Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, ladies and gents let's (inaudible). Okay. I want to share with you a small but subtle difficulty that I've been bothered with and I think the possible resolution of this difficulty is illuminating. Last week I suggested to you a theory. The theory was -- I have it here on this PowerPoint. The theory basically is that -- I'm trying to see if I have a slide that expresses it in just a moment, but -- visually, easily, but I don't.

Audience member: It's good, I like the (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, we'll have it up here. Anyway, the theory basically is that there are there iterations so to speak of Jacob's life, three concentric circles. We can speak of Jacob the man, we can speak of Jacob the family and we can speak of Jacob the nation. Whether we're speaking of Jacob the man, Jacob the family, Jacob the nation there are certain events which are key events in Jacob's life, it is somehow the destiny of these entities whether it is Jacob of the macro-cosmic level, the person, Jacob the family, Jacob the nation. There is a certain event that these themes are going to go through and that Jacob the family needs to struggle at some level with the same issues that Jacob the man struggles with and Jacob the nation as well struggles with them.

Now, of course the main event that we've been talking about for our purposes when we've been focusing on in Jacob's life were what I've been calling Jacob and Esau's -- Jacob's encounters with the Esau throughout his life. We sort of neatly divided that up into what we call Jacob and Esau 1, Jacob and Esau 2 and Jacob and Esau 3. Jacob and Esau 1 is the story of what we've been calling the story of Jacob's purchase so to speak of the bechorah (birthright) from Esau for a pot of lentil soup and some bread.

Jacob and Esau 2 is Jacob's deception of his father Isaac and getting the brachos (blessings) from Esau. Jacob and Esau 3 is when Esau comes out with 400 men and Jacob and Esau ultimately reconcile. We suggested that these things find parallels in the life of Jacob the nation. I want to go through a few -- we're going to briefly review what these parallels are and then I want to point out a difficulty that -- a subtle difficulty I think that suggests itself in these parallels . I want to wonder with you about its resolution.

Okay. Here are the parallels. He on the left hand side of the screen you can see Jacob's life, on the right hand side of the screen you're going to see the life of Jacob the nation. We've just color coded this to kind of make it easy. Basically in Jacob's life Jacob struggles with Esau in the womb.

We argued -- and I'm not going to justify this now, we did this last week, I'm just summarizing right now. If you're interested and you missed last week and you're interested in figuring out why this is so or why this seems to be the way it is, just contact Fran (ph) and get yourself a copy of last week's class and listen to it, but I'm not going to go over it now. Basically we already -- Jacob struggled with Esau in the womb, right? The nation of Israel also is in the womb so to speak at one point. When is the nation of Israel in the womb?

Audience member: In Egypt.

Rabbi David Fohrman: In Egypt. They are in the womb in Egypt, it was their pre-birth, before they are being born, they're born as a result of leaving Egypt that night, korban Pesach (Pesach offering). We've talked about the birth metaphors. Jacob is born, in the original story of Jacob, not the bechor (firstborn) holding on to his heel, but in the story of Jacob the nation, Jacob is born the firstborn, "Bni bechori Yisrael", God says, My first born child is Jacob, is Israel and the Jews are born the firstborn, but there is no Esau, there is a phantom of Esau.

We argued that the reason why there is phantom Esau, there is no Esau in the womb is because ultimately Jacob is going to be called upon to integrate Esau into his personality and that even though Jacob the nation is going to plod along on some level and go through these various events in Jacob's life, but they have choices about how they do that and they're meant to do it right. They're meant to do it sort of the right way.

What is the right way? Well, the next event in Jacob's life is that Esau goes out into field without provisions. Right, remember it? This is the prelude to Jacob and Esau. This is the presumed prelude to Jacob and Esau 1. How come Esau shows up and he is hungry? Right, why is Esau showing up and he is hungry? If Esau shows up and he is hungry so what happened in the field without provisions? What does that remind you of with the Jews? When do the Jews so to speak go out into the field without provisions?

Audience member: (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's when they go out with -- they make as much bread as they can, they make 30 days' worth of bread, but, you know, there is only a limit to how much bread you can take with you and "vegam zeda lo asu lahem," they don't make provisions?

We argued that that language hits you off to Esau's tzeyda (hunt game), of course it's an Esau's word, right? Esau is known for his hunt game and the Jews go out without tzeda(provisions) and "tzeda lo asu", how do you spell asu? Ain -Sin-Vav, it's an Esau word. Just like Esau's going out to the field without provisions, Jews are going out to the field without provisions. It's Jacob, the Jews integrating Esau, becoming Esau-like.

How is Jacob becoming Esau-like? This got into our discussion of the man (manna) and emunah (faith). Basically this is -- we get to the Rashi here. Rashi says the Jews did a really great thing and they were rewarded for generations because of this. This is what Jeremiah talks about "lechtech acharay bamidbar be'eretz lo zerua", that the Jews went out into the dessert without any -- to a place where there was no grain and that God always remembers that. It was the Jews making themselves vulnerable, putting themselves into God's hand and God reciprocates ultimately by giving us the manna. This is Jacob being Esau-like.

Now what part of Jacob's life are we up to now? We are up to Jacob and Esau 1. This is the story of Jacob and Esau 1. Really the prelude to Jacob and Esau 1, when Esau goes out into the field and he doesn't have any provisions, he comes back hungry. Now what's happening here is that Jacob is sort of

integrating Esau's personality into himself and let me explain what I mean by that.

What I argued to you last week is that in the actual story of Jacob and Esau 1 Jacob and Esau represent two sorts of poles almost like of a magnet, neither pole of which is exactly what father wants to see as we might say. Those two poles we can represent in two words maybe. We can think of those two poles as the focus on tomorrow and the focus on today. Jacob is obsessed with tomorrow, Esau is obsessed with today.

For Esau there is no tomorrow, all there is is today. His tomorrow, his possibility of thinking about tomorrow is crushed by the possibility of death. "Hine anochi holech lamut"? I'm going to die, "velama zeh li bechorah", why should I be thinking about the birthright, the birthright doesn't matter, all I need is a piece of bread right now. That's his focus on the situation.

Jacob is completely focused on the opposite. Jacob is focused on tomorrow and he knows that Esau's (inaudible) is today and therefore keeps on saying, "hishava li kayom", swear to me today that you'll sell me the birthright and again he emphasizes today, today, today, but Jacob himself is focused on tomorrow.

The verb which describes Jacob's focus on tomorrow is the "vayazed" verb which we talked about. It's not a very nice word, but it's the word in Hebrew that refers to planning maliciously about tomorrow, it's "zadon", when you lie in wait for someone. So to speak when Jacob is making porridge, "vayazed Yaakov nazid" the words for making porridge just so happens to be those words, the words for lying in wait, the words of zadon. Here he is, he's lying in wait for Esau, he is figuring it out, he's planning for tomorrow and he is trying to make it happen.

Whereas Esau is crushed by the possibility of death and only focused on today, Jacob is desperately spinning his wheels and trying to change tomorrow and trying to change things that he can't really change like birth order. He is trying to buy the birthright. You know, can you really buy the birthright? You know, it's whoever is born first. Jacob's there, he is out there sort of to buy the birthright and to change it.

These are two poles; the focus on today to the exclusion of tomorrow, the focus on tomorrow to the exclusion of today. Neither of these poles is very good. However the merger of them is wonderful. It's the merger of them which is really great. What is the merger of them? This is really what we talked about two weeks before; that's about circles of control and circles of concern. Basically, the perfect balance between tomorrow and today leads to a perfect balance between a circle of control and a circle of concern which is in a word what we call faith.

What is that? The idea is that I'm not crushed by the possibility of death because there is a God out there that I can connect to. God is eternal, I can connect to His eternality, death is not as frightening, I can look death in the eye and still plan and still think about tomorrow. Yet even though I'm thinking about tomorrow, even though I'm concerned about tomorrow, but I don't spin my wheels illegitimately trying to control what I can't control about tomorrow. I'm concerned about it, but I can leave that in the hands

of God and focus on what I can do today. In other words the things that I legitimately can control, yet I can be concerned about things I can't control, but I can allow those to be in God's hand.

That is what the Jews are doing when they go out into the dessert. They make the bread they can, that's their circle of control, right, but I can only make X amount of bread and after that it's the circle of concern. I still care about that, but it's up to God. I place myself in God's hands and say, God, You have to provide for me from here on in. That is when Jacob really integrates Esau, and this is a great triumph when the Jews go out and they do this. Right now Jacob is being neither Jacob-like nor Esau-like, but the compound of both Jacob and Esau together. Yet, Jacob's focused on tomorrow, I do care about tomorrow, but Esau's ability is to operate in the today despite the fact that I'm caring about tomorrow. Are you with me?

This is really terrific. Now, the next thing that happens is that we get up to the part -- in Jacob's life we're up to the prologue to Jacob and Esau. Now we get up to actual Jacob and Esau 1. Actual Jacob and Esau 1 is when Esau shows up hungry and says, look, just sell me, I'm willing to just give away everything for the birthright and I just need a piece of bread.

Now, unfortunately the Jews mimic this rather exactly in their own national life, when after they actually use up the bread over 30 days, instead of keeping what that faith that they have when they got out there, they go and they complain. They basically said we'd rather be in Egypt, i.e. we'd rather just give up our birthright already. We know we were born the firstborn, but who needs it, and we just want bread, either way we're going to die. We're going to die here; we're going to die there. Very Esau-like.

What's happened is that the Jews sort of lost that amalgam of Jacob and Esau and they become very Esau-like in their focus on today exclusively and not tomorrow. That's on our little grey screen over

here. Esau says either way he'll die, might as well have bread, Jews say either way we'll die, might as well (inaudible). Okay.

The next thing that happens is we're up to Jacob and Esau 2. Now, Jacob and Esau 2 in Jacob's and Esau's life was the deception story. Now the challenge of the Jews is to redo the deception story the right way without deception. What does that mean?

Well, for Jacob the man, there was the father, and that father was a person by the name of Isaac. For the Jews as a nation, there's also a father, but the father isn't Isaac anymore, the Father's going to be God.

The idea is for the Jews to present themselves to God as it were in a way which is not deceptive. It will somehow redo the Jacob and Esau story right. What does it mean to do that story right?

What we argued was that what Isaac was really looking for in the story of Jacob and Esau 2, was he was looking for a child with so to speak, that could integrate both. In other words, if you were Isaac, what would you really want? You would really love it if you had a child who was sort of both Jacob and Esau- like that you could bless, but you are sort of stuck with either or. If you had to choose one who were you going to choose?

Think of yourself, you're Isaac, here you are and it's your job to give over the blessings of the Jews to somebody who's going to take this forward to the next 3,000 years of anti-Semitism and all sorts of bad things. Who have you got?

You have Jacob, the nice intellectual guy who stays in his tent all day, and you have Esau, the man who can go out and can hunt and can get things done. Esau, by the way is the paradigm of the vertically integrated company, because he can hunt. Not only can he hunt, he can also make matamim (delicacies), he's a good chef too. He takes us all the way from the (inaudible) to the end. This is really great. This is a man who can get things done, hence his name Esau, asu, the guy who gets things done, the guy who's hairy, the guy who's out there, who can go and hunt in the world.

If I can only choose one, it's not like Isaac was blind to Esau being a little bit more crass, not quite the guy who was the voice, only the guy who was the (inaudible). But if you could only have, at least the man can survive. Let's go with Esau. However, this also explains why it is that -- we talked about the sort of the strange con, how is it that Isaac is really conned, because the second before he's deceived so to speak, he says "hakol kol Yaakov, vehayadayim yedei Eisav," and then "velo hikiro."

What do we mean he didn't recognize him? We just said that the voice is the voice of Jacob, and the hands are the hands of Esau. The long and the short of it is, what we argued, is that Isaac was really sort of looking at some level for a child who did have the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau. It's just, he didn't think he had one, and therefore it was like either or. All right, you have the hands of Esau so I'll bless you.

In the end, what Jacob sort of showed, although not in a nice way, is that he did have the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacob, which is he got it done. He didn't get it done in a nice way. He got it done in a not nice way; he tricked his father. But when push came to shove he was able to actually get the blessing which he needed to do, albeit illegitimately. Hence his father when he realizes that he is deceived, immediately after, "vayecherad Yitzchak charadah gedolah", immediately after he trembles and he realizes who was it that came. He also says these words, "gam baruch yihyeh", so too you should be blessed. What's that about? If I realized I've been deceived, what am I doing blessing the deceiver?

The answer is you showed he had the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau, but that wasn't the right way to do it, and Jacob suffers for the rest of his life for this deception.

There was another way to show that he had the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau, and the way to do that was without deception. The way to do that, we argue, was to do it the way we basically suggested at the beginning, which was to go up to his father, look him in the eye, and say hi, I know that you sent Esau to go and hunt food for you, I can prepare food for you too, bless me.

That way is sort of leaving it up to God. You don't illegitimately manipulate tomorrow, and this again gets into our today and tomorrow stuff, which is that if I'm focused on tomorrow exclusively and I don't have the faith paradox, I'm going to sort of try to illegitimately manipulate tomorrow, which we would sort of call deception. The other way of doing it is that I focus on what I can do today, and I allow

tomorrow up to God. What can Jacob do? Jacob can look his father in the eye and say hi, I can prepare this for you. I'd like you to consider blessing me. At that point, the rest is not in his hands anymore, and that's when he sort of has faith. But that's not what Jacob does.

Now the challenge of the Jews really is to do this right; in other words, to go to Father and to somehow not deceive Him, to show that you're the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau. That's what we argued is happening in the (inaudible) over here, when God wants to test the Jews. God wants to test the Jews, much as father wants to test Jacob. By the way, it's even the same language in the text. Father wants to test Jacob, Isaac that is, asking him are you my son Esau or not, in Hebrew, "ha'atah zeh beni Eisav im lo," come close, let me touch you, see are you my son Esau or not.

It's fascinating that we have that exact same language in the manna. When God says to the Jews, I'm going to give you these laws for the manna, to see -- I'm going to send you the manna to test you, "hayeilech betorati im lo," to see are you going to follow My ways, My Torah, or not.

We mentioned that the first time you have this formulation ha X im lo, is with Jacob and Esau and the second time in the Torah you have this formulation ha X im lo, is with the manna, "hayeilech betorati im lo." It's a direct quote from the Jacob and Esau parallel. It's literally God testing Jacob, the nation, and saying have you integrated Esau into your personality or not?

How would you integrate Esau into your personality? By virtue of keeping these laws of the manna. What are the laws? The laws are you're going to have the manna, however, you're only going to be able to collect that days' worth of manna. You're not going to be able to collect the next days' worth of manna. You'll be able to fully focus on the day. In other words, who are you? You're Jacob. You're always focused on tomorrow. Well, guess what? Now, you're going to have to integrate into that a focus on today. You're going to care about tomorrow like Jacob, but you're only going to be able to collect today and you're going to be okay with that and you're going to trust Me.

These laws are the scaffold for faith. In other words all these laws are designed to do is to get them back to where they were before, when they went out to Egypt and when they made their bread, they did what they could, and then they put the rest in the hands of God.

Now God is saying look, I know you did that, here are these laws, just follow these laws and you'll be back there. The manna will come and everything will be good and -- let me just finish the point -- what is the manna of course. The manna is dew-wrapped bread which reminds you of course of the blessings of Isaac. "Vayiten lecha ha'Elokim mital hashamayim," just like Isaac the man gives Jacob the blessings thinking that he's like Esau and the blessing is God will grant you from the dew of the heavens, so too God, the Father, is now giving the Jews these exact same blessings. Isn't it remarkable how consistent the parallels are?

Audience Member: How would the non-integrated Jacob have treated the manna?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Let's talk about that. A non-integrated Jacob treats the manna exactly the way the

Jews end up actually treating the manna which is a great segway into our next point.

Father wanted a child with the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacob. God wants Israel to integrate Esau and Jacob's focus on today and planning for tomorrow. In other words, God wants Jacob to care about tomorrow, not to be crushed. In other words, let me do it this way.

A non-integrated Jacob and Esau has two possible ways of relating to the manna. One possible way of relating to the manna is the complaint that they say before the manna gets there, and that's the Esau pull and that is; we just want some bread, we're going to die anyway, who needs the birthright, who needs to come out of Egypt, we were there, we were here, why did You bother taking us out, just give us some bread. That's total focus on today.

Now, the other possibility is total focus on tomorrow, which is what happens when the Jews disregard the laws of the manna. They try to forge the manna and save it for tomorrow, and save it for tomorrow, and save it tomorrow, and collect on Shabbos and all of that. That's the focus on tomorrow without trusting that it's going to be there tomorrow. That's the overly Jacob without integrating Esau view into it.

That's exactly what happens. Father blesses the child who has both; God blesses the Jews with manna. The question is do they have both? What happens is that when the Jews don't do this properly, so then they end up testing God. Why do they end up testing God? Because God is (inaudible) with them and God made a commitment to them, and there's a covenant. God said you're my firstborn, this is the way it's going to work, and there's a certain trust and expectation that we're going to be able to work this out, but the Jews are not holding up their end of the bargain.

On the one hand, God is not going to disregard them. This is -- Audience member: What was their bargain?

Rabbi David Fohrman: The bargain is you're my firstborn, and you're going to be what I expect of the firstborn, which is the best of Jacob and Esau together, these two children that are both in some ways the firstborn. You're going to integrate that. You're going to be the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau.

God and the Jews made a commitment to each other in going out of Egypt that the Jews said we'll be your firstborn; we'll stand up and do this.

The manna is sort of the first failure, the inability to really live by the laws of the manna, is the first failure which in Rephidim leads to the Torah to say that they name the place "Masa u,Merivah -- al nasotam et Hashem lemor hayesh Hashem bekirbeinu im ayin", because they tested God, saying is God in our midst or not. Now, if you listen to that language that's the same as "ha'atah zeh beni Eisav im lo", in other words its switching it around. God said I'm testing you to see are you Esau or (inaudible). When we failed that test that amounted to testing God saying, are you in my midst or not. That's where we talked last week about the bargain of faith and the idea is that when you don't have faith, when you fail to have faith when faith is warranted, you have to justify it somehow.

We argued that there are three things that make faith warranted. I have to know that you want me, I have to know that you are powerful and that you care for me and I have to know that you are consistent. If you are all those things then I can trust you, but if I don't trust you and you are all those things the only way I can really deal that without making myself culpable, rely on myself and say you weren't one of those three. Either you didn't love me or you aren't powerful or you are not consistent.

We talked about some of those cases. For example, in Devarim, in the story of the spies what do the Jews say? They have the lack of faith of the spies and they say "besinas Hashem oisonu hoitzi'onu miMitzrayim" and they claim God doesn't love us, which just seems crazy. God took us out of Egypt as a manifestation of His hatred of us which is just crazy, but that's the only way you can justify it. You have to explain it somehow.

Over here its God is inconsistent, "hayesh Hashem bekirbeinu im ayin", is God really here for us or not, can we count on him. Is God a father that we can count on.

By the way, there's one other point where there's a lack of faith, and the third element of (inaudible) is compromised, which is God may love us but may consistently not be powerful enough. Where is that? There's another time where you have the formulation ata… im lo. It's in Beha'alotechah, I believe it's Beha'alotecha, in the story of the slav (quails) when the Jews complain they want meat and then God says I can give them meat.

Then Moses says, how are you going to give them meat "im et kol dagei hayam ye'asefu," what are you going to do, where are you going to get the meat from? You can get all the fish in the sea; You're going to bring them? "Hatzon ubakar yishachet lahem", (inaudible), where are you going to find all the food? God, where are you going to find all the fish? If you get all the fish in the sea together you won't have enough for all these people. God's response is "ata tireh", you're going to see, I'm going to do it, "hayikrecha devari im lo", that's the words, will my words come true or not, you'll see if I said this casually or not, I have that power. This is the same sort of language that we have over here.

Anyway, that's the prime time and when you compromise that, in this case the Jews are saying God is not a reliable father. It's at that point that Amalek comes. Why does Amalek come then? Amalek comes because Amalek is the child of a perceived unreliable father. This is the idea of asher korcha baderech the idea of kara (chance) is the signal word of Amalek; of chance. Why is that the signal word of Amalek?

Rashi translates kara as aray which literally means unreliable. What Amalek stands for is the idea not so much that God is absent, not so much that God doesn't exist, but a more insidious (inaudible) which is that God does exist but he is inherently unreliable.

Because he's unreliable you don't owe him anything. You don't owe him your trust and you don't really owe him anything else. He can therefore be disregarded because he's an unreliable father and hasn't stood up for what he needs to stand up for. This is what Amalek's experience of a father was as we talked about, the experience of every father he's had. However, it's a skewed perception. It's the experience of Elifaz that we talked about, the misperception of Elifaz, the idea of Esau "vayivez Esav et habechorah". We talked about it's never easy to confront a father with deficiencies so you pawn them off on someone else

instead of being angry at father and ultimately Isaac for blessing the wrong person. Here I believe, even at God.

The argument of Amalek, even though it's a skewed argument is, what are you doing standing by the Jews with the manna, you're blessing the wrong person, they're not keeping the laws, they don't have faith. Of course they don't have faith because nobody has faith in You because You're unreliable, but they're not living up to their end of the bargain, so what do you do picking them over us. What I want to argue actually now also, before I get to my problem, is that this too though is a skewed perspective because ironically -- you see, let me ask you this. Maybe Amalek is right? Maybe God did take the wrong person. What did God do? The Jews can't keep the laws of the manna so why doesn't God just get rid of them and say, that's the end guys, you didn't do what you need to do, you're not integrating Jacob and Esau together, you're failing, it's the end of you. That's Amalek's claim. Why isn't Amalek right? The answer, I believe is, that it's God's willingness to stay with the Jews at this point despite their failure that is actually evidence of His being reliable. That is the evidence that He is reliable. Why?

Let's talk about what reliability means. Reliability is the ability to maintain a long-term relationship. What's the nature of a long-term relationship? In Hebrew there's a word for a long-term relationship. The word is brit. That's what a brit is, it's a covenant. Covenant is just a fancy term for a long-term relationship. A long-term relationship is a relationship that has a commitment in it. Let's talk about the definition of commitment. The definition of commitment is -- see, if you always rise to my expectation and I always rise to your expectation we don't need any commitment in our relationship, we're always wonderful. Why would any of us want to leave?

What's the whole point of commitment in marriage? The idea is that I plan to stick with you. Of course I'm going to stick with you if you're the greatest woman in the world ever and I'm the greatest guy in the world why wouldn't we ever stick with each other? The answer is, the whole point of commitment is that we know that we're fallible and we know that we will fail each other. The idea is that when we fail each other we will ride through the storms, that we will find what we can to nurture our relationship through the hard time and we will remember the good, we'll focus on other things, we'll make a commitment to find a way to ride through it until we can reassert our greatness and we will be able to move on.

That's the idea of the definition of commitment. That is the idea of covenant. Once God has made a covenant with the Jews and said you're by firstborn, I'm sticking with you, that by definition means you're my firstborn even when you disappoint me. This is the first time when the Jews disappoint God and Amalek comes along and their explicit claim is drop them, but dropping them would only be evidence actually of God's unreliability. In other words, God's willingness to stick with the Jews is evidence of His reliability. Amalek's view is you're picking the wrong guy again and therefore you're just another unreliable god.

Audience member: By the egel (golden calf) God says to destroy them, wouldn't that be -- Rabbi David Fohrman: That's a very good question. What about the golden calf? That is another

schmooze really and requires us to go through the golden calf story carefully. I actually did a very quick one session of the golden calf a few years back over here, but it really deserves like eight or nine sessions to really go through it in detail. The golden calf is a very, very interesting example of this.

What I want to argue is that the golden calf is the ultimate break, it is adultery really, and adultery is the one thing that can destroy the covenant; in marriage it can destroy the covenant. It is the ultimate test of God's relationship and ultimately we get through that. The story of how we get through that has a lot to do with Moses' greatness and Moses' heroism and what Moses does at that time. My feeling is, looking at the story -- I want to get rid of some details, it's a little bit of a digression but I'll just say this.

Let me get into what the definition of leadership is, what does it mean to be a leader? This is when I think where Moses' medal as a leader is tested the most. My feeling is that the only way the Jews got through this is because Moses did the right thing; Moses' ability to negotiate a very tortuous path. It requires going through the story of the golden calf to see exactly how torturous that was.

Things like "mecheini na misifrecha asher katavta", if you want to kill them You have to kill me too, and other things like that sort of brought them through. The point I want to make just very briefly is that I believe the reason why God picked Moses as a leader was because whatever deficiencies Moses may have had in his personality he was perfectly suited to lead the Jews through the golden calf and God knew that you needed someone who could lead the Jews through the golden calf, and it was almost as if God was playing two sides of the coin. On one side He was the angry betrayed spouse, so to speak at the golden calf, on the other hand He's sort of hiding a laugh as he watches Moses successfully negotiate them through. It's almost like putting Moses in this impossible situation, seeing how he deals with it, but the test over here is how you deal with this impossible situation.

I think I once told you there's this famous adage that God only gives you nisyonot (tests) that you can pass. What happens when you get a test you feel you can't pass, what do you do then? You look at God and you say it's not true, what's going on over here. I think the answer to that is, its true God only gives you tests you can pass, the only thing is you don't know what the test is. Sometimes the test is when you have a situation where there is no way out, how are you going to deal with it. That is the test. It's true, you just don't know what your test is.

Sometimes there's an impossible test, and God says, let's see what's she going to do with an impossible test? That's the test. Not how are you going to succeed, of course you're going to fail, but how are you going to fail. That's what I'm interested in. I think there was that sort of element, something like that going on, the impossible test of how you rebuild after the golden calf. Anyway, I think that the golden calf is the ultimate test of the covenant. This is what it's about, it's about sticking with the covenant.

Now let me get to my problem briefly. My problem is this. It's a subtle problem, i didn't even need to bring it up because it's so subtle, but as I made such a big deal about it, I might as well -- okay, here's the problem. The problem is that there is an inconsistency here. If it's true that the life of Jacob the nation is parallel to the life of Jacob the individual, so when we're up to the story of Jacob and Esau 2 i.e. the deception of Isaac, and the question is how are going to replay that, so we say well what the Jews need to

do with the manna is they need to integrate Jacob and Esau.

Now here's the problem. The way I understand integrating Jacob and Esau and the way the textual parallel seems to indicate that is, it's the idea of can I have the perfect balance of the manna of focus on today and focus on tomorrow, that's what it means. The problem is it doesn't parallel what's actually happening in Jacob and Esau 2, because the nature of the integration of Jacob and Esau 2 is not an integration of tomorrow and today, it's an integration of hands and voice. In other words, when Isaac looks at Jacob in that story and says hakol kol Yaakov vehayadayim yedei Esav he doesn't talk about tomorrow and today. Tomorrow and today aren't issues in Jacob and Esau 2; they're issues in Jacob and Esau 1.

The question is how do you get to the point where you think the Jews are in Jacob and Esau 2, they're bumping their father, there's (inaudible) are you my son Esau or not, are you going to keep the laws of the manna, and we're up to Jacob and Esau 2, and yet, the type of integration we're talking about is an integration of characteristics which you only see expressed in Jacob and Esau 1, which is a focus on tomorrow and sort of focus on today. Where do we see that in the way that Isaac is relating to Jacob and Esau as Esau is the man with the hands and Jacob is the man with the voice?

Audience member: But you set it up as today versus tomorrow, maybe do it versus something else.

Rabbi David Fohrman: But the problem is, how then is that relating to the manna? See, the manna only worked--

Audience member: (Inaudible) Shabbat (inaudible) that you are putting it off, you are collecting today for tomorrow, but God told you to do it, and normally you're not, you're listening exactly to God and you're only collecting for today.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Before you give any solutions I want to make sure you understand the issues. Do you understand the issue?

Audience member: It's not a parallel, no, it's not a parallel.

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, you don't understand the issue. Here's the issue one more time. The issue is that if you go through all this, secured, Jacob and Esau in the womb, here's Jacob and Esau 1, here's Jacob and Esau 2, well Jacob and Esau 1 is an issue where tomorrow and today are issues, right? There's the bread, focus on the bread, focus on the firstborn, that's tomorrow and today issues. But Jacob and Esau 2, which is I want a child with the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacob, isn't about today and tomorrow, it's about having hands and voice.

(Interposing).

Rabbi: Okay. So what it forces us to do is to integrate the two sides of Jacob and Esau. In other words, the grand $54,000 question is, how is it that Jacob, a man of voice is focused on tomorrow and Esau, a

man of hands, is focused on doing, is a person who's focused on today? How do those work? It's complicated, I just want to give you my theory, I don't want to spend too much time on this. Let me just give you my theory and leave it at that.

My theory is the following. Where are we now, where are the Jews of the nation? They're in the desert. They're in the desert when God is asking them to integrate the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacob.

Now, what does the hands of Esau mean? The hands of Esau means are you a doer, can you accomplish in the world, can you bring home the bacon as it were. What would it mean for the Jews to bring home the bacon, which is to be able to have the capacity to have food in the desert? The answer is even Esau himself could not make food for three million people in the desert. You can have all the hands of Esau you want, you can go hunting all you want, what are going to do, find a stand bar? What are you going to hunt? Rocks? What are you going to hunt in the desert, there's nothing to hunt? So what does it mean to have the hands of Esau in the desert? How does a responsible person get food in the desert?

The answer is there is only one way for three million people to get food in the desert, and the answer is through the hands of God, through a miracle. How do you produce a miracle? That's really the question. To be an Esau in the desert, to be able to produce, is a whole different thing than to be an Esau in the field. To be an Esau in the desert is, how am I going to produce a miracle? The answer is that miracles don't come from nothing, as Julie Andrews once said, (inaudible), nothing ever could, so where do miracles come from? The answer is miracles come from faith. Faith is the engineering behind miracles, it's the engine that makes miracles. How does that work? The idea is miracle you're asking God to do something he doesn't like doing, you're asking God to cross over lines.

God for His part, is very happy -- there's a reason there's something called the laws of nature. That's the way God set up the world. There are laws of nature; He took a lot of pains to work it all out mathematically, physics, chemistry, the whole thing. This is God's will. Every time a stone drops following the inverse square law of gravity, the stone is doing God's will, that's God's thing.

Miracles, which we think as the greatest expression of God's will, is actually something God really doesn't go for. That is like, you're really putting God in a corner. You want Me to leave behind My whole laws of nature thing that I spent so much time devising all this to make a little exception for you? That's what you want? That's what a miracle is. So, occasionally you get God to come over to your side of the tennis court and make a miracle for you. But He's much more comfortable on His side of the tennis court called the laws of nature. That's His will that's operating all the time. How do you get God to come over to your side of the tennis court? That's done by going over to His side of the tennis court.

How do you go over to his side of the tennis court? That's faith, that's, well, normally I'm self-sufficient, right, but there are times when I can't be entirely self-sufficient and I place myself in Your hands. Well, if you're going to place yourself in God's hands, that's if you really do that, God's going to say okay, fine. You're coming over to My side of the tennis court, I'll go over to your side of the tennis court. I'll make a little exception for you, but don't ask Me to do this anymore. You know, that's kind of the way it works. That's how faith works.

So what I want to argue is that the hands of Esau in the desert to be a doer, what God really wants from the Jews is exactly what Isaac wanted from Jacob and Esau. I want to bless a doer; somebody who can get food. What does it mean somebody who can get food? Somebody who can get food in the real world, means somebody who can get food even in the desert, means someone who has faith, i. e. someone who can integrate tomorrow and today, the two character traits of Jacob and Esau in such a way that they are compound of both, in such way that you have the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau, that's all the same thing. That's how you produce in the desert.

Now, what I want to argue is -- give me one second, I want to argue that it's not really just in the desert, it's actually in the land too. It's just a little bit more complicated, and I think I made this analogy to you, but let me put it to you again. When Isaac the man gives the blessing to Jacob the person, the blessings are "Vayiten lecha ha'Elokim mital hashamayim umishmanei ha'aretz". What I want to argue is that the first part of the verse is referring to the manna. Hashem will give you the dew of the sky, but the second part of the verse, and from the fat of the land, is referring to what? The land, that's the land of Israel.

What Isaac is saying, what father is saying, what the ultimate blessings of Father to Jacob the nation is, I'm going to take care of you, I'm going to feed you. Where am I going to feed you? I'm going to start feeding you in the desert, that's the manna, but I will continue feeding you in the land.

Now, why does it work that way? It's not just a utilitarian thing that the Jews need to get fed so they'll start getting fed in the desert. It's more than that. What I want to argue is that the manna is practice for the the land. How is the manna practice fore the land? So I think I gave this to you before, but again, at the risk of belaboring the analogy, the manna is like math, right? Some people don't have a math head, I have a daughter who can't stand math. So what do you do with a daughter who can't stand math to actually get her to sit down and do some math, what do you do? You break down equations. You say this equation really isn't so hard. It looks like a hard problem but really it's just three easy algebraic equations. Once you understand the three easy algebraic equations and you put them together, so then you understand that every difficult equation is really a bunch of simple equations, if you could just understand everything and take it apart. That's the manna.

What the manna is is a simple equation. It is a way of getting the Jews used to faith which is going to faith which is going to be the essential axiom, mathematical axiom that they need to survive no matter where they are. It's just the desert's the easiest way to see it. Why? Because the desert is the pure mathematical problems stripped of anything that would confuse you. How so? Because it's very obvious that you're being fed through God in the desert. Where else are you going to get food? What kind of input are you exactly going to have to be able feed 3 million people in the desert? Obviously it's coming from God.

So, the part of the equation that we can take put that's easy is that at least I know that I'm being fed through God. Now, if I'm being fed through God, what's the hard part? The hard part is I have to make myself vulnerable to God, I have to not try to illegitimately manipulate things, I have to deal with only what I can do today, I have to trust that God will help me tomorrow. It's like a practice in trust. But in the land it's a (inaudible) problem. The land is a much more complicated problem. Why? Because really

the same dynamic is happening, it's like any good math problem, it's the same thing. It's just a little more complicated. Which is, how are we going to get food, through faith? It's just a little more complicated, and there's something called personal effort, which is you are mixing in your own labor too.

In other words, you are not going to get it only through faith, you're also going to have to actually plant and you're actually going to have to water your crops, you're actually going to take them to market, and you're going to have to figure out what a good price is, you're going to have to look at supply and demand in the world. You're going to have to have good governmental policies, you're going to have to have all that stuff, but you still can't control for rain, boys and girls. Right, you're going to have to have faith too. Faith is still going to be an essential engine which you as the farmer are going to need in order to be able to get land. It's just a little bit more complicated because now that your labor is mixed in you can fool yourself. You can start thinking that that's all about you and you can drop God out of the picture too.

That's why we start with manna. The idea of manna is, let's practice, guys. Let's get it down straight, let's just get that straight. Do you understand what it's like to make yourself plausible, and then after you get like 40 years of practice with a simple algebraic problem then you'll start getting more complicated problems. You'll own the land, you'll do your thing, but you'll still know there's that faith aspect. Not only then will it be Hashem will give you dew from the sky but it will also be the fat of the land, I will give you from the fruits of the land. So what's happening is -- what God is really doing here is saying, like Isaac, I want a doer. I want a doer, I want an Esau, I want a guy with the hands of Esau.

What does a doer mean? What does it mean for the Jew nation to really be able to produce? It means that they've got to have a relationship with Me. It means they have to be able to trust, to put myself in My hands because there's always going to be that element. That's how they're going to get the rain. That how they're going to be able to survive in the land, they have to have those hands of Esau The hands of Esau doesn't just mean that they can go and do their effort, it also means that they have to be able to have that faith which is the integration of tomorrow and today as we've talked about before.

Okay, so that's the overall theory. One second. I'm doing a lot of talking today and not that much input from you, so let me just, let me skip (inaudible) because I have a lot to say, a lot to say and not that much time to say it. Actually, I'm almost out of time. So let me leave you with that and the following.

This last week's Torah portion. Fascinatingly it has a lot to do with all of this. So last week's Torah portion was Bechukosai. There are lots of fascinating things in Bechukosai, lets actually go to Bechukosai, I'll put it up on the screen for you for a moment.

"Im bechukosai teileichu ve'et mitzvotai tishmoiru va'asitem otam". What does that mean? If you follow My commandments and do everything right, everything's going to be good. Okay. What do you mean, My commandments? Which commandments? "Im bechukosai teileichu", if you go in my ways, does it mean the whole Torah? That's one possibility.

There's another possibility too. We usually think it's the whole Torah, I want to argue it's not the whole

Torah. In the simple explanation we do not mean the whole Torah right now. We mean a particular subset of commandments, the really important (inaudible). How are they? Bechukosai usually gets paired with another Torah portion. What is the portion before this? It's Behar. Let's look at the beginning of Behar for a moment; we'll come back to Chapter 26, which is Bechukosai.

Audience member: The Sabbatical Year and Jubilee.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right? "Vayedabeir Hashem el Moshe Behar Sinai Leimor. Daber el Bnei Yisrael ve'amarta aleihem ki savo'u el ha'aretz asher ani nosein lachem veshavta ha'aretz shabbat La'Hashem".

Right, there's going to be something called the Sabbatical Year. " Sheish shanim tizra sadecha vesheish shanim tizmor karmecha ve'asafta et tevuata. " Six years you're going to be -- you're going to do this. In the seventh year there's going to be "Shabbos shabbason yihiyeh la'aretz shabbos laHashem sadecha lo sizra vecharmecha lo sizmor." You're going to have to leave everything -- have to leave everything.

Now, what's the whole point of all this, and then you're going to have seven sabbatical years, and then you're going to have Jubilee. After Jubilee everything can go back, and (inaudible) "ki li kol ha'aretz", what's the message of all this?

The message of all this is, the land is Mine. You have to understand that the land is Mine. Now, the land is Mine, is God's. Now, notice this over here. "Im bechukosai teileichu ve'et mitzvotai tishmiru va'asitem otam". If you go in My ways and guard My commandments. See that? This is in Behar, what's that talking about? That's talking about the Sabbatical Year. That language is go in My ways and guard My commandments, that's talking about the Sabbatical Year. So the problem is that even in Bechukosai, when you have that language, we're continuing, we're really talking about the Sabbatical Year.

Now keep on reading for a moment. "Vechi tomru" in Behar, lest you say, one second, what's this Sabbatical Year business? Mah nochal beshana hashevi'is, what are you going to eat, right? The answer "Hein lo nizra velo ne'esof et tevu'ateinu", we're not making anything? The answer is " Vetziviti et birchati lachem", look at that language. I'm going to give my blessing to you. What does that remind you of? God giving blessing, father giving blessing. Which blessing? Well Isaac gave a blessing "mital hashamayim unishmanei ha'aretz". This was the blessing of the fat of the land. How are you going to get the fat of the land? How are you going to get the blessing that father gives you; the fat of the land?

Through the Sabbatical Year.

Now what does the Sabbatical Year remind you of? Audience member: The test of the manna.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's the same test as the manna. It's just, instead of a weekly cycle it's a yearly cycle, the same thing as the manna. Which is, okay boys, Friday, you get a double portion, but no collecting Saturday. Well that's the Sabbatical Year. The Sabbatical Year is, okay, we're going to make this rule. Why are we making the rule? The whole point of the manna, you should understand that it comes from Me. Don't fool yourself into thinking that you have more control over them and that it's yours.

No, it's coming from Me, the whole point of these laws is just you should keep on understanding that it's Me, and you shouldn't fall for this illusion that you have this control and it's all you. That's why I'm asking you not to collect on Shabbos, so that you understand that the bread is coming from Me; same thing in the land. There's going to be the Sabbatical Year laws, and through these Sabbatical laws vetziviti et birchati", you're going to get the blessing of the fat of the land and everything's going to be great. Okay?

Now we go to Bechukosai. Did I skip it? I skipped it. Okay. "Im bechukosai teileichu ve'et mitzvotai tishmoiru va'asitem otam." If you follow my laws so everything's good. Now look at this language. If you follow my laws "va'achaltem lachmechem lasova", you're going to eat bread to satiety. Now, where do you have that language "Va'achaltem lachmichem lasova"? Do you know where you first have that language, where this is a quote from? It's right before the manna, in Parshas Beshalach, when the Jews complained.

Right, they said we remember Egypt ""Ba'achaleinu lechem lasova", when we had enough bread to eat to satiety. What's God saying? I remember that complaint. So you thought everything was good in Egypt. You didn't want to come out because you thought I was unreliable. Guess what? I'm reliable, right? "Va'achaltem lachmechem lasova", the same kind of consistency you had in Egypt, you're going to have with Me as long as you understand that the stuff comes from me.

You keep the Sabbatical Year, "va'achaltem lachmechem lasova", just like in Egypt. You'll eat to satiety, you'll have that same consistency, what you always wanted. You'll eat your bread, and you're going to have that, and you're going to know it's there and everything is going to be good. "Vayishavtem levetach be'artzchem", and dwell safely in your land. Okay. However, let's say things don't go well. So things don't go well, "Im lo tishme'u li" if you don't listen to me, now listen to these words, "ve'im bechukosai timasru", if My ways you revile. Now, what was verse? If you go in My ways. What would you sat the opposite of if you go in My ways would be?

Audience member: If you don't go.

Rabbi David Fohrman: If you don't go in my ways. Now look at this, "im bechukosai timasu" translate those words. Timasu is a very strong word. It means revile My laws. Revile? Who's talking about reviling? So we weren't so careful with the Sabbatical Year. All right, fine. So we didn't keep the Sabbatical Year so well. So let's call that not going, let's not call it -- by the way, you know it's the Sabbatical Year because the very end of all this, at the very end of the Rebuke it's "az tirtzeh ha'aretz et shabsoteha kol yimei hashana", and when you get kicked off the land, that's when the land will keep all of its Sabbatical Years. So it's very clear that we're talking about the Sabbatical Year here that this happens. Why is God so hot under the collar, so to speak? "im bechukosai timasu", if My ways you revile, all right, so we didn't keep the laws, we didn't revile Your laws just because we didn't keep them.

The answer is, when it comes the Sabbatical Year, if you don't keep the Sabbatical Year it's reviling the Sabbatical Year. The whole point of the Sabbatical Year is that you should have the faith which is a certain way of understanding that the stuff comes from God. If you don't keep the Sabbatical Year, it's

not like an innocent I didn't get around to keep the Sabbatical Year, it's I thought You weren't reliable, and therefore I had to illegitimately try to control what I can't control. Because I'm trying to make this illusion that I control it because I do the work and I do all this, I plant, and you're missing the whole point. You're missing the whole point; you're reviling God's laws. That's not a good thing. You are putting yourself in the Amalek shoes once again. You're asking for Amalek. You don't get Amalek, you get the Rebuke.

Now look at the Rebuke. So in the Rebuke there's this whole thing that -- what God's going to say is, "Ve'im bezos lo tivosru li, vahalachtem imi bekeri. Vehalachti imachem bachamas keri veyisarti eschem af ani sheva al chatoseichem. " It's interesting, "Sheva al chatoseichem" , we normally read that as I'll punish you sevenfold. It doesn't necessarily mean sevenfold, it also could mean I'll punish you in sevens for the sin which was a sin of sevens; which is the inability to keep to the laws of Sabbath, as it were. Then "Veshavarti et ge'on uzchem"? I will shatter your illusion of independent strength.

That's what it means. You think you're independent, you're not independent. I have to shatter that illusion; you'll see you're not independent. And then "vinasati et shemeichem kabarzel ", I'll make the rain -- there's no rain. What, do you think you control everything, where's -- you're not going to be able to control the rain. I'll have to show you in other ways that you're dependent upon Me if you insist on adhering to an illusion of independence. The way to actually do it is to voluntarily understand that you are dependant, to voluntarily understand that it comes from Me and that's what you do in Sabbatical year. If not, then I'll do it other ways. There won't be any rain and then you'll understand, you'll see that it comes from me.

Then what's interesting is, look at this, "ve'im teilchu imi keri", and you behave with me casually, that's the Amalek word. What does it mean? If you consider Me inconsistent, that's the whole point, why are you not keeping the Sabbatical Year? "Ve'im teilchu imi keri", because you think I'm unreliable. You think I'm awry, you think I'm casual, you don't think I can be counted on, therefore you have to work. You don't have faith. Then, what's interesting is that ultimately in the end of this, and with this I'll close, what God says is and then at the very end I will, "ve'im teilchu imi keri"? If you walk casually with me, so too "Af ani eileich imachem bechamat keri"? I will be casual with you.

Audience member: What does keri mean?

Rabbi DavidFohrman: Keri means happenstance, in an unreliable way, right? You're walking with Me as if I'm inconsistent. So if you do that, if you walk casually with Me, I will walk with you with casually with anger -- later on at the very end, let's see if I can find it. Oh and look at this, yes, "Vehalachti af ani imchem bekeri", I will walk with you in casualness, right, and then "Veheveisi aleichem cherev nokemes nekam bris", vengeance of the covenant, very fascinating. You know what we talked about before?

Right, God is stuck with us because there's the covenant, there's a long term relationship.

So God is saying, when you do this to Me, I'm not going to say to hell with you, I'm not going to say you aren't My nation anymore. I'm not going to go and find somebody new. No, I'm going to stick with you. And that's what the very end of the previous verse says ve'af and even if you do all this, I will

still not decry you, I will still not get rid of you. I will still bring you back. We'll still have a relationship and it's going to get better, but what this is is "cherev nokemes nekam brit", the vengeance of the covenant. It's an avenging so to speak of the covenant.

The idea is that the covenant is a double edged sword, so to speak which is, on the one hand, the happy side of the covenant is that you can't really dissolve it. Once God is committed to you in means you have tenure. It means that you're committed to even if you -- even if you fail. But if you fail expectations in a relationship there's a tremendous amount of hurt and disappointment.

Right, and that's the Rebuke. That's it. You don't get it, you're not living up to your side, so you're going to get it in very painful ways so you'll understand what it means to be independent. Here's "Vehalachti imchem bechamat keri", at the very end of the screen, you see that? And then I'll walk with in angry casualness. In angry casualness, boys and girls, where do we have casual anger? Who had angry casualness? The anger, the hot anger of casualness, of, happenstance. The very first time you have those words, the very first time you have keri , kara, is -- it's not the very first time but it's close to the first time in the Torah is when Jacob our father says to his father, when he's tricking his father, "ki hikra Hashem Elokecha lefanai" . God just happened. Isaac says, so how'd you come here so fast, where did you get meat so fast, I just sent Esau out, are you Esau? Then instead of integrating Jacob and Esau together, the un-integrated Jacob, who is doing a bad imitation of Esau with the clothes, says no, "ki kara Hashem Elokecha lefonai," which is the beginning of father is unreliable.

That's the (inaudible) for Amalek. "ki hikra Hashem Elokecha lefonai," Oh God just happened to provide for me, which was the lie; the deceiving the father. Then who felt anger? Who felt anger because Jacob said that? Esau. How do you know? Because when Rebecca says don't worry, just go to Lavan "ad asher chashuch cheimat achicha", until you brothers anger, anger at what, over this lie, "ki hikra Hashem Elokecha lefonai"? Oh sure, I'm Esau, just God made it happen so quickly. The answer is there are two kinds of casual anger. One kind of Esau expressed in Amalek, the other kind is God says we don't even need Amalek. If you don't keep this so God Himself will express angry casualness, which is what the Rebuke is. It's the anger of, you think I'm unreliable. It's God's response to that.

Okay folks, this is where we're going to end for here, we'll pick up

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, we are moving inexorably towards the end of our look at Jacob, Esau, Amalek and the Jews. In order to do so we need to go back for a moment to the original Jacob and Esau story, to just review it, to make sure that we are familiar with what's going on.

I just want to look at the aftermath of the deception. Jacob gets the blessings and then Esau comes back, his father realizes that he has been deceived and Jacob tells Esau that he's blessed Jacob. Excuse me, Isaac tells Esau that he has blessed Jacob instead of him, and "kishmo'a Eisav et divrei aviv," at the top of the screen here. When Esau heard what his father said. "Vayitz'ak tze'akah gedolah umara," he let out a great and bitter cry "ad me'od, vayomer l'aviv barcheini gam ani avi". He said to his father, bless me too, my father, "vayomer ba achicha b'mirmah vayikach birchatecha." He says I can't, your brother has already come in stealth and has taken your blessing.

"Vayomer ", so he says "hachi kara shemo Yaakov vayakveini zeh pa'amayim". That's why you called his name Yaakov. He has twisted me twice now, "et bechorati lakach vehinei atah lakach birchati". First he took my right of first born and now he's taken my blessing. Right, the play on words, bechora and brachah you can switch the chaf and the reish.

"Vayomer halo atzalta li brachah", and he says haven't you left me a brachah? So Isaac finally answers him and gives him the following blessing. "Vaya'an Yitzchak vayomer l'Eisav, hein gevir -- so pay attention to this, because today what we are going to be doing is we're going to be looking at Esau's blessing.

Audience Member: What perek is this?

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't know what perek this is. What perek is this? Audience Member: (Inaudible) 27.

Rabbi David Fohrman: 27, sounds about right. So, "vaya'an Yitzchak vayomer l'Eisav", so Isaac says to Esau "hein gevir samtiv lach ve'et kol echav natati lo la'avadim". I have placed you -- "hein gevir samtiv lach" I have made him master Jacob, "ve'et kol echav natati lo la'avadim" and all of his brothers, I have given to him as servants. "Vedagan vetirosh semachtiv" and I have given him grain and oil, "ulecha eifo ma e'eseh beni", what can I still give you my son? "Vayomer Eisav el aviv, habarachah achat hi lecha avi", do you really only have one blessing my father? "Baracheini gam ani avi" bless me to. "Vayisa Eisav kolo vayevk", and he lifts up his voice and he cries. "Vaya'an Yitzchak aviv vayomer eilav", so Isaac answers him and says. "Hinei mishmanei ha'aretz yihyeh moshavecha" --

Audience Member: Where is it?

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- "umital hashamayim may'al." Right over here, Pasuk Lamed-Tes. Isaac answers him and says "hinei mishmanei ha'aretz yihyeh moshavecha umital hashamayim may'al". From the fats of the land shall be your dwelling place, "umital hashamayim may'al" and from the dew of the heavens above.

Now, you will notice also that this is suspiciously similar to the brachah that Isaac gave to Jacob. But it's not exactly the same. Isaac had said to Jacob -- it also talked about "tal hashamyaim" and it also talked about "mishmanei ha'aretz". But it was phrased a little bit differently. "Vayiten lecha ha'Elokim mital hashamayim umishmanei ha'aretz", let God grant you from the dew of the heavens and from the "mishmanei ha'aretz."

Now, if you think about it, in the simple meaning of what's going on, when would you say that Esau got the "shmanei ha'aretz" and "tal hashamayim"; what would that mean for him, do you think? When does Esau get the fats of the land?

Audience Member: When Jacob doesn't do what he should be doing. Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, now, that's later, just simple, right.

Audience Member: Mount Say'ir.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Mount Say'ir, Right. Esau gets a yerusha just like the Jews do. They get a place in the world. They get a God given piece of land, which is for Esau, which God takes pain to tell the Jews they're not going to get any of and that they cannot invade Esau. They cannot expect to even get a footstep of Esau's land, because "ki yerusha l'Eisav natati et Mount Say'ir". I have given them a yerusha on Mount Say'ir.

So this is really -- and notice also, that later on when Esau and Jacob meet up and they more or less reconcile. Jacob hugs Esau and Esau hugs him back and they kiss each other and they are going on. Esau says why don't you come with me and Jacob says, no, I am going to stay behind. When Esau departs in peace, he is going somewhere. Where is he going? He is actually going to Say'ir. The reason why he's going -- and I might even go -- I would go so far as to suggest, that the reason why Esau can depart in peace at that point and there can be a reconciliation is, because he is going to Say'ir. This is because Jacob may be on his long journey -- torturous journey, by the way, to eventually get to Canaan. But actually it's going to take Jacob a lot longer and Esau can basically go to Say'ir and set up shop.

We even see the Torah goes out of its way to mention that. If you look after that encounter in Vayishlach -- let's actually head over there, for a second, on the screen.

Audience Member: What is the (inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: We'll get to that in a minute.

Audience Member: (Inaudible). It reminds me about when his neck was severed by Chushim (Hushim, son of Dan).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Let's see here. So, for example -- wait, wait, wait, one second. Okay. So, for example, Jacob, after meeting up with Esau, goes to Bethel and in Bethel God says to him your name

won't be Jacob anymore, you are going to be Yisrael "vayomer lo Elokim ani Kel-Shakai", I am Kel- Shakai . "Preh urveh goy u'kehal goyim yihyeh mimeka," you will have great nations come from you "umelachim mechalatzecha yeitzei'u" and kings will come from you. The land that I have given to Abraham and Isaac I am going to give to you. However, all those blessings are long in coming. When will the Jews actually have kings in their land? It's going to be a long, long time.

It is interesting that right after this event, the Torah goes and briefly lists the b'nei Yaakov (sons of Jacob) and then it goes and it lists the toldot (offspring) of Esau, right over here. After you get through all the offspring of Esau, it then says "vayeishev Eisav beHar Say'ir", Esau then settled on Mount Say'ir. It continues with the offspring of Esau and it talks about all of their princes and all of their kings.

We conclude with "Ve'eileh hamelachim asher malchu be'Eretz Edom lifnei melach melech livnei Yisrael. Vayimloch be'Edom Bela ben Be'or vesheim ee'ro Dinhava." We go through a long list of kings and look how the Torah mentions the kings of Say'ir? These are the kings of Edom before there were ever any kings for the Jews, right. It's like, the fact is, that the Jews have a very long and circuitous road. It's like the game of Life. Have you've ever played the game of Life when you were a kid? There was the short route and then there was a long route, if you wanted to go to medical school, you know.

