I want to come back now and I can sort of wrap up this unit on Judah and Tamar, and just look at its larger significance. I want to do it in the context of a question I asked you way back at the very beginning, at the whole start of this course, which was what was everyone thinking? We asked this question with respect to four people. We asked it with respect to Jacob. What was Jacob thinking of sending Joseph out to such a terrible journey, and all the akeidah parallels and was this a test, a test of loyalty, a test of could Joseph be the real firstborn, Jacob's perspective on the story.

What was Joseph's perspective on the story? What was it like for him to be sent away? This is a question which we haven't quite dealt with yet. I hope to get back to this in upcoming videos. But let's look at what the brothers were thinking. From Jacob's perspective the question was, could Joseph be my firstborn. From the brothers' perspective it wasn't just about the second coat that Joseph had; they were stripping him of both of his coats as if to say almost not only are you not our firstborn, but you're not our brother at all. It's a question of dispossessing Joseph as he's being thrown out of the family, really. Here we saw the expulsion of Ishmael, the parallels to the story of the expulsion of Ishmael. If for Jacob it's an akeidah story, for the brothers it's an expulsion of Ishmael story. They're expelling a brother.

But as we said before, there's an authority problem. I think I said this before. If not, I'll say it now. There's an authority problem. Does Jacob really have the authority to carry out an akeidah? Can an earthly father do that, or can only a heavenly father do that? Perhaps that's the meaning of God taking control of the akeidah story and saying, you're playing akeidah? What happens if Joseph gets lost? We'll really have an akeidah story, and God takes charge of the akeidah story. So it's as if Jacob is going beyond the bounds of his authority and creating this akeidah-like test of loyalty for his son. It's something only a heavenly father can do.

Again, the brothers are going beyond their authority in dispossessing Joseph. That's not something which brothers can do. It's something which really only father could do, and Jacob's not doing it. So the brothers are overreaching their authority, just like perhaps Jacob is overreaching his authority.

By the way, I might as well just get to it now, it helps us understand perhaps Joseph's perspective on the story. You see, there's a tragedy here, a possible tragedy which is going on from Joseph's perspective, which I think can play out as you look at the rest of the story too, which we haven't gotten to yet. But the tragedy is this. You see, we know things that Joseph doesn't know. We know what happens after Joseph is sold into slavery. Joseph doesn't know it.

As Joseph is on his way down to Egypt in the caravan of the Ishmaelites, what he doesn't see is that the brothers have slaughtered a goat and put its blood on a coat and presented it to the father and said "haker na", those fateful words that we'll hear again from Tamar that said, do you recognize this? Jacob said, it's

Joseph's coat. He's dead. Joseph doesn't know that. So if Joseph doesn't know that, think about all Joseph knows. What does the story look like from Joseph's perspective?

Well from Joseph's perspective, here's all her knows. I was 17 years old, I was shepherding with my father's sheep, my father loved me, everything was going well. All of a sudden, I started telling them about these dreams. The last thing I know, I told my father this dream, he was angry at me for the very first time in his life and he said "havo navo ani v'imcha v'achecha l'hishtachavot lecha artza?" He said, are we all going to come bowing to you?

The next thing I know, he's sending me off on this errand to go to Shechem. Shechem, massacres happened in Shechem. I knew it was dangerous and I said Hineini (here I am), akeidah words, as if doom was around the corner. But I was willing to go for my father anyway, trusting that everything would be all right. But it wasn't all right. I got jumped, I got kidnapped, I got thrown in the pit and I got sold, and there was never any search party.

From Joseph's perspective, what does this look like? What is he wondering? The great, unanswered question from Joseph's perspective is, what was father thinking? Was father in on this? Did father put the brothers up to this? Is that why he was angry with the second dream? Then he looks at the history and it's like, well Abraham had two children, and one of them got sent away, Ishmael. Isaac had two children, and only one of them got elected, that's Jacob and Esau is not part of the family anymore. Maybe it's happening again. Maybe I'm being cast away.

In other words, Joseph understands well, perhaps, that this is an expulsion story. What he doesn't know is Jacob's role. Was Jacob part of this? Or perhaps, even if he wasn't part of it, would the brothers have come home -- he doesn't know that they lied to him. For all he knows they came to Jacob and said look, it was either him or us. We got to get rid of him. So the tragedy is maybe Joseph thinks that he is, in fact, dispossessed.

Once you realize that, by the way, a lot of interesting things come into perspective. Maybe, for example, that's why Joseph doesn't write any postcards home. You know, once he ascends to a position of leadership, he still doesn't write any postcards. From his perspective, maybe he's out of the family. Still a good Jew, still a believer in God, still all of that, but not part of the family anymore. Maybe Jacob and his brothers have given up on him. That's the great possible tragedy, which I did say we don't know for sure, but it's a possibility.

To put it another way, even though the brothers may have lacked the authority to throw Joseph out of the family, but it sure looks like a we're throwing you out of the family story. From Joseph's perspective,

he may feel that he really is out of the family, even when, of course, he isn't.

So now the question is, what does God thing of all of this? So God turns to Judah, the leader of the brothers, and the question for him is, can he still be the leader anymore. You, who said haker na to your father, deceiving him, getting Joseph to think he's out of the family, throwing Joseph out of the family without the authority to do so. The question God has is Judah, are you part of the family? You're going to have two sons. Those sons will be taken away from father, just like the sons of Jacob was taken away from him. You'll be in exactly the same position that you put your father in. And in some way, you'll be in Joseph's position, too.

Will you continue to be part of the family of Jacob, you who tried to throw a brother out. If you fail to answer Tamar's haker na, if you fail twice with a haker na, what will happen to your family? Er is dead, Onan is dead, and now the chance for you legacy, the chance for kingship lies with the children in Tamar's womb, Perez and Zerah. If she dies and she goes down in flames, then you're not part of the family, either. There's nothing left of Judah's legacy.

When Judah succeeds, when he answers correctly in the haker na, when he actualizes his name, when he admits, he claws back into the family by the tips of his fingertips. And once that story is over in 38, once he has succeeded in actualizing his name, we continue the Joseph story. Remember, the Joseph story is a triangle, the triangle of vayeiretz. It begins with "ki eireid el beni avel she'olah", with Jacob saying I'm going to go down to my grave mourning Joseph. That leads to Joseph going down to Egypt, "Yosef hurad Mitzrayima", in Chapter 39. It also leads to Chapter 38, "vayeired Yehuda mei'eit echav", Judah going down from his position of leadership over them.

The idea is there are two consequences to the sale of Joseph, and the Torah is telling us about both of them. There are consequences to Joseph; we'll hear about that in Chapter 39. But there are consequences to Judah first, and we hear about that in Chapter 38. That's what the story of Judah and Tamar is doing here.

When we come back, I want to take you into an epilogue to this piece of Judah and Tamar, to what the story of Joseph really means to Judah. We've talked a lot about it now, but we got a fascinating peek into sort of the inner spiritual world of Judah through a very unexpected source; through the Book of Psalms. In our final unit here, I want to come back and I want to show you a fascinating way of reading a psalm that just looks like any one of the other psalms, just regular Biblical poetry. But when you look at it carefully, when you pay attention to the words, you see that you're actually getting a peek into the inner spiritual meaning of all of this. The protagonist who lies so very close to the core of this story, Judah.

Let's come back and take a look at that.

Okay so let's get to this question, how many children and why? In other words, in each story how many children are being lost, why are they lost? Let's talk about Yaakov first in the story of the sale of Yosef. So the most obvious child that Yaakov loses is Yosef himself. Yosef is thrown into a pit by his brothers, why is Yosef lost? Who is Yosef? Well Yosef is the Bechor - at least in Yaakov's eyes, the firstborn. Why is this Bechor lost? Well the chain of events starts with this Ra'ah; Vayaveih Yosef et dibartam ra'ah el avihem - he brings back these bad reports to his father, that stokes resentment, things continue to snowball until the other brothers finally decide that they're going to do away with him. But interestingly, when Yosef is lost, Yosef is only quasi dead, right? There's this sort of perpetual mourning, as we talked about before, as he's not really lost. So, so much for Yosef.

Let's go to the next child who is lost. Who else is lost in the story? Well on chain reaction there's another child lost, and that is Shimon. We talked about this before. Remember when Yosef imprisons Shimon when he sees them, and we talked about why Shimon was imprisoned, why did Yosef imprison Shimon and not the oldest child Reuven? When we looked at the text we saw because when Yosef chooses to imprison Shimon it's right after he hears Reuven say to the brothers in Hebrew - which he understands - I told you; Al techetu bayeled - not to do this sin against the child. So Yosef realizes that Reuven isn't responsible and the next oldest child who is responsible is Shimon. But not only does he realize that, but again as we saw in the text, the brothers are saying to themselves; Asher ra'inu tzarat nafsho behitchaneno eleinu v'loh shamanu - we saw his pain but we didn't listen to him. We talked about not listening and seemingly the seer, Reuven, the one who is named for seeing, saw the pain of his brother, but Shimon, the one who is named for hearing, didn't respond. Why is Shimon lost? Shimon is lost because of a failure to help older brother Yosef out of trouble. So Yosef takes Shimon prisoner.

Finally, the last child that Yaakov stands to lose but doesn't lose, almost loses, is Benjamin. Now if you think about the loss of Benjamin, the possible loss of Benjamin, the language in the text is; Pen yikra'enu ason - I don't want to send him - Yaakov says about Benjamin to his other brothers. I don't want to send him down to Egypt, even though the masked man in Egypt is asking for him, because I worry that he will be lost like the other brothers. What if something will happen to him like happened to Shimon, like happened to Yosef? I've already lost two, I can't lose Benjamin as well.

Now if you think about all of this, all of this resonates in the story of Yehuda and Tamar. How many children does Yehuda lose? Three. In exactly the same circumstances. Think about the oldest child, the Bechor, in Yehuda's case it's Er, how come Er is lost? Well; Vayehi Er bechor Yehuda rah b'einei Hashem - he does Ra'ah, just like Yosef; Dibartam ra'ah el avihem. And, as we talked about before, just like Yosef was quasi dead and there's perpetual mourning, so too, Er, the Awake One, quasi-dead, perpetual mourning, Tamar never gets over the loss of Er, she's always wearing these clothes of mourning. Now, just as Yaakov lost Shimon, the second child, in a chain reaction over the loss of Yosef, over a failure to show loyalty to an older brother, how come Onan is lost? Onan is lost for exactly the same reason. Lost because of failure to help older brother in trouble. G-d didn't like what Onan did, Onan did not take care of Er, would not have a child to perpetuate the name of Er, so he gets lost too.

Finally, there's this third child, which doesn't get lost, but might get lost and the father is worried that

he's going to get lost like the others. Even in Hebrew, just like the language over here was; Pen yikra'enu ason, listen how similar this is; Yehuda; Pen yamut gam hu k'echov. I don't want to allow - he says to himself - Shelah to be taken by Tamar lest he die like his other brothers, like Onan and like Er.

Father worries he will be lost like the other.

So look at what happens, I mean, it's exquisite. Let me get rid of some of this ink so you could just see it. It's literally - it's like the same thing. Everything that's happening in this story is happening in this story. Yaakov loses two children, fears he's going to lose his last to this masked man. Yehuda loses all these children, fears he's going to lose this last to this masked woman. If we just build this out, and look at the whole story, we can actually put the whole story together and what's really happening, fascinatingly, is that Yehuda is finding himself in exactly the same position that he put his father in, in the previous story.

Let's look at it. What did Yehuda really do in the sale of Yosef? Here's what he did. So there's a whole chain reaction. Yehuda deceived his father, in doing so he was disguising what really happened to Yosef, and in doing so he used a goat, slaughtered a goat, put the blood on a coat, stripped his brother of a coat. In doing so, caused his father unremitting anguish over a son who is only quasi dead. Remember, unwittingly they make it worse for Yaakov, because Yosef isn't really dead, Yaakov can never get over the loss.

After this, in chain reaction, Yaakov suffers the loss of a second son Shimon, why? Perhaps over a failure to show loyalty to the first son who was lost. Then Yaakov seeks to safeguard his only remaining son, which in this case is Binyamin, from who? A disguised person who is really the person he's looking for all along, which is Yosef. He doesn't realize that the masked man in Egypt is really a good guy, is really Yosef. So he's somehow shooting himself in the foot, safeguarding his only remaining son. Of course, little does he realize that by keeping Binyamin from going to this masked man who happens to be Yosef in Egypt, he's actually extinguishing the only hope that he has of redeeming his actual lost son.

So the position which Yehuda put himself, his father in, is this terrible position where he loses all of these children and the father is too pained and it's too difficult for him to be able to let go of his last son, in which case he would get everyone back. Because if you think about it, if he would just allow Binyamin to go he would get everyone back. Because when Yosef really finally meets up with Binyamin he reveals himself and Yosef comes back and Shimon gets back.

Well this entire same thing is happening in the next story. Let's just color code it and you'll see. Let's look at the story of Chapter 38. In the story of 38 Tamar deceives her father-in-law - if Yehuda deceives his father in this story, this time Yehuda is the victim of what he did to his own father, he becomes the victim of a deception at the hand of not a child, but a child-in-law. Yehuda deceives his father disguising what really happened to Yosef, this time she disguises her identity. In this story Yehuda used a goat, in this story she asks for a goat but there's no goat, Yehuda doesn't have one, it's dead, that's why he doesn't have one, it got killed in the last story. Remember how Yosef got stripped of a coat here, this time Yehuda gets stripped of a coat. Remember how he caused his father unremitting anguish over a son who is only quasi dead? Now he suffers a loss of a child who is quasi dead, who can come back if only the

right elements come into place, if only Yibum takes place he can come back, Er is Awake - the night of the living dead. Remember how he caused Yaakov to suffer the loss of a second son Shimon, over a failure to show loyalty for a son who was lost? He now loses a child, Onan, over a failure to show loyalty to Er. Same thing. I mean, he's been put in exactly the same situation by G-d, and it's almost like G-d is saying to Yehuda, this is what you do to his father, what happens if you get put in the same situation?

Will you be able to crawl out of the situation you put your father in?

It continues. Not only does Yehuda lose two children, he's about to lose a third child Shelah, he doesn't want to let Shelah go. Same language; Pen yikra'enu ason - lest something to happen to him, just like; Pen yamus gam hu k'echov - just like; Pen yikra'enu ason. So he's safeguarding his only remaining son Sheilah just like Yaakov did, and in doing so he's shooting himself in the foot, he's trying to shield him from - in this case from a disguised Tamar who is really the person he's looking for all along, just like Yaakov was trying to shield Benjamin from a disguised Yosef who was really the person he was looking for all along. Of course, little does Yehuda realize that in doing so, in shielding Shelah from Tamar he's actually doing a disservice to himself, he's shooting himself in the foot, he's extinguishing his only hope of redeeming Er. Because if Shelah goes to Tamar he gets everyone back, he gets Onan back, he gets Er back, through the Yibum that would take place through Shelah.

So what happens is, is that Yaakov is in exactly, in exquisitely, the same position. In losing two children and losing a third to the masked man, if only he would realize who the masked person really is.

We asked before, what was everyone thinking? What was G-d thinking? Well, perhaps we get the answer in Chapter 38. G-d was saying, you did this to your father? What if you're put in the same position that you put your father? Can you get yourself out of that position? The rest of the story of Yehuda and Tamar is the story of how Yehuda gets himself out of that position. The answer is, yes, he can get himself out. And how he gets out has dramatic ramifications for the rest of the story of Yosef. Let's take a look at that in the next video.

Okay, looking at the larger significance of the story of Yehuda and Tamar, what we really need to ask is, in the larger picture what really is at stake in the story? What I mean by that is, what's in it for Yehuda? What will Yehuda lose if he fails? The story in the end goes well, Yehuda gets everything back, but if he doesn't get everything back, he doesn't get his collateral back, if in the end Tamar is condemned to death and Tamar dies, what does he lose?

To answer that I think we need to come back to the Rashi that we began with, that Rashi at the very beginning that seems to be explaining only one sentence of the Yehuda and Tamar story, but I think it's actually explaining the whole story. Let's get back to the Rashi. Remember Rashi's theory; Vayehi ba'eit hahi - why is this Parsha here Rashi says? Why does the story of Yehuda and Tamar seem to interrupt the story of Yosef? Rashi answers it's not an interruption at all. Lelamed - it teaches us; Shehoriduhu echov migedulato - that in the wake of the story of the sale of Yosef, in the wake of Yehuda's role of that sale; Keshera'u betzarat avihem - when they saw the pain that their father experienced, that he'd never got over the loss of Yosef, it was an unremitting mourning for a quasi death. Horiduhu echov migedulato - they caused Yehuda to descend from his position of leadership over them. Said, you can no longer be leader. Amru - they said; Atah amarta lemochro - you were wrong, you told us to sell him; Ilu amarta lehashivo - we would have listened to you; Hayinu shomim lecha - if you would have told us to return him. This was their argument.

Rashi's theory is that this is a story of Yehuda's loss of leadership in the wake of the sale of Yosef. It's the consequence for Yehuda and that brings us back to a very interesting little piece of the story which we thought at first glance seems superfluous. The strange bargaining session, Yehuda's barter with Tamar that seemed to have nothing to do with anything and why do we need to hear of these apparently almost salacious details? Well let's look at what happened in that story. What was it that he gave? A staff, signet ring and cloak. What kind of person wears these things, could put that all together? The answer is, a king. Go back to Rashi. What is this story about? It's about Yehuda's loss of kingship; Horiduhu echov migedulato - losing his position of leadership over them. How can Yehuda be king if he allows the sale of Yosef to happen? That's what the story of Yehuda and Tamar is about.

When Tamar takes these things from him, what is she really taking? All she's doing is taking the physical reminders, the physical symbols of kingship. She is taking from him that which he has lost his right to.

Except, she's not taking it for good, it's only collateral. Who owns collateral? The answer is collateral is still owned by the borrower - when a borrower gives collateral he doesn't give it for keeps to the lender, he gives it to him but it's possible for him to get it back if he pays his debt. So too in Yehuda's barter with Tamar, he has to give the staff, signet ring and cloak because he doesn't have the goat, because the goat is dead, because the goat was killed in the story of Yosef. If he can redeem what he did wrong in the story of Yosef, if he can somehow redeem himself, he can get back these implements of kingship and that's what the story of Yehuda and Tamar is about. The story is about his loss of kingship, but it's also about how he gets it all back.

How does he get it back? How does Yehuda get himself out this mess? The answer is he has to find a way to redeem that collateral, it's a painful process, but he redeems it, he stands up and he recognizes it,

he answers correctly to Haker Nah. Haker Nah were those immortal words, those words that will live in infamy, those words that galvanized the story of the sale of Yosef; do you recognize the coat? Now Yehuda will have to answer Haker Nah, will have to recognize it, and in so doing he has to recognize the collateral, he has to get his coat back. But he can only do it by admitting to a fearsome truth. If he does this though it will put him in position to do something else.

As we said before, what's the story of Yehuda and Tamar really about? Perhaps from G-d's perspective, G-d is putting Yehuda in exactly the same position he put his father in. Well once Yehuda does successfully get the collateral back, once he gets himself out of that mess, he'll be in a position to do something much harder. He'll be in a position to help Yaakov get out of the mess. Yehuda put Yaakov in a mess, Yehuda put Yaakov in this position where he lost his child and then lost another child in a chain reaction, and then is going to lose a third child, but would only get that child back if he understood, but he's too fearful to send that child, Binyamin. Reuven tries to help, but Reuven can't help and now it's up to Yehuda to help. How does he help? He helps by promising collateral. This time it's not a cloak, this time it's himself and he has to redeem himself and he does it in the end through a fearful admission.

That's how he gets Yaakov out of the mess that he put himself in. The story of Yehuda and Tamar is a story about how Yehuda is primed for leadership, is primed for a way to redeem not just the collateral but himself. To redeem himself, actually, literally, to redeem the collateral he promises for Benjamin and figuratively, to redeem himself and to get his kingship back.

