh gee, what a bad idea, destroying the world.

What?

[Response from audience member: (Unclear 26:11)]

Like, oops. Right? But, oops - but it's one thing to say oops I made a mistake, it's another thing to say, oops, the very reason why I destroyed the world is the reason why I'll never again destroy it. This is crazy. I mean, it's one thing to say, I overreacted, but to say that my reason for destroying the world was really a reason - what - to save it? This is ludicrous. In other words, I would ask G-d - I would say G-d, if this is really true, couldn't you have figured this out 15 minutes ago, 40 days ago, before the first raindrops? I mean you're the omniscient one, you're supposed to know everything. And again, by the way, it's particularly problematic if our view of G-d is as an omniscient being, an all-knowing being.

All-knowing beings we don't think of making these kinds of mistakes in math. I mean this is a pretty cataclysmic mistake.

But the text seems to set this up - by the way, and the text goes out of its way to make the connection. It uses the same language; Yeitzer machshevot libo - the inclination of man's heart and the evilness, is exactly the same language. There's other aspects of it which is the same as well. For example, is there any other aspect of verse 21 - 8:21 - which reminds you of 6:5? Look at 6:6. Anything about 6:6 which reminds you of 8:21?

[Response from audience member: The L-rd regretted.]

Well - okay, that's not a literal translation. What is the literal translation of those words? Give me a really literal translation of 'G-d regretted'.

[Response from audience member: It says He was sad.]

Sad. Good, He was sad. Even more literal than just sad? He was saddened blank. What does it say? [Response from audience member: His heart.]

Saddened to His heart. Vayitatzeiv el libo - He became saddened to His heart, is the word where we describe G-d's regret, He became saddened to His heart. Now, fast-forward to 8:21, what does G-d do?

G-d smells the incense; Vayomer Hashem - and G-d says; El libo - G-d speaks to His heart. So again you have that same thematic element, G-d was saddened to His heart, and now He speaks to His heart.

By the way, G-d doesn't speak to His heart very often - I haven't done the search, but there's very few times that this kind of language is used in the Bible. It's like the Bible is intentionally harking you back to that episode. So now the question is, why? I mean if the text is going out of its way to make this connection between the two, how can we possibly understand this, short of just saying well G-d made a really bad mistake, a very elementary kind of mistake? So this is one problem.

A couple of other problems I want to raise also with this story. I think an interesting thing to ask yourself with any Biblical story is could we have done this simpler? So for example if you're doing the story of the 10 Plagues, an interesting question to ask about the 10 Plagues is, did we really need 10 plagues? In other words, if G-d is G-d, all-powerful, and the goal is get the Jews out of Egypt where they are enslaved, so figure what's the simplest way to do it? If you're G-d do you really need - and you can use whatever you want, you can use lightning, fire, ice - I mean anything, the sky is the limit, because G-d uses all these plagues - would you really need 10 plagues, or was that just for show? I mean could you do it more simply? Yes, you could. What could you do? If you were G-d and you wanted to get a certain nation out of slavery, what's the most efficient way to do it?

[Response from audience member: I was going to say transport them…]

Yeah, you could use the old magic carpet trick, or you could do - magic carpet would work.

Or you could just - how about freezing the Egyptians in place? That would work. Just freeze Egyptians, let Jews go. And by the way, that actually happened in one of the plagues, which plague?

[Response from audience member: Darkness.]

Darkness, right. Plague number 9 is darkness, no Egyptians can see even their hands, [nose 30:05] and face, and the Jews can see everything. Isn't that a golden opportunity to leave? No one goes. Very strange. So one of the problems in the 10 Plagues is understanding why it had to be so complicated. Why couldn't people just go free easily?

So here also if we ask the question, looking at the flood, if you're G-d, could you do this simpler? If you think about - I mean this thing was the size of the USS Nimitz, I mean this is an aircraft carrier style boat. It took over a century for this guy to build the thing. I mean this is a - you're not talking about a little hobby project. I think a reasonable question could be asked, okay, let's simplify, goal is wipe out humanity, save one guy, you're G-d, what's the simplest way to do it?

[Response from audience member: Probably not what you're (thinking 30:50).]

How about put him atop a mountain, a really high mountain, get everyone up there; "Noah, get some supplies, go to the top of Mount Everest and stay there for a while there's going to be a flood down

below". That could have been one way of doing it, right?

So one interesting question is isn't it unnecessary work to make Noah spend a long time fashioning an aircraft carrier? I mean, first of all G-d could have provided him with an aircraft carrier, G-d could have said - I mean the same G-d that brings about a flood can say poof, here's your boat, we can do it that way. Or if we don't want to minimize the miracles, you can say, go on top of the mountain. What's the notion of this poor guy having to learn carpentry and build himself this whole boat and very specific dimensions, the whole thing? It seems - I don't know, maybe it's not a question, but it always seemed to me a little odd. So that's one issue.

Another issue also is what happens to Noah after he leaves the boat? Does anyone know? Immediately after he leaves the boat so he offers his offering, G-d decides never to do it again, and then Noah busily sets about doing something strange. What does he do? He plants a vineyard. He plants a vineyard and he waits for the grapes to ripen and he makes himself wine and he promptly gets himself drunk. And the text bothers to tell us this. So (a) why does the text bother to tell us this, I mean why do we need to know intimate details of his life that he decided to get drunk? And (b) it's as if to say that this was somehow Noah's reaction, I mean what exactly is he doing here, why is he getting himself drunk? It seems to be this deliberate act to build this vineyard and for the purpose of getting drunk, I mean what exactly is going on with that? Another strange thing.

Another odd thing here is if you look at - I want you to look for a moment at Chapter 8, verse 13. Could we have a volunteer to read that?

[Response from audience member: And it came to pass in the six-hundredth-and-first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the waters dried from upon the earth, Noah removed the covering of the ark (unclear 32:58) and behold the surface of the ground had dried.]

Okay, good, so let's stop there for a moment. So now if you had to summarize what happened here, so you'd leave out all of the years, and you'd just say, one day the earth was dry. But the Bible doesn't do that, the Bible gives us a date. Would you care to tell me what the date is? The date is, as the text gives it

- let's just do the math - it's the six-hundredth-and-first year, the first day of the first month, so that is 1 January. So 1 January, so to speak, first day of the first month, on the six-hundredth-and-first year.

Now the problem is here that when you're dating something you need to provide what? A point of reference. You can't just say, the six-hundredth-and-first year - of what? So you might thing the what is what? Creation. The problem is if you do the math and you add up all the years, it's not, it's definitely not creation. It's something…

[Response from audience member: (Unclear 34:00) Noah.]

Ah, so if you look at the text you'll find - so for example, take a look at Chapter 7, verse 6. Chapter 7, verse 6 says that Noah was 600 years old when the rains started falling. So presumably what's happening here is that we're talking about Noah's life. But the problem with this is that it doesn't say we're talking

about Noah's life. In other words, the normal thing to do if I were talking about Noah's life, would be in the text to say; And it happened when Noah was 601 years old, that on the first day of the month, the waters dry. That would be the normal way to say it.

If you say it happened in the six-hundredth-and-first year, what is strange about that? If you don't provide a point of reference so it sounds like - like what? It's sounds like it's either from Genesis, from the beginning of the world, or from some established point of reference which you - but to make no - the problem is that Noah's life is a terribly subjective point of reference. I mean, so it's one guy - I know true, an important guy, but all of a sudden to phrase it in this way without even naming Noah as the point of reference, I think makes a very subtle point. The subtle point that I think it makes is what? That Noah becomes the point of reference. In other words, it's almost as if Noah's life shifts from being a subjective standard of measure to an objective standard of measure - to an actually objective yardstick by which time can now be judged in this world - which I think has profound implications. But that's an interesting thing here that the Bible is treating Noah's life almost as if it's becoming an objective standard of time that it doesn't even need to mark, it's just the way time is now reckoned - which is an interesting kind of thing.

Finally, I want to ask one other question - and with this sort of jump in to a broader analysis of the story

- which is the following. What was G-d's purpose in bringing the flood? If I were to have to ask you just very briefly why did G-d bring a flood, you would say, in order to…

[Response from audience member: Drown the world.]

Drown the world. Well not - and specifically to drown who? Humanity and while we're at it the animals. That's what you would say.

However, actually if you look at the text of the Bible, the text seems to suggest another agenda. There was another agenda besides destroying humanity which was, I think, really odd, and I have to tell you the truth I never realized that this was another agenda until I was doing this with my kid when he was learning Noah in school, and he was in First Grade, maybe Second Grade, and he was just reciting the verses. You hear it recited long enough and it starts kind of ringing in your ears and you notice that the verse is actually saying something that you never thought it was saying. So if you read, for example, the beginning of the story in Chapter 6, verses - say - 9 to 12, you will find that if you just read the text simply it does seem as if there is another agenda. What is that agenda?

So maybe we can have somebody read that text.

[Response from audience member: This is the account of Noah. Noach was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time and he walked with G-d. Noah had three sons; Shem, Cham and Yefet. Now the earth was corrupt in G-d's sight and was full of violence. G-d saw…]

Okay one second, I'm just going to add an addition here. 'Now the earth was corrupt before G-d' - can someone give me a little bit of a different translation? Okay, lawlessness. [Unclear 37:46] becomes - gee

it's interesting, none of your English translations have it. But in Hebrew the word earth is repeated one more time - even though it's understood. In other words, you could just say that - like your translations suggests - And the earth was corrupted before G-d and it was filled with violence. But it doesn't. In Hebrew its - oh sort of unnecessarily; The earth was corrupted before G-d and the earth was filled with violence.

Let's continue.

[Response from audience member: G-d saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So G-d said to Noah, I'm going to put an end to all (unclear 38:25) for the earth is filled with violence because of them, I'm surely going to destroy both them and the earth.]

Now if you listened carefully here you will notice that there's another agenda besides destroying humanity, which is what? Destroying the earth - which is not the same thing. I'll destroy humanity along with the earth. In other words if earth is just a synonym for humanity then it doesn't work, because I'm destroying both humanity and the earth. There is another agenda, the destruction of the earth itself, which is very strange.

Notice how many times does the word earth appear in these few sentences. Everything is earth, earth, earth, from the very beginning. What became corrupted? The earth became corrupted - not just humanity, the earth became corrupted. Vatishacheit ha'aretz - the land became corrupted before G-d. Vatimalei ha'aretz chamas - and the land, the earth, was filled with Chamas - Rashi translates it as robbery. But it doesn't say that humankind did a lot of robbing, it phrases it in terms of the land, the earth. The earth was filled with robbery. Again, G-d then looks out, what does G-d see? Not humanity, G-d sees the earth. Vayar Elokim et ha'aretz - G-d looks at the earth - verse 12, and He says; V'hinei nishchata - and behold it was - how do you translate this? Corrupted.

The other word which is appearing over and over here is a variation of the Hebrew word Shacheit - verb

- which I think you've been translating as corrupt, as a verb, but it also means - what it literally means in Hebrew is twist, to be twisted. So, 'the earth was twisted before G-d and the earth was filled with - either violence or robbery - and G-d saw the earth and saw that it was twisted'; Ki hishchit kol basar et darko al ha'aretz - because the way of all flesh had twisted itself upon the land. G-d then said to Noah; The end of all flesh has come before Me. Why? Because the earth is filled with Chamas - with robbery or violence - because of them, and now I'm going to destroy them along with the earth.

There's this very strange agenda here, which is not only the destruction of humankind but the destruction of the earth. Also the twistedness of the earth. You would think of people becoming evil but you don't think of the earth becoming evil, I mean what did the earth do? The earth became corrupted. It's a very strange thing. And it seems that - by the way I think this gets to the issue of the destruction of the animals. What are the animals? They're part of sort of the earth - in other words, nature. G-d says, specifically, I'm not just out to destroy humanity, I'm literally out to destroy the world, to destroy earth. Because the earth has become twisted, has become corrupted. It's a very strange thing.

Yeah.

[Response from audience member: Now this is the same (earth theme 41:19) that earlier with Adam and Eve he had referred to as being joined in creation with?]

Ah okay, very good. So now we come back to our earth theme - going back all the way from Adam and Eve through Cain. Earth has been no passive bystander in this story from Adam and Eve through Cain. Earth is very much a part of the story and is a part of the Noah story too. What we'll have to do is relate somehow everything that's been happening in Adam and Eve and Cain to the earth in this story, because again, the earth is taking center stage.

You see it by the way in another way too. If you look at - I just noticed this yesterday actually. Look at this language and tell me where you've heard this before. Verse 12 which we just read in Chapter 6.

Here's the language, I want you to tell me - a little Bible trivia quiz here, tell me where have you heard these words before? The words are; Vayar Elokim et ha'aretz v'hinei nishchata - that G-d looked out on the world; V'hinei nishchata - and behold it was twisted. Now, where have you heard the following words; And G-d looked out upon the world, and behold it was x?

[Response from audience member: It was good.]

It was good. It's a direct quote from the creation of the world in Genesis. At the very end of - Genesis, at the very ultimate moment of creation when G-d finishes creating the universe, on the seventh day, and He looks out and He finishes everything. He looks out upon the world and behold it was good. Now He looks out upon the world and behold it is twisted. It's a direct quote from there. Almost to say that the creation that I established then which was good, is now no longer good, but somehow it's twisted. Not just that mankind is twisted, but creation itself is twisted in some strange way. Therefore the destruction that comes down is a destruction not just of man, not just of humanity, but of creation itself.

You see it also in another interesting thing. A fellow by the name of Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom called my attention to this. If you look at Chapter 1, the story of creation and you look at the Noah story, you'll begin to find some very, very interesting parallels. I really should have assigned this to you for homework, to compare Chapter 1 and Chapter 8 of Genesis. If you compare Chapter 1 and Chapter 8 from Genesis you'll see a fascinating series of parallels one after the other. One is the story of creation, Chapter 8 is the story of the flood, and the rehabilitation of the world after the flood.

Take a look at the following thing. I'm going to read verses from Chapter 1 in Genesis, and I want to you guys to keep your fingers on Chapter 8 in Genesis, which is the story of the world after the flood, and whenever I quote a verse in Genesis Chapter 1, I want you to tell me if it reminds you of anything in Genesis Chapter 8. Okay? Here we go from Genesis Chapter 1. Okay, the very second verse of creation, the very second verse of the Book of Genesis - the Book of Genesis opens with the following words. In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth. Listen to verse 2. And the world was formless and void, darkness was over the face of the deep and a wind of G-d blew upon the face of the waters. What does this remind you of in Chapter 8?

[Response from audience member: Verse 1.] Verse 1. Can someone read verse 1?

[Response from audience member: G-d caused a wind to blow across the earth and the waters subsided.]

Okay good, so again; G-d causes a wind to blow across the earth and waters subside. Chapter 1, verse 2; G-d causes a wind to blow across the face of the deep and the spirit of G-d, or the wind of G-d, hovers over the face of the waters. So there is wind over waters in Chapter 1, verse 2, there's wind over waters in Chapter 8, verse 1.

By the way, what is the state of the world in the flood? Chaos. Okay even the word flood, by the way, in Hebrew doesn't really mean flood. Do you know what the world Mabul really means? Mabul really comes from the word [Behalla 45:41], which means complete chaos. It's a state of chaos that the world is in, everything becomes topsy-turvy.

You see it also by the way at the very end of the story when G-d promises that it will never again happen again, He says, from now on all the seasons will remain constant; Summer and winter and night and day will all remain constant. Implying that during the flood none of that remind constant, there were no seasons, there was no night, there was no day, it was all - what? Kind of formless and void, as you remember here from the very beginning of Genesis; The world was formless and void and there was a wind of G-d upon the face of the waters.

Okay, let's move on to day number 2 in creation, and I'm going to quote to you now from verse 6, what does this remind you of? Vayomer Elokim - and G-d said; Yehi rakiyah betoch ha'mayim v'hi mavdil bein mayim l'mayim. He says that apparently there were these - there was all this water and G-d said, let there be some sort of sky - a Rakiyah - in the midst of the waters and let it divide between waters and waters. And G-d made this sky or division and He divided between the water that was under this division and the water that was over this division, and He called that division Shamayim - the heavens, and that was the second day. What does this remind you of in Chapter 8?

[Response from audience member: Verse 2.]

Chapter 8, verse 2. What happened in Chapter 8, verse 2? The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped and the rain from heaven was restrained. Where was the water coming from, from the flood? From both above and below. The waters from above and the waters below are coming back together. In Chapter 1 in Genesis, the waters above and the waters below are separated. Here again they're separated.

The appearance of land in day 3 - what does this remind you of, day 3, I'm quoting now from Chapter 1, verse 9. And G-d said, let the waters be gathered into one place underneath the heavens and let the land be seen, and it was so. What does this remind you of in Chapter 8? Well what do you see in Chapter 8, verse 5? The tops of the mountains - that the waters recede and land is seen. In creation as

well, in day 3, the waters recede and land is seen.

Moving on in day 3, going onto Chapter 1, verse 11. Vayomer Elokim - and the next thing G-d says is; Let the earth give - sprout forth grasses and let the trees come out and let the trees multiply and one tree will give birth to the same kind of tree, and there will be trees and there will be grasses upon the earth. What does this remind you of in Chapter 8? When do we know that there were trees? A dove. Chapter 8, verse 11. The dove came to him in the evening and lo, in her mouth, was an olive leaf plucked off, so Noah knew that the waters were abated from upon the earth. So the next thing that happens after the appearance of land is you have the appearance of plant life and vegetation.

Day 4. What happens in day 4? Day 4 in Chapter 1, verse 14, is that even though you had light and darkness beforehand, however, you did not really have a constant system yet of planets and stars and all of that. That shows up in day 4 where we have the following words; G-d says, let there be lights in the heavens; Lehavdil bein hayom u'bein ha'lailah .And what's the purpose of the lights? The purpose of the lights, interestingly enough, is not just to provide warmth and heat and light and photosynthesis to the earth, but also another thing, another more subtle reason which actually is true and which - I was watching a DVD last night from The Discovery Channel on oceans and there were some parts of it - I thought it would be great for my kids, there were some parts of it that weren't so great for kids though, the part about the killer whale stalking the calf of the grey whale. That was when it was time for them to go to sleep, so it wasn't such a happy bedtime last night, I must tell you.

But the more tame part of this, it was talking about the subtle role that the sun and the moon play in terms of the generation of life in the oceans. That the rhythms established by the sun and the moon are critical for life in the oceans to exist the way it is and there's many plant life and bird life and animal life which takes its cue from where the moon is and where the tides are and where the suns are. So what happens is the more subtle function of the moon and the sun is not just providing light and providing warmth, but also to provide order and to provide seasons and regularity by which everyone can time what it is that they need to do.

Even bees, by the way, use the sun in a very fascinating way. Do you know that bees can communicate to each other to tell each other where nectar is, and they do it by means - it's really fascinating, you'd think I was lying if this wasn't really established - but they have a dance. Bees have a dance which other bees can understand, to tell them exactly what direction stuff is and how far it is and how good it is, and they can communicate to each other with this.

There was this guy who wrote a book called [The Honey Bee 50:59], he spent his life studying bees - I read this a while back - and he has this fascinating thing. He found that in the dance the bees orient themselves with the sun. In other words, what they do is they describe where things are in relation to the position of the sun. But the problem is that the sun moves, so what they have - the bees, they'll have this correctional sense in them which corrects for the motion of the sun. So for example, they know if an hour and a half has passed so they know where the sun was an hour and a half ago, so they can still orient themselves exactly in terms of direction.

So it's fascinating the degree to which the sun and its position is crucial in terms of establishing order in creation. So you see that here in day 4. In day 4, what happens? G-d says let there be lights in the sky. What's the purpose of lights? Lehavdil bein hayom u'bein ha'lailah - to distinguish between night and day; Vehayu l'otot ul'mo'adim - to be signs and seasons; Ul'yamim v'shanim - to establish days and to establish months and to establish years. To establish a regular order for creation by means of the cycles of these lights. Does this remind you of anything in the story of Noah? Yes, 22. Chapter 8:22. What does G-d say? While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest and cold and heat and summer and winter and day and night shall not cease. So once again you have the regular establishment of seasons and seasonal variations to establish the regularity of nature cropping up after the flood, as it does again, in Genesis.

Moving on, day 5, Chapter 1, verse 20. And G-d said, let the earth swarm with life and let birds come out and repopulate the earth. What does this remind you of in Chapter 8? What's the first sign of a bird repopulating the earth in Noah? Okay, you remember what happens with the bird? There's the dove.

Noah sends out the dove the first time. The first time the dove comes back with the olive leaf. But then he sends out the dove one more time and the dove doesn't come back. That's the beginning of the birds beginning to repopulate the earth even before the animals. So birds populate the earth before animals in both stories.

Then if we go back to Genesis you'll find that after birds, what comes next? Animals and man populate the earth, which again reminds you of Noah. Day 6; Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures, cattle and creepy things, and beasts of the earth and their kind, it was so. Let us make man in our image after our likeness. And G-d blessed them and G-d said to them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air. Over every living thing that moves upon the earth. Chapters 1, 24 through 28. After the flood what does that remind you of? Sixteen, 17, 18, 19, right? Go out from the ark, your wife, your sons, their wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that creeps. And what does He say? Be fruitful and multiply. So in both cases there is the exodus with the beginning of the earth filling with humanity and animal life and a command in both cases to be fruitful and multiply and to populate the earth.

I could go on, there's a couple of other examples, but this is enough to establish the basic idea. If you add it all up what do you see? What you seem to see is that - what does this imply? It implies that Chapter 8 is structured almost exactly patterned after Chapter 1. What would you make of that? I mean, what is it saying then? What is the significance of what's happening in Chapter 8?

Yeah?

[Response from audience member: It's a second creation.]

It's a second creation. It's literally a re-creation of the world. It is not just about now we're letting the man out of his pen and they can go into and repopulate the world. It's not about that, it's something far deeper. The earth was destroyed and now the earth is being rebuilt. Nature itself is being rebuilt. It's a whole new creation.

Now the question is why? It's literally a re-creation, now the question is why? Why did it have to be this way?

I'll tell you something really chilling by the way. This I found - a friend of mine was playing around with his computer and he found this. A while back I got this program which is a fantastic search engine through Jewish legal responsa throughout the years, and most scholars who use it, use it for legal research. But one of the functions that it has, that it also lets you do research in the Bible - in the text of the Bible. One of the things it does is the following thing that there is a system which has been passed down by tradition, it goes back as far as the Talmud. The Talmud actually doesn't ascribe much weight to it and it's a system of Gematria. What Gematria is, is that by tradition, every letter of the Hebrew alphabet is assigned an numerical value and you could add up the numerical values of words. So for example, the letter Aleph, the first letter, is 1. The letter Beit, the second letter is 2, Gimmel is three, Daled is four. It goes all the way up till 10 which is Yud, and when you get to Chaf, the next letter, so that value is - what?

[Response from audience member: 11.]

It's not going to be 11, because 11 would just be Yud and Aleph together - 10 and 1. So the next one up is going to be 20. So Chaf is 20 and Lamed is 30 and Mem is 40 and you go up until 90. Then you get to Kuf which is 100, and then you get to Reish which is going to be now 200, we're going to go up like that, and then you get to Shin which is 300 and Taf which is 400, and Taf is the end of the Alphabet. So if you use the system of Gematria you could add up the various words.

A friend of mine just did this little experiment which is quite fascinating. What happened is that the computer will calculate Gematria at an instant if you just tell it what you want it to calculate. So what my friend was he ran through the first verse in the Torah; Bereishit barah Elokim et hashomayim v'et ha'aretz - and in the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth. He wanted to see if there was any other verse in the entire Bible that had the exact numerical value of the first verse; Bereishit barah Elokim et hashomayim v'et ha'aretz. So in an instance the computer will search through every verse in the Bible, and identify if there are any numerical values in the verses which exactly match - not quite in an instance, it actually took a little bit of time - but over a little bit of time it will calculate if there's any one that matches. And indeed there was one which matches exactly the numerical value. Do you know which verse it is? I'll tell you which verse it is. It is; Uba'chodesh hasheini - and in the second month; B'shiva v'esrim yom lachodesh - in the twenty-seventh day of the month; Yavshah ha'aretz - the world was finally dry.

Okay? The other verse in the Bible that is the exact numerical value of; In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth. As if again to solidify the idea that there was a creation and then there was a re- creation, it was literally a second creation.

Now the question is why? Why bother? Wouldn't it have just been simpler to - if the idea is people are bad so destroy people, why go through the extra trouble to literally re-create the word? I mean, so take the guy, put him on top of Mount Everest, whatever it is, it's the same thing, I mean why - it seems to

violate the simple rules of economy. That there was something going on here which required a much vaster destruction than simply destroying the world, and that's what I'd like to explore with you. Where is this coming from, this much larger, ambitious project?

What I think you see in this story and what I think you see in all of these stories from Adam and Eve through Cain and Abel and through Noah is that there is a relationship between man and the earth. The earth is not some static thing which is just a place that we happen to be but the earth is very significant to us, partly because - as you said before - it's part of who are creators are. G-d says; Let us make man, and the earth is part of who we are, and our relationship with our creator, with both G-d and the earth is significant, and is not simply trivial. And I think that it's also a dynamic relationship also. It's not the case that the earth stays constant but the earth reacts, so to speak, to mankind, or there is some sort of dynamic relationship between the earth and mankind. What the earth does makes a difference for man and what man does makes a difference to the earth, so to speak. The earth is an inanimate object but to the extent that there's a relationship there are things that change in that relationship.

And again if you look at one of the constant themes in Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel and in Noah is a theme of the curse of the earth. By the way, you see it in Noah as well; how does G-d characterize the flood? At the very end when He says I'll never do this again, how does G-d characterize it? Never again will I curse the earth on account of man. You see that the entire flood is seen as nothing but a curse of the earth. And there seems to be a continuum here and you can establish the continuum in the following way. There's Adam and Eve, there's Cain and there is the flood.

What happened with Adam and Eve? As a result of Adam and Eve eating from the tree and creating this sort of imbalance between passion and intellect, whatever it was - and by the way, it was also, the way we understood it, the natural world making a, so to speak, enticing argument to man, be like us, you can just become snake-like. As a result of that - the result of that was a certain - was the following.

Well let's actually go back to the text because there's another element in this that I want to bring in. G-d says to the snake; More cursed are you than any of the animals. He then says to the woman; Harbeh arbeh itzvoneich v'heironeich - I will greatly increase the pain of your conception; B'etzev teildi banim - in pain will you give birth to children. V'el isheich teshukaseich - your desire will be to your husband, he can rule over you. He says to man, because you've listened to what Eve said and you ate from this tree as I told you not to, let the land be cursed because of you; B'itzavon tochlenah kol yemei chayecha - in toil will you eat it all the days of life. V'kotz v'dardar tatzmi'ach loch - it will just sprout thorns and thistles for you, this land; Bezei'as apecha tochal lechem - by the sweat of your brow will you eat bread; Ad shuvcha el ha'adamah ki mimenah lukachta - until you return to the land from which you were taken, because earth you are and to earth you will return.

Again, there's this emphasis here that man was - that what is so significant about man? Man was taken from the earth. He desires to have a close relationship with the earth. That relationship somehow is cursed on account of this sin and the expression of the curse is really twofold. As we've argued, (a) it's that man will have difficulty farming, (b) it's that he's exiled from Eden. The two things that mother

earth provides for us are what? Are shelter and - shelter, a place to live, and sustenance. Any mother provides those two things for a child. Go back to compassion, go back to the womb, what are the two things that a womb provides for a child, it provides what?

[Response from audience member: Shelter and…]

Shelter and nourishment, those are the two things that compassion provides. Those are the two things that any maternal force, that any mother provides for a child. Mother earth, our creator, our earth, provides the same two things for us; a place to live and also sustenance - food that we get from the land. In both of those respects we become alienated from the earth, there is some curse that expresses itself in our relation to land. It becomes difficult to farm, it's not so easy anymore, plus we get exiled from our real home, from Eden, which is really where we belong.

When will we reunite with earth? Only in death - as verse 19 says; That by the sweat of your brow will you work the land. You're not going to have this close relationship with the land anymore. When will you again have it? Ad shuvcha el ha'adamah ki mimenah lukachta - only when you return to the ground from which you were taken, which is at death, then you really come back to the earth, then you reunite with the earth, but only in death.

The other, more subtle aspect, by the way, of the curses here, which we haven't yet picked up on, which I want to call your attention to now, and is something which we're going to get back to next week, is this word. G-d says to the woman; I will greatly increase your - what? Your pain in childbirth. Is the way we understand it. It's says; B'etzev teildi banim - how do you guys translate that? Verse 16; In blank will you give birth to children, with what will you give birth to children?

[Response from audience member: In pain.]

In pain will you give birth to children, suffering will you give birth to children. Well we call this labor, right? But what's interesting is that the word literally means neither pain nor suffering, the word actually means something else, and I bet very few of your translations translate it this way.

[Response from audience member: Sorrow.]

Sorrow. That's what it really means. Does anyone have sorrow? [Response from audience member: Yeah we have sorrow, yeah.]

Yeah, that's what it really means. The word here is Etzev. What Etzev actually means is, in sorrow. Very strange. It means; I will greatly increase your sorrow in conception and your sorrow in birth. Now the reason I would gather why very few of your translations translate it this way is because most of us don't experience birth as a sorrowful event even after this curse. Maybe it's a painful event, but it's not a sorrowful event. So in what sense is birth a sorrowful event?

But interestingly this word sorrow keeps on cropping up in the curses. It appears again when we get to Adam, listen again, what does G-d say to Adam? He says; Because you've eaten from this tree; Orrurah ha'adamah ba'avurecha - verse 17 - the land is cursed on your behalf; B'itzavon tochlenah kol yemei chayecha. How do you translate that in 17? In blank will you eat from it all the days of your life.

[Response from audience member: Sorrow.]

Again, in sorrow. In sorrow will you eat from it. Now other translations you may have toil; In toil will you eat from it. In labor will you eat from it - which is what it seems to mean in context. What does it mean in sorrow will you eat from the land? That man somehow is sorrowful when he's behind the plow? What is this notion of sorrow in childbirth, sorrow in plowing the land?

We're not going to get back to this today, we'll get back to this next week, but this is an interesting issue, this theme that comes up again and again in these curses, of sorrow. Now what's fascinating is that the theme doesn't end here, it reappears in Noah. Because there's one more time in the first half of Genesis - actually there are very few times that you have sorrow at all in the Five Books of Moses, it only appears five times in the entire Five Books of Moses. But it appears once more in Noah - actually twice more in Noah. When does it appear in Noah? It appears in Noah when G-d decides to destroy the world, all of a sudden man is not sorrowful anymore, but G-d is sorrowful. The word that G-d uses is - when He decides to destroy the world; Vayitatzev el libo - that G-d felt sorrow. Fascinating. That in the curses that appear with the land man feels sorrow, expressed in two different ways, in planting and in childbirth, when we get to the flood, mankind no longer feels sorrow, mankind is wiped out, but G-d feels this same sorrow - which is again strange. G-d says; Vayitatzev el libo - He becomes sorrowed in His [heart 66:50].

It appears one other time, which is in the naming of Noah - which I'll give you maybe for homework if I get to it in one second. In the naming of Noah you'll find the word sorrow used one more time.

There's a link with all of these sorrows; from the story of Adam and Eve and the story of Noah, we'll have to figure out what it is.

But just to finish the thought which I began, there's a continuum in the punishments with reference to land. The first punishments that we have express an alienation from land in the two ways that we relate to land. We relate to land; motherland, or mother earth, in terms of what it - the sustenance it gives us and the home that it gives us. We come to Cain, and as we mentioned before, the same punishments become intensified; Cain also is alienated with reference to land but in a deeper way. It becomes even more difficult for Cain to farm and he becomes exiled but he can't find anywhere in the land to live.

Finally, we come to the flood and the flood is the ultimate alienation of man from land where the land becomes literally inhospitable. Completely - in other words, expels man from its midst, it's the ultimate alienation between G-d and man.

And if you look at why the destruction happens, if you read carefully the first few verses, you see an interesting clue in this interrelationship between man and land. Let's go back to the first few verses for a moment - the first few verses in Noah, Chapter 6, verse 9 - well really, Chapter 6, verse 11. I'm going to

read this with Rashi's interpretation of it. Vatishacheit ha'aretz lifnei ha'Elokim - and the world became twisted, the earth became twisted before G-d. Was becoming twisted before G-d. Vatimalei ha'aretz chamas - and the earth was filled with violence, or, the earth was filled with robbery.

Now the question always is in Hebrew what does the Vav mean? In Hebrew the way you say 'and' in Hebrew is with a Vav, it's just a - it's the word Ve. It's not really a word, it's just a prefix. But Vav is very ubiquitous, very pliable, it can mean 'therefore', it can mean 'but', it's unclear. I would argue, that according to Rashi, it would be interpreted in the sense of, 'insofar as'. In other words the way you read this verse is; And the earth became twisted before G-d insofar as the world was filled with violence or with robbery. [Verse 11 69:17]. And G-d then looked upon the world, or upon the earth - verse 12 - V'hinei nishchata - and it was twisted. I.e. the process of twisting which had began was complete. It was completely twisted or completely corrupted. Why? Ki hishchit kol basar et darko al ha'aretz - because all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.

Now here we're moving a little bit away from just robbery. 'All flesh' sounds like what? Animals too. All flesh. All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. Rashi again quoting a Midrash here seems to suggest that the verse is hinting that the corruption extended beyond man, which is that animals began to mate with animals that were not from their species. So the way of all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.

Then G-d said; The end of all flesh has come before Me because the world is filled with violence or robbery because of them; V'hineni mashchitom et ha'aretz - and I'm going to destroy them with the land. But the word for destroy by the way is also the same word for twisted or to corrupt. Literally; I will twist them off the land. What they have done is that they have twisted the land. What seems to be here is that in the sort of the symbiotic relationship between man and land, it's almost as if man at the top of the food chain so to speak, there's a been a trickle-down effect of his actions and it has affected land, or affected nature itself.

If you look at the way that - if you view - if you think about it for a moment the way Rashi understands it, the way the Midrash understands it, that Chamas is identified with robbery. If you think about robbery and mating across species in animals, is there any common denominator between those two concepts?

[Response from audience member: (Unclear 71:07)]

Loss of boundaries, right? What robbery is, is a loss of social boundaries between what's mine and what's yours. Now animals don't have property so there's no robbery in animals. But the equivalent in animals would be a loss of boundaries in mating across species. A complete loss of boundaries.

If you think about it, this is the culmination of a process which began with Adam and Eve and slowly developed further and further, which is that if you go back again to what G-d says with Cain, you have this great energy inside you, you have this great passion, you have choice, you can either rule it or you can be ruled by it. If you are ruled by it then you have no direction, you're like a car, you could go off in

any way, [unclear 71:54] is crouching at the door, it's not that you're doing [unclear], it's only a matter of time before you explode in this direction, you explode in that direction. The force of passion without any guidance is ultimately a random force. It is a force that speaks for entropy in the universe, this is what entropy is about.

Entropy is that if you leave things to their own devices, eventually the system becomes more and more chaotic - and that is exactly what's happening. The end process of passion run wild is a world in which private properties become meaningless because there's simply no respect for it. Because if I feel that I need your thing, I will take your thing, there's no more boundaries. If that trickles down - if man's relationship with the world is dynamic and man affects the world, then if the top of the food chain is like that, then at the bottom of the food chain, animals are mating with one another.