So you know, the Jews had this very long route and Esau gets the short route. He's got kings right away in Say'ir; he's basically more or less happy and okay. So, going back to the brachos, over here; "hinei mishmanei ha'aretz yihyeh moshavecha umital hashamayim mayal", that is, sort of, Say'ir. However, if we view that as Say'ir for Esau, then there are very important, interesting implications for Amalek.

Because, let's look at Amalek's prospective on all this.

Can Amalek interpret this blessing as Say'ir? What bias do they have to not interpret this blessing as meaning they are going to get Say'ir?

Audience Member: Where, it doesn't say the place?

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. Here's the problem. Let's go back to what we know about Amalek for a moment. The thesis we argue with Amalek is that Amalek is dispossession, squared. He is the dispossessed child of Eliphaz, who himself is the dispossessed child of Esau.

We also argued that Amalek is really just -- again, we talked about Amalek's ancestry the child of Eliphaz and the child of Timnah. Timnah -- what did our Sages tell us about Timnah? Timnah was the pilegesh of Eliphaz, not a real wife, desperate to join the family of Abraham at any cost and yet she doesn't really succeed. Her child is dispossessed, is not really counted among the regular children of Eliphaz. Yet, here you have this child of Eliphaz, who is not really counted as a child of Eliphaz, but he devotes his life to what Eliphaz's mission was. Eliphaz's mission, again, according to our Sages -- what was Eliphaz dispatched to do by his father? To kill Jacob at any cost and that becomes Amalek's mission.

Amalek is trying to out-Esau, Esau, right, to be the -- which you often find in dispossessed children, right, that I am the real Esau and I will be even more Esau than Esau. Therefore, it's up to me to be the

standard bearer of Eliphaz's mission. Eliphaz failed and Esau failed, but I will succeed and I will be the one to re-fame them and I am the real Esau.

The problem with this, of course, is that, as the Rambam (Maimonides) points out, the dispossessed son of Esau, the dispossessed son of Eliphaz is not yoresh (doesn't inherit) along with his other brothers; which means he has no place in Say'ir, which means that he has no place in this blessing. But, from his perspective, if I am the real Esau, but I don't have Say'ir -- what's the only other possible interpretation he can have for this blessing "mishmanei ha'aretz yihyeh moshavecha umital hashamayim may'al"?

Audience Member: (Inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. It puts him into direct conflict with Jacob, right. Jacob's got "tal hashamayim". Jacob has got the manna, Jacob has got "mishmanei ha'aretz"; he's got Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel). So it seems like -- give me one second -- it seems like Amalek's viewpoint is, if Amalek means it that way, then Amalek's translation of this blessing is; "hinei mishmanei ha'aretz yihyeh moshavecha umital hashamayim may'al", that the fats of the land, i.e. the land of Israel. But also umital hashamyaim, which is going to mean the manna for the Jews -- is what for Esau -- or is what for "moshavecha"? What does moshavecha mean?

Audience Member: Your dwelling place.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Is your dwelling place, which puts him on a direct crash course -- it means that what the manna is -- the manna for the Jews is a gift "vayiten lecha ha'Elokim mital hashamayim." But Amalek's perspective on that gift is that you are taking the place that I sit, my land. It's as if the manna is like my land, that's my dwelling place; that is mine. So, in other words, the Jews taking the manna is, in the view of Amalek, an inherent act of trespass, literally. It is like you are trespassing on my land. Because the alternative interpretation of Say'ir is unavailable, right? That's, kind of, the theory that I am suggesting. Yes?

Audience Member: Isn't it (inaudible) the difference between Esau's and Jacob's blessing is the (inaudible) Elokim?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, that's a good point. Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: He will get it, right, he will get it but it doesn't say how, right. Audience Member: I thought, if you read it wrong, the wrong way it says Hashem moshavecha.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, but that's reading it the wrong way, but that's true. All right. That's a good point.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) not referring to the land but (inaudible) the land. Rabbi David Fohrman: Which land?

Audience Member: The land, "mishmanei ha'aretz", what is the "ha'aretz"? If it's not (inaudible) it is not referring to Mount Say'ir. We know that Mount Say'ir, we know later on, it's not (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Could be, but then what is it?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) you say the manna is symbolic of the land; is that what you are saying?

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. I am just saying that in Amalek's view it's as if -- on other words, the manna is a transportable thing, it's bread, right. But it's being rephrased here as -- the characterization is "yihyeh moshavecha" that both "mishmanei ha'aretz" and "umital hashamayim" is your dwelling place. It's as if you are dwelling in the manna. It's as if the Jews eating the manna is an inherent trespass on territory. It's almost like the manna is the territory of Amalek.

Audience Member: But it comes from Hashem, but they do not believe in Hashem. Rabbi David Fohrman: I am not arguing that this is an effective --

Audience Member: It's what he is thinking that he is totally deprived.

Rabbi David Fohrman: I'm just saying that -- that's right. I am just suggesting that another reason why the manna is so provocative to Amalek, may be, because Amalek's view of their blessings is that this is theirs, and it's theirs in almost the sense that land is theirs.

If you think about something being yours, again, I think, in Judaism, the concept of possession is different than it is in Western thought. Western thought you either own something or you don't. It's kind of like being pregnant, right. It's a yes or no thing. There is no such a thing as being more or less, you either own it or you don't own it. I think, in Jewish thought, the notion of possession is much more

-- there are many more gradients in possession; you could own things more and more deeply. For example, you own land more deeply than your own movable possessions. Land is just a deeper thing, it allows for a deeper kind of kinyan (acquisition). A deepest kind of kinyan you could have in land is, you know, is an achuzah (property possession), is a yerusha; it's something that's passed down in the family, it's an inheritance, an heirloom.

So it's interesting that -- what I am arguing that Amalek's perspective is that the "tal hashamayim", the manna, a portable thing, it's not being treated like a portable thing. It's being treated like territory; something that you own in a deeper kind of way. It's a much more significant trespass. It's like you are taking my place in the world by taking what the "tal hashamayim" ends up being, which is the manna.

Of course, the argument is that, you know, to the Jews, who are you? If you managed, as we talked

about before, to integrate Jacob and Esau together it would be one thing. If you're an imposter one more time, then what are you doing? You don't deserve the manna. Okay. Lets --

Audience Member: Rabbi? Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes.

Audience Member: I am still dwelling on what Esti said with "yihyeh" being close to the word, the name of Hashem.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay.

Audience Member: I think that's the big difference, because for Eisav it's just happening; it's "yihyeh", it's going to happen. But for Jacob, Hashem "moshavecha" and that is, like, a deliberate change.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yea, it's an interesting point; if you go back to Jacob's blessing. Well, it interesting, because Jacob's blessing is not really the name Hashem, it's Elokim I think. Where is it over here?

Audience Member: "Vayiten lecha ha'Elokim mital hashamayim" -- Rabbi David Fohrman: Right.

Audience Member: -- second line.

Rabbi David Fohrman: "Vayiten lecha ha'Elokim mital hashamayim". Okay.

Audience Member: Isn't Elokim, midas hadin (The Attribute of Justice)? In other words, if we behave we get it and if not, not. But with Amalek they get it anyway. You know, it's like no ifs, ands or buts.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. Yeah, that could be. I mean, it is interesting that you've got this word which is similar to yud, kay, vav, kay there. I'll give you that. I'm not sure what to make of it.

Audience Member: That's just before he said the brachah "asher beracho Hashem."

Audience Member: It, kind of, (inaudible) the whole idea that you talked about with Esau (inaudible) Amalek (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Go ahead.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) Esau looks back at his blessing and say I was (inaudible) my father, also not involving (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: It was not involved in giving it to me. Audience Member: Can you repeat (inaudible) Jacob's blessing? Rabbi David Fohrman: Back to Jacob's blessing?

Audience Member: Yeah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Jacob's blessing is -- right over here.

Audience Member: Do you notice something; the tal comes first with Jacob -- Rabbi David Fohrman: Right.

Audience Member: The shamayim (Heaven) comes first with Jacob and the aretz (Land) comes second, but with Esau the aretz comes first and then the shamayim.

Audience Member: Also he (inaudible) and later on again. Rabbi David Fohrman: Right.

Audience Member: It's almost like (inaudible), going back to the original theme, Olam Hazeh was more for Esau, Olam Habah was more for Jacob. We're kind of hinting at it in the blessing. Esau, you're going to be more concerned about the aretz and Jacob is going to be more concerned about the shamayim.

Audience Member: Yeah, that's perfect. Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay.

Audience Member: But why does (inaudible) be identical, very similar, I mean, it's not identical, the same blessing --

Audience Member: Why do you have to -- (Interposing.)

Audience Member: -- the blessing you had mentioned the same blessing. Again, "tal hashamayim" and "shmanei ha'aretz", whereas the -- (inaudible) and then you give the same blessing.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, yes; it is interesting. I don't know. The only thing that -- I agree with you and I think that it's interesting that the blessing that he gives them seems to put the brothers on a collision course, because it seems like they are both competing over the same thing. So what I'm arguing is that the original Esau doesn't see it that way.

The original Esau sees that as Say'ir, right, so it's not a collision course. It's only Amalek who can't get Say'ir whose only possibility is a collision course.

Audience Member: Right. Rabbi David Fohrman: Right.

Audience Member: Why can't we (inaudible) is Say'ir? Audience Member: Yeah, today, where today is (inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's to the -- I think it's to the south east of Israel, if I'm not mistaken. All right. (Interposing.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Southern Jordan.

AX: That would be in Leprechaun of Jordan? Rabbi David Fohrman: No.

Audience Member: Jordan?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. I think, yeah. Audience Member: That's what they believe.

Audience Member: Who is worse, Amalek and Ishmael? Esau and Amalek, so which is -- I don't understand.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Who's worse?

Audience Member: I am saying, who is supposed to be -- I mean, they say (inaudible), but Amalek is the descendant of Esau and Ishmael, because they don't want (inaudible). (Inaudible) don't (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: It could be. Audience Member: Ishmael.

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, guys, ladies, folks. Okay, folks, we're moving on. Audience Member: Good.

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right. The rest of Esau's blessing is, "ve'al charbecha tichyeh ve'et achicha

ta'avod vehaya ka'asher tarid uparakta u'lo mei'al tzavarecha." You shall live by your sword. You shall serve your brother, "vehaya ka'asher tarid uparakta u'lo mei'al tzavarecha." Now the question is what does this mean, and it should be "kasher tarid"? Anybody? What does that mean?

Audience Member: Depending how I am. (Interposing.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: So, it could mean when you cause him to go down, when you cause Jacob to go down to "uparakta u'lo mei'al tzavarecha." Then you can break off his yolk from upon your neck. The question is what does that mean? When you cause Jacob to go down then you can break his yolk from on top of your neck? So, interestingly, that is not the way Rashi and almost all other commentaries learn. If look at Rashi over here. Rashi, "vehaya ka'asher tarid, lashon tza'ar". "Tarid" over here is a language of pain; "kimo arid besichi", a verse in the book of Psalms. "Klomar", so it means, "kasher tarid", when you feel pain, when you experience pain, then you can throw off the yoke of Jacob, which translates to mean klomar kesheya'avru Yisrael al haTorah", when the Jews fail to keep the Torah.

"Veyihiyeh lecha pitchon peh lehitzta'er al haberachot shenatal", you'll have an opening to feel pain on the blessings that were taken from you. Then the "uparakta u'lo", then you can throw off your yoke. So my question on Rashi is if it means "lashon tza'ar", a language of pain, what does that have to do with the Jews not keeping the Torah giving a "pitchon peh"? I mean, that has nothing to do with it, so, how do those two things match? How does one thing lead to another? How does "vehaya ka'asher tarid", "lashon tza'ar" refer to the Jews not keeping the Torah giving a "pitchon peh"?

Audience Member: I thought that is what is meant by "ka'asher tarid", (inaudible) when Jacob is down? (Interposing.)

Audience Member: (Inaudible) by being, by not having zechuyot (merits), right -- by being, like, chotei (sinning). Right, you deserve it. At that point, Esau will wake up and be melancholy about not having his blessings, the right of (inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: It was.

Audience Member: If you're down and there's that (inaudible) in the opening; if the Children of Israel are sinning, then Esau at that point will be noticing what he's missing and will --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Why will he notice what he's missing? Audience Member: -- find out.

(Interposing.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: One second, let's just (inaudible) this thought. That's how you're reading it, but it's not how Rashi is reading it. But my question is, according to the way Rashi is reading it, how do you understand Rashi? How does Rashi get from "tarid", meaning "lashon tza'ar", when Esau experiences tza'ar (pain) -- how does he get from that to mean that when the Jews don't keep the Torah, Esau will have a "pitchon peh" and would "lehitzta'er al haberachot shenatal uparakta u'lo". What is that?

Audience Member: That could mean that --

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right. So let me think about it this way. When Rashi says, "when the Jews don't keep the Torah", so let's keep in mind what Torah is he talking about. If you think about it (inaudible), right? When does Jacob's blessing -- as we saw before, when does this blessing come to fruition on the national level?

Audience Member: Manna.

Rabbi David Fohrman: On the national level in the manna and in the land of Israel. We were clear about that, that's the language of the text "Yitein licha Hashem mital hashamayim", Hashem will give you from the dew of the sky, that's a reference to the manna at a national level. Now, was the manna associated with Torah? Yes, with a certain kind of Torah. How do you know? Because the language of the manna came with Torah wrapped up with it. What Torah was there? The Torah of the manna, the rules for the manna. Remember, Hashem says, "leman anasenu", I'm going to test them, "hayeileich betorati im lo", to see, will the Jews keep My Torah or not.

What was the Torah of the manna? The Torah of the manna were the three rules that you had to keep with the manna. You had to make sure not to collect more than an omer (portion) per head, you had to make sure not to save it for the morning, you have to make sure not to collect on Shabbos, because you get a double portion on Fridays. Those are the three Torahs of the manna.

So, maybe what Rashi means is, "klomar kisheyavru Yisrael al haTorah", when the Jews don't keep the Torah, meaning, which Torah, the Torah of the manna, that's when Esau feels pain. Right? Because, what is Esau, look and see. Esau then says, what are you doing giving them the manna? They don't deserve the manna, you're just an unreliable father, again. That's when Esau feels pain and that's the lashon (language) of tza'ar, pain. So in other words, if you're deserving of manna, Esau can live with that. All right, you're deserving of it. But if you're not deserving of the manna, what are you doing getting this? Right? I can do this. So that, I think, might be -- could be that that's what Rashi's referring to here.

Okay, so, having mentioned this, having seen this, let's -- okay, let's just look at the very next thing that happens. After Esau gets the blessings, the very next words are "Vayistom Eisav et Ya'akov al habracha asher beircho aviv", Esau hated Jacob for the blessing that his father gave him. "Vayomer Eisav bilibo yikrivu yimei eivel avi ve'aharga et Ya'akov achi", my father will eventually die --

Audience Member: Missing honoring parents.

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- right, and I will -- and at that point, I will kill Jacob, my brother. "Vayugad liRivka et divrei Eisav binah hagadol", and Rebecca is told about these things, "vatishlach vatikra liYa'akov binah hakatan vatomer eilav hinei Eisav achicha mitnacheim licha lihargecha." The word mitnacheim, comfort himself, here is interesting. Esau your brother is considering killing you, but mitnacheim is not the right word. What does mitnacheim remind you of, what does it really mean?

Audience Member: Comfort.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Comfort. So what does comfort have to do with anything? Audience Member: Comforting himself.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Could be he's comforting himself, comforting himself for what? Audience Member: Not having the blessing.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Could be, but also notice when Esau is going to kill you. Audience Member: When your father dies.

Rabbi David Fohrman: When your father dies, when your father dies what should you be seeking? (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Comfort. How is Esau going to comfort himself? By killing you. Right, so in other words, when Esau should be mourning his father, what's he going to be doing instead?

Audience Member: Killing.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Killing you. So that seems to be what she's saying. Esau's going to find comfort for the death of his father by killing you. So therefore you --

Audience Member: (Inaudible.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: So therefore, atah --

Audience Member: How come after Jacob's blessed Isaac dies? You understand what I'm asking? If he could --

Rabbi David Fohrman: You're right, it's not immediate. Audience Member: It's not tomorrow.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, but nobody knew, you didn't know how long Esau was going to live, so, you know, Rebecca wanted to make sure she didn't lose them. So she says go and leave. Okay, so now --

Audience Member: Is this the same word that Jacob (inaudible) same exact word. Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah that's true. That's true.

Audience Member: It's a unique way of writing it.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, it's not exactly the same word, it's the same shoresh (root), but not the same conjugation. No. Here its mitnacheim and then with Joseph when he loses Joseph its "Ki eireid el bini avel she'ola vayinacheim otam", -- well, it's similar "vayima'ein lihitnacham", and he held himself back from becoming comforted, but you're right it is a similar kind of conjugation. Esau your brother is considering killing you and then Jacob will not be comforted from the loss of Joseph. What?

Audience Member: Menacheim lecha.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Menacheim lecha is wrong, it wouldn't be the right language because mitnacheim is hitpa'el (reflexive-intensive). Reflexive-intensive is going to mean that he's going to do it to himself, he's going to comfort himself so the lecha is wrong. You can't comfort yourself to you, it doesn't fit. It's the wrong kind of grammar, but seeming to suggest that Esau is going to be doing something other than comforting himself, he's going to be killing you.

Okay, here's my grand question, here's why I've been doing this going back and looking at this with you. The reason why we've been doing this is because we have seen -- and I'll show you the PowerPoint just to refresh your memories, since I'm such a nice guy, and I have such a rowdy audience, that's right.

If you remember, we argued that there is a certain trajectory in Jacob's life represented by this arrow in which Jacob encounters Esau three times, Jacob one, Jacob two and Jacob three. We argued that there's Jacob the man, there's Jacob the family and there's Jacob the nation, and that Jacob's family and nation follow the same trajectory. When you take this and you project it out to Jacob's nation, we have been following the progression of Jacob's nation all the way through here and all the way through here between Jacob one and two. This has to do with Jacob's nation this when they're enslaved in Egypt and then all the way up to Amalek's attack over here, right up to Amalek's attack.

Which is, we got up to his encounter over here which is the -- well, excuse me, in Jacob's nation we have the -- we have the manna ending up being -- here, just, I'll show it to you in a different part of the PowerPoint. Right?

Here are all the parallels in Jacob the nation. So the green parallel, father wants to ask Jacob, asks him are you my son Esau or not. In the manna story God wants to test the Jews will they keep My Torah or not. Father wants the child with the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacob. In the story of the Jews, God want Israel to integrate Esau and Jacob's focus on today and planning for tomorrow, in the laws of the manna,

all of this is in the manna. Now, father blesses his child who has both, father wants -- God blesses the Jews with manna hoping that they have both.

Now, here's the interesting question. How far can you read these parallels? Which is to say, right now we're up to this blue thing over here, which is Esau gets blessings, too. That's the next thing that happens in the Jacob life story. Right, after the deception Esau gets blessings, too. The question is, as you're going through the story of the life -- the Jews life as a nation and you're reading the manna, is there something that's reminding you of Esau's blessings? Like, what happened to this part of the story over here, Esau looks forward to the death of father -- all of this.

So, right, so that is going to bring us to the attack of Amalek, the question we have to ask on the attack of Amalek is, do we hear the echoes of Esau's blessings? Because that's what we're up to, right? You understand? In other words, as we're looking at the similar trajectories, if the trajectories continue in the attack of Esau somewhere that's going to remind us something of Esau's blessings. So how does that relate? So I want to go back to the story of the attack of Amalek and see if we can find it. Right, does the theory work? Okay, so let's go to that story. What?

Audience Member: When one's up the other's down, and you have your --

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, all right, all right. You guys are a rambunctious crowd. All right, you with me guys? Here we go. Ready?

Okay, we're in the manna now. So, we're in, where's that? Yud-Zayin (17)? Okay, I want to show you one last thing in the manna before we move into that, which is related. "Vayomer Moshe zeh hadavar asher tzivah Hashem melo ha'omer mimenu limishmeret ledoroteichem", Moshe then says I want you to take an omer's worth of manna and keep it "ledoroteichem lema'an yiru et halechem asher he'echalti etchem bamidbar behotzi'i etchem mei'eretz Mitzrayim." I want you to watch over for generations, so you should always see the bread that I gave the Jews to eat in the desert when I took them out of Egypt.

"Vayomer Moshe el Aharon kach tzintzenet achat viten shamah melo ha'omer man", take a little vessel and put in it a full omer of manna "vehanach oto lifnei Hashem", and leave it before God in what will ultimately become the Aron (Ark), and here we have Sima's point which is a little complicated so I'm not going to get into it, but it's interesting just FYI for those of you who are interested in thinking about it, that what else was in the Ark? There was the manna and there was the Luchos (tablets). The tablets is the Torah. The Torah we call "Eitz chaim hi lamachzikim bah" the tree of life to those who grasp it, the original tree of life, right? And it's interesting that right alongside the tree of life was the manna, actually.

Right, and it goes back to our discussion of the tree of life and its connection to the manna, but we're not going to get into that right now, it's a little complicated. But anyway, so take this little vessel, put manna inside, and leave it before God "limishmeret lidoroteichem", leave it before God for generations. "Ka'asher tzivah Hashem el Moshe vayanicheihu Aharon lifnei ha'eidut limishmeret", and then Aaron did that. What's interesting is that Hashem wants you to always see the manna. Why? So you should always know how I fed you in the desert.

It's kind of interesting, in a certain kind of way what does the manna represent, it strikes me? I think it represent God's consistency in being there day in and day out and feeding you. So if you ever think God is casual, that God in the inconsistent father, right? That God is not there for you, the manna is your reminder that God was always there for you.

Audience Member: (Inaudible.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: These are at the end of the story of the manna in Parshat Beshalach.

Audience Member: We haven't been to Beshalach yet, we have that in 35. It's interesting, they ate it for 40 years. At that point we knew they were going to be there 40 years.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. That's true. Okay? All right, but they ate it until they came to Canaan, and the idea is that's the transition from the dew of the sky to the fat of the land. Now, if you listen to his language do you hear any foreshadows of Amalek here?

Audience Member: Where?

Rabbi David Fohrman: In the idea of taking the manna and placing it in the Ark? Audience Member: It says that Amalek that they're not reliable.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Look at the language. Audience Member: No matter what happens. Audience Member: For the generations?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, so one is -- here. One is lidoroteichem. Just notice that this is for generations. The war against Amalek will last for how long?

Audience Member: For generations.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Also for generations, "Milchamah laHashem ba'Amalek ledor dor", one generation after another. So the manna is there for generations, Amalek fights you for generations. There's another point, too. "Vehanach oto lifnei Hashem", and place it before Hashem. Does that remind you of anything in the war of Amalek? Remember what happened with Moses' hands, the hands up, the hands down? Place it, what happens when Moses' hands are down?

Audience Member: Amalek wins.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Amalek wins. Isn't that interesting that right in this pasuk (verse) right before the attack of Amalek, you have this reference to place which is actually the thing that allows Amalek to win,

and then you have the idea that the manna is there for generations. Now why do you think Amalek should be fighting you for generations? Maybe because the manna is there for generations. What is the manna for Esau? A constant provocation to Amalek. This is mine, right. What you have in your Ark, what you have looking back, right, it's like this constant memory for Amalek that this is supposed to be mine. And it's almost like, what causes Amalek to win? Moses' hands down, it's like the manna being in that vessel somehow --

Audience Member: And then Esau's (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, Okay, we'll get to that in a second. So -- what? Audience Member: Anach.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Anach and menacheim, maybe. Okay, possibly. Okay, anyway, so moving on to the actual attack of Amalek, let's read the following. Here it is.

Audience Member: We hadn't gotten rid of Amalek. Even after we got the manna.

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, so here is the story. "Vayavo Amalek." Okay. So "Vayavo Amalek", Amalek comes, "vayilachem im Yisrael biRifidim." Now, over and over again, what's the double entendre, do you think, in this war?

Audience Member: Lechem.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right, a war over bread. "Vayilachem," a war over bread. "Vayomer Moshe el Yehoshua bichar lanu anashim vetzei hilacheim ba'Amalek." There it is again, it’s a war over the bread. That's the territory which is like being disputed in the war. Is it our territory is it their territory, the manna? A war is always over territory, but this time the territory is portable. This time the territory is the bread. So "Tzei hilacheim ba'Amalek machar", the war against them tomorrow, "anochi nitzav al rosh hagivah umatei ha'Elokim biyadi."

Then you have the strange story where -- with Moses' hands. So Joshua goes up to fight Amalek, and Moses, Aaron and Hur get up and stand on top of this hill. Now "Vihayah ka'asher yarim Moshe", now what about this "vigavar Yisrael", the Jews won? "Vicha'asher yaniach yado vigavar Amalek". What does vigavar remind you of? Remember when we were looking for Esau's blessing, we were up to Esau's blessing, there should be references to Esau's blessing. This is the first of them. Esau's blessing was -- he said how could I give you blessing, right. "Hein gvir samtiv lach", I have made Jacob into the gvir (master). And now the question is, who is going to be the gvir, who's going to be the master? Right, there are times when Israel is master, there are time when Amalek is stronger. So what are trying to do? We are trying to put ourselves in the situation where we are the master. How do we do that?

Now listen to these words "Vihayah ka'asher yarim Moshe," what does that remind you of? Let's go back to the blessings. Here, I just want to -- I'm going to try to do something kind of sneaky over here which

is actually put these two things side by side, don’t know whether I can do it but let's try. Okay you see this over here, here's Amalek, and it was when his hands were up. Now we're going to go back in over here to Jacob and Esau's blessings and, where is it?

Audience Member: Thirty-nine. Twenty-seven, Thirty-nine.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Do you see it anywhere? Okay, now look at this, "Vihayah ka'asher yarim." Now look at this. Now just to check this, let's do a little search, because you can do this, and let's see where, like, how often "vihayah ka'asher" appear in the Torah. So here's the first one, the very first one is "Vihayah ka'asher tarid." There is no other before the blessings of "Vihayah ka'asher tarid". But now we go back let's look at the second one. The very next and second one is "Vihayah ka'asher yarim Moshe." It's a direct reference back to the blessings. Right? It's the only other time previous to this you have "vihayah ka'asher."

So "Vihayah ka'asher tarid", "Vihayah ka'asher yarim" now what's interesting is not just that "vihayah ka'asher". Look at the contrast. "Vihayah ka'asher yarim" means when Moses lifts up his hands. Now, remember we have the word tarid which we didn't know what to do with, but it seems that the Torah itself is telling you how to interpret the word tarid, in reference to the word yarim. What does yarim mean?

Audience Member: Lift up.

Rabbi David Fohrman: To lift up. Which would mean that was what's the Torah seemingly saying tarid means?

Audience Member: Put down.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The opposite. Which would mean, the way to interpret it that the Torah seems to be saying is, "Vihayah ka'asher tarid" when Esau will cause you to go down. Now, the question is what does that mean? So with going down, going up, so this brings us to the famous Rashi on the hands of Moses. You're familiar with the Rashi, it's actually from the Mishnah in Rosh Hashanah. "Bechi yadav shel Moshe osos milchamah" right did the hands of Moses they make war whether the hands up the hands down? Rather, what was it? It was "bizman sheYisrael mistaklin klapei avihem shebashamayim", when the Jews looked up, when they look up to the heavens, that's when the Jews win. When they look down to the ground and they don't see that, then the Jews lose. What's going on? Well, let's think about it. That was the whole issue with the manna.

What was the issue with the manna? It's all about the faith, the whole point was, the whole -- what are the laws of the manna all about? The whole point of the laws of the manna are, these are rules which are designed to understand that there are certain restrictions with the manna. What are those restrictions designed to tell you? That don't give into the illusion that if you have food in your fridge you're the maker of the food, always understand that the food comes from somewhere. Right? Always understand that the food comes from somewhere. Bread comes from somewhere.

Now, come our Sages and say, did Moses' hand do war? Here's the key, there's two kinds of lechem. There's bread, and there's war. If you think about it, by the way, these are the two quintessential male things. Right? The man who goes out and earns the bread, brings home the bread as it were. Goes down in the field and through the sweat of your brow you eat bread, and the man who goes out into the field and makes war. Like the two kinds of lechem.

So the idea is, God as provider, right, as father who gives you these things, so he can give you these things and he can act as a man, in a certain kind of way, when he is --when he goes to war for you. "Hashem ish milchamah Hashem shemo", Hashem is man of war, Hashem is His name. Kind of strange to refer to God as a man, but it's like God is acting like a man. What's God's business to make a war, but God's doing a man job of making war, so God can do this. But whenever God acts like a man, whenever God goes out of his way -- God makes bread, God doesn't make bread, God makes natural things and people make bread. Men make bread.

If God is going to go out of his way to make bread for you, God's going to go out of His way to make war for you, the two kinds of lechem, he's only going to do it as long as you understand that he's the one doing it. Don't give in to the illusion that you're the one doing it. So the key when you get bread or war from God is to understand that it's coming from Him and that the idea of faith. And therefore, the same lesson that the Jews had to learn in the manna they're just getting a seen chance to learn it except with reference to the other kind of lechem; with reference to war. That's the idea of the hands.

So the idea is how are you going to defeat Esau, how are you ever going to be able to win? The only way you're going to be able to win is if Moses' hands were up, it's going to be the opposite of Esau's blessing. Esau's blessing was "Vihayah ka'asher tarid", which in the context of the manna is going to mean, if you get the Jews to look down, which means what? If you get them to say that we're winning the war because we're winning the war. That's when they’re going to lose, that’s when "ufarakta ulo me'al tzivarecha", that's when you can throw his yoke off. But the whole idea is "Vihaya Ka'asher yarim Moshe", Moses was trying to keep his hands up, to keep the Jews looking up. So the Jews looked up, you wouldn't have Esau's blessing, you would have -- you would have the Jews looking upwards instead of downwards and then the Jews could win. Yes?

Audience Member: Listen, if the whole goal is to get this divine kind of person between Jacob and Esau, like combine their traits, why would he issue a direct challenge to him? That I challenge you, you get him to look down and you get -- the whole goal was to combine two traits, right?

Rabbi David Fohrman: One second. Isaac I don't think, is thinking about this at the national level. Isaac is thinking about this -- God is thinking about it on a national level. In other words, the way history works, for whatever reason that's the way history works, history has a way of, not repeating itself, but of following prior patterns, and whatever you do in your life is a -- you're responding to something in a previous world. But that's not what Isaac is thinking at the time. Isaac is looking at his two children and thinking about them. I don't think we need to think Isaac's thinking about it. God may be thinking about it, but I'm not sure if Isaac is thinking about it.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) a direct challenge, if you get Esau to go down you get to get it, why would he fear attacks, right?

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's a good question, "Vihayah ka'asher tarim" I don't know. You're right. Your general question is a good question. The question is, why do the blessings seem to pit these brothers against each other? That wasn't --

Audience Member: You're saying that (inaudible) together. They come and they make a (inaudible). It's like a fusion of a (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true, but the blessings seemed to be phrased in competitive terms.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) the opposite. One is up, one is down, (inaudible) the words that is going to say heaven and earth, (inaudible). It's how to combine the two, that's the whole challenge.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. Okay. Good question. I just want to show you this PowerPoint real fast. Here's Isaac blessing Jacob, in the original blessing. On the right side of the screen is the manna. There's the dew, "Veyiten Elokim mital hashamayim." There's the dew on the manna, "Hu halechem asher natan Hashem lachem le'achlah," it's the bread that God gave you and of course, it's bread coming from heaven, "Lechem min hashamayim. Veyiten Elokim mital hashamayim."

Moreover, the Jews are called sons, "Vayiru Bnei Yisrael," the Jews are seeing the bread. In the blessing, "Vayomer re'eh rei'ach beni kerei'ach sadeh asher bercho Hashem," it's like the child looking out and seeing the field that God has blessed. "Hayom lo timtza'uhu basadeh," you can't see it in the field. It's like the desert is called the field. Everything from the manna is echoing that original blessing.

Moving on, Esau seems to be given the same thing as Jacob. The one subtle difference is Jacob is told that God would give him these things. Isaac told Esau that it would be his settlement. The stage is set up for conflict. Esau, or Amalek, sees that as a trespass in his territory. Here, we get to the actual blessings of Esau.

"Hen gevir samtiv lach," I've made Jacob the master over you, and that finds its echo in the war. "Ka'asher yarim Moshe yado vegavar Yisrael veka'asher yani'ach yado vegavar Amalek." Of course, here's the "Vehaya ka'asher yarim," in green. "Vehaya ka'asher tarid," do you see that? The very first "Vehaya ka'asher," in the Torah is right over here in the blessing of Esau. The second "Vehaya ka'asher," in the Torah is right over here with Amalek, and of course, there are two possible meanings to "Ka'asher tarid."

The first one, when you suffer, when Isaac tells Esau, "Vehaya ka'asher tarid," when you suffered excessively, you can throw Israel's yoke from you. In our case, Amalek sees God, Father in heaven providing bread from the heaven to Jacob, and as Rashi says, when you don't keep the laws it's painful. That seems as a trespass, he attacks thinking to throw off Israel's yoke.

There's another possible meaning, when you take someone down, which is the meaning adopted by

Joshua. Joshua won't allow Amalek to take the Jews down, so the Torah quotes these words from Esau's blessing, but twists them to explain what Joshua is doing. He's keeping Moses' hands aloft. As long as they're aloft, the Jews can win, and that's "Vehaya ka'asher tarid," as opposed to "Vehaya ka'asher yarim."

Finally, "Ve'al charbecha tichyeh," the blessing was according to your sword, you will live. Where does that finds its echo in Amalek. "Vachalosh Yehoshua et Amalek ve'et amo lefi charev," we succeeded in defeating them by the sword, so that they would not live by the sword, so to speak, and kill us.

Audience Member: Esau died by the sword. It's always been (inaudible) the story of Joseph, that we have this unity in Israel (inaudible) death of Esau. The whole story, and maybe it's a Midrash, but with (inaudible) and Naphtali, his head was knocked by the sword, (inaudible) in the blessing with the sword that's in the blessing, and that was the death of Esau, until he was revived by Amalek.

Audience Member: Who (inaudible) the esoteric markings?

Rabbi David Fohrman: The only point I was making is that "Ve'al charbecha tichyeh," if you're going to reverse the blessings, you have to find a way to deal with "Ve'al charbecha tichyeh," Esau is going to live by the sword. We find at the very end of the war "Vayachalosh Yehoshua et Amalek ve'et amo lefi charev," you have to deal sword with sword. Esau lives by the sword, Joshua succeeded in weakening him with the sword. Here's where I want to go next week with this. Maybe, we can do a little bit of this. The very next thing that happens, if we go back to our chart, here's our chart.

Audience Member: Rabbi Fohrman? Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) the only time you (inaudible) now is when you hear the priest's blessing when they raise their hands up, and you (inaudible) a blessing is that the way we have to eat from God. Is that the opposite of what happened (inaudible)? Even now, that's our concept of raising hands is that (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's an interesting thought, connecting the priest's blessing, perhaps, to Moses' hands. We can now fill in the blue, going back to our parallels between Jacob the person and Jacob the nation. Esau gets a blessing too, is going to be parallel to the war against Amalek. The Jews fight Amalek with reference to Esau's blessing. That's what we've seen.

Now, we have one last piece of the story, and that is at the very end of this. Remember, Esau looked forward to the death of his father, the time he can kill Jacob. Where does that come from in our story? Let's go back to the Torah and see if we can find any reference, so to speak, or any hint of this in the story. It should happen right after the war against Amalek, so let's go back to the war against Amalek, and see what we find.

Audience Member: (Inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Much later. Where are we looking? We're looking in Exodus. By the way, do you see this over here? "Vayehi yadov emunah ad bo hashamesh." It just happens to be the words for Moses' hands being steadfast, to indicate also the spiritual trait of steadfastness, which is what the issue with the manna is all about, understanding that God is going to be there for you and trusting Him, instead of trying to think that I'm in charge of this myself.

Audience Member: What's the literal meaning of emunah?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Steadfast, his hands were steadfast and right in the middle of emunah you what? Manna. Here's where the war ends, right over here. Let's read the next words. "Vayomer Hashem el Moshe kesov zot zicharon basefer," write this down in a book, "vesim be'oznei Yehoshua ki macho emcheh et zecher Amalek mitachat hashamayim," God will blot out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens. "Vayiven Moshe mizbei'ach vayikra shemo Hashem nisi," and Moses built an altar and he calls the name of it, "Hashem nisi," which means what?

Audience Member: God is my banner.

Rabbi David Fohrman: God is my banner. What's interesting is the word nes has three different meanings, which we talked about over Shabbos. The three meanings are connected, but that's a whole other schmooze. The meanings are test, banner, and miracle. What do test, banner, and miracle have to do with each other. It's an interesting question. We'll talk about it one day, but for the meantime, over here, banner is a play off of what? How has the word nes been used earlier in the story?

Audience Member: Test.

Rabbi David Fohrman: A test, which is, God had meant to test the Jews to see whether they would keep His Torah, "Lema'an anasenu hayelech beTorati im lo." But at the end of the story what happened tragically, is instead the Jews, by not keeping the Torah and the manna, ended up testing God. "Ve'al nasotom et Hashem leimor hayesh Hashem bekirbenu im ayin," you ended up testing God. Now at the end of the story, when the Jews finally battle and win against Amalek, basically what happens is Moses builds this altar and calls it, God is my banner.

Now, what is God is my banner? I'm just thinking out loud, but if you say God is my banner, what are you really saying? Let's talk about this. I think I mentioned this to you three weeks ago, but to briefly review, what's the answer to Amalek's perspective in this story? Amalek thinks that God has been unreliable. Right? That God, in choosing the Jews, who don't keep the law of the manna that God has just shown himself to be unreliable. I argued to you three weeks ago that that actually is a testament to God's reliability, not His unreliability. Because the definition of reliability is that once you establish a bris (covenant), once you establish a deal, once you have a covenant you have a long-term relationship.

The definition of a long-term relationship is there's ups and there's downs and there is times when you fall short. The definition of a long-term relationship is that even during times you fall short the relationship still exists. That's what happened with the manna. That's why it was a test of God. A test of

God means that God passing the test --so to speak. It's not nice to test God, but passing the test is sticking with the Jews anyway, which is what God did. Right? God stuck with us anyway and didn't say, to heck with them.

We tested God, "(inaudible) nasatem Hashem", we showed ourselves unworthy of the manna, but He still gave us the manna because He had that long-term relationship. That actually showed God as a reliable father.

Now, look at the end point of all of this is when the Jews win in the war against Amalek even when they weren't really worthy, because they just come off of -- right, it was "velo yarei Elokim", they didn't fear God, they were in Refidim, "rafu yadeyhem min haTorah", they weren't keeping the Torah, which Torah? The Torah of the manna. It wasn't working out, but God still came through for them and they still won the war.

Therefore it's very poignant and interesting that the name of the Mizbei'ach (Altar) should be "Hashem nisi", which is God is my banner. Which means what really? Basically it's the Jews saying, it's like me and God, it's like we're stuck together. I may let God down, but somehow God is still my banner, that when you look at me you see God. In other words --

That's the nature of a covenant, right? A covenantal relationship is going to mean that we're sort of joined together and for better or worse what we do reflects upon God. When you see us you see God in the world and that is "Hashem nisi". There is no greater proof of "Hashem nisi" than the fact that Hashem comes through and they win the war even at darkest time thus far in their national history, their failure to succeed with the manna.

At this point, "Vayomer ki yad al keis Ka milchamah LaHashem ba'Amalek midor dor." What's Amalek's reaction to that going to be? If there is this covenantal relationship between God and the Jews, right, Amalek's view of that is, no. Right? You're actually -- You're an unreliable Father and Your continuing to stick with the Jews always just confirms in Amalek's mind that You chose the wrong guy and that You can't be counted on. Therefore, God is going to wage war against you, but how is God going to wage war against you? Right? "Milchamah LaHashem ba'Amalek midor dor", there is a battle of God with Amalek from generation to generation.

Who is Amalek going to attack? Amalek is not going to attack God, who are they going to attack? They're going to attack the Jews, but it's almost like it's undistinguishable. How are they going to attack God? They are going to attack God by attacking the Jews. Why? Because "Hashem nisi", because to the extent that the Jews are the banner, how do you attack God? You attack God by attacking the Jews, there is this connection.

Now, this brings us back to the original Esau story. In the original Esau story after the brachot (blessings) what did Esau say? "Yikrevu yemei evel avi", one day my father will die and when my father dies I can kill Jacob. As long as my father is alive I can't really kill Jacob, because I couldn't do it to my father.

When my father dies do I go kill Jacob?

It's almost like even in Esau's mind father and Jacob are sort of joined at the hip at some way. As long as father is alive can't kill Jacob, once father is dead I can kill Jacob. In a certain grotesque kind of way even though Esau loves his father and even though Esau is mechabed (honors) his father there's a part of Esau that's wishing for what?

Audience Member: The death of his father.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The death of his father, because when father dies I can finally kill Jacob. I can never do it when father is alive. Why? This is true for all children in some kind of way. What does father represent in a child's mind?

Audience Member: Authority.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Authority and therefore morality. Right? In other words father represents expectations, I can't let father down. As long as father is alive there is no possibility of murder in Esau's mind, because it would be going against father's -- I couldn't kill my brother while my father is alive, it would let down my father. There is -- the death wish for getting rid of father is really a death wish for the death of expectations, because without father in the world there is no expectations and at that point I can kill with impunity. Okay?

Now let's transpose this to the national level. What does this mean for Amalek? It means that Amalek has the same death wish, right? Amalek looks at unreliable Father and wants Him out of the picture, because as long as there is a God in the world what can't I do?

Audience Member: I can't --

Rabbi David Fohrman: I can't kill Jacob, I can't kill the Jews, I can't -- right? But if I kill Father, if I get rid -- if Father is irrelevant, if He doesn't matter -- right?

How do I kill Father? Here is the key. I don't even have to really kill Father. Audience Member: You deny him.

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't even have to really deny Him, I don't even have to be an atheist, it's actually something much more subtle. All I have to do is convince myself that Father is really unreliable and once I firmly believe that Father is unreliable He no longer matters. Right? Father becomes irrelevant, it's like killing Father.

An unreliable Father -- if you think about it to the (inaudible) degree -- how do children relate to fathers when they become completely unreliable? At some point they say, I don't care anymore, it's like death of father. In a certain way it's just a trajectory of Amalek's utter belief in unreliable Father that in the end will for them kill Father. Once Father is dead, once He's ultimately unreliable then what? Then I have a free license, there is no expectations anymore, right? In other words when my father becomes irrelevant

then I can get rid of everyone.

Which leads us to Mein Kampf, right? This is really what Mein Kampf is about. I have here some quotes from Mein Kampf actually, I've been reading through Mein Kampf.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's just some bedtime reading. What's really interesting -- there is a number of interesting things in Mein Kampf. One interesting thing, in Mein Kampf, is that Hitler strangely enough talks about morality. You would think that Hitler was a person who had no conception of morality, but he wasn't. He actually does talk about morality. In general in Mein Kampf -- my belief is that Mein Kampf get's dismissed actually. Most people, academics, dismiss Mein Kampf as a work of lunacy which doesn't hold together and is illogical and is just the ramblings of a madman. It shouldn't really be paid attention to.

I disagree, actually. I think that Mein Kampf actually makes sense, there is a logical argument in Mein Kampf, it holds together, it's just you have to understand what the premises are. If you don't understand the premises you won't think it makes sense. Once you understand the premises it makes sense. Mein Kampf makes sense, but that doesn't mean it's right. In other words it's an evil work, it's not an illogical, stupid work. It's evil because its premises are evil. If you start with evil premises you will logically get if you follow it through with a logical end you'll get to evil conclusions, but they will follow logically. You just have to understand what the premises are.

One interesting thing about Mein Kampf is that he talks about morality, but he understands morality in a very interesting kind of way. For example, his first -- this is what he says in the beginning. I'm referring to the very first paragraph in Mein Kampf.

One of Hitler's obsessions is making sure that Austria and Germany reunite, because Austria is really German in his mind. He says -- in the beginning of Mein Kampf he says, today it seems to be providential. It's very interesting that the very first words of Mein Kampf invoke providence, but he doesn't quite mean God. Right? Because for him God -- he never actually makes an argument against God, but God is more or less just sort of irrelevant, right? It's like unpredictable father. Just irrelevant God. There is a providence for him, but it doesn't quite come from God. It comes from something else which he is going to call nature.

He says, it seems to be providential that fate -- whatever fate means -- should have chosen Braunau am Inn as my birthplace for this little town lies on a boundary between two German states -- which he means Germany and Austria, "which we of the younger generation at least have made it our life's work to reunite by every means of our disposal. German Austria must return to the great German Mother country and not because it's economically necessary, no and again no. Even if such a union between Germany and Austria were unimportant from an economic point of view, yes, even if we're harmful economically it must nevertheless take place. One blood demands one Reich."

"Never will the German nations," -- now, here, his first invocation of morality -- "never will the German nation possess the moral right to engage in colonial politics until at least it embraces its own sons within a single state. Only when the Reich borders include the very last German, but can no longer guarantee his daily bread will the moral right to acquire foreign soil from the distress of our own people arise. Their sword will become our plow" -- right, you hear the two lechems --

Audience Member: (Inaudible) plow to sword.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, their sword will become our plow. Bread, lechem and lechem, and from the tears of war the daily bread of future generations will grow. Bread and war. Bread will lead to war. Now, listen to how he is phrasing this in terms of morality for a moment. What is morality in his view? If the Germans all come together and we can't feed ourselves within our own boundaries then we have the moral right to conquer. Now does that seem to make sense to you?

Audience Member: Yeah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Does make sense to you? Do you think you have the moral right to conquer if you --no? Let's say we in America are going through a difficult economic time, we have a financial crisis. Can we now invade Mexico? Can we now take over Toronto because that will take care of our economic problem? This is the argument he's making. He's calling this a moral argument. He means something else with morality, but he's calling it morality. What does he mean? Let's get into his head for a second. What definition of morality are you working with that you can call this moral?

Audience Member: Because (inaudible) then you could conquer anybody. Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. In a certain kind of way.

Audience Member: (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's not really survival. It's not really survival. Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: The German people are in charge of whatever they need in order to survive. His view of morality is whatever the German Reich --

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's not just Germans, he applies it to everyone. It's more than that. He doesn't just say, whatever we Germans want. It's more than that. Anyway, remember bread and war from here, it's kind of interesting. Now here's the other interesting thing in Mein Kampf. The Jews were not the only thing Hitler hated. Hitler hated other things, too. What else did Hitler hate? He hated gypsies, he hated inferior people, homosexuals, but he also hated other people too.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Politically, he hated communists. Okay? He really hated communists and he also hated social democrats. Right? In Mein Kampf he actually makes a philosophical argument for totalitarianism. He is actually philosophically in favor -- he is one of the only dictators that tries to make an argument for dictatorship. In other words, it's not just, I'm going to be a dictator, but he tries to explain to you why dictatorship makes sense and democracy is stupid and communism is stupid. He thinks that Jews, communism and democracy is stupid.

Then what happens is he starts hating blaming the Jews he says, because he realizes that the reason why there is social democracy in the world is because of the Jews. Mein Kampf, "when I recognized the Jew as the leader of the social democrats the scales drop from my eyes. A long soul struggle has reached its conclusion. I ceased to be a weakly cosmopolitan and I became an anti-Semite. Just once more and this was the last time fearful impressive thoughts came to me in profound anguish." He says in another place, I didn't write it down over here, but he says, "I looked at the names on the masthead of social democrats newspaper, they're all Jewish names. I realized it was the Jews behind social democracy, it was the Jews behind communism. I realized it was the Jewish idea. All of these were Jewish ideas and that's when I came to hate them." Right?

He then says, "When over long", and then he starts looking at Jewish history interestingly enough. He says, "when over long periods of human history I scrutinized the activity of the Jewish People there suddenly rose up in me the fearful question whether inscrutable destiny perhaps for reasons unknown to us poor mortals did not with eternal and immutable resolve desire the final victory of this little nation?" Very interesting, like does God want the Jews to win? "Was it possible", he says," that the Earth" -- mishmanei ha'aretz -- "had been promised as a reward to these people who lives only for this Earth?" That's his claim. Then he says --

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: He's talking about the Jews, says, could destiny have really given us the Earth? Then he says, "have we an objective right to struggle for our self-preservation or is this justified only subjectively within ourselves? As I delve more deeply into the teachings of Marxism and communism and thus in tranquil clarity submitted the deeds of the Jewish People" -- we're the founder of the Marxism, he believes -- "to contemplation, so fate itself gave me its answer.

The Jewish doctrine of Marxism" -- now he's going to argue. This gets to why he hates communism so much and why he hates the Jews. "The Jewish doctrine of Marxism rejects the aristocratic principle of Nature" -- capital N --" and replaces the eternal privilege of power and strength by the mass of numbers and their dead weight." Do you understand what he is saying? "The Jewish doctrine of Marxism rejects the aristocratic principle of Nature" -- capital N -- "and replaces the eternal privilege of power and strength by the massive numbers and their dead weight."

Right? He says, why do I care about the people think, what the numbers think, what the masses think,

that's democracy, caring for the masses, everyone's equal- that's communism, that's ridiculous. The strong should rule. "Thus it denies the value of personality in men" -- this is with an eg -- "contests the significance of nationality and race and thereby withdraws from humanity the premise of its existence and culture. As the foundation of the universe this" -- Jewish doctrine, the doctrine of caring for the weak, the doctrine of caring for everyone, not just the strong.

"As the foundation of the universe this doctrine would bring about the end of any order intellectually conceivable to man. And as in this greatest of all recognizable organisms, humanity, the result of an application of such a law" -- of caring for the weak, of caring for everyone -- "could only be chaos. On Earth it would only be destruction of the inhabitants of this planet. If with the help of his Marxists creed the Jew is victorious over all the other peoples in the world, his crown, the Jewish crown, will be the funeral wreath of humanity and this planet will, as it did thousands of years ago, move through space devoid of men." There won't be any men left. "The eternal Nature" -- now listen, who is God? Nature. "Eternal Nature inexorably avenges the infringement of her commands." Who is the ultimate God?

Nature, not God, Nature. "hence today I believe that I'm acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty", the almighty being nature," by defending myself against the Jew I am fighting for the work of the Lord", but the Lord means nature.

Now, listen carefully to what he's saying. What he's saying is that there is two -- in order to understand what he is saying, the evilness of what he is saying -- this is his argument for totalitarianism. There are two possible sources of authority. The source of authority which Jews hold of is God, which is Father. Right? Eternal Father in Heaven. He dismisses that for an alternative source of authority, he calls it Nature. What does that mean? If you take God out of the picture, if God is irrelevant for whatever reason what is the only other source of authority?

Audience Member: Man.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The only other -- not man himself, it's the way of the world. It's just blind nature. Nature is the world without God, the way the world works. Now, how does the world work, what is the law of nature?

Audience Member: Survival of the fittest.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Survival of the fittest. He was a social Darwinist. Survival of the fittest. He says, take that all the way through man and you get to social Darwinism which is the one law of nature is that the fit survive, the strong rule and therefore humanity has to work with that too, the strong rule.

Anything that gets in the way of that is an infringement against nature and nature will avenge any infringement of her law, "and I am fighting for the work of nature." Therefore the strong must rule, that is how the totalitarianism (inaudible) responsibility, they must rule and they can crush the weak and they should crush the weak because in nature the weak are crushed.

Now it's interesting that atheists or people who consider God irrelevant this is one of the strongest and most consistent argument that they make. I don't know if it's the strongest, but this is one of the

arguments that they make. If you read the books of contemporary atheists, people like Richard Dawkins. Right? People like Richard Dawkins will make the argument, will make this argument, which is that nature doesn't care, nature just destroys the weak, that is the rule. Therefore this idea that God cares about -- you don't see it reflected in nature.

This is the great divide, we believe and here is what I want to end with -- the one comfort that I take from this is that at least he hated the Jews for the right reason. Right? Which is that it's true, it's true. We Jews stand for something else, we stand for a different Master other than nature, we stand for Father.

Now what's the difference? If Father is in charge not impersonal nature, who does Father care for? Father cares for all children; even the weak ones. That is -- now look. The lesson of us being "Beni bechori Yisrael", our great (inaudible) yetziat Mitzrayim (exodus from Egypt) God always takes us back, over and over again, the Torah --what do you hear about more than any other mitzvah (commandment) in the Torah?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Take care of the ger (proselyte), you know what it's like to be estranged, the proselyte, yatom (orphan), and the almanah(widow), the weak, dispossessed, unprivileged members of society, take care of them. He was right. Democracy and communism are all Jewish ideas, right?

Communism may take it to an extreme, but it is a Jewish idea. The idea that you should care for the weak, that society should care for the weak and not dispossess them comes from the Jews, comes directly from a belief in a Father that would care for all the children. Because alternatively the only other possibility is that there's nothing to stop the strong to rule. That is moral.

Now, getting back to his argument for morality. Yes, he is moral, yes there is no Father, the only thing that makes a difference is strength, so of course once all the German nation is together and then our bread becomes their plow and the war and the whole thing it all makes sense. It only makes sense if Father is irrelevant. You have to kill Father in order to be able to kill everyone else, kill the Jews, and that's what he does, he kills Father. Father is irrelevant and part of that is that the weak don't matter.