When does Yosef reveal himself to the brothers? After Yehuda redeems the collateral of Benjamin, after he says take me instead, I can't let it happen again. After he admits to the terrible truth about everything that transpired, to this Egyptian official that he doesn't understand is really Yosef. I can't let father mourn again, take me instead. That's when Yosef reveals himself and that's when Yehuda can once again assume his position of leadership. Yehuda gets practise in redeeming collateral in this story, he redeems it for real in this story, the story of the sale of Yosef.

What were the stakes? What would Yehuda lose if he failed in Chapter 38? He would lose his position of leadership over the brothers as Rashi said, right, if he never gets back the collateral, if he's no longer the king. But he loses something more than that doesn't he? He loses his children Peretz and Zorach, because if Tamar is condemned to death, if she dies, she dies with his children, and who are his children? His children are really the only hope for his long-term kingship. It's not just his short-term position of leadership over his brothers which he loses, but he'll lose the long-term legacy. Peretz is the child through whom the Davidic dynasty is going to come, his kingship for generations will be lost. As Rashi says, what is this story about? It's about Yehuda's loss of kingship and it's not just about the loss, it's about how he gets it back, how he gets back in the short term, but ultimately how he gets it back in the long term. There will never be kings from Judah if Yehuda fails, if Tamar goes to her death.

Again, the story of Yehuda and Tamar is a story about how Yehuda lost the right to lead, but how he gained it back again. Let's come back and take a closer look about how he did just that.

So in order to understand how the story comes to a close, in order to understand how Yehuda gets back his collateral, how he gets back his kingship, we need to come back to this large theme that I think animates the entire Yosef story, which is how do you actualize your name? In the previous section we talked about this with reference to Reuven, we talked about how Reuven got his name; Ki ro'oh Hashem b'anyi - G-d has seen my affliction, his mother Leah had said. And indeed Reuven's role in the Yosef story is to somehow struggle with this. What does it mean to be named for a mother who G-d vindicated and saw her affliction? When you interpret this in the narrow sense, your job is to avenge your mother's shame, or do you interpret this in the larger sense, if G-d saw my mother's affliction then my job is to see affliction of others wherever it is, even if it's the affliction of a rival child. This is Reuven's question.

A similar question for Shimon, how does he get his name? Shamah Hashem ki senu'ah onochi - G-d has heard that my mother is hated. Same question for Shimon, how do I interpret my role? What's my job? How do I listen - a counterpoint to how Reuven sees. We talked about this with reference to Yosef, a person named for; Assaf Elokim et cherpati - G-d has gathered up the shame of my mother. If that's your name then what's your job? Is your job to gather up your brothers and put them in prison because G-d has given you the chance to finally have vengeance for what happened to your mother? What is your job? This is Yosef's struggle. There's more to be said about this, but we'll come back to it.

But today I want to talk about the struggle with reference to Yehuda. Yehuda is the other main protagonist in the story of Yosef and his brothers. What does it mean for Yehuda to actualize his name? Well, in order to understand that we have to ask how did Yehuda get his name? How did Yehuda get his name? Leah his mother said, this time I will thank G-d - and here's the key word, I will thank G-d. In Hebrew that word thank is this word over here; Hapa'am odeh et Hashem. Odeh is the root that lies at the core of the word Yehuda. Yadah is the root, Yud, Daled, Heih, and generally it's understood as Hoda'ah, she performed an act of Hoda'ah. If you think about this word Hoda'ah that's at the core of Yehuda, it's a very interesting word, and to really understand what's going on here, we have to come back and understand what that word means. What does that word mean?

So the word Hoda'ah is an interesting word, because it has more than one translation. It means thanks in the sense that Leah uses it; this time I will thank G-d. But it also means something else, it means to admit, to admit you were wrong, to apologize, to say that you're sorry, to admit an uncomfortable truth, all of these things is what it means. So interestingly, we have one word over here, the word is Hoda'ah, and we have two English translations for that word, thanks and admission. Whenever you have one word in Hebrew for two ideas, you have to ask yourself, are these really two ideas or maybe it's just one idea masquerading as two? In other words, the English language considers this two ideas, but in Hebrew it's really just one thing, it's Hoda'ah.

What this challenges us to ask - and I think to really grapple with the Yehuda and Tamar story and to understand its ramifications, we need to understand the union of the two meanings of Hoda'ah. How does the Hebrew language understand these terms? In Hebrew there is no separate word for thanks, there is no separate word for admitting you're wrong. It's all one thing. How is it one thing conceptually?

What is the union? What is the tie that binds thanks and admission? Can we come up with a definition? If you were writing a dictionary and you were defining this word Hoda'ah, you had to define that word, and you couldn't use the word thanks or admission, you had to get to the core of both of these, what would that core be? What would be the essential definition of Hoda'ah? What's the common denominator between these words? Think about that, and let's compare notes.

Okay so in thinking about the connection or the commonality between these two meanings of Hoda'ah; thanks on the one hand and admission on the other, how do these two things relate? Here's what comes to mind. For starters, both thanks and admission involve a certain kind of recognition. They're acts of recognition as it were. But when you say recognition not just any act of recognition, if I look at a chair and I say, hey that's a chair, I've recognized that's a chair but it's not the kind of recognition that thanks or admission is. Hoda'ah is an interpersonal kind of recognition. But again, it's not just any interpersonal recognition, it's not like I smile at you and I say, oh that's a nice hat, that's an interpersonal recognition, it's not an act of Hoda'ah. It is a specific kind of interpersonal recognition, what kind? A kind of re- balancing recognition.

Let me explain to you what I mean by that. You can think about any relationship as a kind of balance. Relationships starts off the relationship is in balance; here's me, there's you, we're-balanced, there's nothing on each side, there's nothing in each one of these cups so they're in balance. How does a relationship though get out of balance? Well a relationship can get out of balance in good ways or in bad ways. A very nice, fine way that a relationship can get out of balance is let's say I move into the neighborhood and you bring me gifts and you come over and you help my kids with homework and get them set up for the first day in school and welcome me to the neighborhood, all of that is absolutely wonderful. Wonderful. And it makes me feel really good and if you do this for me, you're putting something in this part of the balance, it's going to tip the scale downward and it's going to make this part of the scale tip upward, and the relationship is going to get out of balance. At that point I'm going to want to re-balance the scale. How would I re-balance the scale? Well I would reciprocate. I would do that by trying to put something in this part of the scale, I would try to reciprocate to you. That's a very powerful dynamic, I want to pay you back the favor.

This by the way is such a powerful dynamic, it's used all over the place, sometimes people take advantage of us actually with this. If you ever go into a used car dealer - or a new car dealer for that matter - the salesman walks you in and offers you, please take a can of coke from my refrigerator, never take the coke. Because if you take the coke they've just put something in this part of the scale, your part of the scale just went up, what do you want to do? You want to reciprocate. You have no way of reciprocating except if you buy the car. So you're actually going to feel like you want to buy this car, you have a 25 cent can of coke and you're going to spend $25,000 now feeling like you have to buy the car because he did you a favor and you have to find a way to do the favor back. Psychologically that's the dynamic. That's why you do favors for people in your store. So this is a very powerful dynamic here. Relationships can get out of balance in good ways and you want to reciprocate, and of course they can get out of balance in bad ways too.

So let's say that you're mean and nasty and you sneakily steal [unclear 3:10] without looking or something, I mean you could do really nasty things to me. If I find out that you've done nasty things to me, you put something nasty in this part of the scale, so what do I want to do? Well if I want to take revenge of course - revenge is the way you could reciprocate an evil. So that's the desire for revenge. So revenge is sweet. Revenge is sweet because it gets a relationship back into balance. But, what if I'm the kind of person that does not want to take revenge? Or what if it's impossible for me to reciprocate a

kindness? What if I'm not in a position to reciprocate a kindness? What then? Am I destined to live with this relationship that's out of balance, I'm stuck? A relationship out of balance is very painful, I want to get balance back into this relationship. Ah, that is where Hoda'ah comes in.

Hoda'ah is the way that you can re-balance a scale in the absence of reciprocation, either positive or negative. Hoda'ah actually is counterintuitive. What I'm about to say does not make any sense but it's actually true. If your scales are in balance and the one who is in the unbalanced part - I'm in the unbalanced part right now - if instead of reciprocating I can actually look you in the eye and I can recognize the imbalance, I can recognize the truth of what is going on and I can say it to you, that can magically bring things back into balance.

Think for a moment by the way about the words we use for these things, about the words we use for the various facets of Hoda'ah - thanks. How do you say thank you in English without saying thank you? We say I appreciate it. What does the word appreciate mean? Appreciate means to recognize the value of something, to understand the value of something. If I say I appreciate what you've done, I am making a recognition. I'm recognizing the truth as I say, yes, this is true, you put something in here, I am recognizing that. And, if you accept that I have recognized that, I say, wow, you've done such an amazing thing for me, I really appreciate what you've done, I understand its value, and you accept this, our relationship is suddenly gets back into balance.

By the way, it's the same thing for the other side of Hoda'ah - it's not just thanks that it works that way, this is how apologies work too, this is how admitting that you're wrong works. What does it mean to apologize, what it means, how you apologize without apologizing? If you recognize what it is that you've done, you recognize the imbalance you've created, I did this terrible thing to you, I'm all broken up about it, I understand the negative value of what I've done to you and I feel terrible about that, and I can say that to you. I can't right the wrong, but if you can accept my recognition of that, then a certain kind of balance can come back into the relationship. This is the magic of Hoda'ah, this is the magic of Yehuda's name.

In the story of Yehuda and Tamar - indeed in the entire story of Yosef - Yehuda is being called upon to actualize his name. When does he do this? The answer is he does it twice. The first time he does it is right here, how does Yehuda get himself out of this mess? G-d puts Yehuda in exactly the same position he put his father in, will Yehuda who has lost two children, is about to lose a third, Shelah, the only way that he can get the two children back is if he fearlessly lets Shelah go to the masked woman, Tamar. The person that he thinks is evil but is not really evil. How does he get the strength to get his children Er and Onan back if he won't give Shelah? He does so by redeeming collateral.

But how does he redeem the collateral? How does he get it back? He gets it back through answering Tamar's fateful question; Haker nah. What does that mean? Recognize please. Will you recognize? It's the core of his name. It's what Yehuda means. Will you do what you're named for? You told your father to falsely recognize Yosef's coat, now you lost a coat - will you be able to get it back? Your first attempt to get it back failed - when? When you weren't able to perform an act of Hoda'ah, you were worried lest

it come to scandal. Oh I sent the goat, but she's not there, I can't have people talking about me, let her just keep the stuff. Well if she keeps it then that's the end of Yehuda's kingship. She keeps the collateral, she keeps the coat, the signet ring and the staff, it means he lost it entirely.

But Yehuda gets one more chance. The man who was worried about whether it would come to scandal now if he's going to get the coat back it will really come to scandal. Now he's the man who has condemned this woman to death, he's the great judge and he has to stand there and say it might look like I'm the great judge condemning you, this evil woman, who has become intimate with some other man and have this child, that you're supposed to go to death. But now he has to say, no - and he does.

Tzadkah mimeni. He does recognize, he recognizes the interpersonal truth, you are more righteous than I, he says. I was the father. He has that chance to bury all the evidence, but then kingship is lost forever. Instead, he recognizes the truth, you are more righteous than I, you were doing this nobly so that you could perform Yibum so that you could have Er and Onan back. I was the one who did this for ignoble reasons.

That heroic act of recognition, that heroic act of redeeming collateral, sets Yehuda up to help get Yaakov out of the mess that Yehuda put him in back in Chapter 37. With the man who had said Haker Nah to his father, and who heard Haker Nah and was able to recognize the truth, was able to get his kingship back, was able to get Zorach and Peretz back, save his children, now helps Yaakov save his two children. When Binyamin was threatened Reuven says, I'll kill my two sons, it doesn't bring him back alive. Now Yehuda, a man who lost two sons and is speaking to Yaakov a man who also lost two sons, Yosef and Shimon, and says, I know what it means to lose sons, I'm not going to tell you that any of us will lose any more sons. But I will tell you; Onochi e'ervenu - I will be the Orev. I will be the collateral for him.

When he redeems that collateral he redeems it one more time through a very difficult act of recognition, an act of Hoda'ah. He lays it all out on the line for this Egyptian official that happens to be Yosef, tells him the whole story, and says, how can I bear to let my father lose another child? Take me as a slave.

There was a time when Yehuda let the child of a rival mother languish in slavery because it was so painful to deal with the fact that father loved another woman more. Now Yehuda looks that truth in the eye and says, yes, father's soul is bound up with Benjamin, because Benjamin is the child of Rachel, the mother that he loved more than my own mother. That was painful and there was a time when father lost a child because of that, but he's not going to lose one now. Let me be the slave instead of Binyamin.

That terrible recognition of truth, of the painful realities that he would rather not face up to, is Yehuda actualizing his name. The one who is named for admitting uses admission to reclaim his kingship.

Okay so in our previous videos we've been talking a lot about the roles of the various brothers in the story of the sale of Yosef and the parallels to the Cain and Abel story. In particular, the apparent kind of apathy with which the brothers treat the news revealed by Reuven that, oh my goodness Yosef is gone, he's nowhere to be found, and they're just looking for an alibi instead. But I want to turn from the response of most of the brothers to the response of Reuven in particular and just point out really the contrast - what seems to me to be a very heroic portrait that the Chumash paints of Reuven himself.

Especially according to the Rashbam's theory. Let's just lay it out as the Rashbam sees it.

So here is Reuven, right, Reuven is the firstborn, he's the actual firstborn. Now if we go back to our theory, remember that one of the things that bothered the brothers was that Yosef was being treated as the firstborn. Remember as we talked about before, according to Yaakov's view of this, according to father's view of all this, Yosef seems to be treated as the firstborn. So who should be most offended by that? Well the person who should be most offended by that is right over here, is Reuven, who is the actual firstborn, because Reuven is the actual firstborn, the real first child of Leah, the first child that's ever born to Yaakov at all. So if the brothers are defending Reuven's honor, isn't it interesting that Reuven himself takes a different position? Reuven himself is defending Yosef. He, among all the other brothers, is the one who tries to save Yosef and return him home to his father.

Now remember, Reuven's attempt doesn't actually work but it was an attempt, when the brothers were thinking at first impulsively, let's kill him, let's put his body in the pit, Reuven was the one who said, no; Al tishpechu dam - we can't spill his blood, let's put him in the pit and allow him to die. Remember, the Torah goes out of its way to say that wasn't what he was planning on doing, it was just an excuse so that he could get Yosef alive until the night; Lema'an hatzil oto - in order to save him, in the words of the verse. That he could bring him back to father.

So if the brothers are trying to save Reuven from the indignity of not being given the honor of the firstborn, it is Reuven who is trying to Yosef. Not only is Reuven trying to save Yosef, when Reuven finds out that Yosef has gone, what's Reuven's response? He tears his clothes in mourning, he comes back aghast to the brothers, and says, what's happened? We have to do something. Of course, the brothers don't do anything, the brothers ignore him and nothing comes of it. So again Reuven's attempts don't actually help Yosef, but his attitude is a really remarkable attitude. Reuven, the one most threatened by what's happening with Yosef, is the one who is actually going and trying to save Yosef, is trying to protest and is trying to do something - anything - to be able to save him.

Now I want to make the case to you that if we fast-forward a few chapters - we've been focusing mostly on Chapter 37, the actual sale of Yosef - but if we fast-forward about five chapters, and move over to Chapter 42 - Mem-Beis - and we go to the story which we've actually been talking about a little bit, the story about when Yosef overhears his brothers talking. This is when Yosef is in Egypt and he's disguised, he is this Egyptian official and he recognizes his brothers. His brothers are coming for food, his brothers don't recognize him. Yosef is able to overhear his brothers talking because he understands Hebrew and they're talking in Hebrew. The brothers don't know that this Egyptian official can understand Hebrew, and much less do they even know that he's in fact their long lost brother. Yosef is able to overhear their

conversation.

Now if you actually look at that text, you find fascinating insights that the Chumash gives us, I think, into the roles of various brothers, including Reuven. Other brothers as well. You begin to see it emerge if you pay attention - close attention - to the words. There's a fascinating kind of series of wordplays that are playing off of various names in the story. I want to put the text up here on the screen for you. It's right over here. I want to challenge you to look at this text over here, look at these seven or so verses from Yud-Zayin - from 17 to Chaf-Daled - 24. I want you to read through this, pay attention to the names of the various brothers and then pay attention to various verbs and nouns that seem to be playing off of those names. Ask yourself, what sort of word picture do these wordplays paint for us in helping us understand a very close and personal portrait of what's happening here in the story from these various different brothers' perspectives? So take a look at that and let's come back and talk about it.

Okay so just as a background to looking at this text with you, I want to come back to a question which I think I may have mentioned a little bit earlier to you but I want to treat this question a little bit more carefully, and it is this. In a nutshell, why Shimon?

What I mean by that is, there are of course various brothers, from oldest to youngest the brothers of Joseph would be Reuven number one. Two, Shimon, three, Leivi. Then we've got Yehuda over here, number 4. So there are various brothers, these are the first four. Shimon gets singled out by Joseph for kind of special treatment over here. If we go back to this text that I asked you to look at, right over here, Yosef actually imprisons Shimon. It happens right down here. The background of course is that Joseph's brothers have come to him, but not realizing that it's him, and Yosef accuses them of being spies and says that in order to ensure that you're not spies, I need you to come back with Benjamin, and meanwhile I'm going to take one of you prisoner. The one he chooses to take prisoner is Shimon. So the question is, why of all brothers did Joseph choose to imprison Shimon? They were all there, he could have taken anybody, why in particular does Yosef pick on Shimon? Is there any answer that we can give to that?

Again, we treated this briefly but let's look at the text in a little bit more detail here. Okay so here's this text I asked you look at, let's take a look now and let's pay some attention to some of the possible wordplays that are playing off the names of the various participants in the story. Starting here with verse 17 - Yud-Zayin. Vaye'esof otam el mishmar - so here's what Yosef does, he takes the brothers - who again do not recognize him they just think they're dealing with any old Egyptian official. Yosef by this time has already accused them of being spies and he takes them and he places them in a holding pen, essentially in jail, for just three days. That's what happens over here in verse 17.

Then he speaks to them. Vayomer aleihem Yosef bayom hashelishi - Yosef says to them on the third day; Zot asu - do the following; V'ichyu - and you shall live. Et haElokim ani yarei - because I fear G-d, I'm going to be nice to you guys, I'm going to give you a chance to get out of this. Im kenim atem achichem echad ye'asser b'beit mishmarchem - if you're in fact telling the truth and you're not spies, I'm only going to keep one of you here in this holding pen, and the rest of you can go and can bring back food to your hungry household. V'atem lechu havi'u shever ra'avon bateichem - the rest of you can carry your crops, can carry corn for the famine that's afflicting your houses. Word for houses over here - Bateichem. The word for famine over here - Ra'avon, from Ra'av, meaning hunger.

Okay now let's look for the wordplays. Wordplays off of let's say, Yosef's name, Reuven's name, do you see any of them? Okay so let's start with Yosef's name right over here, any other words that look kind of like that? Hey what about this one right over here? See that? Yosef - Ye'esof. We've got the Yud over here, the Yud over here, this Vav goes back a little bit before the Yud, there's the Vav. We've got the Samech and then we've got the Pei. Right? Same letters, slightly rearranged. Yosef becomes Vaye'esof.

Could just be a coincidence, but then look at this word. Ra'avon. Hm, that word means hunger. Go bring back corn for the hunger that's afflicting your households. Well hunger, what word does Ra'avon remind you of? Yeah, it kind of sounds like this word over here doesn't it? Reuven. Reuven, Ra'avon, there's the Reish, there's the Reish. The Aleph gets replaced with the Ayin, two very similar words.