What's G-d's response? Man has become twisted, man's twistedness had twisted the earth, and now I will twist them off the earth by bringing a Mabul. What is a Mabul? A Mabul is nothing but what? What does G-d do to bring the Mabul? He unleashes the water from below and the water from above, all the seasons are out and what is there? There's chaos. What is it? It's just chaos. If there's chaos in the social realm, and there's chaos in the animal realm, then the consequence of that is, I'll bring everything back to chaos.

In order to create the world I established order - as a matter of fact the operative word in creation of the world, over and over again, is what? Up and down the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, the word which appears more than any other word is; Vayavdel - and G-d distinguished. It's a process of finer and finer distinction. There was a creation, big bang, lots of energy, and then what happens next? From then on, all the stuff of creation is there. The moment after the big bang everything that's going to be in the universe is already there, nothing more is ever created, what then makes the universe after the big bang? It's distinction. It's that first all there is, is there's just quarks but then the quarks slowly boiled down to electrons and neutrons and neutrinos, and then pretty soon you get hydrogen atoms. And what happens is, you start to have differentiation. Hydrogen atoms come together with stars, star supernova, you begin to have new kinds of elements; heavy elements, gold, copper, silver, all these things. Differentiation - Havdalah - distinction. The process of creation is creating finer and finer distinctions and it's distinctions that hold the order of the universe in place.

The lack of distinction in a social realm, a lack of distinction in the animal realm, leads G-d to say, I'm going to destroy the world. How am I going to destroy it? By taking away all of the distinctions which I put into it, by again allowing chaos to ensue. So what you see, I think, in this process is again the slow loss of distinction and the end of a process which began before.

I'm out of time so hold on for just one second. We're right in the middle of this but let me give you a couple of things to think about for next week. A provisional conclusion; why did the world need to be destroyed - a provisional conclusion, but again, only a provisional conclusion, this will become, I think, much clearer next week.

One of the reasons why I think the world had to be destroyed is because if you think about what G-d's

plan for the world was, it wasn't just that there should be human beings and you needed a world in which - you needed a place for human beings so you had to create a physical environment so there's a world. But basically life is about humanity and humanity doing G-d's will and whatever it is, and when humanity failed to do it they had to be destroyed - it's much deeper than that. It's that if you would have to formulate the purpose of humanity in the world, if you had to formulate the purpose of creation, it wasn't just I'm going to create humanity, it's that I'm going to create humanity in relationship with its creators. In relationship with G-d, in relationship with the earth. The story of humanity is the story of man in its relationship with G-d and its relationship to the earth.

Now maybe G-d can't be affected perhaps by man, but the earth, the other creator, can be affected in that dynamic by man. And in the destruction that comes upon the world it is not - again - just the destruction of humankind, but it's the destruction of the whole system, of the system of man relating to its other creator - land. That whole thing became awry and it needs to be destroyed and something new is put into its place. What is the nature of that something new?

When we come back next week we're going to try to answer the remaining questions which we've had. Why the boat? Why the reason for destroying the world being the same reason for the reason for never again destroying the world.

If I can, for homework, I want to give you two things to think about. Thing number 1 to think about is what is man's relationship to animals throughout this whole process? What is man's relationship to animals in the story of Adam and Eve? What's his relationship to animals after the sin? His relationship to the snake after the sin? What's Cain's relationship to animals - do we know? I think I suggested to you once before that Cain was worried that he would be killed. Some commentators suggest there was no other people in the world to kill him at that point. Others suggest that it was animals that he was afraid of being killed by. If he was afraid of being killed by animals, what does that suggest about the relationship that Cain has with animals?

What about Noah, what was the relationship of Noah to animals - especially after the flood? You have a couple of verses which are of interest. One verse says that G-d says, I will establish fear upon the animals of you. What does that imply? It implies that somehow in the flood or during the flood that animals were not fearful of man, that fear of animals needed to be reestablished after the flood. That's kind of interesting, where does that come from?

But also another very interesting thing is, can you eat animals or not? Were Adam and Eve allowed to eat animals? No. If you look at the text Adam and Eve were vegetarians. Who were the first people that could eat animals? Noah's children. G-d says after the flood that animals could be eaten. Why? What about mankind's relationship to the animal world changes in such a way that it is the end of vegetarianism? If you go back, if you have a chance, and you look at the verses at the beginning of Genesis which command vegetarianism you'll find that the verses which de-impose or take away vegetarianism, say that you can eat meat, is modeled after those verses of vegetarianism. You can see a very fascinating relationship between those verses, so it's something to look at.

The other question I want to ask you which appears to have nothing to do with anything, but it's something which I just want you to ponder for next week, is the following. This is a sort of personal question which a friend of mine asked me once, it had something to do with his own life, and I think it has something to do with this story too. So I'm just going to ask the question sort of in the air and it's something which you can think about. If somebody does something terrible to you in life and you want to move on in life and they've done something really bad, they've sort of smeared your name in the community, something really awful, which is very difficult to undo the effects of. The person never apologizes for it, and the person is someone who is close to you and very significant to you and you can't easily cut out of your life.

Is it possible to forgive the person in such a situation? Is there such a thing as forgiveness in that situation? And if so, what does that look like? What does that really mean to forgive a person in such a situation? Is such a thing really possible as a human? I'm not asking for a religious answer, I'm just asking for a human answer, what is the human answer to that question? Is forgiveness possible in such a situation? What do you need to do to forgive? Can you even - maybe it's just nonsensical to forgive a person in that situation? Or if it does make sense, what does it look like to forgive somebody who is in that situation? If you would have to write a letter to the person offering your forgiveness in that situation what would the letter say? What would the - could you write such a letter?

That's something I want you to think about for next week and we're going to discuss that next week also in the context of all these stories; Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel and the flood, we'll try and put it all together. So I'll see you next week.

This continues; Paradise Lost: from Eden to the Great Flood. We had some conclusions that we reached at the end of last week, as well as some questions that we left ourselves with. Here is where we were up to as far as I can tell. We wondered principally, probably what I consider in my mind to be the most agitating of the various questions that I have on this story, is the question of the reason why G-d decided to destroy the world and its curiousness sameness or similarity to the reason why G-d decides never again to destroy the world. G-d says that the reason why He's going to destroy the world is because He realizes that the Yetzer - the inclination of man's heart is evil all day long. The reason why He decides after the flood never again to destroy the world is something very similar to that, which is G-d says, I will never again destroy the world; Ki yeitzer lev ha'odom rah min'urav - because the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth. That he's always going to be evil.

So the question is if G-d has a realization that mankind - that evil is sort of a permanent feature of mankind, why does that act at one point as a reason to destroy the world and at another point a reason never to destroy the world? One would think that if it's a reason never to destroy the world, that if G-d had just realized that 15 minutes before the flood instead of 15 minutes after the flood, maybe we could have been spared the flood. What exactly is happening? How could that - it's just a very, very odd thing.

By the way, there are a few other questions which I got an email from somebody in the class, [Robert 1:48]? Hi. So I emailed you just before the class some answers. I'm not going to address all of those questions in the class, but I'll get around to one which you implied. So one question I got by email from Robert is how could G-d really be sure also that He was never again going to destroy the world? I mean, G-d says that never again - I promise I'm never going to do this again. I mean if it happened once it can't happen again? So the question which you might have - and some, by the way, have argued that the story of the Tower of Babel - some classic commentators have argued that the story of the Tower of Babel is really their attempt to somehow build a bomb shelter for the next flood. That they were worried about - they were traumatized by this notion of the flood. The question is how do human beings sort of recover from that and how do you trust G-d having destroyed the world once that He's not going to change His mind again and destroy the world? Where does that come from?

Even more so, how can G-d be so sure that it will never happen? In other words, let me ask you this question - this is really maybe another way of rephrasing our first question, but if the reason why G-d destroyed the world is because people got too evil for Him, so then what's the guarantee if people have freewill that that's never going to happen again? That people aren't going to get to the stage where G-d again finds it intolerable? So what, so G-d comes up and says, oh sorry, I'm never going to do it again? Well, who says? You reached your breaking point once, is there any guarantee that we're not going to push you there again? So what are you going to say, even though you reached your breaking point you're going to hold yourself back? So why didn't you hold yourself back the first time if it's such a good idea to hold yourself back? I mean, there's a real tension there.

Maybe that's just another way of expressing the same problem, which is that when G-d says, but I'm never going to do it again, for the same reason that I did it the first time? I destroyed you because you were so evil you reached my breaking point, but I now realize that you can get so evil that you reach my

breaking point, so I'll decide never again to destroy you. There's something maddening about this and very strange about it.

So this is, I would say, the central question that I want to address tonight. But we're going to deal with a number of other questions to try to build a platform for understanding that. So that is, I would say, central question A1.

But besides central question A1, there's a lot of other issues which we left sort of on the table from last week. Just to briefly revisit them, we asked about a couple of strange observations. (A) If G-d is so great at performing miracles how come Noah had to spend 100 years building an aircraft carrier to get himself out of this situation? I mean, if G-d is going to miraculously destroy the world in a flood would it have been so difficult to provide some sort of miraculous salvation for Noah? An underground tavern could have worked. Mount Everest could have worked. I mean, there's lots of ways that G-d could have saved Noah had He - and a bunch of animals - had He chosen, so why did Noah, this poor, solitary guy, have to learn the shipbuilding craft and spend a good hundred years of his life building this thing? So that's one issue. Maybe it's not a question but just a curiosity.

Another issue which was strange is that we noticed when we compared some verses that Chapter 8, verse 13 which reckons the years on the boat is very strange. Because Chapter 8, verse 13 reckons the years of the flood - it says that the water dried on the six-hundredth year on the eleventh of the month, on the first of the month, just as if it is reckoning according to some objective totem pole of time. Yet when you actually do the math you see that we're not really reckoning according to some objective totem pole like creation, we are reckoning according to Noah's age without saying that it's Noah's age. In other words, instead of saying the six-hundredth-and-first year that Noah was born, we just say it was in the six-hundredth-and-first year, on the eleventh month, as if some sort of objective parameter we're talking about. But if you actually figure out what the Bible is actually talking about by comparing it to some earlier verses, it's very clear the Bible is comparing it to Noah's age. So the question is what's the deal with this sort of objectification of Noah's age in some ways? So that's another issue we want to deal with.

Another strange thing, number 3, is the Bible makes a big deal of noting what Noah does when he gets out of the ark. The first thing he does is he plants - after he builds an altar and offers offerings - is that he decides to build a vineyard, apparently for the express purpose of getting drunk, because he plants a vineyard and he in fact gets drunk. The Bible doesn't seem terribly happy with that, it seems to be an act of degradation by Noah.

The Bible actually calls him - actually describes that act as; Vayachel Noach ish ha'adamah - that Noah, the man of the land - interestingly enough - Noah the man of the land, the; Ish Ha'adamah - the man of the earth; Vayachel - became - I mean, the way you would normally translate that in English, although I don't think it's the best translation here, is that he became profaned. Chol - it's not the best word, it's a little too strong. Chol is the opposite of Kodesh. Kodesh is holy, so they translate Chol which is its opposite as profane, but profane is a little bit too harsh. Because it really has more of the connotation of genericism as opposed to something that was bad. Because when we think of something profane we

think of something like curse words or things like that. But the Hebrew word Chol - for example, the word Chol also doubles for weekday. The Sabbath is a holy day, the word Chol is a weekday. There's nothing wrong with weekdays, it's just Chol.

So the verb form of Chol is; Vayachel Noach ish ha'adamah - that Noah became Chol. Sort of the generic opposite of holy; regular. Vayachel Noach ish ha'adamah - that Noah became Chol, this man of the earth and got himself drunk. But it's a strange appellation to call Noah a man of the earth at this point, especially - and what does it have to do with getting himself drunk? Just how is it that we understand why Noah did that and why it was important for us to know that Noah did that? How do we understand the Bible's characterization of that? That's another thing which we want to talk about.

Finally, one other loose end we left from last week which I mentioned rather obliquely is that one of the things we had been doing is we had been tracing themes and patterns that appeared in the Adam and Eve story, through the Cain and Abel story, and through the Noah story. So one of those patterns which we had traced is the notion of a curse of the land, and we had talked about the flood as being the ultimate curse of the land. This is supported by the fact that G-d Himself says when He decides never again to bring another flood, He says, that; Loh osif l'kallel od et ha'adamah - I will not continue to curse the land on account of man. Implying that what He had just done was really cursing the land, in other words, that this was the greatest possible curse of the land.

The way I see it is that I don't - I may be a little bit fuzzy on this point, but it seems to me that cursing the land bears some sort of similarity to this notion of man somehow becoming alienated from the land. Or that cursing the land with reference to man. You have that kind of language in Cain when G-d says; Orrur atah min ha'adamah asher patztah et pi'ha - cursed are you from the land - which is a strange thing to say. To me it strikes - I don't see how - in other words, that the English word cursed it's not just grammatical to say, 'cursed are you from', it doesn't mean anything. But it's a strange kind of thing to say. Seemingly, G-d is cursing the land but using a strange language. To me, it's indicating some sort of separation, some sort of difficulty in the relationship, so to speak, between man and land, and we talked about that previously.

So that's one of those themes which makes its way through Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and Noah.

But there's another theme that makes its way through which I want to focus on now which we had all but ignored until last week. That is the following. One of the themes which makes its way into the curses of the land that we see in the Adam and Eve story and again appears in the Noah story is the theme of sadness. So we had talked about that briefly last week, I don't know if you remember. It's a strange kind of thing, but the Bible says that G-d said to Adam and Eve; El ha'Isha amar - He said to Eve; Harbeh arbeh itzvoneich v'heironeich - I will greatly increase your pain in conception and; B'etzev teildi banim - in pain will you bear children. Then later on [unclear 10:24] to man; Orrurah ha'adamah ba'avurecha - cursed is the land in your account; B'itzavon tochlenah kol yemei chayecha - in toil will you eat from it all the days of your life.

But really the word that I've been translating here as toil and pain doesn't mean toil and pain, what it

literally means is sadness. Eitzev in Hebrew always means sadness. It's borrowed from the meaning of sadness to here mean toil and pain. But if you translate it literally what it means is; I will greatly increase your sadness in conception - to Eve. In sadness will you bear children. To Adam; In sadness will you eat from the land all the days of your life.

Now what is that supposed to mean? I mean what G-d is really saying is that you're going to have a hard time doing it. But we wouldn't necessarily equate that as sadness, that's a strange thing to say. In other words, ask your average woman who has gone through labor and given birth to a child, how do you feel, she won't say sad. She will say it was painful, it was difficult, but I'm happy with the result, it's the most joyous time of my life. She won't say, oh I'm so sad, that's not the way people respond to labor - as painful as it is. I think, maybe I'm wrong, I never did this before. [Laughter.] I mean, but from vicariously with my wife it wasn't that way. Same thing with toiling - working behind the plow. We all tend to experience - it might be difficult, it might be hard, but we're harvesting, it's a nice thing. In what sense is it sad to toil behind a plow?

So this is a strange nuance in the Biblical text which we'll want to talk about. Interestingly enough, it reappears in the Noah story. I mentioned last time that it reappears when G-d says that He is going to destroy the world. Vayinachem Hashem ki asah et ha'odom ba'aretz - verse 6 in Chapter 6 - and G-d regretted or G-d changed His mind, viewed things differently, the fact that He had made man in the land; Vayitatzev el libo - and He became saddened to His heart. Now we have G-d experience sadness, which is a little strange. The sadness seems to shift to G-d here in the beginning of this story. It's interesting because it's rare that the Biblical narrator ascribes emotions to G-d. Sometimes - well not really rare, occasionally G-d is angry, G-d is jealous, sadness is not one of the ones you usually see ascribed to G-d, but here it is ascribed to G-d. Vayitatzev el libo - He became saddened to His heart.

So how do we understand this theme of sadness in all of these stories? This is another issue to talk about. Remind before we finish today to touch on G-d's sadness here, because I'm not sure I'm going to remember to get back to that. Okay? If I forget, remind me to just touch on G-d's sadness towards the end.

Now one other thing which I noticed which I really want to throw your way right now. This is a real monkey wrench and when I first saw this it - I think it's very shocking when you think about it. These words, referring to G-d's sadness in destroying the world, G-d's decision to destroy the world; Vayinachem Hashem ki asah et ha'odom ba'aretz vayitatzev el libo - that G-d regretted creating man and became saddened to His heart, and then His following decision. Vayomer Hashem emcheh et ha'odom asher barati - I will wipe out the man that I have created; Mei'al pnei ha'adamah - from upon the face of the earth; Mei'odom ad beheimah ad remess v'ad ohf ha'shamayim - from man to animal to all living thing. Ki nichamti ki asitim - because I regretted that I made them. These words appear earlier in Genesis believe it or not. This is another one of these examples of a verse that is quoted from an earlier place. Now the entire verse is not quoted but every verb and just about every adjective that appears in these verses, appears in one other verse, in a slightly different context, not 30 verses earlier from this.

If we had more time I would make you try and find it, but since I'm in one of my benevolent moods and we are pressed for time, so I'm going to identify the verse for you. What I would ask you is what you make of this, because it's very shocking when you think about it. It appears in an apparently innocuous verse earlier. The earlier appearance of these words are in Chapter 5, verse 29. I'm going to read Chapter 5, verse 29 for you, see if you can pick out the themes which are similar. It's easier to do in Hebrew than in English because some of these Hebrew words have different meanings in English but I'll read it for you in both and you can see if you can pick it out.

Vayechi Lemech shta'im u'shemonim shanah u'me'at shanah vayoled ben - verse 28 says that Lemech, who was the father of Noah, so he lived for 82 years and 100 years, and he gave birth to a child. Now we here we go, the naming of Noah. The naming of Noah includes these words. You ready? Vayikra et shemo Noach - and he called the name of this child Noach, Leimor - saying. Now we get to the reason why Noach was called Noach. Are you ready? Zeh yenachameinu - now the word Yenachameinu which here is going to mean comfort, and that word Nachem meant regretted with G-d. So it's a word which has two English meanings. But it means either comfort or regret and we're going to talk about why it can mean each of those. But the word is similar in its root; the root is Nun, Chet, Mem - Nachem. And you can even hear Noach's name there in the beginning of it. Noach is the first two letters of that root, so Nun, Chet. Noach - this would be Noach's name, if you added a final Mem to it, it would spell Nachem which is that root, which can either mean comfort or regret.

Okay, so why was Noah named Noah? Zeh yenachameinu - this one will comfort us; Mi'ma'aseinu - from our works; U'mei'itzvon yadeinu - and from the sadness of our hands; Min ha'adamah asher eirerah Hashem - from the land that G-d has cursed. One more time. This is why Noah is called Noah; Zeh yenachameinu - this one that we're going to call Noah; Yenachameinu - will comfort us; Mi'ma'aseinu - from the works of our hands; U'mei'itzvon yadeinu - and from the sadness of our hands; Min ha'adamah asher eirerah Hashem - from the land that G-d has cursed.

How many elements there reappear in G-d's decision to destroy the world? Listen now to G-d's decision to destroy the world. Vayinachem Hashem - there's that word Nachem - and G-d regretted. That's element A that's similar. Ki asah et ha'odom ba'aretz - that He made man in the world. Now also the word 'made' is nothing but the verb form here of the noun Ma'aseinu - works, that appears in 29. This one, Lemech had said, will comfort us from the works of our hands. But the word there, the Shoresh - the root, is Asah, which in its noun form means works, in its verb form means made. So; Vayinachem Hashem - G-d regretted; Ki asah - that He made; Et ha'odom ba'aretz - man in the land; Vayitatzev el libo - and He became saddened to His heart. What will Noah do? Noah will comfort us from the sadness of our hands. G-d becomes saddened - the word Eitzev here again that word which appears over and over again - well at least four or five times, appears here again, Eitzev - sadness. Here, Lemech says that Noach is going to comfort us from this sadness.

Then G-d said I'm going to wipe out the man; Asher barati mei'al pnei ha'adamah - from the face of the land. The word Adamah is used in Lemech's declaration also, that he's going to comfort us from the sadness of our hands from the land that G-d has cursed. Again, land, that word for land, Adamah, appears

again here also. I'm going to wipe out man, G-d says, from the land in which he appears. Ki nichamti - again this word Nichamti - because I regretted; Ki asitim - because I made them.

So over and over again in this verse coming back to these four words which appear in Lemech's statement. Nachem - comfort and regret. Asah - making. Vayitatzev - sadness. Adamah - land. All of those four elements appear in Lemech's naming of Noah. Almost to suggest - and this is the way I read it, what do you make of that? Now I'm not going to give you a theory now but I'm just going to say that almost whatever theory you would say you would have to say that's what is happening is that when G-d decides to destroy the world He is borrowing the language that Lemech used to name Noah. That's the fact.

Now the question is why? Why do that? What would G-d mean - why does G-d borrow the language with which Lemech named Noah - almost mimicking the language with which Lemech named Noah in His declaration to decide to destroy the world? Was Noah a bad guy? I mean, Noah is a good guy, he's THE good guy. So you're going to use the language of naming this good guy Noah for your language to decide to destroy the world? It's such a strange thing. What is the Bible tipping us off to by doing this? I mean, there's something we're supposed to figure out here, what are we supposed to figure out? So I don't know, we'll have to put the theory together, but that's an issue which we want to come back to.

What is the mimicking of the language of the naming of Noah?

Okay, everyone with me? So we've got a bunch of questions which we want to get back to.

Last week we had begun to put some bricks in the edifice of a theory. One of the things which we had sort of seemed to establish is that there are a lot of elements in this story that seem to suggest that G-d's agenda in destroying the world was not solely focused on destroying humankind, but was focused on literally destroying the world. That there was some sort of destruction, return to chaos, of the world itself, but the agenda was broader than just getting rid of mankind. One of the questions - and we had a number of indications for this. That the language of the verses seemed to indicate it. The parallels between Chapter 8 which describe the re-creation of the world and Chapter 1 which described the creation in the first place, suggests that there's a re-creation of a world, not just the regeneration of mankind. The question is why? Why was that part of the agenda? That was one of the other issues which we left hanging.

All right, so I want to give you a theory - it's only my theory, it may be right, it may be wrong, it may be completely off the wall, but this is how I see it. You aren't going to find it anywhere, there's no commentators that I know that say this, so I take full responsibility for this being whatever it is. But for what it's worth let me give you my perspective on this.

So I want to talk to you a little bit by way of preparation about reconciliation. I left you with a question last week, a question about how people reconcile amongst themselves. How do we achieve reconciliation? So I want to talk about that in terms of human relationships for a moment, because it's going to have some impact on how we understand things here. How is it that people reconcile themselves when things go badly between them? It's all very nice when things go well between people,

but when things go badly the need occurs for some way of repair. The human being has - one of our most important systems is the ability to repair wounds, the blood clotting system, if we didn't have it we'd die. If we don't have the ability to repair relationships we also die - at least in a social sense. We've got to have some sort of mechanism for doing that.

How do we - because you can't say you know how I'm going to have a perfect life I'll never offend anybody, or nobody will ever offend me, because - it's a nice thought but things don't usually work that way. So you've got to have some way of working things out. How is it that we work things out? What happens when our way of working things out doesn't really work?

So I left you with a question last week that I want to explore this week, a sort of dilemma. The dilemma actually comes from real life because somebody asked me this dilemma. Somebody who had gone through a difficult divorce and had seen himself as maligned by his former partner in a way where she had tried to drag his name through mud through the community and he really felt that he was the victim in this situation. He said, how do I go on? I mean, it would be one thing if she apologized - she doesn't apologize, she's still mad, how do I move on? I mean, how do I go on? Can I forgive her? Is it meaningful to forgive her in this kind of situation? And if not, how do I move on? What does it mean to move on?

So that got me kind of thinking about this and I want to ask you about that. So how do we go on in these situations? What's the normal way to go on? How do we compensate?

Yeah?

[Response from audience member: Well I have something to say about all these together in an answer to your question. There's a Frost poem called The Oven Bird, and I don't really remember the whole poem. But at the end of the poem is; 'And the question that he frames in all but words is what to make of a diminished thing'. I think the diminished hopes and aspirations and expectations from all the characters (unclear 24:32) is a sadness and what do you do with that? It's comparing that to an ideal, when you're angry, when you expect somebody to behave as they "should".]

Okay good, so that - I think you're really onto something there.

Let's talk about how is it that we reconcile generally. What would be the way that it actually works? Let me ask you this question. In general, if somebody has done something terrible to me, if I've done something terrible to someone, can the relationship be repaired? Okay, it can be. Now if it can be, how does it get repaired? What are the mechanics? How does it work? How do we repair that relationship? What would be the best possible scenario?

[Response from audience member: Confront the person.]

Okay, confront the person. So let's just work it out. The best-case scenario. If I confront the person and I say hey, I don't like what you did to me, this is what you've done to me. Now what has to happen next?

[Response from audience member: They have to give sympathy. They'd have to be open to your confronting them.]

Okay, so let's talk about it. Let's say they are open to your confronting - they're open to it. Does that itself repair the relationship or does something else have to happen? Something else has to happen, what has to happen? Just I'm asking you a human - I'm not asking you a religious question…

[Response from audience member: (Unclear 25:48)]

…I'm asking you a human relationship question.

Okay, you expect them to be sorry. Now how do you know if they're sorry? Let's say they look kind of downcast, so now is the relationship repaired?

[Response from audience member: You say I forgive you.]

So I have to say I forgive you. So let's say I - I'm just adding this up. Let's say I confront someone with something that they've done wrong, they look kind of glum and then I say, okay I forgive you. Now is our relationship redeemed, rejuvenated, back to what it used to be, yes or no?

[Response from audience member: No.]

No. We're still not there. We're missing a core component. What is it?

[Response from audience member: There has to be some action on your part besides, oh I'm sorry.]

Well that's a good question actually, I don't know if that's true but you introduced another element here which we didn't get to before, which was the words, I'm sorry. Remember that in our conversation until now those words have not appeared. The person just looked glum after you talked about things. But what if they then said, I'm sorry, how does that work? So that is a very magical possibility that I want to explore for a moment in terms of redeeming relationships.

Yes?

[Response from audience member: There are acts - very human acts, that are non-forgivable. Forgiveness itself would become a blasphemy.]

Okay, maybe there are. Maybe there are. I'm not arguing that every act can be forgiven, it may well be that there are some acts that are beyond forgiveness, that's possible. But it's an interesting question whether that's true. A friend of mine, Stephen Vicchio who teaches at Hopkins now and then, so he wrote a play called; Ivan and Adolf: The Last Man in Hell. Which is a play modeled after works of fiction where Ivan Karamazov, from The Brothers Karamazov and Adolf Hitler find themselves the last two people in hell and they're in an apartment in hell. Everyone else has gone out of hell because they've

managed to redeem themselves, these two people have not redeemed themselves and the question is which one is going to get out of hell first. Now the reason why Adolf is there is because he did the worst things that a human being ever did, the reason why Ivan is there - according to Vicchio, which I disagree with - but the reason why Ivan is there is because he has decided that no matter what [Ivan 28:01] says he won't forgive Adolf for what he's done, because his sin is unforgivable.

Now I have some problems with that notion because I don't think it's Ivan's business to forgive Adolf, because Ivan was not a victim of Adolf and a non-victim can't really forgive. I don't either think that it's a sin not to forgive someone if you believe that what they've done is unforgiveable. But that really is the issue which the play explores, is there such a thing as an unforgivable crime or can you be sorry for everything? So that's an interesting question, it may well be that there are things that are unforgivable, but let's not talk about that for a second.

Let's argue that we are dealing with something bad but still within the realms of forgiveness. Still it takes work to really redeem the relationship. In other words if - let me give you an example of this. In Hebrew the words for I'm sorry, the words for - to admit a wrongdoing are Hoda'ah. The root is Yadah. It's usually referred to as Hoda'ah, an act of Hoda'ah. Now as it happens Hoda'ah is an interesting word and it means more than just to admit a wrongdoing, it has a broader meaning as well. It means two other things - at least two other things besides admitting a wrongdoing. One of the other things it means is to say thank you to someone. Another thing it means is to say I'm sorry to someone, and another thing it means is to praise someone who has acted especially nobly in a certain situation. So just trust me that the word can mean each of those three things.

Now my question is why do you have one Hebrew word that means three different things; thanks, praise and admission? When you have one Hebrew word that means three different things, there's only one possibility, which is that from the perspective of the Hebrew language it aint three different things, it's one thing. In other words, there's one thing, it's called Hoda'ah. In English we break it up into three different acts but from the perspective of the Hebrew it's really all one act; whether you're thanking someone, whether you're praising someone or whether you're admitting, you're really doing the same thing. So now my question is what is that same thing that you're doing? What exactly is the act of Hoda'ah all about? What is the common denominator between thanks, praise and admission?

So let me ask you that, what is the common denominator between thanks, praise and admission? The broader question that I'm asking is that the Hebrew word for admitting that I've done something wrong is identical with the Hebrew word for thanks. To me that implies that the concept of thanking someone when someone has done me a favor is indistinguishable conceptually from the concept of apologizing to someone when I've done something wrong to them. Now at face value those things are different things, they are not indistinguishable from one another, now what I'm asking you is can you construct a world in which those two things are very similar? What is the common denominator between those two things?

[Response from audience member: (Unclear 30:53)]

Okay, good, humility is a quality that we would associate with both, it takes humility to say thank you, it takes humility to admit that you were wrong. I'm just going to challenge you on this though. You're absolutely right, humility is associated with each of these things, but humility does not define each of these things. In other words, you couldn't tell me that the definition of thanks is to be humble - thanks requires humility. You can't tell me that the definition of admission that I'm wrong is humility, it's a required thing but it's not a definition. What I'm seeking now is give me a core definition of Hoda'ah, what does the word mean? If you're writing a Hebrew dictionary and you're trying to define the concept of Hoda'ah in some sort of common denominator term, that works for both thanks and praise and admission, what exactly is that concept?

Now an easy way to go about this would be - you're right, humility is a part of it - an easy way to go about this would be to ask yourself the following question. Even in English how could I say thank you without using those words? How could I say I'm sorry without using those words? In other words, if I wanted to say I'm sorry, what words could I use without saying sorry? Or if I wanted to say thank you, what words could I use without saying thank you? Let's say you've done me a great favor you've saved my life, you've done a great thing for me, I want to thank you, I'm not going to use those words, give me the other words I could use.

[Response from audience member: I appreciate.] I appreciate it. You can say I appreciate it.

Now what does it mean to appreciate a favor? Let's analyze what does the word appreciate mean? Tell me what appreciate means. What appreciate means literally is to know something's worth. That is the definition of appreciating. If I appreciate the value of something, I know its worth. The appreciation of something is the value of something. To appreciate means to understand its worth. When I say thank you which is synonymous as I appreciate it, what I mean is I understand what you've done for me. It is an acknowledgment of the value of what it is that you've done for me. That's all it is, which is a fascinating thing. What thanks is defined as, is as an acknowledgement of what it is that you've done. You're looking with the eye, this is what you've done, I acknowledge it. That's all thank you is. It's a very simple thing. It's remarkably simple.

And, think about it for a moment, what is admission? If I want to admit that I've done something wrong, but I'm not going to say the word I'm sorry, what will I say? Something very similar to thanks, won't I? What if I say, you know what, I did something really terrible, I really appreciate what it is that I've done to you. That is very similar to saying I'm sorry, it is a recognition of what it is that I have done in this relationship. That is what it means to say I'm sorry. So at its core what both of these things are [about 33:41] a certain kind of recognition.

Now what kind of recognition? Let's just define it a little bit more. Not any old kind of recognition; if I recognize that that chair is a chair that's not an act of Hoda'ah. An act of Hoda'ah is a certain kind of recognition, what kind of recognition? It is a recognition between people. Not all recognition between people are acts of Hoda'ah; if I recognize that it's Joel walking from 100 yards away that's not an act of

Hoda'ah. An act of Hoda'ah is another kind of relationship, it's a recognition within a relationship of what? What's the common denominator, again, between the kind of recognition that we make in the case of admission and the kind of recognition that we make in a case of thanks? What is the fundamental thing that I'm recognizing in both cases? What is the common denominator?

What I would say - it's not such a difficult question, it's a pretty simple answer. What I would say is that it's the following thing. Again, coming back to human relationships, how do we balance human relationships? Human relationships like to stay in balance, we like to be in balance with each other, we get very nervous when our relationship with other people gets out of balance. How can our relationship with other people get out of balance? A few ways it can happen. One way it can happen is if I do something terrible to you our relationship gets out of balance, I owe you. I've done something really bad, we have an imbalanced relationship. If you do me a big favor, you save my life, so I owe you, our relationships are very much out of balance, this is an uncomfortable situation.

So for example, if you do me a very big favor, if you've done a tremendous thing for me, what do I need to be able to do? What am I desiring to do?

[Response from audience member: Reciprocate.]

Reciprocate. I need to reciprocate a favor, it's just the way human relationships go. I need the balance restored. The way I'm going to restore the balance is I'm going to reciprocate the favor and then we're even.

By the way, if you look at ancient societies, even modern societies, much of the society is built upon that. I mean you had talked about in Indian society the notion of - [there wasn't this notion 35:45] of property that you would give gifts, but the idea was that later on there would be a sense that you would do something for the person. That society was built upon this natural understanding that human relationships [need this] kind of balance and always seek that kind of balance.

Similarly, let's say I do something terrible to you, something awful, that creates this terrible scar in your life, what do you want to do? Take revenge, reciprocate. There's a strong desire for revenge. The desire for revenge is again the desire to seek balance in the relationship, it's just the way human beings are set up. You need - you desire that, you want that balance.

By the way, this is why if you go to a car dealership and you're interested in buying a new car, and the car dealer invites you down and offers you a can of coke - this is why you should never accept.

[Laughter]

Because the minute you accept that can of coke you're stuck. He has just done you a favor. Now what do you need to do? Reciprocate. But there's no way you can reciprocate, you don't have any coke cans. There's only one way you can reciprocate, buying the man's car. It's - no, seriously, it's the only way you can. They teach this to you. I remember I was in a class at Hopkins here in the Psychology of

something or other, and one of the books we had to read was marketing psychology. One of the things that they teach people in marketing is that if you are a salesman make sure to do favors for your people because they will have to reciprocate and the only way they can reciprocate is by buying the goods. Ah, the coke can costs 50 cents and the car costs $25,000, doesn't make a difference. The only way you can - human relationships don't think that way. The only way I can reciprocate is to give back what you've done.

Same thing in revenge. If the only way I can reciprocate is by killing you, or by doing something out of whack, I'll do it. I'm trying to get back this balance but it's difficult to find that balance.

All right, so what if I decide to myself that you know what, there's got to be a better way. I'm not in it for revenge, I don't want to be a vengeful kind of person, I'm not into that? Or what if I can't repay a favor? It's very nice to reciprocate but what if I just can't do it? What if you saved my life, there is no way I can save your life, I just can't repay it? So now I'm stuck. I'm stuck with this very uncomfortable feeling of imbalance. How do I get out of it? I'm not going to seek revenge, I'm not going to be able to repay you a favor, how am I possibly going to get out of this? What am I going to do? So you tell me. You're stuck, right?