Now ask yourself this question, who does Amalek attack? Audience Member: The weak.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The weak. Audience Member: Right.

Rabbi David Fohrman: There is a reason for that. Amalek does not even feel bad that they attacked the weak, there's nothing to be embarrassed about. For Amalek that's moral. There is nothing wrong with attacking the weak, you're supposed to attack the weak, you're doing the will of nature if you attack the weak.

Audience Member: Why would they claim (inaudible)? I mean (inaudible) teshuva in the heart.

Rabbi David Fohrman: What I think is that there is a progression intellectually in the development of Amalek. Amalek doesn't appear on the screen, Amalek progresses. It starts from the dispossessed child, the dispossessed child who feels that every father in his life has dispossessed him as Hitler felt, by the way.

That finally then comes to the ultimate father which is your Father in Heaven and then you feel that your Father in Heaven dispossesses you and he can't be counted on either just like every other father you had.

Once you believe that and you're angry at your brother because your brother got your father's love and not you then the next step is to believe that father doesn't count anymore. Once I believe that Father doesn't count anymore I can kill my brother, I can hate and I have a whole new view of morality where I can attack the weak because there is no father to make the difference anyway. What happens is that Amalek develops the philosophy, the Hitler develops -- it got somewhere, but the core of it starts from the beginning of Amalek, it starts from Amalek's dispossessed view of the Esau's narrative. Not all of Esau becomes Amalek, it's the dispossessed part of Esau that eventually becomes Amalek.

Audience Member: Is that why (inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't know. Don't know, I'm not going to go -- I don't know, I'm not going to go there. Okay guys. Thank you very much.

Rabbi David Fohrman: So anyway, just to summarize because my tape wasn't on, so what we basically have is five stories here in Bamidbar. Wondering what the connection between them are. The stories are, the story of Moses hitting the rock, which leads to the death of Moses; followed by the story of the -- followed by the story of --

Audience Member: Edom.

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- the encounter with Edom. The Jews encounter with Edom followed by the attack of -- sorry, the death of Aaron. This was followed by the attack of the king of the Canaani, the king of Arad. Then, followed by the complaint against the mahn (manna), and the nechashim haserafim and these fiery serpents.

We mentioned that the last of these stories seems to have something to do with Amalek on a number of levels. A) you have this banner, nes, the last time we had a banner, the fiery serpent is put up on a banner. The last time we had a banner was with the war against Amalek. Chazal (Our Sages, of Blessed memory), say the same thing about both banners as it were, say the same thing about both stories, which is that Moses' hands that won the war, you have to look beyond Moses' hands, just like you have to look beyond the banner with the snake, the fiery snake that's put up there on the banner. Look beyond that; you see God and you're saved. Similarly, it is the complaint against the manna that precipitates both problems.

The problem in Bamidbar, which leads to the problem with the snakes; and the problem in Shemot, which leads to the problem with Amalek. We were just wondering what it was that -- we were comparing the two complaints against the manna. The complaint against the manna in Shemot, and the complaint against the manna in Bamidbar. At one level the complaint is the opposite, which is that it was, as someone points out, at one level the complaint is the same, which is that we want to go back to Egypt.

But the complaints are opposite, because in the first thing it's that the manna is too unreliable; in Shemot. Here, it's that the manna is too reliable and therefore it's boring. At another level the complaint is also different, in the sense that the first complaint is that the manna can't be counted on; and the second complaint is that-- the second complaint is that we don't enjoy it; right? If you think about it, also, when God gives you gifts, or when any parent gives any child a gift, the parent really wants two things from the child. If you give a gift to a child, what do you want from the child?

Audience Member: Appreciation.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Appreciation and -- Audience Member: -- and enjoyment.

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- and enjoyment. You want to see the kid enjoying the gift. You want to see

the kid understand that the gift comes from you. Again, if you have either or, it's not good enough. If the kid says, thank you, but never uses the gift, it's no fun. If the kid always uses the gift, but doesn't recognize it comes from you; it's also no fun. You want the kid to understand both; that it came from you, and to enjoy it.

So too with God; when God gives us gifts. That goes all the way back to the meaning of deveikus (clinging). It goes all the way back to what we talked about in Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden). The original gift is, "Eat from all the trees of the garden." The only thing I want from you is A) enjoy it. Enjoy all the trees; but, B) understand that it comes from me. You understand that it comes from me by acknowledging that there are limits to your control.

Because there's one thing that's out of your control and that's the Eitz Hada'as (the Tree of Knowledge [of Good and Evil]). You do that, you have deveikus. Deveikus means you're clinging to me. When you're clinging to me, I live forever. You live forever. That's the Eitz Chaim (Tree of [Eternal] Life), right? That's kind of how we put it together.

The manna could be a return to that; a return to the time when we didn't have to worry about our bread. When God made everything for us. In this case God is even going to make bread for us. But we need both things, both things with the manna. A) you need to understand that it comes from God.

How do you do that? By keeping His laws. This means keeping the laws which limit your control over the manna. Because, when you try to control it too much, you come under the illusion that you are the maker of the manna. So understand that it comes from God, keep the laws. But the other thing that God wants from you is, to enjoy the manna. It's great food, and enjoy it.

What happens, I want to argue, in the story of Shemot is that the-- and Bamidbar, is that the Jews are deficient in each one of these two respects; but, in different respects. In other words, in Shemot their deficiency comes from the fact that they're willing to enjoy the manna; but they want to control it too much, and give in to the illusion that they're in control, and it's not really coming from God. That's a problem.

In Bamidbar, where the manna is predictable, they're willing to live by the laws of the manna. Trust that it's there and that its coming from God, but they're not enjoying it. Either way you have a problem, right? That's not how you're meant to relate to the manna. Yeah.

Audience Member: Before the story of the manna, we have benei Yisrael complaining. But then as far as the collecting on Shabbos, I always learned that it was just a very few people; Dasan, Aviram the Eiruv Rav (mixed multitude). Most of the people did not violate that.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That may be true, but the way the text phrases it is, as a problem with the community so--

Audience Member: You're saying "kol Yisrael areivim zeh lazeh" (all Jews are considered to be

accountable [literally, "guarantors], for one another).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Whatever it is. Either they were all doing it, or enough of them were doing it, there were problems; or, they should have protested, or whatever it was. For whatever reason, the text holds them all responsible for it because it says that

" -- ve'al nassotam et Hashem leimor hayeish Hashem bekirbeinu im ayin." Whatever they were doing there, it was considered to be a communal sin. I'm not sure why. You can argue yes, there only a few people doing it, but they're held to tasks.

Audience Member 1: Even the sin of the Golden Calf, wasn't most of it every time they say (inaudible) they're going. I'm just (inaudible) the whole time.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. It could be. Okay, so moving on.

Audience Member 2: Gratitude is something that you're expected; but enjoying it is not -- Rabbi David Fohrman: That's a good point.

Audience Member 2: -- always saying, you know, "I don't like it. What am I going to do?" I figure I should I be dishonest about it?

Audience Member 3: No. (Interposing 00:07:02-00:07:16.)

Audience Member 1: That's part of the appreciation. If you really appreciated it ---

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true. Although, I'll tell you the truth. That might be where Rashi's coming from. It could be Rashi's translation of -- remember Rashi's translation of lechem haklokeil. The absorption -- remember that also that other Chazal that says that you didn't have go to the bathroom when you ate from the manna.

These two things go together. In other words, now that we understand biology more, and the digestive system more, the idea is that, every food has pesolet (waste) in it, which the body needs to get rid of; and has stuff that the body can absorb.

Except for manna, which the body can absorb everything from; and therefore there's no reason for the body to excrete anything. What they're complaining about is specifically the miraculous nature of the manna. Right? So in other words --

Audience Member 1: You're talking about spirituality and the physicality in life. Because, one of the things that the Rambam says (inaudible) that, supposedly they're testing Him, is the fact that the children

are living in the desert. They're totally dependent on God, it is a total (inaudible) they're going to go into the land and they're not going to be able to survive on this kind of a plane, because now we have to work the land.

Here it's the same thing. The fact is that you're -- in the complaint against the manna, I'm just saying that (inaudible) talking about it is that, you're weighing the spiritual against the physical.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It could be that. It could be that thing. You know the idea always is -- not always is; but if you think about it, in a deep kind of way, taking the line of what you're arguing. Both the enjoyment issues, and the things [sic] issues, are kind of coming from the same place.

Here's why. Because, if it's true that what they were tired of, was the spiritual nature of the manna; or the perfection of the manna which you don't find in any food -- so relate that back to what was happening in Shemot.

Let's go back to Shemot for a moment. In Shemot, what was happening? God was providing them with the manna reliably. They still weren't willing to accept it. They wanted to assert control over it.

Why? Why do they not want to do that? There was something -- they felt uncomfortable somehow, with this sort of long-term relationship, which involved being totally dependent upon a Supernatural Being. Right, it's a very scary kind of thing. I mean if you -- any encounter with a Supernatural Being is scary, right? But if you think about an encounter which requires daily maintenance of a relationship with a Supernatural Being, that's very scary.

Just to give you an example of what I'm talk -- let me give you two examples of what I'm talking about. Let's talk first about encounters with supernatural beings. The reason why this is hard, sort of, to relate to, is because we don't feel all that often that we directly encounter God. If you put yourself in the shoes of the Jews of the desert, they were really in this sort of a direct encounter with God.

If you try to wrap your arms around what that actually means, it's like -- I remember, there was a Rebbi in Ner Yisrael, I won't say who it was, who, when I was -- as a bachur over there, I was at his house on Shabbos afternoon. His little daughter Devorah was playing. Was it Devorah? No, it was a different daughter. I won't tell you the name. It's a different daughter. I won't tell you who.

Anyway, one of his daughters was playing in the corner of the room. She was like, three or four at the time. The Rebbi realized that she was playing with muktzah (objects forbidden to be touched on the Sabbath), or something. We were all gathered around the table. He says, Leahla, or whatever, you're playing with muktzah. It's Shabbat, put it down. She goes, "No." So he says, "Well, but it's muktzah." She says, "I don't want to." He says, "But it's Shabbat." She says, "Well, what's going to happen?" She says, "If I play with muktzah and I don't keep the laws of Shabbat, then Moshiach (Messiah) won't come. Well, you know what, I don't want Messiah to come. I like things just the way they are."

Audience Member: How old was she at the time?

Rabbi David Fohrman: She was like three or four. She was a precocious little girl. She's grown up to be quite a precocious young woman.

That's the Jews with the manna. "I like things just the way they are." There's something very comforting about the world as it is. If you think about the world having to be in a relationship with a supernatural being 24/7, that's like, "I like things just the way they are." I'm not interested. Messiah might be wonderful, but it's pretty psychedelic. It's out there.

That's one thing. The second thing is that -- and if you think about what it means to be -- if you want, actually, a good example of this -- I don't know if you guys see movies. If you don't see movies, I'm not suggesting you see movies. If you're the kind of people that see movies anyway and you would rent a movie -- I didn't see the whole of this, but I saw the first half hour of this movie, years and years ago.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Steven Spielberg, right?

If you want a sense of the kind of emotions that people would go through -- The angst that you would have in leading a normal life and all of a sudden feeling like "life is not so normal anymore." There's a supernatural thing out there that you have to encounter. Feel, like what kind of emotions that brings up

-- watch the first half hour of that movie.

There's no scarier movie than the first half hour of that movie. It's just plain scary. But it's strange because, there's nothing bad about these guys. The aliens in this movie are not particularly evil. They're not. They're as nice as anything else. But the notion that there just is this other life-force that's out there, that is now making contact with you. That you have to -- on the one hand everyone is drawn to it.

Everyone feels compelled, that they must make contact with this.

On the other hand, everyone is scared out of their wits, at the same time. Interestingly, by the way, in the movie, which they filmed in Devils -- where is it? Devils Tower? Is that what it's called? That place in -- it's called Devils Tower, right? Where is it? We went there. We saw it, actually, on our cross country trip, but it was ten years ago.

I'm trying to remember where that was. I think it's in Wyoming. It's just straight desert and then there's that one -- it's just this rock. This monolithic rock which rises out of the desert and it's like half a mile high. It's flat at the top, and it just looks like this monolith, it's really spooky. It's a collapsed volcano, actually. But it's the only thing around.

It reminds me of Har Sinai (Mount Sinai). You know what I mean? It's the Mount Sinai imagery of this cloud coming down on top of the mountain, and everyone gathering around. It's a clear takeoff of Mount Sinai. If you want to have a sense, like a mei'ein (similarity) of what Sinai was like -- because think about it. This is just like encountering some extraterrestrial intelligence. What if you were not encountering some extraterrestrial intelligence, but you encountering the extraterrestrial intelligence? You were encountering the Master of the Universe, Himself -- then you can triple that. You can quadruple that. It's whatever that is, squared. And that's just a momentary encounter. Now think, a momentary encounter is like --

I'll give you another example. Momentary encounters, right, all it takes is a little bit of willpower, to be able to get yourself to survive a momentary encounter with something. It's a lot harder to survive an extended encounter with something that makes you uncomfortable, right?

For example, you might be the kind of God -- imagine this. Let's say right now, terrorists storm this building, and held all of us hostage, and said that we all need to convert to radical Islam; or, they will kill us all in half an hour. We have half an hour to decide. This is all being televised and we all have to decide. That would be a terrible, tragic thing. But you can imagine, you could probably imagine, being willing to give your life for the Sanctification of God in the World (al kiddush HaShem) and not doing it. You can imagine doing that. Even though you're a normal person -- yes, people would think you're a hero. It wouldn't be beyond your capability to imagine yourself, giving your life al kiddush HaShem, probably.

However, now ask yourself -- I don't understand, if I'm willing to die al kiddush HaShem, then how is it that I can be lax about x, y and z halacha (Jewish law)? Or, I say lashon hara now and then. I'm not so nice to my kids. I'm not -- I mean, how can I do this if I'm this perfect person who's look -- The answer is, a momentary action, a burst of willpower is enough to get you through. It's much more difficult, and it's not to say it's much more praiseworthy, but it's -- over the long haul, to be able to maintain even something that's smaller, is a whole different kind of challenge. Similar --

Audience Member: The reality is that most of the (inaudible) says that most of us cannot take it as it is contradicting (inaudible). It's not --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. We can do it once. We can't continue it. Similarly, even to take a very pedestrian example, baseball. So if you think about the records in baseball which are -- when Reggie Jackson hit three home runs in one World Series game, so it was a very big deal. Everyone thought that, that was really amazing. But that's not the record that is considered the greatest record in baseball.

You know what the greatest record in baseball is? The greatest record in baseball was, "consecutive games played" held by Lou Gehrig, broken by Carl Ripken. Now, if you think about that, "consecutive games played", that's just showing up. You haven't even done anything. Do you know what I mean?

You haven't done anything. All you've done is to show up consistently every single day. That's considered the greatest record in baseball.

So the ability makes sense only when consistently it's a really a big deal. But now, what if you took those two together? What if you not only have to maintain something consistently, but what you have to maintain consistently, was a consistent encounter with the Master of the Universe, right? That's what it was in the desert. That's really tough. So now, if you come back to the two issues with the manna, really both issues with the manna really boil down, at some level, to the same thing.

Issue number one, we don't think you're reliable. What do you mean, we don't think you're reliable? You're reliable. You took us out, that was the ten plagues. That was pretty reliable. Everything that came your way, everything that came God's way, He did for us. You know He's giving us this, and yet, for

some reason, we felt this need to exert control; and to try to pretend, at some level, that we were in control of the manna. Where was that coming from? It wasn't coming because God was actually unreliable. God was not actually unreliable. That was a mind game that we were playing.

What's the reason behind the mind game? The reason behind the mind game is, because I don't like being in a consistent encounter, right? It's scary to be in a consistent encounter with the Master of the Universe, understanding that my food is always coming from Him. So let me pretend, that my food is coming from me, and I can get the distance that I want, from that encounter.

Well, it's the same kind of thing over here with the enjoyment kind of stuff. Enjoying the manna is also a way of consistently encountering God. In the same way that -- and so what I can say is -- so what do I not like? I don't like the miraculous nature of the food. I'm getting fed up, pardon the pun, with food that automatically digests itself into my eivarim (limbs) and there's no excrement that -- aye, it's the greatest thing in the world. The answer is no. It's specifically that, which keeps on reminding me that I'm in constant relationship with the Master of the Universe. I'm uncomfortable with that. I'm --

Audience Member: Mechayeiv. Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: It's mechayeiv (obligating).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, it's mechayeiv. Therefore, so -- I think the energy of both is coming from sort of the same place. Yes. -- which is why I think, by the way, that the answer to both is looking beyond the symbol to what's the answer.

Audience Member: Right.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Don't look at Moses' hands. Don't look at the snake. Look at God. What's God saying? "You have to understand I'm around." You can pretend that we're dealing with snakes, we're dealing with hands; but that's just pretend. You've got to look beyond that and look to God. When you do that, you just can't escape the encounter.

Audience Member: Did you say that the entire desert experience was an encounter by Klal Yisrael so that it should found a relationship? So you know --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Not the entire midbar (desert) experience, but if you think what their greatest sins are starting from Sinai it's not really -- yes, if you think about it, all of their -- if you think about it, all of their great sins have some aspect of that. Ha'eigel (the [Golden] Calf), is, let's get this intermediary between us and God going, because having to survive this encounter without Moses, that's just mind blowing. The meraglim (scouts), very similar, right? God is going to --

Audience Member: Why?

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- because without the scouts, what happens? Audience Member: They go into the land.

Rabbi David Fohrman: They go into the land, how? In a supernatural kind of way with -- there's no scouts. There's no nothing. There's no normal military procedure. There's just God winning for us. So let's try to make this more human. Let's do it this way. Ultimately, the desire to "let's make it more human" in the scouts, which, itself, you know, okay, we can live with. Ultimately, in the end what does it boil down to in Devarim (Deuteronomy), we saw this before. Finally, at the very end of this, when Moses said, "Look, don't be afraid of them," because why?

We did this before. Because you have the experience of God taking care of you. We've talked about this before. What do you need for trust? I need to know the person, the Being loves with me. I need to know that they have the power to take care of me; that they understand me.

Moses is saying, you have all that with God. You have a track record. God has been feeding you in the desert; He's been carrying you in the desert; this whole time. And so therefore, God is going to make "war against you", work for you. You understand there's a track record here, so just continue this.

It doesn't make sense? And their response is no, " -- besinnas Hashem otano hotzianu mei'eretz Mitzrayim;" in God's hatred of us, he took us out of Egypt; makes no sense. But it's the only way that they can get the distance they need.

Audience Member 1: There has been usually (inaudible) that everything goes (inaudible) there has to be (inaudible) one of the (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, right.

Audience Member 2: But I think, any time you're dependent on someone, there's always mixed emotions, and you love them and (inaudible) because you want to be independent. Could you just review those slides?

Rabbi David Fohrman: But it also depends, by the way, on -- it also depends on whether the Being is keeping you unnaturally dependent, or not. You see, here's the issue; and this is an issue in child-rearing too.

Let's talk about this in terms of child-rearing. It's the same issue, which is, how dependent should you be should your child be on you? So we can all say, "Well, we want our children to be independent." You do? So then, why don't you leave them alone near the pool when they're three years old? What's with the fence? What's with the rules? What's with all of that? They should be independent.

The answer is, they can't handle that independence yet. They don't have the ability to handle it. Okay. I want my kid to be independent, so why don't I say, "You're on your own kid. Buy your own medical

insurance, at age nine; and go out and get a job. Why don't you just get a job?"

The answer is, they don't have the ability to be independent yet. So the answer is, even though as a parent what I ultimately want is, as much independence as my kids can have. But it's as much independence as my kids can have. When they need dependence, I'm there to give them the dependence, so that they can become more and more independent. But I think in the desert, the Jews in the desert, if you think about it from a rational standpoint, how dependent do they need to be on God? How independent can they be?

Audience Member: Well, they're going to be there for another 40 years now.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true. But that's -- however, long they're going to be there. For however long, for X long that you're going to be in the desert. When you're in the desert, how dependent do need to be on God? In other words, how much is -- if you think about it, on a scale from one to 10, with one being the most dependent, and 10 being the most independent, what level of dependence is appropriate to have on God in the desert? The answer to that question is, how independent can they rationally be?

The answer is, not very. They're not in a place they can grow food. They have no way of defending themselves from enemies. They have no logistical capability to get anywhere. They're basically at about a

1.2. Right? So --

Audience Member: But the truth is, we're really in the same position as they, just as well. We can just as easily not --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, yes and no. No, we are more independent than 1.2, but we -- think we do. This gets back to what we talked about before with the manna, as practice for the land. If you think about it. The two brachot, "mittal hasshamayim umishmannei ha'aretz". "Veyitein lecha haElokim mittal hasshamayim umishmannei ha'aretz". The tal (dew) of the manna is practice for the land.

What that means is that, as I said before; it's the easy algebra problem. It's the problem of faith in the perfect environment where there's nothing else to interfere. In other words, in the most dependent world imaginable, when everything is coming from Me (God), can you accept that; and, can you have faith? It gets a little bit more complicated when you move away from the desert into the land.

Now in the land, at that point, how independent and how dependent do you need to be? You're not 1.2 anymore. You're at about 4.3. It's kind of complicated. They're shades of gray. There are aspects in which I sort of, kind of, control my own destiny.

I have to go to the store. I have to buy tomato seeds. I have to put them in the ground. I have to plow them. I have to plant [sic] them. I have to put fertilizer, and I have to come back -- but God controls the rain. He needs to go --

I need to have an army. I need to defend myself. But, I still need God's help in defending myself. It's more complicated then. If I haven't got faith "down," it's easier to succumb to the illusion that I'm completely independent. I need to get used to trusting; so, at least, I can trust when I need to trust. Then I can balance, how much do I need to trust? How much do I need to --

Audience Member: What does God want from us?

Rabbi David Fohrman: So what God wants is as much -- what any parent wants from his child. As much independence as possible. And to have a relationship with us as independent beings. But like any parent, they will provide the necessary assistance when necessary; but that assistance comes with two caveats. A) understand that it's coming from Me (God), appreciate that it's coming from Me, gratitude; and B) be happy that you have what you need. Enjoy it. Those are the issues here. Yes.

Audience Member 1: I think there's a certain aspect that we had discussed about (inaudible) stones. Is the (inaudible) story towards the end. That it was caused by Reuven having acknowledged and having that balance of acknowledgment and thanking and "welcome-ment"; and how we achieve that balance. I think here it's a certain aspect here of having total dependence. It's just that they feel the --

Rabbi David Fohrman: They feel that they can reciprocate.

Audience Member 1: -- and they feel that they can talk about it, at the moment; and it's very hard when we have that total attachment (inaudible) and ability --

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- to reciprocate.

Audience Member 1: -- to kind of balance and to feel a little different. That's not a normal state of the way we are wired as human beings.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. Okay. Yeah. It could be.

Audience Member 2: Do you think that we're wired, in general as (inaudible) also and that in general (inaudible) also?

Rabbi David Fohrman: How's that?

Audience Member 2: It's just that (inaudible) Hashem is always saying, "You're stubborn, violent and (inaudible) --

Audience Member 1: I would think the opposite though.

Audience Member 2: That we don't have any (inaudible) people, but we have tendency towards it. Audience Member 1: Yeah, well but that's what makes us so great. That ability -- so I'm saying, in the

desert you have to be totally dependent, but then you have to learn how to take this dependence and put it together with independence. What happens is there's a certain transition that Hashem wants in life.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah. You have to transition into a semi-dependent state. Semi independent, semi-dependent; which is the land. But in order to get that down, you have to understand what it looks like to have a healthy dependent relationship. Then, what you can do is have the more complicated relationship; which is independence, mixed with dependence. I still have to have the healthy dependent part, but I also have to be independent. I have to allow my -- I can't allow my independence to delude me into thinking that I don't have any dependence as well. So it's a more complicated situation.

Audience Member: So why were they hesitant? I thought they were hesitant to leave the desert at the end because they figured they won't know how to adjust in the land. What was that fear? Were they hesitant --

Rabbi David Fohrman: I'm not getting into that. I don't see evidence of their not having -- Okay. Guys. Hold on for a second. I need to go a little bit further here.

Audience Member 1: I have a question about the symbol. Why did the medical profession choose that symbol? Because it's really a symbol of God, of depending on God. And here you're saying --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Maybe that's why.

Audience Member 1: -- oh, here we depend on man.

Audience Member 2: -- to show them that they're not really the help themselves. Audience Member 3: Which symbol?

Audience Member 1: -- well, I don't know. That's what I'm asking. Audience Member 3: Which symbol?

Audience Member 1: Is that the answer? Audience Member 2: The caduceus.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The medical profession, the AMA, adopted the symbol of the snake around the banner.

Audience Member 2: It's not the AMA. It goes back to Hippocrates. Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh, it does? Oh, yeah.

(Interposing.)

Audience Member 1: I don't think --

Audience Member 2: The snake is a very negative idea. I don't understand why He picked the snake.

Rabbi David Fohrman: By the way, one other thing, just as a segue back, because I really do want to get back to what I was talking about. An interesting segue back to the connections between Amalek and this manna story in the desert, is also the serpent.

When you think about the serpent, is there anything about the serpent that reminds you of Amalek? First of all, it brings you back to the Garden of Eden, which we argued is the source of Amalek. Remember, Haman, "hamin ha'eitz"? Right? Haman coming from -- the energy of Amalek is really the energy of, "Why can't you eat from that tree after all?" This is the -- give into the illusion that you're controlling everything. That's true.

What else about snakes remind you about Amalek? Think about where Amalek attacks. Audience Member 1: Oh, in the foot. In the (inaudible) rear, those that are in the bottom. Rabbi David Fohrman: What's the language in the Torah?

Audience Member 1: It's the heel, the heel. Rabbi David Fohrman: Not the heel.

Audience Member 1: But, isn't that the curse they will always bite you -- Audience Member 2: "Kol hannechashalim acharecha -- "

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah. So, that's right. There you go. That's it right there. " -- kol hannechashalim acharecha -- " How do you spell "nechashalim"?

Audience Member 1: Like nachash.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Nun-chet-shin, right there; nachash in the middle of them. Also, what's the word? " -- vayezanneiv becha kol hannechashalim acharecha -- " What --

Audience Members: (Interposing.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. Zanav is what? A tail. What is a snake? A snake is all tail. A snake is the only animal that's all tail. " -- vayezanneiv becha kol hannechashalim acharecha -- " The verb that's used to describe the attack is they tailed after you; like a snake. They caught nechashalim from -- play off of

nachash. It's almost as if -- what is the snake? The snake is the serpent.

Again, it sort of brings you back to the Garden of Eden; with the serpent being the tempter. So it's saying, "You really can't eat from that last tree? This is the temptation, which is the Amalek temptation. Right? The snake is the one who says, "hamin"; sorry, he doesn't say " -- hamin ha'eitz -- ", but the snake is the one who says, "why can't we eat from that last tree?"

There's something "Amalek-like" about it, and it seems to be expressing itself here. The idea seems to be that, when you give in to the temptations of getting rid of the manna in one way or the other, not dealing with the manna properly, then you meet up with either Amalek or snake; which is just two sides of the same coin, sort of going back to Eden.

You meet up with Amalek; or, if you don't meet up with Amalek, you're going to meet up with snakes that bite. Snakes that bite are just another version of Amalek. Because Amalek was a snake that bit. The snake that caught up with you from behind. Both, at some level, perhaps, are expressions of the primal snake, which is who you met with, when you were thinking that maybe you'd have that last tree after all. Okay?

Those are some thoughts. Now we're getting back to the question of what the five stories have to do with each other? You were wondering if we would ever get back to that.

So let's get back to the five stories. This is the one I don't really know if I have an answer to; but, let's try. Here are the five stories.

Interestingly enough, if we go back to the encounter against Amalek in Shemot, so -- the story of the manna. The story of the manna was -- so this is a theory. This might be a little of a stretch, I don't know, but here's a thought. I'm just trying this out. It's just a thought.

If you think about the story of the manna. The story of the manna was -- back in Shemot, was really -- was a story of what? The Jews needed to keep the laws of the manna, which would be -- essentially it was their way of expressing faith in God that, I was going to get this manna; and I was going to be able to trust that I was going to get this manna.

Therefore, it's not really coincidental that, in the war against Amalek, which happens afterwards, that the job of Joshua [sic] and Hur was to keep Moses' hands, what?

Audience Member: Upraised.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Upraised. What's the word? " -- vayehi yadav emuna ad bo hasshamesh." Right? The word emuna means "steadfast." That's not just any old word. It's not just any old word. What the Jews were required to do was to believe about God that God was steadfast for them. You even had the word -- don't you have the word "emuna" earlier? So you have it here, too.

If you look at Moses' failure with hitting the rock, this is his failure. " -- ya'an lo he'emantem bi lehakdisheini -- " the failure to have emuna, or steadfastness. That failure, and Aaron dies because of that. I wonder if it's connected to these stories. Anyway, keep on reading a little bit more.

You get to the next story of Edom. This encounter with Edom is a very interesting encounter, in light of everything we've seen before. Because, our central argument that we've been making these past bunch of weeks, has been that Amalek is that part of Edom, which will not reconcile with Klal Yisrael; which can never reconcile with Klal Yisrael.

But, central to our thesis has been the idea that Amalek is not really Edom. Amalek are Edom pretenders. They're related to Edom, but Edom themselves don't even really see Amalek as part of them. Amalek is the dispossessed child of Edom.

Remember, Eliphaz has five children. One of those five children is not Amalek. Amalek is the child of the pilegesh (concubine), who's left out; who's not really seen as one of Eliphaz' children. Yet, Amalek wants to "out-Edom", Edom. To be -- to prove himself the real child of Edom. Edom is the one who gave in, and reconciled.

We will never reconcile. We will be the memory carriers. We will remember the feud. Therefore, all of Amalek's attacks against Israel are saturated with the language of the original first two stories of Esau, which they will never ever -- the encounter between Jacob and Esau, which they will never forget.

That was our central thesis. Walking with this in mind, it will be interesting to see, what happens when the Jews encounter, not Amalek, but Edom? What happens when they encounter real Edom? Do you understand? That's what happens right here in Parshat Chukot. It's the Jews, not encountering Amalek, but encountering Edom.

Interestingly enough, they encounter Amalek right -- well, no they don't. Let's not get into that. But they sort of, kind of, encounter Amalek right after that. If we're right about the fiery serpents. In other words, even if the fiery serpents are an Amalek replacement, as it were, it's interesting that the Amalek replacement shows up right after an encounter with Edom. Right?

Let's look what happens with Edom. "Vayishlach Moshe malachim mikKadeish el Melech Edom;" okay. Moses sends messengers from "Kadeish el Melech Edom;". Now let's just look at these words carefully for one moment. Yes, we'll get to that in a moment.

Well, let's read it a little -- okay. " -- ko amar achicha Yisrael -- " thus says your brother Israel. Notice that word "achicha", "achicha" is meant to do what? In other words, this isn't just an encounter between two, any old nations. Right up front, we understand, that this is Jacob and Esau. The reason why we are achim (brothers), is because Jacob was --

Israel was the ach (brother) of Esau; and you are Esau. Moses is very up front, which makes you wonder. "Okay. What's going on? This is Jacob and Esau."

Listen to this language and let's play our favorite game, 'where have we heard these words before'? "Vayishlach Moshe malachim miKadeish el Melech Edom;" reminds you of what other words in the Torah?

Audience Member: Jacob sending malachim to Esau his brother.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. Who else sent malachim (messengers or angels) to Esau? It was Jacob. And it was the exact same words. But there -- what?

Audience Member: But here it says Israel and not Jacob.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true. "Vayishlach Ya'akov malachim lefanav el Eisav achiv; artza Sei'ir, eretz Edom." What's that?

Audience Member: "Ko amar", he says.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes. " -- ko amar -- " also. So, no. There, there's "ko amar"? Audience Member: Yeah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah. I think it is. Right? " -- ko amar -- " What is " -- ko amar achicha Ya'akov

-- " it is, right? We go back to the original story. Let's just call that up on our screen for a quick second.

-- beginning of Vayishlach. What Chapter is that? Audience Member: The eighth. Probably about the eighth. Rabbi David Fohrman: Where is it? Lamed-Bet?

Audience Member: "Katonti mikol -- "

Rabbi David Fohrman: Lamed-Bet. Here's Lamed-Bet. Okay. Here we go. Yes, there it is. Okay. Here's the original encounter. "Vayishlach Ya'akov malachim lefanav el Eisav achiv;" sounds very similar. " -- artza Sei'ir, eretz Edom. Vayetzav otam leimor, ko tomrun ladoni le'Esav; ko amar -- " there's the "ko amar". Ko amar achicha --

Audience Member: "Avdecha."

Rabbi David Fohrman: " -- avdecha -- " here " -- ko amar avdecha Ya'akov -- " right? A sort of subservient tone. Thus says your servant Jacob, " -- im Lavan garti va'eichar ad ata." Let's read this. " -- im Lavan garti va'eichar ad ata." I've been with Laban for a while, and that's why it took me so long to get here.

"Vayehi li shor vachamor, tzon ve'eved veshifchah; va'eshlechah lehagid ladoni, limtza chein be'einecha."

I have all of this stuff, and I have given you this so that I find favor in your eyes. "Vayashuvu hammalachim el Ya'akov, leimor; banu el achicha, el Eisav -- "

Audience Member 4: Wasn't he punished for that? How far he shouldn't get it (inaudible) Jacob? That was his punishment that (inaudible) --

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right. Let me -- maybe. "Vayashuvu hammalachim el Ya'akov, leimor; banu el achicha, el Eisav vegam holeich likratcha -- " We've come to Esau. We gave him the message. But, he's coming to greet you with 400 men.

What happens is, the initial exchange between Jacob and Esau goes badly. What happens is, Jacob tries to appease Esau, and it doesn't really work. He says, "I'm giving you these things to find favor in your eyes." But, he's coming out to greet you with 400 men.

At that point Jacob becomes very nervous, and he splits everyone up, and he prays to God. He goes -- and then, he sends out these other gifts; which are much more extensive. "Vayitein beyad...eider, eider levado;" right? " -- verevach tasim bein eider le'eider." He gives these gifts; and finally, that works. And there's kind of a reconciliation.

Now let's go back to our other story here; in Bamidbar. "Vayishlach Moshe malachim miKadeish el Melech Edom; ko amar achicha Yisrael," very similar. Okay? And what's the first thing that Jacob had said to Esau? " -- im Lavan garti va'eichar ad ata." I've been with Laban, and it took me awhile.

Now, " -- ata yadata, eit kol hatela'ah asher matza'atnu. Vayeridu avoseinu Mitzraimah," you know all of the travail that we have encountered. And our forefathers went down to Egypt. What's he saying? He's explaining why it's taken so long to have this encounter. Because, guess where we've been for 400 years? We've been in Mitzrayim (Egypt), and you know about everything that happened to us in Egypt.

Now, Egypt and Laban, anyone? Remember that? Going back to our PowerPoint; Israel, the man; Israel, the family; Israel, the nation. We go back here so, where is it? Maybe it's this -- right?

Jacob's life. The lives of his children. After betraying brother and deceiving father, Jacob goes down to exile in Laban's house. After betraying brother and deceiving the father, the children go down to exile in Pharaoh's house. You worked hard there. They work hard there. He leaves with great wealth. They leave with great wealth. Laban runs after him and catches up. Pharaoh runs after them and catches up.

But God saves him; but God saves them. Jacob crosses a river. They cross the sea. Remember all this?

Laban is what? Laban is Pharaoh. Laban in the microcosm, becomes Pharaoh in the macrocosm; for his children. It's very interesting that over here, just like Jacob had said, "It took me a while to get to you, Esau. I have been with Laban. So Moses, in recognition of the fact that, all that happened was that we played this out. At the national level he says, "It took us a while to get to you. We've been 400 years in Egypt."

"Ata yadata, eit kol hatela'ah asher matzanu." Now, there's another interesting word here, which is this. You know, "eit kol hatela'ah asher matza'atnu. That's a very important word. Why is that a very important word? Because, if you remember the terrible stories of Jacob and Esau they are filled with the word matza. The word matza is one of those kind of nasty words that pairs with "hakeir." "Hakeir na -- " and "zot matzanu; hakeir na -- "; and it goes back to the very beginning.

The very first one -- it's all the goats and coats stories. The very beginning of the goats and coats stories is Jacob and Esau with the deception. With the deception, the very first matza is, " -- mah zeh micharta limtzo beni;" right? How come you found the food so quickly? To which Jacob replied, 'Oh, God just showed up.' Then "Velo hikiro," he didn't recognize him.

Then, in repayment for that, there's mechirat Yosef (the sale of Josef); which is "Zot matzanu; hakeir na

-- ". Then they go down into Egypt. They go into -- so, " -- ata yadata, eit kol hatela'ah asher matza'atnu." Through what? Through the sale of Josef. The sale of Josef catapults the family into Egypt. It all started with "Zot matzanu; hakeir na -- ".

Moses with a wink and a nod, "you know 'kol hatela'ah asher matza'atnu'." You know everything that happened to us; that found us; that caught up with us. It really is what caught up with us. The actions of Jacob caught up with him; and led to 400 years in Egypt. This is what Jacob is saying to Esau.

In a certain way, all of this is the fruit of the original deception by Jacob of Esau. Who is Moses talking to? Moses is talking to Esau. In a certain way, what Moses is saying, without really saying it is, that, 'I understand you're mad at us. But, look what happened to us. It's taken us 400 years to get to you. Do you know why?'

Because this has all caught up with you. Those actions of long ago have had repurcussions. Those repurcussions have led us into Egypt for 400 years. You know all of that.

"Vayeirdu avoseinu Mitzraimah, vaneishev beMitzrai'im yamim rabim; vayarei'u lanu Mitzrai'im vela'avoseinu. Vanitzak el Hashem vayishma koleinu -- ", now " -- vayishlach malach vayotzi'einu mimMitzrai'im;" what's strange about this?

What's strange about this is, what do we say at the Passover seder all the time? "Lo al yedei malach. Lo al yedei seraph." That when God took us out of Egypt, he took us out of Egypt not with a malach (an angel). All of a sudden, Moses comes in and says, 'And God sent an angel that took us out of Egypt.' What's the deal with that?

Now here's the problem. Let's go to the story of yetziat Mitzrai'im (the Exodus from Egypt). As we understood the Exodus from Egypt, specifically with korban Pesach (the Passover sacrifice), as we came out, what did we get through the Passover sacrifice? We became what? " -- beni bechori Yisrael." We became God's firstborn.

How's Esau going to look at that? Esau's not going to be very happy with that. That's going to be the reason, right? So notice, " -- vayishlach malach vayotzi'einu mimMitzrai'im;" seems to be an attempt to do what? To play down what actually happened as we left Egypt.

He's very up-front with the fact that it took a very long time. We were in Egypt. Because that's sort of punishment for what happened. That's just Jacob's past catching up with him. But how we got out, " -- beni bechori Yisrael." Let's not go there. " -- vayishlach malach vayotzi'einu mimMitzrai'im;" we got out of there.

Audience Member 1: Can't you say that the -- what you mentioned before in terms of mentioning beni Yisrael? The whole idea of the angel coming to fight with Jacob, and he won. You know we've got these angels from Hashem that can help us out a little bit. You better be good to us.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Could be.

Audience Member 2: Also it could be showing that the angel was an angel just for the Firstborn. Like the angel of Hashem (inaudible). But I like that --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. All right. Moving on. " -- vehinei anachnu veKadeish," we're really out of time, so I just want to finish this very quickly. " -- vehinei anachnu veKadeish, ir ketzei gevulecha." We're right near you. "Na'ehbru na ve'artzecha," let us go through your land. "Lo na'avor besadeh uvekerem, velo nishteh mei be'er;" we will -- (Let us go through your land) we will not go gathering in your fields. We will not drink water. We will just go straight. "Lo nitteh yamin usmol, ad asher na'avor gevulecha." All we want is right of passage. Don't worry. We're not going to take any food.

Look at Edom's response. "Vayomer eilav Edom, lo ta'avor bi; pen bacherev eitzei likratecha." First of all, there's the cherev (sword). Remember "sword" for Esau. Sword is what he gets from his blessing, "Ve'al charbecha tichyeh,". So he says, "I'm going to come out with my sword to greet you. Notice that, just like the first encounter with Edom doesn't go well with Jacob, right? Edom rejected the first encounter. Only reconciled with the second. The first encounter does not go well here, either. There is -- just as Esau was willing to come with 400 men, " -- bacherev eitzei likratecha." So it happens on the national level also.

Notice something else. Why is it do you think, that 2.1 million people are going to make several days' journey through Eretz Edom (the Land [Country] of Edom), and they're not going to be eating anything and they're not going to be drinking anything? Because they have the manna. Stop. How is Edom going to react to that?

Audience Member: Not happy.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Not happy. Because what is the manna? The manna is the blessings. "Mital hashamayim -- " the blessings that Edom thinks he (himself) should get. That was a mistake. By saying

-- you cover your tracks a little bit by saying an angel took us out of Egypt. But when you start saying

how we're millions of people and you say, "Don't worry, we don't need anything; we're fine."

Why don't you need anything? You don't need anything because you have the manna. Why do you have the manna? Right? So at that point, the same way our blessing was the manna, what was his blessing? "Ve'al charbecha tichyeh,". So Edom says, you're invoking your blessing, the manna; I'll invoke my blessing, "Ve'al charbecha tichyeh," the sword. The manna is provocative.

Now look what happens in round two. Moses doesn't give up. Round two. "Vayom'ru eilav benei Yisrael -- " the Jews say, " -- bamesillah na'aleh, ve'im meimecha nishteh, ani umiknai, venatati michram;" oh, forget the manna. We'll buy food. We'll buy food, takeout. We're eating takeout. Don't worry. What do I mean, manna? We'll buy food. We'll buy water. We don't have a be'er (well). We don't have manna. We'll buy food. Right?

Notice, " -- venatati michram;" "michram" reminds you of what? We're willing to pay for food. Jacob- Esau one. Again, remember, Jacob requires Esau to pay for food; when Esau really needs it. Now, Jacob repays Esau by saying, "we'll buy food from you, when we don't really need it. It's an attempt -- and, "

-- venatati michram;" of course, reminds you of, " -- michrah chayom et-bechorat'cha li." The transaction over there of selling the Firstborn-right. It's like, oh, all right, we'll buy food. "Rak ein davar, beraglai eh'evorah." Just let us go, and we'll buy the food from you.

Audience Member: Why does benei Yisrael get involved now, instead of Moses? Rabbi David Fohrman: Good question. Don't know the answer to that.

"Vayomer, lo ta'avor;" and at that point they -- now what's interesting is, they still won't let them go past. There is no reconciliation at this point. But, " -- vayeitzei Edom likrato ba'am kaveid uveyad chazakah." What does this remind you of? 'Am kaveid ubeyad chazakah.' These words kaveid and chazak?

Audience Member 1: The hands of Moses were kaveid and -- Audience Member 2: -- Egypt.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's Egypt. "Yad chazakah" (literally, "strong hand"). When's the last time we had "yad chazakah"? Egypt. And what did God do with "yad chazakah"? He took us out of Egypt. What did Moses try to pass off on Edom happened? 'Al yedei malach' (by means of an angel). What's Edom saying? Edom's coming out to you with "yad chazakah". What are they saying?

They're saying, "We know what really happened in Egypt. Don't try to pull the wool over our eyes. It wasn't an angel. It was God 'beyad chazakah'. Because God said, you're the Firstborn. That's why you have the manna. You can't pull the wool over our eyes. Therefore, if you insist on coming out to us, we will come out with the sword, with "yad chazakah" because the wounds are still very raw."

But, the Jews avoid Edom; and they leave. "Vayema'ein Edom neton et-Yisrael, avor bigvulo;" right? Edom then does not allow the Jews to go. " -- vayeit -- " what?

Audience Member: Reminds you of 'vayema'ein', with Josef.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, it does remind you of 'vayema'ein', with Josef. Yes, it does. " -- vayeit Yisrael mei'alav. And the Jews turn away. So it reminds you of the ma'eins of Josef and Jacob. I don't know what it means, but it does remind you of that. Then, the Jews turn away.

What's interesting, what I want to argue is, I'm out of time. But -- okay. So now remember -- so then they go. Aaron dies. The next thing that happens is they encounter the Cana'ani Melech (King) of Arad. Now, remember how -- the story after that, we said is really Amalek, except it's the snakes instead of Amalek? Right? Remember after that?

Let's look at this story. "Vayishma haCana'ani Melech Arad yosheiv hanegev," now I want to show you a fascinating Rashi. "'Yosheiv hanegev,' zeh Amalek." Rashi says that, this king was actually Amalek.

When the Cana'ani attacked it wasn't the Cana'ani. It was actually Amalek. They were just dressed up as the Cana'ani. Because they came from the negev (desert) and Amalek lives in the desert. It was really, actually Amalek. What happens according to Rashi, it is Amalek attacking them. " -- ki ba Yisrael derech ha'atarim; vayillachem beYisrael, vayishb mimmennu shevi. Vayidar Yisrael neder laShem," by the way 'vayidar neder' reminds you of what play on words with Amalek?

" -- milchama laShem ba'Amalek midor dor." 'Vayidar neder' it seems to me, we have a play on words there.

"Vayomar; im naton titein et ha'am hazeh beyadi, vehacharamti etareihem." Now, look at the -- look at this Rashi. It'll blow your mind. "Shene'emar, 'Amalek yosheiv be'eretz hanegev veshineh et lashono." Why didn't it just say that Amalek attacked? Why does it say, "the Cana'ani, King of Arad"? "Shinah et lashono", they changed their voices.

They changed their language. " -- ledabeir belashon Cana'an," to try to talk in Cana'ani language; so that they wouldn't know they were Amalek. " -- kedei sheyehiyu Yisrael mitpallelim lehaKadosh Baruch Hu leteit Cana'anim beyadam -- " so the Jews would mistakenly pray to God to get the Can'anim, to save them from Cana'anim. But it wouldn't really work, because they aren't Cana'anim, they're really Amalekim. They're dressed up. "Veheim einam Cana'anim".

How did the Jews figure it out? "Ra'u Yisrael levusheihem kelevushei Amalekim -- " the Jews saw that they were dressed up like Amalekim, but their voices were the voices of Cana'an. What does this -- it's "hakol kol Ya'akov, vehayadayim yedei Eisav." What happens is Amalek is remembering the deception, and is coming to you and saying, "you came and deceived father by keeping your voice and changing your clothes? We'll do you one better. We'll keep the clothes and change the voice. And what will we do then? We will deceive whom? Father in Heaven.

You will pray about the wrong person. And Father will not get it right. And you will be destroyed, and we will win. This is their attempt to deceive Father, on the national level. Father is not Isaac anymore. Who is Father? Father is God. This is the attempt to deceive God, and we're going to get the blessings because we are really Amalek.

What's happening? Amalek again says, "We are the real Esau." We remember the deception. You just encountered Esau, and what did they do? They let you go.

We are the child of Eliphaz. What was Eliphaz' mission? Wipe out Jacob at any cost. Jacob deceived Eliphaz and got Eliphaz to go back with a little bit of money. But we are the dispossessed child of Eliphaz, who is out there to prove that we are the real child of Eliphaz. We will kill you at any cost. We are Edom. Edom was a wimp. Edom let you go. Edom remembered; but you reconciled with Edom.

They let you off. There's a cold peace between you and Edom. But there's no cold peace with us.

We remember; and we'll do you one better. We'll replay the deception story, and we'll get the blessing; and we'll attack.

Therefore, it's no coincidence in Amalek attacking and immediately after this, the nachash attacks. It's right around the Jews failure to appreciate the manna. The vulnerability of the Jews is there. They're not appreciating the manna. It's the same vulnerability that gets them with the first attack of Amalek. Amalek is there because Edom has not done what Edom needs to do in the eyes of Amalek. So --

Audience Member: Look at this, mirma and mirma.

Rabbi David Fohrman: "Vayomer, ba achicha bemirmah;" oh, very interesting. " -- vayikach birchatecha. Okay, guys. We're out of time. We'll leave you there.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Well, in the past weeks -- we're continuing now with the theme of how one battles Amalek? What I want to focus on now is the fact that historically there were, sort of, two major tribes -- well, let me put it to you this way. If you look at the great battles against Amalek, which are enumerated in Tana"ch, the major battles against Amalek, you find that the first one is lead by Joshua. Joshua is the general in the war against Amalek that takes place in Parshat Beshalach and later on, in the times of Saul. You have Saul leading the war against Amalek and then the next iteration of Amalek is in the Megillah (the Book of Esther) where you have Mordecai and Esther.

What's interesting about this is if you look at the shevatim (tribes) of these people, Mordecai and Esther and Saul are, first of all, directly related and they are both from the tribe of Benjamin. Joshua is from the tribe of Ephraim. The question is, is that significant at all? Is it significant that later on it's the two scions of Benjamin that lead the war? Does it make a difference?

There is some indication that it makes a difference. If you look at -- let me see if I can pull it up on the screen for you -- but if you look at the language in the Book of Samuel of Saul's battle against Amalek. Let me find it for you. First of all Ephraim and Benjamin are both from Rachel's side of the family. Right, Ephraim is from Josef and Benjamin is from Benjamin, right?

Audience Member: Did she (inaudible) to Leah? Did she give (inaudible) to redemption? Rabbi David Fohrman: Maybe, but hold on a minute. Well, she deceived also, but -- Audience Member: Yeah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Where are we here, Perek Yud-Beis or so? Did I open that? Here we go. For example, if you look at the culmination of Saul's war against Amalek over here, as you know, Saul fails to kill Agag and Samuel feels it is necessary to kill him himself. When he does, you have this scene --

Audience Member: What chapter are you in?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Where is this? This is Chapter 15 in The Book of Samuel I. "Vayisov Shmuel lalechet vayachazak bekenaf me'ilo vayikara" Samuel is leaving and one of the two, Samuel or Saul, grabs hold of the other's cloak and it rips. "Vayomer eilav Shmuel kara Hashem entire mamlachut Yisrael mei'alecha hayom unitanah lerei'acha hatov mimeka" God has torn away the kingship of Israel from you today, Samuel says to Saul, and given it to your colleague who is greater than you. "Vegam netzach Yisrael lo yishaker velo yinachem, ki lo adam hu lehinachem" and the Rock of Israel, i.e. God, won't change his mind, because he is not a man that changes his mind.

"Vayomer chatati atah kabedeini na neged ziknei ami veneged Yisrael veshuv imi vehishtachaveiti leHashem Elokecha" he says I sinned, come with me, go back and let's bow together before God. "Vayashav Shmuel acharei Shaul vayishtachu Shaul leHashem" Samuel follows Saul, they both bow before God. "Vayomer Shmuel hagishu eilai et Agag melech Amalek, vayelech eilav Agag ma'adanot,

vayomer Agag achein sar mar hamaves", he brings the king of the Amalekites, Agag and Samuel is going to kill him.

Now here is the language that he uses. "Vayomer Shmuel ka'asher shikla nashim charbecha kein tishkal minashim imecha, vayishasef Shmuel et Agag lifnei Hashem baGilgal." This is an interesting phrase over here; "ka'asher shikla nashim charbecha kein tishkal minashim imecha", we talked about this once way back. What does it mean? "Ka'asher shikla nashim charbecha" as your sword has made women bereft of children in the past, "kein tishkal minashim imecha" now your mother is going to become bereft as well of a child, right, because I am going to kill you and he kills him.

Now it turns out, I believe that Samuel is alluding to something with this verse. What does this remind you of? Where else in the chapter do we have "ka'asher" hooked up with two shakals? Right, shikla, kein tishkal?

Audience Member: "Ka'asher shakolti shakalti"?

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right, "ka'asher shakolti shakalti", these are words that -- it's the only other time in the Torah that you have ka'asher with shakal twice. That verse is a verse that who speaks?

Basically, this is a verse that Jacob speaks. Jacob says these words and he says them about Benjamin, interestingly enough. Saul, of course, is from Benjamin. What does he say? Remember, Judah says -- Jacob doesn't want to allow Benjamin to go down to Josef. Judah finally convinces him to let Benjamin go with him and Judah says I will take charge of him. When he does, he says -- Jacob reconciles himself to the possibility of losing Benjamin with the words "ka'asher shakolti shakalti" and if I am made bereft of him, so I may be bereft; if I lose him, I lose him. Why do you think Samuel would be quoting those words here?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. In other words, the idea is that, who is Samuel talking to when he says "ka'asher" -- thank you very much -- "ka'asher shikla nashim charbecha kein tishkal minashim imecha"? In the p'shat he is talking to Agag, but there is a secondary level of meaning that he's talking to the other person standing there who is Saul. What he is telling Saul is, there was once a time when Benjamin was threatened with loss and it didn't happen. At the last moment, it turned around. It's when Jacob said "ka'asher shakolti shakalti" and if I lose him, I lose him. But this time Benjamin will be lost; you are Benjamin and you are going to be lost.

This is the kingdom going down the tubes. He is quoting those words of Jacob reconciling himself to the loss of Benjamin, because this is the loss of Benjamin. In other words, it's like in the war against Amalek it is do or die. It's one or the other; (inaudible). Either Amalek is destroyed, or, so to speak, Benjamin is destroyed for failure to destroy Amalek. That is what happens here, the kingship of Benjamin is destroyed.