Here's the Vav, here's the Vav. The Vav gets moved up one letter. Over here the Vav is after the Beit, over here the Vav is before the Beit. Like, by the way, the Vav over here, this Vav over here can move up a letter, same thing. Here's the Nun, here's the Nun. So actually the exact same thing is happening. Same basic word - Vav gets moved up a letter. Same basic word - Vav gets moved up a letter. Only difference, Ayin and Aleph. Only difference Aleph added in.

You know, it doesn't seem to be a coincidence, seems to be a connection between these. Seems to be a connection to between these. I mean, could be coincidental, but it seems sort of un-coincidental. So what is it? Is it just a harmless play on words or does it mean anything? Think about that, and let's come back and we'll discuss it.

So I want to begin to offer you a theory. Now I want to just warn you that this theory has different layers to it. I'm going to give you the first layer now, but there's a second layer that's a little bit deeper and then there's a third layer that's maybe a little bit deeper than that. So here is the first layer of this theory and the theory is about this question which we talked about above, which is why of all brothers does Yosef choose to imprison Shimon? So let's keep that question in mind as we come back and look at this wordplay.

So let's leave aside this wordplay involving Yosef's names for a moment, we're going to come back to that, but we're not going to deal with this now. For now, let's focus instead on the meaning of this possible wordplay, the playoff of Reuven's name with Ra'avon and Reuven, what could be going on over there? Or to be a little bit more precise about it, what might be the connection between these two events over here? Yosef's speech that if you were spies I'm going to imprison one of you to come back and bring back this hunger relief for your family - between that and then what Reuven says over here when it says; Vaya'an Reuven - and Reuven replied.

Let's clean up the screen for a minute. In order to see this, let's come back to verse 22 over here and ask what is it that Reuven said? So here's what happens. The brothers have now heard over here in verse 21, they've heard Yosef's pronouncement that one of them is going to be jailed until the others come back with this missing brother that they're supposed to bring to Yosef. So at that point; Vayomru ish el achiv - and I'm just reviewing this quickly because we talked about this a little bit before. One man says to the other among the brothers; Aval asheimim anachnu - we are guilty; Al achinu asher ra'inu tzarat nafsho behitchaneno eleinu v'loh shamanu - we're guilty because we saw the pain that was afflicting Yosef's soul as he was crying out to the ground. Behitchaneno eleinu - as he was pleading to us; V'loh shamanu and we didn't listen. Al kein ba'ah eleinu hatzara hazos - and that's why this terrible thing is happening to us.

At that point one of the brothers then speaks up, and it's Reuven. Vaya'an Reuven otam leimor - and Reuven then says; Haloh amarti aleichem - didn't I tell you back then when he was in the pit; Leimor al techetu bayeled - I told you not to sin against the child; V'loh shamatem - and you didn't listen. V'gam damo hinei nidrash - and now his voice is calling out to be avenged.

Meanwhile; Hem lo yadu ki shomei'ah Yosef ki hameilitz benotam - they didn't realize that Yosef was listening because there was an interpreter between them. In other words, they weren't aware that Yosef directly understood Hebrew, they thought he was only understanding through the interpreter. So they thought they could be confident in speaking in Hebrew without Yosef, this Egyptian, understanding. But of course Yosef did understand. Vayisov mei'aleihem vayevk - Yosef understanding what's happening, hearing the brothers refer to this event and their perception of their guilt in putting him in the pit. So he cries; Vayashav aleihem - and returns to them; Vayedaber aleihem vayikach mei'itam et Shimon - and then he takes Shimon; Vaye'esor oto l'eineihem - and then he imprisons him before their eyes.

So here's the beginning of a theory that I want to suggest to you. You know when Yosef over here; Vaye'esof - when Yosef comes and he is gathering them all and putting them into prison, what's really

happening? Well there was a time that all of these brothers gathered together to put him in a pit, right? Now Yosef is gathering all these brothers together to put them in jail, as it were, it's almost like a tit for tat. They all came together to jail the one, as it were, and now Yosef is putting them all together and essentially putting them into a pit. Putting them into jail. But then Yosef says, you know what, I'm not going to do that, I'm not going to put you all in jail, even though seemingly by rights I could, because I'm arguing that you're all spies. Et haElokim ani yarei - I fear G-d and therefore I'm going to be nice to you, I'm only going to pick one of you.

Now the question is, who is he going to pick? Perhaps the answer is at this point the text is suggesting to us - the answer just might be Reuven. Who is Reuven? If you're Yosef and you're only going to pick one, who should you pick? Well if you're putting them all into a pit because really they put you into a pit, and now you're only going to put one in this pit, you're only going to put one in jail, who should you pick? You should pick the one who is most responsible. Well there was a whole bunch of brothers, who is most responsible? Maybe the answer is Reuven? This brother is going to be most responsible, you're going to put him in the pit. Remember at this point in verse 19, Yosef has not yet picked the person, he's just picked one nameless person and perhaps he's thinking it's going to be Reuven. Reuven is the oldest, he's the Bechor, perhaps he's leading the charge.

Ironically by the way, the brothers themselves see this truth. The brothers themselves see that the reason why - or suggest that the reason why they're being put into a pit right now is because they put their brother into a pit. Little do they know how right they really are. They think that this is just coming to them from the hand of heaven, and perhaps it is sort of coming to them from the hand of heaven. What they don't realize is that it's directly coming to them tit for tat, from the very brother that they put in the pit. So the brothers thinking to themselves it's some sort of vague manifestation of Divine retribution, this is happening because G-d is getting back at us for what we did in leaving our brother in the pit.

Little do they realize that the same brother who they put in the pit is now putting them in the pit. It's not just G-d indirectly making this happen to them, it's the very victim who they acted upon, is making this happen to them.

So in any case if you're Yosef, perhaps you're thinking I'll imprison Reuven. But he doesn't end up imprisoning Reuven, why? Because Reuven speaks up. In other words, it's almost like the text might be suggesting to us that in verse 19 Yosef is thinking, I'll go get Reuven; Shever ra'avon bateichem - he's thinking as he's going to imprison the one; Achichem echad ye'asser [b'beit mishmarchem 5:51]. But then by verse 22; Vaya'an Reuven - and remember Yosef is listening, they don't realize that Yosef is listening but Yosef can understand all of this. Therefore when does he find out what was the real scoop in the sale of Yosef? When does he find out that Reuven was in fact on his side the whole time? He finds that out here.

In other words, Reuven, he might have thought would be the one to lead the charge, he was the one most offended by Yosef being treated [as 6:17] the Bechor, he was the one who stood to lose the most because it was his position as firstborn that was being usurped by Yosef. Little does Yosef know that it was Reuven who was leading the charge to actually save Yosef. When does Yosef find that out? Yosef

finds that out right over here, when Reuven speaks up among all the brothers. At this point all the brothers are just speaking among themselves, but then Reuven says; Haloh amarti aleichem al techetu bayeled - wasn't I the one telling you; Al techetu bayeled - not to do this? Ah. Well when Yosef hears that; Heim lo yadu ki shomei'ah Yosef - they didn't realize that Yosef was listening. So at that point; Vayikach mei'itam et Shimon - at that point it's not going to be Reuven anymore, it's the next oldest brother that Yosef holds responsible. The next oldest brother is Shimon.

That, I want to argue, is level one. A kind of level one understanding of this text. But I think there are at least two other layers in what's actually going on here, and in order to be able to discern those layers we have to come back to the wordplay. We've only seen the very beginning of the wordplay. Go back, read this text again, and besides these connections, what other wordplay is taking place in these eight verses? I'll see you in our next video and let's talk about it.

Okay so we began to see some of the wordplay over here. We suggested some initial interpretations based on that. But I think there's a deeper layer of meaning in what's going on here and I want to get to that by asking you this question. The window, I think, to understanding is to see some more of the wordplay, and I want you to pay some attention to the issue of sense perception here. The question I want to ask you is, which of the five senses do you see represented here in the story?

So here's our basic five senses, we've got taste, we've got hearing, we've got smell, we have touch, we have sight. If you go through the text do you see any of these senses kind of overrepresented in the story? Okay so out of all these senses, it's basically hearing and sight. Very, very overrepresented in our story.

Let's color code that a little bit and see where hearing things and seeing things emerges in our story.

So here's our first example. Vayomer ish el achiv aval asheimim anachnu al achinu asher ra'inu tzarat nafsho - so the brothers say among themselves we are guilty for having seen - there it is our first example of seeing. Having seen the pain of our brother as he was calling out to us. V'loh shamanu - but we did not listen, we did not hear. Of course it means that we did of course hear what he was saying, but; V'loh shamanu - we didn't listen. Even in English by the way the word hear and listen can have two meanings. It can mean to actually physically hear what it is that someone is saying, but then there's also, do you hear me, do you understand me, do you accept what it is that I'm saying, do you get it, do you listen? So we heard but we didn't really hear. We saw what he was going through but we didn't hear, it didn't penetrate into us, so to speak.

Then keep on reading. Then Reuven says; Haloh amarti aleichem leimor al techtu bayeled v'loh shamatem - I told you not to do this but you didn't hear. So there's our second hearing. Now a third one; Heim lo yadu ki shomei'ah Yosef - ah, they didn't realize that Yosef was listening.

So if we put together this little train, we see something kind of interesting. The brothers say among themselves, we saw but we didn't hear. His cries were coming up to us but we ignored it. V'loh shamatem - Reuven says, you didn't listen. So what's interesting here is that if you look at the episode in the pit, in the episode in the pit Yosef was calling out, but the brothers didn't listen. Now look what's happening, the inverse is happening here. Heim lo yadu - what they didn't realize is somebody was listening; Shomei'ah Yosef - Yosef was listening. Oh interesting. The brother who was calling out before when the brothers weren't listening, now the brothers are talking and somebody is listening, it's that brother.

By the way, remember the double meaning of listening. The word to listen in both Hebrew and English can mean either (a) to hear physically, or (b) to understand and respond. Well if we think back to the pit, when the brothers say we didn't listen, what does that mean? It means well we heard physically what was going on, but we didn't understand and respond, and that's why we're guilty.

Well now, irony of ironies, if we come down to what's actually happening over here, there's a real kind of poetic justice that the Torah is kind of putting out there, because now let's think about listening in terms of what Yosef is doing to their conversation. They didn't realize that Yosef was listening, but what

does listening mean? Well of course they realized that Yosef physically heard them, but they thought that this Egyptian man would have no idea as to what they're saying, would not be able to understand and respond to what they're saying. But there of course they were wrong. Yosef does understand and respond. Heim lo yadu ki Yosef shomei'ah - they didn't realize that Yosef was really listening. Not just hearing physically but truly listening.

What happens at this point? Vayikach mei'itam et Shimon. Oh isn't that interesting? Shomei'ah - Shin, Mem, Ayin. Shimon - Shin, Mem, Ayin. It's like Yosef took the listening one, the one who was listening and not responding. Then of course Yosef imprisons him right before their eyes. There, eyes at the beginning, eyes at the end. You see with your eyes. You see with your eyes. Seeing and hearing.

This of course gets into the meaning of the names, a deeper level of wordplay in the names. We begin to see it here with Shimon, but there is more here than meets the eye (and not just the ear). Let's come back and talk about the names and their deeper meanings and how that sheds light on these eight verses.

Okay so let's go to the actual text where Reuven and Shimon, these two brothers that sort of are on centre stage here in these verses we've been looking at actually get their names when they're born. How did these people get their names? So right here are the relevant verses. You'll find this back in Parshat Vayetzei Chaf-Tet - Genesis 29. So remember Yaakov was married to two wives, he was married to Leah and Rachel, he had always intended to marry Rachel, he got tricked under the Chuppah, and Leah was put in place of Rachel by Lavan their father. So Yaakov was tricked into marrying Leah. So Yaakov loved Rachel more and; Vayar Hashem ki senu'ah Leah - G-d saw that relatively speaking Leah was Senu'ah - Leah was so to speak hated. We talked about these words before. She wasn't loved as much as Rachel, comparatively, it felt to her as if she was being hated. But G-d saw, ratified this; Ki senu'ah Leah

- indeed she was not loved as much. Vayiftach et rachmah v'Rachel akarah - so G-d opened her womb, she had a child first while Rachel remained an Akarah, while Rachel remained barren.

So Vatahar Leah - so here's Leah's first child, the Bechor, the firstborn. Vateiled ben - she has a child; Vatikra shemo Reuven - so she calls his name Reuven. Now how did Reuven get this name, because here was what she said. Ki amrah - because she said; Ki ro'oh Hashem b'anyi - G-d has seen - oh look at that, isn't that interesting? G-d has seen; B'anyi - my suffering. Ki ata ye'ehavani ishi - maybe now that I have this child, my husband will love me. So what is Reuven named for? Interestingly, Reuven is named for seeing. His very name means G-d saw my suffering.

Now let's continue and look at the next child. Vatahar od - and then she conceived again; Vateiled ben - and she gave birth to another child. Vatomer - and this time she said; Ki shamah - oh isn't that interesting? Ki shamah - G-d has heard; Ki senu'ah onochi - that I am hated, that I am comparatively unloved. Vayiten li gam et zeh - and therefore G-d has given me this child too. Vatikra shemo Shimon - and she named him Shimon - the hearing one. G-d has seen my suffering, G-d has heard that I am comparatively unloved. These two senses, seeing and hearing are what these children, Reuven and Shimon respectively, are named after.

Okay so now having seen these names, Reuven's name and how he got it over here, Shimon's name and how he got it over here, the seeing and the hearing, let's bring the knowledge that we've gained over here, back into the eight verses we've been looking at and see what emerges.

Okay the brothers are talking among themselves, not knowing that Joseph is listening and they say, quote - I'm just going to put the quotation marks in here. Aval asheimim anachnu - but we are guilty; Al achinu - for our brother; Asher ra'inu tzarat nafsho - okay so now let's take this and add what we've learned. We've seen his pain, we saw his pain; V'loh shamanu - but we did not hear. Well who was the seeing brother? The seeing brother of course is Reuven, named for the sense of sight. Who is the hearing brother, named for the sense of sound? That is going to be Shimon. Let's continue. Vaya'an Reuven - and now Reuven the seeing brother, he speaks up and he says; Haloh amarti aleichem - back at the pit didn't I tell you; Al techtu bayeled - don't sin against the child; V'loh shamatem - but someone was stopping me. I was the seeing brother, I was saying, don't do this. We saw, we just didn't hear. V'loh shamatem - you didn't hear. What's the subtext? Who was stopping me? The hearing brother. What they were seeing - there was Reuven, but there wasn't Shimon. Gam damo hinei nidrash - and now his

blood is being avenged.

Of course; V'heim lo yadu ki shomei'ah Yosef - they didn't realize that Yosef was listening this whole time. Yosef now hearing about the culpability of Shimon, hearing Reuven - seeing Reuven on his side, hearing about Shimon, hearing about there being no, so to speak, hearing, imprisons Shimon, the hearing one.

Okay so this is what I'm going to call level 2 in our understanding, which is the wordplay kind of deepens as we bring in the names and their correlation with these senses, with hearing and seeing. But there's one more level of understanding here which I think takes us even one level deeper than this, I'm going to call it level 3. Level 3 requires that we go back and take one last look at the names of these children, Reuven, Shimon, and exactly how they got them, and bring that back into these eight verses that we've been looking at too. So let's come back and do that.

Okay so let's get to a third level of understanding in this story which we've been looking at, and I want to ask you this, what is the common denominator in Yosef's name, Reuven's name and Shimon's name in the respective names? When we look at their names and how they got these names an interesting theme emerges which really begins to, I think, resonate in a significant way in these eight verses that we've been looking at.

Here for example is Reuven, the firstborn child of Leah. You see right over here in verse 32. Vatahar Leah vateiled ben - so Leah gives birth to a child; vatikra shemo Reuven - and she calls him Reuven. Now why did she name him Reuven? Well the text says; Ki amrah - because she said; ki ro'oh Hashem b'anyi - G-d has seen my suffering. In Leah's eyes the fact that she is not loved as much afflicts her. As it says over here in verse 31 right before this; Vayar Hashem ki senu'ah Leah - G-d saw that Leah was Senu'ah - we talked about this verse before, she wasn't loved as much as Rachel. In her eyes that makes her feel comparatively as if she's hated. So responding to that, she names him Reuven; Ki ro'oh Hashem b'anyi - because G-d has seen my suffering. Yaakov doesn't love me as much as he loves Rachel my sister, and maybe now that I've given birth to this child, she says; Ki atah ye'ehavani ishi - maybe my husband will love me more. So the name Reuven from G-d has seen my affliction.

Look at the next name. Vatahar od vateiled ben - and she then gives birth to another child. Vatomer ki shamah Hashem ki senu'ah onochi - that G-d has heard; Ki senu'ah onochi - that I am comparatively hated. Vayiten li gam et zeh - and therefore He gave me this other child as some sort of consolation.

Vatikra shemo - and she calls his name Shimon. Of course the name Shimon is coming off of the word Shamah as we talked about before. But the larger context is not just that Shimon is named for hearing, but think about what kind of hearing it is. Shamah Hashem ki senu'ah onochi - G-d has heard that I'm not as loved as my sister. Similarly we saw before that Reuven is named for seeing - Ro'oh, but what kind of seeing? Ro'oh Hashem b'anyi - G-d has seen my affliction.

Now look at Yosef's name. Yosef of course is a child of Rachel, the sister of Leah. Vayizkor Elokim et Rachel - so G-d remembered Rachel; Vayishma eleiha Elokim - and G-d heard her. Vayiftach et rachmah - and He opened her womb. For many years Rachel was not able to give birth. Finally; Vatahar

- she conceived; Vateiled ben - and she gave birth to a child. Vatomer assaf Elokim et cherpati - G-d has gathered in my indignity of not being able to have another child. This name of course Assaf gets transmuted into Yosef.

So the common denominator in all these names over here is that they're all named really for this conflict between Rachel and Leah, and for the sense of pain, the sense of suffering that each of these respective sisters, Rachel and Leah, feel. Interestingly, later on in the Book of Leviticus, in Sefer Vayikra, Perek Yud Chet, Chapter 18, you actually have this language. When the Torah comes up with the prohibition much later on, and once the Torah is given at Sinai, for a man to marry two sisters. Look at the language. V'isha el achota lo tikach litzror - and a man should not take a woman's sister to be a rival to her. Rashi's interpretation of this word Tzror is that it comes from the word Tzara, which really means to be a rival, to cause her pain. Because by definition if two sisters in a situation when each of them can be a wife to the same man, can lead to rivalry, can lead to pain.

Okay so now coming back to these names, we come back to Reuven's name for example. Think about the challenge that faces Reuven in the story of Yosef and his brothers, it's actually a very interesting challenge. Put yourself in Reuven's shoes. If you were named Reuven, if this was your name, you were named not just the pain that your mother felt, the sense that G-d had seen her pain; Ki ro'oh Hashem b'anyi - that G-d has seen my pain, G-d has seen my suffering. You were called for this. This sense that G-d had seen the suffering in my mother, the suffering that she experienced at the hands of her rival, at the hands of her Tzara. What might you think your Divine calling is? What might you think that G-d wants out of you?

Let's get a little bit more particular about that. So imagine you're Reuven, you're the legitimate Bechor of Yaakov and yet you're not being treated as the firstborn. Yaakov treats the child of the other wife, the wife that in your eyes he loved more, treats him as the firstborn, treats Yosef as the firstborn. How would you feel about that?

Now the brothers have gotten together to avenge your honor as it were, and they take Yosef and they strip him of his coat, and they say, he's not the Bechor and we've got to get rid of him. What would you think is happening? How would you look upon this?

You know, you could be excused for thinking that, well this is the moment. G-d is shining on your destiny. This is the moment that was almost prophesized by my mother's name. Ki ro'oh Hashem b'anyi

- G-d has seen my pain, Leah said. Here I am, Reuven, and my job is to avenge my mother's pain and to do what's necessary to get rid of this rival child who is usurping me and usurping my mother.