There's a way out. The way out is completely counterintuitive. We all take it for granted because we do it all the time but when you actually stop to think about it, it makes no sense. What I'm about to tell you flies in the face of all logic, but it is the truth and it's the way relationships work, it's just the way it works. Nachmanides when he talks about this refers to it as a miracle within human nature. But the miracle is, Hoda'ah. The miracle is there is something called Hoda'ah which can work to balance relationships, which makes no sense - which is what? If you've done me a great favor and I look you in the eye and I recognize what that favor meant to me, and you accept that recognition, our relationship magically rebalances itself. If I recognize the - listen how paradoxical this is; I've done nothing more than look you in the eye and recognize the existence of the imbalance. I say, you know what, our relationship is out of balance, you've done this for me, it's meant a terribly - amount - a great deal to me, and you accept that, our relationship has rebalanced.

How is this possible? It makes no sense. You've actually done something to me, saved my life, now I've done nothing back to you, it's just words, all I - and what are the words? I'm recognizing an imbalance. If you recognize an imbalance you'd think you just magnify the imbalance, because now we both know it's there. No. Somehow the imbalance goes away. It makes no sense.

To prove it makes no sense, your average child who doesn't have such experience in life - and even some adults - can't understand the concept of thanks. Because it's a very difficult thing to do. Why is it so difficult to do? Because it doesn't make any sense. I once did this with a group of kids, and I asked them how do you say thank you? Or, say you've done something bad to someone, how do you say I'm sorry? One kid raises his hand, I call on him, he says, you know how you say you're sorry, you say, I didn't mean to do it.

[Laughter]

See, that is not the way you say you're sorry. That is the opposite of saying you're sorry, that is the failure to recognize the truth, which is that I did mean to do it. If you say that, you haven't gone anywhere.

Why - is that like the natural reaction that that's how you say you're sorry. Because what you're crazy, I'm supposed to say I did mean to do it and I feel terrible I meant to do it? It's a much more difficult thing to do.

Plus, what am I worried about? What I'm worried about in the back of my head is that if I look you in the eye and I acknowledge to you that there's nothing I can do to change things, [that I've 40:37] done this terrible thing, I get very insecure because I think I'm going to be stuck with this imbalance. Because I'm recognizing it, you know it's there. If we sweep it under the rug maybe it will go away. But in fact it's the opposite. If we sweep it under the rug it never goes away. If I can recognize it to you and you accept that, it can go away.

Similarly it can go away - and this is the dynamics of forgiveness. Forgiveness, I believe, doesn't come out of anywhere, real forgiveness comes out of an act of Hoda'ah. In other words, if I have done something bad to you within the realm of forgivable things, and I can look you in the eye and say, I've done something terrible to you, I understand what it's done to you. I understand that I could have acted differently, I completely get what it is that I've done, I completely understand how it has impacted your life and I feel terrible by it. I recognize fully that imbalance to you. It is possible that you could find it within your heart to accept that and thereby our relationship could become redeemed. It is conceivable such a thing. That is the way that it works in its best-case scenario.

What I will say at this point though is that having been said, Hoda'ah is a very tricky game to play. It's tricky because it doesn't always work and it's very easy for it not to work. For example, there's very little, partial credit, I believe, when it comes to Hoda'ah. Let me give you an example of what I mean. Let's say I come to you and I've done something really terrible to you and I try to apologize to you and you listen to my words. I've done something really bad, I've just messed up your life in some very serious way. I come to you and you look at me and you listen to my words and it's clear that I feel pretty bad about what I've done. But as I'm speaking you get the sneaking suspicion that I don't really get it, that I don't really understand the power with which I've impacted your life. I don't really understand what this has meant to your life. Sure I understand that I was wrong, but I just don't understand the gravity of what I've done. How easy is it for you to be able to forgive me and say, oh, don't worry about it? It's not so easy to do. It's very difficult to do.

There's very little partial credit when it comes to Hoda'ah. You can say the words but you can't - it's a very difficult thing to do.

But Hoda'ah is a very magical thing. A Rabbi in Pittsburg who deals a lot in psychology, Rabbi Twerski, argues - I've heard him say once before, that there are really only three words you need to have, he says, to have a successful marriage. In your lexicon the three words are; I'm sorry, I admire you, and thank you. If you say those three things you're basically going to make it. Now if you think about it, why is that the first aid kit for marriage? Those are really the three faces of Hoda'ah; thanks, praise and

admission. They are the three ways that our relationship can get out of balance. You can't say my relationship with my wife is never going to get out of balance, I won't do any favors for her, she'll never do any favors for me, I won't do - you've got to have some way besides reciprocation to be able to make things work. Hoda'ah; I admire you, I thank you, I'm sorry, are the ways in which you can pull that relationship back together.

Okay, so that is the best-case scenario. What I'm going to discuss with you in a moment is what happens when the best-case scenario fails? Is there any other possible solution?

Yes?

[Response from audience member: My question is when you say reconcile, are you going to the same level that it was before?]

Ah, so this is - so let's talk about this for a second. When I say reconcile what do I mean? In an act of - when an act of Hoda'ah happens, when it really happens, if you understand that I'm crushed by what I've done and I understand every way that it's impacted your life, and I feel terrible, I am weighed down by what it is that I've done to you. I come to you with a full realization, looking your self in the eye, I shouldn't have done this, I realize what it's done to you, I feel terrible about it. Now, if you decide to forgive me, can our relationship be redeemed? Can our relationship get back to what it once was?

[Response from audience member: In time.]

I think at least in time it can. In time - in other words, if time shows that you were truly sincere and that things have changed, then yes, it can go back. If it's a fake it can't, but if it's real and time shows that it's real, I do believe that that can restore our relationship. It can literally make our - and this is the miracle of Hoda'ah. It can literally make our relationship as good as it was before. In fact, it's possible that it can make our relationship even stronger than it was before. Because we've gone through terrible times, and we found a way to weather them.

But what's amazing about it - and this is what the Ramban says - is that how can you erase the effect of acts? How can words erase the effects of acts? But it can - at least it conceivably can.

Now here's what I'm going to ask you, what happens if there is no act of Hoda'ah? Is it then possible to redeem a relationship? In other words, let's say that I've done something terrible to you and I never come and say I'm sorry, now what are your options? Well one option is you could take revenge against me.

But let's say you don't want to take revenge, now let's talk about your options, what else could you do? So one other option you have is you could cut me out of your life. You could - especially if I'm an important person - you could take scissors and every picture in which I appear you can just cut me right out. This is the way we do it with exes sometimes, right? And just forget it, you're out of here, I've nothing else to do with you, and it's over. That's another way you can deal with it.

But what if I'm a really important person in your life and you don't want to have nothing to do with me,

you want to maintain a relationship with me, but you don't want to take revenge? Now you're really stuck, because if I could come to you with an act of real Hoda'ah we could patch things up, but I'm not doing that. Now what are you going to do? Is there another way to go?

[Response from audience member: (You could still forgive 46:38).] Ah, so now - so you could still forgive. Okay.

Yes?

[Response from audience member: I want to go back a bit to your analogy last week which I thought was (unclear 46:50) well you talked about the cell and the individual. Now you talk about this act but that - these acts are (in so fact) based upon individual actions and reactions and relationships, where the fault may be much larger than the individual, it may be the group to which we belong. … all these people…]

You're absolutely right.

[Response from audience member: … (unclear 47:22) not because of what (you think) they did…]

You're absolutely right, and then when that happens then Hoda'ah at the individual level is no longer sufficient and it has to happen at the communal level. In other words, for example, if the United States were to apologize for slavery, it wouldn't be something that would operate on the individual level, it wouldn't be that individual people would go around to their black neighbors and say I'm really sorry for what I did. First of all, I didn't do it, so in [what sense am I sorry 47:51]? It would happen at the communal level. In other words, a representative of the nation would need to make some sort of apology to a representative of another nation as some sort of national reconciliation. So you're right. Same way that Hoda'ah could act at individual levels it could act at communal levels.

But just to keep it simple, let's just keep it as the individual level for a moment. But you're right that is a complicating factor and it would need to operate on a communal level as well.

But let's go back to the individual. So what can I do in such a situation? So you suggest that I can still forgive. I can still forgive. Now what I'm asking is the following. Let's say you're right - and I do believe you're right - now if you're right that you could still forgive in the situation, is there a difference between that kind of forgiveness and between the kind of forgiveness that happens when an act of Hoda'ah takes place? There's two acts of forgiveness, is there a difference between them?

Yes?

[Response from audience member: Yeah, I think there is, because I think you have to draw your forgiveness not from your apology or your actions, but we ask G-d for forgiveness in the way that we have forgiven others, so it's through our connection with G-d and acknowledgement of what we have

been forgiven that we're able to place that forgiveness towards somebody who has done us wrong.] Okay, that's interesting.

Yeah?

[Response from audience member: So you redefine the relationship because it's not the same relationship.]

Okay, good,

So in other words, let me come back - let's say you're right. In other words, maybe you draw the ability to forgive from a relationship with G-d but I still want to get to this one question, after you've done that, is there a difference not just in the mode by which I am able to forgive, but in the relationship when it's all over? In other words, once you grant that kind of forgiveness is there a difference in the relationship that we now have? In other words, does life look different now than it would have if there was an act of Hoda'ah and forgiveness? Or is forgiveness, forgiveness and it's really all the same? That's the question I'm asking?

[Response from audience member: No, I'd actually say I think it almost puts you because you're the forgiver in a higher - (almost 49:53) imbalances the relationship again, because it always puts you in the higher position.]

Right, see that's the problem, because if the whole purpose of forgiveness is to create an equilibrium in a relationship, if you're not careful this type of forgiveness can do nothing but create a greater sense of imbalance. Here I am, with my magnanimous offers to you lowlife, to offer you forgive - then really we still carry around the baggage forever. How do we ever get back to it?

So what we're struggling with here is that there seems to be two kinds of forgiveness in the world, two animals, two kinds of ways of reconciling a relationship. And let's call it - just to keep it simple - bilateral forgiveness and unilateral forgiveness. Bilateral forgiveness is a forgiveness' that comes through an act of Hoda'ah and an acceptance of an act of Hoda'ah. We argued that that can redeem a relationship to its prior level. What we're asking is, is there another way to achieve balance in a relationship without Hoda'ah? It would be nice if there would be, because if there's not we run a real problem, which is how do you ever have closure in a relationship with someone who has offended you, who you want to keep a relationship with but who is not coming forward to ask for Hoda'ah? What do I do? Like I have to keep on hinting for 15 years? What do I do? This is the problem.

Yes?

[Response from audience member: It's like we forgive - you would forgive for your own sake not for the sake of the other person. You would give - you have to give up bitterness for your own sake.]

Okay, good, so let's talk about what it is - now this is what I asked you to think about, what would this thing look like? I want to know what the guts of this forgiveness is like? If you're writing a letter to someone expressing your forgiveness in such a situation, what would that letter say - whether you send the letter or you don't send the letter? What is the essence of that forgiveness? What - it's not just words, there's emotional work that you need to do in granting that kind of forgiveness. Tell me what that emotional work is. What are you doing?

Yes?

[Response from audience member: Recognizing we're both guilty, we're both on the same…]

Okay, exactly. That's what you're recognizing. It's a core recognition of human frailty. That, I think, is what it's built out of. In other words what I'm - and - I'm just going to press you a little bit more. And when I recognize that core human frailty, when I say to myself you know what, you aren't perfect, I'm not perfect, nobody is perfect, you've done a terrible thing and I am willing to forgive that terrible thing, what do those words mean? In other words, what I'm trying to do is seek balance in the relationship, we're not convinced that it restores the relationship to where it once was, but it can at least achieve some sort of sense of equilibrium. And what do I have to do also to make it work? I have to let go of something, right? What am I letting go of?

[Response from audience member: (Unclear 52:45)]

But the injury is there, I'm always going to feel the injury, I can't let go of the injury, I'm injured. What do I let go of? I let go of my desire for revenge. Because what am I doing then? Let's be very clear about this. As long as I have a desire for revenge, I have a desire to rebalance the relationship actually. What I'm doing now - what this kind of forgiveness is, is an understanding - and when do I grant this kind of forgiveness? By the way, when are you ready to finally grant this kind of forgiveness? This unilateral forgiveness? It's not something that people opt for immediately, it's only when what?

[Response from audience member: Assess the value of the other person and see that's it greater than the separation or whatever, and I want to be (avenged 53:29)].

Okay, but it's more than just that because people can know that for 15 years and still not grant that kind of forgiveness, still not let go, they need to be convinced of something before they're willing to do this, what do they need to be convinced of?

[Response from audience member: That the other way will never happen.] Right, that the other way will never happen.

What they need to be convinced of, is they have to literally give up hope for an act of Hoda'ah taking place and then they can make that judgment. They can say still the value of the relationship is greater than separation and here's how I'm going to preserve it. But I will maintain that as long as you hold out a

shred of hope that that relationship can achieve its natural balance through Hoda'ah or something like that, then - or as long as you're nursing the desire for revenge, as long as you have the possibility of that level 1 kind of reconciliation, whether for good in Hoda'ah or for ill in revenge, you are not yet ready to grant that second kind of level of forgiveness. It is only when you give up on achieving that kind of level 1 reconciliation that you go for level 2 reconciliation.

What happens in level 2 reconciliation? What I would argue is, is that the relationship is not the same as it was. The reason why it's so hard is because you are settling for a second best relationship. You are coming to grips with a sad reality, a reality that is sad. What is the sad reality? You're giving up on potential. You are saying we had this wonderful relationship, that relationship could come back, an act of Hoda'ah could bring it back, we can get back there, and as long as we can get back there I want to get back there because you're an important person to me. The moment that I say I'm giving up on that, it's a very sad thing. Because I'm giving up of the hope of our relationship ever getting back to what it once was.

What do I do in order - what do I do, what do I say - let's get back to the guts of what I'm saying, here's what I'm saying. What I'm saying is I realize that you've done this terrible thing, I realize that's part of you and you've done it. It's a part of your frailty that you can't [grant/ask 55:33] me forgiveness. It is - what is fascinating now is that whereas a Hoda'ah would imply - I just thought of this now - but whereas a Hoda'ah normally would imply if you've done something terrible to me, a recognition on your part about what it is that you've done, what this kind of Hoda'ah is, is a recognition on my part. It's a recognition on my part about something about you which is very painful for me to recognize, which is that you're never going to come to me and understand about this, you're never going to apologize and I have to reconcile myself to that. I have to be able to say, this is just who you are and I don't want to let go of you entirely.

What happens now? What is the new equilibrium of the relationship? It's not the old relationship we have - that relationship is gone, it's dead, it's torn up. A new relationship is created, a new relationship - we're starting over now, we're tearing up the past, it's gone, forgetting about the wound, I'm letting go of that, I'm letting go about that revenge because I'm never hoping to get back there, I'm cutting my losses, we're starting over right here, fresh start. Our relationship is different now. What is the ground zero of our relationship, the baseline of our relationship? The baseline of our relationship is my act of recognition, is my understanding that you are frail. Our relationship is now built on the fact that you haven't apologized, this is what it is, I'm going to be more guarded in my relationship with you now, I'm going to be careful, I'm not going to expose myself, but we will have a relationship. And it has achieved its new equilibrium. There's a new equilibrium, there's nothing out of kilter now. Why? Because I kissed that old relationship goodbye.

As long as I held onto that relationship, we were out of kilter, I was waiting for that to come back. Once I say no more to that, once I destroy that relationship and allow myself to build a new one with you, now we can move on. It's a diminished relationship, it's sad, it requires pain, it requires tears on my behalf to get there, to a point where I'm willing to do that. But once I'm willing to do that I can find

peace with you and I can move on. Our relationship never will have the potential of what it once had, it can never get back there, but it's no longer going to be painful. And it will be a relationship even though it's not going to be what it once was.

So there are a few things that I want to emphasize here about unilateral forgiveness. Thing number 1 is that I only do it when I've given up on bilateral forgiveness. There has got to be some sort of last straw that makes me understand with the depths of my being that we're never getting back there because otherwise I'm going to nurse the possibility that we can get that relationship because I'm not willing to settle with the second best kind of relationship. So that is (A), I have to be convinced that we're never getting back there. (B) Such a relationship implies letting go of the first relationship and building something new between us. It's building a whole new world between us, a whole new environment. I've got to let go of the old world. (C) The new world is a world where the reason why I destroyed the old world is the reason why I'm never again going to destroy the new one.

In other words, the reason why I destroyed the old world - why did I destroy the old world? What was the burning down of that old world? It was the fact that you did this terrible thing to me that was not reconciled, that let us burn that down. But now the fact that that was a reality - that becomes the foundation of our relationship in this world, that that happened, we understand that it can happen, but our new relationship is going to be impervious to that because it's based upon that understanding, we're not getting back there. We build the new world on the ashes of the old one. In other words, never again am I going to destroy this relationship with you because I understand that you're frail, which means I'm not going to expose myself in the same way, we're not going to have the potential for that kind of wound because we don't have that kind of intimacy, that kind of closeness anymore. There's a little bit of a more distant relationship between us. Therefore the reason why I destroyed that will be the reason why I'm confident that I never again will destroy this. And it's a whole new world.

This, I think, is what is going on in the story of Noah. The story of Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel, and Noah is the desire - in other words, someone once said that religion is not just about man's search for G-d, but it's about G-d's search for man. That G-d, so to speak, has a need for a relationship with man as well. G-d has a plan, He desperately wants this relationship to work out and what happens to that relationship? There is a distance which is created in that relationship. Back in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve ate from the fruit, they terribly disappointed G-d, that wasn't the way G-d wanted it to work out. And, all of a sudden, there was this alienation that crept in to this relationship between G-d and man

- we'll talk about this a little bit more in a minute. Cain; mankind takes another step down, another murder, a terrible step down, the alienation gets stronger, the divide gets stronger.

What happens? G-d keeps on hoping, so to speak, that mankind will do something to bring himself back. What? Some sort of act of Hoda'ah. Some sort of way of making up. Some sort of way of repairing the relationship, of bringing the relationship back to what it once was. At a certain point, for some reason, which we have not yet explored, G-d becomes convinced that it's never going to happen. The alienation has reached such profound dimensions that G-d is convinced that it will - that mankind is - not that it can't be repaired, it could be repaired - but He's become convinced that mankind is never

going to come back and say, G-d I'm sorry, we did something wrong, we have to pull this together, here's how we can we work it out. Something happens - and the mystery is what - that convinces G-d that it's the last straw that it won't happen. That makes G-d give up on the possibility of that relationship ever reconciling itself.

[Aside discussion]

What happens is, at that point, G-d settles for second best, for unilateral forgiveness. And unilateral forgiveness has consequences. Consequence number 1 is it means that the whole previous environment for the relationship is over, that we're starting over with a new environment which is based upon the frailty that led to the destruction of the old environment. That the reason why I destroyed that whole world - the purpose of the first world - let me get back to this - the purpose of the first world was for mankind to work that world and to guard it. That was a failure, it didn't work out, that is over and there is a new world, it's a new relationship built upon the ashes of the old relationship.

Simcha [Baer 62:25], a friend of mine, who is quite a scholar and a very original thinker, gave me the kernel of the idea for this - probably more than the kernel of the idea for this. What he suggested, a fascinating thing - and the questions which I asked you in the beginning were really questions that he asked as part of this theory, and what he suggested was the following. He said, do you know what the difference between the world before the flood was and the world after the flood? The difference was they weren't the same world. There had to be a re-creation because it was a whole new world. The environment had to change. What he argues is that the world before the flood was G-d's world, the world after the flood was man's world, it wasn't the same world.

In World A man was a guest in G-d's world. It was G-d's world, and man's job was to take care of it as best he could. In the words of the beginning of Genesis; L'ovdah ul'shomrah - to work the land and to guard over it. But he's not in charge, it is G-d's world. At some point man became so alienated from that world and the possibility that there would ever be a reconciliation had slipped by and G-d then feels himself compelled to destroy His world and to then allow a new, diminished world, a new relationship. I will still have a relationship with you, but you're not in My world anymore, you're in your world, and I can visit your world now and then. You're no longer guests in My world. It's a less intimate kind of relationship and the world itself is different.

Let's go back for a moment to some of our original questions. Why did Noah have to make his own boat? Maybe the reason why Noah had to make his own boat was because it was going to be man's world. The first steps in making that world was making the boat. The boat was the transport into that world. G-d couldn't make that boat for him, he had to make that boat, it was going to be his world. He starts by fashioning his own boat.

When he gets in the boat, what happens to time? It starts again and what is the baseline, what is the new objective baseline? Noah's life. It is the new objective baseline. The old baseline is over, that was for the creation of G-d's world, time now starts again and now the objective baseline is Noah, because who is Noah? He's the new architect of this new world, and it's his world, and that's why the text can say, 'and

in the six-hundredth-and-first year', as if we were talking about THE six-hundredth-and first year, but it's only Noah's life, because he is now the objective standpoint - the objective yardstick - by which this world is measured.

If you look at the beginning of the flood it's a difficult thing, who closed the door? There was a door to this ark that had to be closed, who closed the door? Do you know who? If you look in the text; Vayisgor Hashem ba'ado - the verse says - G-d closed the door. In the new world who opens the door? Vafitach Noach - Noah opens the door. G-d closed him in, G-d closed the last door on His world, Noah opens the first door on his own world. And Noah opens the door and what happens? He sees G-d's world is gone and there's a new, diminished world.

It's interesting, someone asked, what about the law in the first world? Why was there no law, there was no plan for a Torah in the first world? What happened? How come? Simcha Baer argues - and he has other proof for this - he says, there was no need for a law, nature was G-d's law. G-d's will was so vibrant in G-d's world that it was in every leaf, in every tree, you just looked around and you could understand by looking at nature what it was that G-d wanted from you. If you look by the way at Walden - Henry David Thoreau in Walden, this is what he tried to do in Walden. To be able to look at nature and divine G-d's will from nature. It's a difficult thing to do - Henry David Thoreau got as far as he could. But Simcha Baer argues that in G-d's world you could do that, in man's world it's much more difficult. It's only a shadow of G-d's world.

Noah opens the door, sees the diminished world and is the only one who has ever seen both and knows the difference, the first thing he wants to do is plant a vineyard and get drunk. To lose himself. Because it's so terrible. What does he do? He gets drunk; Vayachel Noach ish ha'adamah - and he's the man of the land. The land. G-d's land but now it's not G-d's land anymore it's Noah's land, and to know the difference between G-d's land and your land and to see the difference is a terrible thing. Noah begins and Noah gets drunk.

Interestingly, what is man's relationship to animals in World A and World B? It's interesting, man's relationship to animals fundamentally changes. How does it change? In World A could you eat animals? No. Man - Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat animals, they ate grass, they ate fruits, just like the animals did. In World B vegetarianism is over; Noah's descendants are allowed to eat the flesh of animals. Why? What is the significance? If we had more time I'd do - I'd make you work on this but I'm just going to tell you this because we're out of time. But if you look at the verses in Genesis you will find a fascinating parallel between the verses that mandate vegetarianism in World 1 and the verses that destroy the concept of vegetarianism in World 2. They're modeled after one another.

I'm going to quote the verses for you and see if you can see the connection and the difference between them. Here's Chapter 1, verse 29 to 30. When G-d gives man vegetation to eat this is what the verse says; Hinei natati lachem et kol eisev zore'ah zerah - here I have given to you all Eisev - all vegetation; Zore'ah zerah - that makes its kind. Lachem yiheye l'ochlah - it, for you, man, is to eat. You can eat this vegetation. Ul'kol chayas ha'aretz - and for all the beasts of the field … Et kol yerek eisev l'ochlah - I

have also given vegetation to eat. What does this look like? It looks like there are two beings that consume vegetation. Who are they? They are man and animals. Vegetation is what you both eat. That is Verse A in World number 1.

Look at Verse B in World number 2. Chapter 9, verse 3. G-d says; Kol remess asher hu chai lachem yiheye l'achlah - anything that moves upon the land, any flesh that moves upon the land, G-d says to Noah's descendants; Lachem yiheye l'achlah - is for you to eat. K'yerek eisev natati lachem et kol - like the grass of the field, like the vegetative grasses, I have given to you everything, i.e. even meat. The word here which is borrowed from World A is the word Yerek Eisev, which literally means, the vegetation of grasses. It's a strange kind of word for vegetation but that word appeared as a key word in Verse '1' and it appears again in a key word in Verse '2', but notice the difference.

In Verse '1', in World A, what happens? There is man and animals, both eating vegetation. The same - they share the habitat and they have the same food source. In World B what happens? In World B G-d says no, no, no, you can eat animals now, just like you can eat vegetation. In other words, there's been a fundamental shift in the relationship between man and animal. What is the shift?

What I would argue is the shift is this. In World 1 there were two tenants in G-d's world; there were animals and there were people. But neither one was really in charge, because G-d is in charge, it's His world. These are the two tenants, they both eat grass that I've provided for them, neither of them is going to eat each other. In World 2 it all changes. World 2 is Noah's world, it's man's world. G-d, so to speak, has put Noah in charge and said, this is your world, I'm removing Myself a little bit, it's not the same world, it's a diminished world, it's your world. In your world the animals are part of your world, you can eat them the same way that you could eat the grasses that you both could eat before. The relationship has changed between you. Man has a greater - perhaps an even more fearsome - responsibility, because it is, so to speak, his world now that he has stepped into ever since leaving that boat.

So the argument is that why is it that the reason for destroying the world - how is it that G-d knows that He's never going to do this again? How is it that the reason for destroying the world is the reason why the world will never again be destroyed? It's because it is unilateral forgiveness. It is option 2. G-d became convinced that reconciliation in the traditional sense was never going to happen, the only possibility for keeping a relationship with man was going to be through unilateral forgiveness. Unilateral forgiveness requires the destruction of the previous relationship and its world, and the building of a new world on the ashes of that. Therefore, the old world is destroyed because of the frailty that man cannot bring himself to overcome and that becomes the reason that G-d knows that He's never again going to destroy the new world because it's built on a recognition of that very frailty.

The second world is a diminished world, it's a world of diminished potential, but it's still a world of a relationship between G-d and man. No longer does man live in the splendor of G-d's house, man lives in his own house and G-d visits, as it were. It's a different kind of relationship.

The question though which I want to leave you with - not the question I want to leave you with, the last

issue which I want to deal with you is why? The way it works in relationships is that you only grant unilateral forgiveness when you become convinced that bilateral forgiveness will never work. So what made G-d convinced of that? What was the last straw? Why did G-d all of a sudden become convinced that it wasn't going to happen? That's one question.

I also want to throw in another question which has been knocking around, which it was once asked to me by a woman who I consider a mentor of mine, who in my younger years I used to stay at their household, her and her husband, every weekend, and she was a very bright lady and she had asked me this question once. She said, why is it, do you think, that the great punishments that mankind suffers at the hands of G-d come in the form of alienation? Does that really make sense? If G-d really wants a close relationship with us then when we sin do you think that's really the time to cast us away farther? I mean shouldn't G-d be gathering us in? Why is it that the nature of the punishments which fall out in the Adam and Eve story, in the Cain and Abel story, even in the Noah story, it's all this alienation between man and creator. That man is created by G-d and he's created by land, and in the wake of these sins he finds himself alienated, why doesn't G-d gather us in? If the whole point is closeness then don't distance us once we've done something wrong, bring us in.

So this is an interesting question and I thought about it a long time and I want to tell you what I came up with on this. There is a point to alienation, it's not just some vengeful punishment by G-d that He is mad at us so He decides to alienate us, there's a point. First of all it's a consequence, but it's more than just a consequence - it's not just a punishment, it's a consequence of what we've done - but it's more than just a consequence. There actually is, what I believe, is a rehabilitative goal in alienation, and it gets to the following. Who are we being alienated from? In being alienated from G-d and land there is something very significant about G-d and land, they are both our creators. Alienation from creators is a very significant thing and it has very significant ramifications, and here's where we get to sadness.

Remember we talked about sadness as this issue that appears in these punishments, that the toil with which man toils the man is referred to as sadness, and the toil of childbirth is referred to as sadness. Everything is sadness. Lemech has this idea that Noach is going to be the answer to all the sadness, that; Zeh yenachameinu - he will comfort us from all of the sadness, and G-d says, I'm so sad to My heart.

What is all this sadness business? Why is sadness used as a euphemism for toil? What - there's a common denominator between sadness and toil; there's something sad about toil and there's something sad generally about alienation, which is the following.

Again, man's relationship to land and G-d is significant; these are not just two, any things, these are creators. How do you feel when a person gets alienated from your creator? If you have a parent that you've become alienated from. Let's say, G-d forbid, your parent did not nice things to you when you were kid, let's think they did some really not nice things to you, how do you deal with that? It is an extremely painful thing to deal with. The reason why it's so extremely painful is, if it wasn't your parent you could just cut the person out of your life, but if it is your parent you can never really - I don't know, [Laura Schlessinger 75:57] argues on this, but I disagree. I think if it's your parent you can never really cut the person out of your life. You can't. They're your parents. You can't cut your creator out of your

life. You're cutting yourself off from your whole source of life if you do that. It's such a hard thing to do.

I have a friend who works, by the way, in an orphanage for abused children. She described to me what it is that she sees there. She sees kids who have gone through terrible abuse at the hands of their parents and sometimes they scream and they rant and they rave; I want to kill my mother, I hate my mother, I hate my mother's guts. Then they cry right after that and they say, but all I want is my mother. All I really want is my mother. There's this conflicting - because you can't cut your creator out. You can be angry but the stronger the sense of alienation is from your creator, the stronger is the homing beacon that says, but I got to go back, I've got to reconcile, I've got to put this together. [It's in the sense 76:57] that you're tortured because how do I put this together in such a situation? It's a terrible situation to be in.

But becoming alienated from your creator is not like becoming alienated from your wife, it's not like becoming alienated from your best friend, it's your creator. There's a homing beacon hardwired into human nature which says you never fully cut off from your - you've got to be at peace with your creators. You try and be at peace with them. The stronger the alienation becomes, the louder the homing beacon becomes; that I've got to get back, I've got to put this together, and it creates more and more tension. That is the potential rehabilitative aspect of alienation.

There's a reason why man becomes alienated from land, why man becomes alienated from G-d in the wake of a flood. The reason is, is because it's supposed to activate the homing beacon. That when you become alienated it's uncomfortable to be alienated, there's something sad about it, you're meant to feel the sadness and say, I don't want to live with this sadness, I want to put the relationship back together. When you don't put the relationship back together and you sin again and you destroy the relationship even further, so you get alienated more because it's again - it just ups the ante with the - and makes the beacon even more. It's like water. Water evaporates. Water evaporation cools the atmosphere, but the hotter the atmosphere the faster is the rate of evaporation to cool the atmosphere even more. The more the alienation the more the desire to - it's like a built-in feedback mechanism to ensure that relationships never get destroyed too much.

And what do you call that? You call that toil. Alienation with land is toil. Why? Because if land is really supposed to just give itself to me and give me produce naturally and now I have to farm for it, so I have to toil to work that. Now toil is not just toil, there's an existential side to toil, there's something sad about toil, because every time I toil I'm supposed to feel what? What does the word toil imply? How is toil different than work? Toil implies what? Futility, drudgery. What is sad about futility and drudgery? The recognition that it doesn't need to be this way. There's nothing wrong with working hard, if I'm working really hard but I'm getting what I need to out of that work, there's nothing sad about that. But if I'm working hard and I know that it doesn't have to be this way, that I could just push a button and get the same thing, then it feels like drudgery to me, then it feels like toil. Toil is not a measure of objective how much work I put into something, it's how much work I need to put into something relative to how much work I am putting into something. That is what defines something as toil.

When I feel something as toil if it's land that I'm toiling with, or if I'm toiling with G-d, I should

immediately be seized with a sense of sadness. And that's what G-d says in handing out these punishments. B'itzavon tochlenah - you're going to have labor in childbirth. It's not labor, it's sadness, it doesn't have to be that way. It's toil, it doesn't need to be that way. It's sadness when you're behind the plow, it doesn't have to be that way. Nature is meant to be closer to you than this, and you have to feel that, and then the sadness gets stronger with Cain and Abel, and it gets stronger.

Then, all of a sudden we get to this place where G-d decides to destroy the world, a last straw. But what was the last straw? Interestingly, the language that G-d uses in deciding to destroy the world is copied from Noah - the naming of Noah. Very innocuous thing. Lemech gives birth to a child and says, I'm going to call him Noach which means ease. That's what Noach means, ease. Easy. Restful. What is Noach going to be? Zeh yenachameinu - this guy is going to comfort us; Mi'ma'aseinu - from all the works of our hands; U'mei'itzvon yadeinu - he's going to comfort us from the sadness of our toil; Min ha'adamah asher eirerah Hashem - and he will comfort us from the land that G-d has cursed. Now all of a sudden, G-d picks up on those words and mimics those words and decides to destroy the world using Lemech's words. It's almost as if that was a catalyst for G-d to decide to destroy the world. It's almost as if that was the last straw. But what was the last straw? What was so bad?

So Rashi has a telling comment which made my bones shiver when I first saw it. Rashi says a fascinating thing. Rashi says, do you know what Lemech saw? Why did Lemech name Noach, Noach? Why did Lemech think that this would be a comfort - that Noach would be a comfort? That Lemech was a prophet, Rashi says, quoting a Midrash, and Lemech saw something prophetically. What did Lemech see? Lemech saw that Noah would invent something very powerful, Lemech saw prophetically that Noah was destined to invent the plow. He was destined to invent the plow. When he saw that Noah, his child, was destined to invent the plow he said, this one will comfort us from all of the sadness of our hands, from the land that G-d has cursed. And G-d said, I've heard all that I need to hear, now the only option left is to destroy the world using these words.

What did it mean? What was he saying; this one will comfort us? Comfort for sadness. What are you supposed to do with sadness? What's the point of sadness? Let's talk about comfort for a second - we're over time - let's talk about comfort for just one second. What does comfort mean? Who do you comfort? You comfort mourners. Why do you comfort mourners? What does a mourner experience that he needs comforting? In Hebrew there's a word for mourner, the word for mourner is Avel. The Hebrew word for a mourner is Avel. Avel doubles as another word, do you know what the other word it doubles for is? But, or nevertheless - Aval. Aval and Avel, same word. Why mourner and nevertheless same word?

It could be - a teacher of mind once said - because what is the stage of Aveilut - of mourning? It is the stage of nevertheless-ness. What does that mean - the stage of nevertheless-ness? A mourner screams out, he wants to know why it happened to him, how could you take away my loved one? But he's never going to get an answer to that. So how does he ever get comforted if he's never going to get an answer for that? How does he get comforted? So the first stage of mourning, by the way, is known as Aninut - which is grief, inconsolable grief. But the second stage of mourning is known as nevertheless-ness, it's a stage where you can accept comforters, people who come to comfort you. The word Nachem - you

know the word Nachem can mean regret, it can mean comfort, but what it really means, the common denominator of both regret and comfort, Rashi says, means to change perspective. There's a change in perspective that an Avel makes through comfort, to allow himself to say nevertheless.

What is the change in perspective? He has to understand that he's never going to get an answer to why it happened and there's only one thing he can tell himself to move on, which is, nevertheless it happened. It is a reconciliation with reality, that's what it means to become comforted as a mourner. When I look reality in the eye and I say, I don't know why but it did happen, and I have to deal with that and move on, that's the stage of mourning where you need comfort to be able to help yourself make that transition. But it happened. What does that mean? It's reconciling yourself with a situation that is painful and accepting that that's just the way it is and you have to learn to live with it because it's never going to change.