Why do I bring this up right now? I bring this up, because it seems like Saul's tribe matters. There is

something about Benjamin that is destined to do battle against Amalek and it's not a coincidence that there is a Round 2 over here as we talked about before. As we talked about before, maybe a year or so ago, these words also have an echo. When Samuel says to Saul "kara Hashem entire mamlachut Yisrael mei'alecha hayom unitanah lerei'acha hatov mimeka" God has torn away the kingship of Israel today and given it to your colleague who is greater than you. We hear those words another time in Tana"ch and it is in the book of Esther. Where do we hear those words; "kara Hashem entire mamlachut Yisrael mei'alecha hayom unitanah lerei'acha hatov mimeka" the kingship is given to a colleague greater than you?

Actually, strangely, Haman, disguised as Memuchan is the one who says these words to Ahasuerus plotting to get rid of Vashti. He says let's get rid of Vashti "umalchuta yitein hamelech lire'uta hatovah mimena" and let's give her queenship to her colleague that is greater than she. The Midrash picks up on this and the Midrash says why is Haman quoting from the words of Samuel? The Midrash says that there is a certain poetic justice here. The Midrash says that anybody who says that God doesn't give second chances doesn't know what he is talking about, because these are the same words that God took with finality the kingship of Saul -- he is giving them back to Saul's descendents to finish the job.

Why did Saul lose the kingship? Because of the failure to kill Agag and because of that Agag has another child and because of that Amalek lives to fight another day. Because of that there is Purim and then that child of Agag, Haman, will ultimately use those same words to get rid of Vashti and who was the colleague greater than she? It's Esther who comes in to finish the job against Amalek and it means that Esther has a second chance to do battle and to succeed where Saul failed, which is why, of course, Esther and Mordecai take great care not to take the shalal, not to take the booty of the people that they -- right? That was why Saul failed in this war.

There is something about Benjamin here that is, sort of, destined to fight Amalek. I wonder if there is something about Ephraim as well, about Saul that is destined to fight Amalek. You hear it even -- let's actually think about that. I want to focus today on Ephraim and later on we'll focus on Benjamin. Is there something about Ephraim that is destined to fight Amalek?

Let's go to the story of Joshua, where Joshua from Ephraim, is the one who does battle against Amalek. I want you to, again, read the text and listen for echoes. Here we have "vaya'as Yehoshua ka'asher amar lo Moshe lehilacheim be'Amalek uMoshe, Aharon veChur aloo rosh hagiv'ah". Moses, Aaron and Hur go up on to the top of the hill; "vehaya ka'asher yarim Moshe yado vegavar Yisrael veka'asher yaniyach yado vegavar Amalek". We talked about echoes of the Jacob and Esau stories. We talked about that two weeks ago. Today I want to talk about a different set of echoes in the story, because there is more than one echo in the story.

Not only does this story remind us of Jacob and Esau stories, it also reminds us a bit of another story as well. You begin to see it right over here. "Viyedei Moshe kveidim" and the hands of Moses were very heavy and he took a rock and he put it under himself and both Aaron and Hur went and "tamchu b'yadav mizeh echad umizeh echad, vayehi yadav emunah ad bo hashamesh". Okay. Those words,

"viyedei Moshe kveidim", that should, sort of, remind you of something. It should be itching at your funny bone there.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) switch.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, okay. So, slow down. The words "viyedei Moshe kveidim", if you just, sort of, do this, sort of, meditative thing where you just, kind of, take everything out of your mind and you just smell the incense and you are at the lowest position on the floor and you just, kind of, clear your mind. You just meditate on these words, "viyedei Moshe kveidim, viyedei Moshe kveidim" -- reminds you of what other phrase in the Torah? What else was kveidim (heavy)?

Audience Member: (Inaudible)? Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Maybe. Audience Member: (Inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, so where else were there body parts of another person that were kaveid (heavy), two body parts, just like Moses had two hands that were heavy, two body parts that were heavy? Where else in the Torah do we have two body parts of a person that were heavy? Anybody? Well, I will show you.

Audience Member: (Inaudible)? Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, two body parts that were feeling very heavy. I'll show you. Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's what?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) of (inaudible), right?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Let's find it. It's not here quite yet. Here it is "v'einei Yisrael kavdu mizokein", it's the eyes of Israel that were heavy from being old. "Lo yuchal lir'ot vayagash otam eilav vayishak lahem vayechabek lahem", and who is coming? At this moment, who --

Audience Member: The sons of Josef.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The sons of Josef and who are the sons of Josef? Ephraim and Manasseh. So, now, this might just be coincidental, but let's read just a little bit more in Shemos (Exodus). "Viyedei Moshe kveidim, vayikchu even" -- is there any -- let's just read the rest of the pasuk. Is there anything else about this pasuk that is to remind you of Jacob's blessing?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) to Jacob?

Rabbi David Fohrman: How is this going to -- (Interposing)

Audience Member: -- is being transferred from one to the other. Rabbi David Fohrman: That's interesting. "Vayasimu tachtav" -- Audience Member: It's almost the same words, (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Same words as what? Audience Member: In Vayeitzei.

Rabbi David Fohrman: In Vayeitzei, yeah, well, when he takes an even (stone) and he places it beneath his head. "Vayeshev aleha veAharon veChur tamchu b'yadav mizeh echad umizeh echad" Aaron and Hur hold on to his hands. But now look at this word, "yedei Aharon veChur tamchu b'yadav". Where else to we have "tamchu b'yadav"? Where else do we have somebody holding on desperately to someone else's hands?

Audience Member: Jacob to Esau when he came out, Jacob grabbing Esau's ankles.

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. True, but the language of tomech (supporting); it is the same word, tomech. Audience Member: (Inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Audience Member: (Inaudible)? Rabbi David Fohrman: No.

Audience Member: When the three (inaudible) and (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. It's actually in the same story of Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manasseh. Where do you have somebody desperately holding on to somebody else's arm? Josef holding on to Jacob's arms trying to get him to switch the crossed arms. Let's go back to that story and read it and you'll actually see the connection. I'm sorry, over here. "V'einei Yisrael kavdu mizokein", there is the first reference; the eyes of Israel are heavy just like the hands of Moses are heavy. "Lo yuchal lir'ot, vayagash otam eilav vayishak lahem vayechabek lahem. Vayomer Yisrael el Yosef ", then he goes and he is about to bless them. He crosses his arms -- by the way, when he crosses his arms -- look at this, "sikeil et yadav".

What does that remind you of? "Ka'asher shakolti shakalti", it's a play off of that. But anyway, "vayivarech et Yosef vayomar, haElokim asher hit'halchu avotai lefanav Avraham veYitzchak haElokim haro'eh oti mei'odi ad hayom hazeh", he blesses them and Josef sees this and is horrified. "Vayeira b'einav", there it is, "vayitmoch yad aviv", there it is. It's the same words. Tamchu b'yadav, do you get it? In the last story in Exodus, Aaron and Hur are holding on to the hands of Moses and now, "vayitmoch yad aviv".

It sounds like, that pasuk in Exodus -- between the eyes of Jacob kavdu mizokein and the holding on to the hands is -- is it coincidental that that's happening? This is all about the blessing of Ephraim and who is waging war? It's Joshua the scion of Ephraim is waging this war. It sounds like there is something about this war -- to understand the success of Joshua in the war against Amalek, do we need to understand Jacob's blessing of Ephraim. That is my question. I think the Torah is saying yes, so what I want to do is go back and examine more carefully the blessing of Jacob to Ephraim and to understand how that might match or fit with the war that Joshua the scion of Ephraim is going to prosecute against Amalek, because it sounds like the Torah wants us to look there.

We're going to read through the story and see what we find. Okay. Just, sort of, in large -- okay. Here is the beginning of the story. "Vayechi Yaakov beEretz Mitzrayim sh'va-esrei shanah, vayehi yemei Yaakov sh'nei chayav sheva shanim ve'arba'im ume'as shanah", okay. So here is Jacob; he has been living in Egypt now for 17 years. "Vayikrevu yemei Yisrael lamut" and then he is about to die. "Vayikra l'bno leYosef vayomer lo im na matzti chein b'einecha sim na yadecha tachat yereichi ve'asita imadi chessed v'emet al na tikbereini b'Mitzrayim". All right. We will go through this in a moment.

Look at the introduction to this. Jacob has been here for 17 years. This is the final chapter in the story of Josef that we are about to read. How did the story of Josef begin? Does anyone remember the very first verse in the story of Josef? "Vayeishev Yaakov b'eretz megurei aviv b'Eretz Canaan" and then how does it go? Then "Yosef ben Sheva-Esrei shanah", Josef was 17 years old when he was "ro'eh et echav batzon". The story started when Josef was 17. Now Jacob is Egypt for 17 years, but let's think about the significance of those 17 years. What happened when he first got to Egypt? Think Josef, what happened when he first got to Egypt?

Audience Member: Josef or Jacob?

Rabbi David Fohrman: When Jacob first got to Egypt.

Audience Member: (Inaudible), he is happy for the first time.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true, he was happy for the first time in a long time, because he saw Josef for the first time. Think about, from Jacob's perspective, Josef has been wiped out of his life for many, many years; but then the moment he arrives in Egypt and he sees Josef -- and then what happens? He has Josef for 17 years and now we get to the end of the story. It almost sounds like we are setting up -- for what? It's almost like we are at the same point in time again, do you know what I mean? Jacob with Josef for 17 years and now here is the action. In Episode Number One the action was the selling of Josef. In Episode Number Two the action is what is about to happen now.

The question that inquiring minds want to know is there anything about what is about to happen now which reminds us about what happened the last time? Jacob met Josef 17 years ago -- Jacob was with Josef for 17 years.

Audience Member: Showing favoritism. (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. So one thing is, he is about to show favoritism to one child over the other just like that story again. It, sort of, makes you wonder, are we looking at another selling of Josef? Let's keep this in the back of our minds. Now, I also take you back to -- the question is how might this be connected to the selling of Josef, if it is? I want to take you back, briefly, to -- you know, we talked about Josef at great length two years ago. I don't know how much of that you guys remember, but I want to take you back -- I don't know if all of you were here, but I want to take you back to one theory that I hoisted upon you way back in the very beginning of our discussions with Josef.

That theory was -- we were wondering why it might be that Jacob, who supposedly loves Josef so much

-- why was it that Jacob made this disastrous mistake of sending Josef off into the fields unguarded, to Shechem of all places, which is not a very wonderful place. Murder and mayhem had taken place and was brought to you by Simeon and Levy. He sent him to Shechem alone and unguarded, immediately after becoming are of the brothers' jealousy for Josef. "Vayikan'u bo echav ve'aviv shamar et hadavar", is the verse immediately preceding Jacob's decision to send Josef off to Shechem.

Audience Member: Well, you discussed that already and the reason was he was testing him are you loyal (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What we argued then was that it was a loyalty test. He was testing Josef to see his loyalty. That he was fearful that, in the wake of Josef's second dream, as to whether or not Josef was a good bechor (firstborn) or a bad bechor. In other words, he is looking at Josef as his firstborn; he is the first child of Rachel and he thinks that Rachel is his main wife. On the one hand these dreams seem to confirm that God is viewing Josef as the leader of the family, but on the other hand the dreams are disturbing too and particularly the second dream was disturbing.

The second dream has -- what the first dream didn't have -- is, apparently, the father and mother bowing to him. The idea of father and mother bowing to you is not something that makes you feel particularly good when you are looking at this child as the firstborn who is going to carry on your legacy. Because the idea of a firstborn who is going to carry on your legacy is to carry on your legacy; it's not for him to take that leadership position and usurp it and have you bowing to him. So the dream causes some consternation, perhaps, for Jacob and maybe it's not a coincidence, but immediately after this Jacob goes and tests him.

With this in mind, we suggested that this is why you hear all the akeida (the binding of Isaac) imagery in the story of Jacob sending Josef to his brothers. Things such as; "vayir'u oto meirachok" they see him from afar; it's the same language as the binding of Isaac. The binding of Isaac was a loyalty test. This too was a loyalty test. Okay. Now with that in mind, if we look at this story too, we find an interesting thing. The background for Vayechi -- what happened right before these words in Vayechi?

Josef has been very busily embarking on the task of settling his brothers into Egypt and what happens is something, kind of, interesting. Here is what happens. The brothers say to Pharaoh, "lagur ba'aretz banu ki ein mir'eh latzon asher la'avadecha ki kaveid hara'av b'Eretz Canaan ve'atah yeishvu na avadecha b'Eretz Goshen." We just want -- "lagur ba'aretz banu". "Lagur ba'aretz banu", means we are strangers in the land. We just want to sojourn here. We want to hang out here for a while, because there is not enough food elsewhere. Lagur as we said in the past is a very temporary kind of word. It just means we are just visiting, like in Monopoly. You know, you are not staying around for a while; you are just, sort of, passing through.

Pharaoh graciously says "Eretz Mitzrayim lefanecha hu, b'meitav ha'aretz hosheiv et avicha ve'et achecha, yeish'vu b'Eretz Goshen, ve'im yadata v'yesh bam anshei chayil v'samtam sarei mikneh al asher li".

Something here's what happens. The next thing that happens is Josef brings Jacob to Pharaoh and Jacob blesses Pharaoh. Pharaoh makes this small talk with Jacob and says, so, how old are you? Jacob answers, sort of -- well, Jacob answers in a way that seems not so nice, but (inaudible) answer.

"Vayomer Yaakov el Paraoh yemei shnei megurai sheloshim ume'at shanah, me'at vera'im hayu yemei shnei chayai, velo hisigu et yemei shnei chayei avotai b'yemei megureihem." What is the word that keeps on appearing over and over again here? Megurei, right? He is very down about this. He says the days -- and it's almost like Pharaoh wouldn't even understand what he is talking about. He says "the days of the years of my sojourning have been 130 years", "me'at vera'im" few and bad have been these years of my life. "Velo hisigu et yemei shnei chayei avotai" and my life has not even caught up to the lives of my forefathers, "yemei megureihem" and their lives of sojourning. My sojournings have been bad and they haven't even been as good as the lives of my fathers and their sojournings.

What is all this sojourning stuff? That really takes you back to the very first words in the story of the selling of Josef. "Vayeshev Yaakov b'eretz megurei aviv b'Eretz Canaan -- that's how the story begins. "Vayeshev Yaakov" and Jacob settled "b'eretz megurei aviv" in the land that his forefathers had only been sojourning in "b'Eretz Canaan". What does that really mean? It means that Jacob at that point had, sort

of, though his life was over. If you go back to the way we understood those events, remember we have this theory, it's really Rav Soloveitchik's theory, that Jacob thought that the bris bein habesarim was going to come through him. He thought that he was the fabled fourth generation who was supposed to come back to Eretz Yisrael, "dor revi'i yashuvu heina" the fourth generation is going to return here.

Josef was the fourth generation; that's why he was going to leave Laban. He was going to come back. He was going to establish himself in the land. He was going to do what all of his forefathers had failed to do. Everybody else had just been a ger (resident), but he was going to be the one who was going to start building up the family in Israel and it was all going to come through in his generation. That's "vaysheiv Yaakov b'eretz megurei aviv" Jacob settled in the land where everyone else was only a ger, right, "ger y'hiyeh zar'acha". Now he is going to settle down and he is going to make it happen, which our Sages say, "bikeish Yaakov leisheiv beshalva", Yaakov thought that he was going to settle down? "Kafatz alav rogzo shel Yosef" the troubles of Josef taught him otherwise.

It's almost as if it could have worked except that Josef brought him down to Egypt and (inaudible). So it's, sort of, in recognition of that that Jacob is saying here that his whole dreams have been shattered. He lived under an illusion. He thought he was going to be able to start establishing the Children of Israel, but in the end he realized that he was just a ger, the same way anybody else was and that he wasn't really able to settle down in Canaan. Josef sees this; this is Josef immediately after his brothers had said we've come to be geirim (residents) in Egypt. Josef sees Jacob say, oh, I have been a resident my whole life; I am a resident now. What a lousy ending to my life.

If you are Josef, you, sort of, feel a little bad, right? I mean, here you are, you are trying to, like, settle everybody in. You're trying to save them from famine, but your father doesn't like it, because your father feels that he hasn't really settled down. So what happens? "Vayoshev Yosef et aviv ve'et echav vayitein lahem achuza b'eretz Mitzrayim", look what's happening here. Josef gives them an achuza in Egypt.

What is an achuza? An achuza is not something that a resident has. An achuza is the deepest way that you can connect to land. It is an ancestral holding in Egypt. The resident never gets an ancestral holding in anything. "B'meitav ha'aretz b'Eretz Raamses", is it a coincidence that this happens the pasuk after Jacob's downer speech to the king of Egypt?

It doesn't seem so. It seems like Josef's interpretation of this is, all right, well, look, maybe we'll do a little bit better than residents. At least, you know, you'll settle in; it will be yours. You will have a place to be. It will really be like, you know, you're buying your house, Dad; it's not so bad. What is not being addressed is the fact that this isn't really making Jacob feel any better, because when Jacob was talking to

-- and then, really, everything else that happened is all about -- and the commentaries talk about this; how Josef takes everybody (inaudible) cities so that his brothers shouldn't feel bad that they are residents. So he dispossesses the native Egyptians, so that his brothers won't feel bad, feeling they have as much of a right to be in the land as anyone else.

What happens is that there is a slow process of the brothers and their families becoming more and more entrenched in Egypt. It ends with these words over here at the very end of this process "vayeishev Yisrael

b'Eretz Mitzrayim b'Eretz Goshen vayei'achzu bah" and they took hold of it "vayiferu vayirbu me'od" and they became very, very great in number there.

There is a dark problem with all of this. The problem with all of this is, you're not supposed to take an achuza in Egypt. That's not where you are supposed to be. This whole thing is misguided. That's really the background for Parshas Vayechi. That's what sets us Parshas Vayechi.

Now let's read Parshas Vayechi. "Vayechi Yaakov b'Eretz Mitzrayim Sheva-Esrei shanah", Jacob puts up with this for 17 years. At the end of 17 years he calls Josef. "Vayikrevu yemei Yisrael lamut vayikra l'beno l'Yosef" he calls Josef. "Vayomer lo im na matzati chein b'einecha sim na yadcha tachat yereichi v'asita imadi chessed v'emet, al na tikbereini b'Mitzrayim", I have a request for you. Whatever you do don't bury me in Egypt. "V'shachavti im avotai unesatani m'Mitzrayim u'kevartani bik'vuratam", bring me back and let me have my final resting place in Canaan.

"Vayomer anochi e'eseh kidevarecha" and he says, sure, I'll do it. We talked about this a couple years ago, but back then I said to you, if you were Jacob and Josef your trusted son had just said don't worry about it, dad; I'll take care of it. What's the next thing you would probably say? Okay, thanks. Don't you think that, okay, thanks, would be in order? That would be nice; okay, thanks, I really appreciate you honoring y request.

That's not what he says. "Vayomer hishav'ah li" he says swear to me that you will really do it. What do you mean, swear to me that you will really do it? He just said, I'll do it. "Vayishava lo" so he swore to him. What's that about? "Vayishtachu Yisrael al rosh hamittah." That doesn't seem like a nice thank you

-- swear to me, I don't trust you.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) bowing down?

Rabbi David Fohrman: So bowing then, maybe, was thank you. Rashi is very interesting on "al rosh hamittah". Rashi says "al rosh hamittah" -- let's read the davar acheir (a second commentary possibility) here. "Al rosh hamittah al shehayta mittato shleimah velo haya bah rasha", he's (inaudible) -- I'm not doing the first one. I'm just telling you the second one. The first one was "hafach atzmo letzad Shechina". The second one is "al rosh hamittah al shehayta mittato shleimah", he saw that his bed was complete. "Velo haya bah rasha", that all of his children were tzaddikim, none of them was a rasha (a wicked person), not even Josef. "Sheharei Yosef melech haya", because Josef was a great king; "ve'od shenishba lebein hagoyim", he was captured among the goyim (gentiles); "veharei hu omeid b'tzidko", but still he's a nice good Jew.

It always bothered me about this Rashi. It didn't always bother me about this Rashi, but it immensely bothered me about this Rashi that if you were Jacob, when do you think you first would have noticed that -- when so you think you would have said that blessing to G-d, baruch Hashem, Josef is still a nice frum Jew?

Audience Member: When he arrived in Egypt?

Rabbi David Fohrman: 17 years ago you would have said that when he first came to Egypt and he sees that Josef is still part of the family and he has his payos and (inaudible).

Audience Member: But he's bowing down now versus what set this whole thing in motion. Jacob was upset that he had to bow in that dream. Now Josef is bowing to his father and that, kind of, (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes. So what's interesting about this is -- (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, Jacob is bowing to Josef. (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: So here's the point. The point is that -- what Rashi and the Midrash is saying is that whatever relief Jacob may have felt 17 years ago is (inaudible) by the relief he feels now. This is his real relief. That he was willing to swear that he would take him back to Canaan. Why? If you look at all the commentaries, Nachmonides and others -- the way they understand this is that Jacob was putting himself in a very -- Josef was putting Jacob -- Jacob was putting Josef in a very precarious position vs. Pharaoh, because Josef is loyal to his Egyptian royalty.

If you know anything about British royalty, you notice that it's not just the loyalty that matters; it's the

-- the Queen Mother, right, you know. So the Queen Mother may not be the queen, but she is the Queen Mother. Jacob is the king' father, so the king's father is going to have a state funeral. It's going to be a big deal when Jacob dies. Aleph state funeral in Egypt comes with mummification -- as in fact he was mummified -- and everything else. He was afraid he would be (inaudible). It comes with the whole big -- you know, pyramids and a whole big thing. How is Pharaoh going to take it that we should have state funeral back in little old Canaan? I mean, that basically would be the equivalent of burying Ronald Reagan in the Dominican Republic.

It's a slap in the face of Egypt. Canaan is a third world country. Right, it's a loyalty test and Josef passes the loyalty test when he swears that he will do it and that's when he says, I know that he is a tzaddik.

Now recall, this is 17 years later. What happened the first time it was 17 years later? The first time it was 17 years later Jacob tested Josef's loyalty, but he never knew what happened and he was gone. He just disappeared and it's like it's happening again. Jacob is replaying it as another loyalty test. This time he passes and I know that you are loyal. On one level --

Audience Member: (Inaudible)? Audience Member: He didn't know.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true; well, Jacob knows except that he disappears and he never sees, kind of, what happened (inaudible). So he never really knows the end of what happened. It's like here --

Audience Member: (Inaudible) describe it, but here we have to take responsibility for his brothers and now (inaudible). He is going to keep them together. It's part of it. They are all going to go back and bury him in Eretz Canaan together.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. So here's what happens next. At this point, this is the set up for the blessings of Ephraim and Manasseh. "Vayageid l'Yaakov, vayomer hineh bin'cha Yosef ba eilecha, vayitchazak Yisrael vayeshev al hamittah. Vayomer Yaakov el Yosef, Kel Shakai nirah eilai beLuz b'Eretz Canaan, vayivarech oti. Vayomer eilai hineni maf'recha v'hirbiticha u'netaticha likehal amim, venatati et ha'aretz hazot lezaracha acharecha achuzat olam." He is saying God told me years ago that I am giving you Canaan as an ancestral holding. You set up Egypt as an ancestral holding, but God gave me Canaan as an ancestral holding. But you also just told me that you would bury me in Canaan, which means that you understand my deference towards this land and you are willing to do it on my terms even though it puts you at odds with the king.

Remember also the way we learned the Josef story, Pharaoh sets himself up as a father figure to Josef. Really it's a choice for Josef between which father do I follow? He is willing to follow his real father. At that point what does he say? "V'atah shnei banecha hanoldim lecha b'Eretz Mitzrayim", why does he mention the two children of yours that were born to you in Egypt, "ad bo'i eilecha Mitzrayma" before I came to Egypt. Now think about that, the two children Ephraim and Manasseh were named actually for the alienation that Josef felt from his father; "nashani Elokim et kol amali ve'et kol beit avi", is the name of Manasseh. God has caused me to forget all the travails in my father's house.

These children who were named for you forgetting about me, who were named for you building a new life in Egypt, now that you have agreed to bury me in Canaan, "li heim" I claim them as mine, which means I am accepting you. I am bringing you in to the boat. You are part of the family. Not only are they part of the family, they're mine, but "Efraim and Menashe k'Reuven v'Shimon yihiyu li." I don't see them as grandchildren. I see them as actually my children; they are really mine. "U'molad'techa asher holadeta achareihem lecha yihiyu, al shem acheihem yikar'u benachalatam", what he says basically at this point is that Ephraim and Manasseh become Josef, two tribes, which is, again, pi shenayim (times two) for the bechor (firstborn). He is rewarding Josef with being the bechor, because he has past the loyalty test.

On minute let me finish the point. Okay. Then you get to the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh. By the way -- okay. Fine, so on one level -- the larger point I am making is this. On one level, if someone were to ask to you, gee, it seems a little that this is 17 years -- that all this happened 17 years after seeing Josef again and the selling of Josef happens to be 17 years after seeing Josef the first time, after him being born. Is there any connection between the events? You would say, yes, it is -- the same way, from Jacob's perspective, that the selling of Josef was a test of Josef, so to 17 years -- like, every 17 years you see Josef, he is testing Josef. That's what it sounds like. It is another test of Josef.

All that is what we talked about two years ago, but what I want to talk to you about -- what I want to add to that is that I think that this whole story mirrors the selling of Josef on another level too. What I

want to argue to you -- and I am just going to say it now without proving it, which I usually don't do, but I'm going to do it anyway just to keep things simple. What I want to argue is that it is not just the case that these events parallel the selling of Josef in that Jacob is testing Josef, but I want to argue, they parallel the events in the selling of Josef also in that Jacob himself is tested. I want to argue that there are two tests going on. Jacob is testing Josef, but God is testing Jacob too. There is another test going on, much the same way that the selling of Josef was a test for Jacob.

If we would view the selling of Josef as a test for Jacob or the events leading up to the selling of Josef as a test for Jacob, what were they -- in what way was Jacob tested? What was Jacob doing that lead, ultimately, to the loss of Josef? It was favoritism; he was favoring one child over another. This is another test in which he is going to try to favor on child over another and Josef is going to try to stop it. Why do you think that Josef would try to stop it? Josef knows what happens when you try to favor one child over the other. So I want to argue that the story is also a test of Jacob and that in order to really understand the story, you need to understand it also in light of the selling of Josef.

You need to compare the blessings of Ephraim and Manasseh and the favoritism there to the favoritism in the selling of Josef and ask, what does it mean to Jacob? Did he just not learn? Is he failing again? Is he succeeding? What's happening in this story? So I want to look at it from that angle too. Yes?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) in Vayigash you will see that Jacob had (inaudible) when (inaudible) in Canaan, now we're (inaudible) the end of (inaudible). Then we look to Ephraim and Manasseh and he says that they were raised in Egypt (inaudible) Josef and they are able to obtain the (inaudible) qualities in them and that was why he gave them this blessing that we give to our children now. He knows that the Children of Israel are eventually going to be in galus (Diaspora) and the way to prepare (inaudible) with the way his children are (inaudible) in Diaspora. But Ephraim and Manasseh who have been raised in Diaspora -- they're the ones who have the ko'ach (strength) to withstand it and, therefore, he sees strengths in Ephraim that are needed.

So when you think he's being tested -- but he's learned also. He's learned some things from seeing his children, in the last 17 years, assimilate and he thinks that Ephraim and Manasseh -- Ephraim, maybe, more than Manasseh (inaudible) did not assimilate. Therefore, he's (inaudible) growing as if, like, you're standing up (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Audience Member: (Inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't think we know that. Audience Member: Well, it (inaudible) the end of Vayigash.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's just (inaudible). It doesn't say that they assimilated. Well, it says that they (inaudible).

(Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: But Josef was -- (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: But Josef is the one who gave them that. Josef is the one who gave them that. Audience Member: It was by (inaudible) too. (Inaudible) --

Audience Member: It says Vayigash. Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. (Interposing)

Audience Member: Jacob called (inaudible) in Josef, but, again, Jacob, before (inaudible) actual (inaudible) he called (inaudible) and he (inaudible) in his children as well. (Inaudible) I was right the first time, not that he failed in his childrearing. (Inaudible) and I see (inaudible) now.

Audience Member: Although, now the brothers -- because -- (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Gang, we only have a few more minutes. Just stick with me for a minute, okay? All right. As it turns out, when you read the story of -- when you read the blessings of Ephraim and Manasseh and you see a fascinating thing. There is Rashi right over here. When Jacob blesses Ephraim and places him before Manasseh he says the reason why he did it is, because he saw prophetically that Joshua would come from Ephraim. You see it here too and I think that the Midrash saw the connections between Joshua's war against Amalek and this story. It is saying that in this story he sees Joshua. He sees that Joshua is going to be the one "sheyanchil et ha'aretz veyilamed Torah l'Yisrael", he is going to be the one to give possession of the land.

Remember, what is Jacob thinking about throughout this whole process? He is thinking about his connection to Eretz Canaan. Well, who is going to be the child that is going to manifest the connection between Eretz Canaan? Who is going to live the dream that Jacob had? Jacob's dream really was to be Joshua. "Vayeishev Yaakov b'eretz megurei aviv b'Eretz Canaan", was, I am going to be Joshua; I am going to be the one to conquer the land. I am going to be the one to take possession of the land.

Ultimately it was Joshua, so when he puts his right hand on Ephraim, he is doing it, because he sees Joshua as the living embodiment of what he wants to be, which, if you think about it is what the firstborn always is. What a firstborn is what I see myself in the next generation. I see somebody who is taking the role that I want to take in the next generation.

You see, Ephraim is, sort of, taking that role, but the beginning of that role, I want to argue, is also the battle against Amalek. Joshua can't be the one (inaudible) -- Joshua can't be the one to take us into Israel unless he's also the one who battles Amalek. There is something about that that is connected. Let's continue a little bit more.

Here is where I want to show you something. I want to show you something which I think is fascinating. Well, let me back up for one moment. The selling of Josef -- when you think about the selling of Josef in Jacob's life -- when we think about the selling of Josef in Jacob's life -- I argued to you that the selling of Josef is payback for Jacob for -- it's in a long line of goats in coats. It's payback for the first goats in coats story. In other words, Jacob tricked his father with goats in coats over the bechor (right of firstborn). His brother then (inaudible) him with goats in coats (inaudible) and he thinks that he's the firstborn.

I believe it's more than that. Jacob, in his original trickery of his father -- excuse me -- when he goes to Esau and he (inaudible) Esau to selling him the birthright -- "michra kayom et bechorat'cha li" sell me today your birthright. Well, "michra kayom et bechorat'cha", is, kind of, odd; sell me today your birthright, that Josef's own child, his own firstborn was sold out from under him. It's almost like in repayment for the words, sell me your bechor -- Jacob's bechor was sold out from under his feet. Like we said before, just as Esau, in that story, after he sold his right of firstborn, sat down to eat bread -- after the man who sells the right of firstborn sits down to eat bread -- in the selling of Josef, after the brothers sell the firstborn, they sit down to eat bread.

So it really sounds like everything that's happening in the selling of Josef is payback at some level for Jacob's deception of his own father. What does this mean? Here is what I want to argue to you. Right now I am going to tell you the theory and then I am going to prove to you the theory. The theory is, don't you think it would make sense that if the selling of Josef was payback for Jacob's deception of his father and his brother and the whole Amalek is really Amalek's response to Jacob's deceiving his brother and his father in that story. Don't you think it would make sense that the man who combats Amalek successfully should have to relate to these stories?

More than that, if you think about what is going on in Jacob's life right now, in Vayechi -- what is going on in his life? He's had Josef back in his life for 17 years. Not only has he had Josef in his life back for 17 years, he is now going to crown Josef, finally, at the end of this as his firstborn. He is going to go and he's going to give these blessings to different children. Don't you think that is, sort of, the closing of the circle? In other words, Jacob lost everything; he lost Josef, because of what he did to his own father. But now he has Josef back and not only does he have -- after all those years and after all that pain he finally has Josef back and he is finally going to do for Josef what he wants to do, which is making him the firstborn and to bless his children. This is really the closing of that circle.

It's interesting that Joshua should come from Ephraim. It's almost like what is happening is that Jacob is basically saying (inaudible), I paid my dues. You know, I have gone through it all. I have had a terrible life these past, you know, 21 years, but it's over and I have Josef back. Because it's over, the child that is

born from this, Ephraim, is going to be the one who is going to be able to battle Esau, because Esau in the guise of Amalek comes to me and, basically, says you tricked me. The only thing that I can say -- the moral leg that I have to stand on is, yes, and I lost Josef and after all those years I finally got him back.

Therefore, it's with that leg to stand on that I can say, yes, I tricked you, but there was more to that story. I paid for that and because I paid for that, I can now confront you again.

Now, with that in mind, let's read through the story of Ephraim and Manasseh, keeping in mind echoes that take us back strangely to the story of Jacob and Esau. It shouldn't surprise us that we -- this is the proof of the pudding. As you listen to the story of Ephraim and Manasseh you are going to hear echoes of every event in Jacob's life where he confronts Esau, because this is the culmination of his (inaudible) to Esau. It's more than that. You'll see what I mean; let's read.

Audience Member: You could write a book.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, one day. Okay. "Vayikrevu yemei Yisrael lamut vayikra l'beno l'Yosef", what does this word "lamut" remind you of?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right, exactly. That word "lamut" -- the very first time that "lamut" appears in the Torah is when Esau thinks he is going to die in the very first encounter with Jacob, when he says "hinei anochi holech lamut". I am going to die, why do I need this right of firstborn? The second time in the Torah that you have "lamut" is right over here in "Vayechi" when, "vayikrevu yemei Yisrael lamut", when now Israel (Jacob) is going to die. It's taking us back to his very first encounter with Esau, because all of these encounters are setting up this final culminating blessing of Ephraim. What is happening? It's the working through -- this is the culmination. This is the working through of all of that stuff with Esau.

Let's read a little bit more. "Vayomer Yisrael el Yosef, hineh anochi meit", what does that remind you of with Jacob right over here? Towards the end of the section we find the next -- here, here -- I'm sorry, let me go back. The first time you have "hinei anochi" in the Torah is, "hinei anochi holech lamut", when Esau says I am going to die. The next time you have it is when Jacob says to Josef, "hinei anochi meit, vehaya Elokim imachem v'heishiv etchem el eretz avotechem. Va'ani natati lecha", in the blessings of Ephraim and Manasseh. In the beginning of the blessings you have "lamut" and in the end of the blessings you have "hinei anochi meit"; it's all coming off of these words "hinei anochi holech lamut".

Let's keep on going. "vehaya Elokim imachem v'heishiv etchem el eretz avotechem" -- Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, good. The next one is "hishav'ah li, vayishava lo", remember that, when Jacob forces Josef to swear. When is the other time that Jacob forced someone to swear? When he forced Esau to swear that he was going to sell his right of firstborn to him and it's exactly the same words.

"Hishav'ah li kayom, vayishava lo", and he swears to him. It all goes back to that first story. I mean, is this a coincidence? It's all going back.

Let's read a little bit more. This is the first time that "hishav'ah li" followed by "vayishava lo" appears in Tana"ch. Here is the only other time in Tana"ch that you have "hishav'ah li, vayishava lo". These are the only times in Tana"ch that this combination ever appears. Let's keep on reading. "Vayishtachu Yisrael al rosh hamittah", what does that remind you of? It reminds you of another encounter with Esau. "Vayishtachu artza sheva pe'amim", when Jacob bows to the ground seven times before Esau, when re reconciles with him. It's almost, like, what allows him to bow and realize (inaudible) the loyal son Josef? Because he reconciled with Esau. There was another part to that story. I didn't just deceive you; I also reconciled with you at the end. I bowed before you. I bowed before you.

What about this? "Vayar Yisrael et b'nei Yosef vayomer mi eileh. Vayomer Josef el aviv banai hem asher natan li Elokim bazeh", Jacob said, who are these children and Josef said, they are my children that God has given me in this. He said those same words to Esau. Esau -- "vayar entire hanashim ve'et hayiladim, vayomer mi eileh", Esau said who are these people? "Vayomer hayiladim asher chanan Elokim et av'decha", they are the children that God has given me. Did you hear that? It's the exact same words. It's almost as if the Torah is saying what allows Jacob to be able to look upon his grandchildren, the children of Josef? It's because he was able to reconcile with his brother and be able to show his brother his children. Because he was able to show his brother his children, he was able, later on, to look upon -- to get Josef back and to lay eyes upon his grandchildren from Josef.

I'm sorry. There are only two times we have "mi eileh" in Tana"ch. "Mi eileh" with Jacob and Esau. "Mi eileh" with Jacob and Joseph.

Moving on. "Vayomer Ya'akov" , "Kach na et birchati'". Jacob had said to Esau at that moment, take my blessing. Now, " -- vayomer kachem -- " the very next thing he says, after the blue, is the purple. "Kach na et birchati", take my blessing. The very next thing he says in Jacob and Joseph, after the blue, is the purple. " -- vayomer kachem na eilai va'avaracheim." It's a play off of those words. "Take them to me, and I will bless them." What's the Torah saying? Why does he have the right to bless these children?

Only because he was able to say to Esau, "Take my blessing". Only because he reconciled with him.

Here's the "Ve'einei Yisrael kavdu mizoken,". Okay. So, well, what does that remind you of? "Ve'einei Yisrael kavdu mizoken," and now Israel's eyes are very, what? Think Jacob and Esau. It's Isaac. It's the second encounter. That's right. It's when Isaac's eyes are not "kavdu mizoken" but when he's old and " -- vatichena einav meirot;" he can't see because he's too old, "lo yuchal lirot". Now, here's, and -- here's the kicker; here's the question. Did Jacob succeed now; or, did Jacob fail?

The granddaddy of all the problems was not the sale of Joseph. It was the -- Jacob's deception of his own father. When Jacob deceives his own father, what was he doing? Isaac had wanted to bless a certain child. Jacob had said, that's not the right child to bless. Jacob had then deceived his father. Rather than go to his father, Jacob deceived a father who couldn't see.

Now, look what's happening in this story. "Ve'einei Yisrael kavdu mizoken," who can't see? Jacob can't see. Do you understand? It's not the same story as the first story. It's the opposite. In the first story, a child tries to deceive a father who can't see. Here, now, that same child, can't see. But, see that same child who can't see, wants to bless one child more than the other. He can't see. But, can he see?

Audience Member: Very clearly.

Rabbi David Fohrman: He can see very clearly. He can see more clearly than anyone else. Because, when he says, "No, I'm going to bless Ephraim first", in other words, no "yadati b'ni, yadati"? I know; but I know what's going to happen. My eyes are set on Canaan. That's the background of this whole story.

This is going to be the child who's going to make Canaan. This is the firstborn. And, he's right.

It's the other way around. A child does not have the right to deceive his blind father; when the blind father wants to bless a certain child. But a blind father, who can see with his mind better than with his eyes, surely does have the right to decide who he wants to bless. That's what Jacob is doing now. Jacob is taking the correct prerogative now. But, here's the interesting thing. When he blesses them, here, listen to the blessing. Right?

Here, you hear it here also. " -- vayageish otam eilav, vayishak lahem, vayechabeik lahem." What is that? When he kisses them, and he holds them, what does this remind you of? Again, the reconciliation with Esau. Listen to these words. "Vehu avar lifneihem; vayishtachu artzah sheva pe'amim, ad gishto ad achiv. Vayaratz Eisav likrato vayechabkeihu vayipol al tzavvarav vayyishakeihu vayivku." Right.? It's the same words. "Vayigash", "vayishak", "vayichabeik"; you understand? It's -- again, what gives him the right to do this? Because he was able to make up with Esau, he can again do this. At least according to Rashi.

" Re'o panecha lo pillalti; vehinnei hera oti Elokim, gam et zarecha." What does this remind you of? "Re'o panecha lo pillalti;" I can't even believe I'm seeing your face, Joseph; and now I'm seeing your children. That exuberance at the end of his life, he can finally see his grandchildren; again, in the reconciliation story. Look at the bottom, " -- al kein ra'iti panecha kirot penei Elokim vatirtzeini." This is what he said to Esau. Seeing your face is like seeing the Face of God. Look at these words. "Ra'iti panecha kirot...Elokim". "Re'o panecha...hera...Elokim,". It's all a play on words. Everything is going back to the reconciliation story.

But, here's what I want to leave you with. By the way, look at these words, also. " Sikeil et yadav,". What does it remind you of? "Ka'asher shacholti, shacholti." More than that, the original "ka'asher shacholti, shacholti" wasn't when he said it. It's actually when Rebecca said it. Rebecca said, remember what Rebecca said? Rebecca said, "run away," to Jacob. "Because, why should I lose my two children on one day; because of this terrible sibling rivalry?" The word for "lose" two children was also, "shikeil." What she said was, " -- lama eshkal gam sheneichem yom echad." Why should I lose you both on one day?" What's happening -- she used those words to signify the "loss of children due to sibling rivalry."

He is engaged in an act now, which could be interpreted as perpetuating sibling rivalry. But he is not afraid of what she was afraid of. He uses that word, "sikeil et yadav," when he crosses his hands, to

perhaps perpetuate that sibling rivalry. He's using that word, but he is not afraid of what she was afraid of.

Joseph is afraid of that. "vayei'ra be'einav;" Joseph doesn't want to see it. Because Joseph sees it happening again. What I want to argue is, this is the test for him. Right? He was testing Joseph, but it's also the test for him. Can you do it right? I think he does do it right. He does it right because he has the prerogative.

Also, however, does -- with Jacob and Esau, Jacob and Esau got two different blessings; that put them at war with one another. Think about the blessings of Ephraim and Manasseh. What blessing do they get? Do they get two different blessings? They get the exact same blessing. It's the exact same blessing.

And what is the blessing, by the way? "Yevarechecha Hashem veyishmerecha. Ya'eir Hashem panav eilecha vichunneka. Yissa Hashem panav eilecha," what are the last words? " -- veyaseim lecha Shalom." It's a blessing of peace. That's all he wants for his children. He wants peace between them. That's his blessing. " -- veyaseim lecha Shalom." Give peace. Right?

It's interesting that, if you go to the sale of Joseph, where does the word Shalom appear in the sale of Joseph story? "Velo yoch'lu dabro leShalom." They were so angry with Joseph, they couldn't even speak in peace. At the end of Jacob's life, his blessing is that God should give you peace. That's his blessing for his children.

Not only that, when he blesses them he says something else. He says, "Hamalach hago'eil oti mikol ra, yevareich et hane'arim, veyikarei bahem sh'mi, vesheim avotai, Avraham veYitzchak;" what were the brothers worried about with Joseph? What was Joseph worried about with the brothers?

What we argued about way back when, was that when the brothers were throwing Joseph out of the family with their selling of Joseph. It was another gireish Yishmael (throwing out of Ishmael). They were throwing him out of the family. The worry of one side of the family about the other is, maybe you're dispossessing us. Maybe we're not even part of the family. Maybe you're going to be the one to carry everything on, and we're nothing.

Listen, however, to the blessing he's giving to both Ephraim and Manasseh. "Veyikarei bahem sh'mi," both of them will carry my name. and not just my name, " -- vesheim avotai, Avraham veYitzchak;" and Jacob. Right? What?

(Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- of Abraham and Isaac. (Interposing)

Audience Member: It's the same (inaudible) every time. We know what you mean.

Rabbi David Fohrman: At least it should be. (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: It's here that, in essence, he's proclaiming the Firstborn right.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes. He's proclaiming the Firstborn right. He's saying that Joseph is the firstborn; and proclaiming that Ephraim is the firstborn. What's happening is, that the blessing he's giving them is a blessing of peace. He's giving them the same blessing. He's reassuring them that they will both carry his name. Yet, he's recognizing the reality. Because you can see the reality. They will be different.

One child is going to take you into the land. That's the child who is going to be me in the next generation. He, the father who can't see, but who can see, has the prerogative; has the right. This, I think is Jacob passing the test.

What Jacob can do is -- he is redoing everything that he did wrong the first time around. This is the culmination of the sale of Joseph. He's got Joseph back. He has been through all that. He only has the right to do this because he is reconciled with his brother; with Esau. And, the very first thing that got them into all this trouble, with his own deception of his father over who the firstborn is, he's redoing that same event now. Except he's doing it the right way, where there's this danger of sibling rivalry. He's not allowing it to happen. He is favoring one side over the other in a way that does not create rivalry.

In fact, Ephraim and Manasseh don't have rivalry, throughout history. He actually succeeds. I want to argue that it's the culmination of the story.

This is why Joshua can battle Amalek. Why can Joshua battle Amalek? Because, who is Amalek? Amalek's whole power is dispossession. Amalek's whole power is unreconciled anger over what Jacob did to Esau.

Who represents reconciliation in all of that? Joshua represents reconciliation. Joshua, the scion of Ephraim; is the child who is born of reconciliation. He's the child that is born of all of it. He's the child that comes after the end of the sale of Joseph. After all the payback, he's the child that comes from the working out of all of this. He stands for -- he undercuts Amalek's whole premise.

That's why he can battle against Amalek successfully. That's why, I think -- it's the answer to the mystery of the puzzle. That's why you hear, in Joshua's battle against Amalek, the echoes of the blessings of Ephraim and Manasseh. That's why he can succeed. Okay, folks. That's what I have to say.

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right. Welcome back everybody. It's nice to see you. Even though it's the middle of the summer, thanks for coming by. Today should be the final installment of our Amalek series. You can never really trust me when I say that, but I think that it may well be true. I want to end with a final look at another side of the coin of the issues which we discussed our last time together.

Last time we were talking about ways to combat Amalek and when we did, we looked at Joshua and we were pondering why it might be that Joshua is the first one to really battle Amalek. We talked about this interesting kind of train of connections between Joshua coming from the tribe of Ephraim and the original blessings to Ephraim and to Manasseh. We argued, essentially, that if you look at the (inaudible) of Ephraim and Manasseh, there are a series of parallels that link you back to the Jacob and Esau stories.

It seems like Jacob's ability to bless Ephraim is in many ways the culmination of his various confrontations with Esau, and signify his ability to overcome perhaps his earlier failures in his relationship with Esau, on many different levels. It's the culmination of the sale of Joseph, he lost Joseph, and he is now getting Joseph back, as it were. I'm not going to go over the rest of it, but you can re- listen to last week's lecture to get that in completion, or three weeks ago I think it was. Actually, we were away for two weeks.

We argued on many levels, at least three different levels, those lessons were a culmination of the Jacob and Esau story and in a certain way, were a mirror image of that story. It's Jacob taking the reins and favoring one child over the other, but doing it in a way that would work instead of a way that wouldn't work as happened earlier in his own life.

What I want to do today, so in a certain way, we might summarize that by saying that what the blessings of Ephraim and Manasseh signify is Jacob having overcome the challenges of his confrontations with his brother Esau, and therefore, in a certain way, it's not surprising that the fruits of those blessings, in particular the child Ephraim who is favored in this blessing, which is Joshua, would be the one to carry on the battle against Amalek because if Amalek is the part of Esau that will never reconcile with Jacob, the moral leg to stand on in confronting him would come from Ephraim. Any child of Ephraim is a reminder of Jacob's success in overcoming those challenges, and therefore, that's sort of the moral leg to stand on when confronting Amalek.

What I want to discuss today is one other side of that feature, which is that, and really what I'm doing today is just putting together stuff which you already know, or you already know if you've been here with me for a while, and I'm actually going to take us on a review of some of the material which we covered way back when in the winter when we were studying the Scroll of Esther because really what I'm going to argue today about is in a certain way the bridge between the book I wrote, The Queen You Thought You Knew, and the Amalek stories.

One of the things that always puzzled me was that kind of I was writing about certain things in that book, I couldn't figure out how it related to the battle against Amalek. There are certain parallel themes there, but they seem to be disconnected. Now, they no longer seem to be disconnected, it seems to make

sense. I want to describe to you how it makes sense. Audience Member: Do we get credit in your book?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Do you get credit in my book? You got credit in my last book. Audience Member: Yes, we did.

Rabbi David Fohrman: We mentioned your group. The question which I want you to consider is this, which is that if the battle against Amalek historically in Tanach begins with Joshua, in Tanach the battle against Amalek historically in Tanach ends with Esther. If it begins with Ephraim, it ends with Benjamin. Esther is from the tribe of Benjamin. Actually, Esther is not the only one from the tribe of Benjamin who confronts Amalek, also Saul, her great-great-great-grandfather who also confronted Amalek and failed in many ways.

The question I want to ask is, last week we talked about why Ephraim can be successful in confronting Amalek; I want to discuss today why Benjamin could be successful in confronting Amalek, what Benjamin adds to the picture. Again, just looking at Saul and Esther. Well, if I did this right, it really should take more than one session. I have to do this quick, so we'll try to do this in one session.

Let's talk about Saul for a moment. First of all, the battles between Saul and Amalek, and Esther and Amalek, with Saul and Amalek on the one hand and Esther and Amalek on the other hand, seem to be connected to each other. These are not two disconnected points of Tanach. The text goes out of its way to show you the connections between them. I've talked about this before so I am just going to briefly mention these again.

One of the connections appears, first of all, if you always wonder why it appears that the Scroll of Esther goes out of its way to tell you how the Jews did not take shalal, didn't take booty, from the battle. That's really referring back to the failure of Saul and his battle, to abide by that restriction. They took booty.

Esther is not going to make the same mistake twice.

One of the more elegant examples of the connections which the Midrash itself picks up on, is when Memucan tells the king that in his advice to depose Vashti, he says that we're going to get rid of Vashti, "u'malchutah yitein hamelech lire'utah hatovah mimenah," we're going to give her queenship to a colleague that's greater than she. Of course, that language is quoted from the Book of Samuel.

"U'malchutah yitein hamelech lire'utah hatovah mimenah," her queenship will be given to a colleague who is greater than she, is almost a direct quote from what Saul heard from the mouth of Samuel, when Samuel told him that he would no longer be king. He says, "kara Hashem et mamlechet Yisrael me'alecha," God has torn away today the kingship of the Jewish People from you. "Kara Hashem et mamlechut Yisrael mei'alecha hayom u'netanah lerei'acha hatov mimeka," He's going to give it to your rei'ah, your colleague, who is greater than you.

For some reason, Haman seems to be quoting this language coming from Samuel. Why would Haman be quoting from Samuel? If you do the math, it makes perfect sense, right? Who is Haman? Where does he come from? Haman is Haman the Agagite. Who was it that Saul failed to kill in that war? It was actually Agag, a great-great-grandfather of Haman. Of course, Saul himself is the great-great- grandfather of Esther.

What happens is we are going back to an earlier confrontation between these two family members, Agag on the one hand and Saul on the other. They are the antecedents or the progenitors of Esther on the one hand and of Haman on the other.

Essentially, what the Midrash learns from this is that anybody that says that God doesn't give second chances doesn't know what he's talking about, because with the same language that God took away the kingship from Saul, he delivered the kingship back into the hands of Saul's descendent, to give her a second chance to finish that job. Haman unwittingly, in getting rid of Vashti, is actually vacating the throne and allowing -- for who is that queen who is greater than she? That is going to be Esther. Esther is going to get a chance to redo it.

Really what I want to argue -- this is the piece which really should take us longer than today -- is that that connection between Saul and Esther runs very deep. It's not just that one failed to take booty and one didn't, one's war was unsuccessful and one's war was successful. I want to argue that at a very deep level, there was something that was a potential within Benjamin that could allow Benjamin to successfully confront Amalek. That potential existed with Saul but was squandered, and that potential was actualized by Esther. There is something going on which allows Benjamin to confront Amalek and it beats in the heart of the Saul story and it beats again in the heart of the Esther story. What is that something?

Let's talk about Benjamin for a second. What do we know about Benjamin that's sort of unique in a certain way? Yes.

Audience Member: He's the only one who didn't bow before Esau.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. One thing that you know about Benjamin is that Benjamin is the only one who doesn't bow before Esau. Now, if we think about this in terms of the talk I gave three weeks ago, what that does is it sort of sets up Benjamin as almost the polar opposite of Joshua in a certain way. What I mean by that is the following.

One of the arguments I made to you was that insofar as there's Joshua just coming from Ephraim and Ephraim represents the working out of Jacob's issues with Esau, one key part of that working out of the issues with Esau is that if you remember the language that we saw back in this PowerPoint over here, as we go back to all this language, the parallels which you see over and over again a little bit further on, here you go, "vayishtachu Yisrael al rosh hamitah," the parallels are going to take you back to the reconciliation story between Jacob and Esau.

Israel bows. "Vayishtachu Yisrael al rosh hamitah" reminds us of Jacob bowing to Esau, "vayishtachu artzah sheva pe'amim". Later on, "vayar Yisrael et bnei Yosef vayomer mi eileh. Vayomer Yosef el aviv banai heim asher natan li Elokim bazeh." That exchange when Israel sees the children of Joseph and says who are they and Joseph says the children that God gave us, that exchange again reminds us of the reconciliation story when those very words were spoken by Esau to Jacob and Jacob repeats it to Esau, "Vayar et hanashim ve'et hayeladim vayomer mi eileh," Esau says to Jacob who are these children? "Vayomar hayeladim asher chanan Elokim et avdecha," those are the children that God gave to me.

This stuff keeps on going further and further. A little bit further, "Vayomer kaHashem na'ali babarchem. Vayomer Yaakov kasna et birchati." Basically, what the Torah seems to be saying is that the reason why Jacob has the ability to do this again and to see the children of Joseph and to ultimately get Joseph back is because when he tricked Esau, that wasn't the end of the story. There was the third story, there was this reconciliation story. That reconciliation story, that bowing of Jacob before Esau, gives Jacob a moral leg to stand on in the future in confrontations with Esau.