But that's not what Reuven does. Reuven alone among the brothers is the one who seeks to save Yosef, who has a plan to come back in the middle of the night and bail him out. The text itself goes out of its way to make this clear. When the brothers said; Lechu venahargeihu - let's come and kill him. Vayishma Reuven - Reuven heard what was going on; Vayatzileihu miyadam - and Reuven saved them and said; Lo nakenu nefesh - we can't do this. Vayomer aleihem Reuven - and Reuven said; Al tishpechu dam - we can't kill him, instead let's put him into this pit; V'yad al tishlechu bo - and let our hand not be upon him. The plan of course was to allow him to die in the pit. But that was just the excuse that Reuven was giving to them; Lema'an hatzil oto miyadam - in order to save him from their hands; Lehashivo el aviv - to come back in the middle of the night and return him to his father. This is Reuven's plan.

So essentially Reuven has a fateful choice to make. As the child of Leah, as the child named for G-d has seen my mother's pain, he has to decide what does that mean for him? What then does G-d want from him? There's really two ways of seeing that, the narrow way and the broader way. Here's the narrow way. If G-d has seen my mother's pain, then maybe what G-d wants from me is G-d wants me to avenge my mother's pain. G-d wants me to do whatever it takes to make sure that those who caused this pain, that those who were responsible for it, pay the price. If that's the case, how do I respond to Yosef? Yosef is the cause, Yosef has been treated as the Bechor, Yosef is usurping me, it's happening in the next generation. Not only did my father love Rachel more than Leah, but now he's favoring Rachel's child more than me. So one interpretation is, G-d wants me to avenge my mother's pain.

But there's another possible interpretation, what else could G-d want from me if He has seen my mother's pain? So the other way to interpret this is if G-d has seen my mother's pain, it's up to me to see all who suffer like this. I must never close my eyes to that pain wherever I find it. That's how I respond to my mother's pain. It's a much broader response. That in fact is Reuven's response. Look back in the text.

Vayomru ish el achiv aval asheimim anachnu al achinu asher ra'inu tzarat nafsho behitchaneno eleinu v'loh shamanu - we saw his pain - by the way look at this language over here; Tzarat nafsho. Do you hear the sort of double entendre here? It literally means we saw the pain of his soul. But Tzara as we saw before in Leviticus is the word actually for a co-wife. V'isha el achota lo tikach litzror - the language of a second wife who is a sister that causes pain. What did Reuven do? He saw the pain of the child of a co- wife, the child of a rival. He, the man who is named, for G-d has seen the pain of my mother, now says, what G-d wants me to see is someone else's pain, the pain of the child of my mother's rival. He can see that and he doesn't stop seeing that and he acts upon that. That is Reuven's greatness.

There is of course another response and this is represented by Shimon. If I am named for G-d hearing that my mother was unloved, then how could I possibly hear the cries of the child of my mother's rival? That would betray my mother, betray what G-d wants from me. V'loh shamatem - we saw but we didn't hear.

By the way, once we're talking about names, the interesting thing is, what about Yosef? Remember how he got his name. Yosef, named by Rachel, for; Assaf Elokim et cherpati - G-d has gathered in my reproach, G-d has gathered in my shame. So if you're Yosef what do you think that your mission is?

Perhaps the story of the sale of Yosef boils down to a challenge for each brother as to how it is that they understand their name, how is it that they understand what their name demands of them.

The question of what Yosef was up to, what was Yosef thinking when he was tormenting his brothers, what was his plan, did he have a plan? All those questions that we asked at the beginning - those are complicated questions, and we're just getting the beginning of a sense of some things that might be going on here. But there are some ominous overtones right here in the beginning of this story.

Remember, Yosef named for; Assaf Elokim et cherpati - G-d has gathered in my suffering. Well what did Yosef do over here? Vaye'esof otam el mishmar - he gathered them in to prison, he gathered them into the pit. He, who was put in a pit is now taking all these brothers who put him there and gathering them into the pit. This is the very verb for which he got his name. Well if you're named, G-d gathered in my suffering, and now G-d delivers the brothers who did all of this to you, what is it that G-d wants from you? The temptation for Yosef is to see if this is what G-d wants. Why else would G-d deliver them into my hand?

But this, I think, is the challenge that faces all the brothers, whether it's Yosef, whether it's Reuven, whether it's Shimon. Later on I'll try to argue that even with Yehuda this is true. With these four brothers, the challenge is, how will they relate to their name? Reuven and Shimon provide two diametrically opposite approaches. As much as we saw before that the Torah seems to condemn what it was that the brothers did in not listening to the voice of their brother and hearing that as having echoes

of Cain and Abel and that sort of voice calling out from the pit and not responding. As much as that may be so, shouldn't allow that to overshadow the clear heroism of Reuven, the one who is named for seeing the pain of his mother and yet channels that powerfully, saying, if G-d has seen the pain of my mother it is up to me to not blind myself to that kind of pain. To see that pain just like G-d saw it, everywhere, even in the child of my mother's rival.

I just want to close by noting that the Medrash itself heralds Reuven's act in this kind of way. The Medrash learns from Reuven that you should always do a Mitzvah with a full heart. She'ilu hayah Reuven yodei'ah - if only Reuven had known; SheHakadosh Baruch Hu machtiv alav - that G-d Himself would write about him in G-d's own Book, these immortal words. Vayishma Reuven vayatzileihu miyadam - and Reuven heard what the brothers were going to do and he saved Joseph from their hands. If Reuven had only known that those words would have been immortalized in the Torah, he wouldn't have just suggested to his brothers to put him in the pit and then surreptitiously try to double back for his brother. Instead; B'kseifo hayah molichu etzel aviv - he would have hoisted Yosef on his shoulders and brought him back dancing to his father.

A friend once remarked to me before Rosh Hashanah, he said, you know the problem with life is that it doesn't come with a soundtrack. You know the point of a soundtrack in a film is to help you follow the score; when the kettledrums are playing you know that something dramatic is going to happen, when the violins are coming in you know that there's something romantic happening. But in life you never get to hear the soundtrack. Maybe after 120 years you hear the soundtrack, you know what the significant points in life are, but you never know those points when it's happening. He said, that's really the point of this Medrash. In the Torah's eyes this is the significant point of Reuven's life, this is what is immortalized about Reuven for generations. Vayishma Reuven vayatzileihu miyadam. This is the highpoint. Reuven's ability to transcend the narrow meaning of his name and to actualize the meaning of his name at a higher, more universal level. To say that if G-d has seen my mother's pain, that I need to see that pain wherever and whenever it exists. That's where the soundtrack was playing. That, in the Torah's judgment, was the high point of his life. That's how thousands of years later we in the eyes of the Medrash are meant to remember him.

Okay so what's the other story, what's the other great saga in the Book of Genesis that reminds you of this kind of set up? If we would put this arrow up here over the top of the screen and we would say the Joseph story is the great saga in the second half of the Book of Genesis that gets interrupted by one chapter in the middle, what great saga in the first half of the Book of Genesis seems to have the same kind of structure? The answer is, I think, the Abraham saga, the story of Avraham. The story begins in Chapter 12, goes along quite nicely for about six chapters, picks up again a chapter later in Chapter 20, keeps on going for another five chapters or so, all in all, a large, epic story just like the Joseph story. Yet right over here in the middle of the story we got Chapter 19, a story which has nothing to do - seemingly - with the Abraham story. We focus - like we do in the story of Yehuda and Tamar, on a relative of the main character. Here we were focusing - if we say the main character is Yosef, a brother of his is Yehuda. Over here if we say the main character is Abraham, a child of a brother over here is Lot. Lot is the child of Haran, one of Abraham's brothers. For some reason we have the story over here that seems to have nothing to do with the surrounding Abraham story. It's just a digression where the main character is all of a sudden Lot. Then that's done with and we're back to the Abraham story.

It seems kind of odd, and what's even more strange actually, or really intriguing, is that when you begin to look at these two stories side by side, you actually see some curious connections between them.

Okay, so what I want to assert here is that we've got here going almost a tale of two digressions. In a moment we're going to look very carefully at the story of Chapter 38, and we're almost going to forget about the story of Lot and his daughters. But after we finish looking at all of the details of Chapter 38 and after we begin to understand what this story is doing here and whether or not it's really a digression that interrupts the Yosef story, or complements it, then I want to come back and talk about this other story, Lot in Sodom. Again, see if they're connected in any kind of way. Because at the face of it the stories are actually eerily similar to each other. Here are some initial connections, we'll see more once we finish the story of Yehuda and Tamar - I think on a deeper level. But just for starters take a look at this. Here's the beginning of a glance of what I want to call A Tale of Two Digressions here.

Let's start with Yehuda and Tamar, just to summarize some of the stuff that we've seen. The story of Yehuda and Tamar we've got a digression - an apparent digression - from the story of Yosef that focuses on a relative of the main character. As we said, the main character is Yosef, over here we're looking at a brother, and that brother is Yehuda. So that's one element in the story of Yehuda and Tamar.

Next element, it's a seduction story, that's what we began to talk about. Not only is it a seduction story, but it's a seduction story to be more specific in which a woman actually seduces her father-in-law.

Remember, Yehuda is the father-in-law of Tamar; Tamar married Er the child of Yehuda, making Yehuda her father-in-law. To go a little bit further, in this case the woman tricks the man, she's not straightforward with him, she dresses up as a harlot and tricks him, and the reason she does so is because she fears that he won't go along with it if he knows what's really going on. Tamar worries that Yehuda won't marry her to perpetuate the line of heir if he knows who she is, because he's worried that she's killed two of his sons. He doesn't know the reason why they died had nothing to do with her. So she fears he wouldn't go along with it and therefore she has to resort to trickery, to subterfuge.

Now what's her motive? Her motive in this case is trying to make sure that her husband's legacy isn't wiped out. She has a pure motive you might say, she's trying to make sure that Er will not be childless, that there will be a Yibum child, as it were, that will carry on the legacy of Er. So while her motives are pure, Yehuda's motives are less pure, we might say.

Finally, at the end of the story there are two children that are born, and those two children are named Peretz and Zerach.

Now what does this remind you of? What other story in the Book of Genesis does this remind you of? The answer is, it reminds us of this story, the story of Lot and his daughters. It's not just that these are the two chapter-length digressions in big stories in the Book of Genesis, but in these kind of eerie ways the stories are kind of the same. Just as Yehuda and Tamar is a story that focuses on a relative of the main character, so too the story of Lot and his daughters also focuses on a relative of the main character. The main person of the saga is Abraham, and over here we're talking about Lot his nephew. Whereas this story focuses on Yehuda, a brother of the person we've been focusing on previously, this story focuses on Lot, the son of a brother of the person we've been focusing on previously, namely Abraham.

Now if we continue the story of Lot and his daughters is also a seduction story. Remember at the end of that story, after Sodom is destroyed so the children of Lot fear that the entire world has been destroyed, they're not aware that it's a localized destruction. Therefore they think it's up to them to repopulate the world. Therefore they seduce their father so that they will have children through him. So over here where a woman seduces her father-in-law, over here the seduction involves the father himself.

Remember, how the woman tricked the man because she fears he won't go along with it? Same thing in this story. Both of the children of Lot trick their father because they fear he won't go along with it, so they get him drunk and seduce him and he's unaware of what's really going on. What's her motive? The women's motive is pure. Not only that, it's the same kind of motive, it's trying to make sure that a line is not ended. It's not just a localized line, that of her husband's legacy, over here it's the line of all of humankind trying to make sure that the human race is not wiped out. What about the man's motives?

Well the man's motives again, less pure in this case. As Chazal understand it, as our Sages understand it, Lot was quasi aware of what was happening and allowed it to happen anyway. And, lo and behold, two children are born. The two children over here were named Peretz and Zerach, the two children over here that are born are named Ammon and Mo'av.

Now it's not just this, it's not just that there are all of these particular connections between the stories. But in the deep way, these two stories actually become one story. Where do these two stories become the same story? The answer is, it happens in the Book of Ruth. Because in the Book of Ruth, there is a man by the name of Boaz and there is a woman by the name of Ruth. Who are these people? Boaz, a great grandchild of this man, Peretz. Ruth, a great, great grandchild of this man Mo'av. They come together, they unite together, and these two stories become the same story in the Book of Ruth.

Interestingly, if you think about the themes of these stories, this is a quasi Yibum story, not a real Yibum story, not a Halachic Yibum story, because a woman is not marrying the brother of the deceased, is

marrying a father-in-law, but the same kind of thing, an attempt to perpetuate the legacy of a dead husband. This also a quasi - or you might say a corrupted - Yibum story, a woman seducing a father but in order to perpetuate a legacy that would otherwise be destroyed. And of course, what is this story? In this story we also have the sort of quasi Yibum story. If you remember the Book of Ruth; Ruth is trying to perpetuate the legacy of her dead husband too. So these two stories are actually coming together over here in the Book of Ruth.

So in the Tale of Two Digressions, it's not really two digressions, they actually unite and almost become the same story.

But as interesting as the Tale of Two Digressions are once you project these things forward into the Book of Ruth, I don't think that this suffices in and of itself to answer our question, which is, what is this story doing here right now in the Book of Genesis? What is it doing here interrupting the sale of Yosef? It's interesting that we have these two digressions over here and that they bear some similarity to each other and that they become the same story, that's very, very intriguing, we'll want to come back to that in terms of understanding the larger significance of this story. But we still need to figure out the local significance of this story, what is this story doing here? Why is it interrupting right over here in the middle of the sale of Yosef? We've not yet found a sufficient answer to that, that is the question we need to come back to and try to figure out, is this really as much of a digression as it seems?

So let's come back, take another close look at Chapter 38 this time and see if we can figure out the answer to that question.

Okay so does Rashi answer the question that he posed? Rashi's own question was, why is it that the story of Yehuda and Tamar appears where it does and interrupts the larger Yosef saga? Do we now understand why we have the story of Yehuda and Tamar here? And I think the answer - at least superficially - is an emphatic no. Even if you accept everything that Rashi says, seems to only explain why one verse in the story of Yehuda and Tamar is here. Vayehi ba'eit hahi vayeired Yehuda mei'eis echov - Rashi says, why does it say; Vayeired Yehuda mei'eis echov? It says; Vayeired Yehuda mei'eis echov because it means that Yehuda didn't just go down physically from amongst his brothers, he went down politically as well as a result of what happened in the previous chapter, in the sale of Yosef.

Okay so you've shown why we need this verse. This verse tells me something about the consequences of the sale of Yosef which was what happened in Chapter 37, so now I understand why I need Chapter 38, verse 1. But that's all I understand. Why do I need verse 2, verse 3, verse 4? The story of Yehuda and Tamar should have been exactly one verse long and then we should have gone back to our regularly scheduled programming, back to the story of Yosef going down to Egypt. Why do I have to hear the whole long story of Yehuda having three [brothers/sons 1:28], one of them died and then Tamar tried to marry this one and it didn't work out, tried to marry that one and this whole long, colorful story involving seduction and collateral as we'll see, and a woman almost getting killed and a whole long thing? The rest of it just seems like a diversion. What, because it was an interesting story, so we figured once we start talking about it, we throw in the rest of it? Why is the rest of it here?

So Rashi frustratingly asks the question, why is this story here, and then you expect you're going to get an answer, but it doesn't seem like you get an answer. Rashi seems to only answer why one verse is here at best - maybe even one word, over here, this word Vayeired. What is Rashi doing? Doesn't he see that he didn't answer his own question? This is what should bother you I think when you read this Rashi.

The theory that I want to suggest to you is that sometimes there's more than meets the eye to Rashi, especially when Rashi is quoting a Medrash. In fact this is a Medrash over here that Rashi quotes to answer his question. The way the Medrash works is kind of like the iceberg theory of things, you only see the tip - at least that's what visible to the naked eye. But if you explore a little bit you find there's a whole world beneath the surface. I think that's the case here too. I think if you look just beneath the surface you'll (a) find mountains of evidence for what it is that Rashi is saying, and (b) you'll see that Rashi is not just explaining why one verse is here, he's actually explaining why the entire story is here.

But in order to do this, we have to take a careful look at Rashi and the assumptions that he seems to be making, and see what is his evidence for these assumptions? They are not assumptions, they are not axioms that come out of nowhere, they are actually grounded in a careful look at the text, Rashi doesn't give you all the evidence you have to figure it out yourself. But let's take a look at what the assumptions are that Rashi is making and let's try and uncover the evidence for those assumptions. We'll begin to fill in some of the missing pieces over here.

Here are some of the assertions that Rashi makes. Here's the Rashi that we're looking at, we're looking at Chapter 38, verse 1, the Rashi over there. By the way, almost everything we're going to be doing in the

Yehuda and Tamar story is really just figuring out what Rashi means over here. It's just taking apart the layers of meaning which seem to be packed in, almost obliquely, into this one Rashi. So here are Rashi's assertions. (A) When Yehuda went down from amongst his brothers he went down politically not just physically. That's one thing that Rashi is going to argue, what's the evidence for that? (2) When Yehuda was politically demoted that was a direct result of the brothers' perception of Yehuda's role in the sale of Yosef, they were dissatisfied with how they thought Yehuda led them. What is the evidence for that?

Assertion number 3 that Rashi makes, the brothers regretted their decision to sell Yosef once they saw their father's grief over the loss of his son. Now remember that's an assumption that Rashi is making, that the brothers actually regretted the sale of Yosef; Keshera'u betzarat avihem - when they saw how upset their father was. What's the evidence that Rashi has for that? Because it's not explicit in the text. Indeed if you look at the text it's actually only much later - four, five chapters later, Chapter 42 over here in this verse which we looked at before - that you actually see evidence that the brothers regretted the sale of Yosef. If in other words, if I asked you what is the first time you have evidence in the text for the idea that the brothers regretted having sold Yosef? It would have been here when they say amongst themselves when Yosef is overhearing them, they don't know it's Yosef; Yosef is this masked man, this official in charge of grain in Egypt. They're saying to themselves, gee, all these misfortunes are befalling us because; Asheimim anachnu - we are guilty; Al achinu asher ra'inu tzarat nafsho behitchaneno eleinu v'loh shamanu - because we saw his pain and we didn't listen to him. We talked about this verse before. But this seems to be the first time, the very first time, that the brothers seem to regret, or have a sense that they might have done something wrong. At least we don't have any evidence that they felt this before that.

But Rashi is now making a very bold argument, he's saying, no, no, no, immediately after the sale, right over here when Yaakov mourns, when they heard these words that Yaakov was inconsolable; Vayema'ein lehitnachem - that he would not be comforted, that's when they regretted the sale of Yosef. So where do we see that? It's not explicit in the text, how does Rashi know that?

Finally, number 4, Rashi's assertion is that the brothers would have listened to Yehuda - or at least that's their own perception of things - that they thought that they would have listened to Yehuda had he told them to return Yosef to his father. That's actually, according to Rashi, the nature of the flaw in Yehuda's leadership that the brothers identify. Atah amarta lemochro - they said, you told us to sell him, we were listening to you. Ilu amarta lehashivo hayinu shomim lecha - if you would have told us to return him to Dad, we would have listened to you. Now that's an assumption Rashi is making too. How does Rashi know that? Or, how does Rashi know that they were even thinking that? And if they were thinking that, is what they're thinking true? Are they delusional? Are they just blaming everything on Yehuda and sort of lying to themselves because they wouldn't have listened to him anyway? Or would they have listened to him? Is there any evidence for that, one way or the other?

So these are the assumptions that Rashi is making, what is the evidence, if any, in the text that supports these assumptions? Take a look at the text, go back to the beginning of 38, the end of 37, wherever you want to look in the Yosef story, do you think there's evidence that supports these assertions? Let's come

back in the next video and let's compare notes.