Lemech. Lemech looks at the sadness, looks at the toil and says we need comfort for this. We have comfort, we have a plow. This guy is going to comfort us from all of the sadness, we don't have to feel so sad anymore, we've got a plow. Because what does the curse of the land say? It says that we'll have difficulty farming. I have a solution for difficulty in farming, a technological solution. We've got a plow, we're fine, we can get by, it won't be so sad anymore, we'll reconcile ourself to this is just the way it is, the land is cursed, that's life, get over it, nevertheless-ness, let's be comforted, the plow will comfort us.

It's the way we can deal with it - right? Noach, it's easy now. Noach, it's ease, it's all ease. We can go on, we don't have to feel so sad anymore.

G-d sees that and what does He see? That the purpose of sadness has now been destroyed. What is the purpose of sadness? It's not to make you sad, it's rehabilitative, it's to activate the homing beacon, it's because you're supposed to believe and understand that that's not the way it's supposed to be, that it can be different. You're supposed to imagine a different life where you don't have to have that sadness and work to achieve it. Once you try to comfort yourself from the sadness, once you say it's just the way it is, we just have to get used to it, the land is cursed, let's find a technical solution to the problem, you've missed the boat. You are reconciling yourself to something you shouldn't reconcile. You, mankind, are giving up on the relationship ever being what it needs to be, what it can be. You're saying the baseline is sadness. That convinces G-d that it can't change.

Once mankind has given up and has said, this is just the way it is, then there is no hope to respond and to get back. Then the purpose of sadness doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense to curse the ground anymore, it's a lost cause. You can't have a technical solution to an existential problem. There's no such thing as the plow solving the problem of sadness. You've missed the whole point. You've thrown in the towel in the relationship ever being what it is. And it's at this point that the point of no return is finally reached.

Until this moment there was always the possibility that mankind - that the sadness would be so potent, so strong, that mankind would then collectively come to a recognition, come to a Hoda'ah and reconcile their relationship with G-d and thereby rehabilitate that relationship. Now that the sadness shifts away

from man, now it's G-d that feels the sadness and it is G-d that propelled by that sense of sadness; Vayitatzev el libo - became saddened to His heart. G-d makes a decision and G-d comes to a recognition. The recognition that G-d comes to is that the old relationship as it once was can no longer be salvaged and that's a moment of profound sadness; Vayitatzev el libo - G-d becomes saddened to His heart. Then G-d says, it has to be a new world, and that world is destroyed. And mankind is important, we still have a relationship, we're still going to do it, but it's a different relationship and it's built upon the ashes of the old world.

An interesting question is, is there a way back? Is there a way back to G-d's world? Is there a way back to that world? Are we always consigned to live in this diminished world in which Noah got himself drunk? Is there a way back? That's a question I want to leave you thinking about. But the thing that I would leave you to think about is, especially in terms of religion and the Messianic notions of religion, if the real meaning of Messianism might not be a return to that world? A return to G-d's world. A return to living as a guest in G-d's world. A return to a world where there is a tree of life, [back that 88:15] you can live with, and where the replacement tree of life somehow can lead you back to that world. What would that world look like? It's really something which we could talk about for another couple of sessions, I have a lot more to say on that. But I won't say it because I'm over time, so I'll leave you with this.

I hope we've come to some sort of conclusion in the Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel, and Noah stories - I think we have. I want to say that you guys have been a very exciting and interesting class to have, lots of spirit in you folks and I've really enjoyed it and I've enjoyed getting to know some of you. I leave this course with a kind of sadness also, it's sad to let you go and to say goodbye. But the time comes for all of that. So I want to thank you very much and thank you.

[Response from audience members: Thank you.]

After listening to this series of lectures later, I do want to add one point which strikes me as worthy of clarification. If Noach finds grace in the eyes of G-d and if Noach indeed is a Tzadik, if Noach is indeed righteous, how do we reconcile that with this notion, this prophecy that Lemech has that Noach is the one that creates the plow? Somehow there's these dark storm clouds - pardon the pun - associated with Noah that it is the creation of the plow that heralds the end of the world in G-d's eyes?

Yet I would suggest that that's really precisely the point. Noach was a Tzadik, the creation of the plow is not evil in its own right, there is nothing about a plow that makes it evil, it's how it's used and it's how people look upon it that makes it evil. It is Lemech and his generation's perspective upon the plow that is evil, it is the notion that the plow can provide comfort for sadness that is evil. Yet the creation of the plow itself is Pareve and in fact, I think it's ironic and perhaps even fitting that Noach becomes the builder of the new world. Because the plow the same way that it was the perspective of Lemech and his generation upon the plow that destroyed the world, it is the creator of the plow that becomes the builder of man's world.

In G-d's world you don't need the plow, plows aren't needed and as long as G-d's world is a possibility,

as long as you can climb back and re-create G-d's world then to seek comfort in the plow is a blasphemy. But if G-d's world is over, if we begin anew, if it's man's world and man has to take care of his world, then it's fitting in a way that Noach, the one who finds grace in the eyes of G-d, and is saved, to build his ship and to take responsibility for a new world - it's fitting that he becomes the creator of the plow, the instrument that man will use to till his world and subdue it.

Rabbi Fohrman: The story of the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life and the Garden of Eden is

one of those things that we've -- one of those stories that we recognize from childhood in one form or another. Whatever kind of Hebrew education you've had even if it was only your mother telling you bible stories or if it was Hebrew school or it was day school, you've come across the story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden as a ubiquitous story. Even if you haven't come across it in a Jewish context, you've come across it in the secular context, from a Christian context because it permeates the western society. It permeates art. It's there as part of our cultural heritage.

The problem we have, I think, in confronting a story like this is that oftentimes when you know a story very well from childhood, it's difficult to look at the story with fresh eyes because you tend to view the story as if you were a child for your whole adult life. I think that's certainly with the story of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden that sounds so mythic, that it just sounds like one of these Grimm's fairytales. Perhaps in our heart of hearts that's what we dismiss it as. Oh yeah, the talking snake and the whole thing, right. You know, it goes right along with Little Red Riding Hood and the talking wolf.

I think the challenge with all biblical stories and particularly with one like this is to see if we can sort of break out of that view of that mythic childlike world and to examine it again. It's a very difficult thing to do because oftentimes first impressions last. My wife, actually, who's an educator in her own right, suggests -- often feels that we shouldn't even teach these stories to kids. They should be completely ignorant of them until they're 16, 17-years-old in high school and they can really learn them in depth because the damage that you do by teaching these stories at a simplistic level can never be undone later in life, she says.

That's true, you know. If you read the comic books, the bible tales, it's very difficult to shake those impressions loose. Part of the difficult manifests itself in the following way. It seems to me that one of the best ways to begin attacking a story like this is to try to clear away all the brush. Try to attack the big questions in the story. Let me give you an example of what I mean by a big question on the story.

I think that almost every bible story, almost every biblical narrative has at its core a big question. By Big question with a capital B, I'm distinguishing it from Little question with a capital L. It's difficult to distinguish between Big questions and Little questions, but let me try and give you my take on it. A Big question to me is a question that at the end of the day if you haven't answered this question about the story, you can't really claim to have any understanding at all of the story. I mean, you're just completely in the dark. It's a question that is so pervasive that if this story is important to you, it's going to keep you up at night because you don't have the answer to this question.

Little questions are why does the verse use this word instead of this word? Why is this imagery used instead of this imagery? Those are Little questions. Those are details from the Big questions, the serious questions. Every biblical narrative almost every biblical narrative has it's Big question. The story of the binding of Isaac, for example, the akeidah. It has as it's big question, you know, Abraham gets called out of the blue by God, take this child up to the top of a mountain and kill him. We celebrate this every Rosh Hashanah. We all go into shul and we hear the shofar blasts.

The shofar blasts that you hear are a memorial to Abraham's act and the goat that he slaughtered instead of his child, and you have to ask yourself did Abraham do the right thing, you know? Maybe he should have just said no. If God comes out to you and says take your child and take him to the top of a mountain and kill him, how do you know that's the right thing to do? How do we deal morally with this act and the scary thing is that when you look at the Torah itself the bible does not seem to be in the least bit bothered with this problem, but this is the big elephant that's standing in the middle of the room that we need to begin dealing with before we go further.

The problem is that these biblical stories have what I would call a lullaby effect. The lullaby effect is that if you ever actually listen to the words that you sing to your children in lullabies, you know, rockabye baby on the treetop, how does it go? When the bough breaks, when the wind blows the cradle will rock. When the bough breaks the cradle will fall and you're singing this nicely and then down will come baby, cradle and all. Now you've got like a 16-month-old baby in your arms that you're rocking to sleep. Just imagine this baby in the boughs and then the bough's breaking and this child coming crashing down.

I mean, now, nobody ever asks this question about the thing. They just go and sing these words. So it's a lullaby effect. You've just sung it so many times and your mother used to sing this that you simple cease to think seriously about the words. You divorce those words from real life. The problem is, the words are real life and if you were first introduced to this story as an adult, to this lullaby as an adult, you know, you'd scream bloody murder. You'd call social services on your mother for singing you this thing. You'd be asking -- and then after the bough broke how long was the fall? You'd be asking did anyone call 911 at the bottom?

We don't ask those questions because we recognize the text from childhood and it's just okay and it doesn't really have to make sense. The story like the Tree of Knowledge you have that sort of thing where like other biblical stories, there are some big elephants in the middle of the room which nobody goes around saying anything about. It's just like, yeah, there's an elephant in the middle of the room, but we just walk around like nothing's strange.

So the first challenge is to see the elephant, to try to take the blinders off and see the story as if you've never seen it before. I think that's really the first challenge in any biblical narrative. To completely block out any knowledge that you have of this story before. To read it at first glance and then just ask yourself what's going on here? Now in order to do that, I'm going to ask you to do a very difficult thing. That is, you all have chumashim in front of you that have commentary in them. The Hertz digest of commentary.

What I want you to do is I just want you to focus on the text. I don't want you to read the commentary. Reading the commentary already prejudices you to issues which are beyond the text itself. You just can't do that. You've just got to look at the text. Tomorrow I'll try to have for you some clean sheets that just have the text if you like so you won't be tempted, but it's very, very helpful to just clear your mind, almost like a meditative exercise if you've ever been involved in meditation, to get that sense of the blank slate and then go into the text and say okay, what strikes me about this story?

In a few minutes I'm going to actually have you do that. You'll break up in pairs and you'll go through the story and you're going to try and look for what strikes you in the story, what you think is troubling, what you think needs to be answered. Then we'll come back and talk about it. Before we do that, I'd like to just see if we can bring out at least one big elephant in the room to begin with to give you something to begin working with. So I'm just going to summarize the story very briefly. It's a story you all know.

You tell me just listening to the story what would you say the big elephant in the room is, what would you say the problem is.

Okay. So God creates Eden, this wonderful place. It's paradise. He has people, Adam and Eve, which he's created as well, and He places them in Eden. He places them in paradise. The deal in Eden is as follows. There are lots of trees. The Trees are all fruit bearing trees and Adam and Eve are allowed to eat from any tee that they like. There are two special trees. There is the Tree of Life and there's the Tree of Knowledge between good and evil. We're told that God has created them and God has one command and one command only. The command is that you can eat from any trees that you like, but there's one tree that I don't want you to eat from. It’s the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and you must not eat from it. On the day that you'll eat from it, you'll die.

Now apparently on the day that you'll eat from it you'll die means that on the day that you eat from you'll become mortal. In other words, they didn't die on that day, but they changed from immortal beings to mortal beings. Death will become a reality for them. Okay. So that's the deal. Scene Two. Everybody's naked. Nobody has any problems with that. God comes and -- excuse me, along comes the serpent. We are told the serpent is a very cunning creature and the serpent has a deal that he'd like to propose to Eve.

He suggests to her that wouldn't it be not such a terrible thing if she tasted some of this fruit after all? Eve engages in a short dialogue with the serpent and decides that maybe the serpent's right after all and takes some of the fruit. We're not sure which fruit it is, by the way. The story -- the idea that it's an apple is a myth. The Torah doesn't talk about apples. He hands the fruit to her -- actually the Talmud talks about it being a sheaf of wheat as a possibility. So it doesn't sound so delicious, but we'll actually talk about that later. I think that has some significance.

So she takes some, hands it to her husband Adam. He takes some as well and all of a sudden things go downhill very quickly. God appears, He's not happy about the situation. He asked them why they ate, nobody has any good excuses. Various punishments come out. God says for the man there's going to be, you know, you're going to have to work the land, the woman's going to have difficult child labor. The snake is going to have to eat dust. Everybody gets expelled from Eden. Nobody's too happy. That sets up story Number Two, Cain and Abel. That's your two-minute summary of the Adam and Eve story.

All right. Now, I told you that story. Is there any premise to this story that doesn't seem to work? What would you say? Now what I mean by that is the following. I'm asking that -- I was given the -- what I want to hear is more of an internal question, not an external question. In other words. It's not -- I don't want you to say well, given my 21st century morals, I find it difficult to believe that there's a place called

Eden. We can talk about that, but that's not what I'm interested in for the purpose of this discussion.

What I'm interested in is questions that the Torah itself wants you to ask. That is to say when you look at the story, it's almost as if the Torah is asking you to ask a certain question and tempting you to ask that question because that question's that’s really there internally in the text itself is more often than not a window into deeper understanding of the text. So what do you say? Anything here that is odd? Yeah?

Participant: I have two things.

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay.

Participant: The second being more important, but the first being, what was the snake's interest in having Eve -- in tempting them?

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay, good. What was the snake's interest in tempting Eve? Why would the snake do

such a thing? Okay.

Participant: The other question is why were those trees put there if they weren't supposed to eat from them?

Rabbi Fohrman: Why were the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, why were they put there if we

weren't supposed to eat from them? Okay. Very good. So I would say that that is a very important question. Why were the trees put there if we shouldn't eat from them? I'm not sure if that's an internal question or an external question. We will address it a little bit, but that's an interesting question. If God really doesn't want us to eat from these trees, so what are they here for anyway? Okay. That would lead you to suggest that what? That maybe it's all a setup. Maybe God really wants us to eat from the trees but then He gets really mad at us when we eat them.

I'll get to you in one second, but I just want to respond to that in a moment, but let me just put it to you this way. I'd like you to think in the back of your mind, do you think that's a tenable reading of the story? Is it possible that really God wants us to eat from these trees and it's a setup, basically? Does that work or does that not work in the text? Something to think about. Yes?

Participant: Why were they created without a knowledge of good and evil in the first place?

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. Why were they created without a knowledge of good and evil in the first place?

Good. I would say -- but you could reformulate that question to make it an internal problem in the text. See right now, you've just posed a philosophical problem that you have. Okay? You can reformulate that question a little bit more but we're getting very warm. Go ahead. Yes?

Participant: Well any parent knows that if they tell a kid not to do something, you're sort of challenging them to do it.

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. So you're touching on Sharon's question, which is come on, God. If you really

don't want them to eat about it, so don't create the tree. If you tell them the cookies are in the cookie jar but you can't have any cookies, so what do you expect? Yeah?

Participant: So the whole thing's not -- why the tree of good and evil?

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. Good. This is what I would see as the central textual problem in the middle of

the story, which is the following. What's the one tree that God doesn't want you to eat from? It's the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now -- you were going to say something else?

Participant: (Inaudible 00:14:09).

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. So hold on for a minute. God doesn't want you to eat from the Tree of

Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Now think about it for a moment. Let's get to your question. Why would God not want them to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil? Presumably, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, just take it at superficial face value means what? You eat from this tree and you get -- what do you get?

Participant: Morality.

Rabbi Fohrman: You would get morality -- you'd get an understanding. You'd get the knowledge of

good and evil. That's what the tree says. It's a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now, we have your question, which is what's so bad about the knowledge of good and evil? You know, if God says don't eat from this tree. This is the tree of wanton licentiousness and sexuality or something like that, you know, then we understand maybe God doesn't like that kind of thing, but none of that. This is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Now we have your question, which is so that's a bad thing? So God doesn't want us to have good and evil? So let's talk about this for a moment. If you don't have knowledge of good and evil, then who are you? Let's say you don't know the difference between good and evil. Give me an example of somebody who doesn't know the difference between good and evil. Yeah?

Participant: A child or an animal.

Rabbi Fohrman: A child or an animal. Give me a --

Participant: A psychopath.

Rabbi Fohrman: A psychopath. A child or an animal are people that we don't expect to understand the

knowledge of -- the difference between good and evil. Somebody who's an adult and lacks knowledge of good and evil is what we call a psychopath. Or if we want to cast it in perhaps a more charitable light, imagine for yourself the imbecilic axe murderer. Somebody who simply has no concept -- is almost

childlike as an adult. He has no concept that there's a difference between right and wrong and he has axes and he likes to go around his neighborhood chopping people up because it's fun to watch the red stuff called blood flow in the streets and he just doesn't understand the concept of good and evil.

This is what you might expect from somebody who just doesn’t know the difference. So the problem is obvious, which is would we hold up the imbecilic axe murderer as a great ideal of humanity before Eden? Now this is how God really wanted it to be. God wanted somebody who had no concept of an understanding of good and evil. After having eaten from the tree God got really mad. Now you understand morality. This is an awful thing.

Who is higher on the evolutionary scale of mankind so to speak? The person who literally has no understanding of good and evil, or somebody who is in a position to choose? Someone who understand there's something called right and something called wrong. We don't go about ascribing heroism to those who don't understand the difference between good and evil. So it sounds rather odd that God would not want us to eat from this tree, but hold on for one second. The question becomes even stronger and even more textual when you think about it this way.

The story actually doesn't work on those terms. Think about it for a moment. There's an internal contradiction in the story. If it's really true that this tree gives you an understanding of good and evil, which you didn't already have, the story ceases to make any sense at all. Can anyone find for me what the internal contradiction, the philosophical contradiction that tears apart the whole story is?

Participant: If they don't know what's good and evil why pay attention to the commandment?

Rabbi Fohrman: Good. If you don't know the difference between good and evil, then why pay attention

to the commandment? Because if you don't know the difference between good and evil and God commands you don't eat from the tree, then what' your expected reaction?

Participant: Indifference.

Rabbi Fohrman: Indifference, because you don't know that it's good to obey and bad to disobey. You

don't have the knowledge of good and evil, right? So if it's really true that you don't know the difference between right and wrong, then why pay attention to the commandment?

Now what problem does that make for us in the story? Why is it the story makes no sense of you assume that the Tree of Knowledge give you an understanding of good and evil? Something happened later on in the story that makes it completely impossible to understand this story on that basis. What happens?

Think about what happens in the story. What happens later in the story that makes the story blow apart in a Catch-22 if that's what's going on? Think about what happens. They eat from the tree. What happens next?

Participant: They clothe themselves.

Rabbi Fohrman: They realize their nakedness. They realize they're naked and they make themselves

primitive garments. What happens next? Participant: They try to hide.

Rabbi Fohrman: happens next?

God calls out. They try to hide. Okay. God says where are you? They hide. What

Participant: They blame each other for --

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. Why do they blame each other? Because God asks you why did you eat from

this tree? They then blame each other. Hold on. Let's just take it slowly. They then blame each other. What happens next?

Participant: God gets angry.

Rabbi Fohrman: God gets angry. Why is this not making sense?

Participant: Why would God get angry if they didn't have any capacity to make a decision?

Rabbi Fohrman: Exactly. God's anger is completely unjustified. If it's really true that eating from the tree

gives you a knowledge of good and evil which before you did not have, then God's anger at them for not eating is completely inexplicable. Back to Dick's question, why would they pay attention to the command? They would be indifferent to the command not understanding that to obey is good and to disobey is bad. So what do we see from here? God is angry at them, and God is so angry that He dishes out lots of punishments.

Eve has difficult childbirth and Adam has trouble in the field. Death all around. The Snake gets -- has to eat dust. All of this is completely capricious. It's completely unjustified. You have this idyllic being living in the Garden of Eden that was like one of these Reuben's angels that didn't understand the difference between good and evil and now all of a sudden you're punishing them for an act that they didn't -- okay. So what must we conclude? It must be that before they ate from the tree, they did understand the difference between good and evil. Hold on. Free will is impossible without understanding the difference between good and evil.

In other words, I can have all the free will I want, if I don't know that there's something called right and something called wrong, I'm not responsible for my actions. In order to be responsible for my actions, a couple things have to happen. I have to understand the difference between right and wrong and I need to be able to make a free choice between right and wrong. If I don't have ither one of those things, I'm not responsible for my actions.

If I understand the difference between right and wrong but I can't make a free choice, if I'm forced into doing something, so I'm not responsible for my action. I was forced. Likewise, if I have free will but I

don't have the understanding of the ontological categories of right and wrong, I just don't understand the difference, so again I'm not responsible. I'm a baby. I'm an animal. So it must be that the fact that God punishes them, the fact that God is angry proves to us that before they ate from the tree, they understood the difference between good and evil.

So now the story doesn't make any sense because they already had the knowledge of good and evil before they ate from the tree. Now this forces us into a particular understanding of the story. What does this force us to conclude? That what?

Participant: (Inaudible 00:21:11).

Rabbi Fohrman: What? Okay. If we are willing to live with the capricious god so we might just close

our books and say all right. God is capricious. We now understand why nobody has to understand to God and religion is a farce. It starts from Story Number One. It's just an evil God. Here He goes, He has these innocent beings and He just takes out the whole Zeus lightning bolt and just tries to make their lives hard from the very beginning. That's one possible way of looking at the story.

Or if we're not willing to live with a capricious God, we live with a just God, it must be that our thesis is wrong. It cannot be that what this tree gives them is an understanding of the difference between good and evil. It must be what? Let's just set up the structure. It must be what? You disagree?

Participant: No, at first I was disagreeing, but then I was thinking about my disagreement and what I was thinking is, you know, a child knows to obey his parents. He may or may not know why, so it's very different from the knowledge of good and evil. So what maybe this is talking about is, you know, of course they were obeying their parent and then they kind of became teenagers and were just doing their own thing and got tempted. So there's a difference between oh, knowing you're supposed to do this and knowing you're not supposed to do this versus the knowledge, you know, deeper knowledge of why you should do this and not do that.

Rabbi Fohrman: Let's talk about that for a little bit, though. Well, let's try and take it apart. A child

knows that he's supposed to listen to his parents and -- knows that he's supposed to listen to his parents. Would we call that a knowledge of good and evil, a knowledge of right from wrong?

Participant: No.

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. Let's see. Now, if it's obedience and it doesn't come from any sense of moral

sense, is the parents justified in punishing the child when they do wrong? I mean I have a kid who's, how old is she now? She's ten-months-old. So even at ten-months-old you can already see the beginnings of understanding of obedience. In other words, she knows enough to be able to look at a parent's face and to detect a look of disapproval and to move her hand away from what she was about to touch, but I'll be darned if I would punish her for touching the thing that I gave a look of disapproval to because I don't believe that she yet has an understanding of right or wrong associated with that. To me, it's just instinct at this stage.

So what I'm pointing out to you is the following it seems that there's no escaping this kind of dichotomy. Either you understand right or wrong, or you don't and you just have an instinctive understanding of obedience. If your only understanding of obedience is instinctive and it has nothing to do with a moral understanding of right or wrong, I believe punishment is out of the question, God's anger is certainly out of the question and God's punishment is certainly out of the question. This is what I believe.

To me, if I see God punishing and God's getting angry, to me -- those punishments -- if you read the text, God sounds pretty angry. It's not simply that this is a little educational exercise that He's trying to move you away from the stove. He's telling you that humanity has changed for history from now on women will have labor and childbirth and from now on men are going to work the by the sweat of their brow. This is real life. This is not just some little exercise. God seems genuinely angry and genuinely punishing.

To me that only makes sense if there was a real act of disobedience. So to me therefore, that implies heavily, strongly, that there was some understanding of good and evil to begin with before eating from the tree. We then have the catch-22. Apparently they already had the knowledge that the tree was supposed to give them before they ate from the tree. So the tree's a farce. So it must be that we got something wrong. That our theory is wrong and cannot be that the tree gives you an understanding of good and evil which you before did have. It can't be.

There's only one way out of that question. There's only one other way out. If the tree doesn't give you an understanding of right and wrong that you didn't have before then what could it give you if it's a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil? Just to lay it out structurally, I think it means the following. It is not the case that before I had no understanding of morality and afterwards I had that understanding.

What must be the case is that before I had one kind of understanding of morality, and afterwards that understanding changed. What it changed into was something called the knowledge of good and evil, but before that wasn't what it was called.

In other words, before I had one way of understanding right and wrong and it was called we don't know what, but that was enough that basic sense of morality that you had that God could get angry at you if you disobeyed. You had an understanding of right and wrong. Let's call it knowledge of right and wrong just for arguments sake. Then by eating from this tree, you would then -- that knowledge would change. What you would now have is a different kind of moral knowledge called the knowledge of good and evil. For some reason God doesn't want you to have that knowledge

The question is why? The real question is so what then are these two states? What were they like before eating from the tree? What were they like after eating from the tree? That is one of the central challenges that will face us for the rest of today. What I'd like to do now, without any further ado, it two things.

First of all if we can turn down the heat because people are going to get real sleepy soon unless we do that. The second thing is what I'd like you to do is to break up, to find yourself a chavrusah, find yourself a study partner. If you want to study in groups of three you can, but here's what I want you to do.

With this question in the back of your mind, but don't try and answer it too quickly, I want you to read through the text and keep a little notepad, you and your partner, of problems that you find in the text.

Difficulties that you think need to be addressed in this text. Strange things in this text or observations. You should have some paper. If you can't we'll try and supply some for you, but make a list of them. That's what I want you to do. Hold on, don't do it yet. Don't do it yet. Folks.

There's one thing that I don't want you to do. This is very important. What I don't want you to do is answer any of your questions. No theories, okay? We're going to separate -- no theories. I don't want you to try and answer any of the questions. The only thing you're doing is coming up with problems, observations, strange things from the very small to the very big in this story and then we're going to get back and discuss them, but I am not interested in you trying to at this stage formulate theories. I think it's important to separate the two, to just look at the text and find the problems, and then later on to come back and try to put it together

At this point we probably won't have enough information yet to begin to provide solid answers. As we put together the problems, I think they'll begin to start answering themselves. Let me tell you where you should look at, okay? What I'd like you to look at is start from Chapter Two Verse Eight, which is the planting of the Garden of Eden and read through Chapter Three.

Right. So remember you have two rules, two no-nos which you have to abide by. No-no Number One is no theories, no answers to problems and No-no Number Two is no looking at commentary. Okay.

You're all set. You've got about 15 minutes and then we'll reconvene. Okay, folks.

First of all I must say that it's interesting. As I was going around the room, there are a few people saying gee, you know, half these questions I'm not sure if these are the kinds of question you're supposed to ask. This is going to be a common theme as I was going around the room, but all of you from the little that I listened in really were tuning in to some really important things so I'm eager to hear your feedback on this. Let's try and get a representative sample of what you think some of the other problems in the story are other than one of the big elephants which I mentioned before.

Are there any other big elephants or small elephants or little kangaroos or anything in between? You know what? This might be a good way of doing it. What I think we can do just for the heck of it, is why don't I read through the story very quickly and you stop me when you have a question? Why don't we do it that way? Okay?

Participant: So read a verse, stop.

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. This might take a while. All right, all right. I may not get to all of you, but hold

on for a second. We didn't start yet. You have a question? Participant: Well, you've got to say the first word first.

Rabbi Fohrman: Thanks. I get to read a whole sentence before I stop. Harumph.

Participant: You said (inaudible 00:30:08).

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. "Vayita Hashem Elokim gan b'eden mikedem vayasem sham et ha'adam asher

yatzar." And God planted a -- and by the way, what you might want to do, if you have any of your notepads in front of you, what might be helpful is if you find a question from the crowd that you find particularly interesting that you didn't think of, you might want to write it down as well on your note page and keep track. Because when we come back together and put this all together, we'll want to address those questions. It might be helpful for you.

"Vayita Hashem Elokim gan b'eden mikedem," and God planted a garden in Eden in the east, "vayasem sham et ha'adam asher yatzar," and He placed the man that He had made there. Yes?

Participant: Vayita says that God planted? So if everything has been created, then what's this sense of planting? Is He planting for somebody else to take care of?

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. God seems to plant or create a new place which is going to be Eden, which is

distinct from the rest of creation. Yeah.

Participant: God put man in Eden, so He formed man outside of Eden. What did man know before he

got into Eden?

Rabbi Fohrman:

Okay, very good. For some reason, and that's important, Rashi actually notes this here,

man was created outside of Eden and put there. The logical thing to do would be if you want man to be in Eden and you're making man, just make him there. You don't have to put him there. Nevertheless, man is outside of Eden and then he's put there. That's interesting as well. Yes.

Participant: In this verse, as in Verses 9, 15, 16,, 18, 19, 21 and 22, God's name is Hashem Elokim. So there's a pattern here of both justice and mercy parts of God's name being put together. Is there a reason why God's name is this way in this part of it?

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay, good question. Just to give the background of where that question is coming

from, traditionally it's understood that God has different names and each of them signal different ways that human beings perceive God. Two of those names, two of the most common of those names, are Hashem, which we just pronounce Hashem, just really means "the name," but that is the name that we give to the most fundamental name of God, which you'll see as a Yud-Hei and then a Vav-Hei. We don't know how to pronounce it; we just say Hashem when we're referring to that name.

The other name that is very common is Elokim, Alef-Lamed-Hei-Yud-Mem. Oftentimes the translation will translate that as the Lord God, and Lord is Hashem and God is Elokim. But Jewish thought has it that there is a significance to each of these names. They represent different ways that we perceive God.

There's a general understanding that the word Hashem connotes a sense of God's compassion, whereas the word Elokim connotes a sense of God's justice, or ability to relate to us in terms of justice rather than compassion.

Sometimes, God is referred to by both together, Hashem Elokim, as you point out is happening here. God's name is doubled in each of these cases, Hashem Elokim. Is it significant that God is referred to by both appellations here? Okay, good.

"Vayatzmach Hashem Elokim min ha'adamah kol etz nechmad l'mareh v'tov l'ma'achal v'etz hachayim b'toch hagan v'etz hada'at tov vara." Now, so God plants all of this beautiful stuff, and He plants the Tree of Life "b'toch hagan," in the middle of the Garden, "v'etz hada'at tov vara," and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Yes?

Participant: At this point until later, it's not clear what the Tree of Life really is.

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay, good. Let me just elaborate on the question. All right, we now are introduced to

the two important trees. The title of this was "A Tale of Two Trees." We are now told about the two trees. Tree number one is the Etz Hachayim, the Tree of Life. Tree number two is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Okay, what's strange here in this verse about these two trees? Let everyone look, and then I'll get you. One second. What's strange here about the way these two trees --

Participant: (Inaudible 00:34:27) life is eternal life. That's not --

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay. The Tree of Life seems to be a tree that would grant you eternal life. What were

you going to say?

Participant: It's almost as if the trees for nourishment are in one place and the trees of life and knowledge are in another place.

Rabbi Fohrman: Well, hold on for a second. Let me ask you something like this. Let's talk about

location of trees for a moment. We are mapping the Garden of Eden. Now, in our rudimentary map, we know there's lots of trees here, but there are two special trees. Where is the Tree of Life? In the midst or in the middle of the Garden. The sense is it's probably in the middle of the Garden. You could read it that it's just in the Garden, but there's a strong temptation to understand that it is in the middle of the Garden, b'toch hagan.

Now, where is the Tree of Knowledge? Interesting, we don't know. Now, as you read this verse the first time, when you read it superficially, you tend to think that the trees are in the same place. But if you read the verse carefully, you'll notice that that's not actually the case. Why? How do you know? Because if you wanted to write that both trees were in the middle of the Garden, what should the text have said?

How should the text have read? Participant: Etz hachayim v'etz hada'at.

Rabbi Fohrman: B'toch hagan, right. It should have read, etz hachayim v'etz hada'at tov vara b'toch

hagan. It should have said, and the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil were in the midst of the trees of the Garden. Instead, it only says that after the Tree of Life, and then it just adds on,

and there was a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. So clearly, the narrator is trying to tell us that whereas it's clear where the Tree of Life is, it's in the middle of the Garden; it's not so clear that that centrality exists with the Tree of Knowledge either.

That becomes particularly interesting when what? Now, hold on for a second. I'd like you to look for a moment at Eve. Later on, when Eve talks about these trees, and I think, Margaret, your group was talking about the inaccuracies in Eve's description. What is strange about Eve's description to the serpent? Take a look for a moment, fast forward to Eve's conversation with the serpent. Hold on, I'll get to you in a second. Let everyone look at it. Eve's conversation with the serpent, what is strange about the location of the trees there?

First of all, let me ask you this. Which tree or trees are you not allowed to eat from? Participant: The Tree of Knowledge.

Participant: Tree of Life.

Rabbi Fohrman: Okay, some confusion here, right. Some of you are saying the Tree of Life, some of

you are saying the Tree of Knowledge. Which one is it, or is it both? Participant: Verse 17.

Rabbi Fohrman: What does Verse 17 say? Please read the verse.

Participant: From the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, don't eat from that.

Rabbi Fohrman: Right. So clearly, when God gives the command, when He commands Adam, He says

that there's one tree that I don't want you to eat from, and that is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. What about the Tree of Life? He doesn't even mention it. Is it clear that Adam even knows that there's a Tree of Life that exists? If you read the verse -- let's read it. Verse 16, "Vayetzav Hashem Elokim al ha'adam laymor," and God commanded man saying, "mikol etz hagan achol tocheil," from any tree of the Garden you may surely eat. "U'mei'etz hada'at tov vara," but from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, "lo tochal mimenu ko b'yom achalcha mimenu mot tamut," do not eat from it because on the day that you eat from it, you will die. This is the only thing Adam knows about trees. There are lots of trees in the Garden. There's one tree I don't want you to eat from, it's the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Don't eat from it. On the day you eat from it, you'll die.

Is there any command about the Tree of Life? No. Does he even know there's a Tree of Life? We don't even know. Yet what's strange is that at the end of the story, the Tree of Life finally makes a cameo appearance.

Participant: Verse 22.

Rabbi Fohrman: Verse 22. What happens in Verse 22?

Participant: In Chapter 3, Verse 22, I'm fascinated by this verse. It says -- I'm going to do the English. "And the Lord God said behold the man has become as one of us to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life and eat and live forever, therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden."

Rabbi Fohrman: Whoa, that's right. Hold on for just a minute. So here you have, God says okay, now

we're in deep trouble. Man has eaten from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and he's become like one of us. First of all, this is very strange. He's become Godly? God's worried about His territory over here? He's afraid -- and God's plural? There's lots of problems here. Lots of problems. We'll get to this in a second. But as far as the Tree of Life is concerned -- and then God says, oh boy, I'm very concerned. The people have eaten from this Tree of Knowledge; now I'm really in deep trouble because what's going to happen next? They'll eat from the Tree of Life, and then the implication is?

Participant: They'll become like God.

Rabbi Fohrman: They'll become just like Me.

Participant: The implication here is that if you eat from the Tree of Life, you live forever.

Rabbi Fohrman: Right. That seems to be the sense, that if you eat from the Tree of Life, you'll live

forever. So here what happens is -- this is a very strange verse. God is so scared? God is God. God knows who He is. He's omniscient, He's omnipotent, He's the Creator, He's all of that. Now He's worried that because we eat from two lousy trees, we're going to be just like Him? This is very strange.

But what's really strange is just textually, all of a sudden God's worried that they'll eat from the Tree of Life. If God was so worried about them eating from the Tree of Life, why didn't He command them not to eat from it? When He originally commands, He says -- one second, hold on. You're jumping. Just hold on for a minute.