If that's the message of Ephraim so to speak, or the blessings of Ephraim, that Jacob's reconciliation with Esau gives Jacob a leg to stand on in confronting Esau, then Benjamin represents the polar opposite of this. Benjamin is the one child who never bowed before Esau. He wasn't born yet when Jacob confronted Esau. It's not just that way back when Benjamin was not born yet when everyone bowed before Esau. It's more than that.

When else do we have, historically, the confrontation between Amalek and Benjamin when Benjamin will not bow? Of course, the answer is the story of Esther. That's what the Book of Esther is all about. Mordecai's stubborn insistence that he will not bow before Amalek when everyone else says this is a really good idea, this is a really good idea, and he says no. He is going to not do it. It seems like it's a little bit of a shitah (method) so to speak, a little bit of a bedavka, right? I don't know how you translate these in English.

Audience Member: A method, a direction of thought. Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. It's something which he is doing on purpose. In other words, it is not something which is happening by happenstance, it's a point. He's standing on ceremony, so to speak. This is something which Benjamin pointedly will not do. This idea even goes back in a certain way to the blessings of Benjamin themselves. If you go back to the blessing which Jacob gives Benjamin, "Binyamin ze'ev yitraf baboker yochal ad ula'erev yichalek shalal," so this is the blessing that Jacob gives Benjamin. Benjamin is like a preying wolf, a wolf that preys, that tears apart its prey. "Baboker yochal ad," in the morning it will eat to satiety, "ula'erev yichalek shalal," and in the evening it will divide up its spoils.

Now, this is a little strange because you wouldn't think of a wolf really dividing its spoils, but the Midrash actually talks about this, and the Midrash says "baboker yochal ad ula'erev yichalek shalal."

U'la'erev yichalek shalal." You'll never believe what the Midrash thinks "ula'erev yichalek shalal" refers to. Anyone want to guess? I'll show you the Midrashim. There are like 15 of them. They all say the same thing.

Here it is. "Baboker yochal ad;" "Bayom hahu natan hamelech Achashveirosh le'Esther haMalkah et beit Haman." "U'la'erev yichalek shalal;" "vatasem Esther et Mordechai al beit Haman." Strange?

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, no. It's all in the Scroll of Esther. It's a prophetic illusion according to the Midrash to the times of the Scroll of Esther, where in the Scroll of Esther, what are the spoils that Benjamin will divide? The spoils that Esther and Mordecai got from Haman's household when Ahasuerus gave them the house of Haman. Now, what's strange about this is that Saul lost his kingship for taking spoils from Amalek and what the Midrash is saying is that even in the successful war against Amalek there were some spoils taken, just not enough to make them lose the battles completely.

In other words, they avoided all the spoils but the one kind of kosher thing they got was Ahasuerus still did give Haman's mansion to Mordecai and Esther, and that is the kiyum (existence) of this, so to speak. If you kind of add the picture up and say okay, who is Benjamin in the relationship to Amalek? He is the guy who will not bow to Esau, who was not born when Jacob bowed to Esau, and later on, at all costs, will not bow, even though it seems foolhardy. He's the guy who, in the times of Saul, insisted on taking booty from Amalek and even in the times of Esther, when they knew that they couldn't do it, but still they got something. You know what I mean? That's what the Midrash seems to be saying.

To me, what Benjamin is, is you almost see Benjamin emerging as a kind of kanai, as a kind of zealot, in reference to Amalek, basically saying I am not going to give one inch. The propensity of Benjamin is basically saying I will give no quarter to Amalek and it's a very extreme view. I will not bow, I will show no recognition, and they're no different than anybody else and if I conquer them I have the right to take the spoils. If you take that energy too far, you lose, because you can't take the spoils (inaudible). What is that energy and why should it be effective? Here's what I want to argue.

Let's talk about not bowing. It's strange because on the one hand you would say that's bad, because the whole reason why Ephraim can succeed against Amalek is because Jacob did reconcile with Esau and Amalek won't remember that so that's the one thing that gives Jacob the moral right to stand on in confronting Esau. Let's think about it now for a moment. Who really is Amalek and what's the difference between Amalek and Esau?

Remember, Amalek is not all of Esau. It's only part of Esau. So, what's really the difference between Amalek and Esau? With Esau, we actually did succeed in reconciling. That reconciliation mattered and

later on there's more or less whole peace between Jacob and Esau throughout history; right? The Christian Church, the Western world, Roman and all that, right? I mean, not the greatest friends of the Jews, and all that, but not the worst enemies of the Jews.

It depends, you know? Right now the Christian Evangelicals are Israel's greatest friends. On the hand, you kind of never know. Maybe they just want to wait for the Messiah to come and take over, but okay. You're never quite sure, but at least they're not organizing to wipe out every man, woman and child who they --

Audience Member: (Inaudible) the Crusades --

Rabbi David Fohrman: But even in the Crusades, no, no. Pogroms, yes. Violence, yes. Organized wiping out of every man, woman, and child; no. Hitler and Haman are the only two times you have that and they are not products really of Christian anti-Semitism. You could say they're relatives of Christian anti-Semitism, but that's not Christian anti-Semitism. They're actually coming from a different place.

Hitler was coming from a racial place, from a different place. It was not the standard blood libel. It wasn't just Crusades; we're going to convert to Jesus or something.

My point just is that there's been a kind of somewhat of a détente between us and Edom, but not between us and Amalek. What's the difference? I think the difference is that again, Amalek is as we said before, the hardened position of Esau vis-à-vis the Jews, that part of Esau that will not reconcile with Jacob. Why won't they reconcile? This goes back to a few months back, when we talked about this.

Basically, the argument that we made is that they cannot afford to reconcile. Why can't they afford to reconcile?

They cannot afford to remember. Their memory almost plays tricks on them because they cannot afford to remember the reconciliation narrative. Why? What I tried to argue is that this goes back to --

Audience Member: Eliphaz.

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. "Vayivez be'einav," for example. Remember Amalek comes to -- the words which drive Haman's genocide are "vayivez be'einav lishlo'ach yad beMordechai levado." It was too petty for him to --"vayivez be'einav." Those words when he decided he's not just going to kill Mordecai, he's going to kill everybody. Those words "vayivez be'einav" really come from Esau.

The only other time you have vayivez in the Torah is "vayivez Esav et habechorah," when Esau debases the birthright. It's almost, I argue, is that there is a double entendre in that verse "vayivez be'einav." The alternative way to read it is that the earlier vayivez, i.e. Esau's debasement of the birthright was be'einav, was dancing before the eyes of Haman. He couldn't stop thinking about Esau and Esau's squandering the birthright and that fuels the genocidal hatred against the Jews.

The argument in short was that every interaction that Amalek has ever had with a father, with any father, has ended badly for them. There's a lot of sublimated father hatred. When you hate your father,

it's not an easy thing. Most people can't really consciously hate their father, because their father is their father. When you're angry at your father, it's a very dangerous thing. The hatred, you don't want to recognize it, and Amalek is angry at every father he's ever had. Eliphaz, he's dispossessed from Eliphaz. He's the one child that is not called after the name Eliphaz.

Esau squandered the birthright. "Vayivez Esav et habechorah". Isaac, the grandfather, the great- grandfather, blessed the wrong guy. God, the ultimate Father figure, is favoring the Jews instead of him. For him, it's all unfair, it's all unfair, and the hatred against father, which I think God recognizes in "milchamah le'Hashem ba'Amalek midor dor," which is that there's this saddle, there's this anger which will not be satiated.

The only kosher person, we argued, that Amalek can deflect any anger towards is Jacob. Jacob did do some bad things to Esau. He is part of the picture. He is not the only piece of the picture, but for Amalek he is the only piece of the picture. The only other piece of the picture is fathers, and therefore, Amalek cannot afford to deal with the reconciliation, to accept the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau, because if he does, it is going to force him where? He's lost the only outlet for that anger. It forces him to channel that anger where it belongs. The only place it can go is towards fathers and he doesn't want to do that.

There's a strong bias against accepting any type of reconciliation between Esau. He just can't do it. If that's the case, if we're right about that, then let's talk about Benjamin. Let's talk about bowing. You see, is it a good thing or is it a bad thing to bow before Amalek? Is it a good thing or a bad thing to bow before Edom?

(Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: When is bowing ever a good thing? What I argued three weeks ago is that bowing was a good thing. Bowing, when he does something wrong, and you admit he did something wrong, bowing can be a good thing. When Jacob bowed before Esau --

Audience Member: (Inaudible) because you're not supposed to bow before anybody but before Hashem.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Some would argue that. I'm not arguing with that. I'm arguing that Jacob bowing before Esau was not a bad thing. The text seems to say that that gave him the ability to bless his children -- Ephraim -- it seems to say that. However, that's only good with Edom. Bowing before Esau makes sense in our relationships with Edom. It doesn't make sense in our relationships with Amalek.

Why? Because if the whole point of bowing before Edom is an attempt to reconcile and to say I was wrong, that works for Edom who can accept that reconciliation and put it behind him. It doesn't work for Amalek.

Amalek will never accept reconciliation no matter what we do. They can't. Now, if you put yourself in Amalek's shoes, think you're Amalek for a moment. Actually put yourself in Amalek's shoes, and you see a Jews or the Jews bowing before you, how are you going to interpret that?

Audience Member: That they're afraid of you.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. You cannot interpret it as it's meant, which is an attempt to reconcile because you can't accept reconciliation. There's only one other possible interpretation of bowing. What does bowing mean to you now? It means weakness. It means subservience. That is Benjamin's perspective of it. Benjamin's perspective is I will not bow, and it's Benjamin who is the zealot in the relationship with Edom, so to speak, who will not bow, who in a certain way, complements Ephraim and allows, I want to argue, Benjamin to successfully confront Amalek. It may be true that you have the moral edge because you bowed, but if you bowed before Amalek, to them that's just weakness.

There's this interesting kind of right and left where one hand pulls forward, one hand pulls back. It also reminds me, and I think that it's only ultimately Benjamin who has that final capability to be able to (inaudible) with Amalek and defeat Amalek because they will not show that weakness and it seems like weakness. It's interpreted as weakness in the context of the battle against Amalek.

I hasten to add over here, even though I really usually don't get involved in contemporary ramifications of this stuff, but if you think about it in contemporary terms, to me I can't help thinking about the Arab- Israeli struggle with this as well, in the sense that in reality, if you think about our struggle with our Arab cousins, the reality is as much as -- it's a very inflamed situation. In inflamed situations people tend to take extreme divisions.

I believe it's either we believe that we're essentially as right in our battle with our presence. It is a complicated story. Our record has not been entirely clean. Their record certainly hasn't been clean. There are nuances in the struggle which is one the reasons why, I think that even if we think as we -- there's a video about winning the war of PR on campuses, for example, and there's a lot of media and there's various foundations who are putting out films or attempting to try to portray Israel in a good light. I think that when you do that you need to be careful because the audience is sophisticated and if you put together a film which does nothing but seem like a rah-rah peace for Israel it's simply not going to be effective on college campuses because it just seems like okay, but what's the other side of the story.

You actually have to create a nuance of these that tries as honestly as possibly to look at the narrative and you know if we did do things wrong in Deir Yassin so we did things wrong in Der Yassin. But you really have to look at it as a realistic kind of thing. What I will say is that when it comes to apologizing for something like Deir Yassin it's a tricky kind of thing because if you're dealing with somebody who can accept that apology then it looks like an apology, but if you're dealing with someone who will not accept any apologies all it looks like is weakness.

That's really the bind which I think we find ourselves in, which is that yes, honestly, there may be some things we should apologize for, but if there is nobody there to accept the apology, if there's nobody in the mood of accepting apologies then the only other option you seem to have is that I can't admit anything, I can't bow in any kind of way because bowing is a sign of weakness and that's really I think the difficulty that we find ourselves in.

Audience Member: I'm trying to think and I can't get it, I'm hoping you can, going back to Rachel, because it's interesting that it's both Ephraim and Benjamin who had this zealot ability to fight Esau. What was it about Rachel that she was able to give over this ability to withstand Amalek to her --

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's an interesting question. The answer to the other good question is this. The thing that Ephraim and Benjamin do have in common, of course, is that they're both b'nei Rachel, they're both children of Rachel. Benjamin, of course, is Rachel's child and Ephraim is a child of Joseph, who is the older child of Rachel. The question of obvious (inaudible) is on the larger level what is it about Rachel that allows for Rachel's children to confront Esau. This gets to the second peace level I want to talk to you about today.

The first peace is that I think the one thing that Benjamin does, is Benjamin's a counterpoint to Ephraim in terms of bowing. Whereas Ephraim may represent the positive side of bowing, Benjamin is the opposite extreme and sometimes you need kind of both, but the other thing which I want to talk to you about goes to this issue of, really the issue of the children of Rachel in general. This gets to the connection between Saul's war against Amalek and Esther's war against Amalek. So let's talk about that.

I actually forgot about the Saul piece of this. I didn't really come prepared to talk about this so I'm not going to talk about it in detail right now. We did talk about it in detail once upon a time in this group for those of you who were here a long, long time ago. It was when we were facing the other way. It was before Purim. It was when I gave that topic about Pilegesh Bagivah (the Concubine of Gibeah) and the Scroll of Esther and the rape of Dinah and how all this fits together.

Audience Member: Do that one again. Rabbi David Fohrman: Do that one again? Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: (Inaudible). I'm sure that somebody's got the tape of it. Actually, I think I may even have the tape of it, so you can e-mail me if you want, but there's a whole fancy constellation of stories of Saul (inaudible) there and hopefully one day there will be a sequel to The Queen You Thought You Knew book. That's kind of the next piece over there.

What I argued back then was that if you look at the Saul story, in general, you find some great triumphs on the part of Saul, but you also find some great failings. If you think about Saul's great triumphs, Saul's probably greatest triumph comes in a little sort of unknown story, not a very well-known story around the 10th chapter or so of Samuel 1, which is his battle in defense of the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, against Nahash, the King of Ammon.

Now, if you look at that battle, Saul successfully unifies the Jews against the regional power, Nahash the King of Ammon and because he's able to unify -- just for groups he's able to win in that battle. This can be too complicated to do in the short time so I think I'm going to have to leave out the Saul piece and do

it in a --

Audience Member: If you start it, you've got to finish.

Rabbi David Fohrman: If I start this with you, then I'm not going to be able to finish Amalek today, that's for sure. I anyway have to do another session at some point. All right. Let me, I'll take it where it goes. I told you I was going to finish today.

(Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: But I won't do it next week. When we continue I'll try to do it, but I'll try to give you heads up.

In Saul's war against Nahash the King of Ammon, you hear the echoes of another battle, another battle involved in Jabesh-Gilead. It turns out that Jabesh-Gilead is the -- let me throw that up on the screen for you, that story, "Vaya'al Nachash Ha'amoni vayichan al Yaveish Gilad," Nahash, the King of Ammon.

This is right now where Saul is made king. It's right over here. Saul has just been made king right over here. "Vayakreiv Shmuel et kol shivtei Yisrael vayilacheid shevet Binyamin. Vayakreiv et shevet Binyamin lemishpechotav vatilacheid mishpachat hamatri vayilacheid Shaul ben Kish." This is the lottery, "vayivakshuhu velo nimtza," they couldn't find him. "Vayishalu od baHashem hava od halom ish," they said we can't find the king because Saul was hiding. They asked the Urim and the Thummim again to send us somebody else, but God said no, "Hinei hu nechba el hakeilim," he's just hiding.

"Vayarutzu vayikachuhu mesham," they took him out from there. "Vayityatzev betoch ha'am vayigbah mikol ha'am mishichmo vamalah." They took him out from there, he stood up, and he was a good head and shoulders -- by the way, which is where head and shoulders comes from -- he was a good head and shoulders above the rest of the people.

By the way, as you read this, you are reminded of a couple of interesting things. First of all, just a little phrase over here, "Vayivakshuhu velo nimtza," they searched for him but they could not find him, sort of reminds you of what? If you think about the children of Rachel, that phrase of finding or not finding, if you remember, one of the key words that go back to the children on Rachel, it goes all the way back to the story of Mechiras Yosef (the Selling of Joseph).

The story of the selling of Joseph was of course the time when the brothers come before their father and say "zot matzanu haker na," we found a bloody coat. Ultimately, you got this. If it was just that you'd say nah, who knows? The word matza is really a common word, but you keep on reading. What about this? "Vayarutzu vayikachuhu misham," and they ran and they took him from there. Anybody?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: This is actually the language of Pharaoh. When Pharaoh takes Joseph out of the

pit. He's in prison that's called a pit, "Vayikachuhu vayaritzuhu min habor," when he takes him out of the pit. That's again Joseph and of course, "Vayigbah mikol ha'am mishichmo vamalah." The one thing about Saul was always his shoulder. It's always the shechem of his shoulder. It's always an important thing.

Audience Member: We've got Shechem (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. Of course if you go back to the selling of Joseph, where was the selling of Joseph? It was in Shechem (Nablus). Shechem was a shoulder and Shechem was also a city. It's all this sort of stuff which is evoking the past of the children of Rachel.

Samuel says, "Hare'item et asher bachar bo Hashem ki ein kamohu bechol ha'am vayari'u kol ha'am vayomru yechi hamelech," everyone says yay, the king. It's really great. "Vayidaber Shmuel el ha'am et mishpat hameluchah vayichtov basefer vanach lifnei Hashem vayishalach Shmuel et kol ha'am ish lebeito," Samuel sends everyone home. Saul also goes home, "Vayelchu imo hachayil asher naga Elokim belibam," and a great group of people go and escort him home.

However, "Bnei bliya'al," there were these no good nicks who said, "mah yoshi'einu zeh," what can this guy do for us? Who is Saul and how can he ever really help us? "Vayivzuhu," and they debased him, "velo havei'u lo minchah," and they wouldn't give him anything. They wouldn't offer him congratulations. What was Saul's response? "Vayehi kimacharish" and he was silent.

Audience Member: It doesn't say he was (inaudible), he was silent.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true. It was as if he was silent, but the idea is that he didn't respond to them.

Audience Member: The fact is that -- Rabbi David Fohrman: Later on -- what?

Audience Member: Rachel did (inaudible) to keep it.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Later on, the next thing that happens is that there's this war that Nahash, this regional power, the King of Ammon provokes against ¬Jabesh-Gilead. Now, in this war Saul actually successfully defends the Jews, really against all odds. Remember that Saul did not have the unstinting support of the entire populace. As you’ve just seen, a lot of people liked him, but there was this skeptical element that said "mah yoshi'einu zeh," could you really do anything for us. If you now think about "mah yoshi'einu zeh," why Saul really might not really be so successful as king.

Let's talk about the odds against Saul. What are really the odds against Saul? Why is Saul's kingship, maybe, not looking so bright?

Audience Member: He's not coming from David.

Rabbi David Fohrman: First of all, he's not coming from David. That's true. David's later. (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: He's hiding. That's right. Also, he's hiding from -- a little bit earlier in Samuel he complains that he's from the smallest shevet (tribe) of the Jews, and he's from the smallest family, the smallest tribe, how's he supposed to lead all the Jews. Let's talk about this for a moment. Why was Benjamin such a small tribe, especially now?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) Concubine of Gibeah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It was right after the Concubine of Gibeah. Now, in the Concubine of Gibeah there was a civil war where everyone ganged up against Benjamin led by Judah and Benjamin was decimated to a point where they basically were going to be simply destroyed. The whole tribe was going to be completely destroyed, were it not for a last case charity there of people who got together and tried to give them lots. That's why he's such a small tribe. If you think about it, politically, you know what it means that politically that the first king of Israel is now being chosen from the tribe of Benjamin.

Do you know what that would be like? That would be like the year after the Civil War to have, like, Jefferson Davis's brother elected President of the Union. You know what I mean? That's what it would be like. Somebody from South Carolina being voted in by the North, by the Union. That wasn't happening, during the Reconstruction Era, but this was reconstruction and this was what is happening.

Benjamin is being chosen to lead Judah. It's literally unthinkable. Therefore, the people who said "mah yoshi'einu zeh," people who say how could he possibly do anything, really, what he's saying is that this is a politically crippled king. He has no ability to rally everyone around his side. Judah is never going to listen to him. What are you going to do? So now, enter Nahash the Ammonite. Nahash the Ammonite decides "vayichan al Yaveish Gilad," that of all places he's going to attack the little outlying town of

¬Jabesh-Gilead.

Now, who is Jabesh-Gilead? This wasn't just attacking any town. Why did Nahash immediately after Saul was decided to become king decide to attack Jabesh-Gilead, in particular? The answer is it takes us again back to the Concubine of Gibeah. In the story of the Concubine of Gibeah, Jabesh-Gilead played an important role. Jabesh-Gilead was the one town that didn't join in in the rout of Benjamin.

When Judah called to amass troops to kill Benjamin, the one town that didn't join in was Jabesh-Gilead and Judah and everyone else remembered that. Because when they were looking at the final stain of the terrible tragedy and awful and horrific story of the Concubine of Gibeah, after the tribe of Benjamin is completely massacred and everyone feels guilty about massacring Benjamin and almost completely destroying a tribe, they then say of themselves, we need some women for them, where are we going to find women for them? They come up with this (inaudible) plan.

What they decide to do is they say when we called our troops against Benjamin, we made everyone swear that they would support the war and there was somebody who didn't support the war. Who didn't support the war? There was Jabesh-Gilead who didn't support the war. Let's pull out the men of Jabesh- Gilead and give their wives to the tribe of Benjamin, which is what they then do. So Jabesh-Gilead gets massacred and the girls of Jabesh-Gilead end up becoming wives for the tribe of Benjamin, in the final terrible tragic turn of that sort.

Now, if you think a generation or two later why would Nahash, the King of Ammon decide to attack Jabesh-Gilead of all people at the beginning of Saul's reign? The answer is because this is testing the new king. This is the great political test that the (inaudible) the new king is going to be; can he rally the tribe of Judah to his side if Judah's a much stronger tribe and the backbone of the Jewish People at his side.

Can somebody from Benjamin after the Concubine of Gibeah actually succeed as king and how am I really going to test you. Do you think you can rally people to the defense of Jabesh-Gilead?

Jabesh-Gilead was not popular, Benjamin was not popular. Let's see Benjamin try to rally the Jews to his side to defend Jabesh-Gilead. That's really what Nahash, the King of Ammon, is doing. It's probably not a coincidence that his name just happens to be Nahash.

Audience Member: Which portion (inaudible)? Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: Which portion (inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't remember who Jabesh-Gilead was from. He wasn't from Judah, I don't know.

"Vayomru kol anshei Yaveish el Nachash kras lanu bris vena'avdecha," so basically Jabesh gives up. Jabesh says fine we surrender. "Vayomer aleihem Nachash Ha'amoni," Nahash the King of Ammon says, "bezos echros lachem binkor lachem kol ein yemin vesamtiha cherpah al kol Yisrael." No problem, Nahash says, I'll be happy to make a treaty with you and the treaty is going to be that I'm going to wipe out the right eye of all of you guys. We're going to take out everybody's right eye and that's going to be the treaty, "vesamtiha cherpah al kol Yisrael," and I'm going to place that as a mark of shame.

Now, here this is interesting because you would say this would be a mark of shame on who? On the habitants of Jabesh-Gilead, but that's not what the text says. He says I'm going to place it as a mark of shame on who? "Al kol Yisrael," on all of Israel.

Audience Member: (Inaudible.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, that's the point. The point is why is Nahash doing this? Nahash is not going to have any economic benefit of taking out everybody's right eye, why does he take everybody's right eye out? What was he actually thinking? What he's thinking is -- and if you think about the next

phrase, it makes sense why he does this too. " Vayomru eilav ziknei Yaveish," so the elders of Jabesh said, "heref lanu shivat yamim,2" give us seven days, "venishlicha malachim bechol gvul Yisrael," and we will send messengers out among all over Israel, "v'im ein moshi'a otanu," if nobody comes to save us, "veyatzanu eilech," we'll accept your terms.

Do you think that's like strategically a smart thing to do? I mean, imagine somebody comes to threaten you, you're a little nation and you say okay, just give us seven days to find all the allies we can to beat you up and then we'll see. It's like you don't do that. That takes away any element of surprise, any element of anything. Why did they say that?

The answer is because that's the whole game over here. The whole point of what's happening is that -- the whole point of Nahash is that Nahash thinks that they won't be able to find any allies. The whole reason why he's provoking Jabesh-Gilead is not to win against Jabesh-Gilead, but what he wants to do is he wants to debase the whole institute, the new institution of kingship. The number one goal of a king is number one responsibility of a king that he's able to protect everyone, to be able to unify people as a national defense. Basically, that is what Nahash is saying. Nahash is saying you have no ability to do that. What; I'll attack Jabesh-Gilead and you, you think you're going to be able to rally anybody in support of Jabesh-Gilead.

That's the idea, of course, of the bris (covenant). The covenant is I am going to come and I'm going to knock out your right eye. Why knock out your right eye? If you think about that symbolically, what does that mean? What is your right eye? It's part of a --

Audience Member: Part of a pair.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Part of a pair. Why do you have two eyes? Why don't you just have one eye? Audience Member: Depth.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Depth. The answer is you can see what you can see. You can see the same thing with one eye as you can see with two eyes, but you see qualitatively better. So what two eyes really is an example of, the sum of the whole is where (inaudible) departs. You see that with two eyes because the depth perception is an entirely new thing which comes to you once you have two eyes.

By taking out an eye, what is Nahash really challenging? If you think about what a community is, what a king in charge of a community is, the definition of a community is not just a whole bunch of people living together. A community is an organism, a meta-organism which is above and beyond any individual. That's the whole point of the community. A community is not just a bunch of I's; it's a we.

The I's stand together. They make a we as we offer something qualitatively greater than the individual I's. Right, I am talking about not an eye -- you understand what I am talking about -- the person I.

By destroying the eye, one of two eyes, what really Nahash is doing is saying I challenge this notion that you have any kind of community. I challenge there are no parts working together over here and because

that was on the table and because that was the whole challenge then obviously the people of Jabesh- Gilead will be coming back and saying okay we understand your challenge so at least give us seven days to see whether you're right, maybe somebody will help us. Nahash wants to see if somebody is going to help them. If they have seven days that's the whole point. You're saying all the time you want you're not going to find anybody to help you, Saul is not going to be able to help you.

What happens? "Vayavo'u hamalachim Givat Shaul vayidabru hadevarim be'aznei ha'am." Listen how bad this is. Messengers come from Jabesh-Gilead and who do you think they should go to with the news that Jabesh-Gilead is being threatened? You would think they should go to the king. Who do they go to? They go to Givat Shaul, they go to Saul's house, but "vayidabru hadevarim be'aznei ha'am," who do they tell? They just tell everybody. They just start gossiping in the street. It's like you see that little purchase car that the king has here, it's like there's a national security emergency and they haven't even gone to him. It's like Al Haig; I'm in charge. You know, remember that back then. It's like where's the president.

"Vayisu kol ha'am et kolam vayivku," all the people raise their voices and they cry. Whenever you hear that phrase "vayisa kol ha'am vayeivch," there always is the cry of despair, no hope, whenever you have that. Hagar. When Hagar thinks that Ishmael is going to die, "vatisa et kolah vateivch." When Jacob thinks that he's not going to buried with Rachel and it's all over, "vayisa kol vayeivch". Wherever you have "vayisa kol vayeivch," it's always despondency.

Here, too, the people are despondent. They think that there's absolutely no chance to war Jabesh-Gilead. Of course, there's irony here because these are the very people who can help. You understand? These are the very people who can do something.

Now, strangely enough we have another time, "vayisu kol ha'am vavivku" in recent history of the Jewish People and you know what it was? It was in the Concubine of Gibeah. In the story of the Concubine of Gibeah when they found out that there were going to be no wives, that Benjamin is threatening that there's going to be no women for Benjamin to marry, Benjamin is going to die out, you know what the first response of everybody was? "Vayisu kol ha'am vayivku," they raise their voices and they cry. It's a cry of despondency.

Now, of course, you didn't have to really be despondent. The people could come up with a solution. Why couldn't they come up with a solution? Because they had sworn, they had taken an oath which they thought they were bound by that they will not intermarry among with Benjamin when they thought that Benjamin was such an evil tribe and when they attacked them. Really all they had to do is find a way to undo that oath, find a way to get out of that. You know, there are halachic ways to get out of oaths. Right? That's the way out.

Instead what they do is they despair and they say there's nothing we can do when of course, there is something they can do. Instead they settle upon something illegitimate to do, which is oh, let's see who didn't attack Benjamin, it's Jabesh-Gilead, let's kill them and give them their wives. This is the last time you heard that in the story involving Jabesh-Gilead and now you, like, see the beginnings of this replay.

This sort of collective powerlessness, when the collective really isn't powerless, you sort of see it all happening again.

At this point Saul enters into the text. "Vehinei Shaul ba acharei habakar min hasadeh," Saul's coming with his oxen from the field and he doesn't even know what's going on, "Vayomer Shaul mah la'am ki yivku," Saul says how come everybody's crying, "vayisapru lo et divrei anshei Yaveish," and the people of Jabesh go and they tell him what actually happened. The messengers come and the actually tell the king by the way.

At this point something amazing happens. "Vatiztlach ruach Elokim al Shaul", Saul feels like he's inspired by God at this point, when he hears these words, "vayichar apo me'od," and he becomes very, very angry.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: God's (inaudible). Audience Member: From Hashem, right.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. "Vayichar apo me'od," and he becomes very angry. At this point "Vayikach tzemed bakar," he takes the oxen which are there. What kind of oxen? "Tzemed bakar." What's a tzemed bakar? A team of oxen that are yoked together; right? You know how a team of oxen work, yoked together with these yokes? He takes together a team of oxen who is working for him, "vayenaseihu," and he cuts them all up. "Vayishlach bechol --"

Audience Member: It sounds like the Concubine of Gibeah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It sounds like the Concubine of Gibeah. If you go back to the Concubine of Gibeah, the whole story starts when the husband of the raped woman takes her body, which may have actually been alive at that point, actually cuts her up and sends body parts all over. This sensational act is what rallies everyone together to defeat Benjamin. Now the child of Benjamin does the same act and what's the purpose?

The first time it was to unify the people. That action is what unified the people against Benjamin, but it unified them in civil war. It was a paradoxical thing; it unified them in the service of non-unity, in the service of destroying any semblance of unity to enlarge it. It unified a sub-group of klal Yisrael (the congregation of Israel) against a particular group.

What Saul does now is takes the memories of that, takes a team of oxen and cuts them up and sends them out with messengers, body parts of theses oxen "leimar," saying, "asher eynenu yotze acharey Shaul," anybody who doesn't go out to war with Saul, "ve'achar Shmuel," and after Samuel, "ko yei'aseh livkaro," so will be done to his oxen. "Vayipol pachad Hashem al ha'am vayetzu ke'ish echad." In other words, how are they're going out? They are going out "ke'ish echad," they're going out unified. Saul

succeeds in unifying them.

This is a good kind of unity. Instead of unifying a subgroup against another group, which is of course nasty, I mean that's what you do. If you think about little places of immature lessons, this is what they do. In other words they get your friends together, but it's unity, bullying, getting a group together, unifying a group but unifying it at the expense of someone else within a larger group.

What Saul is doing is something legitimate, which is unifying everyone, even people who previously didn't get along in self-defense, in self-defense from an external threat. "Vayitzu ke'ish echad.

Vayifkedem beVazek vayihiyu bnei Yisrael shelosh mei'ah elef ve'is Yehuda shloshim alef." He manages to get Judah with him, there is 300,000 troops, the people of Judah are 30, 000. "Vayomru lamalachim habayim ko tomrun le'ish Yavesh Gilad," tell people of Jabesh-Gilead, tomorrow you're going to be saved.

The people came, they told it to anshei Yavesh (people of Jabesh) and they were happy, they rejoiced. The people of Jabesh-Gilead said to Nahash, the threat, "machar netze aleichem," tomorrow we'll go out to you, we'll accept your terms and you can do, "va'asitem lanu kechol hatov be'eyneychem." There's a little play on words here. You can do to us anything that's good in your eyes. Because you saying you're going to knock out our eyes, do whatever is good in your eyes.

The next day, "Vayasem Shaul et ha'am shlosha rashim," Saul then divides up the group into three different camps and they go, "vayavo'u vetoch hamachane be'ashmoret haboker." That dawn they come and they fight against Ammon "ad chom hayom vayehi hanisharim vayafutzu velo nisharu vam shnayim yachad," and then the people they were fighting against scattered and you couldn't even find two together.

What happens is that Saul is coming in a unified way, manages to destruct the unity of their foes, everyone else scatters. "Vayomer ha'am el Shmuel mi ha'omer Shaul imloch aleynu," and then the people come and say, who was the one who said in disgust shall Saul really rule upon us? "Tenu ha'anashim unemitem," give us those people who didn't believe in you and we will kill them. Now, what do you think Saul should do? Should he wipe out an opposition at this point?

Audience Member: No.

Rabbi David Fohrman: No. "Vayomer Shaul, lo yumat ish bayom hazeh," no man will die today, "ki hayom asa Hashem teshu'a beYisrael," because God has saved us today. What happens is that Saul avoids the easy way out, right, which again would be division, which would be to kill his enemies, and instead insists on unity.

If you look at the numbers here, the numbers are fascinating. If you look at the train of numbers, it begins with 300,000, there are 300,000 people. It then goes to 30,000; there are 30,000 people from Judah. It then goes to three, which is the three heads. It then goes to two, "velo nisharu vam shnayim yachad." It then goes to one, "lo yumat ish bayom hazeh." It's like a funnel which is unity all coming

down to one.

The bottom line is Saul succeeds, but when he succeeds -- and this is the point for our purposes -- he succeeds in doing two things. He succeeds by expressing two different sort of emotion, well, an emotion and an expression of that emotion. The two verbs which are key in this story are number one, "vayehi kemaharish."

When everyone debased him when he becomes king, what emotion would you have if you were king? Anger. Instead of anger he is silent. He might have felt anger, but he was silent; right? He was silent in the face of his enemies. Now, was he always silent in the face of his enemies? No, because then Nahash comes along, Nahash is an enemy, he could have been silent there too. Instead what's Saul's response, what's his emotional response to hearing about Nahash?

Audience Member: "Vayichar apo."

Rabbi David Fohrman: "Vayichar apo." Anger. What happens is that there are two possibilities for anger here. One possibility for anger is anger at my group; people in my group won't accept me as king. There he's not angry. There he is quite. Then instead there is -- but later on it's not like Saul's just a wimp who can never feel anger, and could never just -- he is not. Instead he can feel anger, right, but he feels anger appropriately.

He's able to conquer anger when necessary and when it's productive and to be silent, but there were times when he wasn't silent. Right after this he feels anger, but it's not anger in -- the first kind of anger would have been anger in service of himself. I'm angry because people aren't accepting me as king.

What I want to do is take that kind of anger, there he was silent. When it's anger against an external group that's threatening my people, there I'll be angry and there he succeeds in unifying the people. He directs the anger against the external foe and unifies his people behind him.

What I want to argue, what I want to leave you with today is this thought. What this goes back to is another story. It goes back to the story not of Jabesh-Gilead, not just of the Concubine of Gibeah, but it goes back to the story of the rape of Dinah. What I don't have time to do with you now is if you look carefully you will find that there are about a dozen parallels between the story of the rape of Dinah on one hand and the story of the Concubine of Gibeah on the other hand.

What we argued then is that what the rape of Dinah was to a family, the story of the Concubine of Gibeah was to a nation. It was just the rape of Dinah acted out in a large way. The same sort of destructiveness there was in the rape of Dinah there was -- the rape of Dinah -- let's do this way, if the Concubine of Gibeah was the great failing on the part of the nation, a civil war, there were elements of civil war within the story of the rape of Dinah.

As Rashi puts it, Rashi lumps together the rape of Dinah together as the three bad things that happened in Shechem. Those three bad things was the rape of Dinah, the sale of Joseph, and the division of the kingship which in Rashi's mind I think are the three events that are disunity in the family. It begins with

the rape of Dinah.

If you think about what went wrong in the rape of Dinah, these two verbs silence and anger, those are the things that went wrong. Jacob was silent; silent in the face of what? In the face of an external threat. There was a threat to his daughter and he was silent in the face of that threat.

Then there was anger. Anger on the part of whom? Anger on the part of the brothers. Anger at his silence. But the problem is that who they are really angry at is father again and their father's (inaudible). They can never really be angry at their father and what it does is it leads to an overreaction which ultimately leads to the entire massacre of Shechem in a sort of ill-conceived, failed diplomatic move as we've seen it before. The diplomacy failed and they then embark on a rescue mission and they destroy everyone. It's not just that they destroy everyone; they also sow the seeds of discord among themselves. The story begins as Dinah daughter of Lea, and the story ends "hachezonah ya'ase et achotenu," people say, shall our sister be made into a harlot?

The great question is, Jacob, would you have been silent if it was a child of Rachel? Maybe it was only because it was a child of Leah. Would you really have been silent? We, Simeon and Levi, she's our sister. We can't allow our sister to be handled like this. They act when Jacob didn't act and so what you have is silent anger which doesn't end up working out well.

What Saul does is he succeeds in repairing sort of the damage of the disunity of the rape of Dinah. The disunity of the rape of Dinah ripped large the Concubine of Gibeah, which is the Concubine of Gibeah. He succeeds in this one war of kind of putting that back together, of salving those old wounds. He is a child from the children of Rachel now and he is able to reach out to the other side of the family and to unify them appropriately against an external enemy and things are good. This is the highpoint of the kingship for Saul.

What we'll talk about when we come back after the summer is the low point in the kingship of Saul. Unfortunately it doesn't last and Saul is destroyed. One reason he is destroyed is because of Amalek. But strangely even after Amalek, Saul is still king. He is still king even as David is crowned king. If you look carefully what we'll do when we come back after the summer is we're going to look at the Saul and David's narratives, the narratives of Saul and David while Saul is still king and is still chasing David, which is really Saul's downfall.

If you look carefully at those narratives what you'll hear is just what we've heard here; echoes of the rape of Dinah. You are going to hear echoes to later points in Jacob's life, after the rape of Dinah, which are very crucial to an understanding of -- again what Benjamin or the children of Rachel can do, other narratives involving the children of Rachel involving ultimately the story of Joseph.

I believe what happens is that Saul has a historic possibility open to him, its historic possibility which is almost like history in every stage of life is open to this possibility. Same way we saw that Jacob had the opportunity to sort of replay mistakes he made earlier in life, the nation of Israel, the story of the manna in the desert and the possibility of replaying the Jacob and Esau narratives.

What I want to argue is that on the national level the Jews or the kings of Israel also have these opportunities, to replay these earlier events and to do it right. Saul had such an opportunity here to replay the Concubine of Gibeah, the story of the rape of Dinah and he did it successfully. But to truly be a successful king he wouldn't just have to replay the beginning of the schism in the family of Israel, he would have to replay the end of them also. The end of them is not just rape of Dinah; it's the story of the sale of Joseph. He has to replay both of those right.

He gets that chance in the story, I believe, of David. We'll talk about how he handles that chance. This, I believe, is what sets up the story of Esther and I think it's the framework for understanding why she and Saul have a chance to confront Amalek. There is a lot more to be said and I guess I probably won't be able to finish it today, so we'll see when we come back after the summer. Thank you.

Rabbi David Fohrman: While we (inaudible) the projector I will just fill you in with a little show and tell. We were in California. How many of you were here for the talk that I gave -- I actually gave it a couple of times, so if you weren't here one time (inaudible) on Joseph and Pharaoh's dreams? Raise your hands if you were here for that. If you have no idea what I'm talking about raise your hands.

Audience Member: Do I do both? Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh, really? That's a very bad (inaudible). Anyway, I gave this talk on Joseph and Pharaoh's dreams. It was really deep; it's one of my favorite little pieces that I've put together. It had to do with a way of deciphering Pharaoh's -- with theory on how Joseph deciphered Pharaoh's dream. When I say decipher it, he deciphered it kind of literally.

I won't get into the theory in detail, but in a nutshell what I argued is that, you know, Joseph said that he knows that "Bil'aday Elokim ya'aneh et shlom Pharaoh", that Hashem will interpret Pharaoh's dream and yet we have no record of Hashem ever communicating the meaning of the dream. Nevertheless, Joseph goes about and interprets it. Generally when G-d talks to somebody in the Sefer Bereishit (Book of Genesis) it says, God talks to them and here God didn't talk to him and yet Joseph knows how to interpret the dreams.

You might just say that Joseph is making it up, that he is figuring it out on his own, but there are elements in the dream that you couldn't really figure out on your own. For example, the notion that the cows represent years, the chartumim (magicians) thought that cows represent all different sorts of things. How does he specifically know that the cows represented years, could've been a lucky guess, but could've been cities, could've been daughters, could've been anything. How does he know that?

I developed a theory that interrelates into the dream actually is kind of a code which Joseph is able to decipher. The reason he is able to decipher it is because the key to the code is Joseph's own life. He hears resonances of his own life in Pharaoh's dream. For example, what the beautiful cows are known as cows were "yefot to'ar", right, which is a word -- "yefat mar'eh" and "yefat to'ar" are used only to describe Rachel and Joseph in Chumash (Pentateuch). The other, the ugly cows are described as "rakot" --

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What rakot reminds us off? That they're are Rachel and Leah cows. It doesn't look like we're going to get our projector going today, I'm sorry. It's acting up here. I don't know. Sorry about that. We may have to actually use the Pentateuch which would really be tragic on this, but I think we'll try to do that.

Anyway, so it was a very -- without getting into too much detail now, it was a very elegant kind of code

that had multiple different layers into it. It reminded me of the little I know of some aspects of sort of modern cryptography. I was always interested in kind of comparing it to modern cryptography and seeing if there were connections.

I had a really interesting encounter, in California, which I'll just tell you about briefly. We were at my sister and brother-in-law at Palo Alto, part of Silicon Valley, the shul aptly named Emek Beracha. We were there and of course there is lots of, you know, high-tech people around. There is -- he works for Adobe and Yahoo and Apple and Google and all these (inaudible). My kids managed just to farnegel¬ a tour of Google, by the way. (Inaudible) employees which is really remarkable. I've got (inaudible) and it's kind of remarkable place.

Anyway, in shul I managed to meet a guy, you know, wearing a black hat, looks he could have come out right of the Five Towns or Brooklyn and he had a doctorate in theoretical cryptography and was working as a manager in one of the top security sections in Google, actually. He was an interesting fellow so I said you're just the kind of guy I'm looking for and, you know, I pigeonholed him and gave him my whole shpiel (play) on Joseph and Pharaoh's dream.

Anyway, he was very intrigued. It turns out that most of the modern cryptography, right now, is really mostly a computer-driven science. Most codes are developed by computers and are cracked by computers. By comparison codes which human beings thought up, as recently as fifty years ago or so, are notoriously easy for computers to break. The famous Enigma Cipher which the Germans used in World War Two which was painstakingly broken actually by the Allies, you know, your average PC could break that in about five seconds or less. Similarly the Japanese Imperial Code.

Somehow these codes -- at the time the code makers always think that they are very secure and over time with enough industriousness they can be broken with striking results. I was just reading the other night that the less you think that this is an arcane part of science, first of all it's very important nowadays. If you're going to have any sort of baking online you're going to want cryptography, you're going to want your stuff to be encoded and recently in World War Two interestingly enough one of the reasons why we won and beat the Japanese in Battle of Midway -- remember the Battle of Midway was a battle which the United States was outnumbered in ships by a great deal and we were slowly losing the Pacific. The final kind of deathblow the Japanese have decided to attack Midway Island and kind of hopscotch over the Hawaii and capture that.

We had managed to decipher part of the Japanese Imperial Code, but we couldn't figure exactly which island is which. There was this island which was running around which was codenamed AF we weren't quite sure what it was and thought it was Midway, there was a lot of chatter about that. It looked like Japan was preparing an attack at a certain time on a certain day on Midway, but nobody knew exactly what AF was.

The United States naval commander instructed Midway Island to send out a communication to Hawaii that their fresh water condenser was broken. They sent it out as an un-coded message out in the clear and Hawaii answered back that they are going to send over a barge with fresh water and lo and behold

the Japanese picked up the transmission and encoded it and this is their code, "and so that AF is out of water."

Audience Member: Oh, really.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's how they figured out, very simple, right, what Midway Island was. That they took all the reaming aircraft characters, a fleet of this and put them all in Midway Island, we were there waiting for them and in a day the United States wiped out most of the Japanese Imperial Navy and that really changed the course of the war. Little things like that make a big deal.

Anyway, so I was talking to him and it turns out that the Joseph's code really does seem to be a code and he suggested it uses three or four different kinds of modern cryptographic tools. Things, for example, known as secret sharing where no one person has the whole code, so just because you get one person you still can't get the code. The secret is shared over time by different people and other very interesting esoteric methods.

He says that what's interesting about the code is that it was done before computers and there was what's known as heuristic code which means that it's not actually mathematical, it's based upon human experience, but is the kind of thing that computers can't actually make up and the kind of thing computers can't really break, because it's conceptual, it's not mathematical. He'd like to publish a paper on the book, so we're going to try and do it and publish it in the modern cryptography journal, so we're

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Audience Member: Yasher ko'ach.

Rabbi David Fohrman: At the very least, he says, he knows that his group of security experts at Google will get a big kick out of it. We're going to try and do that. I'm going to work on that in my spare time.

Here is what we're going to be doing. I'm going to finish up today something which I have spent a good part of last year on. If you weren't here last year you still should be able to follow, because it will be its own little thing, but it's connected to what we're talking about last year.

It's going to be the end of the Amalek series which we began. Following that in coming weeks, following that in coming weeks what I would like to do next is something which I'm in the middle of working on now, it's something which I've not finished working on, I'm actually kind of in the middle of it. It's something which I began with you, but it has since developed further so I want to kind of continue it.

If you look at the stories involving Eliyahu Hanavi (Elijah the Prophet) in Sefer Melachim Aleph and Sefer Melachim Beit (The Book of Kings One and Two). Some of the stories are more familiar to you, the story of Elijah at Gar Hakarmel (Mount Carmel), which we talked about the aftermath of that little bit, a couple of weeks back. We'll continue with that and go a little bit further. Also stories involving the death of Elijah and a little known story about -- well, actually, I wouldn't say a little known, a little story

of Elijah and Ahab and the vineyard of Naboth, as well. Those are really fascinating stories and I think there is a lot going on there so hopefully we'll be able to make some headway together on that.

By the way of finishing up the Amalek stories, I want to get back to a couple of points. For the benefit of those of you who were not here last year may be even for those of you who were to summarize one point. We spent a long time talking about Amalek and one of the points that we made over the course of our discussions together is that if we were to analyze who Amalek is we might say, we might call the Amalek as the sort of self-appointed memory keepers of the feud between Jacob and Esau.

If you look at who Amalek is genealogy wise, Amalek actually appears as the grandson of Esau, he's actually one of the children of Eliphaz. As we talked about before he is actually seems to be -- the Ramban (Nachmanides) argues based upon a subtle inference in the language of the text that he is actually the dispossessed son of Eliphaz, he's the child of a pilegesh (concubine), as opposed to the child of a wife and doesn't actually seem to bear the name of Esau's family going forward, but he seems to identify very strongly with Esau and seems sort of to be the self-appointed memory keeper for the battle between Jacob and Esau.

However, we argued that whereas if you look at the various historical interactions between Esau and Jacob in Tanach (Bible) and even post-Bible you'll find that even though Jacob and Esau never really emerged as the best of friends, but there was sort of cold détente between them. In Sefer Devarim (Book of Deuteronomy) there is no war between them, there is sort of a cold peace, but that's not the case with Amalek.

Amalek seems to be dedicated to destroying the Jews at every turn and we talked about why that was.

We mentioned that -- without going into this in detail, just by way of a thumbnail sketch of review -- we suggested that if you look at the various different Amalek narratives, in particular the times that Amalek attacks the Jews, in particular the Megillah (Scroll of Esther) and the story in Beshalach when the Jews attack and even later on with "haCana'ani melech Arad" where Rashi says it's for Amalek.

If you look at those narratives you'll find these linguistic clues that bring you back to earlier Jacob and Esau stories. It's as if Amalek, as they are attacking the Jews, are remembering the Jacob and Esau story. Just to give an example of what it is that I'm talking about in Beshalach and then again in Deuteronomy when it talks about the attack of Amalek on Jews in the dessert so if you remember "ve'ata ayef veyage'a", that they attacked you when you were "ayef veyage'a." So if you remember "ayef", right, where does "ayef" come from in the Torah? Who was ayef?

Audience Member: Esau.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. "Vayavo Eisav min hasadeh vehu ayef"? Esau came back from the field, he was ayef. Of course the verb for Amalek attacking us, of course, is "vayavo Amalek", right, and then later on "vayavo Haman", right? This echoes "vayavo Eisav min hasadeh vehu ayef."

There are these memories of -- there seem to be these memories of these stories in which Jacob had bested Esau. Jacob had bested Esau and had taken the bechorah (birthright) from him, in Jacob and Esau number one. Jacob and Esau number two, there was the story of the deception of Isaac and the taking of the bechorah.

These stories seem to be at the forefront of Amalek's national memory, shall we say. One of the arguments I made is that in all of these stories you never find -- you find a dozen references in the Book of Esther and in the Amalek attack stories to the first story of Jacob and Esau involving Jacob's taking of the birthright from Esau. You find references to Jacob and Esau two, the stealing of the blessing, but what you never find is references to Jacob and Esau three, which is the reconciliation story of Jacob and Esau. The time that Jacob bows and essentially apologizes for what he had done in the past. You find that Amalek just doesn't deal with that and we wondered why that was.

We suggested a theory that whatever the ultimate answer is it seems that Amalek for all of their emphasis on zecher -- of course what we're told to do is not just to wipe out Amalek, but to wipe out the zecher of Amalek, wipe out the memory of Amalek, as if the thing that we are battling is more than just a nation, but it's their memory.

It's almost a PR battle, because if Amalek succeeds in rewriting history and leaving out Jacob and Esau three and only focusing on Jacob and Esau one and Jacob and Esau two and said that as a result of that then there is a perpetual battle between Esau and Jacob there is really no way for the Jews to continue to do their mission in the world, there is essential alienation between Jacob and Esau which can never be sort of overcome. We do battle against Amalek's memory.

Anyway, so those were some of the points that we made last year without going into detail about them. What I want to talk about today, leaving that in the background of your mind, is a final piece in the question of how it is that we do battle against Amalek, how is it that the Jews battle Amalek.

If you look at the shevatim who are involved in the battles, the tribes, so there is two tribes that are the forefront of it. One tribe is Ephraim and here we have Joshua who takes the lead in battle against Amalek the first time around and then you also have Benjamin. Benjamin battles Amalek in the times of Saul.

When Saul comes and of course he is from Benjamin and he wages war against Amalek in the Book of Samuel One. Then, of course, in the Book of Esther, Esther and Mordecai are also from the tribe of Benjamin, are actually according to Chazal (our Sages) actually descendants of Saul. It seems like Benjamin has a special place in the battle Amalek as well.

We were just wondering if there is anything about Ephraim and Benjamin in particular which should make them the vanguard, as it were, in the war against Amalek. In our previous sessions we've talked about Ephraim and we talked about the brachot (blessings) of Ephraim and Manasseh, in particular Ephraim, and I'm not going to go over that, but what I want to talk about today is Benjamin. Where does Benjamin come from in being to battle Amalek and with that I want to sort of close out our look at Amalek.

What I want to begin is something which at face value has nothing to do with Benjamin, but has to do with the Book of Esther and it is as important as anything and I think it has a lot to do with Benjamin. It's the parsha of yibbum (levirate marriage) and chalitzah (the removing of the shoe) in Parshat Ki Teitzei in the book of Deuteronomy.

What I want to do here with you is play one of our favorite games which is where we heard these words before as you read through the parsha of levirate marriage you're going to notice stuff that's going to start reminding you of the Book of Esther. What about this reminds you of the Book of Esther?

"Ki yeshvu achim yachdav", when brothers sit together, settle together, "umet echad meihem", one of them dies young, "uben ein lo", and he has no child, "lo tihiye eshet hamet hachutza le'ish zar", so it's a mitzvah (commandment) upon the widow of the deceased not to marry any other fellow except for the brother of the deceased, "yevama yavo aleha ulekacha lo le'isha veibma", it's a commandment for the brother of the deceased to marry her and to have children. "Vehaya habechor asher teled", and the oldest child that their union will give rise to, "yakum al shem achiv hamet", will establish the perpetuation of the name of the dead brother. By the way, in Hebrew this word, yakum, it's an interesting word to keep in mind. What does yakum mean?

Audience Member: Establishes, get up.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Get up. Yakum is actually an interesting word, it's worth kind of making a study of it, the way yakum is used in this kind of context. Where else in the Torah do you have yakum used in this type of context? It's a strange word here, "vehaya habechor asher teled" I would say "yikra al shem achiv hamet" or something, it will be called after the name of the widow.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Instead it's "yakum al shem achiv hamet". Where else do you have the word yakum in that kind of way? Cases that come to mind, it's sort of lesser known cases that come to mind --

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, so in the dictionary there is always more than one translation of the word. The common translation of yakum literally means to physically get up, but there's another translation of the word yakum which it seems to be over here, as well. For example, the pasuk (verse) "venasan" -- let me see if I can find it.

Audience Member: (Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Here are some examples of that. "Ve'im ga'ol yigal et hasadeh hamakdish oto veyasaf chamishit kesef erkecha alav vekam lo." This is an example of -- in Vayikra (Leviticus) if a person was "ve'im achar hayovel yakdish sadehu" the person took his field and he consecrated it to hekdesh, so he can "ve'im ga'ol yigal et hasadeh" he can redeem it for money. The money becomes consecrated, the

field goes back to him. The word for the field going back to him is "vekam lo." In other words what happened is that the field was in the domain of the Temple, it was consecrated and you're going to redeem it from the Temple domain, right, "vekam lo", and it's going to come back to you.