Okay so let's begin with Rashi's first two assumptions that he's making, which I've labeled over here, ever so conveniently, 1 and 2. That is, this idea that first when Yehuda went down from his brothers he went down politically not just physically. Two, that the reason why he was demoted was because the brothers perceived him as having failed in leading them somehow in the sale of Yosef. Finally, maybe let's even throw in the beginning of 3 and talk about that too, which is that the nature of the failure became apparent to them when they saw their father's grief; Keshera'u betzarat avihem - when they saw how pained their father was. So is there any evidence for these three things over here?

I mentioned to you before that Rashi was kind of basing himself on a playoff of this word; Vayeired Yehuda mei'eis echov - that Yehuda went down from amongst his brothers. That's the word that Rashi wants to suggest to us, kind of in a Medrashic sense, means that he was caused to descend politically from amongst his brothers. It turns out that there is a little bit more to the story than that. That Rashi seems to be getting this from somewhere. In order to see this I want to challenge you, take a moment and look earlier in the text, look in Chapter 37, do you see this word or a version of this word anywhere in Chapter 37 that comes to mind in a way that might support the argument that Rashi is making? Take a look at 37, especially the end of 37, see what you find.

So it turns out that there actually is some evidence for this, I think, and Rashi sees the evidence in making a connection between the text's two uses of this word right over here, Vayeired - going down. Because the other time we have it right before Chapter 38, indeed just a couple of verses before this we have it right over here. Let's take a look at this verse; Vayakumu kol banav v'kol benotav lenachamo - and all of his children, all of Yaakov's children got up to try to comfort him; Vayema'ein lehitnachem - but he would not be comforted. Vayomer - why wouldn't he be comforted? Because he said; Ki eired el beni - I will go down - there's that word again, going down - I will go down to my grave mourning Yosef.

Vayevk oto aviv - and his father cried for him. Well isn't that interesting? Because just a verse or two after this - this is at the very end of Chapter 37 - a verse or two after this we get to this, the first verse in 38 in which we have this word one more time.

Rashi seems to be making a connection between these words. It's almost as if he's saying, you want to understand this Vayeired? In order to understand this Vayeired you have to go back to this Ki Eired. The reason why Yehuda went down, was demoted, from amongst his brothers is because Yaakov his father said; Ki eired el beni avel she'olah - I'm going to go down my grave mourning Yosef. When the brothers saw the depth of his pain they came to the conclusion that Yehuda had failed them. So you see Rashi seems to be linking these two Vayeireds, these two goings down.

Now it's interesting because it's not just two, it's actually three, it's actually a triangle. Remember we talked about this whole section Genesis 38 being what appears to be a digression? We've got Chapter 37 the sale of Yosef, we've got Chapters 39 - 50 the rest of the Book of Genesis, which is the whole story of Yosef in Egypt when he meets up with his brothers, eventually meets up with his father. And then the story which we're looking at right over here, Chapter 38, Yehuda and Tamar, which seems to be this unconscionable digression right in the middle of this great story of the sale of Yosef. Now, the very first verse in this digression, as Rashi reminds us, begins with these words; And Yehuda went down from

amongst his brothers. That's the very first verse, the transition verse, that is the link as it were between Chapter 37 and 38, it opens 38. Well it turns out that if this over here is the transition verse that opens 38, as we've just seen the verses that end 37 also have this went down verse.

Well now if we come back to the end of the digression, so to speak, the transition verse going into 39, let's take a look and see what we find there. Well here it is right here, this is the verse that ends the transition, that brings us back to the sale of Yosef where we're going to spend the next 12 chapters or so in, after the story of Yehuda and Tamar, the whole rest of the Book of Genesis, the transition verse is right over here, Chapter 39, verse 1. Look what it says. V'Yosef hurad Mitzrayma - oh isn't that interesting? Yosef was brought down to Egypt. See what's going on here? There's this triangle of Vayeireds, this triangle of going down. It begins with Yaakov's mourning at the very end of Chapter 37; Ki eired el beni avel she'olah. It then continues with the transition verse into the digression; Vayeired Yehuda mei'eis echov - Yehuda went down from amongst his brothers. Then, as we come out of that digression it continues with one more; V'Yosef hurad Mitzrayma - Yosef went down to Egypt. There is a tale to be told in these goings downs. These are the links that make the digression sort of make sense.

What Rashi seems to be suggesting is that there is this triangle of Vayeireds and the triangle would look something like this. There's the top of the triangle, a cause of it all, and the cause is somehow this.

Yaakov's statement, I will go down to my grave mourning Yosef, has ramifications. One ramification it has is for Yehuda; Yehuda gets demoted from his position of leadership when the brothers see what it is that Yaakov is saying here; I will go down to my grave mourning Yosef, and that causes them to regret the sale of Yosef. So one ramification is for Yehuda and his position of leadership over the brothers, he goes down, he is demoted, as Rashi says, from his position of leadership over them. But another cause is for Yosef. There is a second person that is affected by all of these cataclysmic events that have been caused in Chapter 37, and that of course is Yosef. Yosef went down to Egypt.

So in other words, what it's saying is, is that the ramifications of the sale of Yosef are not to be understood narrowly, just in terms of what happens to Yosef when Yosef went down to Egypt. No, there is another story to be told here too, the ramifications of the sale of Yosef for Yehuda; Yehuda's going down from his brothers, and that is what the story of Yehuda and Tamar is about. What I want to argue to you is it's not just what the first verse is about, it's about, Rashi is saying, what the entire story is about. It's about understanding what the ramifications, what the cataclysmic effects were of the sale of Yosef. The cataclysmic effects for Yosef we'll get to in Chapter 39, the cataclysmic effects for Yehuda come much earlier in the very next chapter, in Chapter 38, and that's how Rashi wants us to understand the story.

Okay, we're still just scratching the surface of Rashi, but we're beginning to make some headway in understanding the evidence in the text for some of these assertions. Let's come back and examine some of the other assertions and let's look a little bit deeper and continue to put this together.

Okay I want to turn our focus to Rashi's third assumption - or what at least I'm calling his third assumption, the fact that - or at least Rashi's contention that the brothers regretted their decision to sell Yosef already once they saw their father's grief over the loss of his son. Which means, by the way, that just about immediately after the sale they had already regretted what it is that they've done. That is really an astounding contention. It's astounding for two reasons; first of all because if you're just reading the Biblical text - again as we've talked before - it doesn't seem as if they regretted it until chapters later, years later. They come and they meet Yosef and they talk amongst themselves and they say, oh this is probably happening to us because we're guilty for what we did to our brother. That's really the first time that you hear any obvious evidence in the Biblical text that they actually regretted it. The idea that the same day they had already thought it was a bad idea, how does Rashi know that?

Even more, what is the trigger, according to Rashi, once they saw their father's grief over the loss of his son? Or in Rashi's words; Keshera'u betzarat avihem - it was their father's pain that convinced them that they were wrong. That is really astounding and here's why. When you think about their father's pain, was that something which was expected or unexpected? Did that come as a real surprise that Yosef is going to be gone, they're going to come to him with a torn-up coat, that's going to look like a wild beast devoured him, and Yaakov's is going to be like, oh okay, like, whatever, let's go on. I mean they must have expected that their father was going to be upset - a little upset, very upset? So it's no surprise that Yaakov is upset. So if it's no surprise how could that be a catalyst for them all of a sudden concluding that they're wrong? They weren't surprised by that, that had to have been part of the plan to begin with.

In other words, imagine I'm one of the brothers, so say I'm Shimon over here, and let's go back to that moment right where you see Yosef approaching. Okay so here's Yosef over here, Yosef is coming, lah- di-dah-di-dah and Shimon sees him coming and Yosef is on his way, he's on a trajectory to arrive here in about three minutes. So you've got three minutes to plan. Here you are, you're conferring with your other brothers, and over here there's this gaping pit in the desert and you're thinking, hmm, should we put Yosef in the pit when he comes? Then you're talking about it. So you must be thinking, like, well how are we going to deal with it with Dad? So you must have factored in the fact that Yaakov's is going to be angry? It doesn't come as a surprise.

It's like in stock prices, once everyone knows that the company is going to report a loss, so if I know that six weeks before they report a loss, it doesn't affect the stock price anymore. Shimon conferring with his brothers have already factored in Yaakov's response, so to speak, into the stock prices, they're not surprised by this. So how could they regret everything once in fact what they expected happens - that Yaakov mourns and he feels terrible? Of course he was going to feel terrible, how could you be surprised by that? How could you change your mind about whether you thought this was right or wrong just because what you expected in terms of Yaakov's grief actually materialized?

It must be that something unexpected happened, that Yaakov's grief was not expected in quite the way it appeared. So what we have to do to really understand Rashi is figure out that, what is the unexpected part of Yaakov's grief? Or to put it in another way, what was their plan? How did they plan on handling Yaakov's grief and what happened that upset that plan?

Okay so let's go back to the text, let's look at their father's grief and try to isolate the unexpected plan. Vayakumu kol banav v'kol benotav lenachamo - now when you read this, I want you to focus here on 35, and ask yourself what are the extra words? What is the idea which seems trivial here, which I don't really need to hear about? Let's actually go back to verse 34 and continue into 35. Vayikre'ah Yaakov simlotav - Yaakov tears his clothes; Vayasem sak bemosnov - he put sackcloth on; Vayisabel al beno yamim rabim - and he goes and he mourns for many days. Vayakumu kol banav v'kol benotav lenachamo - and all of his children; his daughters and his sons, came up and they tried to offer comfort to him; Vayema'ein lehitnachem - but he would not be comforted, because he said; Ki eired el beni avel she'olah - I will go down to my grave mourning Yosef, and his father cried for him. What is unexpected in this (a), and (b) is there any extra detail which the verse gives me which doesn't really seem to be adding that much? Anything which seems kind of superfluous? What do you think about that?

Okay so I want to suggest two things to you, (a) the unexpected element of the father's grief. The unexpected element of the father's grief is this, it's actually this word over here that Rashi is focused on. Ki eired el beni avel she'olah - I will go down to my grave mourning Joseph. Remember Rashi, as we talked about before, makes this Yeired connection, this going down connection, between these two Vayeireds. But it's actually this which is the unexpected element of the grief. In other words, what happens in verse 34 is actually quite expected. Okay so he tears his clothes, that's expected. He puts sackcloth, he's mourning that's expected. Vayisabel al beno yamim rabim - and he mourns for many days for his son. They would have expected all of that. Let's get to the part that seems superfluous in the verse. What seems superfluous is this piece right over here; Vayakumu kol banav v'kol benotav lenachamo - and then all of his children got up to comfort him. Why am I hearing about that? Just tell me he mourned for a long time, put 34 and 35 together. What difference does it make in the middle of that, all of his children got up to comfort him?

What I want to suggest is, that that's not superfluous, this is actually crucial, because this was their plan. What was their plan? When Shimon was conferring with the brothers back at the pit, what was their plan? Their plan was yes, of course father will mourn, but that's what he has a family for. Thank G-d, Baruch Hashem, he's blessed with 12 sons and okay, so he loses one of them of course, but look, death is part of life, everybody gets over loss, and how do they get over loss, because they have a loving family and we will be the loving family for Yaakov. We will console him for his loss, and with the psychological support of all of his sons and all of his children he will be able to gradually get over this loss. Yes, death is terrible, but the way it works is, is that we all get over loss eventually, and it will be hard, but it's worth it, because Yosef is such a problem for the family that we need to get rid of him and Yaakov will eventually get over it.

If we go back, by the way, to what we started this whole series with, this question of what were they thinking? We talked about that from four perspectives, the brothers, Yosef, Yaakov, G-d, what was everyone thinking in the story? There were two aspects of what were the brothers thinking, one part of it was not such a nice thing to do put your brother in a pit, but the other part of it is that what about their father? Even if they're going to do this to Yosef, how could they have done this to their father who they loved, to destroy him so much? The answer may be that they had a plan. The plan didn't work but

they had a plan. As far as it's not such a nice thing to do, well we talked about that; Yosef is illegitimately being treated as the Bechor, he's destroying the whole family, he's usurping Reuven's rightful place, it can't be allowed to stand. But what about their father? How can we do this to him? Well here is the plan; Vayakumu kol banav v'kol benotav lenachamo - the comfort of family. We'll help him get over this.

So they do it; Vayakumu kol banav v'kol benotav lenachamo - they get up to comfort him, they're putting their plan into action. The next thing that is supposed to happen - one of the things you always need to do when you read this text is don't be fooled by the illusion of inevitability, what happens in the Torah is not necessarily inevitable, it could have happened differently. What the brothers expected did not actually take place. They expected Yaakov to be comforted, like anyone would be comforted for loss after many, many days. Time together with love really heals all wounds. But it didn't happen, time did not heal anything. Vayema'ein lehitnachem - he would not be comforted and he said; Ki eired el beni avel she'olah - I'm going down to my grave, I will never be comforted. Years, decades later, I won't be comforted - and it was true, he was never comforted. He never got over the loss of Yosef, even decades later he did continue to mourn. He mourned and cried perpetually for his loss. That's when they knew they were wrong.

In Rashi's words; this unexpected happening; Ki eired el beni - the shocking declaration of Yaakov that he will never get over it, that time will not dim the pain in the least, convinced them that something was missing, they miscalculated. Therefore if Yehuda was the one who engineered this; Vayeired Yehuda mei'eis echov. If father is going down to his grave mourning Yosef, then Yehuda must be made to go down from his position of leadership over us.

The question I want to talk about with you next is why - why didn't the plan work? Weren't they right? Doesn't family always help you comfort loss? Why couldn't Yaakov get over it? It turns out that Rashi has an answer to that too. We'll take a look at it when we come back.

So why was it that the brothers were wrong? Why was it that Yaakov could never stop mourning for the loss of his son? Isn't true that in general time heals wounds? People usually don't mourn with the same depth of pain and loss five years, 10 years, 15, 20 years after a loss. Loss never goes away, but it - the pain gradually eases. Not in the case of Yaakov. I will go down to my grave mourning my son. He cries and he cries and he cries. Where is this coming from?

So Rashi has a theory and I want to share it with you. Rashi comments on these words; Vayema'ein lehitnachem - that Yaakov would not accept comfort, and here's what he says. Vayema'ein lehitnachem - Ein adam yachol lekabel tanchumin al hachai vesavor she'meis - a person cannot accept comfort for the loss of a living person thinking mistakenly that he's dead. She'al hameit nigzerah gezeira sheyishtachach min haleiv v'loh al hachai - because G-d grants the gift of forgetting, which is the salve that heals our wounds only for those who are truly dead and not for those who are alive; V'loh al hachai. In other words, the brothers' mistake ironically is that Yosef is still alive. On the one hand that lessens the gravity of their crime, they say, his blood won't be on our hands, but what they didn't realize is that when Yosef is still alive, you can't forget him, you can't close the book on his loss.

You see it in the Jewish laws of mourning themselves, here are a couple of them. According to traditional Jewish burial, have you ever noticed how traditional Jewish burials are different than the way others bury their dead? There's no viewing of the dead in a dressed-up state, there's no looking at them, making them look fine and nice and beautiful, in a gorgeous suit and never looked better in his life.

There's none of that. There's no burial in a beautiful casket with a fine, linen pillow. No. It's just a plain pine box. The grave is not filled in with [unclear 2:07], the mourners traditionally shovel the dirt with their own shovels on the grave. There's nothing more final than the sound of dirt hitting a casket; it says, it's over. The law of tearing your shirt traditionally is not done with this little black ribbon, you tear your shirt in grief, it's irreparable loss.

Finally, just the Hebrew word for mourner itself. It's very interesting, a colleague of mine once pointed out that the phrase in Hebrew for mourner is Aval. You spell it over here; Aleph, Beit, Lamed. Avel actually, vowelized this way. But when you take these letters and vowelize it this way it means mourner, interestingly when you take these letters and vowelize it differently, you vowelize it like this, then what it means is nevertheless or but. Why? Why does it mean that? Because every mourner has a question, why did it happen to me? How could it happen? There is no answer to that question. The answer is nevertheless it happened. Mourning is the process of understanding that it did happen - but it happened and therefore I have to move on.

Comfort comes ironically from assimilating the pain of loss, the finality of loss, and then being able to move on knowing that it's final. But what happens when it's not final? That's when loss lingers. That's when loss really gets you. Because you can never close the book, you can never say goodbye to the pain. Some modern day examples of this. Why is it that POWs is the most painful thing for any nation? Not just those who were killed but those who were missing, that you just don't know where they are.

America and the Vietnam War. Israel with Gilad Shalit, willing to trade thousands and thousands of people, willing to go to war for a kidnapped soldier. Not for the dead soldier but for the kidnapped

soldier. Because the fate of the kidnapped soldier is a question mark, and the question mark is the most painful thing. Why is it that in the wake of 9/11 search parties and search parties and search parties looked for people you knew were dead but you didn't have any evidence that they were dead? You were just looking for a shred of some sort of DNA evidence, something you could give back to the family to say that it's over. If I don't get that evidence I can always say to myself maybe they're walking the streets somewhere? Maybe they checked into a hospital and had amnesia? Even though it's nonsensical, even though it's not rational, your mind holds onto that.

For Yaakov it was never final. Yaakov ripped his clothes, he mourned, but he kept on mourning, he could never close the book. He refused to accept comfort. He never saw a body. He thought his son was dead but he never absolutely knew for sure. The truth is, Yosef is still alive. What Rashi is saying, seemingly, is he's expressing that this idea about closing the book is not just a psychological truth, it's an existential truth. It's the way things are. It's not just psychologically I can't let go of someone if I know that he's still alive. It's even if I don't know he's alive, even if I'm convinced that he's dead, but he's in fact alive - Rashi says I still won't really be able to say goodbye. There will be a part of me that won't be able to stop mourning. That even though Yaakov thought Yosef was dead, there was this little part of him that couldn't let go, because as a matter of fact, even though he didn't know it, Yosef was still alive. So ironically the brothers sparing the life of Yosef, even though it's a kindness on one hand, leads to a certain kind of extra cruelty in their father's reaction. He can never let go.

Therefore, according to Rashi, it's when they realize this, when they see the abiding pain that it's never getting better, that over the time, over the days, over the months there's no assuaging father's pain, that's when they realize the plan was wrong. Shehoriduhu echov migedulato keshera'u betzarat avihem - the whole plan to sell him and to make things better - Yehuda's plan - they now come to the conclusion it was rotten at the core, it could never have worked. You failed us in their eyes. Amru - they said; Atah amarta lemochro, ilu amarta lehashivo hayinu shomim lecha - if you would have told us to return him we would have listened to you.

Let's examine this final premise. Is that just, you know, Monday-morning-quarterback? You know, very fine to say after the fact when you see things are bad, but at the time it's not really true, it's just their way of placing blame on him? Or is there any evidence that this too is correct, that they really would have listened? Let's now examine this final premise. The brothers would have listened to Yehuda had he told them to return Yosef to father, is that true? I think Rashi would argue that it is true. Here too I want to refer you to another comment of Rashi in the story of Yosef.

When Yehuda hatches his plan; Lechu venimkerenu layishma'elim - let's sell him to the Yishmaelim, let our hand not be upon him because after all; Achinu besareinu hu - he really is our brother, we can't really kill him, we can't do it. The brothers' reaction is given right here in the text; Vayishme'u echov - and the brothers listened. Rashi's comment on that over here; Vayishme'u echov, is to quote Onkelos.

Onkelos is the very early Aramaic translation of the Torah. Why is he quoting Onkelos? Because Onkelos in two words gives his explanation of what Vayishme'u means. In Aramaic; Vekabilu minei. Vekabilu minei in Aramaic means, and they accepted what it is that Yehuda said. Even in English by the

way, the word listen can have two connotations, it can mean physically to hear - even the word to hear, I hear what you're saying. It can mean physically to hear, or it can mean psychologically to accept. Even in English when we say I hear you, it doesn't just mean that physically the words went into my inner ear and my eardrum accepted them, transmitted them to my brain. It means I accept what you say, I hear you, I get it. Onkelos - the brothers got it, they accepted what he said; Vayishme'u echov - they listened to him, not just physically, psychologically. They accepted and they changed their mind because of what Yehuda said.