So what's strange is that if God doesn't like people eating from the Tree of Life so much, so He should have said, don't eat from the Tree of Life. All He says is, don't eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Then, all of a sudden, he wants them out of Eden for the grand imperative that maybe they'll eat from the Tree of Life. But you never said you didn't want them eating from the Tree of Life. It must be --

Participant: Contingent.

Rabbi Fohrman: It's contingent. The only possible answer is that I don't mind you eating from the Tree

of Life, if you haven't eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. Once you've eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, everything changes. Now, I have to kick you out because maybe you'll eat from the Tree of Life.

All right. So there's a lot of questions here, we just have to take it slow. We will get into more of that. We will, in short order -- actually, why don't we do this now. Let's take the opportunity for a moment to just focus on questions having to do with the Tree of Life. We're going to devote the next five minutes to the Tree of Life for a moment.

So question number one is, what is the curious relationship between these trees? Why is it that eating from the Tree of Life is okay, but eating from the Tree of Life after you've eaten from the Tree of Knowledge is not okay, and is so not okay that God has to banish you from Eden? That is problem number one.

Problem number two is a problem we touched on also, which is God's whole tone here is completely inexplicable. God's really worried that we'll become really God-like and we're going to be just like Him? I mean, God knows better than anybody that human beings are never going to be God. So why is it that He seems to be so concerned?

Another problem, getting back to the Tree of Life, and this is what we started this discussion with -- let's get back to our Garden of Eden map. Where's the Tree of Life? In the middle of the Garden. Where's the Tree of Knowledge? We don't know. Okay. Now look at Eve. When Eve talks to the serpent, let's construct the map based upon that. What does Eve say to the serpent? Let's see if we can devise any cartographer --

Participant: She doesn't even identify the tree by name, it's just the tree in the middle.

Rabbi Fohrman: Right. She says there's one tree -- let's read the verse. Chapter 3, Verse 3. "Vatomer

ha'ishah el hanachash mipri etz hagan nocheil," the woman says to the serpent, oh, no, we can eat from trees. "U'mipri ha'etz asher b'toch hagan amar Elokim lo tochlu mimenu v'lo tig'u bo pen temutun," it's just the tree in the middle of the Garden that we can't eat from and we can't even touch lest we die.

What is strange about what Eve says here? Participant: She doesn't identify which tree it is.

Rabbi Fohrman: She only identifies it by place.

Participant: She's implicitly talking about the Tree of Life.

Rabbi Fohrman: She misidentifies the tree, right? Because the tree that they're not supposed to eat -- she

says, the tree that we're not supposed to eat from is the tree that is in the midst of the Garden. Which tree was that? The Tree of Life. But God never said anything about the Tree of Life. It's the Tree of Knowledge that they're not supposed to eat from. So she misidentifies the tree to the serpent.

Fascinating.

Participant: In Verse 16, God tells man le'echol mikol etz hagan which means every tree.

Rabbi Fohrman: You do raise an interesting point, which is that when God says that you can eat from

the trees, what's the language that God uses?

Participant: Mikol.

Rabbi Fohrman: "Mikol etz hagan achol tocheil." Look at the language which Eve uses when she says

we can eat from the trees. What's the language that Eve uses? "Mipri etz hagan nocheil." What's the difference between "mipri etz hagan nocheil," from the fruit of the trees we can eat, and what God said, from all the trees you can eat?

Participant: God says broader, you can (inaudible 00:44:04).

Rabbi Fohrman: The sense of God is much broader than the sense of Eve. God's talking about all the

trees. Eve says, yeah, we can eat from the trees. But the word 'all' got left out. What else is different between God's command and Eve's repetition of it to the serpent?

Participant: The touching.

Rabbi Fohrman: The touching, okay. We have three things that are different. Eve says, we cannot eat

from the tree nor can we touch it, lest we die. What does God say? God says, don't eat from it. He didn't say anything about touching it. So, so far we have three differences between what God said and what Eve said. A, Eve misidentifies the tree. She talks about a tree in the middle of the Garden that she can't eat from. It's not true. That was the Tree of Life that she presumably could eat from. That's question number one. Question number two, Eve talks about not touching the tree. God didn't say anything about not touching the tree. Question number three, "mikol etz hagan." God talks about all the trees of the Garden. Eve just talks about the trees.

There's one other distinction, which is what is the consequence of eating from the forbidden tree? What does God say the consequence is? "Ki b'yom achalcha mimenu mot tamut." Translate that? Ki b'yom, on the day, achalcha mimenu, that you eat from it, mot tamut.

Participant: You're going to get it.

Rabbi Fohrman: You're going to get it. You shall surely die. Mot tamut is the doubled verb. You'll die,

yes, you'll die. Fast forward to Eve. Eve says we can't touch this tree or eat from it, then what does Eve say? Why not?

Participant: Because you might die.

Rabbi Fohrman: Because you might die. What's different about what Eve says and what God says?

Might die, that's much more equivocal in Eve. So we have four fascinating differences -- Participant: She wasn't there when God said it.

Rabbi Fohrman: Interesting, she wasn't even there. She just got this command via telephone from

Adam, right, because she wasn't created yet. Remember, Eve was not created when God made this command, so how did Eve know the command? Either Adam told her, or where was she created from? His rib, right? Before she was created, what were they? They were androgenous. They were Adam-Eve together as one. So maybe she got it by osmosis. She was part of the being that got the command.

But either way, however she got the command, there are four key differences in what she says. You talked about Nechama Leibowitz. Nechama Leibowitz has a fascinating analysis of why those four differences make a difference. If we have enough time at the end of all of this on Tuesday, we'll get back to why those four things make a difference. But for now, just keep those things. Maybe we'll talk about it during recess, if you want. It's a little bit off our topic, but keep those four things in mind.

Okay, let's go back to the Tree of Life. So one thing we know about the Tree of Life is that God never commanded originally for us not to eat from it. For some reason, it was okay for us to eat it originally. Only after we ate from the Tree of Knowledge, it became not okay. Another thing that's interesting about the Tree of Life is that it was in the midst of the Garden. According to Eve, the Tree of Knowledge is in the midst of the Garden. So the real truth is that the Tree of Life is the one in the middle. Eve's perception is that the Tree of Knowledge is the one in the middle, almost as if to say that there's a difference between God's world and Eve's world.

In God's world, the most central tree is the Tree of Life. What's the tree in the middle? It's a big forest, right? The middle is the point that you're focused on, and everything else surrounds that midpoint.

That's the tree. The tree that God focuses on is the Tree of Life. Where's the Tree of Knowledge? It's out somewhere. The way I would read it is that what she focuses on is the Tree of Knowledge. To her, that's the tree in the middle of the Garden. That's the one tree we can't eat. Somebody once said, the one thing that you can do to get your kid to eat from the cookie jar, say that's the tree you can't eat. The tree that I can't eat becomes the focus. That's the one I can't have. All the other trees, yeah, those are the other trees, we can eat from those. But this tree is the focus.

In God's world, that's not the focus. That's the Tree of Life. But interestingly, Adam and Eve were not even told that they even know about the Tree of Life, and presumably if they didn't know about the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Life had some central place in the Garden, if you're God, you've got to figure that sooner or later they're going to eat from it. That can't have bothered God. It only bothered God once they ate from the Tree of Knowledge.

One other thing I want to point out to you on the Tree of Life which I think is fascinating. Someone over here asked that it was strange, what happens -- after they eat from the Tree of Knowledge and then they're banished from Eden, what does God do to make sure that they will never get back here?

Participant: Flaming sword.

Rabbi Fohrman: Who's carrying the flaming swords?

Participant: Cherubs.

Rabbi Fohrman: Cherubs, angels. In the Torah there are different kinds of angels. One of them are

known as keruvim or cherubs. You may have seen Rubens' paintings, cherubs. So it comes from here. The cherubs are two specific types of Biblical angels. So there are two cherubs and they've got their flaming swords. They're going to make sure that nobody is going to make their way back to the Garden of Eden. But not particularly to the Garden of Eden, for a particular reason. Look at that verse which talks about the angels. Exactly what are they guarding the way back to? Not just to Eden, but they're guarding the way back to the Tree of Life, "lishmor et derech etz hachayim," they are watching over the path back to the Tree of Life. Because remember, God's imperative now is they have to be out of here because I can't have them eating from the Tree of Life. That is the focus in God's world.

Let me ask you something else, a little bit of Biblical trivia for you all. Is there any other time in the Five Books of Moses, in the entire Pentateuch, where the angels keruvim appear? Is there any other time in the Five Books of Moses that these particular angels called cherubs appear?

Participant: Yeah, when they're creating the Tabernacle.

Rabbi Fohrman: Excellent, very good. When they're creating the Tabernacle. When they're creating

the Tabernacle, the Mishkan, the sanctuary for God in the desert, there are cherubs. Do you remember exactly where the cherubs appear in the construction? They're on top of the ark in the Holy of Holies. Everyone see Raiders of the Lost Ark? A long time ago. So there you saw it. There was the ark, and then there were the cherubs on top of the ark. They tried to reconstruct it as faithfully as they could. That's the only other time in the Five Books of Moses that we have cherubs. By the way, it's two cherubs, just like over here.

Now, what do you think was in that ark? What was in the ark? The tablets symbolizing the entire Torah, right? This is the blueprint for the entire Torah. It's in the ark. What do you call the Torah every time you go into the sanctuary? "Etz chayim hee l'machazikim bah," it's a Tree of Life to those who hold fast to it. Fascinating. There are two cherubs in the Torah, and each time those cherubs appear, they're guarding the Tree of Life. The first time they appear, they're guarding Tree of Life number one, the original Tree of Life. The second time they appear, they're guarding Tree of Life number two, the Torah.

Now, interestingly, what is the function of each of these cherubs? What are the first cherubs trying to do?

Participant: Keep us out.

Rabbi Fohrman: Keep you out. What are the second cherubs trying to do?

Participant: Bring you in.

Rabbi Fohrman: Bring you in. The second cherubs are "sochechim b'chanfeihem," what they do is they

shelter you with their wings, underneath their wings, within the orbit of the Tree of Life. So fascinating, the same two cherubs that keep you away from one Tree of Life, now give you access to another Tree of Life. Almost like a replacement Tree of Life. But now the question is, what's the deal with this Tree of Life? What explains the connection between Torah as a whole and the Tree of Life in general? It's certainly not the case that by learning Torah, we live forever. It's not that. But in some sense it's a Tree of Life. Somehow, there must be some deep connection between these two things. How does that shed light on what the Tree of Life was about, why God didn't want us to have -- in other words, apparently the same God who doesn't want us to have the first Tree of Life, now says you can have a second Tree of Life, but the first Tree of Life is no longer good for you. How does that help us understand the relationship between these two trees? Yes?

Participant: Where does the idea that the tablets are the Tree of Life?

Rabbi Fohrman: Where does that come from? It actually comes from a verse in Mishlei, a verse in

Proverbs. When you say that on Shabbat and you open the ark, you say "Etz chayim hee lamachazikim bah," you're actually quoting from a verse in Mishlei, a verse in Proverbs where King Solomon describes the Torah in those terms

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Let's move on. Just to take stock. We spent some time talking about the discrepancies between G-d's command about the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life and Eve's rendition of that command to the serpent. We've also talked about some strange things about the Tree of Life. Let's move on and see what other questions we have. Let me pick up the narrative.

Verse 10, "V'nahar yotzei m'Eden," now there was a river going forth from Eden, "l'hashkot et hagan," to irrigate the Garden, "u'misham yipored v'haya l'arba rashim," and from there it went out and it had four, not tributaries, four branches, head waters. What's the problem here?

Audience Member: Why are we bothering with this stuff?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Why do I need a geography lesson? Right in the middle of a very compelling story I've been introduced to these two trees. You can’t have one tree, you can have another tree and all of this and all of a sudden it's time for some geography. We need to know about some rivers. There's this river going here, there's this river going there. By the way, there's lots of gold over there and gold is very good, right? So, we've got four verses and then at the end of all of this, at the end of our geography lesson we have -- "Vayikach Hashem Elokim es ha'Adam vayanicheihu b'Gan Eden l'avdah u'leshamrah," that G-d placed him in the Garden of Eden. What are the rivers doing here? Is that a problem?

Audience Member: There's another problem and that is that when man was kicked out of Eden the universe fundamentally caved because this is physically impossible. Rivers do not diverge. The laws of physics forbid it.

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, good. Actually what you are saying is true and if you look on a map you'll find that it's not true and that these rivers don't come together. The Bible is actually perpetrating a geographical fiction. So, the question is why would you give us a geography lesson when the geography lesson isn't even true on real life according to the map? If it were, you could trace these rivers back to Eden and you could find out where they were, but you can't because in real life the rivers don't meet; these particular rivers don't meet.

The point I want to focus on here is rivers. Why do I need the geography lesson? Basic thing. One second, I need to go on otherwise we are not going to get anything done today so I'm going to short circuit --

Audience Member: Do we get the geography lesson?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Do we get it? We got it here. I did not explain it, no. There's no explanation. These are just the questions. The question is; why the rivers?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? I did not say we're never going to explain it. For the time being we are on

a question collecting hunt. I do this with my kid. We have a little box that's called the question collection; it's just for questions.

Okay, now moving on. We get the creation of Eve. The truth is there is -- we could spend an entire three days just on the creation of Eve. I'm not going to do that. For the time being though, I just want to point out a couple of things. This group had some questions on the creation of Eve, other groups had some questions. Just in terms of simple reading here's the spin I would give it.

One question is; in the middle of the creation of Eve all of a sudden you get G-d creating? Audience Member: Animals.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Animals. G-d says, gee, I've got to have a helpmate for Adam. Next thing we know G-d's off creating animals. What's going on?

Audience Member: (Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: They're prospective help-mates. So it must be they're prospective help-mates. Now, why is Adam naming all of them? Is that a good question? Why is Adam naming all of them? G-d brought them all to Adam, the text says, and Adam named all of them. Let me ask you something. When you name a child, what are you trying to do?

Audience Member: You distinguish him from other children.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right and what do you hope, when you're going through your name book? Audience Member: You're giving him a personality.

Rabbi David Fohrman: You're trying to give him a personality, k'shemo ken hu. You're trying to understand the essence of the child, as best you can, after having gotten to know him for three days. I've tried this with my little one. We had a girl named --

Audience Member: But He already created the animals?

Rabbi David Fohrman: True, that's a good point; we'll get to that in a moment, hold on. So, He creates all these animals. There are two stories, by the way. There's creation story number one, creation story number two. In creation story number one the animals are created in a different order than in creation story number two. How the two stories reconcile is beyond the scope of this discussion, but right now we are in creation story number two.

In creation story number, two G-d decides to create animals as prospective help-mates for Adam. He brings them to Adam and Adam responds by calling them names. Do you know what the Gemara says? The Talmud says that, what does it mean that Adam named them? It means that he was intimate with all

of them and afterwards named them. Why? What does it mean to name something? To name something means to try and describe its essence. Adam tried -- you know the Biblical term for knowledge?

Knowing? There's some connection between intimacy and knowledge.

Adam was trying to understand the animals to see if these were prospective help-mates to him. One by one he rejected all of them and said this doesn't work for me. G-d then went back to the drawing board, said this is not going to work and then created Eve. We then have the creation of Eve.

All of this somehow seems to be -- at least in creation story number two -- seems to be subsumed in the larger narrative of the two trees. It's almost like this is just -- just from the perspective of this narrative, in other words, this is just sort of getting the character slate out. We've got the animals, we've got Eve, we've got Adam and then the next being we get to know is the serpent. Let's pick up from there.

Let me ask you this. If I were going to read to you the story of the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the title I was going to give to the story was; I'm now going to read to you the story of Adam and Eve being tempted in the Garden of Eden, where would you say that story starts? What's the first verse of that story?

Audience Member: The serpent?

Rabbi David Fohrman: The serpent. You would say it's Chapter Three, Verse one, right? "V'hanachash hayah arum mikol chayas hasadeh," right? I would argue with that. I think it's close, but not quite. The truth is that the Torah's chapters are not a part of Jewish tradition. They were given by actually Christian commentators later on. The chapters themselves are not part of Biblical interpretation in the classical way that we have it. I would go back to the last verse of Chapter Two. The last verse of Chapter Two is what? "Vayihiyu sh'neihem arumim ha'adam v'ishto velo yisboshoshu." "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not embarrassed."

If you were trying to prove textually that that was the beginning of the story, how could you prove that that's the beginning of the story? That it starts from that verse and not the verse afterwards, about the snake? I'll give everybody a chance to look. How could you prove that that's really the beginning of the story? What makes you think from the textual perspective that that's probably true?

Audience Member: The word arum is in both sentences.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. We'll get to that in a moment, but that wouldn't convince -- okay, that would show you that they're tied but not necessarily that the story starts there. Yes?

Audience Member: That the key is nakedness later on, the knowledge of good and evil is around nakedness.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, you know it because the whole story is about -- because nakedness has a very strong prominence in the story and where does the story end? What's the end of the story, really?

Audience Member: G-d makes them clothes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: G-d makes them clothes. So, if the end of the story is G-d makes them clothes it sounds like the beginning of the story is; and they were naked. One of the interesting things, I think, in this whole story is to try to explain -- and this I think is one of those elephants in the middle of the room, you probably have it down in your notepads, I would assume some of you, what the devil was nakedness doing in the story? Why is nakedness so prominent in the story? For example, what happens immediately after they eat from the tree?

Audience Member: They become aware.

Rabbi David Fohrman: They become aware that they are naked. Now, does that strike you as a little bit odd? There's this tree, it's called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. If somebody told you he was walking down the street and said, okay, there's the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, people took a bite from it, what do you think is the next thing that would happen? Let's forget the Bible; someone is just spinning a little story. Someone says I've got this Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in my story, I'm going to have my characters eat from it, the next thing that should happen is what?

Audience Member: They'd become (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, they'd become aware of all these different moral dilemmas, they realize that the supreme court is going to debate abortion rights, they realize that there's going to be Brown versus Board of Education, they are consumed with doubt and concern over the great weighty moral issues in the world, right? None of that. What happens? They realize that they're naked. That is a very odd consequence for having eaten from something called the Tree of Knowledge. This is not called the tree of sexuality, it's not called the tree of clothes, it's not called any of this. It's the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that is a strange thing to happen after eating from the tree. Yes.

Audience Member: I also work with teenagers. It reminds of just around the same time that 11, 12 and 13-year olds start noticing that there's a right -- really, it's truly a right and a wrong rather than obeying something, it's just about the time they get real private and scared of having anyone see their body. They get very self-conscious.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, very interesting. The first time that teenagers begin to devote themselves to causes and having an understanding that they're -- sort of an independent understanding, really? That there's a right from wrong as opposed to their parents -- also coincides with an air of sexual awareness. I think that's true and it's a very incisive point and probably sheds a lot of light on this narrative.

The question we might ask is what is it that explains that strange quirk of human nature? Why should those things go together? That would be an interesting thing to think about also in the context of this story?

Audience Member: But there's no real surrounding, it's just a man and his wife. What's there to be

ashamed --?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Exactly, so then what happens? They eat from the tree and they're naked and all of a sudden G-d calls out and says, where are you? What's Adam's response? He hides, right? Now he hides because what?

Audience Member: Because he's naked.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Because he's naked. Now listen to this for a moment. Again, back to the elephant in the middle of the room. Let's imagine that you are a reporter on the spot, this is CBS Evening News, you have an exclusive interview with Adam. He has just eaten from the tree and he is crouching behind a bush, hiding from G-d. Okay? Now he's like naked and he's hiding there and you've got --

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: One second, right, so you've got this microphone and you're talking to Adam and you say Adam, you know, I can't help but noticing. I see this half-eaten apple in your hands and I see you crouching behind this tree. Can I ask you, why are you crouching behind the tree?

Audience Member: Why don't you chew it?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Why don't you chew it? Because I didn't inhale, right. So you say to Adam, why are you crouching behind the tree? So now, forget the Bible, what would you say the logical response of Adam would be?

Audience Member: He's ashamed.

Rabbi David Fohrman: He's ashamed, of what? Audience Member: Having eaten the apple.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Having eaten the apple. Let's elaborate a little bit. You're Adam, I say why are you crouching like this? So you'd say?

Audience Member: I'm ashamed. Audience Member: I screwed up.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Who are you ashamed of? I'm ashamed of G-d. I'm ashamed of what I did in the eyes of G-d. In other words, who am I hiding from?

Audience Member: G-d.

Rabbi David Fohrman: G-d, right. Why? Because I can't bear to look Him in the eye because He asked me to do one little thing, there are all these trees, but there's one little tree that I can't eat from and I had to go and eat from the tree and now I feel very ashamed because G-d is calling out to me, right? That's what you would assume. Does Adam say that? No, Adam does not say that. Adam says the reason why he is hiding is because he is naked. Now we have your question, right? Well, one second, he was always naked. G-d created him naked. Whose he embarrassed of? G-d? G-d says I always created you this way, why are you embarrassed all of a sudden because you're naked?

In other words, what is fascinating about the story is that Adam's perception that he is naked is of such consequence to him now that it dwarves even his natural embarrassment or ashamedness of G-d in terms of the one reason why he is hiding. For some reason nakedness is so important that in his mind that's why he is hiding, even more than because I'm ashamed because I couldn't listen to you. So, nakedness again is very important in the story. We're going to get to your point and then I already know what it is. Yes.

Audience Member: What I noticed about the verse and the verse that follows it is that G-d knows that if Adam knows that he's naked that it meant that he ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which means that Adam, one of the things that he must now know is that his shame over nakedness is associated with having eaten from the --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. So you could read it like that. It might just be that Adam understands that his consciousness of nakedness is a consequence of eating from the tree and to him that symbolizes having disobeyed. It still seems interesting that that is the one thing that everybody is focused on, this nakedness thing. So, remember -- now if you look at the story structurally we have the following. The beginning of the story starts with?

Audience Member: Nakedness.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Nakedness. The end of the story ends with? Audience Member: Clothes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Clothes. The middle of the story -- what's the breaking-point in the story? Eating from the tree and understanding that you're naked. So you have nakedness at the beginning of the story, at the end of the story and right at the breaking-point, in the middle of the story. The truth is there is nakedness at one more point in the story and here is what I want you to do.

If everyone can I would like you to see if you can find a connection between what we said is the very first verse of the story, which is the last verse in Chapter Two and the first verse in Chapter Three about the serpent. I want you to read the last verse of Chapter Two and then the beginning of Chapter Three, the first verse, and see if you can find any connection between those two verses, any strange little connection between those two verses. Don't shout aloud if you find it just see if you can find it. The last verse in Chapter Two, the first verse in Chapter Three.

Now, one second, hold on, no shouting out, I said no shouting out. Now, most of you probably did not find a connection between those two verses. The reason is because most of you were reading those verses in English and when you read those verses in English there is no way to find the connection. Here's the second challenge. If you can read Hebrew, but not understand, in other words, if you can just read the words, but not understand, I still want you to cover up the English and go back and read the Hebrew of the verses and see if you see a word reappearing from the last verse of Chapter Two into the first verse of Chapter Three. Do you see a word that reappears?

If there is a Hebrew reader in the room who reads Hebrew, but does not understand, see if you can identify that word? Is there anybody from that category? That can identify that word? Listen to the verse and I will read it. "Vayihiyu sh'neihem arumim ha'adam v'ishto velo yisboshoshu," and the two people, the man and his wife, were naked and they were not embarrassed. "Vayihiyu sh'neihem arumim velo yitboshoshu." Next verse. "V'hanachash hayah arum mikol chayat hasadeh," and the snake was more cunning than any beast of the field. I'll read it in Hebrew one more time, see if you can hear the world. "Vayihiyu sh'neihem arumim ha'adam v'ishto velo yitboshoshu." "V'hanachash hayah arum mikol chayat hasadeh." Do you hear the word?

Audience Member: Arum.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Arum, do you know what that word means? Naked. The two people are arumim, they were naked, "velo yitboshoshu," and they weren't embarrassed. The very next words that introduce the serpent are "v'hanachash," and the snake, "haya arum" was?

Audience Member: Naked.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Naked, but here it means cunning. You see, in Hebrew arum is a homonym. It can mean cunning, tricky, sly, but it's also the word for naked. Isn't that strange? This nakedness is the main theme in the story and now you're using that word to describe the snake, but you don’t even mean that he's naked, you mean that he's cunning. Why would the Torah use the main motif of the story, nakedness, to describe now the snake? This is very strange, when you don't even mean nakedness, you mean cunning.

Now let's ask the following question. Can you see any relationship whatsoever between the two meanings of this word and how the Torah is using them? On the one hand nakedness, the main theme, on the other hand the snake is arum too, he is cunning as well. Is there any relationship whatsoever between being cunning and being naked?

Audience Member: My chavrusa made a point there. That if you interpreted arum as being hairless because most animals are covered with hair then that's certainly where largely hairless is the snake, he has no hair at all.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's a very good point. I have a general theory --

Audience Member: Also snakes are seen as slimy which is also --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. I have a general theory and it's probably not just mine, I think others use it as well, that oftentimes the Torah will use this device. The Torah will sometimes be using a word to mean something and then it will use that word in a different meaning, but when it uses it in a different meaning oftentimes it wants you to hear the resonance of the primary meaning even when you hear there's a different meaning. So you might suggest that when it says that the snake is cunning it doesn't just mean cunning, it means the snake was cunning, but you're meant to hear the resonance of nakedness as well, which is the main theme of the story.

Now isn't that interesting. If you could describe, as you suggest, one creature from the animal world as being naked wouldn't that be?

Audience Member: The snake.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The snake, right? It is the reptile with no hair, the representative of the reptilian kingdom, with no hair. So it's odd that the snake really is naked, not just cunning. Let me ask you this. Is there a relationship conceptually between the following concepts, the two concepts of the homonym; nakedness, arum; cunning, arum. You're all staring at me like I'm from Mars because there is obviously no connection between these, right? But there is, think about it. Sometimes you have something from the SAT's, they give you two words and they tell you to find the relationship between these two words. Let's do it that way, to find the relationship between the following words, cunning, nakedness.

Audience Member: You strip away all of the subtleties of --

Rabbi David Fohrman: When you're naked, okay. Now what about cunning? Trickery? Audience Member: You're hiding.

Audience Member: You're hiding.

Rabbi David Fohrman: You're hiding? It's just the opposite. To be cunning is to disguise the naked truth, right. Exactly as you say. To be cunning, to be trickery, the essence of what it means to be a trickster is to mask my intent, to have clothes on. To be naked is what you see is what you get. To be naked is to allow yourself to truly see what it is that's on my mind. So fascinatingly, the word that the Torah uses to describe the snake, it uses it in exactly the opposite way, right, that it always uses that word to mean naked. Why would the Bible use the same word to mean the very opposite, one verse after it meant nakedness? Maybe it means like you suggest that the snake was also naked. Maybe the snake was cunning on one level, was masked on one level, but was naked on another level.

Audience Member: So he appeared naked, but he had another agenda.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Or, maybe he appeared cunning, but maybe he was really naked, right. It all

depends on how you look at the snake. Something I'd like you to keep in mind, as we talk about the snake is, was the snake anything other than cunning? Was he also naked on some level, and not just cunning? Was the snake also innocent? Maybe the snake was just telling it like it is. Maybe on one level he was cunning, but on another level he was naked, he was just telling it like it is. Maybe that's a possibility, too. Okay, so we got naked, hold on for one second, we got nakedness all throughout the narrative, plus we've got a naked snake, okay. The next thing I want to do is to take a closer look at the snake, because there's a lot of questions that we need to ask about the snake. That’s going to be the next thing we're going to do, after I get to some of your questions. Yes?

Audience Member: Has the snake eaten from the Tree of Knowledge?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Ah, has the snake eaten from the Tree of Knowledge? Okay, good question, we don’t know, it doesn’t say that it has, right.

Audience Member: G-d said that they would die, or He told Adam that he would die in the day that he ate and the snake says that won't happen and it doesn't happen.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, good. Let's focus now, let's get to your question, Margaret that the -- right now we're going to devote the next 10 minutes to questions about the snake, but first of all let's entertain Margaret's question. Is the snake lying or telling the truth? The snake challenges Eve and says, "lo mot tamutun," it's not true; you're not truly going to die. Is the snake right or wrong?

Audience Member: Right.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Because when they ate from the tree, do they die? Audience Member: No.

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. Okay, how did the snake know this? It's a pretty smart snake, right? So the snake says, you're not going to die now. How is this the case when the snake says "lo mot tamutun," you're not going to surely die, right, is the snake telling the truth? Is the snake telling the truth? Yes. It's also true, though, seemingly the sense of it though is that you're not going to die today, but today -- this is how the Ramban understands it, Nachmanides, you will become mortal. By eating from the tree you will become mortal, now. In other words, there's a difference between a mortal being and an immortal being that difference happens now. The second you eat form this fruit, you change. You become a being that dies, as opposed to a being that doesn't die. But that's not what the snake is interested in.

The snake is interested is, so when are you going to die? Not now, next year, 20 years from now, 80 years from now, "lo mot tamutun," it's not going to happen right away, right. What have you got to worry about? That's way off in the future. True, you become a mortal being, but the consequences of that only become manifest much more at a distance. The snake says you're not going to die; you're not going to die right away. Let's see, is there anything else that's strange about the snake.

Let's read the snake for a second. Here's how it goes, "veyiheyu sheneihem arumim ha'Adam v'ishto v'lo yisboshashu," they were both naked, and nobody was embarrassed, "v'hanachash hayah arum," the snake was naked/cunning, "mikol chayas hasadeh," of all the beasts of the field, "asher asah Hashem Elokim vayomer el ha'ishah," and he said to the woman the following words. Now how do you have these words translated in your English, what does he say?

Audience Member: Yea, has G-d said you shall not eat --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, so now, all right so the (inaudible) says it in archaic language, but what you have is ye. What does ye mean?

Audience Member: Yes. Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, Audience Member: Surely.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Surely. Surely has G-d said? I don’t know what ye means, personally. I'm just asking here. Maybe --

Audience Member: A wake-up call.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, maybe. Let's read it in Hebrew. Here's how it goes in Hebrew. "Vayomer el ha'ishah," he says to the woman, "af ki amar Elokim lo tochlun mikol ha'etz hagan," listen to these words. What does af mean?

Audience Member: Yea. (Laughter)

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Audience Member: Since.

Rabbi David Fohrman: V'af, af al pi. Audience Member: Even though.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Even though, right, so it means but or even, right. "Af ki amar Elokim," if, even if "amar Elokim," G-d said, "lo tochlun mikol eitz hagan," don't eat from the trees of the field. Does he ever finish the sentence? No. The snake's, first snake, here's the brilliant snake. If you were the brilliant snake and you're trying to attempt to seduce this woman into eating from the tree, would you do it this way? What would you say?

Audience Member: You would not say the first thing. You would say G-d told you --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, what are you mentioning that for? That you'd want her to forget about that, right you want her to forget about G-d. Would the first thing that you'd mention is that G-d told you not to? That's how you tempt her? You would seemingly, you know, you'd say look at this tree, isn’t it delicious. You'd say, it's really nice, I can arrange you -- you come up with something, but the first thing she says, remember, G-d is not some abstract character in Eve's world. G-d is Dad, G-d is your father and he said the first thing he says is, even if G-d told you not to eat, the sense of the verse is, so what. It's okay, don’t worry about it. This is a very strange way to begin a temptation. Go ahead.

Audience Member: (Inaudible?)

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, yeah, go ahead.

Audience Member: That's the same way that I read in Chapter 2, which I know you didn’t agree, but it's the same idea in Chapter 2, what he says, "vayetzav Hashem Elokim al Adam lemor mikol eitz hagan achol tochel," that implies they can eat from anything that even G-d can't.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Exactly. So the snake is completely reversing it. Right, because the snake is saying, has G-d really said you can't eat from any tree? What the snake said is actually a mirror image of G-d. G-d says you can eat from all these trees, the snake says, you can't eat from any tree. But the snake is inaccurate. But the sense of the snake is, look at the restriction that's upon you. You can't eat from anything. Don’t you live in a tough world? Eve responds, it's not so tough, I mean, you know, there's only one tree that's in the middle of the garden that we can't eat from, but even that overplays the sense of restriction because in G-d's world there isn't even a tree that's in the middle of the garden that you can't eat from.

Okay, but for the time being, what's strange about what the snake says is this is a very strange temptation even if G-d said so, so what. I mean that's just a really odd kind of thing to say. What else is odd about the snake? Let me tell you a couple of other things that are odd. First of all, the snake itself. What's so different about this snake than most snakes you know?

Audience Member: It walks.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It was a walking-talking snake, right. It's not only a talking snake; it's also a walking snake. How do you know it's a walking snake?

Audience Member: Because He condemns it later to --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Because afterwards, G-d says, you're going to have to crawl on your belly, so you see that before that he was a walking-talking snake. So you've got a walking-talking snake, and you know what's really crazy? It's a walking-talking snake and you're not even supposed to be surprised that it's a walking-talking snake, right. In other words, it's not like the Torah comes in and says, and now

here's the walking-talking snake. It's just like, yeah and the snake said such and such, almost like a fairy tale. Now this is strange because there's one time else in the Torah that you have a talking beast. What is that?

Audience Member: Bil'am's donkey.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The story of Bil'am. The donkey of Bil'am is a talking donkey and there you are supposed to be surprised, but one second, there you are supposed to be surprised that it's a talking donkey, because the only person who's not surprised is Bil'am, but everybody else is absolute -- so why can't Bil'am understand that this is strange? The strange thing here is that this seems to be a snake that you're not even supposed to be surprised that this is a walking-talking snake; this is just like part of the scenery; that is odd, yes?

Audience Member: Well, if I part begin on this juncture between a golden age and all that follows, this is a different kind of animal. It was transformed into what we see as the snake today. It doesn't exist anymore.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, good. This is definitely a different kind of animal. We don’t see any snakes like this now, but this is a naked animal, it is hairless, it is an animal that walks upright, it's an animal that talks, it's an animal that seems to be able to make rational arguments, right. Now there's some discussion in the commentators how literally you take all of this. The Rambam seems to say that the snake didn’t say anything, but Eve, looking at the snake had this dialogue in her mind. But whether or not you accept that or you go with the way the Torah seems to put it out, certainly, the image here, is a strange one. It is an animal that is unlike any other animal that it says that we know of and what it says to Eve is a very strange thing, the temptation that the snake gives is very strange.

Let's move on. Somebody asked here, does anyone else have any other questions about the snake? There were a couple of good questions that I heard going around the room. Yes?

Audience Member: Chapter 1, Verse 26, in Creation, G-d says that man will have dominion over all creatures that creep on the earth. So additional kind of classes to hear what people are hearing --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Ah.

Audience Member: The snake has a reason --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, good. Now you're getting to the snake's motivation. Some people over here, I believe, asked, what was in it for the snake? How come the snake is doing this? You're suggesting, maybe it had something to do with his dominion issue, right, that there is a charge to man that he masters nature and masters animals and now you've got a walking-talking snake that isn't so sure and is willing --

Audience Member: -- and in fact masters.

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- and in fact masters them. Audience Member: -- and in fact does not creep.

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- and in fact does not creep, that's right, okay. So you might ask, what's the snake's motivation? Let me read you a very fascinating Midrash that talks about what the snake's motivation was. I left my Midrash in the car so this is just going to be from memory here.