Another example of it is with Abraham and Ephron with the field that he bought from Ephron. Doesn't it say at the end of that -- don't we have that language as well -- remember that?

Audience Member: He had a tekumah because he wouldn't have been (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, but what was the language there? He goes, if you have Chumash (Bible) you can find this if not --

Audience Member: Chayei Sarah? Audience Member: Chayei Sarah.

Audience Member: "Vayavo hasadeh", "Vayakam Avraham". Rabbi David Fohrman: No.

Audience Member: "Vayakam hasadeh."

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's at the end of it. It's the very end when he buys the field. Audience Member: Yeah, "Vayakam hasadeh".

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's it, right there. You want to just read that out loud? Read the verse before the last one and then the last one.

Audience Member: "Ve'acharei chen kavar Avraham et Sarah ishto el me'arat sdei hamachpeilah al pnei Mamrei hu Chevron be'Eretz Cana'an. Vayakam hasadeh vehame'arah asher bo le'Avraham la'achuzat kaver me'et bnei Chet".

Rabbi David Fohrman: If you think about that that's a pretty unusual use for the word "vayakam" -- Audience Member: (Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- when you say, here you have an inanimate object, a field, the last thing in the world that can get up and go anywhere, it's described as "vayakam hasadeh" so what does that mean?

This is another translation of the word "vayakam", it doesn't literally mean physically that the field got up and went, but it's a language of redemption.

When something -- what you have is when something is sort of alienated from you and then it comes

into your domain it's almost like its potential has actualized. "Vayakam hasadeh le'Avraham", it became his, it's as if he redeemed it from Ephron. Here too, the field was in the hands of hekdesh and you redeemed it and you sort of got it back. That seems to be the sense in which "vayakam" is appearing here with yibbum --going back to our case of a levirate marriage.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Same idea. Right? "Vehaya habechor asher teled yakum al shem achiv hamet". Right, that's the idea, it's really a redemption of the soul. The idea is that the person's soul is alienated from him, the person died and he has no legacy left in the world and here comes the child that's born and sort of brings life back into his legacy. It brings back into the domain of the deceased sort of his name.

That's kind of what's happening now.

Audience Member: What about "Kol horeg Kayin shivatayim yakum"?

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's different. Over there it means -- it's a different shoresh (root), it's from (inaudible) where it means redemption. "Vehaya habechor asher teled yakum al shem achiv hamet velo yimacheh shemo miYisrael." Okay. The child that is born is called after the dead person "velo yimacheh shemo miYisrael", does anyone want to translate that? And the person's name, the dead person's name, should not be erased from Israel. Little -- by the way what does it have to do with Amalek, anyway?

Audience Member: "Timcheh et zecher Amalek."

Rabbi David Fohrman: That actually is an Amalek word, isn't that interesting? Right, "Macho timcheh et zecher Amalek mitachat hashamayim", right? "Macho emchcheh" or "timcheh et zecher Amalek mitachat hashamayim". There is this idea of wiping out or erasing Amalek's name and over here "velo yimacheh shemo miYisrael", this person's name shouldn't be erased.

Okay, that might just could just be a coincidence. Let's keep on reading. "Ve'im lo yachpotz ha'ish lakachat et yevimto", so let's say the guy doesn't want to marry his yevama, the brother. What happens then? "Ve'alta yevimto hasha'ara el hazekeinim" so the yevama goes up to the gate, the gate in those days was where the Sanhedrin, in every city the court would sit in the gate. She goes to court, to the zekeinim (elders), "ve'amra me'en yevami lehakim le'achiv shem beYisrael", my brother-in-law does not want to, he is withholding himself is really the language, from reestablishing the name of his brother in Israel, "lo ava yevami", he does not want to do that.

Here we have an interesting thing. What happens next? We're used to normally thinking that the removal of the shoe happens next, but actually something happens before the removing of the shoe, in the verse, which is the "vekaru lo ziknei iro vedibru eilav" the elders actually sit him down and talk with him and after that the verse says, "ve'amad ve'amar", but he then is recalcitrant and he stays stubborn and he stays in his previous position and he says, "lo chafatzti lekachta"? I'm not interested, I don't want to take her. At that point "venigshah yevimto eilav", then she comes in "le'einei hazekeinim vechaltzah na'alo me'al raglo", she takes of his shoe, "vayarkah befanav" and spits in his face, "ve'antah ve'amrah",

she says, she answers and says, "kacha ye'aseh la'ish asher lo yivneh et beit achiv." Audience Member: Oh my gosh.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Here you go. "Kacha ye'aseh la'ish asher lo yivneh et beit achiv", this is what should be done to the man who will not build up the house of his brother. "Venikra shemo beYisrael beit chalutz hana'al", and this name was called in Israel the house of the undone shoe. Okay, so you kind of got it and this language over here of "kacha ye'aseh la'ish asher lo yivneh beit achiv" what you remember from the book of Esther?

Audience Member: "Kacha yei'aseh la'ish asher Hamelech chafetz be'yikaro." Rabbi David Fohrman: Very well done.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay, yeah. Good. Where, where?

Audience Member: Chapter Eight, 26 and then three verses before (inaudible) yet. Rabbi David Fohrman: Good, okay. It turns out that as -- hold on one second.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, okay, so as you pointed it out even so the most obvious reference to the Book of Esther, well actually the Book of Esther is quoting this, realize this is written before the Book of Esther, so the Book of Esther is citing this. The most obvious citation which the Book of Esther is making is "kacha yei'aseh le'ish", but if you go to the Book of Esther and look at the language of the Book of Esther carefully you'll find a number of other things, in the Book of Esther, which remind us specifically of this parsha. It's not just these words, "kacha yei'aseh la'ish", which, by the way, are probably the only other "kacha yei'aseh la'ish", does anybody want to make a bet on that, everybody?

How many times you have you think "kacha yei'aseh la'ish" in Tanach (the Scripture), we can take a quick look over here. Where is it?

Those are all the "kacha yei'aseh", let's try "kacha yei'aseh la'ish". "Kacha yei'aseh la'ish". Yeah, there it is. These are the only ones in the Scripture, right. Deuteronomy, 25 and Esther, 6. It's pretty clear that Esther 6 is quoting from Deuteronomy 25, it's the only other time in the Scripture that you have that language.

Anyway, so going back to the -- here is the Book of Esther over here. Anyway, so right over here as you pointed out correctly you offered up this language, "lo chafatzti lekachta"? I don't want to take her. Then over here before "lo yachpotz ha'ish", if he doesn't want to take her. The language, the single verb over here is "lo yachpotz", turns out that that verb just happens to appear in "kacha yei'aseh la'ish" story in the

Book of Esther as well. Let's go to the Book of Esther and see if we can find it. Where is our Book of Esther story? Here we go.

Audience Member: "Asher chafetz bikaro."

Rabbi David Fohrman: There you go. "Balaylah hahu nadidah shenat hamelech va'yomer lehavi et sefer hazichronot divrei hayamim vayiheyu nikra'im lifnei hamelech. Vayimatze chatuv asher higid Mordechai al Bigtana Vateresh shnei sarisei hamelech mishomrei hasaf asher bikshu lishlo'ach yad bamelech Achashveirosh. Va'yomer hamelech mah na'asah yekar ugdulah leMordechai al zeh? Vayomru na'arei hamelech meshartav lo na'asah imo davar. Vayomer hamelech mi vechatzer veHaman ba lachatzer".

Right? Then Haman comes in and the king has one question for him and that is -- Audience Member: "Ma la'asot ba'ish asher --"

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- what should we do "ma la'asot ba'ish asher hamelech chafetz bikaro", what should we do with the person that the king desires to honor. Then over and over and over you've got this "chafetz", right. One time after another time we keep on --

Audience Member: (Interposing) we had it a lot before also when Ahasuerus was -- "Mi hamelech" -- Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't think (inaudible).

Audience Member: -- "mi hamelech".

Rabbi David Fohrman: You have it over and over again. You have it five times in this narrative, I think. It keeps on -- you see (inaudible) "Vayomer Haman belibo lemi yachpotz." Okay, now, let me ask you this. Let's actually chart the parallels, is there anything more besides "kacha yei'aseh" and "chafetz" which interlink these two parshiyot? Let's go through the Esther parsha little bit more in detail and see if anything else reminds us of the story of the removing of the shoe.

"Vayomer Haman el hamelech ish asher hamelech chafetz beyikaro. Yavi'u levush malchut asher lavash bo hamelech" actually the easiest way to do this would probably be to take this and put it side by side. Right? Let's take the Book of Esther over there and here is Deuteronomy over here and let's kind of resize it so we can get these together, right? Here is Deuteronomy over here and here is the Book of Esther over here. Okay, so we have the Deuteronomy on the right-hand side of your screen and we got the Book of Esther on the left-hand side of your screen. Let's continue reading in the Book of Esther.

Anyway, so Haman got this idea, "vayomer Haman el hamelech, ish asher hamelech chafetz beyikaro. Yavi'u levush malchut asher lavash bo hamelech vesus asher rachav alav hamelech va'asher nitan keter malchut. Venaton halevush vahasus al yad ish misarei hamelech hapartemim." One second, "yaviu levush malchut. Vehilbishu et ha'ish asher hamelech chafetz beyikaro vehirkivuhu al hasus birechov ha'ir vekaru lefanav kachah ye'aseh la'ish asher hamelech chafetz bikaro." Okay, anything else about the story reminding you of Deuteronomy?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) dressing and undressing.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Dressing and undressing. Okay, right. A public spectacle and also dressing and undressing. In Deuteronomy, what do we have? Undressing. The man gets undressed. What part of him gets undressed?

Audience Member: Shoes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Shoes. Okay. In the Book of Esther, we have dressing. What part of the person gets dressed?

(Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: You know this. Everything except for the shoes. You see how these are mirror images of each other? You have dressing from the feet on upwards, putting on the clothes of the king and his crown, and then we have undressing of the shoes, the bottom of the person. They're really like mirror images of each other in that kind of way.

Audience Member: They're both done at one in the afternoon? Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: They're both done at one in the afternoon. Rabbi David Fohrman: Are they? No.

Audience Member: The war was at one in the afternoon.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah. They were in the sha'ar (gate), not in the chatzar (courtyard). Okay. Anything --

(Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right. One second. Anything else. There is a plan here, let's see if it talks about (inaudible). There's also a play on words. One of the things that the Torah will do occasionally is play Jewish anagrams with you. Where it will take a word and mix it up in parallel stories. It turns out that there is a mix up word that appears in Deuteronomy and it gets mixed up in the story and the way you know it is its position in the verse is exactly the same, but it's the mixed up word. See if you can find the mixed up word.

Audience Member: Yakar.

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Good. It is yakar. I'll tell you where you see it exactly. It's right over here. Let me find it here for you. "Vayikach Haman", look at this, "Vayikach Haman et halevush ve'et hasus vayalbeish et Mordechai vayarkiveihu birechov ha'ir vayikra lefanav kachah yei'aseh la'ish asher hamelech chafetz bikaro." Now what does that remind you of?

Audience Member: Yakar.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. You have over here, right before "Kachah yei'asah la'ish" in Deuteronomy, you have the befanav. You with me? Right before the "kachah yei'aseh la'ish" over here, you also have a befanav. Where is it?

Audience Member: Lefanav.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right over here, lefanav. Now, the word right before lefanav is vayikra. The word right before befanav over here is, you see that, vayarkah. You see the little play on words. It's Jewish anagrams. Take vayikra, switch the Aleph and the Hei, switch around the Yud and the Reish, and it's kind of a play on words. "Vayarka befanav" comes "vayikra lefanav," "kacha yei'asah la'ish." Instead of spitting in his face, which is degradation, you have "vayikra lefanav", the calling about how wonderful it is.

Now, if you see these two patterns, you see the link between the patterns. So far we have -- let's think of it all together. What is common about the relationship between Deuteronomy and Esther so far, the nature of the relationship between Deuteronomy and Esther? We found so far three things. By the way "vayarka befanav" also is a play on words for the beginning of the verse and the end of the verse is vayikra over here, but what about the end of the verse?

Audience Member: Bikaro.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. Over here, bikaro, of course, is also a playoff of yakar. It's again Jewish anagrams. Take yikaro, rearrange it and you have yakar. What's common about all these things? "Vayikra lefanav kachah yei'aseh la'ish asher hamelech chafetz bikaro," what relationship does that have to "yakar befanav?"

Audience Member: They're opposites.

Rabbi David Fohrman: They're opposites of each other. Spitting in someone's face publicly is going to be the greatest degradation. Riding through the streets and having someone "yikra lefanav", calling out and saying "kachah yei'aseh la'ish asher hamelech chafetz bikaro" is going to be the greatest --

Audience Member: Honor.

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- honor. You have greatest honor versus greatest degradation.

Similarly, in "kachah yei'aseh la'ish." What are the words "kachah yei'aseh la'ish?" The words "kachah yei'aseh la'ish" in Deuteronomy is "kachah yei'aseh la'ish asher lo yivneh beit achiv, the greatest degradation. In the Book of Esther, it's the greatest honor, "kachah yei'aseh la'ish asher hamelech chafetz bikaro."

Finally, similarly with dressing and undressing. The greatness honor would be to put a king's clothes on you from head to just about toe. The greatest degradation would be to have your shoe removed from you and being called the "beit chalutz hana'al."

You have this very careful mirror imagery between Deuteronomy and the Book of Esther. It seems like the Book of Esther is very consciously patterning itself after the Book of Deuteronomy in a mirror image kind of way which leads us to the question --

Audience Member: Why?

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- why. Why? What does the Book of Esther have to do with the Book of Deuteronomy? That's what we've got to figure out. What do you think? Come on, it wasn't a rhetorical question. What do you think? What would the Book of Esther have to do with the Book of Deuteronomy? Why are these mirror images?

Now, recall by the way that even in the Book of Esther there's flip, of course. In the stories which we're reading, two different things are happening, which is what Haman thinks is going to happen and what actually happens. What Haman thinks is going to happen is that he's going to be running through the streets and someone's going to be calling before him this stuff. What ends up happening actually to Haman is the greatest degradation. He hopes that he's going to be honored. In the end he's actually degraded. Yeah.

Audience Member: The first is talking about the continuation of Israel and with Haman, he's trying to put an end to Israel.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Why should that have anything to do with a levirate marriage and the removing of the shoe, with a levirate marriage and the removing of the shoe in particular?

Audience Member: To reflect the life of Eliphaz. Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. We're getting warm.

Audience Member: We're talking here about two brothers.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. We're talking about two brothers. Let's talk about two brothers. What does the Book of Esther have to do with two brothers? The truth is the Book of Esther has everything to

do with two brothers. If you're thinking about the Book of Esther, remember the people understand their pretention in the copious of each story are Haman, on the one hand, who thinks that he's going to be riding through the streets, and ultimately Mordecai who is riding through the streets. There's this flippy kind of relationship between them.

It turns out, I want to argue, that both Haman and Mordecai, their stories, if you want to really understand their stories, what their stories are really about are exactly what a levirate marriage is about.

A levirate marriage is there is almost no better metaphor for the Book of Esther than the story of a levirate marriage which begins with these simple words, "Ki yeshvu achim yachdav," when brothers settle together. The story is on two different levels about brothers settling together. For Haman, that's what the story is about and for Mordecai that's what the story is about in two different kinds of ways. Let me explain what it is that I mean by that.

Let's start with Mordecai. What I'm doing now, maybe this is an appropriate way to end up our Amalek stuff. What I'm going to do with you now is actually a review, a review of something we did a year ago, or almost a year ago right before we started talking about Amalek, it's the last class I did with you, right before we started the story of Amalek. Which is going to end up being the last class again of the Amalek series.

What I was talking to you back then was a sort of oral sequel to the book that I wrote called The Queen You Thought You Knew, which was what I would have (inaudible) on the book, if I had only thought about it in time enough to write it (inaudible).

I want to review that with you. One of the things that always bothered me as I was going through the Amalek stuff was -- sort of a personal insight really -- which was that I kept on thinking to myself gee, this would make a great book one day and it would really be a great sequel to The Queen You Thought You Knew, but I hadn't thought of any of it, before I'd written The Queen You Thought You Knew, and I had implicated in that book that I was going to write a sequel and I sort of teased where the sequel was going to go, but the problem was is that I couldn't figure out.

The sequel that I had in mind to actually write at the time when I wrote the book is completely different from the sequel which I would write now. I mean it's a very nice sequel the first sequel, but it had nothing to do with the Amalek stuff. I couldn't figure it out. If the Amalek stuff really works, how does it fit with the themes in The Queen You Thought You Knew and I couldn't create a bridge between the stuff in the book and this new stuff. This probably makes a really lousy sequel.

What I'm going to do with you today is the bridge. It's really the bridge between everything we've been talking about Amalek and the ideas in the last third of the book which -- this is kind of how the sequel would go. Don't spread it around.

Here's the idea. What I'm doing now is kind of a review from what we did about a year ago or so. If we go back to the Book of Esther for a moment, right before this discussion between Haman and Mordecai,

there's a discussion between Mordecai and Esther. In the discussion between Mordecai and Esther, Mordecai tells her -- see if we can find it, where is it, did I lose it? No, it's before this -- Esther said I can't go to the king, I'm stuck, I'm going to get killed.

Mordecai tells Esther these famous words, "Im hachareish tacharishi ba'eit hazot revach vehatzalah ya'amod laYehudim mimakom acher ve'at u'beit avich toveidu." This is what I spoke about at the end of the previous (inaudible). I argued there that these words "Im hachareish tacharishi ba'eit hazot", if you keep silent Esther at this time, salvation will come to the Jews through another place. By the way, these words "Revach vehatzalah ya'amod laYehudim mimakom acher" are Jacob and Esau words. She's battling Amalek. When Mordecai tells her that if you keep silent we will be saved anyway, how does he know that's true? How does he know that God is going to save them from the hands of Amalek?

If you chart the words "revach vehatzalah" you know, because where do the words "revach vehatzalah" come from? It turns out the word revach only appears one other time in Tanach before this. You'd be amazed by that, but apparently there's only one other revach. The only other revach is "Revach tasimu bein eider le'eider." It's in Jacob and Esau three. That's the story that Amalek forgets about. It's when Jacob appeases Esau and basically says he's sorry, so he gives him all these gifts and he places revach, he places distance, between each one of these flocks that he gives.

Then of course the word hatzalah, also from that same story. Right before he gives those gifts, he prays to God and what does he say, "Hatzileini na miyad achi miyad Esav." "Revach vehatzalah" seem to be together. How does Mordecai know that he's going to survive the onslaught of Amalek? Because he knows something that Amalek doesn't know, or that Amalek doesn't want to face up with, which was Jacob and Esau reconciled. It's not just about the feud. It's a mixed remembering to not remember the three, the third story and in the merit of the third story, you have a leg to stand on when confronting Esau.

Anyway, he tells her, "Im hachareish tacharishi ba'eit hazot", you must not keep silent at this time. Now, what I argued back then and what I argued to you a year ago is that the words "im hachareish tacharishi" are kind of fairly sinister words. They actually draw us back to another story, the only other time you have a double hachareish in the Torah and that is in the portion of nullifying vows.

In the portion of nullifying vows in the Book of Numbers, you have the story of a woman who makes a vow, but she finds it very difficult to keep. It's a vow of inui nefesh, it oppresses her, and in that case her husband has the ability, in certain circumstances, to annul the vow. But he only has the ability to annul the vow if he annuls it on the day that he heard of it, sort of his immediate response has to be oh my gosh, that vow isn't binding. If he does that, the vow is annulled. Or on the other hand he can affirm the vow.

However, the Torah does indicate a third possibility, which is what if he chooses neither to affirm nor to annul the vow. To that the Torah says "ve'im hachareish yacharish lah ishah miyom el yom", if you will keep silent. We know that before that the words for keep silent there, lehacharish actually comes from the Hebrew word cheresh, which really means to make yourself deaf. What the husband is doing is really

making himself deaf to the wife's predicament. He's saying I don't know, it's not my business. It's like you're plugging your ears. This is what the Torah says, that there's no such thing as making yourself deaf. If you choose to make yourself deaf, that's the same thing as allowing the vow to stand. It's just that you're doing it sort of passive aggressively.

The Torah says that, in fact, if she fails to keep to the terms of the vow, the Torah holds him responsible for that if she can't keep to the terms of the vow.

Why would the Torah hold him responsible for that? Because he put her in that position. These words, "im hachareish tacharishi" Mordecai is quoting those words. It's almost as if he's saying your husband has sort of made (inaudible). The shoe is on the other foot. The story of annulling the vow is about a man annulling what his wife said. Now you're in the opposite position. You're a woman, you're a wife, but you have the power to annul what your husband said. Your husband made a decree that's inui nefesh, that's going to cause hardship, that's going to cause death and destruction for the Jewish People. If you have the ability to annul it, but what you can't do is keep silent, you can't pretend you didn't hear. If you keep silent, what he tells her is "Ve'at u'beit avich toveidu", you and your father's house will be destroyed.

Seems strange. The worst that you could accuse Esther of is cowardness. She's a coward. What if Esther had an accident? If Esther had an accident, the worst thing you could tell her is she was too scared.

Because you're too scared, your father's house is going to be destroyed. The Torah gives dispensations for being scared to go to battle. You don't have that kind of response. But seemingly, what Mordecai is talking about is something a little bit more sinister, a little bit darker. What I want to suggest he's saying is literally the very same thing as nullifying vows. He's suggesting to Esther that she shouldn't have that kind of passive aggressive motivation. She shouldn't try to keep silent as if she's making herself deaf to what the other Jews are going through.

Now, you might pull back right now and you might say, one second, Fohrman, why are you saying such nasty things about Esther. You're saying that Esther would even have the nisayon (test) to keep silent in that kind of way, in a way that would sort of really cause hardship in a knowing way and she can act, but she's keeping silent anyway. Why would she do such a thing?

The answer to that is the (inaudible) story for the story of Esther. Just to review this is really the third part of the book, actually, to sort of expand it. When Esther goes to the king to save the Jews, she goes twice. The first time she goes she fails, the second time she goes she succeeds. Each time she goes her language tells an interesting story.

First time she goes, she says these words. She goes to the king and she fingers Haman, she says Haman's the guy. Here's what she says. "Ki nimkarnu ani ve'ami lehashmid laharog u'le'abeid ve'ilu la'avadim velishpachot nimkarnu hecherashti ki ein hatzar shoveh beneizek hamelech." "Nimkarnu ani ve'ami" such strange words. Me and my people have been sold to be killed and to be destroyed? Why is she talking about me and my people have been sold to be killed and to be destroyed? They've really been sold? As it turns out, even though Haman had mentioned giving money to the king's treasury, the king

had said, "hakesef natun lach"? I don't need the money. Really there wasn't really -- the king has not really been bought up because really there is no transaction here.

Also, if you were Esther, what would you be trying to do? I mean, if I was Esther, how would I be trying to appeal to the king? I would try to appeal to him as the white knight in shining armor who's going to come and save the (inaudible) in distress. I want to make him feel good about what he's doing, but listen to what Esther says. She makes an argument that literally could have come from a (inaudible). It doesn't sound very romantic at all. She says "Ki nimkarnu ani ve'ami lehashmid laharog u'le'abeid ve'ilu la'avadim velishpachot nimkarnu hecherashti ki ein hatzar shoveh beneizek hamelech."

She said look here, I have to admit that if we had only been sold as slaves I really wouldn't be making such a big deal about this. Sure, I can understand we've been sold as slaves, you get some slave labor out of it, not so bad for us, we're not killed, we're only slaves. I really wouldn't have protested in that case, but I'm only protesting because we're getting killed. If we get killed, what do you really get out of that anyway? You don't get any slave labor out of it and plus it's worse for us, we get killed. That's why I'm mentioning this, but, king, don't you worry, if we were only slaves I really wouldn't have asked anything of you.

I mean, why is she mudding in the waters. Let me just say, there's a guy who's trying to kill us, why does she have to get into that, really if it were only slavery, yeah, for sure, take us as slaves, I don't care. If you're trying to make someone feel like he's stepping up, he's saving you, he's making everything good, don't compromise it in this kind of way.

What I want to argue is that there's a path here. The path is that the -- this is an argument that I made before, that when Esther's been called on to save the Judas, the Judas are not the Jews. Historically, the word Judas now means Jews, but it is an inaccuratism to believe that the word Judas meant Jew at this point in history. It actually meant someone from the tribe of Judah, someone from the kingdom Judah.

Remember this is at the time right after galus (exile) of the First Temple. Until now, literally, until 55 years ago the kingdom of Judah had been a kingdom. They've actually been a nationality. They weren't a religion, they were a nation. Judah was a nation. If you think about who the Judas were when the Persians say, when Haman says he's going to get the Judas, he's not thinking he's going to get the Jews in terms of the religion, he's going to get the remnants of the kingdom of Judah. That's what it means he's going to get Judah.

Who is the kingdom of Judah? It turns out that the 10 tribes are gone, who is the kingdom of Judah? Audience Member: Judah and Benjamin.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's actually Judah, but not just Judah. It's Judah and Benjamin. There's this little straggler tribe along with Judah and it is Benjamin.

Now, no one called it the kingdom of Judah and Benjamin because Benjamin's so small and now why is

Benjamin so small. Let's talk about that. One of the reasons why Benjamin is so small is because of Judah. Because a few generations before Judah wiped them out in a civil war because of the pilegesh baGivah (concubine of Gibeah) and so there are really just a few stragglers of Benjamin left, but there were. There was a lot of tension between Judah and Benjamin historically when Saul had been king and rally Judah behind him, but it wasn't easy. He was from Benjamin and it was right after the concubine of Gibeah, and there was a lot of tension.

If you think about it in those terms, that's really why we stand and give such honor to Mordecai. Listen to how Mordecai's introduced, "Ish Yehudi hayah beShushan Habirah u'shemo Mordechai ben Yair ben Shimi ben Kish ish Yemini." That verse is really telling you a surprise. It's saying there was a Judaite person, a person from the nation of Judah, but he was "Mordechai ben Yair ben Shimi ben Kish" and guess what tribe he was from? He was not actually from Judah, even though he was part of the kingship of Judah. He was from Benjamin.

What that means is that what he knows is different than from what Haman knows. You see, Haman doesn't know that. All Haman really knows is there's this Judaite guy who's giving me a hard time, I'm going to kill all the Judaites. What Mordecai knows is that his primal affiliation, his primary affiliation is through his own tribe Benjamin and Esther's primary affiliation is through Mordecai and Esther.

That's all well and good as long as Benjamin and Judah are in the same boat, everything's fine. But what if the interest of Benjamin and Judah start to diverge. Along comes Mordecai and makes this argument of Esther, "Al tedami benafsheich lehimaleit beit hamelech mikol haYehudim", don't think that you can hide in the palace. Maybe along with your little Benjamite friends and escape the common holocaust which is going to engulf the remnants of the kingship of Judah. "Im hachareish tacharishi ba'eit hazot", if you keep silent.

Now, why might she keep silent? Let's talk about the dark reason why she might keep silent. (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Think about that. If you were from Benjamin, why might you not be so terribly bothered if you can escape into the palace with your Benjamite friends and relatives while Judah, unfortunately, goes down the drain. I mean, any number of reasons. The past. The Concubine of Gibeah might be one reason, but if you want to go all the way back into the past, you would go to -- what was the beginning of the terrible tension between Benjamin and really the children of Rachel and Judah, in general? The selling of Joseph. How did Benjamin react to the selling of Joseph? You have that famous Rashi. What did Benjamin do? According to Rashi he named his 10 children very similar names after Joseph. He was torn apart. Benjamin was the remnant of Rachel who remembered Joseph. Joseph paved the way, this terrible thing.

Now all of a sudden along comes the queen and look at these words over here, "Ve'ilu la'avadim velishpachot nimkarnu hecherashti." We heard those words before. You know I really can see myself as keeping quiet if we only sold this place. Why?

Audience Member: We did it already.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Because it happened once before. Sold as slaves, why's she mentioning being sold as slaves? Was there ever selling as slaves in the past between these people? Oh, yes, there was. It was in the story of Joseph. Now, why is she talking about if we were killed, if we were sold as slaves? Because if you go back, turns out that the word Nun-Mem-Chaf-Reish-Nun-Vav only appears one other time in Tanach with different validation. The only other Nun-Mem-Chaf-Reish-Nun-Vav which she is referring to "Ve'ilu la'avadim velishpachot nimkarnu hecherashti" took place in the story of you guessed it, the selling of Joseph. Who said it?

Audience Member: Judah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Judah. When Judah has the bright idea to sell Joseph as a slave he says "lechu venimkereinu laYishmaelim," Nun-Mem-Chaf-Reish-Nun-Vav. Let's just sell him to the Ishmaelites. Now, Judah of course is very nice because in that same sentence Judah said "mah betza ki naharog et achinu bechisinu et damo," we could never kill our brother, never. Why? Because there's no profit in it, that's why, "mah betza ki naharog et achinu bechisinu et damo", we don't gain anything out of it, plus if we kill him we have blood on our hands. We don't want to kill him and have blood on our hands.

If you did a depth kind of analysis, we don't get anything out of it, we don't get any profit and plus it's really bad for us because we've killed him. I have a better idea. "Lechu venimkereinu leYishmaelim", let's just sell him to the Ishmaelites. That way we get the money coming in, there's the credit, but plus it's not so bad because "ki achinu vesareinu hu", let not our hands be (inaudible). We're not killing him that way. It works for us so much better if we just sell him. "Lechu venimkereinu", let's just sell him.

Enter Esther who remembers well that story and says to the king you know, I really have to ask you to save these Judas, you know why? Because you're trying to kill them. Now, if you'd only been trying to sell them as a slave, I think I could have seen my way in towards keeping silent, hecherashti. What Mordecai warned me not to do, I think I could have kept silent in that kind of way. It would have been a passive aggressive silence. I would have just kind of watched as Judah melted away, but even though I really have to pay back Judah because Judah was so nice; he didn't want to kill us because the whole depth kind of analysis didn't work out.

Same thing over here. King, you know, if you're trying to kill us, it's just too bad, because we're dying, you're not getting anything out of it. But if you sold us, you'd be getting something out of it. It wouldn't have been so bad, you wouldn't be killing us. Exactly the same as Judah's calculations, couldn't see myself just doing that but you're killing us, so please step in. You hear the bitterness over the centuries of the memories of the selling of Joseph even as Mordecai told her you have to step in, you have to step in, and she is stepping in, but she's doing the letter of the law. She's stepping in when there's bitterness and pain over it.

The truth is this appeal does not work. She fails, because even though Haman is killed the decree still stands and if the story ends now the Jews die. She fails. She only succeeds when she goes back a second

time, but when she goes back the second time she's still remembering things.

She goes a second time and here's what she says. "Vayoshet hamelech le'Esther et sharvit hazahav vatakam Esther vata'amod lifnei hamelech." She says, "vatomer im al hamelech tov ve'im matzati chein lefanav vechasher hadavar lifnei hamelech vetovah ani be'einav yikateiv lehashiv et hasefarim machashevet Haman ben Hamdata." She then says, "ki eichachah u'chal vera'iti bara'ah asher yimtza et ami ve'eichachah u'chal vera'iti be'avdan moladeti."

Here she does something which she's never ever done before the scroll. She identifies the people who are threatened as her people and she doesn't have to do this. This is the moment when she is saved, Mordecai is saved, all the guys that Benjamin (inaudible) all gathered to the palace and had a party while the holocaust is going to Judah. But she won't let it happen. She goes back specifically for them and says they are my people. How can I bear to watch, the pain that I would have with these people being destroyed. "Vera'iti bara'ah asher yimtza et ami", how can I watch these people. She does it at a great risk to herself by identifying herself with the threatened Jew.

If you read Ahasuerus's response, Ahasuerus is not happy. Ahasuerus basically tries to wiggle out of it and tries to punish her. He says, "Hinei beit Haman natati le'Esther ve'oto talu al ha'eitz al asher shalach yado baYehudim. Ve'atem kitvu al haYehudim katov be'eineichem," but really you can write whatever you want but he really doesn't give them the permission to prevent this and really Mordecai comes up with this way of saving the Jews which is really brilliant, a whole PR campaign, but the king is angry because she has identified herself with this threatened people instead of her queen. You know, whose queen are you? Are you the queen of the Jews or are you the queen of them. It's a very difficult position she puts herself in.

The point is with these words she's also quoting from the story of the selling of Joseph. "Eichachah u'chal vera'iti bara'ah asher yimtza et ami" somebody said those words. "Pen ereh vara asher yimtza et avi" this is the story of Judah and Benjamin.

Remember when Benjamin is framed so Benjamin is going to be taken now as a slave and Judah steps up and Judah says there was a time that I allowed a child of Rachel, a child of our rival mother, to be taken as a slave and I watched my father suffer. This can't be that time. I can't allow that to happen again and therefore, let me be the slave, I put myself in danger. Take me instead because "pen ereh", how can I possibly go back to my father, "eich ereh barah" these same words, "asher yimtza et avi", how can I go back and see the pain that befalls my father.

These are very heroic words on the part of Judah because Judah knows that father loves Benjamin more than me, because he loves Rachel more than me. He loves the other mother more than my mother and that was the reason why I allowed the selling of Joseph to transpire in the first place. How can I go back and see the pain that's evolved in my father? These are very heroic words on the part of Judah. Because Judah knows that "Father loves Benjamin more than me. This is because he loved Rachel more than me. He loved the other mother more than my mother. That was the reason why I allowed mechirat Yosef (the sale of Josef) to transpire in the first place.

"Now I can accept that, and it's okay. My father loved the other woman more; and I know that. I will sit as the slave, because that is better for my father." That is the ultimate heroism for that part.

Now Esther remembers that. And Esther repays you though with that. She says, "And therefore I will put myself at risk; and save the Jews." "Ki eichachah uchal vera'iti bera'ah asher yimtza et ami;" She remembers that, and she pays Judah back.

Bottom line, what is Esther's greatness? Esther's greatness is, she remembers the whole story; not just part of the story. Yes, it's true, she remembers the pain of the sale of Josef; and, yes, that bitterness seeps through. But sometimes in life, when you have bitter parts of life, and somehow over life, over years those relationships get better. At that point we all have, in the deep, dark recesses of our souls, we have a choice to make.

The choice is that memory is a fluid kind of thing. And memory is a subjective kind of thing. Memories never tell the real truth. Memories tell what you want them to tell. Memory is really, if you think about it is, within that -- what is memory?

What memory is -- this is a very deep thing. Memory is not just a recollection of past events. Memory is, how do you memorize things? When you have a difficult thing to memorize, how do you memorize it? So I would say, how do you memorize a song?

A song has 793 notes. How could you possibly memorize that? But if we sat here and I spent an hour teaching you a song, at the end you would be able to sing the song of 793 notes. How could you memorize that? If I said, "A-sharp, B-flat minor, C -- you'd never be able to remember it. But if I sing you a song, the song connects all of the parts.

You have ligaments. You have ways of connecting this. It's not a whole bunch of different things. It's one thing. That's what memory does. Memory is not just recall of events in your life. The way your memory works is, it stitches together those things. It tells a story. It makes the events into a story. But there is no right story. The story is subjective. It's how you stitch together those events.

Are you familiar with the famous FedEx problem; the math problem? You know what I'm talking about? Audience Members: No.

Rabbi David Fohrman: There's something -- Fran, you'll know what I'm talking about. There's a math problem. Basically, it's a special delivery problem. It's that, if you have a delivery man, who has to deliver 100 packages, right? What's the shortest route?

It turns out that a computer cannot calculate the shortest route. At least at one time this was so. What's so hard about calculating the shortest route? There's so many different possibilities, you can't calculate the shortest route.

That is the memory issue. It is, how am I going to connect these 100 things, so that it makes sense; to me? You can connect them in any possible different kind of way. Your mind is going to choose.

I think when we ask God, "Zachreinu lechaim", when we, in Yizkor -- or we say that God should remember us. In "ya'aleh veyavo" when we say, "Remember us for good." We actually are asking God to stitch together our lives; the various experiences of our lives, in a good way. "Zachreinu letovah", right? "Zachreinu lechaim".

This is that -- let your memory -- because it's almost as if it were a subjective thing on the part of God. God, how do You remember our lives? What story do you think we're telling? What events are important? What events aren't important? How are You placing the emphasis? All of that is what memory does.

You have to be very careful lest [sic] you think that your memory tells the truth. Your memory tells you the story that you want to tell; out of your life.

The question for Esther is, what story does she want to tell? She has a choice. If she wants to, she can just remember with bitterness everything that happened with Judah over the centuries; and keep the feud going for another generation. Esther's greatness though is, that she does remember that. It's there. It does affect her, and there is bitterness over there. But she's able to work through that. In the end, and perhaps because she is able to remember it.

Remember, here's the other thing. Here's the catch. This is a trick. Lest you say to yourself that you're all

-- right? I'm a woman, 'sugar and spice and everything nice'. If bad things happen in my life, I close the door on them; and I forget about them.

No. You can't forget about bad things, because when you try to forget about bad things you don't forget; you remember. What you're doing is you're consciously saying that they're not there. But you're sub-conscious knows better. Your sub-conscious knows it's there. It's going to come back. You're going to be angry and you're going to be resentful under the surface. It's going to get you, without you even knowing that it gets you.

The trick is, that you have to remember the bad things, too. The question is, what story do you tell? How do you weight them? How do you put them together? What Esther's doing is a delicate game of weighting the story.

I remember the bad stuff; I do. And there's bitterness associated with the bad stuff. At the end of the day, though, it's because she remembers that, she's able to work through that. And the next time she goes to the king, she's says, but I remember there's something more to Judah, too.

Look at the end of the story. Judah sacrifices himself heroically; and I can pay that back; centuries later. I can close that circle. In this last story in Tanach, it's really a great story of reconciliation between the benei (sons of) Rachel and the benei (sons of) Leah. It's brought to you, courtesy of Mordechai and

Esther in "Ki im hachareish tacharishi -- ". That brings us finally -- I'll let you go with the thought of why Benjamin can combat Amalek.

Because, go back to the first thing I said. What's Amalek's problem? Amalek's faced with this same issue, with Jacob. It's brothers and brothers. "Ki yeish'vu achim yachdav." And, there's bad stuff that happens. But there was good stuff that happened, too. The bad stuff happened in stories number one and number two with Jacob and Esau. The good stuff happened in story three.

What is Amalek's response? Amalek's response is, forget about story three. I will only remember stories one and two. I forget about story three. Because of that, Amalek misremembers history. Who's going to battle Amalek? Mordechai and Esther will battle Amalek. Because Mordechai and Esther are the true memory keepers; of the brother's struggle. The only way they have the ability -- the reason why they have a moral leg to stand on is, let the people who have -- who also have difficulty in their relationships between brothers. Who have -- that the story of the sale of Josef is remembered. What gives them the ability to combat Amalek is that, "Yes, we remember the beginning of the story. But we remember the end of the story, too."

Therefore, I have a leg up of the (inaudible). The ability to triumph over Amalek because Amalek insists on only the beginning of the story. Yibum (Levirate marriage) and chalitzah (extraction from obligation of Levirate marriage ceremony), are the metaphor for that. It's the story of brothers together; where there's pain in the family. Why isn't this brother interested in marrying the yebamah (brother's widow eligible for Levirate marriage)? Even after the Zekeinim (Elders)) come and plead with him, "Marry her". It's because there's something going on. There's something he remembers.

If he doesn't get -- he's going to passively-aggressively allow the name of his brother to die. "I didn't kill him. He's already dead. It's not my fault. I'm just not going to rescue his name. I'm not doing anything." It's hachareish tacharishi'. "I'm just staying silent. I'm just being passive. I won't act." The Torah does not think much of passive-aggressive kind of malevolence. That's exactly what this is. Therefore, he's going to be called the, " -- beit chalutz hanna'al."

What does Haman think his claim to fame is? When he comes to the king, what is he thinking about? His mind is filled with only one thing when he comes to the king. What is that? Killing Mordechai. His wife has just told him, "Why are you so upset with Mordechai? You'll go to the king in the morning.

You'll ask him to kill Mordechai. You'll come, you'll take two tablets, you'll go to the feast and you'll be really happy."

He's so obsessed with this, he can't wait until the morning. In the middle of the night he comes throwing pebbles at the king's door. Could I please kill Mordechai? He's obsessed with that. But he's obsessed with one other thing, too. Namely, how great he is. Because, when the king says to him, "We want to honor somebody," the only person he can think of is himself.

I want to argue that the reason why Haman thinks he's so great; the two things that Haman is obsessed with are A) his own greatness, and B) the death of Mordechai; and they are in Haman's mind, the same

thing. The reason why Haman thinks he's so great is, what favor is he doing for the king and for the world? He's ridding them of the Jew.

Hitler, by the way, he thought, he was so -- what was his greatness? Because he was ridding the world of Jews. Therefore, he's willing to divert magnanimously, all of his war materiel at the end of the war; even as the war is going down the tubes, to be able to keep the gas chambers going. Because that is the great favor that he's doing for the world.

In Haman's mind it's the same thing. Therefore, when Haman says, "the man the king wants to honor;" what does he think his claim to fame is? He thinks his claim to fame is, that his relationship with his brother is such, that he's going to "deep-six" his brother. He's going to try to destroy his brother.

Therefore, what Devarim considers, what Sefer Devarim considers the greatest mark of shame, which is standing by while your brother dies, Haman considers his greatest child. Therefore, he takes the language of Devarim so to speak, and the language of the Megillah, and turns it on its head, and it's no longer spinning into space, but "the king wants to honor me, because I'm standing by. I'm going to destroy Mordechai. And, again, I'm going to get rid of them all. I'm going to kill the brother that lives with me."

But, of course, the flipside happens. Mordechai is the one who is honored. Why is Mordechai honored? Because what did Mordechai tell Esther? " -- im hachareish tacharishi -- ", you must not stand by while your brother bleeds. You cannot stand passively-aggressively by.

What the flip is really about is, the Torah exalting Mordechai and Esther for their ability to not stand by while their brother pleads. This gives them the ability to have Haman on the ropes, and to have Haman be the one who's leading that horse through the streets, instead of Haman being exalted for his flip of the Purim story.

That's the end of Amalek folks. It's been great. Next time, when we come back, we'll move on to something else.

Rabbi David Fohrman: I think that what I want to do (inaudible) from your feedback -- it seems like it could, kind of, work. I always felt that one of the mistakes that people make when they think about books in general, they think about even Torah learning, is that everyone is focused on content and chiddushim (original new thoughts) and all of that and you think that that's the way you judge a work, which is, you know -- you take a sober look at the content and what is being said. That's true, but to me what's always ignored is how you say it also -- the presentation.

My personal feeling is that there's a very thin line and almost no line between content and presentation. To me, what I was aiming to do in presentation was not just to put the ideas out there, but to try to put them out in an engaging, captivating kind of way that, sort of, drew you in and maybe you want to keep on reading and gave you the feel that you are reading a novel that you didn't want to put down. To me, that is a real accomplishment, because most of the time when you pick up a sefer (Jewish learning book) you're thinking, oh, you know, I have to learn, so I'm going to struggle through whatever it says, because at least I'm going to get the insights. People just don't pay that much attention to how they put ideas down. They figure it's (inaudible) justification that it's learning and that it's Torah and I can put it down any way I want.

To me, it would be a real coup if you could create a book that people read -- would pick up not even because it was Torah, just because they wanted to pick it up and they felt that they couldn't put it down. To me that, in a way, it is almost what the Torah itself is talking about.

When you think of -- even in Shema, we don't always think of these words a lot, but if you think about what we say in Shema about Torah, right, "veshinantam lebanecha". What are the next words? "Vedibarta bam beshivtecha b'beisecha u'belechtichah bederech u'beshochbecha u'bekumechah." If you think about what those words mean, they don't just -- we have a halachic way of doing those words, when we wake up we say Shema, when we go to sleep we say Shema. But the p'shat of what those words mean is that you should be so in love with Torah that you are talking about Torah "vedebarta bam" you just, like, are talking.

When you talk to people you talk about Torah. It should be the first thing that you talk about when you wake up. It should be the last thing that you talk about when you go to sleep. When you are at home you talk Torah, when you are -- in other words, why? Because you can't stop thinking about it; it just invades your thoughts. It captures your imagination. That is the, you know -- that's the, kind of, thing

-- so if you can put something together that captures people's imagination in that kind of way, it's a great, great thing. That's, kind of, what I was trying to do.

Today I am sharing -- I'm doing something which I -- I wouldn't say that I don't often do, because with you I actually do this, but, in general, outside this group I don't often do. You guys are my official guinea pig group (laughter). I use you to try things out with and, basically --

Audience Member: We feel so honored.

Rabbi David Fohrman: You feel so honored. Audience Member: Because we're graded GP.

Rabbi David Fohrman: You're graded GP, that's right. Audience Member: Guinea Pigs.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Not, PG, but GP. So here is the thing. What I want to share with you today and probably next week and maybe the week after that is something new that I have been developing that I just started developing. I am very excited about it. This began to come to me last Friday night and I have been working on it ever since. I have lost some sleep over this. It actually happened when, the Shabbos before Purim, I happened to pick up this book on Friday night as I was sitting down before Kiddush waiting for my girls to get home from Eish Kodesh which could take a while. I happened to just open it up randomly and -- kind of, like the king in the Megillah -- it opens up to the right page and you just start reading.

Audience Member: What was the name of the book?

Rabbi David Fohrman: The name of the book is -- this is a great book. I do recommend it; it's Yehoshua Bachrach's Kitvuni Ledorot. I recommend anything by Bachrach. Bachrach was a teacher at Michlalah and a great scholar and he wrote Ma Bein Shaul LeDovid, Yonah and Eliyahu, Machar Chodesh.

Audience Member: Where can you get his books? Can you get his books around here? Rabbi David Fohrman: Can you get his books around here?

Audience Member: Ima shel Malchus.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Ima shel Malchus, about Ruth, right. Basically he's great and, you know, he writes all these wonderful little books on Tana"ch and they are fascinating. I highly recommend them.

Audience Member: This one is (inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: This one is Kitvuni Ledorot which is on the Megillah. Audience Member: English or Hebrew?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Hebrew. Anyway, he's great. So I just happened to pick up this book and I just happened to open it to this page and I am reading this Chazal -- actually it was, like, two pages -- and it hits me like a ton of bricks. I couldn't sleep that night, like the king (laughter) and like Achashverosh (Ahasuerus) actually, Haman came to the door.

Audience Member: Who was Haman?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Haman were the ideas. Everything that this was about was Haman; it was actually literally Haman coming to the door. It opened up Haman in this whole new way which I haven't been able to stop thinking about. Not just Haman, but really Amalek in general. It's almost like a glimpse into the dark heart of Amalek's soul. It seems to me that Amalek was one of the -- so that's really what I want to talk about. Amalek is one of those things that is the most mystifying aspects of the Torah, one of the most difficult, most mystifying aspects of the Torah. I know this is really -- Oh, there's no battery left in here, so I am going to have to rely on your thingybob (sic.).

I am a little nervous taping this, so I am not sure how far -- so do me a favor and just don't put this tape out there right now on the internet. You can circulate it among friends if you like, but what I am talking about is speculative.

Amalek is very, very tough. Here you have this decree to wipe out an entire nation; man, woman and child. You have a king that was deposed, because of his inability to completely fulfill this decree. It's just a strange law. The idea that we must never, ever forget what it is that Amalek did to us and people that

-- we are supposed to be told that we are not in the revenge business. We are warned against revenge and yet, what is this idea that we must never forget what Amalek did to us? Does that contradict our idea of revenge? The whole Amalek idea is just one of those things which seems inexplicable. I never had much of a p'shat on it. I struggled with it a bit 10 years ago after 9/11 actually and I had some thoughts then which are interesting, but I don't think that I really got to the heart of the matter.

This passage from our Sages began to just open up this whole new window and I began to discover. You know, with my sort of methodology -- my sort of methodology -- the methodology I use -- others use a similar methodology -- it's one of the criticisms that I got for the book and you can find it on the internet if you like. The Dov Ber blog wants to know whether Rabbi Fohrman's book is controversial and whether it should really be damned, just like Rabbi Slifkin's books; even more than Rabbi Slifkin's books. Why? Because, you know, there were no Chazal (passages from our Sages) in the book. It was all original thought and are you really allowed to think that much (laughter)? So that was really the issue.

Audience Member: No.

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? That's right.

Audience Member: Have we heard that voice (inaudible) too?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, yes. We have heard that voice from the (inaudible) too. The truth is I am not one of these anti-Chazal kind of people. Like, I am not the kind of guy to think that every one before was really stupid; listen to me, I am so much smarter. I really don't think that's the case. As a matter of fact, what I think I'm doing which is very complimentary of the Midrash and it's really just observing what Midrash does, seeing the tools that they use and, kind of, using them.

Between you and me -- I don't know historically -- but I doubt that we really have all the Midrashim. Everything of this time was written down; it was never edited the way Bavli was edited in a systematic kind of way. There weren't any computers, there weren't information retrieval systems. There were no tape recordings. Do we really know that we even have anything approaching a complete record of what our Sages thought of on Chumash and Midrash? Therefore, is it wrong to at least observe what they did so effectively and so incisively and try to make use of that and see what else is out there? To, kind of, connect the dots with what they do say and fill in the pictures. That is how I view what it is that I do.

Ironically, 36 hours after this thing went off on the internet whether my book is controversial engendering a flurry of 70 comments back and forth about whether I really should be banned.

Audience Member: That's really mean.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It is kind of mean. It would be fun if I didn't have daughters to marry, let's put it that way (laughter). It's like everyone says, yeah, it's great for sales and I say, you don't have daughters to marry.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) said was paranoid. Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: It means that (inaudible) said was paranoid.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, I suppose so, but, anyway -- but within -- Audience Member: Because you go to (inaudible)?

Audience Member: That's right.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. So, 36 hours after this went up I actually got this e-mail from this rabbi in Riverdale, Kenny Hain's son-in-law -- son, Shmuel Hain, Rabbi Hain's son. It was this wonderful e- mail; he read the book and he really loved it and he said, by the way, here are three passages from our Sages that support what you say. In fact it was; they were these out of the way passages from our Sages in the Yalkut Shimoni and other places that I never really saw. He is right; they do support the thesis of the book. So I will put them in the second edition. But it just goes to show, when you get on to something, when you find something in the text, you know, often times our Sages will have seen it; it's just that you have to figure out where they saw it and you have to track it down. It was there.

Audience Member: Did you (inaudible) e-mail? Did you (inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: I decided not to respond to the whole piranha fest. I really felt that if I got involved with that that it wasn't going to do anybody any good, so I didn't respond. I just didn't think it was a good idea, because you don't win. If you put that out there, so then -- how come you didn't put it

in the book? Well, I didn't really see it at that time. Well, what were you doing publishing something if you didn't see? You know what I mean? You can't really win. So I didn't put it out there and then in the second edition maybe I'll put it in there.

But the idea is that you can start either way, in other words, the way the passages from our Sages work

-- and this is relevant what I am about to talk to you about. Midrash has its own language and one of the problems is that if you don't bother to understand the language, you can just misinterpret everything they say. Unfortunately, there are books out there that do this consistently. There are books on Midrash that seem like very nice books. You know, it's not just the Midrash Says or The little Medrash Says or -- there are other books like that. This sort of innocent compilation midrashim, but they don't seem to be attuned to the language that Midrash is using and when that happens, you run the risk of making it sound like just a bunch of fables and child stories and crazy things.

I actually had some people lose faith in our Sages, much more than they gained faith in our Sages, because they seem things that are just strange. But one of the things about our Sages is that they use an allegorical language; they touch on ideas and it is sort of like hameivin yavin. In other words, we're showing you the tip of an iceberg and if you want to do your digging, you will see the rest of the iceberg. You know, see you -- that's our Sages signing out.

That's basically it. It's like you're on the bridge of the Titanic and you just saw that little iceberg and you know there is a whole lot underneath the water and you just have to decide whether you're going to look. So, you know, that's the case, you can go either way, which is that sometimes you stumble upon this whole subterranean network of stuff in the text and eventually you will find a passage of our Sages or two that are alluding to that, you know, look at this, look at this, look at that, which is what happened in the book. Sometimes it works the other way, you see this passage from our Sages that's the strangest thing in the world and it's this key into this whole subterranean network in the text that you never even imagined was there. It works that way.

In this case, what I am about to show you today -- that's the way it worked; I found the passage from our Sages first and then that just led you into a cave. The cave is a remarkable cave. It's this warren of these underground textual connections that really connect so much. What I'm about to share with you in the next few weeks is especially exhilarating, because it connects so much. One of the best metaphors I have to -- the work that I do is jigsaw puzzle work. A lot of times people say, you know, like, you give a class and people say, wow, that's so amazing. How did you come up with all these different things? It's like, boy; you must be the most brilliant guy in the world.

The truth is, no, it really is not so much a function of brilliance. What it is, is that anybody who does jigsaw puzzles knows how jigsaw puzzles work, right? First you put the (inaudible) pieces over here and you put those aside. If this is a very big jigsaw puzzle it can take you a few years, you know, but you've got the face over there and you've got this over there. Then once in a while you'll find a few pieces that click together and that connect major parts of the puzzle and then all of a sudden you see a whole new larger picture of the puzzle. You can see that in five minutes and then all of a sudden things change and

you talk about it, but it's not something that developed in five minutes; it's something which was put together over time.