By the way, in this, lies Yehuda's leadership. Richard Neustadt a while back wrote this great book, recently got updated, called Presidential Power, in which he analyzes the nature of what it means to be powerful as a president. How is a president powerful? What he argues there is that we actually sometimes make a mistake in thinking about where a president's power really lies. We think a president's power lies in statutory powers; his ability to declare war, his ability to submit budgets to Congress, his ability to address the Union, his ability to order in the National Guard, issue executive orders. All of these are his statutory powers by law, but he argues that presidents that rely on these alone will eventually find their power slowly, slowly seeping away. A president's real source of power, Neustadt argues is actually in his power to persuade. The great presidents, people like FDR over here, people like Kennedy, even to some extent people like Reagan, were successful not because they were a bully in terms of how they used statutory powers, but because they used the bully pulpit. They understood the power to persuade. They took their case to the public, the public put pressure on congress, they were able to influence others.

According to Neustadt the great presidents leave their statutory powers in reserve and they become a reserve of power that enhances their ability to persuade, but it's the power to persuade that is their essential power.

Yehuda is ultimately the leader here, understood by the brothers to be their leader, because; Vayishme'u echov - we listened to you, you had our attention, we changed our mind. At that point the plan was to kill him, it was to leave him in the pit. They changed that plan because of Yehuda's power to persuade. We were listening to you they said. If you had gone further; Ilu amarta lehashivo hayinu shomim lecha - we would have listened to you to do that too. You had the responsibility to stop us. Had you told us to bring him back to father we would have done it.

So coming back to Rashi's assertions, it seems like there really is pretty good evidence for all of these assertions. The question we need to deal with now, is okay, so if we accept all of these assertions, still there's one last problem, which is that they don't add up - apparently - to a solution to Rashi's central problem, which is; Lamah nismecha parsha zu l'kan - why is this story here? Because even if you accept that Yehuda went down from his brothers, not just physically but politically. Even you accept that the reason why he was politically demoted was because the brothers perceived him as having failed them in the sale of Yosef. Even if you accept that the brothers regretted their decision once they saw their father's grief, they understood that they were wrong, they understood that this is a loss that father will never get over and that they were mistaken that they could console him. Even you accept that the brothers would have listened to Yehuda had he told them to return Yosef to father. Even if you accept all of that, it still seemingly doesn't add up to a solution to this problem, which is why is this story here?

Because even if you accept all of that, what you would essentially be doing is accepting the Medrashic reading of this word. But it's just one word, it's just one sentence, we're just understanding this sentence; Vayehi ba'eit hahi Vayeired Yehuda mei'eis echov - the reason why it says Vayeired is to teach us these things, to teach us that Yehuda went down politically from among his brothers. But that just explains this one word, or at best this one sentence, what about the rest of this whole chapter going on farther, and farther, and farther? Why is all this here?

What I want to argue to you next is that this little Rashi is a very, very deep little piece of work and it's not just telling you about one verse, it's telling you about the whole story. Let's come back and see how that's so.

Okay so before we dive back into the story of Yehuda and Tamar and pick up this challenge of trying to figure out exactly where it is that Rashi is coming from here, I want to just as a quick epilogue to the last point, just talk for a moment to you about Yehuda and his position, vis-à-vis the brothers, in relation actually to Reuven, or contrasted to Reuven. We talked a little bit before in our last unit about Reuven's attempts to save Yosef, and in a certain way, Yehuda also attempts to save Yosef, how are those attempts similar and how are they different? How is it that the picture of Yehuda merges different than the picture we get of Reuven?

So looking back to what we talked about with Reuven, remember, this is kind of the piece that we were talking about Reuven the seer, Shimon the hearer, Reuven sees the pain of his brother. Reuven is very heroic in the degree of empathy that he feels for Yosef, and his attempts to save him. He tries to save Yosef and go all the way and return him to his father, to right what he sees as a terrible wrong, here he goes all the way.

On the other hand, he doesn't actually persuade his brothers nor does he even try to. What he does in fact is he does an end-run around them. Remember what he says to the brothers is; Yad al tishlachu bo - let's not send our hand against him, let's leave him in the pit. What he attempts to argue to the brothers, let's leave him in the pit to die, so he's not really changing anything, it doesn't make a difference whether you kill him outright and put his bones in the pit or whether you just leave him in the pit to die. From that perspective he's telling the brothers basically the same thing, what difference does it make which way you kill him? The reason why he's doing it is to do an end-run around the brothers so that at night he can come back - as the text says; Lema'an hatzil oto miyadam lehashivo el aviv - to bring him back to his father, unbeknownst to the brothers. So he makes no attempt to actually confront the brothers and persuade them to change their minds, but what he's going to do is he is going to try to act unilaterally without them and try to circumvent them.

So if you contrast that to Yehuda, Yehuda does save Yosef from death but he doesn't go quite as far as Reuven. His argument is not that we should save him and this is wrong and this is abhorrent and that we can't really do this, and that we have to return him to father. He doesn't go as far as saying we should return him to father, instead he says, let's sell him as a slave instead. So he doesn't go as far as Reuven. On the other hand, he actually does persuade the brothers, he actually confronts them and persuades them to follow him.

So what we might do is look at the orange over here as a measure of sort of leadership capacity or ability to act as a leader. Yehuda is acting as a leader much more than Reuven - at least in Neustadt's version of this. He's actually confronting the brothers and persuading them effectively. The brothers, if anything, say you should have gone further. What were you doing just saving Yosef from death, you should have gone further and had us return him to father. Reuven on the other hand, who actually has that ambition, wants to save Yosef and return him to father, is the one who doesn't feel that he has the leadership ability to be able to do it, and in fact, doesn't act as a leader in that kind of way. So even though in the brothers' eyes, at least, now that they see themselves as wrong for having sold Yosef, might see Reuven - if they would only understand where Reuven is coming from - as having the sort of the morally superior

position. Reuven wanted to save Yosef and return him to his father, but unfortunately, Reuven wasn't able to make that actually happen, wasn't able to persuade the brothers. Does an end-run around them and the end-run doesn't succeed because it's foiled by Yehuda's plan and ultimately the Yishmaelim get in the way and selling him before Reuven is able to actually make his plan happen.

Yehuda's plan in not quite - and this is the brothers' argument; the brothers' argument is it was morally flawed. You knew this was wrong, the brothers are arguing, you should have told us to return him to father. But for all the moral flaws of Yehuda he is acting as a leader, he is an effective leader. What he does argue he's able to argue and he's able to win, he's able to persuade the brothers to follow him.

So in effect then the brothers' critique of Yehuda is not a critique of Yehuda's leadership capacity. They're not saying you aren't an effective leader, you don't have leadership qualities. He does. The critique is the direction in which he takes those qualities. You didn't go far enough in the brothers' view. You see it actually if you look at the text very carefully. You see sort of a kind of cutting corners that Yehuda is doing, which, in Rashi's eyes, the brothers later are sort of holding him culpable for, saying, you should have gone further. In other words, in the brothers' view the brothers feel that Yehuda understood that it was wrong, but didn't go far enough in stopping them.

Let's look at Yehuda's language again; Vayomer Yehuda el echov mah betza ki naharog et achinu vechisinu et damo - as we read these verses, I want you to take a look for a word that appears over and over again. What's the word that appears over and over again? Yehuda says to his brothers, what profit do we get out of killing our brother and covering his blood? Let's sell him to the Yishmaelim, let our hand not be upon him, because after all, he is our brother. And, his brothers listen to him. Do you hear the word? It happens four times. What's the word? The word is brother. Here's the first one; Vayomer Yehuda el echov - Yehuda says to his brothers. What gain do we have out of killing our brother - there's the second one - and covering up his blood? Let's sell him to the Yishmaelim, let our hand not be upon him because after all he is our brother. And the brothers listen to him.

Now notice also that the word brother doesn't mean the same thing each time. The two outer brothers, this one - one and four - over here, if you view this as a sandwich, this is the bread and this is the meat. Two and three are the meat and one and four is the bread - the outer brothers. The outer brothers, who are these people? Who is Yehuda talking to when he talks to his brothers? Who are the ones listening to him when his brothers listen? How is that different from the middle ones? The middle brothers over here; What gain do we have over killing our brother, because after all he is our brother. So these ones on the outside are referring to Yehuda's partners over here, to the full brothers, the ones who are plotting along with Yehuda as to what to do with Yosef. These brothers over here, is a reference to Yosef himself, the outcast brother, the half-brother. But of course it's the same word, and the argument ostensibly that Yehuda is making is that, well brothers are brothers, they should all be treated the same. He is our brother so how could we do this to him?

On the other hand, is he really taking that argument to the nth degree? I mean if you really accept the premise that Yosef is your brother, and that therefore you ought not kill him; What do we gain out of

killing him and covering up his blood, that's the wrong thing to do, because after all; Ki achinu besareinu hu - he is our brother. Well if he is your brother then not only should you not kill him, you shouldn't sell him as a slave either.

This really is the brothers' argument. What were you doing letting us sell him? You knew this was wrong, you understood he was our brother, why didn't you go the whole way? You didn't go the whole way because at some level you were afraid of us, and maybe there is his failure of leadership. A leader cannot be afraid of the ones he led, you were afraid that we wouldn't listen to you, you have the power, we were listening to you, you should have gone all the way. Not only don't you kill him, you don't sell him as a slave either. This is the brothers' critique against Yehuda in Rashi's eyes.

Okay, having seen all this, let's come back to the question we asked before, understanding this Rashi, this Rashi in which Rashi wants to figure out why is this not a digression. Lamah nismecha parsha zu l'kan - why is this Parsha here? Rashi's argument is, is that this whole story of Yehuda and Tamar, the whole thing, not just the first verse, is not a digression. He's explaining that the reason why the whole Parsha is here is for the reasons he's argued here, because Yehuda has been demoted and the brothers have caused him to lose his position of leadership over them. How is that an explanation for why this story which doesn't seem to belong is all here? How is it that Rashi is not explaining one verse, but explaining the whole story?

So again, we're going to come back and look at that.

So the truth is that this question which we have been beginning to talk about is Chapter 38 a digression, if we pull back the zoom lens it's actually a pretty significant question. Imagine if you were taking a long haul trip on a plane, a fellow comes sits down next to you, introduces himself, he's been studying Bible at McGill University, and then wants to say to you, look I think the Bible is really interesting, my professor has been talking to me about all these different authors of the Bible. There's the J author and the E author and the P author and the D author, he's been talking about actually Julius Wellhausen's theory. Julius Wellhausen was a guy who lived a while back in Germany, right over here is a picture of him, and he propounded a theory known as a Documentary Hypothesis. The idea that the Bible was composed not by G-d but by all these different sort of multiple authors, and then an editor later on came and put them together. That if you look carefully enough you can see the seams, you could see where this document was kind of stitched together - not very well, because the editor didn't do that great of a job and couldn't cover over all the tracks of the multiple authors. Therefore, if you look carefully, you will find the evidence of these multiple authors.

Actually Chapter 38 has historically been one of the places that the Documentary Hypothesis will point to for its claims. So imagine this guy is telling you, yeah, you know I was reading the Documentary Hypothesis, the story of Judah and Tamar, what is the story with Judah and Tamar doing there? It's just interrupting the whole story of the sale of Yosef, this unconscionable interruption of the story of the sale of Yosef, and it proves, he will argue, that there are multiple authors. You see this is one author over here and this is one author but then evidently there was another competing author and he kind of threw this in, and maybe he was from the tribe of Judah and felt there was too much about Joseph, and wanted some more Judah stuff, and he only threw it in. Then later on some editor came and kind of stitched this altogether and didn't bother really doing that good of a job, and so we've still got this digression in here. This is the Documentary Hypothesis, that this is fundamentally a digression.

Now Rashi is arguing that that's not so, that there's no competing author here. Rashi of course is going with the normative Jewish view, the Bible is the product of one author, G-d gave the Torah at Sinai.

Imagine that you propound that back to your fellow Joe on the plane and you tell him Rashi explains what this chapter is doing here. Chapter 38 is here because - and then you start telling him Rashi's theory. Will Joe be impressed? So again, if you just read Rashi superficially, if you're not careful, he doesn't seem to give a really great refutation of why this is a digression. It still seems a digression. As we said before, Rashi seems to only explain the first verse, and as I mentioned to you before, it's my contention that Rashi is explaining more than the first verse.

But let's say you would want to come back to Joe on the plane, let's say you would actually want to sort of argue against the Documentary Hypothesis. You know, there's sort of two ways you could do it. One way to do it, which is kind of has its limited effectiveness, is you could say, well look you have your theory, you think this is a digression and you think it was put in here by some other author, and my theory is that there's a different reason why this is here. Then you can come up and pick one of a dozen reasons of why you think this story is here. Basically you can all agree to disagree. He'll have his theory and you'll have your theory of why this is here, and you'll all kind of go home, and you'll never really know who is right.

But is there a way to actually take the offensive against this theory? In other words, not just to be on the defensive, that yeah, I'll explain to you why this digression is here, but to actually be on the offensive. In other words, what I want to argue to you is that Chapter 38 is actually some of the best evidence we have that the Torah is actually a unified document. That parts of the Torah that seem to be just kind of pasted together with digressions here and digressions there, aren't, and if you look under the surface, it's all unified. It had to have been the product of one author. How would you prove that? What would you have to look for in Chapter 38 in order to make that argument?

So what would you need to see in Chapter 38 to prove that we're not looking at a digression, at something that was plunked in there by another author? So let me answer that, if I can, by way of analogy. Right here you see on your screen a patchwork quilt, actually a handmade patchwork quilt. So imagine that someone came to you and said, this quilt was sewn together by different people, it wasn't one person who decided to sew it together because look, this thing over here has nothing to do - looks so different than this. Somebody who chose polka dots obviously is not interested in stripes, and somebody who chose stripes is not interested in polka dots. Or, there's obviously a blue author here and this is evidence of the blue author, and then there's a pink author and people who don't like pink, they don't like blue, now these polka dots clearly were done by the same person. But - and everything else was done by different people. Let's say someone made that argument, how could you refute it?

You know, one thing you could say, is you could say, well, you know you think it's different authors I think it's the same author, and they just chose to put different things in here. You could make that argument and you too could agree to disagree, and go your ways. But how could you prove that they're wrong? How could you prove that there's actually one maker of this quilt? What would you have to show? You would have to show some sort of seamless stitching, some sort of seamless interweaving.

Let's say you took this and you flipped it upside down, and you were able to look on the underside of the quilt, what if you saw the same distinctive weave for all of the different patchworks? That would show a single author. What if I looked at this piece carefully, this red polka dot piece, and what if, if I began to examine this underneath a microscope, this patch over here? I began to see at a microscopic level the same red polka dots. And what if l looked at this paisley pattern over here and if I look carefully I began to see at a microscopic level, the paisley pattern all over here in the leaves and the leaves over here, and over here it looks so different, but at the microscopic level, I'm seeing these exact same paisley patterns in pink, woven throughout all of this grey and everything. At that point, it becomes pretty hard to resist the idea that this is a single author. That kind of cross weaving of themes doesn't take place - at the surface level it's patchwork, at the deeper level it's all interwoven, it has to be unitary.

What I want to suggest to you is that if we want to settle this question, is Chapter 38 a digression, once and for all, the way to settle it, is to look carefully in Chapter 38 and see if we see that cross weave. If we look at Chapter 37, Chapter 39, 40, 41, and all of that, do we see a certain kind of cross weave? Are there themes, words, ideas, that are distinctive in Chapter 38, that are cross woven with 37, 39, 40, 41, with the Joseph story? If you find these very distinctive words and themes that are underneath the surface echoes of the Joseph story over and over and over again, that's what you show, it's all the work of one master

artist. That's the way you flip over the quilt and you see the same distinctive hand stitching on the other side. It's the way you see this polka dot pattern reappearing over and over again in every one of the panels.

We're going to be looking for those telltale cross weaves in Chapter 38. Go back to 38 and start looking for those distinctive hallmarks of hand stitching. Ask yourself, what about 38 reminds me of the Joseph story? I'm reading a story which is so different from the Joseph story, but if I listen very carefully, if I look at the other side of the quilt, I begin to see these themes, these words, these ideas, that eerily remind me over and over and over again, of the Joseph story either before or after Chapter 38. This is the cross stitching that shows a unified Torah. Open up your text, go back to the quilt, as it were, read Chapter 37, read it with 38, read 39, read 40, read it all together, ask yourself, can you find the common themes, ideas and phrases and make it all part of an unmistakable magical whole?

Hi Rabbi Fohrman back with you, we're going to be taking a look now in detail at the Yehuda and Tamar story, Genesis Chapter 38, and when we do so I want you to be doing something, and I'm going to be doing something. What I'm going to be doing is just reading through the story with you. I'm going to read it through in Hebrew, you'll have the English on the right side of the page, and I'll try to translate it freely as I go. But as I do it, I'm going to sort of make some observations along the way about some questions that come to mind for me, as well as some observations as we go through it. Just the kinds of things that any intelligent fellow kind of reading this through, I think would ask about.

And what I want you to do while I'm doing that, is listen to the story but out of the corner of your eye, try to watch out for connections of one kind or another. Conceptual connections, linguistic connections, language connections, words, phrases, ideas, that seem to link Genesis Chapter 38 with the surrounding text. That is with Genesis Chapter 37 - Bereishit Lamed-Zayin, the story of the sale of Yosef itself, or the story afterwards Bereishit Lamed-Tet - Genesis 39, the story of Potiphar or later on in the story of Joseph in Egypt. Are there any indications that Chapter 38 is intimately connected? Do you hear resonance between this apparent digression, the story of Yehuda and Tamar, and the surrounding text? What ideas, themes and phrases seem to kind of be popping up here, that popup elsewhere in the Joseph story? Do you find any?

So you take a look at that, I'm going to talk about what comes to mind for me as I read through this, and then we'll come back and compare notes.

So with no further ado, let's jump in over here, Bereishit Lamed-Chet, Pasuk Aleph. Vayehi ba'eit hahi - and it happened at that time; Vayeired Yehuda mei'eis echov - and Yehuda went down from amongst his brothers; Vayeit ad ish adulami ushemo Chira - so he came to this man by the name of Chira. Vayar sham Yehuda bat ish canaani - so Yehuda saw there the daughter of a Canaanite man; Ushemo Shuah - his name was Shuah; Vayikacheha vayavo eileha - and he married her and had children with her. Vatahar vateiled ben - she conceived and had a child; Vayikra et shemo Er - Yehuda called the name of that child Er.

The names, by the way here, might be kind of significant. The names at least are kind of strange at first glance. For example, the name of the father of the bride of Yehuda is Shuah. Shuah from the language Yehoshua really means salvation. A strange kind of name for a father. Vatahar vateiled ben vayikra et shemo Er - a strange kind of a name for a son, Er: Ayin, Reish. What does Ayin, Reish mean? Well Er actually means awake, a strange kind of name, especially when you consider what happens to poor Er, we really don't know anything much about Er, but as I've mentioned to you before, he dies, and his name is Awake. Okay, kind of odd.

But anyway; Vatahar od vateiled ben - she then has a second child; Vatikra et shemo Onan - here too the name is strange, the second child's name is Onan. Onan - later on at least in Rabbinic Hebrew it means grief. Onan is the earliest stage of mourning, actually before burial you're known as an Onen. It's a kind of grief which is so pervasive and so dominating that you are Patur from all the Mitzvot, you don't have to put on Tefillin, you don't have to do anything, you're released from all obligations that you have

towards G-d, you're just focusing on the deceased. So a strange kind of name for this child, Onan. Awake and Grief.

By the way, it's kind of interesting because the story has a lot to do with death. Everyone is dying and here you have the child named Grief, it just - again the names are interesting, what do we make of all that?