Audience Member: Is it allowed? It's just a commentary.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's allowed. I'm allowed to do whatever I want. (Laughter)

Rabbi David Fohrman: I just make the rules for you guys. (Laughter)

Audience Member: All of us are constrained (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right, that's right, that's right. Okay, but that's enough. Here's what the Midrash says. I actually did not get involved in a lengthy introduction between the confluence between text and Midrash. It's an important thing to talk about. I don't want to dwell on it now, but often times, text and Midrash can illuminate each other in very interesting ways. When you read Midrashim alone, and -- by Midrash by the way, I refer to one of the oldest known Biblical commentaries on the Bible, goes back some several thousand years, a couple of thousand years, and it sounds like a complete fairytale. I mean Midrash sounds very, very strange. You have Midrashim which make your head spin, but oftentimes the problem is that you're reading the Midrash in a vacuum and you haven't looked at exactly what it's trying to illuminate in the text.

I, kind of, compare it to playing piano. If you've got, you know if you play Old Macdonald Had a Farm, right, you play it on the left hand of the piano, or the right hand. Which is the hand that carries the melody, is the right hand, right? So what's it going to sound like? It will sound like Old MacDonald Had a Farm, right. But let's say you just play the left hand Old MacDonald Had a Farm, what does it sound like? It sounds like nonsense, no it sounds like nonsense, the left hand, just the harmony, the Old MacDonald Had a Farm doesn't sound like anything. That's text and Midrash. Text is the right hand, Midrash is the left hand. When you read text and you read it alone, all by itself without -- just a superficial reading, so you have the basic storyline, you got the bare bones of Old MacDonald Had a Farm, but it's bare bones.

Likewise, when you just read Midrash, if you just pick up a Midrash and you read it through superficially, you're hit with all these stories that sound like they're from left field that's like listening to the left hand of Old MacDonald Had a Farm, it sounds like you're on a left field. What you need to do is

bring the two hands together and then you have a rich sound, then you have a rich sound. The Midrash is almost like harmony to the text. It's picking up on certain themes in the text and bringing them out in richer depth, but it does so using a sort of parable kind of language which needs to be brought back to the text.

So right now, we're going to engage in an exercise of just listening to the left hand. I'm going to just read you this Midrash and it's going to sound really crazy. When you start attaching it to the text, it doesn't sound so crazy anymore. Here's what the Midrash says -- the Midrash, like you, was concerned with what was in it for the snake, what was the snake's motivation? Here's what the Midrash says, here's what the snake wanted to do. The snake's motivation was that he wanted to assassinate Adam and marry Eve. Now, why does this sound so strange? You want to assassinate Adam, he'll have him eat the fruit, he'll die and then he'll marry Eve.

Audience Member: Ethical.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, now, it's not ethical because he's not the father, right, but the -- okay, right, now the problem is this, what will the kids look like? Did you ever think about this? I mean this is a very strange Midrash.

Audience Member: So naked, and so clever, you wouldn’t -- Rabbi David Fohrman: So naked and so clever --

(Laughter)

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. So this is a very strange - -what's the Midrash trying to say here, right. Why is the Midrash saying that that was the snake's motivation? Where is he coming from? I think that it has something to do with what you suggested about the dominion issue, as well. Right? Or what you suggested, excuse me, that Adam has dominion, right. Snake wants something else, he wants to assassinate Adam and marry Eve. Think about that, what's in it for the snake?

Let me share with you something else that's strange about the snake. Take a look at the text for a moment. Is there anything different about how G-d talks to the snake in the wake of eating from the tree and how He talks to Adam and Eve in the wake of eating from the tree. Hold on for a minute, let me give everybody a chance to see it.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Go ahead.

Audience Member: He asks Adam and Eve, why'd you do it? He doesn't ask the snake that. Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, good.

Audience Member: You're punished.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. If you read carefully you'll find a following difference. You will find that when G-d approaches each of the three main characters of the story, the snake, then Eve and then Adam. Is that how it goes? Adam, Eve and then snake. When He talks to the snake, He never asks the snake anything. When He talks to Adam and Eve, when He talks to Adam He says, what have you done?

Everybody's got their chance to explain themselves.

Let's read the text for a moment. "Vayomer" -- 11 -- "mi yagid lecha ki eirom atah?" He says to Adam, who told you that you are naked? "Hamin ha'eitz asher tzivisicha levilti achol mimenu achalta?" have you really eaten from the tree that I told you not to eat from? Now Adam can say something here, right, this is the chance for him to say something, this is the chance for him to give his defense. What does Adam say? "Va'yomer ha'Adam ha'ishah asher nasata imadi hi natna li min ha'eitz va'ochel", yeah, this woman that You gave me, G-d, she's the one that gave me this fruit and I ate. Adam flaunts. G-d is not very impressed and Adam gets his punishments. Then G-d approaches the woman. "Ma zot asit?" he asked, what have you done? Again, He's asked a question, she can respond. "Vatomer," she responds by saying "hanachash hishi'ani va'ochel", the snake tempted me and I ate.

Then we get to Verse 14 and the pattern breaks. "Vayomer Hashem Elokim el hanachash, ki asita zos arur atah mikol habeheimah." He says to the snake, there's no question, because you've done this cursed are you from all of the creatures on the land, "al gehoncha teilech" and all of the curses. He never asked the snake why he did it or asked any command. The snake never got a chance to respond. There's a clear difference between them.

The Midrash picking up on this difference says the following. What explains the difference? Midrash says a fascinating thing. It's a Midrash that doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. Again, like all Midrashim when you first read them I'm just going to tell you what the Midrash says. The Midrash says that G-d said the following. The reason I'm not talking to the serpent, the Midrash says, is because I already know what he's going to say. He's got a lot of lawyer-like excuses up his sleeve. This is what the Midrash says, it uses almost exactly those words, it's almost an exact idiomatic translation. He is a lawyer-like creature and I know what he's going to say.

Now, listen to what G-d said the snake was going to say, okay? He'll tell me the following. You commanded them, G-d, and I commanded them, the snake. Why did they leave your command and follow mine? You commanded them, G-d, and I commanded them, I'm not to blame. Why did they leave your command and follow mine?

What's so strange about this Midrash? Does a snake have a good argument or a bad argument? It's a darn good argument. That's a lawyer-like excuse? That's the only decent argument on the table here. You commanded them and I commanded them, who told them to listen to me, they should have listened to You.

You know, the Talmud uses this argument in a fascinating way. The Talmud in Tractate Kiddushin

actually uses this argument in a legal context. This argument for (inaudible) in the Talmud is known as "divrei harav vedivrei hatalmid mi shomim." This argument went as follows, very briefly. In halachah, in Jewish law, there is a concept of agency. Which means to say that I can point you an agent to carry out certain acts. If I want to go and sell a field I don't have to literally walk up and sell a field to you. I don't have to physically go and sell a field to you. I can designate Bob as my agent to then go and carry out the transaction with you, okay?

However what happens in the following case. Let's say I'm a mafia boss, right? I designate Bob as my agent to rob out Jim, to kill Jim. Now I say, Bob, you're my agent -- and we're going to close that, with this we'll close, I think I'm already five minutes overtime, I apologize -- I say, Bob, you're my agent to go and kill Jim. Okay? Bob then, the hit man, goes and kills Jim.

Under Jewish law, who is responsible for the crime? Is it me, the mafia boss, the sender, or is it the agent? Who is responsible for the crime? Under Jewish law it is the agent and not the mafia boss, okay? Because agency breaks down when it comes to crime. In the words of the Talmud "ein shali'ach ledvar aveirah," there's no agent to commit a transgression. There's only agents for other things, but not agents to commit transgressions.

Do you know why there are no agents for transgressions? Why? Why does agency break down for transgressions? Why not? If agency is a valid legal device why isn't it that the act becomes ascribed to me.

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. Audience Member: (Inaudible) go.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. Because "divrei harav vedivrei hatalmid divrei mi shomim." Because we say to the agent the following. G-d commanded you not to do something and the sender commanded you to do something. Who should you listen to, "divrei harav," the words of the master or the words of the disciple? Who do you listen to when they are in conflict? Obviously, you listen to the words of the master and not to the disciple.

If you listen to the words of the disciple you do so on your own and you are responsible for the action. In other words, these are the words that break agency, it's the snake's argument. The Talmud uses the snake's argument and says, this is the reason why there's never any agency for transgression and the snake is right according to the Talmud and according to common sense. Yet, G-d doesn't even give him a chance to say it. Right? What's going on with the snake?

Here's our problems, a quick round up of all the problems that we have addressed today and tomorrow we begin to put all of this together. Here are the problems that we have on the table. All right? You got a lot to think about tonight. As far as the snake, right, you've got a walking-talking snake and nobody's

surprised. You got the Midrash saying that the serpent's motivation is to kill Adam and to marry Eve. Why? You got no prelude to the snake's punishment. G-d doesn't give him a chance to say anything. Why? He's got a lawyer-like excuse, but his lawyer-like excuse is a great argument. How come G-d doesn't let him say it?

You've got -- going back to our other questions. You've got the whole relationship of the tree of life and the Tree of Knowledge. How do we understand the relationship between those two trees? Why is the Tree of Life identified with Torah? Why are there two sets of Keruvim, one guarding one and allowing us access to one and denying us access to the other? How does that shed light on what the Tree of Life is? Why is the Tree of Life off limits only after we eat from the Tree of Knowledge, but not before we eat from the Tree of Knowledge?

Why do I have a geography lesson of rivers in the middle of this whole story? When the snake says that you would be like G-d he is not lying. G-d Himself, as you said, confirms the snake's words and says, now that you've eaten from the Tree of Knowledge I have to kick you out of Eden because you've become like G-d and now if you eat from the Tree of Life you'll even be more like G-d. What's G-d so worried about, we're really like G-d? Besides, if it really is true that by eating from the Tree of Knowledge we become more G-d like, wouldn't G-d want us to elevate ourselves, doesn't He want mankind to go up the ladder? Let's hear what's He is so worried about, right? Why is He so mad that we're bettering ourselves? Why would G-d put a Tree of Knowledge, of all things, off limits, a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

We have our central question, what is knowledge of good and evil mean? It can't mean a simple moral knowledge, right? We proved it can't mean that. It must mean they had one kind of knowledge of good and evil before eating from the tree and a different kind of knowledge afterwards. The knowledge before we might call knowledge of right from wrong, the knowledge after is a knowledge of good and evil.

How are these two knowledges different? What is the knowledge of one before and one after, how are those different?

The prominence of nakedness in the narrative. What accounts for the importance of nakedness in the narrative? Why is it at the beginning, the middle and the end? Why is the only thing that Adam can get out of his mouth after he's eaten from the tree is the idea that he's naked even more important than the idea that he's embarrassed? And, why is the snake the most naked of all creatures, not just the most cunning of all creatures?

Tomorrow we will come back and put this all together. I will see you then.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Let's move on. Just to take stock, we spent some time talking about the discrepancies between G-d's command about the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life, and Eve's rendition of that command of the Serpent. We've also talked about some strange things about the Tree of Life. Okay. Over these three days, we're looking at the -- we'll see how far we get -- we're looking at the story of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden. The title of this three-part series is, "A Tale of Two Trees." Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and the two big trees. The Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. We're looking at this story and, if we get a chance -- hopefully we will -- we'll also be looking at the story of Cain and Abel. I believe that, to really get this story -- Cain and Abel is really chapter two of this story. It's almost like reading chapter one of a book and not getting to chapter two, if you don't get to Cain and Abel. Even once you've finished Cain and Abel, if you've only read chapter two, chapter three -- and, I think the final chapter of this book -- really is the story of Noah. Once you have that you can really put it all together.

We're not going to be able to get that far, unfortunately, but we will, hopefully, be able to get through much of the first, what I believe, are two chapters. I'd like to go through briefly, to outline briefly, the main points that we made yesterday, in preparation for continuing with them today. If you have your outline here, the first thing we talked about was trying to focus on some of the larger questions in the story. I think it’s always helpful to, in your mind, to prioritize your questions. To have a sense of what's the main thing that's really bothering you. What's a big question, as opposed to a little question. All the questions are important, but it’s important to have that sense of priority to begin with.

In addition, what we really did yesterday was, we really didn't answer anything. We talked about big questions. We talked about little questions. We didn't really begin to give any answers. I think that it's important to separate that process. To first, just question. Get everything on the table that you feel you need to understand and then, after you're done with all of that, you have the keys to begin to put things back together. Questions, I think, begin to answer themselves at a certain point.

The big question we said -- the big elephant in the middle of the room -- in the story of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, is the following. G-d creates Adam and Eve, puts them in the Garden of Eden. Puts them in paradise, there's lots of trees. G-d says you could do whatever you want. There's just one tree that I don't want you to eat from. That is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. That's all we know about it, its name. Then, Adam and Eve, as we all know, don't do as they're told. They eat from the tree and then bad things start to happen. G-d gets angry; all sorts of punishment develop upon them. Ultimately, they're kicked out of Eden.

The main question in the story -- the big question in the story -- I think, is, why would G-d withhold this tree? That's 2A. Why would G-d withhold the tree? Why doesn't G-d want them to eat from it? Of all things, to withhold the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil? Aren't people better off knowing the difference between good and evil? Aren't we nobler for our knowledge of the difference between right and wrong? We don't hold up the imbecilic axe murderer as someone who is the paragon of what it means to be human in an original state. We say that, to have an understanding that there's a difference between good and evil, is part of what makes man a noble creature. Why would G-d want to deny that

from us? Is this a setup?

Maybe G-d wants us to eat from the tree and he's just pretending that he doesn't want us to eat from the tree, but it's really a good tree. That's a possibility, but then we have a rather capricious G-d. What would we think of a parent that does this with their kids? There's the cookie in the cookie jar which is made out of wheat germ and all sorts of good stuff. So the parent, in order to trick the kid, because he really wants the kid to eat it, says you can eat any cookie in the kitchen, but there's this one cookie in the cookie jar you cannot have. The parent's doing it to set up the child.

Now, we might say that's a cute and endearing parenting move, but when the parent jumps on the child, after the child ate from it, and says, and now, all these punishments will devolve upon you. You'll have to work by the sweat of your brow for this. You'll have to have pain in childbirth. You'll have death to everybody and the whole nature of humanity has changed; all of a sudden, what used to be a cute and endearing parenting trick becomes rather capricious. So it’s difficult, I think, to read this story as saying that G-d -- it was just a setup -- G-d really just wanted us to eat from the tree, because G-d's anger in the aftermath of that becomes difficult to understand.

To me, it is easier to read the story that G-d was truly disappointed when we ate from the tree. G-d really didn't want us to eat from it. He was truly disappointed with our having eaten from the tree. If I can, just a very short digression. I think that one of the reasons why people have an aversion towards reading the story this way, that it is more tantalizing, in a way, to read the story as G-d just setting us up and really wanted us to eat from the tree -- is because, if we read it the way I'm suggesting, that G-d didn't want us to eat from the tree, genuinely, then -- oftentimes people tend to look at G-d as less than all-powerful in such situations. Like what? In other words, history really didn't work out the way G-d wanted? We ate from the tree -- he really didn't want that to happen?

I think that that's indeed the case, but I don't think that that makes G-d less than all-powerful. Part of the reality of having human beings in the world is that they have free choice and part of the reality of free choice is that we can disappoint G-d. That it is possible for us, genuinely, to do something that G-d doesn't want us to do. Part of giving people free choice -- you can't have one without the other. You can't have your cake and eat it too. If you're giving people free choice and that is necessary, there must be a possibility of evil. It’s impossible to have free choice without, truly, the possibility for evil.

G-d needs to recuse himself, as it were, and to allow people to do as they will, even if He wouldn't want it that way. By the way, it's the same thing with parenting. That if you're trying to have independent children and allow children to grow up, part of that means, allowing children, at a certain point, to make their own choices and allowing them to disappoint you. If you never truly allow a child to disappoint you; if you always set out their path and there's never any permission, any ability for the child to choose something else then you haven't really fostered an independent being. You've required the child to maintain childlike ties to you their whole life. Part of what it means to raise a child into adulthood, is to allow them the possibility, at a certain point, of saying, look, here's what I want from you, but the choice is yours and I place this choice in your hand.

It's a delicate point at which point you make that -- when you do that. You don’t do that with a three- year-old, you don't do that with a five-year-old. But it's an important point to do, at some point, in a child's development. I think that's what G-d does with giving us free will. If G-d truly doesn't want us to eat from the tree and we have free will to eat it, why, of all trees, would this be the kind of tree he doesn't want us to eat from? Again, if it's the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, then it gives us a knowledge of good and evil. It gives us moral knowledge. That seems to be something that makes us nobler? That was question number one.

Question number two we had, is 2B, which is that the text actually doesn't make any sense. It's a catch 22 because, internally, the text destroys itself. If it's really true, that this is a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, that they didn't have moral knowledge before they ate from the tree, they couldn't distinguish right from wrong, then the text makes no sense, because G-d's reaction to their eating is completely inexplicable. In other words, if it’s true that people didn’t understand the difference between right and wrong, then do they bear any responsibility for reaching to take that apple from the tree? Absolutely not. They didn't know that it was wrong. They didn't know that it's right to obey and wrong to disobey. So then how do we understand why G-d gets so angry afterwards? You can't get angry at somebody who didn't understand right from wrong.

It must be, if G-d got angry at them, that they did understand right from wrong, before they ate from the tree. If so, they already have the knowledge that the tree is supposed to give them before they ate from it, so the text makes no sense. That was our second question, to which we answered the set of questions by the following conclusion; 2C. It must not be that before they ate from the tree they had no moral knowledge and after they ate from the tree, they had moral knowledge. Rather, it must be that before they ate from the tree, they could distinguish right from wrong. What did the tree give them?

The tree gave them something called the knowledge of good and evil, which is different than whatever kind of knowledge before.

In other words, the tree did not give them the ability to distinguish right from wrong, rather, it somehow changed their capacity to distinguish right from wrong. Such that the end product of that change was something called knowledge of good and evil. One might say that before eating from the tree, people had knowledge -- we might call it knowledge of right from wrong, just for argument's sake. After they ate from the tree, something happened, and that knowledge changed, and then there was something called the knowledge of good and evil.

What those two categories are, we have not yet explored, but that's the challenge for today; to try and figure out what that is. What were they like before they ate from the tree, what were they like after they ate from the tree? What exactly was this tree all about; how did it change things? That is the general big question in this story. Yes?

Audience Member: Why did they need to know the difference between right and wrong in order to just simply obey what they're told?

Rabbi David Fohrman: We talked about this yesterday. We had a bit of discussion on this, but I'll

summarize it quickly. We said that it really is I can't have your cake without eating it too. In other words, when I demand obedience from a dog, a dog can be obedient. But we don't generally think of-- at least I don't -- generally think of a dog as a moral agent. It's obedient, so if I punish a dog, it’s not really so much that it's punishment in the same sense that I'd punish a human. Rather, it's that I'm trying to give it positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement, but it's not really punishment; I'm just trying to condition its behavior. That’s not punishment in the sense that when the court says you committed murder and you've done an evil act, we must punish you. That's not just to condition the criminal's behavior.

Punishment does not make sense because you were disobedient in the dog sense of the word. It only makes sense if you were disobedient in the moral sense of the word, if you had a moral sensibility.

Therefore, G-d's act seems to imply that they weren't just like dogs that they can be conditioned to be obedient or not. They understood the moral import of their actions. Otherwise, His anger doesn't seem to make sense. That's what we came out with yesterday.

Okay, this was the big question, but there were a lot of other questions which we then began to entertain. To take you back to the outline sheet. We read the text. We noted that, in the middle of the Garden of Eden story -- by the way, we will not -- unfortunately, we're not going to get back to answer this question, because the answer to this question, which we're about to read, only comes through at the end of the Noah story. I apologize in advance for that.

We asked, why the geography lesson? In the middle of this whole story we have this geography lesson about rivers, and the rivers don't even meet when they're supposed to meet anyway. It just seems completely irrelevant. So we didn't understand why we have that geography lesson. We didn't talk about Eve's names, so I'm going to leave that out. Somebody in the back of the room raised this question.

What does it mean -- I think it was you --what does it mean that they would be like gods, if they ate from this tree? It's very, very strange -- 4A. The snake, when he tempts Eve to eat from the tree, says, eat from this tree, "Vihiyisem k'Elokim yod'ei tov va'ra," you'll be just like G-d, knowing the difference between good and evil.

Now, is the snake lying or telling the truth? We might be tempted to say lying, but we know that he's telling the truth, because G-d himself confirms his words. Later on in the story, at the very end of the story, when G-d expels mankind from Eden, he says I'm expelling you because, "Hein ha'adam haya k'echad mimenu lada'at tov va'ra," now, mankind has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. "v'ata pen yishlach yadav v'lakach gam min ha'eitz ha'chaim v'achal v'chai l'olam," and now, maybe he'll stretch forth his hand and eat from the Tree of Life and he'll live forever. The sense seems to be, he has become godly by eating from this tree and he'll become even godlier if he eats from the Tree of Life.

This is very strange. G-d is really threatened? G-d thinks that we're going to become like him? That seems very odd. Second of all, even if we would assume that G-d is threatened, how does -- and this is 4A3 -- how does the knowledge of good and evil, specifically, make us god-like? In other words, it seems as if G-d is now defining what it means to be god-like. If somebody walked up to you on the

street and said, tell me, what does it mean to be god-like? You just read this story. You would say, having the knowledge of good and evil. That would be the answer.

That's a very strange definition of what it means to be god-like. I mean, I would say, powerful, omniscient, eternal. There's lots of things I can think of what it would mean to be god-like, but this wouldn't be the first thing that would come to mind. Yet, the text tells us, the Torah tells us, that in this context, this is what it means to be god-like. You have a number of problems. Is G-d threatened? Is knowledge of good and evil, specifically, something that would make us god-like? Yes?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) god-like with a small g. Do you mean God-like with a big g?

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, I mean god-like with a small g, actually, but that's a very astute observation. Elokim, the word that's used there, or Elohim, is a generic word for G-d. If you look in the Hebrew, when G-d says, what you will be like, there's many different names for G-d, some of which are specific to G-d, some of which aren't. For example, the word Adonai or Yud-Hei-Vov-Hei, is a name that's specific for G-d. The name Elohim is one of those names which is not. Elohim is actually a generic name that can refer to any powerful being that people believe is god-like with a small g. For example, in the 10 commandments it says, "Lo yi'hyeh lechah elohim acheirim al panai," you should not have any other gods besides me. There, the name is used clearly with reference to gods other than G-d. That's the word that's used here and that's why I use the small g. G-d seems to be saying, you'll be like gods, but not necessarily like me, but like gods with a small g, whatever that means. That's an important point.

Okay, we talked about the Tree of Life. We had a lot of problems with the Tree of Life. First of all, G-d creates two special trees, the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Good and Evil. The Tree of Life he never tells mankind about. The only tree that he mentions to Adam and Eve is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and says that I don't want you to eat from that one. They don't even know, for all we know, that there exists a Tree of Life in the garden. However, the Torah tells us that the Tree of Life is placed in the middle of the garden. The Tree of Knowledge, from G-d's perspective, is somewhere else.

If the Tree of Life is in the middle of the garden and the people don't know it’s there we can presume that, sooner or later, they're going to eat from it. Presumably, G-d has no problem with this, otherwise He would have said, don’t eat from the Tree of Life. But he's perfectly happy with them eating from the Tree of Life. He never says not to; puts it right in the middle of the garden. Well, then how come, at the end of the story, when G-d tells them that I'm expelling them from Eden, He says, I have to expel them, lest they eat from the Tree of Life? You had no problem with them eating from the Tree of Life.

So again, we concluded, must be there's no problem with eating from the Tree of Life originally, before you eat from the Tree of Knowledge. After you eat from the Tree of Knowledge, it must be that now you can no longer eat from the Tree of Life. We see the beginning of an interesting relationship between these trees. Somehow, the Tree of Life is something that's okay to have, but not okay to have once you eat from the Tree of Knowledge. It's very strange why it's not okay to have it, because G-d says, lest you be like gods. Doesn't G-d want us to grow and become more like Him? So why keep a Tree of Life away from us? For some reason He wants to keep it away.

The second point we made with the Tree of Life, is that there seems to be a curious relationship between the Tree of Life and Torah. Specifically, we mentioned yesterday, that we find keruvim, we find angels known as cherubs, that guard the way back from the Tree of Life to make sure we'll never get back to the Tree of Life. The final words in the Garden of Eden story, are that G-d set up these two angels to guard the way back to the Tree of Life. We noted yesterday that there's only one other time in the entire Five Books of Moses that those angels appear; the cherubs appear. The only other time they appear, is over the Ark, in the Tabernacle. When the Ark was set up, over the ark there were two cherubs, same type of angel. What are those cherubs guarding inside the Ark? They're guarding the Torah.

What do we call the Torah whenever you open up the Ark? We say, "Eitz chaim hee la'machazikim ba." You say it's a Tree of Life to those who hold on to it. It comes from a verse in Mishlei, a verse in Proverbs. There seems to be an interesting relationship, perhaps, between these trees of life and these angels. Somehow, thesame angels that guard back the way to the Tree of Life to make sure we can never have access to that tree, allow us access to the second Tree of Life; to the Torah. Somehow, the Torah is a replacement Tree of Life. But then, how is that true? Learning Torah doesn't make you live forever? The original Tree of Life would make you live forever. Exactly how is it that the Tree of Life is a replacement for the first tree? That's a question that we left unanswered.

We have a lot of things to figure out with the Tree of Life also. Why is the Tree of Life permitted at first and restricted later? How does the Tree of Knowledge change things? How do we explain the relationship between the Tree of Life and Torah? Yes?

Audience Member: I wasn't here yesterday morning and I wanted to know if you explored at all, what was G-d's plan then, for Man? If He didn't want him to eat from the Tree of Good and Evil, and He didn't want us to have knowledge, and we were supposed to be able to live forever, what was our existence supposed to be like and what was our relationship with G-d supposed to be like? Is it so radically different from that, because of these events?

Rabbi David Fohrman: That is a question which we need to answer today. That's part of the big question. The way we set up our big question is this. It must be that people have some kind of moral knowledge before eating from the Tree of Knowledge, otherwise, they can't get punished. They have some capacity to distinguish right from wrong. The simple answer to your question is, what was supposed to happen was, they were supposed to use that capacity. The same way that we use our capacity, in a different way, they had some sort of capacity to distinguish right from wrong. They were supposed to use that capacity. Yes, they had the possibility of living forever.

It might be that history would have been very short. G-d gave you one command. You decide to adhere to it. You use your free will to adhere to it. You eat from the Tree of Life. You live forever, end of history. Perhaps, that's a possibility. Fundamentally, we can argue that the same dynamic was in place.

However, what we'll try and explore today is, exactly what the nature of that knowledge was to begin with? What did G-d want from them, specifically, to begin with? How did the Tree of Knowledge change what it is that G-d wants from us and change what kind of people we are? That's today's work.

Yes?

Audience Member: Just wondering if we brought out yesterday, I can’t remember if we did. This problem, which is, before eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, it seems that we were immortal, because part of the punishment of eating from that is, we become mortal. In some ways, its chaim, if it does give you eternal life, is irrelevant (inaudible) to our life?

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't know the answer to that. That's a good question. There seems to be some ambiguity with the immortality thing here. You can question, were they inherently immortal before eating from any of the trees or not? If they were inherently immortal, so then why would they need to eat from the Tree of Life to become immortal? If they were not inherently immortal, then why, before eating from the Tree of Life, did G-d punish them by saying that you're going to die?

The only thing that I can think of is that they were not inherently immortal, and essentially, by banishing them from the Garden of Eden, He was in effect consigning them to death. Because, again, by leaving the Tree of Life in the middle of the garden, it was a foregone conclusion that eventually they eat from it and live forever. By setting up the angels there, they were consigning them to live in a state that they would die. That would be the only solution I would see. That's an interesting question. Yes?

Audience Member: I have a (inaudible) question. As from reading the text, it says Eve gets the trees mixed up. Her subsequent conversation with the serpent, it seems to be talking about the Tree of Life?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Were you here yesterday? Audience Member: Yes, I was.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, we've mentioned this. We talked about this yesterday. My belief is that Eve does not get the trees mixed up. Eve engages in almost like a Freudian slip in referring to the tree. For the benefit of those who were not here yesterday. We know that the Tree if Life is identified as the tree that is in middle of the garden. Again, they were never commanded not to eat from that tree.

However, in Eve's conversation with the Serpent, Eve says, that the tree she's not supposed to eat from is the one in the middle of the garden. So is she misidentifying the tree? Does she not know what’s going on? That's a possibility. What I suggested, as an alternative possibility, is that she is, indeed, referring to the Tree of Knowledge, but what is revealing about the text is that to her, that's the tree in the middle of the garden.

In other words, what tree is in the middle of the garden? Any tree that you pick in a forest is the middle, if that's what you're focusing on. If you take a zoom lens and you focus it on the tree and you pull back from that, that's the tree that's in the middle. That means the tree that you're focusing on. G-d focused on the Tree of Life; for G-d, that was the tree in the middle of the garden. For Eve, the tree in the middle of the garden was the Tree of Knowledge. That's what she focused on and that represented the divergence of focus from G-d's focus. Yes?

Audience Member: Is there any discussion in the tradition as to why these are trees that are embodied with such powers?

Rabbi David Fohrman: There's some question as to whether they were even trees at all, as I mentioned yesterday. The Talmud has various scenarios of what these trees actually were. Some suggest that they were wheat. Others suggest that they were grapevines. I'm sure there's much significance to that.

Here's a point we didn't touch on yesterday and we might as well add it today. Which is that, another thing you have to deal with in the story are the punishments. The punishments seem rather capricious and random. If there's a general principal, I think Rabbi Hollander spoke about it yesterday, of midda k'neged midda, of measure for measure kind of punishment. There's this notion that the punishment has got to fit the crime, in order for our sense of justice to be assuaged. It's very difficult to see how that's true, in this case. The input is we eat from a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. What's the output?

G-d looks at man and says, ah, let's see, what do you do? You're the one who's supposed to earn a living around here. All right, so that's going to be impossible. I'm going to make it very difficult for you to farm. You're just going to have weeds coming up. That's what we'll do for you. And you, woman, you're the one who bears children around here. All right, so we'll make that difficult. We'll make conception difficult. We'll make childbirth difficult. And the snake, we'll make him crawl on the ground, death to everybody, expulsion from Eden all around. Where does the punishment fit the -- they ate from a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; it seems like G-d is just reaching into his grab-bag of tricks and hurling random lightning bolts at everybody. How is it that we understand the connection between the punishments and the crime? That's another issue I think we need to deal with.

Okay, moving to 4D. We talked about the prominence of nakedness in the story. We mentioned that nakedness is something that appears all over the story. The beginning of the story, we said, is in the last verse in Chapter 2. "Ha'adam v'ishto shneihem hayu arumim v'lo yisboshashu." They were both naked and they were not embarrassed. At the end of the story they get clothes. G-d makes them clothes. That's really the end of the story. The midpoint of the story is when they eat from the tree and they immediately understand that they're naked. You have nakedness at the beginning of the story, you have clothing at the end of the story and you have an understanding of the meaning of nakedness right when they eat from the tree.

Nakedness plays a big part in the story. Why is it so significant in the story? Why specifically is the one consequence from eating from a Tree of Knowledge, nakedness? One might think that if you eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, your eyes would be open to a whole new world of moral dilemmas. Something like that, but that's not the case. Instead, your eyes are open to nakedness. But it's not called a tree of sexuality? It's not called a tree of wanton licentiousness? Why is it that nakedness is the direct consequence of eating from the tree?

We mentioned also, in D2, that strangely, nakedness is the reason that Adam hides. One might suggest that if you were the reporter in Eden interviewing Adam, and you ask him why he hides, he might say, I'm hiding because I'm so embarrassed. G-d gave me one command and I couldn't even keep that

command. That's not what Adam says. If you read the text, Adam says, I'm hiding because "Va'ira kee eirom anochi," because I was afraid because I was naked. But he was naked before? G-d created him naked. What's he so embarrassed about? For some reason, that's so significant to Adam, that it outweighs even the embarrassment that he feels. His focus is on nakedness in particular.

Moving further in the curiosity front, we mentioned that even the snake is naked. The snake is described as "arum," as cunning. Yet, we mentioned yesterday, that the Hebrew word for naked is arom.

Immediately after the Torah says that Adam and Eve were naked and they weren't embarrassed, the next words that come from the Torah are "V'ha'nachash haya arum," and the snake was naked too, or the snake was cunning. The word for cunning is the same as the word for naked. "The snake was arom." That's very strange. Why would the Torah use a homonym like this to mean cunning, right after you've used it to mean naked?

We suggested even further, that what's doubly strange is that there seems to be a very interesting relationship between the concepts, the twin concepts of this homonym; the concept of nakedness and the concept of cunning. To be cunning is to be masked, to hide yourself; to be naked is to be exposed. They really are opposites. Why would the Torah use the same word for opposite ideas? Was the snake both at the same time, perhaps? Was he, maybe, cunning on one level and naked on another level? It's a possibility that we raised, but didn't quite get into.

Okay and just finishing up what we did yesterday. We finished our analysis yesterday, our questions yesterday, with taking a closer look at the snake. We mentioned that the snake is very strange on a number of levels. He is a walking, talking, serpent and we are not meant to be surprised by that. In the story of Bila'am we have a talking donkey, but everyone's very surprised by it. In the story of the snake, it just seems like, yeah, that's the way it was back then. We have a walking, talking snake, it seems rather odd.

We mentioned that there's a very strange Midrash that talks about the snake's motivation. The Midrash says what was the snake motivated by? What was in it for the snake? Why was he tempting Eve? The Midrash says, because he had a plan to assassinate Adam and marry Eve. It sounds just chucklingly childish, to assassinate Adam and marry Eve. But this is what the Midrash says, in all seriousness. We joked yesterday, what would the children look like? What exactly did the Midrash have in mind? Why attribute such a bizarre motivation to the snake?

We mentioned that the way the snake tempts Eve is strange. For such a cunning, brilliant, creature, he doesn't seem to come up with a very good temptation. He says; even if G-d said eat from the tree, so what? This is the words out of the snake. This does not seem to be a brilliant tactical move; to mention G-d having put the thing off limits. It's a strange way to tempt Eve. Talk about the deliciousness of the fruit, but he doesn't do that.

Finally, we mentioned that the way that the snake is punished is curiously different from the other creatures in the story. When G-d punishes Adam and Eve, before He just hurls out a punishment, he gives them a chance to defend themselves by asking a question. He says, did you eat from the tree? What

did you do? But to the snake there's none of that. He just launches directly into his punishment. He says, "Al gachon'cha teileich," that you're going to be on your belly. Why is it that the snake is not questioned first?

The Midrash picks up on this and the Midrash, we said, gives a very strange answer to this. The Midrash says, the reason why G-d didn't question the snake is because G-d already knew the snake's answer and he didn't like it. That the snake had lots of lawyer-like excuses, basically, in the words of the Midrash, and G-d wasn't interested in hearing them. Then the Midrash says what the lawyer-like excuse was.

Fascinatingly, the lawyer-like excuse is the only good argument that comes from any of them. The lawyer-like excuse is this. In the words of the Midrash, You commanded them, G-d, not to eat, and I commanded them to eat. Why did they listen to me, they should have listened to you?