This is one of those things where there are these really large parts of the jigsaw puzzle, but they aren't fitting. This passage from our Sages and the network that it uncovers really connects a huge amount of Torah, from the Exodus from Egypt to -- much of the book of Genesis to, indeed, a fair amount of Jewish history and, I think, glimpses into the nature of anti-Semitism in general and particularly Amalek. Strangely enough the key to it all is Amalek. Yeah?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) one minute, can you clarify for me --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Can I just ask somebody in the back if they would just -- can you get me a glass of water or something to drink. I'd really appreciate it. Thanks so much, yeah?

Audience Member: When it says you cannot marry into The Children of Israel, you can't marry an Egyptian, I mean, ever, right -- some three generations. Is this the same thing with Amalek?

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, one of the interesting things about Amalek is that Amalek -- there is no sin against marrying somebody from Amalek if they convert. Not only that, but the mitzvah to wipe out Amalek does not apply to -- first of all, A, it doesn't apply to individuals. If you look at the Rambam (Maimonides) carefully you will find -- baruch Ata Ado-noy Elokeinu Melech ha'olam shehakol nihiyeh bidevaro.

Audience Member: Amein.

Rabbi David Fohrman: We need an amein group, right? What is interesting is A, the command to wipe out Amalek is not a command to wipe out any individual Amalekite. In other words, if you find an Amalekite in the street and you know he's from Amalek. He has his family tree and stuff like that; you are not required to kill him. Why? Because it seems in Maimonides that it is not an individual's mitzvah. It is a mitzvah on the tzibbur (the nation) as epitomized by the king. In other words, the king has to take the nation to war to wipe out Amalek as a whole. It's not an individual thing that individual people have to wipe out individual Amalekites.

Similarly, if an Amalekite would renounce the tenets of Amalek -- in other words, if they would say -- Maimonides is very clear on this. If Amalek as a whole or individuals within Amalek would say we accept the Seven Noahide Laws and we're going to be good boys and girls, then there is no war against them. You accept them and they become regular geirei toshav and you have all the halachos in Maimonides at the end of Rambam Hilchos Melachah about how you have to visit their sick and you have to give tzedakah to them and you have to do all of those things. They can have an Amalek family tree that goes all the way down through history and yet you have to be nice to them and you treat them and you give them special privileges and they fly first class in your societies.

This makes it all the stranger, because, you know, I think the standard way we look at Amalek is not

racial. The standard way that we look at Amalek is -- I think, the way that we are, sort of, taught in schools -- to the extent that we are taught about this, which isn't that much -- that we believe that there is this, sort of, metaphysical warfare and that somehow the Jews are the light side of the force. Amalek is the dark side of the force and we are the good guys in shining armor and we represent everything that is fine in the world and Amalek must represent absolute evil. They just are evil and they're evil incarnate and, therefore, they must be killed.

My thoughts are not completely settled on this, but I do have to tell you that I can't say that I am entirely at peace with those notions. It is a little scary to talk about abject evil, evil incarnate within people. I mean, if you think about it, we as Jews, reject the notion of the Christian devil. We don't believe in evil incarnate in the supernatural realm, so it's a little bit funny that we would believe in evil incarnate in the human realm. Because it's almost like -- the way we think of Amalek is almost like, Amalek is just the devil, but it just dressed up as people.

So what is the difference between, like, the Christian devil and the Jewish devil, as the Jewish devil is Amalek? Do you get it? I get a little -- one second, let me just -- I'm venting right now (laughter). I may be wrong. It's just an instinct. It's just an instinct, but the notion that Amalek is absolute evil and that our job is to wipe out evil -- and then you have to ask yourself, if your job is to wipe out evil, don't you become evil yourself? I mean, if you have a job to wipe out every single man, woman and child of another people then what makes that good? Like, wouldn't you say that that would be evil?

So you get into this, sort of, paradoxical, kind of -- do you know what I mean? It's just very troublesome, especially -- I'm still venting -- especially in the wake of the Holocaust when we were subjected to genocide. We know what it's like. You know, it's just tough, you know? Rabbi Dale Gottlieb, I remember, once said the one issue which he will never deal with -- which is one of the reasons why I don't want these tapes circulating around -- the one issue that he will never deal with in public is the issue of Amalek. The one issue he will never speak about it Amalek. He never speaks about it to ba'alei teshuvah, he doesn't talk about it and if he were asked about Amalek in public forum with ba'alei teshuvah around, he would find a way to change the subject.

That's the way I felt also. How do you even talk about this? It's just very hard to figure out. What I want to argue -- today, what I want to do is argue against this vision of Amalek that we all have; the vision of Amalek as evil incarnate. In a certain way that is going to make it harder to figure out what's going on, because if Amalek is not evil incarnate, so why are you supposed to wipe him out? But then we're really bad if we're not even wiping out evil. But it is hard for me to argue that Amalek is evil incarnate. If they were then there should be a mitzvah upon every individual to kill evil incarnate wherever it is.

What difference does it make whether it's a mitzvah on the tzibbur or on the individual? When you meet evil, you get rid of evil. This guy is evil; if I met Hitler I would kill him. So if these are all the most evil things, so then I should be killing them. I should be walking around with Raid, I should be exterminating evil. I think the notion that -- plus, also, if you notice the mitzvah to wipe out Amalek is also a mitzvah that only appears at certain particular times. It's strange. There is this Rambam, it comes

from the Gemara; "shalosh mitzvos nitztavu B'nei Yisrael besha'as kenisasam la'aretz", there are three mitzvos that we have when we go into the Land.

There is the mitzvah "som tasim alecha melech" there is the mitzvah to get yourself a king. There is the mitzvah to wipe out Amalek and there is the mitzvah to build the Beit Hamikdash. If it were the case that Amalek was evil incarnate, why should it only be when you come into the Land that you have that mitzvah? I mean, anytime, wherever you are that you meet evil incarnate, you should be getting rid of them. There's a trigger for wiping out Amalek and it is at that particular time. So how is it that we -- so, I think, that we need a more nuance picture of Amalek then -- one minute, no questions yet; let me just finish making my case.

We need a more nuance picture of Amalek then that they are just evil incarnate. I think we have to figure it out and that is what I, kind of, want to do. What I want to ask you is, what's the nature of the struggle? I guess, here is how I want to get to it. What I really want to ask is in a certain way a more fundamental question than what's the morality behind all this and what are we doing? Really the issue is, like, what is the struggle about? What exactly are we fighting about? Is it just this, sort of, you know, light side of the force and dark side of the force and we're the good guys?

You can find this in the Maharal a little bit, this idea that Amalek represents the exact opposite of everything that Israel stands for and, I guess, that's possible, but what are they really fighting about? Or what is Amalek really? Another way of talking about it is what is Amalek -- Amalek evidently hates us; we hate them. What do they hate us so much for? I mean, they attacked us in the desert -- like, why? Like, what was that about? What are they so upset about? Is there a way of understanding what the motivations of Amalek are when they are attacking us? Is it just that they don't like good? Is that what it is? I think that's what we normally think. They don't like good; they don't like God. They are haters of God. We represent God; Amalek hates God. They are the ultimate atheists and it's up to us to completely destroy them.

Is that the case? Is that what it's about or is it about something else? What I want to argue today and next week is that that's not true, that Amalek does not hate God. Actually, I think that Amalek likes God.

Audience Member: (Inaudible)? Rabbi David Fohrman: One second. Audience Member: (Inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah. I am not arguing that we don't have a mortal battle with Amalek, right? I am just arguing that I don't think it's the case that Amalek hates God. Now, it is true that you have the language "ki yad al keis kah" that the hand of Amalek is on the throne, so to speak, of God. That's not the same thing as saying that Amalek is trying to wipe out or kill God. What it's saying is that, if anything -- in other words, what I want to argue is that there is a difference between Amalek hand being on the throne of God and Amalek being the mortal enemy of God. Those are not necessarily the

same thing. You have to understand what it means. Audience Member: Do you want to rephrase that?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. It is possible. Let's try to assemble the evidence and try to figure it all out. What we are going to do is just look at a bunch of evidence; a bunch of language evidence, a bunch of our Sages evidence and just try to, kind of, put it together. Yes?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) today, because of the struggle for our survival when you hear --- I mean, is that not the same?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. So here's the thing. You always have to be a little bit nervous about seeing Amalek everywhere, seeing Amalek today. The Jews have always had enemies. Not all of the Jews enemies are Amalek. We don't know who Amalek is anymore. Nevertheless, that having been said, I will say one -- one of the questions that I would ask is -- well, hold on. Let me just share something with you. You know, especially, I think that any thinking person living today -- and this is really what the (inaudible) for my book was about even though my book itself does not really about this -- has got to look at the Holocaust and ask himself what is the deal with that?

The reason why there you have a stronger case for thinking that this was a confrontation with Amalek is, because if you actually look at confrontations with Amalek over the centuries and you look at the Holocaust, you really see a lot of chilling parallels and it just has this Amalek feel to it. Why? Let's talk about Amalek in the times of Haman if Haman is really an Aggagi and a descendent of Amalek.

Here you have an officer of Persia -- I make this case in the (inaudible) from the book -- as Persia sweeps to power with something that looks very much like Blitzkrieg, coming to world domination, wiping out Babylonia, it just happens to hatch this vendetta against the Jews. Not only this vendetta against the Jews, but, to my mind -- and maybe I am wrong -- but in the long sweeping history of 2,300 years of anti- Semitism, going through the Romans and the Babylonians and the Assyrians and the Crusaders and the Byzantine emperor. The first crusades and the second crusades and all of that and Ta"ch veTa"t and through it all, it seems to me that there are only two times in the last 2,300 years where there was an organized attempt to wipe out every man, woman and child among the Jews; literally to exterminate every last member of the Jewish people.

The only times that I know of were in the times of Ahasuerus with Haman and 1939 to 1945 in the Holocaust. Those seem to me to be the only two times. There is that Blitzkrieg parallel and there is also the way they did it. If you look in the Megillah there is this careful use of euphemism by Haman, where he is not really talking about the killing; he is talking about the "osei hamelachah" the doers of the work. There is this gentle attempt to not really be so upfront. It doesn't really name the people, "there is this people" and there is an attempt to hide behind a façade, a façade of euphemism and also a façade of law and order. Everything is done kada'at (according to law); kada'at, kada'at. Everything is according to the law and it's just like Nazi Germany, in that, sort of, way.

There are euphemisms, there are final solutions -- you know, we won't talk about the killing and yet, there is this bureaucracy. There are all these laws and you hide behind the laws. I think I told you about my friend the daughter of the art dealer? Did I tell you about her? No? It's in my book or in my something.

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: What's that?

Audience Member: It's on one of your tapes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's on one of my tapes, this divine (inaudible) tape. My friend Monique (inaudible) in Baltimore, she is a child survivor of the Holocaust and she was a -- her father was an art dealer and she said they came in and they looted the whole place, but they didn't loot the whole place. They made them sit down and document for an entire day the provenance of each painting and what it was from and who it was from and sign it over to them. It was all done kada'at. So there was a whole paper trail and everything and it was crazy, because they were just stealing his stuff, but they were going to do it by law and you have to sign all the papers and everything. Then, lo and behold, ironically, now she is getting the art back from museums in Austria, because the paperwork still survived and it's a paper trail now. She's in struggles against several museums trying to retrieve these paintings.

It is hard to resist the notion that there is something about the Holocaust that smells Amalek-like. It's not just us who have that notion. It was actually the Nazis, too. The Nazis believed it. I just did a quick little search here, actually pointed to by a friend of mine. If you look in Wikipedia, you'll find this yourself.

Look at Purim in Wikipedia, and then look under the section, Purim and the Holocaust. You'll find a lot of interesting things.

You'll find that Hitler, although there were decrees at various points sporadically against Jewish observance at various holidays, but specifically banned and forbade the observance of Purim. He also declared it a capital offense for either Christians or Jews to be in possession of the Book of Esther. You would be killed if you were a Christian and you had the Book of Esther.

In a speech made on November 10, 1938, which is the day after Kristallnacht, Streicher, who was one of the guys who was hanged an Nuremburg, surmised that the same way that the Jews killed out all the Persians, if the Jews would succeed in bringing a world war upon Germany, this is what they would do to Germany, too. It would be a reenactment of Purim. Jews would've instituted a new Purim festival in Germany. Nazi apostolate Jews were timed often to coincide with Purim. They would make a practice of finding 10 Jews to hang on Purim, in revenge for the hanging of the 10 sons of Haman.

Hitler, himself in a speech on January 30, 1944, said that if the Nazis were defeated, the Jews would celebrate a second Purim. Then, of course, there's that famous thing where Streicher, as you know, yells out Purim fest 1947 from the gallows as he been hanged, the 10th of the Nazi war criminals. It seems like the Nazis themselves took it pretty seriously, this idea that we're in mortal combat with the Jews and that

Purim is somehow there.

One of the interesting questions, I think, that we need to ask when considering Amalek, looking throughout the broad sweep of Jewish history, there are three and maybe four times, when we seem to be in confrontation with Amalek. I'm going to argue later that there is a fifth, but for now, let's say three and maybe, four. After the splitting of the Red Sea, when we meet Amalek for the first time and they attack at Rephidim, that's the first time.

The next major battle against Amalek is in the times of King Saul, where King Saul fails to kill Agag. The next major battle against Amalek is in the times of Purim and King Ahasuerus, and maybe, the Holocaust.

One of the interesting questions that I think we should be asking, or we can ask, is there any rhyme or reason to when Amalek attacks? Does it just happen to be that they happen to be that the battle was joined at these four moments in history, or is there a reason that the battle is being joined at these four moments in history?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) into the land. Rabbi David Fohrman: Is there an issue?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) into the land.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, okay. The question is what's happening at these four moments in history that's provoking a battle with Amalek? I think that you're right about that and there's a Midrash that says the same thing. What is happening at the time of Ahasuerus? What is happening as the Jews cross at the splitting of the Red Sea? What is happening at the time of King Saul? Even at the Holocaust, what is happening?

Audience Member: And now.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, and now, what's happening? What's happening, it's all the same. What's happening is the time of transition, where the Jews are on the move and are going into the land. If you think about it, it's hard to see it because we know that the Jews were in the desert for 40 more years before they got into the land, but it wasn't supposed to happen that way.

After the splitting of the Red Sea, they were 11 days away from Israel. They were at Mount Sinai, and from there, it's 11 days to Israel. That was supposed to happen immediately. The spies messed everything up, but that wasn't supposed to happen. When Amalek attacked, they were 11 days away from Israel.

King Saul is the first king beginning to organize Jewish life in Israel, from a period of central chaos in the times of the Judges. What's happening at the time of Ahasuerus?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. We have permission to go back. You have the beginnings of Jews going back to resettle the land that's (inaudible). Well, they did and they didn't. They didn't do it as well, but they're not doing it as well now either.

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Why can't you (inaudible) the other part about (inaudible)? Even if they're having their transition, we were weak. At those points in time, we were weak.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. It could be. We were weak in commandments. (Inaudible) Torah, according to the Sages that's true. Do you know what a seismograph is? A seismograph measures tremors in the earth. That's what you measure earthquakes with. If you had a seismograph to measure just movements of the earth in Jewish history and you had that seismograph along for the last 2,300 years, when would you have the two biggest quakes in Jewish history in the last 2,300 years? They would be the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel, and they happened within three years of each other. Now, is it possible to believe that that's coincidental?

In all of 2,300 years, the two biggest shakes, whether for good or ill, is the establishment of the State of Israel and the Holocaust is happening within three years of each other. You can't just say, well, it's really just the non-Jews felt guilty about the Holocaust, so they gave up the state.

Yes, there probably was a little bit of guilt that helped people, the partitions don't pass, but that wasn't true because historically, the move towards the settlement of Zion had begun with the first aliyah well before the Holocaust and continued through. Ben Gurion and everyone else, was in Israel at the time of the Holocaust draining the swamps and building the walls of Jerusalem and it was happening contemporaneously. These two things are coming to a head at the same time. Is all this a coincidence? It's hard to argue it's a coincidence. Yes?

Audience Member: I'm saying you have to (inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes.

Audience Member: Maybe that's why the commandment is (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's a commandment, right. It's not just the land, you're right. It's coming into our own as a nation, part of which is the land and that maybe is why King Saul is part of it also because that's part of us coming into our own as whole. All right, but anyway, this is getting ahead of ourselves. It's just something to keep in mind, why is it they attack at particular points.

All right, so I want to share with you two sayings from our Sages. Here are two sayings from our Sages, which is very interesting. Saying from our Sages number one, which is the first thing I read that night is here. Our Sages say the following. "Mah ra'asa Esther lomar machar e'eseh kidvar hamelech?" Our Sages ask a question, which I touch on in the book also, which is that why did she wait?

Here she is, she's at the banquet, the king just said that whatever you want, Esther, half the kingdom and it's yours, just say it. No. Instead, "Machar e'eseh kidvar hamelech," come to the party tomorrow and tomorrow, I'll do what you ask. How does she know she's going to get as good a reception tomorrow? How does she know the king is going to be in the same mood? That's what she says, so the Midrash wants to know why. Why does she postpone it until tomorrow? Why wait?

This is what the Midrash says. "Ela yadah," she knew, "shezaro shel Amalek lemudim lipol lemachar," she knew that Amalek falls tomorrow. "Vechen hu omer biyemei Moshe," and so it was in the times of Moses. When Moses tells Joshua to fight against Amalek it's, "Tze hilachem ba'Amalek machar ani nitzav al rosh hagivah," tomorrow I'm going to stand on the top of the hill. With Moses, it was also tomorrow and not today.

Similarly, King Saul, whose destiny as king is to fight Amalek, when Samuel is sent to anoint Saul as king, God appears to Samuel in an epiphany and says, "Ka'es machar eshlach eilecha ish me'eretz Binyamin," tomorrow I'm going to send you a man from the tribe of Benjamin. It's always tomorrow. "Ve'af kan," here too, "lemachar e'eseh kidvar hamelech." Esther knew her history. She knew that she had to join the battle tomorrow and not today.

It's a very interesting Midrash. The Midrash is seaming a thread with Amalek, that tomorrow is an important theme with Amalek, and if you're going to be victorious over Amalek, you're going to be victorious tomorrow. The question is what's the meaning of that? Why is it so? What is it about Amalek that makes tomorrow the propitious time to battle them and not today, as it were? This is a question that I want to ask. What's that?

Audience Member: They denied the past.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Maybe. That's one question, why tomorrow? All right. Now, I'm about to read this Midrash to you, but to make this Midrash really come alive, the Midrash has put everything together. This is Midrash ties everything together, but before I do, let me give you a sense of some of the kinds of things that it ties together.

Audience Member: Can I ask you just one more question before you go on? The significance of, I wipe out and you wipe out, and (inaudible), is it the physical? (Inaudible). Is God saying, you wipe out ideologically and I'll wipe out physically or is it beyond us?

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't know.

Audience Member: I'm very confused about that. What is our duty? Are we supposed to do the physical, or is God going to do the physical, and we just have to have the mindset of we don't (inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: "Timcheh et zecher haAmalek." The question is what does memory mean? This is a little bit of a different schmooze that I don't want to get into right now.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Maybe. Let me not go there right now.

Audience Member: No, but it's important to know in terms of what is incumbent upon us.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true, but it's not my job to explain everything to you. I'm just telling you what I figured out. You can go from there. All right, so here are a couple of interesting things. "Revach vehatzala yamod layehudim mimakom acher," Mordechai says. It turns out that that word, revach, appears only one other time in Tanach. Does anyone know where the only other revach in Tanach?

It appears in the same portion as another word that appears with Haman and the battle between Mordechai and Haman, which is also a unique word, which appears only twice in Tanach, once with the battle against Haman and the other time in that same other place in the bible. That word, I'm going to give it away if I tell you what it is because you all know what I'm talking about.

"Vayivez be'einov lishlo'ach yad beMordechai levado." When Haman decides that he's going to wipe out the Jews, it was too degrading for him to wipe out only them, but to wipe out others also. It turns out the word vayivez also appears only one other time in Tanach. It appears in that same other place. Where is that other place, and what does it all mean?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. The only other time is "Vayivez Esav et habechorah," when Esau degrades the birthright. The only other time revach appears is "V'revach tasimu bein eider la'eider," when Jacob is approaching Esau. What about this? "Im mizera hayehudim," Zeresh says "Mordechai asher hachilota linpol lefanov lo tuchal lo," you shall not be able to overcome him. What does lo tuchal lo remind you of in Chumash?

Audience Member: The struggle of Jacob.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The struggle of Jacob with the angel. "Vayar ki lo yachol lo," he saw that he could not best him. "Lo tuchal lo," you will not be able to best him. What does all this mean? How about this? "Vayizak Mordechai za'aka gedolah u'marah," and Mordechai let out a great and bitter cry.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Here are our Sages. Our Sages point out this one. Our Sages point out that there's only one other time in Tanach when you have anything approaching that, which is with Esau. "Vayitzak tza'aka gedolah u'marah," when Esau lets out a great and bitter cry.

Our Sages say, you learn from here that anybody who says that the Holy One, blessed is He is a vatran, that the Holy One, blessed is He just lets things go, yivatru chaya, his life should just be let go because

God bides His time. All the tears that Esau cried when he was deceived about the birthright blessing, were tears that Mordechai would cry when Mordechai would echo the great and bitter cry of Esau, "Vayitzak tza'aka gedolah u'marah," gets mirrored in "Vayizak za'aka gedolah u'marah."

It always seemed strange to me why that would be so, why our Sages were specifically connecting the battle between Mordechai and Haman specifically to Jacob and Esau. What exactly is it all about? But there's another Midrash that brings it in order, and also here's another thing. This just occurred to me this morning, and I may be crazy, but it just fist and it's weird.

You know how names in the Torah are always a little bit suggestive. When King Saul happens to battle Nahash, the king of Ammon, was that really his name or is that the role that he's playing in this story?

When Naomi has two children that just happen to be named Mahlon and Chilion, disease and destruction, is that their names? Come here, little disease, little destruction. Come over here.

It could be that those were their names. I'm not saying it wasn't their names, but the names also play a role in the story. When Er dies, and the only thing you know about Er is that he was ra and that he dies and Er is ra spelled backwards, and Er means awake. If you learn through the story of Judah and Tamar, that is Er; he's dead, but he's awake. He's the living dead because he can always come back through evil. He's the walking dead. Some names can often be suggestive. Here's the question. What name is Haman suggestive about?

Audience Member: The manna.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Haman, he is the manna. He is the manna. It just struck me as I was hanging around by my piano in the morning. I was just thinking one second, Haman, Haman, "Lo nitna haTorah ela le'ochlei haman," the Talmud says. Is there any weirdo connection between Haman and manna?

Audience Member: He could be anything he wanted.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Then, if you think about it, look back to the first time Amalek attacked. Amalek attacked in Beshalach. What was the last thing that happened right before Amalek attacked in the portion of Beshalach?

Audience Member: The manna.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The manna. The Jews get the manna and they mess up. They start collecting on Shabbos, they start trying to get more, they start trying to save it, they start trying to eat too much, and God gets very frustrated and says "Lama tenasu et Hashem," why are you doing all of this. Then, all of a sudden, Amalek comes right after the manna crisis. Coincidence? Yeah, it could be.

Audience Member: Again, that's the nature of evil.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Maybe, but what is the nature of evil? What is it about Haman? Again, it could

just be crazy. Is it a play off the words of the manna? If you look carefully at the Amalek narrative in Beshalach, it seems that Amalek really is a response to what's happening with the manna.

One of the things that Moses says, he cries out, is why are you yelling at me? "Lama tinasun et Hashem." One of the words that you hear over, and over again is, why are you trying God? Then, when they build this altar, they name the altar after the battle against Amalek. They built this altar and they call it Hashem nisi, which is a play off of all of these tests that there were. Hashem nisi, God is my banner, so the word, miracle, has been transformed from trying, trying, trying into banner, but you see the text is connecting everything that led up to this, to this victory over Amalek.

What's the connection between the stuff that's happened before Amalek and Amalek, is Haman related to it, and what would manna have to do with the whole thing? These are just some questions. Now, let me show you this Midrash. This is really a wild Midrash.

Audience Member: Rabbi Fohrman, (inaudible)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, I'm going in that direction. That's very good, Naomi, but next time don't tell everyone. One second. Here's another question. When you're reading the Haftorah of Zachor last week, you get to these words. Let me just call it up on the screen for you real fast.

"Vayomer Agag achen sar mar hamavet. Vayomer Shmuel," and Samuel tells Agag, "ka'asher shikla nashim charbecha ken tishkal minashim imecha vayeshasef Shmuel et Agag lifnei Hashem beGilgal." Samuel says, as you have made women bereft of children, so now shall your mother be bereft of a child, and he kills her. It turns out Samuel is quoting from somewhere, paraphrasing somewhere else in Tanach. Where is paraphrasing from?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right, "Ka'asher shakolti shakolti." You get it? Shakal with a chaf means to be made bereft of. He's quoting "Ka'asher shakolti shakolti." Now, where does "Ka'asher shakolti shakolti," appear?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) your book.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That, I did write in my book. Where does "Ka'asher shakolti shakolti," appear? Audience Member: Jacob says.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's the words that Jacob says to reconcile the loss of Benjamin. Now, why do you think Samuel would be quoting these words now?

Audience Member: Because King Saul is from the Tribe of Benjamin.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, because King Saul is from the Tribe of Benjamin. What does that have to do with anything? What chilling message is really Samuel saying? Here's what I want to give you. Who is Samuel talking to?

Nominally, he's talking to Agag, but he's really talking to King Saul, who let Agag stay alive. What he's really saying is that at that time, back when Jacob said, "Ka'asher shakolti shakolti," and reconciled himself to the loss of Benjamin, but bless God, in the end, Benjamin didn't have to be lost because Judah came along and saved him. That was then and this is now, but now, "Ka'asher shakolti shakolti," Benjamin will be lost and Benjamin is lost over their failure to kill Agag.

This is the end of Saul as king. This is the loss of Benjamin, of their position on the stage of Jewish history. That seems to be what's going on. There seems to be this death battle between Benjamin on the one hand and Amalek, as if this was King Saul's destiny. His destiny was to fight this war and if he does not fight this war, he will be going down. It's either Amalek dies or Benjamin dies.

Isn't it a coincidence that Esther, generations later, and Mordechai in the next battle, to be joined against Amalek, just happen to be the progeny of King Saul, from Benjamin, getting the second chance? What is it about Benjamin that specifically is going to be the one who confronts Amalek? Why is the Tribe of Benjamin? It's not just Benjamin. The other one who confronts Amalek is Joshua. Whom is Joshua from?

Audience Member: Ephraim.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Joshua is from Ephraim. It's all from Rachel. The common denominator is Rachel. What is it about Rachel that is going to be Rachel confronting specifically Amalek? If you want to get really nitpicky about it, is there a reason why it's not all of Rachel, that it's specifically Ephraim and Benjamin, as opposed to say, Manasseh? What is about Ephraim that makes you wonder about Amalek?

I want to show you something that will just make your bones shake over here. I only have a little piece of this, unfortunately, on PowerPoint because I forgot to download the rest of it. Isn't that awful, but next week, maybe I'll be able to show you the rest of it. Here is a fascinating Rashi.

The Midrash quoted by Rashi says that when Jacob blessed the children of Joseph and placed his right hand on top of Ephraim, the younger, he did so because he saw prophetically that Joshua, of all people, would come from him. He saw that Joshua would come from Ephraim. Here's what Rashi says. "Ve'ulam achiv hakatan yigdal mimenu," the younger child will be even greater than the older child, "she'atid Yehoshua latzet mimenu sheyanchil et ha'aretz," it would be Joshua who would conquer the land.

Isn't it a coincidence that Joshua is that one who, A, conquers the land, and B, battles Amalek? Are those things just coincidental? Also, is it coincidental that he should just come from Ephraim? Why does he come from Ephraim? What is there about Ephraim that makes Ephraim comes to its fruition with Joshua and Joshua battles Amalek?

Well, take a look at these words. "Vayikrevu yemei Yisrael lamut vayikra livno leYosef vayomer lo im na matzati chen be'einecha sim na yadcha tachas yereichi ve'asita imadi chesed ve'emes." Vayakrivu yemei Yisrael lamut, the word lamus, that is the second time in Chumash that the word lamut ever appears. Do you know what the first time lamut appears is? Where is the first time lamut ever appears in the Chumash, to die?

Right over here, "Hinei anochi holech lamut." When Esau said this, here I am, I'm going to die. Esau says I'm going to die, "Lama zeh li bechorah." Now, if you continue, he then says "Vayakrivu yemei Yisrael lamut vayikra lebeno Yosef lemor im na matzati chen be'einecha sim na yadcha tachat yereichi ve'asita imadi chesed ve'emes."

Later on, at the very end I don't have this in the PowerPoint, but he says, "Hinei anochi met," when he actually gives the blessing half a chapter later. "Hinei anochi met," is his language. What does hinei anochi met remind you of? Look earlier, look right over here. Do you see this? "Hinei anochi holech lamut." That also finds an echo with Jacob, the hinei anochi.

Let's continue a little bit. Here's the first time, here's the second time. What about this? "Hishava li vayeshava lo." Jacob makes Joseph swear that he's going to bury him in the land of Israel. There's only one other time in Tanach when you have that exchange, hishava li, swear to me and he swore, and is with Jacob and Esau when Jacob makes Esau swear and Esau swears.

There's something about these events that seem to be just echoing. What about this? "Vayish'tachu Yisrael al rosh hamitah," Jacob bows at the head of the bed. Another Jacob and Esau allusion, "Vayish'tachu artza sheva pe'amim," Jacob is bowing to Esau. As you continue, this is really chilling. "Vayar Yisrael et benei Yosef vayomer mi eleh." Do you know that the words mi eleh only appear twice in Tanach? Just the words mi eleh, when is the only other mi eleh in Tanach?

It's when Esau says mi eleh, who are these people? It's the same thing because "Vayar vayomer mi eleh. Vayomer banai hem asher natan li Elokim ba'zeh," Joseph said. That's the exact thing that Esau said. "Vayar et hanashim ve'et hayeledim vayomer mi eleh. Vayomer hayeledim asher chanan Elokim et avdecha." They're my children that God gave me. It's like wild.

This is just the beginning. Later on, I'll show that every single thing that happened, 20 things in this portion of the blessing of Ephraim, all goes back to one of three confrontations that Jacob had with Esau. This is leads somehow to Ephraim who somehow leads to Joshua, who somehow comes back to Amalek. What's going on?

One second, I'm out of time, so no questions. I'm going to read this Midrash and then let you go. Here is the Midrash, and this is one these Midrashim that I have surveyed some people who learned this school; girls because boys don't even learn this in school. The girls who learned this school invariable had learned this Midrash the wrong way. It's very, very sad the way that our schools have taught this Midrash, so let's read this Midrash with open eyes and see what the Midrash is actually saying.

The Midrash tells a fantastical, woven out of whole cloth, back-story in the fight between Mordechai and Haman. It says, if you want to understand the fight between Mordechai and Haman, you have to understand that they were really fighting about something else. There was a ketata kedumah beineihem, there was a primal argument between them, and there was something they were arguing about.

The Midrash comes up with this whole story about how Haman and Mordechai really knew each other and they had this whole interaction before. Where is the evidence for all of this? Every single thing the Midrash is saying is allegorical and if you listen carefully to the Midrash, you will hear the textual allusions woven throughout the Midrash. The Midrash will say ayen sham, ayen sham, ayen sham, look at these stories and you will understand the argument. Let's read the Midrash carefully and see what the Midrash is saying.

The Midrash is in Yalkut Shimoni. It says, "Omru lo lechinom hayu mitkotetim," this is what I opened up to that night, they weren't arguing for nothing, Mordechai and Haman, "ela ketata kedumah hayata beneihen," there was an old fight that was between them, "kesheyahu Bnei Yisrael bonin chomot Yerushalayim," when the Jews were building the walls of Jerusalem, "biyemei Ezra," in the times of Ezra, "bo'u aleihem hasoni'im," their gentile enemies came to them "umanu otam melivnot," and they held them back from building.

They said, "Ve'omru lahem shelo birshut hamelech aten bonin," you do not have the permission of the gentile king, Koresh, to build these walls. You have to stop building. "Vehem omru," and they said, "en anu bonin ela birshuto," we do have the permission of the gentile rulers. We are allowed to build.

Now, just stop right here and think, what does this back-story even remind you of in terms of arguing? It's like now, isn't it? If you think about at the times of the Holocaust, what were we doing? We were building the walls of Jerusalem, yet we weren't in charge. The British were in charge, the world was in charge. Britain had a mandate. Do you know what a mandate means, the United Nations mandate?

A mandate means that they were entrusted with Palestine by the world to help figure out what to do with it. We were building the walls of Jerusalem and the question is would the world allow? The British weren't really sure. How do execute this mandate? They restricted refugees. We're not really sure. There was a white paper, but there was also the Balfour Declaration. The question, did the world allow? Was the world going to allow? Even with the partition, that was the issue. Would the world allow? This was in the days of Ezra, does Koresh allow?

"Omru lahem hasoni'im," finally the gentile nations who hated said, "bireru mikem echad," get yourselves one representative, "ve'anu nivreru lanu echad," and we will find one representative for us, "veyelchu veyodi'u lemelech," and those two representatives together will go in front of Koresh and will tell them what's going on here in Palestine, "bireru umot ha'olam velo matzu ish hameyuchad berishut keHaman harasha," the (inaudible) got together and they couldn't find anyone who hated the Jews more than Haman, "veYisrael bireru lahem Mordechai," and the Jews chose Mordechai, "ve'asu lahem tzeida vehalchu," and they made themselves provisions and they started walking.

Now, first of all, you wouldn't think about that. It's an interesting thing. I wonder, and I don't know for sure, but if you've ever taken calculus, there's this idea of approaching the limit, but you never really get to the limit. The limit is this infinite regress and you never really get there. I want to argue that Amalek is the infinite limit of anti-Semitism. It is this dark core, which is this exaggerated limit and generally, no one really gets there, except for Amalek themselves and maybe Nazi Germany.

It's like this thing that's almost impossible to reach, but the limit is important because it defines for you in very black-and-white terms what the fight is about and all of anti-Semitism partakes of that energy, but it's just not of that same strain. That seems to be what the Midrash is talking about, where the gentiles say who's going to represent us. Haman will represent us because he hates the Jews most of all. He is, of course, Amalek.

If you even think about Hitler, what did Hitler think he was doing? Hitler said on more than one occasion, he said I am doing the world's work. It's just no one will do it, but me. Everyone will be silent, but they will not do it. They're counting on me to exterminate the Jews. Was he right or was he wrong? Well, the Jews have some friends now, but they didn't have very many friends at the time of the Holocaust. That was basically it.

The world was silent and when the St. Louis went sailing from port to port there was no place that you could land. It was as if it were true. Whether it was the Ukrainians or was it the Poles, it was somehow the world in a conspiracy of silence, but their representative, as it were, the tracks never got bombed, the representative was Amalek, and it's almost like here. Bireru lahem, they found him. Here's our representative. We're not going to go, but you go.

What happened along the way? "Asu lahem tzeida veholchu." Tzeida, red flag. What does this remind you of? "Kitzayed bepiv." It's Esau known for his tzayid, known for his provision. They're going on the way. "Vehayu Mordechai hatzaddik ochel pito me'at me'at," Mordechai was eating his bread and rationing it. By the way, think manna now. Mordechai is eating his bread and he's rationing his bread. What are you supposed to do with manna? Are you supposed to over collect?

Audience Member: No.

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, right. You just take a little bit and you trust that God is going to give you. Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. "Vehaya Mordechai hatzaddik ochel pito me'at me'at," he was rationing his bread and eating it very carefully, "kemo she'omru chachamim," as the Sages say, when you're going on the way you shouldn't eat more than in the times of famine, "veHaman harasha achal velo hishgi'ach," he ate like a pig. He finished off his bread, velo hishgi'ach, he didn't think about tomorrow. He didn't think about tomorrow.

"Chasar mezono," pretty soon, he was fresh out of food, "ve'alov hu omer u'beten resha'im tech'sar," and

that's what Proverbs say, that the wicked will always be hungry. "Keivan shelo matza pat baderech le'echol," since they couldn't find any bread in the way, baderech; what's baderech remind you of over, and over again? They're on the way when all this is happening.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: When does Amalek attack? "Asher korcha baderech," they attacked you on the way. "Keivan shelo matza pat baderech le'echol ba lo etzel Mordechai," Haman came to Mordechai, "vehaya mis'take'ach lefanov," and he bowed before him and he was begging him, "lehalvot lo kikar achad," to just lend him one piece of bread, "velo haya rotzeh," and Mordechai didn't want to do it.

"Lesof amar lo," finally Mordechai said to him, "im ani noten lecha kikar achat," if I give you one piece of bread, "ata mocher atzmecha li," will you sell yourself to me as a slave? "Amar lo hen," Haman said absolutely, I have to think about today. Now, what's this reminding you of? "Amar lo en klaf," he said to him there's no parchment, "shenich'tov bo shtar lekichatech," that we can memorialize this for tomorrow, so that we will know what happened here. "Amar lo," Haman said, "harei hasandal shelcha," there's your shoe. We could always write it on your shoe strap.

"Miyad katav Haman al sandalo shel Mordechai," Haman wrote on Mordechai's sandal, "ani Haman haAgagi avdo shel Mordecha haYehudi shenimkarti lo bekikar lechem achat," I am Haman and I sold myself as a slave to Mordechai for a piece of bread. "U'kesholeh lebesof legedulah," what does legedulah remind you of? "Vayigdelu hana'arim." Do you know what I'm talking about? "Vayigdelu hana'arim," when Jacob and Esau get a little bit older. "Vayigdal hamelech et Haman," when Haman gets a little bit older when he gets to his greatness.

"U'kesholeh lebesof legedulah vekava et atzmo avodah zara," he made himself into an idol, "vahaya Mordechai yoshev besha'ar hamelech," Mordechai was sitting in the palace of the king, "shehu yotzei uba bo u'keshero'eh et Haman she'over," when Haman would go past, "hu poshet lo et raglo," he would just stick out his foot out a little bit with shoe strap on it, "besandalo," on the back of his shoe, "sheshtar lekichato ketuv bo," that that was where it was written than Haman sold himself, "vehaya Haman ro'eh u'mitmale cheimah," and that's the words, "vayimaleh Haman cheimah." Where do you have the word cheimah?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Why not run away to Laban, "Ad asher tashuv chemat achicha," until your brother's anger subsides a little bit? It didn't subside, did it? Twenty-one years later, he's still angry. The Midrash is saying centuries later, he's still angry. This is the cheimah. Mordechai sticks out his shoe, what part of the body is that little shoe strap on? It's on your heel.

Audience Member: Ekev.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. "Ki ikveini zeh pa'ama'im," when he screams za'aka umara. That's

"Al ken kara shemo Yaakov ki ikveini zeh pa'ama'im." The original Amalek is the child of Elifaz, the child of Esau. It's Esau's grandchild. If you go back to this story, "Michrah chayom et bechorat'cha li," sell me today your birthright.

Now, it's not exactly the same because there, he sold the birthright and over here in this story, he is selling himself as a slave. It's like the Midrash is actually perverting the story. It's the story up to a point, the same bread issue because remember, Esau was angry and what did Yaakov give him? "Lechem u'nezid adashim," he gave him bread. There's the bread. Haman, name the manna. The man, the manna, the bread from God, the bread that God gives us, God, our heavenly father.

Anyways, it's all the fight about the bread. What is the Midrash saying? The Midrash is saying if you want to understand the fight, the fight is the fight with Esau. What is Haman? Who is Haman? Haman is the one who always remembers, never forgets, and will not reconcile with Jacob no matter what.

What I would argue is, and I'll try to prove this to you next week, is that in the actual portion of the Torah, Jacob reconciles with Esau. He goes to Esau, and if you read that portion, he says, "Kach na et birchati," take my blessing, "vayishtachavu lo," and he bows before him and the blessings were that you're going to bow before me, but I'll bow before you, and I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done it.

In your face, it seems, "Penei Elokim vatirtzeini," and Esau who had come with 400 men says okay and he kisses him and they go their separate ways. In general, if you look at the Jewish relationship with Esau, it's been pretty good. It hasn't been perfect. Esau, Rome, Christianity; there have been crusades, there's been anti-Semitism, there's been tension, but now the Christians are pretty philo-Semitic. We've more or less made it through 2,000 years of history with Esau with at least a cold peace, a detente, sort of like the detente at the end of the portion of Vayishlach with Jacob.

Except, there is one part of Esau, one strain, if you look at story, "Michrah chayom et bechorat'cha li," sell me today your birthright. It's all about today. What did Esau do? He didn't look at tomorrow. I'm going to die tomorrow, what difference does it make, but when does tomorrow matter? With your grandchildren, with Amalek, that's when tomorrow becomes today. Amalek comes and says, what's the deal?

Amalek is that strain of Esau that doesn't look at the reconciliation, that will not (inaudible) reconciliation between Jacob Esau, and instead, only sees the original pain. The only thing they see is this story. How do you know? Here's the proof. When did they attack? "Ve'ata ayef veyagei'a." There's only one other ayef in the Chumash.

Audience Member: With Esau.

Rabbi David Fohrman: When Esau was tired and Jacob took advantage of him and asked him for that bread when he was tired. "Asher korcha baderech," when they happened upon you by the way. Korcha, where's the earlier korcha? When Jacob tricks Esau, he goes to his father and his father says, "Ma zeh miharta limtzo beni," how did you find the venison so quickly, "ki hikra Hashem Elokecha lefanai," God

just can't make it happen so quickly.

Esau never forgets that. Esau will chance upon you, by the way, when you are tired. Who will they battle? "Kol hanech'shalim acharecha," the little ones, "vayizanov," and they tail after the little ones. Why? At the moment of reconciliation, which Amalek does not accept, what does Jacob tell Esau why they can't continue to walk together. I have all these little ones, so we're going to take too long. I have these little ones, so I'm just going to go my own way.

Now, Esau comes to you by the way, and he's going to attack the little ones. He completely rejects it. Here's the argument I want to make and with this, I'll let you go. Why did they reject the reconciliation? What is it about Amalek that rejects Jacob's attempt at reconciliation with them?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's more than that. That's why by the way, "Yisrael nikra reishis." There's a saying by our Sages that's says this, the Jews are called reishit, the first and Amalek is called reishit, the first. What is their argument really about? Over whose birthright it really is, this competition of who is going to be the first. When did they always fight? Do you know when they fight?

They fight when tomorrow becomes today because Esau doesn't care as long as it isn't tomorrow. But when tomorrow is today, when you're about to go into the land of Israel and establish yourself as the nation of God in the land living out your destiny of God's first born in the world, that's when it matters and that's when Amalek will attack. Therefore, they attack when the Jews are going to go into the land after the splitting of the Red Sea, because that's tomorrow.

They will attack at times of King Saul if we don't attack them first, and they will attack at the times of when we're building the walls of Jerusalem in the times of Koresh, and in the times of the Holocaust when we're building the walls of Jerusalem with Zionism. That is the moment of peril.

I want to argue that the reason why we wipe out Amalek is not because they're evil. There is an evilness to Amalek, but it's not because of the evil. It's because it's something else. It's because they pose a mortal peril to us and because there is a battle to the death that having rejected the reconciliation, there is no other choice. There's no way to appease them because no matter what you say, no matter how sorry you are, no matter what you do, there will always be the battle. Why is there always the battle? Why won't Amalek accept the truth?

The reason why is this. What is the word that Haman uses when Haman said that he's going to destroy us all, when Haman takes a personal fight to Mordechai and transposes it into genocide for the world of Jews? "Vayivez be'einov lishlo'ach yad beMordechai levado," it was too degrading in his eyes to get Mordechai. The word vayivez only appears one other time in Tanach. The only other time is "Vayivez Esav et habechorah."

Those two vayivez are connected. What does it mean? The reason why Amalek is going to kill us and

say it's not that the battle against Mordechai, it's the battle against everyone, is because "Vayivez Esav et habechorah." What's the truth of what happened between Jacob and Esau? The truth of what happened is there's enough blame to go around.

The truth that happened is it's true we took advantage of them. We took their bread when they were down, it's true they weren't looking at tomorrow, they were only looking at today, but he didn't have to sell the birthright either. The narrator steps up and tells you when he sold the birthright, "Vayochal vayesht vayakam vayelech," he ate, he drank, and he left, "vayivez Esav et habechorah," and Esau degraded the birthright by letting it go like that. That's the narrator talking. The narrator usually doesn't talk. The narrator comes out and says that was a degradation of the birthright. That is what Haman cannot take. Haman cannot look at the vayivez or he always looks at the vayivez.

There's another way of reading "Vayivez be'einov," which is the vayivez of Esau is always in his eyes. "Vayivez be'einov," all Haman sees is the degradation. It's self-loathing. It's that I can never forgive myself for degrading the birthright in that way. Look how much it matters to be the nation of God. They love God, just as we love God, but they hate us. More than that, they hate themselves for having lost the opportunity. It took two to tango. What's the only way reconciliation could happen?

The reconciliation could happen and it happens with most of Esau, you can reconcile with most of Esau. Whom can't you reconcile with? Why won't they accept your apology? The answer is that ultimately, it's not about you. It's about themselves. They can't look at the degradation. They always haunted by the degradation. They can't do it, so they take the energy of that degradation, they transform it into genocide, and they blame you for it.

No matter what, it's always the Jews' fault. That's why they can't see any of the reconciliation because the reconciliation would mean it's over, but it can't be over for them because they can't come to grips with their piece of it. What they do is they transmogrify their piece of it and they're always going to get Jews, and that's why there can't be no reconciliation. When did they prove it? They proved it when they attacked you in the desert, when they took the reconciliation and they stuffed it in your face.

Here was Esau, and instead of saying, okay, you're a little one, they attacked your little ones because they only remember ki hayage'a. They only remember that piece of it and that is zachor, always remember. "Zachor et asher asah lecha Amalek." Why? It's not revenge. We're not in the revenge game, but you have to remember that act because that act tells you something. That act tells you that they totally are not going to go for the reconciliation. They will not show it. All they see is the hatred. They will not even be mityaches to any of the attempts to reconcile.

There is no quarter with Amalek. The reason why you have to wipe them out, therefore, is because if you don't wipe them out, they will wipe you out. It is simply self-preservation.

There is a strain, there is a little piece of Esau that will give you no quarter and that it's all about themselves. When tomorrow becomes today, it's the most dangerous times.

That's why the commandment of wiping out Amalek is specifically when you come into the land, you appoint a king because that is the most dangerous time, and when you're going to build the house of God because that's when you're the firstborn in the land and that's when they have attacked. If you don't attack, they will. The Holocaust is proof of it. Therefore, it's simply the only way.

(END RECORDING - 01:22:45)

Rabbi David Fohrman: On my way home, I noticed something, which if I get a chance to, I'll share it with you today. I still don't know quite what it all means, but I do have some theories. I was working at it with my daughter, which was actually really nice, who contributed mightily to the effort, so that was a lot of fun. We stayed up late on Friday night working on it. Before I dive into that, it sounds like you had some responses, questions, comments, protestations, or stone throwings from last week. Yes, ma'am?

Audience Member: Okay. When Jacob gives this blessing to Judah, he says, "Lo yasur shevet miYehudah," when they finally want to establish themselves with a king when they go into the land of Israel, you would think that they automatically would go to the Tribe of Judah for a king. They rest and they go for a very brief (inaudible 00:01:48).

Rabbi David Fohrman: They go for what?

Audience Member: You think that the way you read the Book of Samuel I, King Saul was a king for a very short time before it was taken away from him and then they go to King David. The (inaudible 00:02:06) that he was king, he had to kill Amalek. Amalek has to establish the Benjamin-Amalek pattern, why did they even bother with King Saul? It doesn't make sense. In light of everything that we did last week, it seems to now have a purpose in order to establish that pattern.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, yes.

Audience Member: Why did they (inaudible 00:02:35)? It had to be related to Amalek because he didn't contribute anything, King Saul, other than the fact that he didn't erase Amalek.

Rabbi David Fohrman: You're right, in the sense of the Yalkut Shimoni, which we did at the end of last week. We did the Yalkut Shimoni at the end of last week. I don't think I brought it with me today, but the language of it suggests that King Saul's real destiny, as King was his battle against Amalek.

The reason why it suggests that, if you read the Midrash carefully that is the implication of the Midrash. The Midrash says that whenever you battle Amalek, you have to battle Amalek of the morrow.

Remember, tomorrow. Think about the proofs of that. Proof Number 1 is because Esther said, I'll go to the king tomorrow. Proof Number 2 is that Moses, when he is going to send Joshua to battle against Amalek he says, tomorrow I'm going to stand on top of the hill.

Proof Number 3, is when Samuel anoints Saul king, so God says to him I'm going to send you a man from Benjamin tomorrow and he will be king. If we just look at those three proofs and we play our favorite Sesame Street game, which one of these is not like the other? Which one would you say is not like the other? The last one. How is the last one not like the other two? How is the last one different from the other two?

Audience Member: It's more indirect.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's more indirect, how?

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:04:26 - 00:04:31) tomorrow, you will be king.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. In other words, in the other two, we're talking about a direct battle between a person and Amalek that is going to be postponed until tomorrow. Over here, in the third one, with anointing Saul king, you're not talking about the battle. You're talking about anointing him king, so what is it that you see from that?

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:04:51 - 00:04:52). If you look at it the right way (inaudible 00:04:54 - 00:04:57).

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, because that's going to happen later. The idea is that Saul is going to be anointed the king now and later on, one day he'll find Amalek. It seems that the Yalkut is looking at Saul being anointed king as tied inexorably to the eventual battle against Amalek, such that it's almost the same as saying, I'll battle tomorrow, which is another way of saying that the destiny of Saul in being anointed king is ultimately the battle of Amalek, which supports your view.

Audience Member: Had he probably battled with Amalek, first of all, it's a very direct question. What would happened to King Saul, there would've been no reason to remove him.

Audience Member: There was a (inaudible 00:05:38 - 00:05:40) he was not going to become the ultimate leader.

Audience Member: I'm just saying, why didn't they just go straight (inaudible 00:05:46 - 00:05:47).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. This is a question, which I can't get into now in detail. There is a little bit of a digression, so I don't really want to get into this, but the question is, why were we playing around with Saul if Saul was going to be king anyway? If he succeeded, what would have happened then?

Would David never have become king and all that? That's an interesting question in the Book of Samuel. It's compounded by the fact that generally speaking, the Talmud says, "Ein malchut noga'at bechavertah afilu kimlo'a nimah," which is that one kingdom doesn't encroach on another kingdom. There's only one president at a time, who always says that? Nowadays, who says that?

Audience Member: Hillary Clinton?

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, every president. That's what Bush always said, or Obama said that before he was inaugurated. We only have one president at a time, I think that was his line, and it's true. "Ein malchut noga'at bechavertah afilu kimlo'a nimah," there's only one king at a time. If so, why did God anoint David as king before Saul was deposed? What's the deal with that? I mean, isn't that setting up a rivalry? All of these are very good questions.

My theory of it is that what was supposed to happen the whole time or what could have happened if King Saul was successful against Amalek, and even if King Saul maybe wasn't successful against Amalek, were things really on the track to happen? What was supposed to happen was, I believe, that there was

supposed to be a shared kingdom. There was supposed to be basically a president and a vice president, and the vice president was ultimately going to be Benjamin. It almost happens when David comes back with the head of Goliath from battle.

Jonathan's reaction is that he falls in love with David basically. He loves him and he says to David later, I know you're going to be king, "Ve'ani eheyeh lecha lemishneh," and I'll be second in charge, which if you think about it that's always the role of the children of Rachel. They're always second in charge to the king, that mishneh lamelech, with Mordecai, with Joseph.

Here, Jonathan is saying it. He's perfectly okay with that, and that really would have happened. If you even listen to the language, "Venefesh Yahonatan niksherah benefesh David," what does that of? "Nefesh Yahonata niksherah benefesh David," where else do you have one soul bound up with another?

Audience Member: With Joseph.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's actually Jacob and Benjamin. Judah says it about Benjamin's relationship with Jacob. If you think about it, those are those words, which are very difficult for Judah to say, to recognize that his father loves Benjamin more, and that he'll be the slave. This is the same thing with Jonathan.

Jonathan also, it's very difficult for him to say "Venefesh Yahonatan niksherah benefesh David."

King Saul is saying, you're crazy, he's your rival, he's going to displace you, and you love him? That ability to go over to the other side of the tracks, where he's echoing Judah, again, he's repaying Judah in a certain way for those words. Now, Benjamin is repaying Judah and saying I'm willing to be the second in charge to you because of that. That's what should have happened and it would have happened, if not for King Saul, who wouldn't let it happen.

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:09:44 - 00:09:46).

Rabbi David Fohrman: I can't play that game of why it couldn't have been that. Go ask God. Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:09:55 - 00:09:59) Judah through Michal.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. I don't know exactly why it happened the way that it did, but anyway, that's my theory. That's a little bit of a digression. Anyway, it sounds like the rest of you are unsettled with what I talked to you last week, or some of you at least. No? Nobody was unsettled? Some of you were unsettled? If so, what's going on? We'll open this up for a minute for a group therapy session if you want, before I dive into what I was going to say. Anybody want to pipe up? Any problems, issues from last week? No, yes, nobody? You're all fine? Right? No? Yeah go ahead.