Anyway; Vatosef od vateiled ben - she then has one last child; Vatikra et shemo Shelah - and she calls the name of this child Shelah. Again, what does that mean? Shin, Lamed, Heih? Shel-ah, that it's hers or something? What does that name even mean or does it mean anything?

So anyway; Vehaya bicheziv belideta oto - so let's continue. So Vayikach Yehuda isha l'Er bechoro ushemah Tamar - so Yehuda then takes a wife for Er and her name is Tamar. Vayehi Er bechor Yehuda ra'ah b'einei Hashem - so Tamar now married to Er suffers the loss of Er because Er the Bechor of Yehuda, the firstborn child of Yehuda, is; Ra'ah b'einei Hashem - is evil in the eyes of G-d and G-d causes him to die young. Now a couple of things to point out here. First of all, why does the verse have to go out of its way to mention that Er is the Bechor of Yehuda, the firstborn child of Yehuda? I mean if you've been paying attention, we just went through the genealogy, we know that Er is the firstborn, Er was born first, Onan was born second, Shelah was born third. So why does the text have to tell us that which is completely obvious? Second of all, just an interesting play on words here. Look at how you spell Er, the name of this child, look at what he is, he turns out to be Ra'ah. Ra'ah of course is Er spelled backwards, kind of interesting little play on words there. Ayin Reish is Er; Reish, Ayin is Ra'ah.

Anyway so Er dies and there are two children left, that would be Onan and Shelah. At that point Yehuda says to Onan - and we talked about before; Boh el eishes achicha v'yabem otah v'hakem zerah l'achicha - go be intimate with the widow of your brother Tamar, and have a Yibum child, a child through a levirate marriage, as we talked about before, that's going to carry on the name of your brother Er. But; Vayeida Onan ki loh lo yihiyeh hazarah - Onan knows that the child is not going to be his. In other words, even though of course biologically the child will be his, but spiritually and in every other way, the child is going to be seen as the legacy of the deceased Er, not the legacy of Onan. Therefore, he didn't want the situation, and therefore; Vehaya im bah el eishes achiv veshicheis artzah - he made sure that if he was intimate with the wife of his brother he would not impregnate her; Levilti netan zerah l'achiv - so he would not have these children which were not his. And, G-d didn't like that either - G-d didn't like what Er did before, G-d didn't like this either; Vayeirah b'einei Hashem asher osoh - it was evil in the eyes of G-d what Onan was doing. Vayomess gam oto - so G-d did away with Onan too.

So now there are two children dead, Er and Onan, and there's Shelah left. At that point remember Yehuda's perspective on this is very different from ours, Yehuda doesn't know what we the reader knows. We the reader knows why it is that Er and Onan died. Er and Onan die for their sins. Vayehi Er bechor Yehuda ra'ah b'einei Hashem - Er was evil in the eyes of G-d. Vayeirah b'einei Hashem asher osoh - G-d thought it was evil what Onan was doing, so G-d killed them. But Yehuda doesn't know all this. All Yehuda knows is there's this woman who marries my children, and she married two of them and

they're both dead, so it doesn't seem very safe to allow her to marry the next one.

With that in mind; Vayomer Yehuda l'Tamar kalato shevi almonoh beis avich - so Yehuda says to Tamar, I know that you have your eye on Shelah because if you marry Shelah you can perform Yibum with him and have this child that will carry on the legacy of your deceased husband Er. But he says, Shelah is too young. Shevi almonoh beis avich - why don't you wait as a widow in your father's house; Ad yigdal Shelah beni - until Shelah gets a little bit older. That's what he told her. But; Ki amar - he said to himself; Pen yamus gam hu k'echov - lest he die like his brothers. He was worried that Onan would die like his brothers and actually had no intention of giving Shelah to her even when Shelah gets older. So he puts off Tamar and tells her to wait, but in fact he's really not going to give her Shelah at all.

Vatelech Tamar vateishev beit aviha - so in this situation Tamar goes and waits in her father's house.

So, as it happens; Vayirbu hayamim vatamas bat Shuah eishes Yehuda - so after a long while the daughter of Shuah, who was Yehuda's wife, dies; Vayinochem Yehuda - and Yehuda finds comfort for the loss.

Actually it seems like a superfluous kind of thing over here, why is it that that's important? It is kind of interesting though that Nichumim - comfort for loss - I'm kind of tipping my hat here, but this is one of the connections to the Joseph story. Can you find where? Where does this connect to? If you look through Chapter 37 where do we find the idea of comfort and seemingly we're hearing comfort again. So you can kind of think about that and we'll come back to it.

But anyway, Yehuda finds comfort from his loss; Vaya'al al gozezei tzono hu v'Chira rei'eihu ha'adulami timnata - so it turns out he goes for a sheep shearing festival out to Timnah. Vayugad l'Tamar leimor - and Tamar hears about this; Hinei chamich oleh timnata lagoz tzono - that Yehuda is going to be passing by on his way to Timnah to shear his sheep. So at that point Tamar comes up with a plan, if she's not going to get Shelah, and there's no other brothers, how is she going to perform Yibum? She persists in this idea that she wants to have a child to carry on the legacy of her dead husband, and therefore she goes and sets out to actually seduce Yehuda.

Vatechas betza'if vatisalaf - she goes and she covers her face with a veil, she's disguised, he doesn't know who it is; Vateishev bepetach einayim - she sits by the crossroads; Al derech timnata - on the way to Timnah; Ki ra'atah - why? Because she saw that; Ki gadal Shelah v'hu loh nitnah lo l'isha - that years had passed and Shelah has gotten older and Yehuda is still not giving her. So evidently Yehuda has no intention of giving her Shelah, so she's going to take matters into her own hands. Vayireha Yehuda - so Yehuda sees her; Vayachsheveha l'zonah ki chistah paneha - and he thought that she was a harlot because he wasn't able to recognize her because she had covered her face.

At this point, you know the Torah is going to go and - if you were writing this, you don't want to get into too much detail about these acts, you could suffice it in a sentence and dispose of this. But interesting, the Torah dwells on this. Why does the Torah dwell on this? It gets into details. Vayeit eileha el haderech - so he comes to her by the way; Vayomer - and he says to her - and then we get into this, it's just astounding, this bargaining session between Yehuda and the harlot. I mean the Torah is a minimalist document, it conserves words and why are we getting this detail about negotiations between

Yehuda and the harlot? What purpose could this possibly serve? So this, I think, is a very big question that you have to ask as you're reading through this.

Vayomer hava nah avoh eilayich - so he says, come let me come on to you; Ki loh yadah ki kalato hi - he didn't realize who she really was. Then she says, well what are you going to give me? This isn't for free; Mah titen li ki tavoh eilay? Vayomer - so he says; Onochi ashalach gedi izim min hatzon - I'll come up with a sheep and I'll send a sheep to you from my flock. So she says, well you don't have the sheep, so what are you going to give me meanwhile? Im titen eiravon ad shalchecha - I need some sort of collateral. I mean, why are we hearing about this? This long and detailed bargaining session and what it is that's collateral, it just seems all so superfluous. Vayomer mah ha'eiravon asher eten lach - so he says, well I don't have any collateral, what could I possibly give you? So she says, well, you know you've got your staff; Chotomcha upetilecha umatecha - you have your cloak, you have your ring, why don't you give me that? Vayiten lah ve'yavo eileha vatahar lo - so he gives her that, the deed is done, they're intimate, and she actually becomes pregnant and has a child.

Why are we hearing about the details of this apparently sordid story? This, I think, is a clue as to, I think, what's really going on in this story. In these verses which seem very, very superfluous, nothing superfluous is happening. The Torah doesn't have a habit of engaging in superfluous things at all. We have to come back and figure out what the significance of this is.

We've gone through about half of this story here, again as I've gone through this, are you hearing any echoes of the rest of the story of Joseph? Go back again, read Chapter 37, read Chapter 39 and the rest of the Joseph story, at least skim it, become familiar with its themes, are you hearing those themes echo in this story? Let's come back in the next video, read the second half and then begin to put this all together.

Okay so verse 19; Vatakam vateilech vatasar tze'ipha mei'aleha vatilbash bigdei almenutah - so after being intimate with Yehuda, Tamar goes, she puts her clothes of mourning back on, the clothes of widowhood that she had been wearing to mourn the loss of Er, and she goes back to her father's house. Meanwhile; Vayishlach Yehuda et gedi ha'izim - Yehuda goes back and Yehuda of course had promised her a goat, so he sends the goat with a friend; Beyad rei'eihu hadulami lakachat haeiravon miyad ha'isha - to go, take back the collateral. He's going to send the goat and his agent is going to find this harlot who he has been with and they're going to make an exchange and he's going to get back his things. But; V'loh metza'ah - the agent looks and can't find her. So; Vayishal et Anshei mekoma leimor - and at that point the agent starts asking around and says; Ayei hakedeisha hi ba'einayim - where is the harlot who used to be at the crossroads; Al haderech - on the way? Vayomru loh haytah bazeh kedeisha - and everyone says, we don't know what you're talking about, there was never any harlot here. Vayashav el Yehuda - so the agent goes back to Yehuda and says; Loh metzasiha - I didn't find her. I looked for her; V'gam anshei hamokom omru loh haytah bazeh kedeisha - and I also asked around and everyone said there was no harlot over here. Vayomer Yehuda - and at that point Yehuda says; Tikach lah - well I guess let her just take the things that she took as collateral; Pen niheyeh lavuz - lest it's going to come to scandal if you go, keep on asking about this harlot on my behalf. Hinei sholachti hagedi hazeh - I did in fact send the goat to her; V'atah loh metzata - you didn't find her.

Now the question again here is, is why do we get all this detail? I mean, who really cares that there was this unsuccessful attempt to find the stuff, he sent the stuff, he sent the goat, he didn't send the goat. I mean, why do I care about all this?

Anyway; Vayehi kimshalosh chodoshim - it happened after three months; Vayugad l'Yehuda leimor zantah Tamar kalatecha v'gam hinei horo liznunim vayomer Yehuda hotzi'uha vetisaref - it happened at that time - and this is again, you have to go back to the Ramban here which I talked to you about before, about the nature of Yibum. Remember the idea here is, is that Tamar was waiting and hoping for Yibum, hoping to have a child through a relative of the deceased. Now when the Torah later formalizes the law of Yibum, the woman while she is in a position of waiting for Yibum after her husband has died she doesn't have children she's waiting to marry one of the brothers of the deceased, she's known technically, Halachically, in the Talmud as a Shomeret Yavam - a woman who is awaiting Yibum. A Shomeret Yavam leaves her status of being a Shomeret Yavam through one of two ways; either a Yavam, the brother of the deceased, according to the Torah, would marry her, or the brother of the deceased would perform a procedure known as Chalitza, which would release her from her sort of limbo status.

Now, as I might have mentioned to you before, the way the Torah conceives of Yibum is that when the brother of the deceased actually would marry the widow, assuming that she would, he wouldn't actually be performing a new act of marriage. For example, there doesn't have to be a ring. There's no ring because all he is really doing is stepping into his brother's previously existing marriage. Normally speaking when a man dies it terminates the marriage, except in a condition in which they have no children, in which case the marriage is sort of in limbo and the brother of the deceased can step back into that marriage and sort of re-ignite it. This is a technical, Halachic detail, but it is important for the discussion.

What happens if a woman in that situation sort of disregards this lingering obligation of Yibum, disregards her status of Shomeret Yavam and would go and would marry some other man, not from the family, without benefit of Chalitza which would release her from the status of being a Shomeret Yavam? So according to the Torah this is something which she is not supposed to do, but it's not seen as an act of adultery if she does that. In other words, her residual marriage to her previous husband, the one who died, is not considered to be of sufficient strength that she's considered really married and that if she would marry somebody else that would be an illegitimate marriage and would be considered an adulterous union. Nevertheless it seems that that's the way it works after the Torah was given.

We're talking right now in Genesis before the Torah was given at Sinai, and as the Ramban says, the idea of Yibum was known, but it worked by sort of different rules. One of those different rules seems to have been that a woman in a state of Shomeret Yavam when she hasn't had Yibum actually actualized, so she's in that state of potentiality; she was in this marriage and her husband died and there are no children, she's awaiting Yibum. That if she would be intimate with another man it seems that the custom at the time was that it would be considered an adulterous union.

On that basis Yehuda, who ironically is in the position of judge over here in the local area it seems, he hears that Tamar is pregnant. Now he doesn't know who the father is, he doesn't realize that the father is actually him. So he thinks, okay here's Tamar, this woman who is awaiting Yibum and she didn't marry Shelah - the only other person really available for Yibum - he thinks, and therefore she must have been intimate with some other man, she's pregnant and therefore she deserves to die. Which is his response.

Vayugad l'Yehuda leimor - in verse 24; Zantah Tamar kalatecha v'gam hinei horo liznunim - Tamar illegitimately was with some other man and she's pregnant, she's going to have this child out of wedlock, this child - contravening her previous marriage to her husband. Vayomer Yehuda hotzi'uha vetisaref - so Yehuda says okay, so she needs to die. He levies the death sentence against her. Now Tamar is going to die; Hi mutzeit - she's being taken out to be killed.

Now actually if you think about it, Tamar is in a situation where of course she has a secret weapon, she has Yehuda's stuff: his staff, his ring and his cloak. If she wants, one call to the National Enquirer and it's all over, she can just give them that stuff. Interestingly, Tamar does not choose that course of action.

Tamar instead does something else. She sends the stuff back to Yehuda. As she's being taken out to be killed; V'hi shalcha el chamiyha leimor - she sends the stuff back to Yehuda saying; L'ish asher eileh lo onochi horo - and she says, the man who owns these things is the father of my child. Vatomer - and she says; Haker nah - do you recognize these things? L'mi hachotemet vehapetilim vehamateh ha'eileh - who is the owner of this staff, this signet ring and this cloak? That's the message she sends when she sends the stuff back to him.

Now it's a very risky kind of thing of course, because she's putting the ball in Yehuda's court, what could Yehuda do if he wanted? If Yehuda wanted to avoid scandal, wanted to avoid responsibility for this, he could just disclaim all responsibility, he could bury the stuff, he could pretend that it wasn't him, it's an embarrassing situation. But that's not the path Yehuda chooses. Yehuda honorably; Vayaker Yehuda - verse 26 over here - Yehuda actually recognizes the things; Vayomer - and he responds; Tzadkah

mimeni - she is more righteous than me. Remember this is the man who previously was worried about scandal, didn't want his friend continuing to look for this harlot, but then he actually says, look it was me; Tzadkah mimeni - and in fact she is more righteous than I. Ki al kein loh netatiha l'Shelah beni - actually, I hadn't been giving her to Shelah and the reason why she was intimate with me, she was just trying to perform Yibum. She was doing it this way because she knew that if she approached me straightforward I wouldn't have agreed.

V'loh yasaf od leda'atah - and he wasn't intimate with her again, Tamar is spared; Vayehi b'eit lidetah - and as she had children; V'hinei te'umim bebitnah - it turns out that she had twins. Vayehi belidetah - and then as she is born; Vayiten yad vatikach hameyaledet vatikshor al yado shani - she ties a red string over the hand of Bechor, of the firstborn child, saying; Zeh yatzah rishona - this is the one that came out first. Vayehi kemeishiv yado - but then the child that seemed to be coming out first, put his hand back into the womb; Vehinei yatzah achiv - and the other child came out first. Vatomer mah paratzta alecha paretz - and she said my, how have you burst forth like that? She in fact named him for bursting forth.

The word Peretz means bursting forth. Vayikra shemo Peretz - and she called him Peretz and the other child she called Zerach.

By the way, what does this remind you of? Just another hint in the story of the general story, the surrounding stories of Genesis, what does this story of these two children being born in this kind of way remind you of? So we've gone through this story in some detail now, what are the aspects of this story that remind you of the surrounding narrative of Genesis? Is this really a digression? Or, as I want to suggest to you, are there interwoven themes that really, really bind up Chapter 38 with the rest of the surrounding text, the story of Yosef and even the broader surrounding story of Genesis? What do you think? What do you think those themes are? Those words, ideas, phrases, concepts? You can make a list and let's come back and compare notes.

Okay, so what are some of the links between the Yehuda and Tamar story and the rest of the Yosef saga? To bring back our arrow over here, we've been looking over here at Chapter 38, but if you go further and you look at the story of the sale of Yosef which we've been talking about earlier, and the story of Yosef continues - the story of Yosef and Potiphar's wife, in later chapters when Yosef meets up with his brothers in Egypt. What are some of the links that seem to interweave these various stories with each other? Okay, so let's try to think about that. We're going to try to just come up with those themes, ideas, words, and things like that, which seem to indicate that Chapter 38 is not a digression but is part and parcel of the larger story. So what are some of those elements?

Okay, so one of the ones that Rashi mentions is this. If you pay attention when Tamar confronts Yehuda she uses words that we've heard before. When she shows the coat and the staff and the signet ring, that stuff that he had given her as collateral, she says to him; Haker nah - recognize please to who do these things belong to. Where else have we heard these words Haker Nah before? The answer is yes, you guessed it, it's in the sale of Yosef. Remember when the brothers come and they show the coat to their father. So; Zot matzanu, haker nah haketonet bincha hi im loh - do you recognize this coat? Is this your son's coat or not? So here's another time where someone asks somebody do you recognize this? Actually one of the things is do you recognize a coat; Haker nah l'mi hachotemet vehapetilim vehamateh ha'eileh.

Now you might think that; Haker nah - recognize please, are words which appear all over Tanach, so maybe this is just unremarkable, because maybe this appears dozens of times throughout the Bible. Does it appear dozens of times throughout the Bible? Let's take a quick look. Okay, so I've opened up Judaic Classics library here by Davka, and this handy little program allows you to search through the entire Bible for words or phrases. So we just put in Haker Nah right over here, these words, and let's search through the entire Tanach and see how many times the words appear. The answer is twice. They appear in Genesis Chapter 37 and Genesis Chapter 38. These are the only two times, right over here when the brothers say; Zot matzanu, haker nah haketonet bincha hi im loh - we found this, do you recognize the coat - to their father. Over here when Tamar says the same words to her father-in-law, to Yehuda, when she presents a coat to him; L'ish asher eileh lo onochi horo, vatomer haker nah l'mi hachotemet vehapetilim vehamateh ha'eileh - recognize to whom belongs to these things.

So this seems like it's not so coincidental, it's just the only other time in Tanach this phrase is used other than the sale of Yosef happens to be right over here in this apparent digression, in this thing that's supposed to have been just plopped in here. It doesn't seem very plopped in here, it kind of seems like it connects.

But is there anything else besides the Haker Nah? It turns out there is. There's the Zot Matzanu. Take a look at this. You see these words over here? It's not just Haker Nah. Zot matzanu haker nah - we found this father; Haker nah - do you recognize it? Well if you look carefully at where Haker Nah appears in the story of Yehuda and Tamar, can you find anything that reminds you of Matzanu? You actually do, it's actually a play on words, it's right over here. Hi mutzeit - she was being taken out. Now in Hebrew the word Mutzeit means something else, but the sound of the word; Mem, Tzadi, Aleph is the same as Zot Matzanu - we found this. It seems to be a play on words of Zot Matzanu together with Haker Nah

that connects us to the other Zot Matzanu, Haker Nah - we found this coat, do you recognize it? So we have Zot Matzanu, Haker Nah together seemingly in one form or another in both stories.

Let's continue, is there anything else about these stories that remind us one of the other? Okay, so we've got these two language connections that we've just seen between the story of Yehuda and Tamar and the sale of Yosef, what else do we have? So going back to our little list over here, let's try and list these together, what else besides Zot Matzanu and Haker Nah? So, like going back to the very beginning, if you think about one of the major themes in the sale of Yosef, which seems to actually be reappearing in the story of Yehuda and Tamar, is this. We've got a father - in the case of Yosef that father is Yaakov, in the case of Yehuda and Tamar that father is actually Yehuda. In both cases these fathers get tricked and who do they get tricked by? They get tricked by either a child or a child-in-law. Yaakov is tricked by his children and Yehuda is tricked by his daughter-in-law Tamar.