That's a very good argument. We noted yesterday that the Talmud, indeed, uses that argument. "Divrei harav v'divrei hatalmid divrei mee shom'in." This is the argument that explains why there is no agency to commit a transgression. If I designate you as an agent to kill Bob, who's responsible for the crime? In Jewish law, the legal responsibility for the crime lies with the agent, not with the sender, why? Because you turn to the agent and say, the agency was invalid; you're not an agent. "Divrei harav v'divrei hatalmid divrei mee shom'in." You say, what, you were following orders? The Nuremberg defense, you got commanded? So what? G-d commanded you too. If the master commands and the disciple commands, then who do you follow, the words of the master or the words of the disciple? If the human being commands and G-d commands, and they're in conflict, who should you follow? You don't follow the words of the person; those words are invalid. You follow the words of the master. There is no agency.

This argument is the argument that the Talmud uses itself with great effect and yet, this is the snake's argument and G-d says I don't want to hear it. Why not? It's a much better argument than Adam makes. It's a much better argument than Eve makes, but G-d doesn't want to hear this. Something strange is going on with the Serpent. That is where we concluded yesterday.

Audience Member: Why does the serpent have knowledge that man doesn't have? Why does the serpent know that there's a Tree of Good and Evil and what will happen to them and what G-d's plan is and why G-d doesn't want them to eat of it? He's a serpent. His final, best creation has no (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, interesting. The snake seems to be more clued in to this whole business of the Tree of Knowledge. Of what it is, what the consequences of eating from it would be and all of that, than mankind is. That's interesting. It's almost as if the snake already has that knowledge, in some way, and therefore knows from experience. That might be the sense that we would get. That's a very good point.

Audience Member: The snake's an agent for G-d.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Clearly, the snake is an agent for G-d. In other words, Judaism rejects this notion of there being an independent devil around. We believe that that's a form of polytheism, to believe that

there is a force out there, which G-d didn't create, that's just an Antichrist, or something like that. That's out there to destroy G-d. Clearly, the snake, on some level, is even G-d's agent. I don't think what the two of you are saying are contradictions. I think it's true that on some level, he is G-d's agent, but I think it's also probably true that he's clued in, that on some level he has the knowledge. We might say how come the snake has this knowledge? Some people asked yesterday, did he eat from the tree? We don't know. It never says that he does, but somehow it seems to inherently have this knowledge. Maybe he can inherently have it and we have to eat from a tree to get to it. That's an interesting possibility. Those are interesting things and we'll get to discuss them in a few minutes. Yes?

Audience Member: Just on the comment before about how did the snake already know or whatever. What I find interesting is the first thing the snake says is a question. So the snake might not really have known anything beforehand, but it was trying to just -- there's something about him that just wanted to engage Eve in dialogue and then, based on her answer, just kind of plays with what she says to create his next information.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true, but the sense of the snake, especially since we're told that he's cunning, seems to be that he has something up his sleeve. It's to the snake's credit in terms of his skill, perhaps, as a tempter, that he allows Eve to respond and then fashions his temptation to fit her response. Instead of trying to impose something on her, he draws her into discussion and then takes it from there. I think that's right. He just asks a question, waits for a response, and then fashions his argument against her response. Indeed, he takes advantage of the various details in her response. For example -- again, this is going to the Midrash -- but the Midrash says that, we mentioned yesterday, that Eve, for whatever reason, inaccurately conveys the original message not to eat from the tree in a number of ways.

One of the ways in which it's inaccurate, is that she suggests to the snake that she's not allowed to touch the tree. She says, "We can't touch it, lest we die." G-d never said anything about touching the tree; he said about eating from the tree. The Midrash says that, you know what the snake did? The snake bumped Eve and pushed her into the tree. He said, see, your fine. The sages also make the point from there, as a lesson to us that you always have to be conscious of the difference between a restriction itself and the fence around the restriction. In other words, what Eve was doing was really creating a fence around the restriction. G-d said I don't want you to eat from the tree, so she made up in her mind that she wasn't even going to touch it.

That's fine. The sages do that all the time. For example, in Sabbath laws, there are various prohibitions that you aren't supposed to do on the Sabbath. The sages said, okay, we don't want you kindling a fire on the Sabbath; we also don't want you to make use of a fire that was already kindled. Even though in Torah law that wouldn't be prohibited, but it's creating a fence around the law. There's nothing wrong with creating a fence around the law, but you have to just understand what the fence is and what's the law. If you confuse the fence and the law, then you're vulnerable to a snake pushing you against the fence and saying, see? Nothing's wrong. That was the problem there.

Okay, any other questions before we move on? Any other points before we move on? I asked you,

yesterday, to jot down any other major questions you had on the story. Are there any major questions or any minor questions which you want to share before we move forward from yesterday's list? I'll give you a second to look that over. Yes?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) question tonight? Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes.

Audience Member: I think a big question for the story, in its original context, but it certainly becomes a big question for us as we start (inaudible) where the story is 3:16. Part of the woman's punishment is that it says her husband will rule over her and exactly what that means and if it, in fact, means (inaudible) --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, we're going to talk about that when we get to Cain and Abel -- hopefully tomorrow. That will become very important, but let's leave that until tomorrow. Okay? We will get to that. Assuming we get to Cain and Abel, we will get to that. Hopefully we will.

I'll even give you some homework for that, if you're interested in doing something tonight. If you just have nothing to do after this whole day of what do you call --

Audience member: We have got to go to your lecture.

Rabbi David Fohrman: After my lecture. If you're lying awake late at night. Look at the Cain and Abel story for those words and you'll find them one more time. Then ask yourself, why are they used again, where they're used? Which words? The words of the punishment to Eve; that your husband will rule over you. That your whole desire will be for your husband, yet he can rule over you. In the Cain story, those words are used verbatim again, except there's no woman in the Cain story. What does that comparison suggest to you; the comparison of those two verses, okay? It'll be very important when we get to the Cain story, but I'm going to leave it until we get to them. We'll compare them and then we'll try to understand them both.

One of you, yesterday, asked the following question. I don't think you asked it out loud, but I heard it come up in one of the groups, so I'm just going to paraphrase it. Somebody asked the question, if you look at the very first question that G-d asked to mankind, there's something very odd about it. He asks a question that He already knows the answer to. What's the first question that G-d asks us? Where are you? Talking to man, he says, where are you? If there's one question that G-d knows, he knows where man is. That's one of the perks of being omniscient. If G-d knows where man is, how come he asks where man is? That seems like an important question.

The Midrash deals with this question in its own peculiar Midrashic way. I'd like to set out that Midrash for you. The Midrash says the following thing. In Hebrew what's the word for where are you?

Audience member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Audience member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: No.

Audience member: Ayekah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Ayekah. Okay? Ayekah. Where are you? All right? Aye kah and you put them together. What does this word remind you of? Right? Say it a little louder.

Audience member: Eichah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Eichah. Does anyone know what the word eichah is? We have a Megillah called Eichah. It's the Book of Lamentations. The Book of Lamentations begins with the word eichah. It's spelled the same way, but it's a different word, and it's a different root. But it is spelled the same way.

Eichah does not mean where are you. Eichah means instead how could it be? "Eichah yashvah vadad," it's the beginning of Jeremiah's lament, look how she sits alone, or literally how she sits alone, referring to Jerusalem, bereft of her children. Everyone has left, the Babylonian exile has -- they've all gone into exile. "Eichah yashvah vadad ha'ir rabasi am hoyesah k'almanah." The city that was so full of people is now like a widow.

The Midrash is intrigued by this similarity between the words, and says the following thing. The Midrash points out a curious parallel. He says if you think about the eichah in the beginning of Lamentations, and the ayekah in the beginning of Genesis, you start to see an interesting similarity. What is it? How are these words used in similar contexts?

Audience member: Rhetorical.

Rabbi David Fohrman: They're both rhetorical. Good. But think about historically what's happening in each situation.

Audience member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: Tragedy. Audience member: You're missing.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. You're missing in Lamentations; how are you missing in Genesis? Let me tell you what the Midrash says. The Midrash says "Adam Harishon tziveiti mitzvah achad," I commanded him one command, and he transgressed, and as a result I was compelled to send him into exile, "v'konanti alav eichah," and I lamented that exile with the word eichah or the word ayekah, where are you. That

was my lament.

Later on, the Jewish people will transgress My commands, I would feel compelled to send them into exile, the Babylonian exile, "v'konanti aleihem eichah," and I lamented for them eichah of the Book of Lamentations. That's what the Midrash says. There is an interesting similarity; there's exile from Eden, there's exile from Jerusalem, both coming with ayekah or with eichah.

Now, the problem is this. It's a nice play of words, but it's not really true because it doesn't say eichah; it says ayekah. It's like close, but no (inaudible). In other words, because grammatically they're not related, ayekah is not grammatically related to eichah, ayekah means where are you, eichah is a different root and it means how could it be, or how.

What I'd like to suggest to you is that the Midrash is saying something much deeper. The Midrash is not simply engaging in a play of words, but there is a real way in which both of these words are laments.

There's a way that they really do mirror each other in a much deeper way.

I want to make that manifest, and what I'd like to do is the following. I'd like to have you guys figure out what ayekah really means. Now, how are you going to do that? You're going to take apart the word, and you know that the root of ayekah, or the where part of it, if you take out the you part, is what? Ayei. Ayei means where. Now, ayei is not the only Hebrew word that means where, there is another one.

What's the other Hebrew word that means where? Eifah. The other Hebrew word that means where is eifah.

Now, in Hebrew, if there are two Hebrew words for where, it must be, I mean, Hebrew is not a redundant language, it must be what?

Audience member: Different.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It must be that there are two kinds of wheres. There's one where that's called ayei, there's one kind of where that's called eifah. Now we just have to figure out how they're different and we'll know what each one really means. Now, how are we going to do that? No dictionaries allowed. If you can't just look it up in a dictionary, how are you going to find out what the difference between these words is?

Audience member: Look up their contexts. Audience member: Appeal to authority.

Rabbi David Fohrman: You are going to look up their contexts. No, you don't appeal to authority. That was the wrong answer. You look up their different contexts. We're going to do that now. What you're going to do is you're going to search your encyclopedic knowledge of Tanach for all the times that ayei appears and all the times that eifah appears.

Now, in case that would take too long, I have in my infinite benevolence arranged on a sheet a number of representative samples from Tanach of each of these, just going through a concordance. I'm going to pass those sheets out to you, and you're going to use your Tanach's available to you, or you're just going to use a little snippet from there and your knowledge of them to proceed.

You're going to go through those and you're going to ask, based upon context,what do I think eifah means and what do I think ayei means. This is part one of your assignment.

For those of you listening to this on tape, here are the various verses that deal with the words eifah and ayei. First we have some examples of eifah. The first verse comes from Genesis Chapter 37, Verse 16, it says "Hagidah na li eifah heim ra'im," tell me please where are they shepherding. This verse was said by Josef regarding his brother's whereabouts. He was asking to find his brothers and he asks "Hagidah na li eifah heim ra'im," tell me please where are they shepherding.

The second verse is in the book of Job, Chapter 38, Verse 4, it is "Eifah hayita beyosdi aretz." G-d's speaking to Job in the final speech of the book, says where were you when I set the foundations of the world? "Eifah hayita beyosdi aretz," where were you when I set the foundations of the world?

The third verse is a verse in the Book of Ruth. It is "Eifah likatet hayom," where did you gather grain today? This is Ruth speaking to Naomi in Ruth, Chapter 2, Verse 19.

Here are some examples of ayei. "Vayigva adam vomot v'ayei," a man dies and then where is he. This is in Job, Chapter 14, Verse 10, "vayigva adam vomot v'ayei?" A person dies and then where is he?

A second example, "Hinei ha'eish v'ha'eitzim v'ayei haseh l'olah," here is the fire, but where is the lamb for the offering? This was Yitzchak to Abraham, ascending the mountain on the way to the Akeidah, to the binding of Isaac. Yitzchak asks his father where is the lamb for the offering, "Ayei haseh l'olah?"

We have number three, "Ayei ha'anashim asher ba'u eilecha," where are the men that have come with you? This is Genesis, Chapter 19, Verse 5, spoken by the mob of the people of the Sodom who have come to Lot, asking for the angels who have come to visit Lot. They don’t know they're angels, they're asking "Ayei ha'anashim asher ba'u eilecha," where are the men that had come to you?

We then have "Ayei hakdeishah hi ba'einayim," where was the harlot who was on the crossroads? This is the messenger seeking to deliver payment to a harlot on behalf of Judah. This is in Genesis, Chapter 38, Verse 21, "Ayei hakdeishah hi ba'einayim," where was the harlot who was in the crossroads?

Finally, "Ayei na eloheihem," where are their gods? This is with reference to idols. It's in Psalms 115, Verse 2, "Ayei na eloheihem," where are their gods?

That is the list of verses that I've compiled dealing with eifah and ayei.

Now let me tell you part two of your assignment. Don't worry. Part two of your assignment is the

following. There is a Midrash that says the following thing about eichah. We're talking about the strangeness of ayekah. I'm sorry to make you crane your necks, I'll just stay here. We talked about the strangeness of ayekah, having a sense of lament. Now let me tell you some strange things about eichah. Eichah's clearly a lament, "Eichah yashvah vadad," look how she sits alone.

I want to read you a Midrash that treats eichah as something that doesn't always have to be a lament. Let me tell you what that is. I'm just going to run over here to get it. The Midrash notes that the word eichah appears various times in Scripture. There's three particular times that it appears. Here's what the Midrash says. The Midrash says "Eichah yashvah," this is the very first Midrash in the Book of Lamentations.

This is what the Midrash says. "Shloshah nisnavu b'lashon eichah," there were three prophets that used the word eichah in their prophesy; "Moshe, Yeshayahu, v'Yirmeyahu." They were Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

Now, Jeremiah's in the Book of Lamentations, that's what we have up on the board.

"Moshe omar," you don't have to write this down, you're going to get it in a handout in a second -- "Moshe omar," when Moses said it, he said it in the beginning of Devarim, in the beginning of Deuteronomy. Interestingly, we read those words on the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av. On Tisha B'Av we read the Book of Lamentations. On the Shabbos before Tisha B'av we always read the beginning of Deuteronomy which has the words eichah in it, as a sort of prelude to Tisha B'Av.

When we read it, if you pay attention to the cantillation, you'll hear that we read it with the trop, with the cantillation of eichah. What did Moshe say? "Eichah esa levadi torchachem umasa'achem v'rivchem." "Eichah esa levadi torchachem umasa'achem v'rivchem." We use the eichah, the sad trop of eichah to read those words. Moses says how can I bear alone all of your "torchachem umasa'achem v'rivchem," all of your arguments and all of your disputes.

The context is that he's recounting that it used to be that he used to judge the entire people himself. Jethro came to him and said this is ridiculous; there are thousands of people here, you're spending your whole day judging, you've got to set up a judicial system that you'll be in charge of. Then what he said at that time was "Eichah esa levadi," how can I possibly judge everybody? I need this judicial system.

That was the first eichah.

The second eichah was Isaiah; "Eichah hoyta l'zonah." Isaiah says lamenting the Jews that they've lived in a time of opulence, and they've become opulent and they've strayed, they're like a harlot that's straying from G-d. He said look at how she's like a harlot.

"Yirmeyah omar" and Jeremiah said "Eichah yashvah vadad," look how the City of Jerusalem sits alone.

Now, noting these particular contexts, Rav Levi says the following, "Omar Rav Levi," mashal what is this like. What are these three prophesies like? "Mashal lematruniya shehaya lah shloshah shushbinin, echad

ra'ah oisah beshalvusa, v'echad ra'ah oisah v'pachdusa, v'echad ra'ah oisah v'nivla." It's an allegory to an aristocratic woman who had three friends. One saw her in her days of tranquility, one saw her in her days of opulence, and one saw her in her days of disgrace, and each one said eichah.

In other words, Moses is the first one, that's in her days of tranquility. Everything's basically fine with Moses in the desert; it's just that there are a lot of people around, so Moses says how can I possibly judge everybody? I can't do it.

Later on, in her days of opulence, when she was in Israel, so Isaiah says ah, you've become opulent, he uses the word eichah. Later on, in her days of disgrace, after exile, Jeremiah uses the word.

Now, the interesting thing about this Midrash is the following, does eichah preserve its meaning in each of these? Apparently not, because the first time Moses uses it, it's not a lament. I mean he's just saying there are a lot of people around and how can I keep track of everybody.

Your assignment is to figure out how eichah really means the same thing in all three of these things. How do all three versions of what the prophet is saying here, how are they really three different levels of eichah? What you see from this is that it's not always a lament, that eichah has a meaning which can transcend being a lament. Its core meaning is X; X is often a lament, but sometimes not. The sometimes not is in the case of Moses, but what is X? What is eichah? What is its core meaning that is sometimes a lament?

You have two assignments; the difference between eichah and eifah, and to help you understand that difference also this Midrash which will help you to find more carefully what eichah is. You're looking for the core meaning of eichah and ultimately that's going to answer why G-d asks a question that He already knows, because He doesn't know the answer to this question. Find yourself a chavrusah, I give you about 15 minutes, come up with a theory and we'll go from there.

All right folks. Eifah and ayei; two ways of asking where, anybody come up with a theory or the beginnings of a theory? I want to rule out -- that's something what we could do also, to rule out possibilities, or we can come up with a theory. Yes.

Brian: It seems like eifah is referring to an exact physical location of someone. At least that's the way it works here, although I don't know if that's exclusive. Ayei seems more along the lines of the question that Hashem asks Adam.

Sometimes, for most of these, the answer is known in the question. In other words it's sort of a rhetorical question. Some of these, where they're asking Lot where are these people are, they've got a good idea where those folks are. When Yitzchak is asking where the sacrifice is, he's got an idea what's going on, what the answer to the question is. It seems like some of these are that way, they're rhetorical questions. The person who is asking the questions, or people asking the questions might know partially of have a clue what the answer is before they're asking.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. An excellent analysis. I'm just going to play devil's advocate with you. Brian's point is this. Brian says that the eifahs all seem very concrete, that the ayeis seem rhetorical and perhaps the questioner knows the answer to many of the ayeis. Can anyone respond to Brian? One second, before giving a different response, respond to Brian. Go ahead.

Audience member: Except that, number two of I is, where were you when I set the foundations of the world, that's not a physical place, it's whether he exists or not.

Brian: Right. I can't deny I had difficulties with that one, because the where could be where are you physically and where are you mentally, or where are you with your consciousness or your essence.

Audience member: Unless it's got to be rhetorical because G-d is asking it.

Audience member: They've known before under II, where was the harlot in the crossroads and he is specifically looking literally for where is she, so that I can give her payment.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. In other words, in 2, 4, in II4, it's clear that he doesn't know where she is. So it’s not really a rhetorical question there. What we could say that as a general rule many of the ayeis seem rhetorical but not exclusively, because 2, 4 is not rhetorical, he doesn't know where she is. But, that's a pretty good start. What do you say, any other thoughts? Go ahead.

Audience member: We also found that to be with the ayeis it's almost a question of there is no answer to it, or it's more of a metaphysical question.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Which one? In ayei?

Audience member: For ayei. The eifah is much more of a physical and the ayei is more of a metaphysical.

Rabbi David Fohrman: We seem to be in general agreement. Let me just hold on for one second, and I'll get right back to you. We seem to be in general agreement that eifah is a simpler question than ayei. We all agree with that?

Audience member: Yes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: In other words eifah, it's easier to define eifah than ayei. Eifah seems to be regular where, where are they, presumably. The ayei seems to be a little bit more difficult. You have a question up in the back.

Audience member: I was thinking about something, that ayei is more like where are you morally.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. In other words that there's an implied moral question, maybe with the harlot there's an implied moral question. That's again a little bit more homiletic in the case of the harlot. I don't know. I'm just going to be really concrete here. A man dies, and then where is he.

Now, I grant you that that's not a concrete question. In other words it's not like I want to know where you are, but it's also not a moral question per se. I will grant you that it's not a regular concrete question, but what we have to try and figure out is what kind of question is it. Yes.

Audience member: Well, all of these seem to be ironic.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Good. All of the ayeis seem ironic, except for the last one. Except for 4. Audience member: No.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Including 4?

Audience member: If it is the person, if we have here an author who is choosing the words, then the messenger is asking the locational question where is the zonah. The author is pointing out that there wasn't any zonah. Similarly, "Ayei ha'anashim asher ba'u," that's ironic because there aren't any anashim, they are malachim.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Very interesting. It's true that ayei seems to be much more associated with irony or can associate itself with irony much more than eifah can. Good. Go ahead.

Audience member: On those two levels also, questions two and three, it's almost like they can have different answers.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Where's two and three? Two and three of what?

Audience member: Of ayei. It's almost a question of what are you going to answer to this question. You could, you know like Avraham could have said it's right here, but you know the answers are come to be a little --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Good. In other words you're saying the answer to eifah is what? Audience member: Concrete.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Concreted, location. The answer to ayei is invariably not location. Even I would argue with 4 -- that 4 is the difficult one, where is the harlot who used to be in the crossroads. That's the sticky one there. The real problem is every theory has to deal with two, four. That's the problem. Yes.

Audience: The thing about 2, 4 is that even though it says where is the harlot, she isn't a harlot. That's ironic.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. That's why it's ironic. That would support your theory that it's ironic. I mean that was a very interesting theory that ayei, from the questioner's standpoint is not as significant as from the author's standpoint who wants you to hear the irony of something.

Audience member: There answers point to that, because they say there's no harlot here, which could mean we haven't seen the harlot that you're asking about or it could mean --

Rabbi David Fohrman: That it wasn't a harlot.

Audience member: We know that, but you don't know that.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Interesting, very interesting. Okay, very good guys. Let me tell you what I think about this, and it incorporates a lot of this, but I think brings one little element in. Maybe I'm wrong, but here are my thoughts on it.

I think that you guys are right that eifah is a simple question, and ayei is not. Eifah is a very simple, concrete question; ayei is not. I agree with you that ayei can easily have ironic overtones, but it's not always ironic. I agree with you that ayei can be a moral questioning, but not always.

Here's what I think the concrete difference is. In other words if you would have forced me, if I was writing a dictionary, and you'd force me to give a definition of each of these two words, how would I define them differently? Here's how I would define them.

Eifah, a simple question where, the answer is poh, or the answer is to give a location. As you suggested you're right, many of the ayeis won't work by giving a location and here's what I think it is.

When Yitzchak asked for example, here's the fire, but where is the lamb for the offering. It's not really a question. I'm not asking; where is the location of the lamb? In other words I'm not asking, you know, gee, is the lamb in your backyard or is the lamb in your car? You need the lamb.

Audience member: He's getting an inkling.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, he's getting an inkling. Audience member: How come there isn't any?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. That's the question. Ayei is how come there isn't any? That's really what ayei is. One is where, a regular where, I want to know the location of the thing. Ayei is, I don't want to know the location of the thing. I'm surprised that it’s not here. Ayei is an exclamation that why isn't it here. Its where is it with an expectation that it ought to have been here. It's almost where did it go, or where have you gone, which often has the connotation of what's happening, because there's an expectation that something's here and it’s not.

Listen carefully. Let's look at the ayeis. "Vayigva adam vayomot v'ayei," a man dies and then where is he. He used to be here, and now he's gone. I've no idea where he is. It's not that I want to know is he in place X, Y, or Z, I'm surprised that he's not here and I'm noting that surprise by saying where is he. I expected he's here and he's not, where is he.

Similarly, "Hinei ha'eish v'ha'eitzim v'ayei haseh l'olah,", here's the fire, Isaac says, but where's the lamb for the offering. In other words there's an expectation that if you're making an offering, so there's a lamb in the offering, but I don't see no lamb, so I'm not interested if there's a lamb in the car, I'm saying how come there's no lamb here. It's not here.

Similarly, "Ayei ha'anashim asher ba'u eilecha," where are the men that have come here before. In other words, the people of Sodom knew that there were people that had come. They had seen them, and now they want to know where have they gone, they're not here anymore, where are they, how come they're not here with you. We want to know where they are.

"Ayei hakdeishah hi ba'einayim,", the messenger knew that there used to be a harlot here, she's not here anymore. Where is she? I have an expectation that she's here, and she's not here.

"Ayei na eloheihem," where are their gods now? In other words your gods ought to be here, if they're real gods they ought to be here showing up, they shouldn't be taking the day off. Where are your gods now?

Ayei is not just the simple where are you; it's the where have you gone. Where are you instead of being here?

Similarly, now think of eichah and ayekah. How are these words similar, eichah and ayekah? Why is ayekah a lament just like eichah is? Think now about what G-d is saying to Adam. We asked a question why G-d asks a question that He already knows the answer to. He knows where Adam is. Now you should be able to understand why He's asking the question.

Audience member: How come?

Rabbi David Fohrman: How come what? What's His real question? Audience member: How come you're not out here?

Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience member: How come you're not out here?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. How come you're not here with Me? Audience member: Fabulous.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The Midrash says, again this, the Midrash paraphrases the question this way, "etmol leda'ati achshov leda'ato shel nachash," yesterday you were here with My mind, right, with My knowledge, now you're with the knowledge of the snake. Where are you instead of being here? You used to be here with Me.

Think about what a lament is. Define lament in the dictionary. Why would I ever lament over anything? Audience member: Loss of something that I had.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. It's this word. It's ayekah. It's where have you gone. You used to be here. I lament that separation, that's what I lament. Well, I lament death, because I'm separated from you.

If you think about why we're so sad about death, you know, you can ask the theological questions, why are we so sad about death? If you believe in the World to Come and you believe that the World to Come is a better place than here, so everybody should be dancing with joy when people die. Why are we sad? What's the answer?

Audience member: For ourselves. Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience member: For ourselves.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah. The answer is it's not because I think you're in a worse place than you were before, it's because I'm separated from you. I really don't care where you are. I know that you're not here and you used to be here, and that's why I'm sad. Its eichah, its ayekah, it's where are you instead of being here, you're not here with me anymore. That's always a lament. That's what the beginning of Eichah is, that's what the beginning of lamentations is. "Eichah yashvah vadad," look how the city sits desolate. All the people who used to be here aren't here anymore. They're gone. It's ayekah.

Audience member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Audience member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. I don't know where they are. I want to know how come they're not here. That's what the lament is.

Audience member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Audience member: Isn't it a why?

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. Yes. It's a why couched in a where. Audience member: It's in a lament.

Rabbi David Fohrman: In a lament. Where are you instead of being here? You used to be here, how come you're not here anymore? That is what G-d is really asking. Think about it now in terms of the Midrash that I gave you on the other side of your page. You now understand what the Midrash is saying with its three levels of eichah. Eichah is not always a lament. What eichah really means, eichah or ayekah, together in a way, one is how could it be, and one is where are you instead of being here. Those are just flip sides of the same coin. Where are you instead of being here is just another way of saying how could it be that you're not here. The how of eichah is very similar to the where of ayekah.

Look at the Midrash. There are three prophets that said eichah. There was Moses, Jeremiah, and Isaiah. Now, Jeremiah and Isaiah are clearly laments, but Moses isn't. What does Moses say? Think again of the double meaning of eichah, not just how could it be, but where are you instead of being here, or a lament at separation. How does that resonate with what Moses was really saying? Look at what Moses is saying there. How does that resonate with the context?

"Eichah esa levadi torchachem umasa'achem v'rivchem." It's a lament of separating. Who's being separated from whom? Jethro comes and he says that you can't do it all yourself, you need judges.

Let me ask you, what's so sad about a bureaucracy of judges judging the Jewish People instead of Moses. Audience member: There's no personal contact with Moses anymore.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Exactly. There's no personal contact with Moses anymore. It's in that sense that it's a separation. It might be a joyful thing, it might be a time of tranquility, it might be a time that baruch Hashem there's so many of you, but what the Midrash seems to be pointing to is the eichah in it

-- but still there's a separation. By putting in a bureaucracy I'm not here anymore, being with you, I'm separated from you, and that's the sense of eichah.

All right. I think we're on the road to beginning the answers to some of our questions. One sense I think we get out of G-d's question is that whatever happened here, whatever it is that happened here, G-d had a sense that you're no longer here with Me. That eating from the tree -- you should have been here, but you're not here with me. That's G-d's question.

Let's continue putting this together by one more piece which is to look at the Tree of Knowledge more carefully, and in particular I'd like to look at the words the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This is part two of putting it together.

We asked what's so special about this tree. Let's try and answer that question now. What's so special about this tree? What's making this tree so special? It's a Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the Eitz Hada'at Tov v'Rah. Let's look at those words da'at tov v'rah.

Let's take the word da'at first. Da'at is commonly translated as knowledge. There are different Hebrew words for knowledge; one of them is da'at. Anyone know what else da'at means in the Torah besides knowledge? What's the first time the Torah uses da'at? Anyone know?

Audience: Sexual intercourse.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Sexual intercourse. When it says that man knew his wife, the Biblical sense of knowing is da'at, "vayeida adam et Chava ishto," Adam knew his wife is the same word as knowledge. Why should that be so? Why should the Torah use the same word for sexual union as it does for knowledge? Why are those ideas linked, how are those ideas linked?

Audience member: Knowing something is uncovering something, and there's a certain intimacy in that.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Good. There can be an intimacy in knowledge. The way I can really get to know something, we almost say, we even say in a non-sexual sense that someone may have intimate knowledge of something, which means that they know it very closely. That would seem to suggest, perhaps -- one might suggest, what's the drive for sexual union? Where does it come from? Is there anything beyond pleasure in that drive? Presumably there is.

Audience member: Peru u'revu.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Is there anything besides having children in that drive? Audience member: Intimacy, closeness.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Intimacy, closeness. Another way of looking at it is knowledge. Which is a sense that why is it that Adam seeks to know his wife as it were, why doesn't he know her already? Because she's female and he's male. Because she's different than he is. It suggests that on some level, one of the deep drives in human nature for intimacy is to really know the other. What kind of knowledge? I don't mean picking your brain kind of knowledge. We can have that knowledge in conversation. No sexual union is required for that knowledge.

Audience member: The experience.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The experience of another, exactly. There's two ways to get to know something. I could know it through my mind, or I can know it through experience. The experiential knowledge is in many ways much deeper. I know it not just through my head; I know it because I know it, because I've experienced it. One of the deep drives for sexual union seems to be to experience the other. To come in contact with the other and thereby experience what femininity is from a masculine perspective or the other way round.

tIn the history of philosophy you have this debate that rages through epistemology between the empiricist and the rationalist basically. Which is that what's the most reliable form of knowledge? The rationalist will tell you that the most reliable form of knowledge is your head, right, that unless it makes sense, so then you don't really know it. You've got to figure it out in your mind, and you've got to have it all logical, and you've got to have it all worked out and then you know it. The empiricist will tell you baloney, you can have a beautiful logical structure, but until you test it in the laboratory until experience

verifies it, you don't have it. The way you really know things is through experience.

What da'at seems to suggest is that there's a type of knowledge that's known as da'at where you come into contact with the thing and you experience it. It's a much more personal knowledge. It's not with the head necessarily, it's experiential.

Now, if that's true, we have here an Eitz Hada'at Tov v'Rah, a Tree of Knowledge, of da'at of tov and rah. That's strange, because most of the time when we think of knowing good and evil, that's a head kind of knowledge; I know this is bad, I know this is good. Your head is involved. What this seems to suggest perhaps, is that an Eitz Hada'at Tov v'Rah is not that kind of knowledge. An Eitz Hada'at Tov v'Rah is an experiential knowledge of good and evil. You know good and evil because somehow you experience it in the inner fibers of you being, not because it's all locked up in your head.

What does this mean? I don't know. I'm just telling you now that the word da'at might suggest that we're talking about something other than a plain, intellectual knowledge. Perhaps we're talking about that there's some experiential element. Now we're laying out some pieces to put together. There's the piece of ayei and ayekah, the sense that G-d had the sense of distance from man in the wake of them eating from the tree. We also have a sense of knowledge being not necessarily intellectual knowledge, but experiential knowledge.

Let's go further and put one third piece in the puzzle. That third piece of the puzzle is the rest of the name of the tree, the Eitz Hada'at of what? What was this experiential knowledge of? Of Tov and rah, of good and evil, let's look at the words good and evil and see what we can glean from that.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The theory that I'm about to give you in putting this all together is not my own. This is the theory of the Rambam, the theory of Maimonides. It was propounded 900 years ago and it's written up in the Sefer Moreh Nevuchim in his classic work on philosophy. Moreh Nevuchim, the Guide to the Perplexed. You can find it towards the very beginning of the Guide to the Perplexed if you'd like to look at it, although it's difficult to read because he uses very Aristotelian language when he talks about this. It's kind of hard to put together, but I'm going to share with you what Maimonides says here. What I'm going to do -- he doesn’t elucidate it that much, I'm going to try and elucidate a little bit, but I'll tell you what he says and we'll try and bring this into the text. Maimonides records that he was once accosted by a fellow who was very troubled by the story of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, because he felt it -- he was bothered by one of the questions, actually that we asked before. He was bothered by the question that, whatever we lost by eating from this tree, didn’t we gain something that was far more important than we lost? We gained the knowledge of good and evil that we didn’t have before. Now we can tell the difference between right from wrong and before we couldn’t tell that difference. Even if we had all these punishments, in the end wasn't it worth it? This is the question Maimonides was asked.

Maimonides answers this person in a letter and he records the gist of this letter in the Moreh Nevuchim. Here's what he says. He says no, we only lost. We didn’t gain anything because before -- again, we had a certain kind of knowledge of good and evil and after we had a different kind of knowledge. Our knowledge before was better than our knowledge afterwards. The post-eating is known as knowledge of good and evil, what was the before eating known as? Remember, this was our big question. Our big question was, what were we like before, what was the knowledge like before and what was it like afterwards? We know what it's like afterwards; it's the knowledge of good and evil. What was it like before, what were the words, what was it called before it was a knowledge of good and evil?

Maimonides suggests new words. You know what he suggests it is? It's the knowledge of emet and sheker, the knowledge of truth and falsehood. Before eating from the tree, moral knowledge was called knowledge of truth and falsehood, not knowledge of good and evil. Now, what Maimonides says here is very strange because we don’t think of truth and falsehood this way. If I ask you -- if I asked you the following question, I said, okay, two plus two equals four. Is that true or good? (Laughter) Right, you'd say true. If somebody said good, you’d look at them funny. Likewise, if I said I am standing in Palo Alto, is that true or good, you would say true, right?

Audience Member: And good! (Laughter)

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, thank you. Okay, thank you very much. Now if I was -- let's say on the other hand I was saying, what do you think robbing a bank is; is robbing a bank bad or false? Most of us would say bad. We would think it funny as false, but Maimonides says that's only because we live in a world after we ate from the tree. Before you ate from the tree, it would make perfect sense to describe those acts as true and false, those moral acts of true and false, not just as good. In other words, the

categories that we now use to evaluate mathematical propositions like two plus two equal four, or propositions like I am sitting here in Palo Alto, could actually be used to describe morality.

Now what did Maimonides mean by this? Let's try and figure out what he means by this, okay. What I'd like to do is go through the following exercise with you. If I can, I'm going to go back to this blackboard if you don't mind craning your necks for a minute. Well, if I do this way, let's see how we can look at these categories of true and false and good and evil, with regard to morality. I'd like you to brainstorm for a minute. We're going to spend the next three minutes on a brainstorming session. Our brainstorming session is going to focus around the following issue. I want you to give me a moral choice or a moral dilemma; give me any moral choice or dilemma that comes to mind, okay. Just brainstorm.