They get tricked in a story involving a goat. There's a goat - remember the brothers take this goat and they slaughter it and they present it to their father. Well over here in the story of Tamar there was also that goat. Remember, the supposed digression of Yehuda and Tamar, that bargaining session about what the collateral is going to be, what was it that Yehuda promised? He said, I'll give you a goat. Of course, lo and behold there's a goat in the sale of Yosef, the goat that is slaughtered to put the blood on the coat. It's almost this kind of interesting, who was responsible for slaughtering the goat? Well who is acting like a leader? The king of course was Yehuda over here. If you think about Yehuda's role, Yehuda leading the brothers is the one who puts the blood on the coat and slaughters the goat and gives it to his father, and then the next story all of a sudden Yehuda promises a goat but doesn't have it. So if you think about it, there's a goat in the sale of Yosef, there's no goat in the Yehuda and Tamar, the goat is gone, he says, I don't have a goat. It's almost like you wonder, well what happened to the goat? Maybe it got killed in the last story or something?

So in both cases there's this father tricked, in the story involving a goat, and not just a goat, but a goat and a coat. These are tales of goats and coats. There's a man losing his coat in each story. The sale of Yosef, of course Yosef gets stripped of a coat, well in the story of Yehuda and Tamar, Yehuda gets stripped of a coat.

Speaking of losing, the one who really gets lost is the child himself. In both stories - at least in the sale of Yosef, remember the father loses something, what does he really lose? He loses a child. What kind of child? A firstborn child. But sort of a murky firstborn child. Think about Yosef, was Yosef really the firstborn? Well we talked about that before, he was sort of the firstborn, at least in Yaakov's eyes, in father's eyes, he considers Yosef the firstborn, but he may not actually be the real firstborn, there's some question about that. Is Reuven the firstborn? Reuven is actually the first-born child of Yaakov even though father considers Yosef his firstborn.

It's interesting, in the story of Yehuda and Tamar, Yehuda also loses a first-born child, loses Er. Er is actually also kind of a murky firstborn, why? Because Yehuda also interestingly has two wives, just like Yaakov. In this story Yaakov has two wives, Rachel and Leah, and then by the end of this story Yehuda

ends up with two wives. Not Rachel and Leah but the daughter of Shuah on the one hand, and then his second wife, Tamar. Well who is his Bechor? His Bechor from the first wife is Er, that's the one he loses. But who is his real legacy, in the end, by the end of the story? It's actually Tamar's first-born child, Peretz, that becomes the father of the Davidic dynasty, the father of the dynasty of kings from Yehuda. So the question is, who is his real firstborn? So in both cases father loses a firstborn, a sort of murky firstborn, the child that he considers a firstborn, but not necessarily the child that history will consider the firstborn. Kind of very interesting.

Actually, one more element while we're at it. After the father loses the murky firstborn and there's this loss of a coat, a coat is then presented to a father for recognition, and that of course sets up this; Zot matzanu haker nah. Again, if we think back to the story of the sale of Yosef, the brothers present this coat to their father and say, do you recognize it? Of course Tamar presents this coat to Yehuda, her father-in-law, and says, do you recognize it? Using these very same words.

Interestingly enough by the way, if you go back it's not just Chapter 38 connecting to Chapter 37; Chapter 38 actually connects way back here as well to another story even earlier than Chapter 37 in Genesis. It's intimately connected to these stories before. What other story before 37 is 38 reminding you of? It's almost like a link; this is really the second of the stories, this is the third - what's the first? What do you think it is? We'll come back and I'll share with you my thoughts on that.

Okay, I'm going to call Chapter 38 the third chapter in this ongoing saga; Tales of Goats and Coats. In Chapter 38 Yehuda has no goat, but he's got a coat. So take my coat instead of the goat. Of course in Chapter 37 a goat is killed and its blood is put on the coat. What about earlier than this, where else do we have another tale of goats and coats? The first of the goats and coats tales? So it turns out that if you look at all of these elements we've seen, they actually all appear somewhere before, they appear not just in the third chapter, not just in the second chapter but in the first chapter of the tale of goats and coats, which is of course the story of Yaakov and Eisav.

We're going to sort of extend this all and just think about it. In the story of Yaakov and Eisav, of course Yaakov tricks Eisav and tricks Yitzchak. So there's a father tricked by who? By children - in this case Yaakov. In a story involving a goat - remember Yaakov goes and he actually kills a goat and presents it actually to his father, just like in these other stories. And there was a man who lost a coat, in that case it was actually Eisav, because Yaakov dresses up in Eisav's coats, and in this goats and coats story presents himself as a Bechor. The father in a sense is actually losing a murky firstborn. The question of course is who is the real firstborn? Is it Eisav? Eisav is the biological firstborn, but the question is maybe Yaakov is the firstborn? Yaakov bought the right of the firstborn from Eisav when he was - earlier, so some question. Father thinks that Eisav is the firstborn but Yaakov thinks that he is the firstborn. Again, children disagreeing with their parents about who the real firstborn is in story number one, in story number two and perhaps in story number three. Who is the real firstborn? Does father really know who the real firstborn is?

Of course in all of these stories, including the first one, the coat is presented to the father for recognition, and we have, interestingly enough, this very same language; Zot matzanu haker nah, slightly different so it doesn't show up in our list, it's not the exact same words; Haker nah. But the roots are there. Let's take a look. Over here, sale of Yosef, remember? There's Haker Nah. Can you find anything in the Yaakov and Eisav story that reminds you of Haker Nah? The answer is you can, it's right over here. When Yitzchak did not recognize his son, the language was; V'loh hikiro - he did not recognize him. Same language. Haker nah - children to father, do you recognize please? Children tricking father. Father can't recognize; V'loh hikiro - he didn't in fact recognize it. So father can't recognize through the deception here, and father can't recognize through the deception here. He recognizes the coat but of course he's being deceived.

And by the way, it's not just Haker Nah but it's the twin of Haker Nah also. Remember, Haker Nah got paired with Zot Matzanu - can you find the Zot Matzanu over here in the Yaakov and Eisav story? This we found - is there any finding in the story of Yaakov and Eisav that gets paired right before Hikiro?

The answer is there is, it's right over here. Yitzchak to Yaakov - remember Yitzchak had sent out Eisav to go hunting for him and in pops Yaakov representing himself as Eisav, but he's there too soon. So Yitzchak says to his son; Mah zeh miharta limtzo beni - gee, how did you come back from the hunt this quickly? But this word; Limtzo - how did you find it so quickly, evokes this; Zot matzanu - this we found; Haker nah. Finding and recognize, both in the context of a deception perpetrated by a son upon an unwitting father. A father who can't really see correctly. In this case the father is blind, in this case the father is unable to see what really happened to his son, the one he thinks is his Bechor.

So fascinating, all three of these factors are reappearing in all three of these chapters of tales of goats and coats. Yaakov and Eisav, the sale of Yosef, and now Yehuda and Tamar.

But wait, there's actually more, there's more of course. Because Chapter 38 does not just connect with these stories, it also connects to what comes after it, what about Yehuda and Tamar reminds you of the story of Yosef and the wife of Potiphar? Take a quick look at Chapter 39 and see what you think.

Hi there Rabbi Fohrman back with you. By the way, one other point of contact between the story of Yehuda and Tamar and Chapter 37 the sale of Yosef, I want to just point out to you, is this over here. The idea of constant, incessant mourning; mourning that doesn't go away. If you remember as we talked about before Yaakov Avinu will not be comforted for the loss of Yosef; Vayema'ein lehitnachem. The children come and try to comfort him but he won't be comforted. We talked about why, of course. The reason is, is because Yosef is not really dead, he's only quasi dead, Yaakov thinks he's dead but he never actually sees a body, so you can't - as Rashi says - get over the loss of someone who is not really gone.

Therefore in some way, shape or form, Yaakov even though he thinks he's dead can't accept Tanchumim, can't accept comfort for the loss of Yosef. It's a loss that can't be closed, therefore the pain never goes away and he can't be comforted. We talked about this before.

Is there any idea of mourning that seems to keep on going on and on and on and someone who won't be comforted in the story of Yehuda and Tamar? So the answer is right over here. Remember Tamar, Tamar is mourning Er, Tamar has on these black clothes, these clothes of mourning, these clothes of widowhood. We get this little detail in the story when she goes to change those clothes to dress up as a harlot by the side of the road, she takes off those clothes of mourning. Now when is this? This is years after the loss of Er. Remember, Er dies and she wants to marry Onan, and she does, but nothing comes of that, and then she's promised that well let's wait and see when Shelah grows up, and then Shelah grows up. So like a decade later she finally sees she's not getting Shelah and at that point she goes out to seduce him. So this is like 10 years later and she's still wearing these Bigdei Almenutah, these clothes of mourning, why is she continuing to mourn?

The answer might just be for the exact same reason that Yaakov is continuing to mourn. Yaakov mourns because Yosef is not really dead, there's no closed book, he's only quasi dead. What about Tamar mourning for Er? Same kind of thing, interestingly. Er, is he dead or not? Well Er is very emphatically dead, right? Except sort of not because the whole idea of Yibum is to do what? Is to keep the line of the dead going, to bring back someone who is going to be the legacy of the dead person. The brother of the deceased is going to marry the widow, step into the shoes of the marriage and revive the marriage. It's like Er is coming back.

By the way, remember the name Er. We talked about such a funny name, Awake. What a strange name for a dead guy, right? All he does is die and here he is and named Awake. He's the night of the living dead. This is really what's happening here. But it is the night of the living dead, that's why Tamar can never really get over the loss of Er, why she continues to mourn. Because since Yibum is a possibility and she's not giving up on Yibum, she can never accept comfort for the loss, she's still in her clothes of mourning 10 years later. It's an open book. Just like Yosef is quasi dead, Er is quasi dead. Er could come back, Yosef can come back.

There is of course somebody in Tamar's story who actually does accept comfort for a loss, who is that? The answer, interestingly enough, is Yehuda. The one person who loses someone in the normal way of the world, Yehuda loses his wife and then moves on; Vayinochem Yehuda - Yehuda receives comfort. So Yehuda receives comfort, but Yehuda who had tricked his father about the loss of a child who wasn't

really dead, his father can't receive comfort. Tamar who has married Yehuda's son and who is waiting for Yibum and Yehuda puts her off and says, well maybe Shelah, maybe Shelah, she too can't accept comfort.

So another connection between these stories, in addition to all the connections we've seen here, is the idea of perpetual mourning. Perpetual mourning because of quasi death. This is what happens in the story of the sale of Yosef, it's also what happens in the story of Yehuda and Tamar.

Okay, so moving on, we've seen the connections between these stories, what about the connections between these stories, between 38 and 39? Anything remind you of Yosef and the wife of Potiphar? The answer is a lot should remind you of it. Yehuda and Tamar is a seduction story, the wife of Potiphar is a seduction story. They are actually mirror image seduction stories. How are they mirror image? Well, if you think about the role of the man and the role of woman, over here in the story of Yehuda and Tamar, the woman is acting nobly and the man not so high minded. In the story of Joseph and the wife Potiphar it's actually the reverse. The wife of Potiphar is just plain seducing Yosef. Yosef who is resisting seduction because he doesn't want to do this terrible thing and betray his master, he's the one who is acting nobly in this story. So it's kind of a mirror image. But two seductions stories; one the mirror image of the other.

Not just any old seduction story, what else about 38 reminds you of 39? Oh there's a man who loses his coat. This is actually a mistake that should go all the way out here, because this connects us to the story of the sale of Yosef and the story of Yehuda and Tamar and the story of Yosef and the wife of Potiphar. But of course, just like Yehuda loses his coat in this story, just like Yosef loses a coat in this story, Yosef loses his coat again in this story. The wife of Potiphar strips Yosef of his coat. If you think about the role of the coat, it's actually precisely the same in Chapter 39 as it is in Chapter 38. What role does the coat play in 39 that reminds you of the role of the coat in 38?

Well you could think about it this way. What was the coat originally in each story? Originally the coat was given for safekeeping. If you think about the Yehuda and Tamar story when Yehuda gives his coat he gives it as collateral, that is safekeeping, it's collateral. It's not yours, I'm just giving it to Tamar for a while until I get it back. Well that's what the coat is given for originally, that's the original plan, but what happens in the end is that the coat ends up getting used as evidence. Remember, Tamar then sends the coat out to Yehuda and says, do you recognize this coat? This coat shows that you're the one responsible for this, you're the father of the child. So the coat which was given for safekeeping ends up used as evidence in the hands of the woman.

It's exactly the same thing in this story. Yosef - what happens in the story, how does she get the coat? Remember, she grabs a hold of Yosef's coat and then Yosef who doesn't want to be complicit in this act, actually wriggles out of his coat and runs out into the street and leaves. Then she, furious, then goes and screams and says Yosef tried to violate me, and here's the evidence, here's his coat. So the coat which was originally - it wasn't hers to keep but she's just holding onto it, ends up getting used as evidence. Of course it's a mirror image story, because in this story the coat is used to prove something that's actually true, and in this story the coat is used in a corrupt kind of way to prove something that's false, to prove

falsely that Yosef violated her.

So interestingly, if we add all this up, we see that 38 is very closely connected to a whole bunch of stories; to 37, to the stories before this - goats and coats number 1 of course, the story of Yaakov and Eisav, and to the story after this, the story of 39. Is there anything about this that connects 38 to stories even after this, the later chapters, Yosef meeting his brothers in Egypt? Let's come back and talk about that.

Hi Rabbi Fohrman back with you. Before we move onto the later chapters over here, the story of Yosef meeting his brothers in Egypt, I just want to show you one other connection here. We were looking at connections between the story of Yehuda and Tamar and the story of Yosef and the wife of Potiphar, over here these Chapters 38 and 39. I just want to show you one sort of link that bridges all of this, this Chapter 37, 38 and 39 together and that's actually the theme of Ra'ah. If you think about people getting lost because of doing Ra'ah things, that theme actually resonates in all three chapters. Think about in the sale of Yosef. In the sale of Yosef at the very beginning of the story what happens to Yosef that starts off this chain of the brothers getting so resentful and eventually doing away with him? It's actually this; Vayaveih Yosef et dibartam ra'ah el avihem - here's the word to keep your eye on, he brought back bad reports about the brothers to father. Well this idea of Ra'ah, doing Ra'ah ends up actually being the reason why Er the firstborn child of Yehuda is lost too. Yosef firstborn child of Yaakov lost, so to speak, because of Ra'ah; Er, firstborn child of Yehuda lost; Vayehi Er bechor Yehuda rah b'einei Hashem - because he is doing bad in the eyes of G-d so G-d gets rid of him.

And by the way, Yosef - if you think about Yosef, Yosef gets lost again, so to speak, in the story of Potiphar's wife he gets put in prison, ironically because he resists - it's actually again the mirror image, the stories always seems to be the mirror image of the previous ones - because he resists doing Ra'ah. Take a look at this. Eineni gadol babayit hazeh - when he's resisting the seduction of Potiphar's wife, he tells her, look there's no one greater in this house than I am, I'm the one who is in charge in everything, my master trusts me implicitly; V'loh chasach mimeni me'umah - he didn't leave anything away from me, he doesn't withhold anything from me, my master. Ki im otach - except for you, because; B'asher at ishto - in so far as you are his wife; V'eich e'eseh hara'ah hagedolah hazot - how could I do this terrible Ra'ah thing? He resists doing the Ra'ah and because he does she is furious at him and she gets him put in the pit, in jail, by framing him for violating her.

So there's this train of Ra'ah in all of these stories, people getting lost or becoming undone because of Ra'ah, because of Ra'ah, and over here, ironically, because he stood on his principles and he will not give in to Ra'ah.

So the bottom line is that there are these connections between all three stories; 37, 38 and 39 as well, the doing of Ra'ah, the loss of someone through the doing of Ra'ah or the resisting of the doing Ra'ah, as it were, in the last story.

Okay so now let's go to this, the later chapters, what else about Chapter 38 reminds you of stuff that goes on in the later chapters of Yosef meeting up with his brothers in Egypt? What did you come up with?

So one thing that comes to mind for me at least is the theme of disguise. Over here in the story of Tamar, Tamar our protagonist is disguised, she's dressed up and because she's disguised Yehuda cannot recognize her. Well where in our story of Yosef do we have someone who is disguised and because they're disguised other family members can't recognize them? Well of course, that's this, who is the one in disguise? It's Yosef. Because he's in disguise, who can't recognize him? Well these guys, the brothers in Egypt can't recognize him. Yosef disguises himself or Yosef is disguised, the brothers don't know who he

really is. So in both cases we have a person's identity who is disguised and in both cases that disguise is used to deceive. Tamar uses her disguise to deceive Yehuda about who she really is, and Yosef realizing the brothers don't recognize him continues willfully this deception and pretense that he's just some Egyptian official who has no connection to them. In fact though, that's not the case. So in both cases the person's identity is disguised, disguise is used to deceive.

What else though? It's not just that. Think about collateral. Even more than that, think of collateral involving Yehuda. In our story Chapter 38, Yehuda does not have his goat so instead gives collateral to Tamar, he ends up having to redeem that collateral, does that remind you of anything later on in the story? Any other collateral later on in the story? It turns out there is.

Later on in the story if you remember, Yaakov will not send Benjamin down to Egypt, he's worried about Benjamin's safety. Reuven tries to convince Yaakov to send him - unsuccessfully. He says, I'll kill my two children if I don't bring back Benjamin successfully to you. Yaakov doesn't listen. But then Yehuda steps forward and Yehuda says; Onochi e'ervenu miyadi tevakshenu - I will be the Orev for him. I will be his collateral.

Interesting, the same Yehuda who redeems collateral over here in the story of Tamar, redeems collateral once more in this story, promising himself this time as the collateral, not just a coat. Little does he realize how hard it's going to be to redeem, just like in this story. Yehuda thinks it's going to be easy, he'll just send a goat and then [they'll find her 5:26] but he never finds her. Then at the end what does he have to do to get his coat back? He has to admit to a terrible truth. He has to admit he was the one. Same kind of thing interestingly happening in this story. Yehuda thinks it's going to be easy to get this collateral back. Of course, I'll just promise myself as - what's going to happen to Benjamin anyway? Little does he realize that the masked man in Egypt has other plans. The masked man in Egypt is going to imprison Benjamin, little does [Yaakov/Yehuda 5:48] know how difficult it is going to be to redeem this collateral, what will he have to do?

He'll actually have to do the same thing he did in Chapter 38. In Chapter 38 he made a terrible admission, he's going to have to do that one more time. He bares his soul to Yosef in a stirring speech, where he says, look you don't understand, our family, this is what happened. There was a child who was lost, a child that father loves, father loves these other children more than he does me and let me stay instead of [you 6:14]. He bares his soul to Yosef not knowing that it's Yosef. He admits to redeem collateral in this story. He admits to redeem collateral in this story too.

So these stories are looking intimately connected. I mean, in all these ways, in these ways, in these ways and these ways. Are you - do you still think that over here Chapter 38 that this is really a digression? It's not even open to discussion. But what does it all mean? What do all these connections mean? They're not just pretty things that are there so that we can see that these things are connected. These things are actually clues to the deeper meaning of the story of Yehuda and Tamar, to why this story is here. Not just that the story is not a digression, but what this apparent digression really means for our deeper understanding of the Yosef saga.

The clue to that, I think, to the meaning of it all, comes from one last connection that bridges all of these stories, and that is, the loss of children by father. Think carefully about the loss of children by father, in all of these stories: 37, 38, later chapters, who gets lost? How many children get lost? Why do those children get lost? I think the answers to those questions are going to give us a key to finally understanding what the story of Yehuda and Tamar is really about and to a deeper understanding of Rashi; Vayeired Yehuda mei'et echov - Yehuda went down from amongst his brothers, why did Yehuda go down? How can he climb back?