Give me a moral dilemma, or a moral choice that you can think of. Audience Member: To lie or tell the truth.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Give me a specific example. Audience Member: To lie about why I'm late at work. Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay.

Audience Member: When I'm driving. Audience Member: How about --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Hold on, hit and run, driving. Audience Member: Stealing food for your children.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, stealing food for your children. In other words, a very starving person, right, stealing for children. Anything else? Yes.

Audience Member: You know, Holocaust dilemmas like you say to save one person for another like a Sophie's Choice.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, what was the, give -- Audience Member: To save one child and --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, to save one child over another. Audience Member: Kill a screaming baby?

Rabbi David Fohrman: The kill a screaming baby was the you know, when they're on a bus and the

baby will give away your location, the whole bus will get bombed.

Audience Member: I don't know if it really happened? I'm not sure if they made up that story.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, okay, we all set; any others? Now I have conveniently divided these, if you notice, into two groups. Can anyone tell me what the difference between these two groups are? For those of you listening on tape, the two categories here break up as follows. The board is split into two sections, the right side and the left side. On the left side we have the dilemma about lying about being late for work and we also have, do you leave a note for hit and run accident? If you hit a car, do you leave a note?

On the right side of the board, we have, do you steal food to feed your children, if your children are starving? Holocaust dilemmas, do you save one child to -- do you allow one child to be killed to save another? A similar kind of dilemma do you -- if there's a screaming baby that's endangering the lives of a group, is it legitimate to kill the screaming baby? At that point, these are the ones that we have and we will shortly add more to both sides of the list. In other words, let me put it to you this way, in each group there is a tension, right. In other words I have reasons for choosing one; I have reasons for choosing the other. We can visualize these as boxers. There's two boxers in a corner, right, they're each facing off against each other. Let's name the boxer in each corner, okay.

Audience Member: The one in the right side is to save a life for a life.

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, so listen, we didn’t do enough then, let's do more. Audience Member: No, no, no.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Give me two more dilemmas or two more choices. Audience Member: Find a wallet, a lost wallet, to return it.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Find a lost wallet, do I return the lost wallet? Return wallet with all contents, with contents. Okay, give me another one.

Audience Member: To stop the parents from beating a child. Rabbi David Fohrman: To stop a parent from beating a child. Audience Member: And from beating a wife.

Rabbi David Fohrman: And why would he not?

Audience Member: I mean, it's also, is it your business to intervene?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, if that would be the choice I'm willing, I'll take it on those glance. The issue is, do I stop a parent from what I think is harsh treatment of its child or do I say that's in the parent's prerogative? All right, I'll put that over here, stop parent from hitting child. As it is, we would all agree that if the child is being terribly brutalized, you'd step in; we all agree that if it's an innocent slap that you don't step in, right. But there's like a harsh spanking, do you stop a parent from a harsh spanking when it's -- yes?

Audience Member: Lying on your income taxes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, lying on your income taxes. (Laughter)

Audience Member: Or lying to customs.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, same idea. All right.

Audience Member: The one she said about is it always good to tell the truth? My sister put something that was absolutely terrible on her and said so how do I look and I tell her, you look terrible; it's going to hurt her feelings.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, good.

Audience Member: You know, she just spent a lot of money or something and she would be devastated. Rabbi David Fohrman: Tell terrible dress.

(Laughter)

Audience Member: (Inaudible) there will be another one.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, one second. Tell about adultery, tell about infidelity. Tell infidelity. All right, folks, okay very good, we have some very nice examples here. We have the two sides. At this point, the two sides of the list stand as follows. On the left side of the board we have, lie about being late for work, we have, do you leave a note for a hit and run accident, do you lie on taxes, cheat on income taxes, do you return a wallet with the lost contents in it, with the contents in it, if you find it.

On the right side of the list we have, do you steal food for children, would you save one child at the expense of another, would you allow a screaming baby to be killed in order to save the group? Would you stop a parent's harsh treatment of another kid that is, sort of, border line? Would you lie about the beauty of your sister's horrible dress if she asks you about it? Would you tell somebody about another person's infidelity? We have that on the right side of the list.

Do you lie about being late for work? Do you do hit and run driving? Returning a wallet with its contents? Lie on taxes? Do I tell my sister about the terrible dress? Do I steal for children? Do I save one child over another? Do I kill a screaming baby? Do I stop parents from harsh spanking? Do I tell about infidelity?

How might these be two different categories?

Audience Member: The ones on the right seems to be open to debate; some people would feel this way or some people will feel that way.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, good.

Audience Member: Whereas, many people looking at the ones on the left will say there's a clear cut answer.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Excellent. The ones on the right are open to debate; the ones on the left are not, right. Anybody thinking clearly will realize that it's the wrong thing to lie about being late for work.

They'll realize it's the wrong thing to hit and run, they'll realize it's the wrong thing to take the wallet if you have the driver's license in it and you know whose it was and they'll realize it's the wrong thing about lying on taxes.

Whereas, you can argue about whether or not you should tell your sister about the terrible dress, whether or not you should steal for children, whether or not you should favor one child over another, whether or not you should kill the screaming baby, whether or not you should stop a parent from harsh spanking or whether you should tell about infidelity.

Okay, good. That's a very good thumbnail answer to them. Now I want to know -- yes.

Audience Member: We're saying that there's a moral dilemma and if there is a moral dilemma, if it's a dilemma, then you have some choice.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh, you have choice in all of these and that leads me to my next question. If it's true that here the answer is clear and there the answer isn't, then we know over here that there are two boxers that are fighting with each other, right. However, over here, there's only one boxer, everybody knows what the right thing to do is, so what's the other boxer?

Audience Member: Pathetic.

Audience Member: People do those things all the time.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, but we know that people do this stuff all the time, so there must be another boxer. So I'm asking, how are the boxers different here than they are here?

Let's go through some boxers here, right. Tell that terrible dress, give me the two boxers, in one corner I have --

Audience Member: Telling the truth. Audience Member: The truth.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The truth. Audience Member: The truth.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Versus? Audience Member: Feelings.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Versus feelings. So what's more important, truth versus feelings? Stealing for children, what are the two boxers? Dishonesty stealing, versus needing to protect ones family, right, okay. Save one child over the other, one child and the other child. Kill screaming baby, one life, right, my killing one life will that justify saving others, okay. Stop parents from harsh spanking; parents right to privacy and dominion over their own kid, versus my obligation to shelter others from harm. Tell about infidelity; truth versus privacy, one might say.

Over here, we know that there are two boxers and we've identified them very well, right. What are the two boxers over here? One is to lie about being late for work; there is dishonesty on one side, what's on the other side?

Audience Member: Self versus a greater --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. In other words, what's happening over here is that there is a very clear choice, do you understand? Excuse me, over here the truth is very clear, now that's not to say that people can't rationalize --

Audience Member: Right.

Rabbi David Fohrman: For example, hit and run driving, or let's say that you bumped into somebody else's car in the parking lot and you smash in their rear end, but nobody's around. So, do you drive off or not? Everybody might know that the answer is you don't drive off, but if you're talking to somebody who did this, what do they tell you? This is what an insured driver's insurance is for. Right, this is --

Audience Member: If it was done to me --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Or it was done to me, right. Now, they'll give you another side, the other side is a rationalization, right, it's not a real other side. Yes.

Audience Member: I think on the left side, you have a personal consequence for your behavior, you may not like the consequence of honesty, but on the right side, the consequence is also where I'm cleared.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, excellent. Over here, there's an objective dilemma, which is that if you keep myself out of it I still have a dilemma, I just don't know what the right thing to do is. In other words, I have a dilemma about the terrible dress, I have two competing moral demands, one says I should be honest and one says I have to be sensitive to my sister's feelings. So even if I completely recuse my own, personal desires, but I still have a dilemma which I'm struggling with.

Here, stealing for children, even if it's true that I have personal desires, but even if you would take my own personal desires out of the mix I still have a dilemma. I have an obligation as a father or as a mother to protect my children; I have an obligation as a human being not to steal. I have competing moral demands, how do those win out?

Saving one child over another, same thing. Stop parent from harsh spanking, again, I have competing moral demands, one is respecting privacy of the family, the other is sheltering all of humanity. How is it that I reconcile those demands? That is one type of question.

Here I want to know what's the right thing to do and if I get it right, I get it right, if I get it wrong, I get it wrong. Here I do not have any competing moral demands. I have one moral demand and it's very clear. The competing element is my desire, my desire to go in that direction, not because it's right, but because I have a personal desire that it not go that way. I have a desire for money, I have a desire for power, I have a desire to not to be embarrassed, all of that stuff, hold on a second, it's a complicated point, just wait a minute.

What Maimonides suggests is the following, that before eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, people only had these kind of dilemmas, but not these. Let me explain to you what I mean by this. Maimonides suggests that before eating from the Tree of Knowledge, you only had one choice, you had a choice of truth and falsehood and that is the following. What he suggests is, that your choice was, there's God's will out there. God's will is what I am supposed to be doing, right, whatever God's will is. Now, there are times when I'm confused about what God's will is. Anytime I'm competing moral demands, I have a question, what does God want from me? Does God want me to be sensitive to my sister's feelings, or does God want me to be truthful?

In the abstract, God wants both of these, but which does God want more. I have to make a choice, right. So, my choice is, Maimonides says, truth and falsehood. If I get the choice right, then I win, in other words I have identified the truth that in fact is what God wants from me. If I got it wrong then I made a mistake and I got the false answer, it's like a multiple choice test.

Over here, the boxers are very different, the boxers are not competing the moral demands over here; over here it is very clear what is true. In other words, if you would ask, what is it that God wants from you over here? You may not know the answer over here, but you sure, in fact, know the answer over there. Therefore, if your only lens is truth, if the only thing you're looking for is what does God want, if

your only question is, I need to decide what God wants, once I've made my decision about what God wants, the choice is over.

Over here, I have no choice, it's very obvious what God wants, God wants me not to lie about being late to work, God wants me not to hit and run, God wants me to return the wallet with contents, God wants me not to lie on taxes. It's only after eating from the tree, that I begin to have these kinds of questions, because eating from the tree did something, it changed the way I looked at things. It changed my knowledge of right and wrong from a knowledge of truth and falsehood, to a point of where I'm just trying to figure out God's will, to a point where I'm also struggling with my will.

Before, all I wanted to know is what Your will is God, once I've answered the question what Your will is, my choice is over. After eating from the tree, there's another will that makes a difference, too, and that is my will and I can never ever divorce my will and facture it out.

Take a look at this tree for a moment, okay, what was this tree all about? When Eve looks at the tree, she sees the following things. Take a look at the verse, can someone read the verse, she looks at the tree the moment she decides, what is she --

Audience Member: She sees it's good.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, she sees it's good, but there's three ways in which she sees it's good, what does she say? "Vateireh ha'ishah ki tov ha'eitz lema'achal," the woman saw that the tree was good to eat

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Audience Member: Good to -- Audience Member: "V'chi ta'avah "--

Rabbi David Fohrman: "V'chi ta'avah hi le'einayim," that it was desirable to the eye, "venechmad ha'eitz lehaskil" and the tree -- how do they translate that?

Audience Member: Which desired to make red wine.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, but that is not the simplest way to translate those words, "Venechmad ha'eitz lehaskil," is a very strange phrase, let me tell you what it means, literally. What I believe it means literally is, "nechmad," cute or beautiful, the tree was cute or beautiful, "lehaskil," to contemplate. The tree was beautiful to contemplate; it was level number one, "tov lema'achal," good to eat; level number two, desirable to the eye and level number three, beautiful to contemplate. There are three levels of something going on here. What are these three levels of? What things in life are beautiful to contemplate? Give me something beautiful to contemplate.

Audience Member: Sunset.

Rabbi David Fohrman: A sunset. I was off yesterday around sunset time. I took a drive over to Tuscadero Beach and watched the sunset over the rocks. That's beautiful to contemplate, right? There's a level of beauty that tickles you at the level of mind. Sunsets might be one. What are others? Poetry? Poetry is beautiful, but it's not beautiful to look at, it's beautiful to contemplate. Music, good music, classical music; it tickles the mind, it's beautiful to contemplate.

What are these three levels of? Taste, the lowest level. Beautiful to the eye. Every child understands something that tastes good. They can taste something sugary; a lollipop. Did you ever see a child get a lollipop for the first time? They're very excited about it. That is good to taste. But a child can't maturely understand that looking at a rose is beautiful. When a child is nine or 10 years old, or 11, 12, it starts to understand that there's something beautiful about a rose. Gets up to the second level. That's the second level that Eve talks about; not just good to taste, but beautiful to the eye.

Then you can get to the highest level that Eve talked about, beyond the eye, and beyond even taste; the beauty of the mind, the beauty of poetry, the beauty of the sunset, the beauty of classical music. This tree had all three of those things. That's what was so tempting about the tree. This tree was dripping with aesthetics, with aesthetic appreciation. These are three levels of aesthetic desire.

If you ask yourself, why is it that human beings appreciate taste? Let me ask you something, why could a computer never appreciate taste? Let's imagine a computer with taste buds. It could detect something that would be sweet, but it wouldn't really appreciate it the way we would. Imagine a computer that was programmed to recognize roses; it could recognize a rose, but it wouldn't appreciate a rose like we do.

Or imagine a computer that might be programmed to recognize sunset, or to recognize classical music, but it wouldn't appreciate it like we do. What is the computer missing, that we have, that allows us to appreciate all this stuff?

Audience Member: Feelings.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Feelings? Experience? No, it does experience it. It can reach out, let's say, and what if little things touch the rose.

Audience Member: Small things.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Good. It's missing subjective experience. What is it missing? Yes, it's missing humanity. It's missing what makes us human at a deep level. What difference does it make to human? Let me tell you what Edgar Allan Poe says it's missing. Edgar Allan Poe lived before computers, but he had some thoughts about this.

What is it that fires aesthetic appreciation? What makes us appreciate the aesthetic? Tolstoy says the same thing, Edgar Allan Poe says it as well. Here has a little essay, Edgar Allan Poe, called in which he sets out written in 1845 -- it was actually a speech that he hid where he sets forth a theory of poetry. He sets out a theory of what makes poetry effective. He's trying to educate you how to write good poetry. If anybody can educate that, Poe can educate that.

This speech was considered by William Safire to be one of the top 200 speeches or so, ever given in history. He, therefore, included it in his collection Lend Me Your Ears, which is where I saw it.

Wonderful little book, of what he considers the top speeches in history.

This is what Poe says about what fires aesthetic appreciation. What is it that makes aesthetic appreciation come alive? Why is that we can appreciate aesthetics, but no computer ever can? Here's what Poe says. "That pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the beautiful. In the contemplation of beauty, we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation or excitement of the soul, which we recognize as the poetic sentiment, which is so easily distinguished from truth, which is a satisfaction of reason."

Even Poe knows Maimonides difference between truth and falsehood and good and evil. He says there's truth on the one hand, and there's beauty on the other hand. What fires beauty? What fires beauty is pleasure or desire. The pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived and maintained from the contemplation of the beautiful.

What he argues is, is that human passion or human desire, is what makes the beautiful real to us, what makes us want to dive in. If you imagine yourself without desire, without having any desires, then you're really not in a position to appreciate the aesthetic. If you had no desire for tasty food, you can't really appreciate something delicious. If you have no desire for that ethereal beauty of the rose, you can't appreciate what makes that rose so special. And if you've looked at a beautiful scene, a beautiful sunset, and never wanted to dive into that scene and be a part of it, and become part of it, then you can't really appreciate the sunset.

If you don't have that longing in you, if you don't have that sense of desire, then life is flat and you don't have that appreciation of beauty either. What makes beauty come alive is the desire on any level for that beauty.

What Eve sees in the tree is the tree dripping with aesthetic appreciation. The tree, Maimonides suggests, is dripping with desire. What the tree holds is desire. What she can get from the tree is an influx of desire. When she does eat from that tree, when she eats from the tree of desire, her choices change; she no longer, and mankind can no longer make choices that are only between truth and falsehood, between identifying what God wants, because now there's another very powerful element burning within humanity, and that is personal desire, and it can never ever be factored out of moral choice. Now, the left side of the board becomes a possibility too. I can know what God wants perfectly well and not do it, because my desire burns as well. There's another desire to be factored in, not just God's desire.

Here is how the story reads according to Maimonides. Let's go back to the story and read it through. Before I do, by the way, there's a very fine distinction. I just want to make one more point to help make it clear. That is that really Maimonides terms are commonsensical terms. Good and evil really are commonsensical terms for this. Let me give you an example. When a child doesn't like broccoli, what does he say about the broccoli?

Audience Member: Yich.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yich. The broccoli's bad. That's what the child will say. When the child likes macaroni and cheese, what does he say about the macaroni and cheese?

Audience Member: It's good.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's good. What does the child mean when he says the macaroni and cheese is good and the broccoli is bad?

Audience Member: I like it, I don't like it.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. He means the broccoli does not conform to my desire, but the macaroni and cheese does. The words good and bad are words which we human beings use for what conforms to our desire, what conforms to our will.

When we are trying to find out somebody else's will, when I'm trying to identify what you want, and I am perfectly objective, so then if I get the question right, I've arrived at the correct determination of your will; a true determination of your will. Or if I get it wrong, I say I'm mistaken, or I have a false determination of your will. That's a question of true and false. It's very objective. But when the issue's me, when my desire is part of it, then that's good and bad. The good outcome is the outcome that conforms with my desire, the bad is the outcome that doesn't conform to it.

Maimonides says the symbol for that are the words good and evil. The symbol for the injection of desire into moral choice is that choice has now become choice of where you can't factor out desire. Choice is where I always need to consider my will to. I never can just look at God's will. I've always got my own will that's always going to intrude whether I like it or not. All of them true, whether indeed, whether I like it or not.

I can rationalize lying on taxes all I want. I can make it look like a choice between true and false. I can tell you from now until the moon that the government doesn't need the money and it's just the big corporation. But bottom line is what fires that choice is my personal desire, that subjective aspect of it.

Now, what we're going to do in this reading is come back to many of the questions which we entertained earlier today and yesterday and piece them together.

First of all, is anyone completely lost? (Laughter). I hate it when people are completely lost. Audience Member: Is that in the sense of eifo or --

(Laughter)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Very good. Is that in the sense of eifo or ayei; where are you guys? All right.

You know what, I can't read this. Just one Midrash then I'll clarify this point. The Midrash says what's the difference between a tzaddik and a rasha, a righteous person and an evil person? What's the difference between these two? Here's the difference the Midrash says. When they come to the World to Come, God shows everybody his yetzer hara, his evil inclination. The righteous and the evil person have two different perspectives on it. Here are their perspectives.

The perspective of the righteous person, when the righteous person looks at his yetzer hara, he sees a mountain. He says how could I possibly ever have overcome this evil inclination? When the evil person sees his yetzer hara, he sees this little molehill, and he says that, I couldn't even overcome that?

This is very counterintuitive; you'd think it's the other way around. The tzaddik is the one who had the easy time through life; the evil person is the guy with the big evil inclination. He's the one who should be seeing a mountain. Our Sages say it's exactly the reverse.

A friend of mine had a very beautiful p'shat on this Midrash. He had a very beautiful explanation that I want to share with you. He said, you know what the Midrash is really saying? The Midrash is telling you that the difference between the tzaddik and the rasha, the righteous person and the evil person is what perspective they view their evil inclination from. What really is the difference between the evil person and the righteous person? One gave in to desire and one didn't.

If you're looking at desire before you give in to it, if you're looking at the apple pie before you've eaten the apple pie, it looks like a mountain. It is huge. You can see every contra of those apples. You can see the whip cream on top. This is a mountain, it is impossible to resist that apple pie. But once you finish the last crumb and the realization sinks in that that was 793 calories, and you are still hungry, then you say I couldn't resist the little molehill of that apple-pie? That's exactly what you say. Why? Because the desire isn't burning in you anymore. That's the mind game of desire.

When the desire's there, it's a mountain; you can't resist it. But it's a (inaudible), it's not real, it goes away. Once it's satiated, then I see truth and false for what it is, and then I say one second, this was a no- brainer, it's 793 calories, and I'm still hungry. Where was the other boxer? All I see is one thing that made sense, and the other thing there's nothing left.

That is what it means to look at a left-hand side situation, once there's no desire. When you look at that left-hand side situation once there's no desire, there's no choice anymore. Lying on taxes, if I don't have a desire, if it's just a molehill, then obviously --

So, Adam before eating from the tree when he's confronted with any one of those, it's well, obviously; God doesn't want me to do that, so I won't do it. The only choice is the first time.

Here's how the story reads. The story reads as the following. The snake. We had lots of problems with the snake. Let's go back to the snake. Snake shows up and he makes the following really weird argument, "Af ki amar Elokim lo tochlu mikol eitz hagan," even if God said don't eat from the tree, so what? We said that was a very strange argument.

Let me share with you Samson Raphael Hirsch's commentary on this line. This is how he understands it. It fits in beautifully with Maimonides. Samson Raphael Hirsch says the following. The snake was saying, the emphasis is on the word said, "Af ki amar Elokim lo tochlu mikol eitz hagan," even if God said don't eat from the tree, so what?

The implied question is do you want to eat from it? Search your feelings. Do you want to eat from the tree, do you have a desire to eat from the tree? You do. Well, if you do, then even if God said so, so what? Because where does your desire come from, where does your instinct come from, where does your desire to have good things come from, where do you think it comes from?

Audience Member: From God.

Rabbi David Fohrman: From God. He's the one who put it in you. Well, then you have a contradiction. God's telling you one thing, and He's putting an instinct in you that says the other thing. What argument is the snake making? Why is it a snake? Why in particular a snake? And it's a walking, talking snake and we're not supposed to be surprised, why? What is the snake representing here?

Somebody mentioned this yesterday. It's a beautiful idea. He said why do you think it was that Adam and Eve got to this whole creation story? The story is really about the Tree of Knowledge and in the middle of that story Eve gets created and we get this whole long digression about the naming of the animals. Come on, God brings every last animal to Adam to see whether Adam will like it, and then at the end of all the exercise, Adam says he can't find any mate, so God says okay, fine I'll make you a woman.

Now, God wasn't smart enough to figure that out in advance? It had to be trial and error? He really thought that mating with a donkey is going to be the right thing? Is that what it's really about?

Somebody suggested, yesterday, that the snake was asking for a second chance at that argument. But if you listen to what the Midrash is saying that the snake wanted to marry Eve, the Midrash seems to agree. The snake was looking for a second chance, a second crack, at that possibility.

Let me try and make clear what I'm trying to say here. What is the difference between snakes and people or animals and people? Imagine a walking, talking snake. Imagine that you could have a representative of the animal kingdom that could talk. Imagine that you could have a representative of the animal kingdom that could walk. Imagine that you could have a hairless representative of the animal kingdom. All of the other animal kingdom has fur, but there's a hairless one. Starting to look more human, right?

The snake is naked too. The snake is the hairless representative of the animal kingdom. He walks and he talks, he is the most human like of all the animals and now he wants another crack at the chance that everyone else lost with Eve.

What does he really want? What is the difference between humanity and snakes, animals? What would be the difference, if you had a walking, talking snake? Did human rights go to the snake, or is there still a

distinction between humanity and the snake? What's the distinction? Audience Member: A soul.

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. Audience Member: Control.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The distinction is how does God speak to you? Does God speak to you, or does He speak to you through your instinct, or does He speak to you in words, in thought? This is the distinction.

What the snake is saying is the following. The snake is saying, if an animal goes and follows his desire and copulates his will, and he eats at will, is it following the will of God?

Audience Member: Yes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Absolutely. Because God put the instinct in the animal, and there is no more (inaudible) now, He never told the animal do this, do X, Y, and Z. He is following the will of God and you can find Psalms that express this all the time. They talk about nature singing, being aligned with God's will and doing God's will. Why? Because all the river has to do is flow and it's doing God's will. All the animal has to do is act on its instinct and it's actualizing God's will. God put the instinct in the animal.

The snake is naked. The snake is making a very naked argument to Eve. Yes, it looks cunning on the one hand, but it's also very straightforward. The snake is just telling it like it is. He's telling Eve what it means to be an animal. He's saying Eve, I don't know about you, but I'll give you a snake's perspective on your dilemma; even if God said don't eat from the tree, so what? I'll tell you how a snake would look at this.

A snake would say I want to eat from this tree. I am my desire, I feel my passion burning inside me, I feel my instinct burning inside me wanting to eat from this tree, and now what, God's going to tell me something with words that I shouldn't do it. Well, then I have a contradiction. I have a contradiction between what God says and then what God said by planting instinct in me. I don't know about you Eve, but I'll tell you how a snake would resolve that dilemma. He'd resolve that in favor of instinct, because instinct is the primary force of God. That, is how God really talks, and that is how God talks to animals. The snake is naked. He is very straightforward, he's arom, he's just telling it like it is.

Relative to the woman, he's cunning. Why? Because the argument works for snakes, but it doesn't work for people. Because when it comes to people, God does speak in instinct, but God also speaks in voice and you've got to balance instinct and voice. In other words, you've got your instincts, you've got your drives, but God also tells you how to organize them. You've got to listen to them both, and if you only listen to one, if you don't put those in the proper balance, you're in trouble. It's a cunning argument to

Eve, but it's a very innocent argument on behalf of the snake.

You have a walking, talking snake, a snake that looks very humanlike that is making this argument. I think what the Midrash is saying by saying that he wanted to marry Eve, we joked what the children would look like. The joke is the answer to the question. It was because of what the children looked like that he wanted to marry Eve. What was the snake's desire? In other words, what does it really mean?

It means that the animal kingdom, if you could anthropomorphize the animal kingdom and see the animal kingdom looking upon mankind. Remember mankind, somebody said this yesterday also, we got this charge to rule over humanity, you could answer from anthropomorphize your animal kingdom, that the animal kingdom would say who are you to rule over me? The drive of the animal kingdom is the most humanlike creature at the time. The closest to intelligence. The only thing missing is this difference between instinct and voice, then makes the proposition to the human family to join us on our side of the fence.

Audience Member: Be an animal.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Be an animal too. It's wonderful. Follow your desire, that's what it means to live, that's what it means to follow God's will. The snake is not entirely wrong; there is something very powerful about desire. God does speak through desires. It is true that God gave us desires. It is true that if we follow them, as (inaudible) with voice also, we are following God's will. It is true that if you cut off desire you're doing a terrible harm to yourself.

Imagine life without any desire. Imagine thinking that the only way to follow God's will is to stamp out desire and just listen to voice. You're dead. Desire is what makes you live. It's what makes you thrive. It's also part of the way God's talking to you. There is something to be said for the animal kingdom, but there's a balance to meet there, and the snake isn't arguing in favor of balance. He's arguing all for instinct; even if God said so, so what?

Eve looks at the tree. She sees the tree dripping with desire. She says look how powerful you are with desire. I become more powerful. I can elevate that role of desire in my life. I become a much more powerful human being. It's true. You do. Think of how alive you feel when you're gripped in the thrall of desire. If you didn't have it, you'd feel dead. If you could increase your sense of desire, you'd feel alive. The snake's argument is very tempting. You can even argue that you can serve God better to be a more desirous human being. You're a more powerful, invigorated human being.

Eve looks at that desire and she eats from the tree. Immediately, what happens? They realize they're naked. Adam eats from the tree too, and they both realize they're naked. They're embarrassed that they're naked. Before they weren't embarrassed. Why are animals not embarrassed about being naked? You know why? Why are kids not embarrassed about being naked?

I'll tell you why. It's because there is, before eating from the tree, Adam and Eve had desire and they had their heads and they had their mind. They're basically in balance. They were the way God created them.

By eating from the tree, we altered things forever. What we did was we took desire and elevated that and created a greater sense of desire within humanity.

What happens then is that your desire and your capacity to control that desire, your head, become out of balance. It's almost like if you imagine a person driving on his car. He's just bought a new car at the dealer and then he says you know, I don't like my V6 engine, I want a V12 engine. I've seen V12 engines, and I want a V12 engine. He goes and puts in a V12 engine.

Now, that's very nice, but the problem is when you're just idle on a V12 engine, you're going 75 miles an hour, on a Toyota Camry. The problem is that I have the same steering wheel in my Toyota that I used to have when I had the V6 engine. The steering wheel's designed for the V6, not for the V12. Now I'm stuck with a car that's very powerful and I'm stuck with a steering wheel that I have to control this thing with.

That is the dilemma of humanity after eating from the tree. We have the same steering wheel we had before, we have the same head that we had before, but our desires are very powerful. Immediately after eating from the tree, the one consciousness that human beings had was that whoops, I'm out of balance. My desire is very powerful and it can crush me, even.

It's interesting. Animals, their desire is right where it needs to be. There is no head, there is no strings. There's just desire, and that's God's will, and that's the way it's supposed to be. They're not embarrassed of their desire, they're not embarrassed of sexuality, they're not embarrassed about any of that. You can have eight kids, also their desire is right where it needs to be in terms of their head, they can control everything.

However, when you get to a certain stage, the desire starts upping itself within the human condition. There is a natural, perhaps one way of looking at embarrassment of nakedness is a sense that I'm dealing with fire. I'm dealing with something dangerous here. It's even instruct of the words that Adam and Eve used, "Va'ira ki eiram anochi," Adam says I'm afraid, because I'm naked.

It's fascinating. He doesn't even say I'm embarrassed. I'm afraid, he's fearful. What's the difference between fear and embarrassment? Embarrassment is one thing, but fear is the fear of being squashed; I have a sense that there's something big and powerful in this room and it can squash me and that is my desires. It's very powerful.

Then you have the punishments. What are the punishments? Think about it. You've got by the sweat of your brow you will make food. What does that mean? That before then, nature just provided for me and it just provided. That's just the way it was. Now you have to work. Why?

Imagine a factory model car. It's perfectly in line with its factory, it's perfectly harmonious with everything else the maker made. Everything fits, everything drives. But imagine you replace the engine and now this car has to relate to everything else that came out of the factory. It doesn’t relate so well.

Why? Because it is no longer a harmonious cog of this whole thing.

What happens when Adam and Eve, so to speak, change their makeup, elevate that role of desire is that there is a disharmony that now comes into play between their relationship and the rest of God's world. Now man, it's not that nature just provides for me, now you've got to beat your living out of nature. It grinds. You've got to work out of nature. It's not that you just have kids. It grinds. It's a machine. It works, but it grinds. It's literally laborious to push out children. Death, what is death?

Imagine a car that had a perfect engine, factory done, and there was never any friction within its parts. How long will that engine last?

Audience Member: Forever.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Forever. It wouldn't die. Now imagine that you modified a little bit and it grinds. Now it eventually wears out. Everybody wears out, there's death in the world, because there's this grinding also, because of this disharmony.

The snake was the walking, talking representative of the animal world. The closest example that we could have of the animal world. He wanted another crack at it. I think that the reason why -- this just occurred to me last night -- it seems to me that the reason why God, it's in response actually to something somebody said here yesterday, it seems to me that the reason why God gave mankind the ability to mate with all of the animals before representing him with Eve and He didn't just give Eve in the first place. You know why? Because if He just gave Eve in the first place, man would have lost out on the experience of truly understanding that he could never, ever find a mate with an animal.

God wanted mankind to have the experience through his own trial and error. That he has to understand that the animal world is the closest thing in nature to you, but it's not you. You have to understand that the only thing that can really be a harmony with you is an Eve. Nothing from the animal world can work.

The snake may have wanted another chance. The words of the Midrash to assassinate Adam, this is all anthropomorphic, but to assassinate Adam and to live with Eve and to foster a race of snake-men, i.e. to bring humanity to that level that humanity, too, becomes ruled by desire, not ruled by God's voice, but ruled by desire.

What is the punishment of the snake? Remember that God never talks to the snake? Because the snake is right. The snake was the guy with the only good argument. Why? Because as you said, the snake is nothing, but the tool of God. The snake is God said okay, now the animal world is due to pose this question to humankind; will you be like us or will you retain your identity?

What happens is, God then says I don't want to hear your excuses, I know your excuses. You're my agent and they shouldn't have listened to you, they should have listened to Me. They don't listen to you.

What's the punishment, so to speak? The snake didn't have free will, the snake doesn't get punished either. What's the punishment? He loses his legs, he crawls on his belly, now there's enmity between the

snake and the children of Eve. I think what that punishment was, in a certain way, is making it a little bit easier for humanity, because now the snake doesn't look so human anymore. If the snake doesn't look so human, if he crawls on the ground, if he's more visibly an animal, if there's this hatred between --

Audience Member: And he's to be feared.

Rabbi David Fohrman: And he's to be feared, then perhaps mankind, in the future, would be able to understand that his destiny does not lie with the animal world.

We won't have time to do it, but if you go into Noah, if you go in the Cain and Abel story, and also to the Noah story, this motif keeps on appearing more and more. Cain, for example, after his sin, fears that the animals will kill him, apparently. He's concerned that the animals will kill him. It's almost like what is it that makes a human being distinct from an animal? It's his capacity to avoid desires and rule over his desires, but otherwise he's just an animal, and if he's just an animal, the same way they kill each other, they'll kill you. Cain realizes that after the sin the animals might kill him.

Finally, you know what the difference between Noah's world and our world is? We can eat meat after Noah. Before Noah you can't eat meat. Adam was a vegetarian. Noah, you can eat meat. Why?

A friend of mine suggests that again, it's reinforcing that distinction between the animal world -- in the times of Noah again, people got confused and God finally says well, if you can eat them, you'll understand that you can't mate with them and you can't be part of that world. It's a whole different world and that's world is not for you. It's reinforcing that distinction.

God ends the story, and with this we'll end, by giving them clothes. I think that's very beautiful. Despite, it's very fascinating, the Midrash says that the Torah begins with an act of gemillat chessed and ends with an act of gemillat chessed. It ends with the chessed, with the kindness, of God burying Moses, because no one else knew where he died, God buried him. The congruent act to that is the first act of chessed of God, of clothing Adam.

It's such a beautiful Midrash, because if you think about it, it's such a chessed. Imagine having such high hopes for humanity, giving them one choice to just make it or break it, and they dash Your hopes, and they eat from the tree, and they take the temptation, and You exile them from Eden, and you enforce them and all of that, but at the end You give them clothes. What does it mean to give them clothes?

The only reason they needed clothes was because they disappointed God and ate from the tree that He commanded them not to eat from. Nevertheless, God responds and closes the story with an act of chessed; he gives them clothes, an act of kindness. That act of kindness is to give them the tools to live in the new world of their own making. I think that's the greatest act of kindness that you could possibly have.

It's a similar act of kindness with Moses. Moses, too, died because God was disappointed with him. Nevertheless God closes the Torah with his burial, an act of kindness. I think that's the greatest kindness

that you could possibly have. As parents I think it's a model too, that when we have children and we give them free choices, we hope very much that they'll choose in a way that's congruent with our hopes and that's our greatest hope, but there's nothing we could do. We put the choice in front of them and ultimately, the choice is theirs. We have to reconcile ourselves to the possibility; they may not choose the way we'd want them to choose.

How then could we deal with them? Do we cut them off? What then do we do? One possibility, the way to act with chessed, I think, is to be able when they have disappointed us, to give them the tools to live in the world of their own making and to give them clothes to allow them to transition to that new world.

Hopefully, by giving them those tools, we also lay the groundwork for a path that will help them find their way back to us.

Tomorrow we'll look at another chapter in the story, the story of Cain and Abel. I think the story of Adam and Eve and God's first interaction with human beings continues in a very remarkable way in this next story. We'll examine that and its implications for us tomorrow.