Audience Member: Unfortunately, I believe that it seems every (inaudible 00:10:47) and issue is going after Amalek and there seems to be no (inaudible 00:10:50) and be the ultimate (inaudible 00:10:54 - 00:10:57). I'm wondering why there aren't any events of the Amalek (inaudible 00:11:00)? That'll be the question. (Inaudible 00:11:06 - 00:11:14) you don't mention our battle with Amalek or (inaudible

00:11:16) Amalek. (Inaudible 00:11:19 - 00:11:24).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Where?

Audience Member: There's a (inaudible 00:11:25).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, it's one of those things that you asked. I'm kind of remembering what the last points I made with you about Amalek. We did the Yalkut Shimoni. We talked about tomorrow. We talked about that stuff. Did we talked about why specifically the command to wipe out Amalek is a command to wipe out a memory of Amalek? Did we speak about that?

Audience Member: No.

Rabbi David Fohrman: No? That's where we left off? Audience Member: We talked about the vayivez.

Rabbi David Fohrman: We did talk about the vayivez? Audience Member: At the end.

Rabbi David Fohrman: At the very end, we talked about this? Should we go back? We'll rehash this a little bit. What I began to suggest last week, the essential theory that I suggested to you last week, to boil it down to a nutshell, was based upon a number of Midrashim from our Sages supported by facts.

The essential theory I already gave to you was that the battle against the Amalek doesn't seem to come out of nowhere, that Amalek seems to remember the Jacob and Esau stories, seems to remember specifically again, when Amalek attacks,"ve'atah ayeif veyagei'a." There's only one other ayeif in the Torah. The only other ayeif in the Torah is when Esau comes from the hunt and he's ayeif.

"Asher korcha baderech," they happened upon you by the way. Happened upon you, was also a word, karah is a word that goes back to the Jacob and Esau story. It's a word that Jacob uses when he deceives his father and his father says, how did you come back from the hunt so fast? He says "Ki hikra Hashem Elokecha lefanai," God just happened to provide me with food from the hunt very quickly. Somebody that didn't forget that and that is Amalek.

We suggested that it's not a coincidence that Amalek, in fact, is actually, physically the grandson of Esau. We suggested that Amalek is that part of Esau that will not forget those things and bears eternal enmity for those things.

I want to continue today. We might've begun to talk about the vayivez piece of it also. Similarly, you find, this is all based upon a Midrash and the Yalkut Shimoni. I'm not going to go back and review right now, but in support of that Midrash, we also find the Jacob and Esau language sprinkled throughout the

Book of Esther, which evokes the same idea.

For example, I don't know if I mentioned this last week, but when Zeresh says, "Im mizera hayehudim Mordechai," if Mordecai is really a Jew, "lo tuchal lo." Lo tuchal lo reminds you of what in the Jacob and Esau story? "Lo tuchal lo", you will not be able to best him.

Audience Member: With the angel.

Rabbi David Fohrman: With the angel. Remember when Jacob was battling the angel and in the end, the angel camp best him, and the language is, "Vayar ki lo yachol lo," he saw that he couldn't best him. Here, too, you're getting that idea, which is, Haman, you're not going to be able to best him.

There's a bunch of other languages. You have the kara language also. "Vayavo Haman," what does that evoke in the Jacob and Esau story? First of all, you have with Amalek, "Vayavo Amalek," but where else in the Jacob and Esau story? When Esau comes back from the hunt and he's hungry, "Vayavo Eisav min hasadeh vehu ayeif." It just keeps on going. It's that memory of Esau coming and then being taken advantage of, which is foremost in the minds of Amalek. We'll get to the vayivez piece of this in a moment. I want to expand on what I said last week about that. I'll get to that in a second.

In the meantime, I want to show you something interesting that I found also. I'm not sure if I showed this to you, but take a look at the book of Deuteronomy over here. This is Deuteronomy, Chapter 2, "Vaneifen vanisa hamidbarah derech Yam Suf," so we left Mount Sinai, "vanasav et Har Se'ir yamim rabim," and we started circling around Mount Seir. Of course, who lives in Mount Seir? Esau.

"Vayomer Hashem elai leimor. Rav lachem sov et hahar hazeh penu lachem tzafonah," go north. "Ve'et ha'am tzav leimar atem ovrim bigvul acheichem bnei Eisav," you're about to go through the territory of your brothers, the children of Esau, "hayoshvim beSe'ir", who are in Seir, "veyiru mikem venishmartem me'od," and you should be careful of them.

"Al titgaru bam ki lo eten lachem mei'artzom ad midrach kaf ragel ki yerushah le'Eisav natati et Har Se'ir," don't make trouble with them, I'm not giving you even a footstep of their land, because I have given to Esau Mount Seir as an inheritance.

What's interesting about this, before we even go any further is, I don't know, I'm not sure, but aside from the Jews, do you know of any other nation, other than Esau, who in Chumash God says He has given them an inheritance in a particular land? I think this is it. I may be wrong, but I think this is it.

We have an inheritance in Canaan and Esau has an inheritance, you see it right here, in Mount Seir, from God. This means Esau has this special point of land that God says, you can have this land and because of that, we can't have any of his land because God cares about them and He does that. This idea, I think, is addressed little farther in Chapter 2, with the children of Lot also; the children of Lot also get an inheritance.

"Am gadol verav varam ka'anakim vayashmideim Hashem. Ka'asher asah livnei Eisav hayoshvim beSe'ir asher hishmid et haChori mipneihem vayirashum vayeishvu tachtam ad hayom hazeh." This is when Moses is trying to exhort the people not to be afraid in their conquest of Canaan. He says, God is going to do for you just like He did to Esau in Seir, that God got rid of the Horites before them and divested the Horites of the land so that Esau could be there.

You have this idea that it wasn't just the Jews that God helped get into their land. God also helped Esau in these battles and Moses even says that that's going to be the precedent for you coming into the land of Israel.

Here's the thing I really wanted to show you, back to the beginning of Chapter 2. He says, don't mess with Esau in Mount Seir, rather, "Ochel tishberu mei'itam bakesef," you should buy food from them with money, "va'achaltem," and you should eat, "vegam mayim tichru mei'itam bakesef," and you should buy water from them with money, "ushtitem," and you should drink. Why?

"Ki Hashem Elokecha beirachecha bechol ma'aseih yadecha, " because God has blessed you with everything that you have, "yada lechtecha et hamidbar hagadol hazeh," you know where you're going in this whole big desert, "zeh arba'im shanah Hashem Elokecha imach lo chasarta davar," Gord has been with you this whole time. "Lo chasarta davar," you don't have any needs, God has taken care of your every need. Principally, what needs to people have in the desert that God's taking care of?

Audience Member: Food and water.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Food and water. Now, there's something strange about these two verses together. What's strange about it?

Audience Member: Why did they have to buy food and drink?

Rabbi David Fohrman: First of all, why would they buy food and drink? The next verse just reemphasizes itself, that you don't need anything because God has been providing you with food and water this whole time, so all of a sudden, how come you have to buy food and drink here? You don't need to.

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:23:07 - 00:23:15).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What's the real answer to this question? The answer to this question, I think, is yes, you don't need any food and that's specifically why you should buy food from them. Why should you be buying food from Esau? Because there was a time when Esau desperately needed food, and rather than giving him food, what did Jacob do? Jacob sold him food with money.

God says, there was a time when Esau desperately needed food and you sold him food. Now, you don't need food, you're going to buy food from him at full price. Tonight, we're eating takeout boys, takeout in Seir, no home cooking tonight, no manna tonight. This is what it seems to be saying, and less you

miss the point, "Ki Hashem Elokecha beirachecha," because God has blessed you. Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:24:21 - 00:24:22).

Rabbi David Fohrman: There you go, what's the fight about? Esau is mad at you because you got his blessings from him. God has blessed you with the manna and you're not going to put it in his face.

You're not going to eat manna in front of Esau. You're going to buy food from him, specifically because of "lo chasarta davar," because you don't need it. The idea is, we need to be very sensitive to our history with Esau and it's, pardon the pun, an Achilles' heel, Jacob.

Audience Memeber: Is that why God gave them the oil, so that we should continue to buy from them? Rabbi David Fohrman: It's not them.

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:25:07 - 00:25:08).

Rabbi David Fohrman: We'll get to that in a second. Remember this about Esau for a moment, "Ki Hashem Elokecha berachecha mikol ma'asei yadecha."

Audience Member: Does that mean that at that point God wasn't (inaudible 00:25:28 - 00:25:30), that they ask about it?

Rabbi David Fohrman: God doesn't have to what?

Audience Member: God was not going to give the nation of Israel the manna or water at that time?

Rabbi David Fohrman: It doesn't specifically say that. It just says that even though you have manna and water, you're going to go and buy from them. It doesn't make a difference whether you're going to get it or not. You can have it, but you're not going to eat it. You're going to eat their bread and their water.

Audience Member: Right, but does it say (inaudible 00:25:48)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: It doesn't say yes or no. They did have manna. They ate manna until they came into the land of Israel. The manna never stopped.

Audience Member: How do you know that?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Because it says with the manna, that they ate it for 40 years until they got into the land of Israel. I wasn't going to get into this now, but I'm just going to touch on this now. Here you have a situation where the Jews are eating manna, and God says you're not going to eat manna anymore for this. You're actually going to buy at full price because "Hashem Elokecha berachecha," because God has blessed you.

You all know that names are evocative. When King Saul, for example, fights his first war against Nahash, King of Ammon, that's probably not a coincidence that he just happened to have the name snake. When Mahlon and Chilion, were the children of Naomi and they died, they probably weren't named sickness and destruction for nothing. Names can be evocative. Did it ever bother you? Did you ever wonder what Haman's name sounded like to you?

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:27:05 - 00:27:07).

Rabbi David Fohrman: We talked about Haman and we talked about Haman's relationship, too. What did we say about that?

Audience Member: Ha man, (the manna).

Rabbi David Fohrman: The manna and what else? Go ahead.

Audience Member: Related to Parshat Haman, which is right before the battle with Amalek.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, so we are relating to the fact that, isn't it interesting that Amalek attacks us right after we got the manna? Here's another piece to the puzzle right over here. When you're eating manna and you get to Esau's territory, you should stop eating manna and you should buy food from him, again the relationship between manna and a potential attack from Esau, or from the strain of Esau that will never forgive, which is Amalek.

We're going to get back to that, see whether that's true, and exactly what we make of it in a moment. In the meantime, I want to do something else with you, which is, I want to discuss Amalek's lineage with you. We mentioned before that Amalek is a grandson of Esau, but in particular, what is his family tree? How did he get to be the grandson of Esau? He is the child of Elifaz.

Esau has more than one child, he's the child of Elifaz, in particular, and we also know the mother of Amalek is Elifaz's concubine, a woman by the name of Timna. I want to show you the verse that the Talmud considers to be, the most trivial verse in the entire Torah.

Audience Member: Timna has (inaudible 00:28:54) also.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's actually interesting. I haven't thought of that. Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:28:59 - 00:29:03).

Rabbi David Fohrman: We'll get to that. Let's just look for Timna for a moment. Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:29:18 - 00:29:22) Amalek, correct?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. One other thing while we're at it, right before we get to that. Going back

to the actual story of the sale of the blessings, I just want to go through that with you for a minute. Here's the story of the sale of the blessings.

"Vaye'ehav Yitzchak et Eisav ki tzayid bepiv veRivkah ohevet et Yaakov." "Vayazed Yaakov nazid," how do you translate those words? What does that mean? What did he do?

Audience Member: A culinary delight.

Rabbi David Fohrman: He prepared culinary delights. He made cholent and he was eating cholent. The only reason why you know that that's what it means is because you've read the story before, you know the context, and you know that's what it means.

If you've never read the story before and you just have these words off in the middle of nowhere, which said, "Vayazed Yaakov nazid," would you, in a million years, have any idea how to translate that?

Audience Member: No, because it sort of looks like tzayid. Rabbi David Fohrman: It does sort of look like tzayid.

Audience Member: It's right after tzayid.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. It's right after the tzayid, so in a certain way, it seems to be a play off of the tzayid. It's Jacob's tzayid, or counterpart of tzayid, that's true.

Audience Member: Now quite as sharp because it's not (inaudible 00:30:49).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, that's true. That's very nice. It seems to be a play off of tzayid on the one hand, but not even a play off of it. It seems to come from the words zadom. As a matter of fact, if you look for any other vayazed, take out the Vav, search for the Yud-Zayin-Dalet. Let's see if we can do that right now.

As you all noticed, there are two Vayazeds, or two Yud-Zayin-Dalets in all of Chumash. The first one is right here. We just saw that. Let's look at the second one. "Ki yazid ish al rei'eihu lehargo be'armah," if a person will contemplate, meizid, if a person will act wantonly, will act willfully, what does meizid mean? It means, the premeditated desire to commit a sin. This is what meizid means. If a person premeditates, stalks his fellow to try to kill him secretly, so then he needs, "me'im mizbachi tikachenu lamut." Isn't it the same as, "Vayazed Yaakov nazid"? What?

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:32:03 - 00:32:04).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true, but what does it sound like Jacob is doing then? Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:32:08).

Rabbi David Fohrman: He's setting up Esau. In other words, it's not such a nice word. It's a word that seems to indicate that he is planning something, planning to get him.

What's interesting also is, think about this. Where in the Chumash do we have "Ki yazid ish al rei'eihu lehargo be'armah," somebody plotting in his heart to secretly kill somebody else? Who plots in his heart to secretly kill someone else? Esau, and why does Esau plot to do it? Because his blessings have been stolen from him, so in response to the Vayazed, the ultimate response to Vayazed on Esau's part, is that Esau is Vayazed.

When Esau says, "Yikrevu yemei eivel avi," my father's going to die, "ve'ahargah et Yaakov achi," the same language over here, and I am going to kill my brother. It seems like there is this little triangle of vayazed going on.

Anyway, continuing, "Vayavo Eisav min hasadeh vehu ayeif." This is Amalek language that we talked about before. Esau comes from the field and he's tired. Esau comes to Jacob and says, shovel me in some of this red stuff, "ki ayeif anochi," because I'm tired; that's why they call him Edom.

What's interesting, by the way, is that's why they call him Edom. There's another reason why they could have called him Edom, which is not why, because he came out admoni (red), but notice that that's not why he's called Edom. He's not called Edom because he looked red when he came out. He's called Edom because he said, shovel me in some of this red stuff.

Audience Member: The same thing as Jacob (inaudible 00:33:57).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, no, with Jacob it said that he was holding onto the heel. Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:34:02 - 00:34:06).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right, but there it means something similar because he twisty with the heel. It's the part of the foot that twists. "Al kein kara shemo Edom," so he calls him Edom because of this stuff. What we're saying is, the reason why Esau was call Esau, is not because, actually, of anything innate of the way he was born. It was because of the particular choice that he was making, which is that he needs the red stuff right now.

Audience Member: Does that mean he wasn't called Edom until this incident? Rabbi David Fohrman: That's what it sounds like.

Audience Member: Or was it (inaudible 00:34:37) to the future?

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't know. Probably the former, but I can't tell you. Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:34:41 - 00:34:42) God or was it Jacob?

Rabbi David Fohrman: It doesn't say. That's why he was called Edom. "Vayomer Yaakov michrah ka'yom et bechoroscha li." Oh, I didn't even notice this.

Audience Member: Yes, they're very similar.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, that's true, but michrah. What's that? Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:35:07 - 00:35:10).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, but here's the thing. Remember in Deuteronomy, "Mayim tichru me'itam." That's a very strange word, tichru. As a matter of fact, let's even see how many times the word tichru appears in Tanach. We can look that up real fast. Only one time, we have that word. Anyway, it seems to be a sort of tortured play off of "Michrah chayom et bechoratcha li."

Anyway, let's go back to Genesis here. "Vayomer Eisav hinei anochi holech lamut velamah zeh li bechorah. Michrah chayom es bechoratcha li." First of all, the chayom over here, Jacob is focusing Esau on today. Sell me today your birthright, to which Esau says yeah. Esau really is just looking at today "Hinei anochi holech lamut," tomorrow I'm going to die, "lamah zeh li bechorah," why do I need a birthright.

"Vayomer Yaakov hishavah li kayom," there's kayom again, swear to me today that this is true, "vayishavah lo vayimkor es bechorato leYaakov." Now here what is interesting, "VeYaakov natan leEisav lechem u'nezid adashim." First of all, notice that all Esau wanted was what? It was the soup. Yaakov threw in the bread as good will.

Did you notice, by the way, that extra-normal thing on the internet going around with the bears? Do you know what I'm talking about? There's a little comic going around on the internet with a Yeshiva guy going out with a girl on a date and he says, can I tell you a vort from my Rebbe? You haven't seen this?

He says, Esau just wanted the porridge. How come Jacob gave the bread? She says, well why? He says, well because there a dispute in the Talmud what blessing you're supposed to make on lentil soup. Is it mezonot or adamah? The best way to get out of the doubt is to wash, so Jacob gave him bread. Then, there's this whole argument about whether he really thinks that's true or not, but there's another answer to it. I mean, it's an interesting question. Jacob throws in the bread, but interestingly, what you see throughout the ages, it's that throw-in of the bread that Amalek seems to always remember. What's that?

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:38:48 - 00:38:49).

Rabbi David Fohrman: I think they're bad, but I'll show you how and I'll show you why in a moment. Anyway, he gives the bread and the pot of lentils "Vayochal vayesht vayakam vayelach vayivez Esav et habechorah." Now, there are five verbs in a row over here. "Vayochal vayesht vayakam vayelach vayivez Esav et habechorah," he ate, he drank, he got up, he left, and Esau degraded the birthright. Now, let's

play our Sesame Street game. Which one of these things is not like the others? The last one. How is the last one different than the others?

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:39:23 - 00:39:26). It's a passive verb. Rabbi David Fohrman: No, it's not passive. Actually, it's just as active.

Audience Member: It's passive. It happened because of the rest of the ones. (Inaudible 00:39:35 - 00:39:39).

Rabbi David Fohrman: The others are physical, this one's intellectual. That's true. Here's what I think the difference is between them all. The difference is that the first four, the narrator is doing the narrator's normal job. What the narrator is doing is just telling you what happened. The fifth is a value judgement on the part of the narrator.

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:40:02) other four did.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, but the fifth he also did. The point is that he did in the opinion of the narrator. You can't argue with vayachol, you can't argue with vayesht, but the narrator is saying that in the narrator's opinion, or in G-d's opinion, that was a degradation of the birthright. The point is this.

Usually speaking, the narrator keeps his opinion to himself and even when you get to the seemingly most egregious events that happened, the narrator doesn't really comment. He leaves it up to you.

In the sale of Joseph, the narrator doesn't come out and say, and that was a really bad thing to do. Even with Cain killing Abel, it never says that was a really bad thing to do. The narrator doesn't say that, you have to figure it out. The narrator respects you enough that generally speaking, he leaves it up to you. This is an exception.

It's one of the very few places in the Chumash where the narrator comes out and says, from the omniscient narrator's perspective, that was a degradation. I can't believe that Esau did that, that was a degradation. It's interesting that that word vayivez is the word that appears in the Book of Esther, is the word that Haman uses to take his desire to kill Mordechai and transfuse it into a desire to kill everybody, to kill all Jews. That is significant. I'm going to come back to that in a moment.

Now, let me get to the most trivial verse in the entire Torah, which I mentioned to you before. The most trivial verse in the entire Torah according to the Midrash of the Talmud is this. "Vayiheyu bnei lotan chori veheimam va'achot lotan Timna." The Midrash says, did God really have nothing better to do than to tell me that the sister of Lotan was Timna? What's the background to this?

The background to this is if you look at what's happening here in Genesis, "Eilu bnei Se'ir." First, we went "Eilu bnei Esav," first we had a whole bunch of sections talking about Esau and all of their princes. But after we're done with the princes of Esau, we get a section, which seems very trivial. "Eilu bnei Se'ir hachori yoshvei ha'aretz." We get the genealogy of the Seirites who were pre-Esau.

In other words, the people of Seir, the Chori, who were originally in Seir before Esau came and dispossessed them. Among them, we meet a prince by the name of Lotan, "Lotan veShoval veTzivon va'Anah." This is in Genesis, Chapter 36: 22. We hear about the children of Lotan. Lotan was one of these princes of Seir and he had children.

Then, it says "Va'achot Lotan Timna," he also had a sister by the name of Timna. The Talmud says that is really trivial. What use do you possibly have for that? I want to argue that this verse is actually a key to much of what goes on in the Torah. It's a very important verse and the Talmud's answer to why it's not so trivial is the beginning key to why this is anything but trivial. It is very important.

The sister of Lotan was Timna. What does the Midrash say about that? You know the Midrash, Rashi quotes it. The Midrash says, that Timna shows up somewhere else too. It turns out that Timna, the other time we have Timna, let's just call that up over here. Here's where Timna shows up again, the same Timna apparently.

Timna was a pilegesh (concubine) to Elifaz. Seemingly, the Midrash assumes it was the same Timna, so that means that the Timna who was the mother of Amalek also happened to be the sister of Lotan, who was from Chori. Now, why do we care? The Midrash says, what does that show you?

It shows you that here you have a girl, Timna, who is the sister of one of the ancient princes of the Chori of Seir. The idea is, if you know how royalty works, usually new royalty will marry old royalty in an attempt to make themselves important, so to speak, to really solidify their hold on power. That's the way it always works in old Europe or anything like that and it works that way here, too.

Who's old royalty? Really, old royalty are the Seir people. These are the people, who really belong in Seir. Esau, at this point, is just a newcomer to Seir. If his family is going to marry in, it would be important to marry into the Seir people. Instead, what happens?

This girl Timna ends up becoming a concubine, not a wife, but a concubine to Elifaz, which leads the Midrash to say, that you see how desperate the surrounding peoples were to get into Abraham's family that Timna, who was this princess, was even willing to be a concubine to Elifaz. She said, if I can't marry into the family, if they won't take me as a wife, I'll at least be a concubine. That's what the Midrash says and that's what Rashi quotes. We're going to do a family tree right now of Amalek for a moment.

Audience Member: Rabbi Fohrman, maybe she didn't have a choice. (Inaudible 00:46:31 - 00:46:36).

Rabbi David Fohrman: I'm not getting credit. I'm just quoting the Midrash. That's what the Midrash says.

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:46:39 - 00:46:40).

Rabbi David Fohrman: She says, maybe she didn't have a choice. Maybe, somebody forced her to marry him.

Audience Member: I heard a different Midrash that she went to Abraham and she actually wanted to convert. Abraham sent her away and that was a punishment that she ended up being the mother of Amalek.

Rabbi David Fohrman: I didn't see that in the Midrash. All I saw in the Midrash is that she wanted to marry into Abraham's family and said if I can't be a wife, then I'll at least be a concubine.

This is Timna. Now, I want you to look carefully here at these verses here and tell me what's strange about the children of Elifaz. Here we go. "Vayiheyu bnei Elifaz," here are the following children of Elifaz. We're in Genesis, Chapter 36, Verse 11. "Vayiheyu bnei Elifaz," now we all know that Amalek was one of the children of Elifaz. Let's read it.

The children of Elifaz were "Teiman, Omar, Tzefo, veGatam u'Kenaz." What's missing? Amalek. You know that Amalek was one of the children of Elifaz, but you just listed the five children of Elifaz. These are the children of Elifaz, and who is not listed? Amalek. Next verse. "VeTimna haytah pilegesh le'Elifaz," and Timna was a concubine to Eiphaz, "vateled le'Elifaz et Amalek," and she gave birth to Elifaz, Amalek. Okay, what's going on?

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:48:05 - 00:48:06)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Do you know the mothers of the other ones? No. Okay. Why not? Who are they from, presumably? From some wife or some wives of Elifaz, but it doesn't matter. Now, look at the subtle difference here. Who are the children of Elifaz? They're five children of Elifaz. They're Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. That implies what about Elifaz?

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:48:36 - 00:48:39). Rabbi David Fohrman: One more time.

Audience Member: He didn't have to (inaudible 00:48:42 - 00:48:46).

Audience Member: He was taken out of the thing and put it separately because it's very important. Rabbi David Fohrman: It could be because it's a very important idea.

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:48:54 - 00:48:55)?

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, you guys are getting drushy on me. It's very simple. (Interposing 00:48:59 - 00:49:04)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, Amalek was a lesser child. How do you know? Because the children of Elifaz are Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. Amalek is not even called a child of Elifaz. He's

called a child of Timna the concubine of Elifaz who gave birth to him for Elifaz, but he's never actually listed as a child of Elifaz. From here, from this very subtle reading of the text, and it's not me, for once I can actually point to someone else who says this. The Ramban actually says this. This is not me. Let me show you the Ramban. Listen to what the Ramban says.

Audience Member: Is this like Ishmael also?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Very similar to Ishmael, yes. All right, let's read it together. "Veyitachen ki bnei Elifaz hachamishah hayu yedu'im lo," it could mean that he wasn't even aware of the birth of Amalek, "ki holidom minashov," they were from his wives "ve'Amalek ba'avur heyoto ben pilegesh," because he was a child of a concubine, "lo haya lo shem be'echov," he did not have a name within the family. He wasn't counted as among the children of Elifaz along with his other brothers.

"Vehaya nichlal im bnei Esav," the verse includes him in the children of Esau, "ba'avur heyoto mizaro," because biologically, he does come from Esau, "vehutzrach hakatuv lomar ki imo plonit asher hu noda lah yoladto le'Elifaz aval einenu bichlal bnei Esav," he is not counted within the children of Esau, "velo yoshev imahem behar Se'ir."

If you look at Amalek, Amalek actually doesn't live in Mount Seir along with everybody else, and that's why. "Ki bibnei hageviros," because it was the children of the actual wives, "yikra lo zera," that actually carried the family name, "velo beben pilegesh," not for a child of a concubine, "ki lo yirash ben amah im banov." Now, he's quoting from Sarah. The same way that Sarah says that Ismael will not inherit, so too Amalek will not inherit.

Now, let's build a family tree. You have now Elifaz and you have Timna. Timna is the concubine and Amalek is not really the child of Esau. Now, here's the deal. Let's look at what our Sages are telling us about Timna and what our Sages are telling us about Elifaz, the two parents of Amalek. We hear about Timna that the most important thing for Timna, which trumped everything else in her life was what? To be part of Abraham's family, and yet, when she's the concubine of Elifaz what happens to her? The child that she has is not really part of Abraham's family.

Now, let's talk about Elifaz. What do our Sages tell us about Elifaz? Our Sages tell us that "Vayisa et kolo vayevk," when Jacob lifted up his voice and he cried when he first met Rachel and he kissed her, so our Sages are bothered why Jacob cried. Why did he cry? Our Sages tell us a very interesting tale to say, here is why Jacob cried. Jacob cried because of Elifaz.

Here's what happened. The textual evidence for this is what our Sages are doing is they're linking "Vayisa et kolo vayevk," here to the last "vayisa Esav kolo vayevk." Jacob lifts up his voice and cries when he see Rachel, the last "vayisa Esav kolo vayevk," in the Torah was when Esau lifted up his voice and cried when Jacob deceived him. Our Sages say in effect, this is my interpretation of our Sages, that the two "vayisa kolo vayevks" are connected. If you want to understand why Jacob is crying when he kisses Rachel, you have to understand that's because Esau cried when Jacob deceived him.

Here's the story that connects them, our Sages say. When Jacob deceived Esau, the next thing that Esau did was he dispatched his trusty son Elifaz to kill Jacob because we know that he wanted to kill Jacob. He sent Elifaz to kill Jacob and said, you're on a mission. Don't come back until you kill Jacob. Now, we have the story that Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is based on.

Elifaz goes and he catches up to Jacob. He's there, he takes the knife, and he says I can't do it. I can't kill you, just like the hunter in Snow White, but he says what can I do? If I go back to my father not having killed you, he'll disown me. Jacob says no problem. Take all my money and "Oni nechshav kemet," a person who is poor, it's like he dead. Take all my money, and then you could go back and you could say that you killed me. Elifaz says good idea. He drops the knife, takes his money, and he goes back to Esau.

Now, if you think about it, what Jacob did for Elifaz, was that a nice thing that he did or a mean thing that he did?

Audience Member: It's similar to what he did.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's similar to what he did to his own father. Basically what he's doing is he's saying, trick your father the same way I tricked my father. I did it with my father; you can trick your father too. Now certainly, there's something nice about what he's doing because if Elifaz, unwilling to kill Jacob, comes back to Esau with nothing, and says I failed, what's going to happen? He's going to be dispossessed. Jacob actually allowing him to find favor in his father's eyes, but he's doing it in a deceptive way.

Audience Member: (Inaudible 00:55:27) saving his life. Rabbi David Fohrman: Saving whose life?

Audience Member: His own.

Rabbi David Fohrman: He's saving his own life, that's true, and so he has an ulterior motive. That's true. It's an iffy kind of thing, so our Sages say that's why he cried. Why did he cry? Because he didn't have the money to marry Rachel straight out, so he had to work for seven years and the whole long thing.

Now, it's all up to Amalek. What are our Sages really telling us? I think our Sages are actually telling us about Amalek in all of these things. Why? Here is Amalek. If you were the child of Elifaz, what do you think your mission in life would be?

Audience Member: To remember how to always fight it.

Rabbi David Fohrman: If you're the child of Elifaz, and Elifaz's mission given to him by his father, was to avenge the loss of blessings, to kill Jacob, what would your mission be?

Audience Member: To kill Jacob.

Rabbi David Fohrman: My mission would be to fulfill the unfulfilled task of my father. My grandfather was hoodwinked by Jacob, and my job is to finally fulfill this destiny, which is to kill Jacob, which is exactly what Amalek thinks his job is. But there's something that compounds it, and makes it much, much more poisonous, and much, much worse, and that is Timna.

Timna is desperate to be part of the family of Abraham. Whom does she marry? Elifaz, from Esau, and Esau is not even really part of the family of Abraham. Esau has been dispossessed from the family of Abraham. She's marrying into him to try to desperately be part of this, but then, tragedy compounds upon tragedy.

Not only is Timna marrying into the dispossessed part of Abraham, but Timna's own child becomes disposed from Elifaz in a very similar way to the way Esau becomes disposed, because the father doesn't even consider him one of his own children. What does Amalek inherit from his mother? If he inherited from his father the desire to kill Jacob, what did he inherit from his mother?

Audience Member: To be part of the family.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The desire to be part of the family no matter what, and how am I going to be part of the family? I'm going to do what Elifaz should've done. I'm going to kill Jacob, but what compounds the bitterness is that they don't even notice him. He's nothing. He's not even part of Esau. He's just a son of a concubine. He doesn't even count. He doesn't have a name amongst his brothers.

There's a tremendous amount of anger within Amalek, but only part of the anger is really for Jacob. Whom is Amalek really angry at? Let me just finish my point. What Amalek is really angry at is every father he's had. He's angry at Elifaz, who won't even recognize him, and yet he's loyal to Elifaz and wants pursue that vision.

He's angry at Esau, and yet he's loyal to Esau. What is he angry at Esau for? What did Esau do? How did Esau get himself dispossessed? Because he didn't have to sell that birthright. What word in the Torah sticks out in his head? It's the Vayivez, and he despised. That was Esau's part of it. That's the word, which Amalek can't stand. The "Vayivez Esav et habechorah." That got you dispossessed, why did you have to do that? Yeah, it was good you thought for the day. You didn't think about tomorrow, but I'm the grandchild and tomorrow matters to me. I am the grandchild, what about me? He is despised.

Part of the picture is Jacob, Jacob who victimized Esau. It's a complicated picture. There's enough blame to go around and we have to be careful with that. When we go to Edom, you have to make sure to buy food from them, and you have to be careful not to antagonize them. You buy food. God gave you the blessings and you buy food. This is Amalek in the Book of Esther, but there's another way to read "Vayivez be'einov lishlo'ach yad beMordechai levado," that it was degrading in his eyes to just kill Mordecai. That is, it was degrading in his eyes. What does that mean? The word vayivez was in his eyes, he couldn't get it out of his head.

The thing that haunts Amalek is that degradation; is the anger at father, at father Esau, at father Elifaz,

but it's an anger that's displaced. I can't be angry at Esau because I'm loyal to him because my mother wanted to be part of his family. What do I do instead? This, by the way, is the legacy of abused children, period. This is what happens with abused children.

Abused children find it very hard to be angry at their parents because my parent is my parent. I have all this angry at my parents, but it's not kosher for me to be angry at my parents, so what do I have to do? I have to find somebody who it is kosher to be angry at. Who here is part of the picture that's kosher to be angry at? It's Jacob.

What fuels the anger of Amalek is the degradation. It's the dispossession. It's dispossession squared. Esau is dispossessed, and he's dispossessed within this. What fuels it is all that dispossession, the degradation, and all of that, but he projects it upon Jacob, which is the reason why you can never reconcile with Amalek. You can reconcile with Esau, but you can't reconcile with Amalek. Why can you reconcile with Esau?

If you think about it, we did reconcile with Esau. Jacob appeased Esau. He bowed before him. He said he was sorry. He said, take my blessings, do the whole thing. Esau, who came with 400 men to kill him, kisses him, hugs him, and says I have a lot, my brother. I really don't need it, but ultimately accepted it, and went his way to where of all places? To Mount Seir, because God gave him Mount Seir, and that was okay. It worked out. It wasn't nice, but it worked out.

Over the centuries, we've had our détente with the Christians. There have been the Crusades and bad things. More or less, we've made it, but the ones you're not going to make it with is Amalek. The reason why there's no reconciling with Amalek is the only time I can reconcile is if you're angry at me for what I did and I apologize, then we can reconcile. That's what happened with Esau, but Amalek is not just angry at me for what I did. Who's Amalek really angry at? Amalek's really angry at themselves, or their own fathers, but they won't come to grips with them being angry at their own fathers. They've displace that anger upon you, but there's nothing you can do to make them less angry at their own fathers.

No matter what you do, it's never ever going to be enough in their eyes, and they're always going to get you, which is why, I believe, we have to always remember what Amalek did to us. In other words, what do we need to remember? The idea is that what we need to remember is that the enmity of Amalek is not quenchable. In other words, they came to you in the desert, and this is an interesting thing. They came to you in the desert.

With this I'll close, I'm really out of time. We talked about this a little bit before, but Jacob and Laban's household was very similar to the Jews in Egypt. How so? He was a slave in Laban's household; the Jews were enslaved in Egypt. When Jacob leaves Laban's household, it's very similar to the Jews leaving Egypt. It's the same words. We did this before, I think, "Vayasigu otam." It's all the same words.

How we got down to Egypt, it's all the same. If you follow all the parallels, if you keep your eye on the parallels, when Jacob left Laban's household, it's very similar to the Jews leaving Pharaoh's household.

Now, when Jacob left Laban's household, he crosses over a river. When the Jews leave Pharaoh's

household, they cross over a sea. Now, right after Jacob crosses over the river, what happens next?

He meets Esau. He's about to meet Esau because he's about to go into Israel, and he's going to meet Esau. This is the time that Esau is going to encounter you. Esau is going to be angry, but what happens at that moment? He makes up with Esau. They kiss, they hug, and they go their separate ways. Now, what's interesting is that immediately after the splitting of the Red Sea, the Jews also meet up with Esau. What should've happened, if you find the parallels? They should've kissed and hugged, just in memory of what happened at that moment.

Audience Member: It wasn't Esau.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It wasn't Esau. It was Amalek, that's right. It was Amalek, so the answer is that they met up with the strain of Esau, who identifies so strongly with Esau that they say to themselves, we are the real progeny of Esau, even though they're not. We will be the pure-blooded Esauniks, fight for everything they stood for, not give an inch, and they remember everything. They remember "Ata ayeif veyagei'a," you took advantage of Esau when he was tired. You are tired; we're going to hit you when you're down. You said "Ki yikra Hashem Elokecha lifanai," we're going to get you because of this. They remember, but their memory is selective. They only remember certain things.

What they should be remembering, according to the parallels, is the act of reconciliation. They should be remembering how Jacob came and said, "Kach na et birchati," take my blessing, but they don't remember that. The only thing they remember is the tiredness, and how they were taken advantage of.

Not only that, "Vayezanev becha kol hanecheshalim acharecha," and they cut down the weak behind you, what does that remind you of? After the reconciliation, do you know why Jacob said he can't go with Esau? Because I have all these little ones, I have to go too slowly, and they trail after me. It is those little ones specifically, that they attacked in the desert. Why? Because the idea is that we don't care about your reconciliation, not even on the board.

What happens is Amalek has a very sharp memory, but a memory for only what they want. It's a skewed memory by virtue of "Vayivez be'einov," they will not look at Esau's own complicity, and they will not look at reconciliation. They need t be angry at Jacob because it's the only way that they could have a target to displace the anger at their own fathers. That is why, A, you need to remember what they did to you because of what they did to you showed that a moment that they should've been reconciling with you, what they were doing instead, was remembering only all the bad things. They have a selective memory, and you need to remember that.

Always remember what they did, because of what they did, as long as they are Amalek. If they're not Amalek, if they make peace with you, Maimonides says that you accept them, and you don't kill them. Even Amalek, you do not kill if they make peace with you, because then they're not Amalek anymore. Then, they renounce the eternal hatred. But if they consider themselves Amalek, if they stay within that mindset, then there is no reconciling. You must remember that, because if you try to reconcile with them, that is very dangerous. If you try to reconcile with somebody who will not reconcile with you, how will they interpret the attempt to reconcile?

Audience Member: As weakness.

Rabbi David Fohrman: As weakness, and therefore you can't afford that, which is why I believe, Mordecai doesn't bow. Why doesn't he bow? Jacob bowed. In an act of reconciliation, Jacob bowed to Esau. That was a good bowing, but it's only a good bowing to Esau, who will accept it. If I decided that there's no reconciling, so then how do I interpret bowing? They're weak.

Audience Member: Benjamin didn't bow.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Benjamin didn't bow, that's the point. There is a part of Esau, just as there is a part of us, that will not bow. It's the Benjamin part of us, and we'll talk about that later. What is happening is that they won't remember. I believe that, ultimately the command to destroy is interesting. The command to destroy Amalek, what are we really trying to destroy? The memories of Amalek.

Amalek are the ones who remember. They are focused not on tomorrow, on today and on the past. They remember the past and it burns in their eyes. The problem is they misremember the past. It's a PR battle.

If you let them win the PR battle, if you let them define the debate, that this is what the struggle between you and Esau are about, we are the true Esauniks, then there will be no peace in the world, then the Jews have no ability to relate to anybody in the world. There will be the eternal enmity of Esau. They misremember. Their memory is skewed. What we need to do is destroy that memory because the memory is poisonous.

(END RECORDING - 01:09:15)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Let me give you an update and I'm thinking about Amalek and the manna here. I want to introduce you to a problem that I've been struggling with over the last couple of weeks with respect to all of this Amalek stuff. It may not seem like much of a problem to you, but it seems like a problem to me. Let me unburden myself and share with you with difficulty that I've been struggling with.

I don't know if I did this with you already, but I suspect that I did, so hopefully this will be review. One of the bases for the problem is this. One of the arguments that I have been making to you about Amalek, is that one of the reasons why need to get rid of the memory of Amalek, as it were, we need to wipe the memory of Amalek, is that it is specifically something about Amalek's memory as it were, that we find problematic. It's not so much Amalek, it is Amalek, but what was bothersome about Amalek is the memories that they have, and therefore it's specifically the memories of Amalek that we need to wipe out.

The argument that I suggested to you is that for various reasons, but and we won't get into the reasons right now, is that we argued essentially that Amalek is that part of Esau which will never move on, which will see themselves as locked in the eternal conflict with Jacob, and essentially what we argued is that Amalek sees themselves as the memory keepers of the struggle between Jacob and Esau. They see themselves, we argued that they are, if you look at the genealogy, they are the dispossessed child of Esau, Esau is the dispossessed child of Eliphaz, the grandson of Esau. He is desperate to be part of Abraham's family, but dispossessed at the same time. They see Esau almost as having sold out, that there was a reconciliation between -- there are three stories that we have of Jacob and Esau.

The first story of Jacob and Esau is where Jacob buys the birthright from Esau. The second story is the deception story where he deceives Esau and gets the brachos (blessings) from their father and the third story is when they meet again, when Esau is coming with 400 men. We argued that if you look at the textual parallels, it seems pretty clear that Amalek has a lot of memories of the first two stories, but has virtually no memory of the last story and thus they mis-remember the story of Jacob and Esau. They deny the existence of the reconciliation narrative and it's not because there's not aware of the reconciliation narrative, it's because they deny it. How do you know that they're aware of the reconciliation narrative and they deny it? Two major ways.

One way is who do they attack when they attack the Jews? They attack a particular segment of the Jews. Which segment of the Jews did they attack, remember? They attack the weak and the stragglers. Why would they be attacking the weak and the stragglers? Well, if you think about the reconciliation narrative, where do we have the weak and the stragglers in the reconciliation narrative? Remember the reconciliation narrative? Jacob meets Esau, remember we talked about the weak and stragglers in that reconciliation narrative? Where?

Audience Member: (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: "Vayezanaiv becha kol hanecheshalim acharecha" in Ki Teitzei, in Devarim

(Deuteronomy), when we retell the story of Amalek's attack, we say "vayezanaiv becha kol hanecheshalim acharecha", that he tailed after you. He tailed after all of the weak who were behind you. That's the language. By the way, not for now, we'll eventually get to this, vayezanaiv is an interesting word, which really means tail, it's a verb form of tail, right? The word necheshalim is a strange word for weak, but what does not remind you of? Nun-Chet-Shin?

Audience Member: (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Something that you would grab by the tail, right? Specifically, a nachash (snake). Where do we have a snake being grabbed by the tail? The story of Aaron, Aaron's staff. Anyways, we'll get back to that there, the connection maybe between Amalek and a snake, but I don't want to get into that right now. For the time being, the point I'm making is that in their specific desire to tail after you and to take advantage of the weak reminds you of something in the Jacob and Esau narrative. Let's go to the Jacob and Esau narrative, refresh your memory here.

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, I'm talking about the third story. The third story, remember the third story in Vayishlach, guys? You don't know what I'm talking about? Let's go to Vayishlach.

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: When he goes to meet Esau again with 400 men. Where do we have it? Let's find it.

Audience Member: You skipped one story. The story that we (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, yeah, that's a story in the midrash (commentary), actually, so I'm not dealing with that now. We talked about that not the last week we were together, but the week before that, we talked about that, right? That was the -- did we not talk about that? We talked about the Eliphaz story. So, you skipped that, you had to --

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Right. Well, basically it’s another story in which Jacob really deceives not just Esau, but now deceives Eliphaz, and if you were into getting Eliphaz to abandon the quest to kill him, if you were Eliphaz's child, what would you think maybe that your mission in the world is? To finish your father's unfinished business, which is, and Amalek is the child of Eliphaz, and Amalek sees himself as on a mission.

Audience Member: The mission is to kill Jacob.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The mission is to kill Jacob. Here's the reconciliation story, right over here. At

the very end of this reconciliation story, right, after Jacob bows before him, says take my blessing, and here. "Vayomer nisah venelchah ve'elcha lenegdecha", so Esau says let's go together. "Vayomer elav adoni yodei'a ki hayeladim rakim vehatzon vehabakar olot alai udefakum yom echad vameitu kol hatzon. Ya'avor na adoni lifnei avdo ve'ani etnahalah le'iti leregel hamelachah asher lifanay uleregel hayeladim ad asher avo el adoni Se'eirah." This is the story where basically Jacob says I can't go with you because I have too many fragile people and they're weak and they're slow, so you go ahead and I'll go behind.

That's the story.

Who do we meet in this story? We meet fragile people who walk slowly. Who is it that Amalek attacks? Amalek attacks the fragile people who walk slowly. It's not that Amalek is unaware of this story. Amalek is very aware of this story, but whereas Esau graciously allows Jacob to depart because he has weak people in his camp, Amalek viciously attacks those same weak people, almost saying that Esau let you get off easy and Esau should have taken advantage of you. This is what we do. We're going to attack.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) the irony of the words "kach na et birchati", sometimes ironic using that

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Rabbi David Fohrman: Well it is, it is ironic and really what Jacob is basically saying is this is as close to reconciliation as you can get, but Jacob was basically saying take the blessing already, take my blessing, here's all the material goods, and he really goes pretty overboard. "Ki al kein ra'iti panecha kirot pnei Elokim veterzeini", seeing your face is like seeing the face of God. So, he's as apologetic as you can imagine, but this is not something that Amalek deals with this.

Amalek sort of ignores it and I think I may have the case to you, although I don't remember if I did, in exactly these words, but when Jacob sends the gifts, he prays to God, "Hatzileini na meyad achi", save me from my brother, and then he sends these gifts. When he sends the gifts, he tells the people, "verevach tasimu bein eder ubein eder". The Baal Haturim points that that word revach appears only one other time in the Bible. The only other time you have revach in the Bible is in the megillah. Where do you have it in the megillah?

Audience Members: "Revach vehatzalah ya'amod al laYehudim."

Rabbi David Fohrman: "Revach vehatzalah ya'amod laYehudim." Okay. "Revach vehatzalah", what did you pray to God? "Hatzileini na meyad achi meyad Esav". Both of those words revach and hatzalah appear in the megillah and they appear first in this first story, in this reconciliation story. It gives you a sense of what Mordecai was saying especially when we go back to that other piece of our Sages about Mordecai. Remember when Mordecai hears about Haman's plot, "Vayiz'ak tze'akah gedolah umarah", he lets out that great and bitter cry.

There is one other time in the Bible that you have "Vayiz'ak tze'akah gedolah" and it's when Esau lets out a great and bitter cry. One is with a zayin and one is with a tzadik, but otherwise they're the same. Our Sages says that the reason why Haman had the chance to commit genocide against the Jews was because of Esau's tears, but anybody who says that God is a vatran, anybody who says that God lets

things lie and doesn't exact debts is wrong. God just bides His time and the proof is that all the tears that Esau cried over the blessings are the tears that Mordecai would end up crying, at the hands of Esau, in the times of Haman.

If that is true though, what is Mordecai saying when he says "Revach vehatzalah ya'amod laYehudim" and he is specifically quoting from here. What's the meaning of that? Why will it be? Remember when he says "revach vehatzalah", he says basically we're going to be fine and Esther, if you don't save us, someone else will. Providence will see to it that we will be saved. Why is he so sure that Providence will see to it that we will be saved? He is so sure because of "revach tasimu bein eder ubein eder".

What he is alluding to is that Amalek are those people who deny this story. They consider this story as if it didn't happen. They think this reconciliation is nonsense, but it wasn't nonsense and the reason why we’re going to be saved now is because there was a reconciliation between Jacob and Esau and because Amalek mis-remembers that and it is their mis-remembering of that which is ultimately their Achilles heel. The reason we have a moral leg to stand on, that we in the end will prevail is because "revach tasimu bein eder ubein eder" and because of "hatzileini na meyad achi", because Jacob did these things, so we have a capacity and we will win in the long run. One way or the other, we will win.

This is one indication that Amalek denies the reconciliation story, that Amalek is aware of it, but denies it. It's the attack on the weak, Mordecai's invocation of "revach tasimu bein eder ubein eder" and these things. Another indication of it which, I think, I talked to you about, but I might not, goes back to an interesting set of parallels which I am going to show you in PowerPoint.

I think I showed you this, but in case I didn't, if you listen to this language over here, "Vayugad leLavan bayom hashilishi ki barach Yaakov"; we probably did this. "Vayugad leLavan bayom hashilishi ki barach Yaakov", and it was told to Laban, on the third day, that Jacob had ran away. Where, again, do you hear that language? You hear it right over here. "Vayugad lemelech Mitzrayim ki barach ha'am", right, you see that everybody? These are the only two times that you have that language. It was told to the king of Egypt that the people had fled, it was told to Laban that Jacob had fled. The Torah seems to be setting up this parallel between the way Jacob leaves the house of Laban and the way the Jews leave the house of Pharaoh. It continues.

"Vayikach et echav imo", when Laban chased after Jacob, he took his brothers with him, when Pharaoh chased after the Jews, "V'et amo lakach imo", he takes his people with him. You with me, guys? Look at the next words. "Vayirdof acharav", Laban chases after Jacob, "vayirdof acharav", same verb with Pharaoh down over here, "vayirdof acharei B'nei Yisrael", see that? You with me? Right, it's all the same language.

"Vayaseg Lavan et Yaakov", Laban caught up to Jacob. "Vayasigu otam chonim al hayam", Pharaoh catches up to them. It's all the same. You with me guys? What's going on here, this can't be a coincidence. This occurring of five verbs, all in order, that are all the same. "Vayugad", "ki barach", "et amo lakach imo", "vayirdof acharav", "vayasigu otam", it's just right down the line.

Evidently, this is sort of a microcosm/macrocosm thing. What happens to Jacob as an individual in the house of Laban, happens to the Jews as a community in the house of Egypt. What does Jacob experience in the house of Laban? Basically, slavery. For how many years? 21 years. What do the Jews experience in the house of Pharaoh? Basically slavery. For how many years? For 210 years. It's basically a microcosm/ macrocosm, it's a multiple of ten. We didn't do this? We didn't do this in (inaudible)?

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Oh, really. Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh, wow. What can I do? Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. If you don't publish your stuff, someone else will publish it for you! So, it seems that what Jacob experiences in the house of Laban, the Jews will experience in the house of Pharaoh. The way they leave Egypt is the same. The experience in Egypt is the same. What's also interesting is that the way that they get down to Egypt is the same. What I mean is, the way Jacob gets down to the house of Laban is the same as the way the Jews get down to the house of Egypt. How do the Jews get down to Egypt? Basically through the sale of Joseph. In the sale of Joseph, what happens?

Father treats the younger child as if he is the bechor (firstborn son). Father is treating Joseph as if he is the firstborn son. The brothers tricked their father about that child. They kill a goat and they present the brother's coat to the father. What does that remind you of? It reminds you of Jacob and the blessings.

Where, father is treating the younger child as if he is the firstborn son. Sorry, father is not treating the younger child as if he is the firstborn son. The younger child thinks he is the firstborn son. The father is treating the older child as if he is the firstborn son, but the brother, which in this case is Jacob, tricked his father about that child, which in this case is Esau, killing a goat and presenting the brother's coat to the father, when he wears the coat and comes in front of his father. It's like the same story.

The same way that you get down to the house of Laban, the Jews get down to the house of Egypt, which is basically goats and coats. It's the goats and coats narrative. There's goats and coats one and there's goats and coats two.

The question is how far does this trajectory continue? How far can you trace this trajectory and see it continue. In other words, what we've seen is, is that the way that Jacob gets into Laban's house is similar to the way the Jews get into Pharaoh's house. Jacob's experience in Laban's house is similar to his children's experience in Pharaoh's house. The way Jacob leaves Laban's house is similar to the way his children will end up leaving Pharaoh's house. Let's just go a little bit farther.

After Jacob leaves Laban's house, and all those parallels which we saw, the next thing that happens is he

gets to a river and he crosses over the river. What would that remind you with the Jews? After they leave Pharaoh's house? The Yam Suf (Red Sea). Now, immediately after Jacob crosses that river, he then encounters Esau, with 400 men, waiting to attack and he reconciles with them. Now, what happens with the Jews right after they cross the Red Sea? Who do they meet? They meet Esau's descendants, Amalek. That suggests that what was supposed to happen historically at that time?

Audience Member: Reconciliation.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Reconciliation. What they were supposed to do is kiss and hug each other. There was supposed to be this memory of what had happened with Jacob and Esau. If you just continue the parallels, it's just a natural playing out of those parallels. There was supposed to be a reconciliation but instead, there wasn't. Instead, it went badly. Instead, we met an Amalek that didn't recognize the reconciliation, didn't want to have anything to do with the reconciliation. The reconciliation is there, it should have been re-enacted, but it wasn't. Amalek came and didn't have anything to do with it.

Now to my problem. I alluded to you that I had a problem. Here is my problem. My problem is that if this is right, how exactly does this square with what we did the last time that we were together? The last time we were together, we read the man (manna) story, which is the prologue to the attack of Amalek in Parashat Beshalach. When we read the manna story, we find a very strange thing. We found that as you read the manna story, you started hearing echoes of the Jacob and Esau stories. What echoes should you have heard? If you follow the parallels which we were just seeing now, which of the three Jacob and Esau stories should we be hearing parallels to? Story number one, story number two or story number three, the reconciliation story?

The answer is story number three, the reconciliation story, that's where we're up to, that's what Jacob did after he crossed the ma'avar Ya'abok (ford of Jabbok), he reconciled with Esau and that's what you would expect to happen. That is what should be happening when the Jews confront Amalek. However, instead, if you look at all the parallels in the manna story, you don't see any of the parallels going to the third Jacob and Esau story. They go to the wrong stories. The parallels remind you of the first two Jacob and Esau stories not the third. I'll show you what I mean.

Let's go to my Amalek parallels.

Audience Member: In my mind, (inaudible) grandson, but even in today's world, as you started out the whole lecture, it's different. I mean, you have Amalek is still not an Esau in today's world. You have the Christian community and you have the Amalekim who want to destroy us. You have to say that with some of them, that with some of the Esaus, you still have a relationship.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true.

Audience Member: -- Amalek is the one who --

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- but Amalek sees themselves, right, it's not a coincidence that when we should

have met Esau, we instead met Amalek. Amalek and Esau don't have nothing to do with other. They have everything to do with each other. Amalek sees themselves as the real Esau. Amalek is the grandson of Esau, right? Our theory is that Amalek sees themselves as the grandson of Esau, in trying to almost

out-Esau Esau, outperform Esau. Like, in a certain way, any abused child or dispossessed child, what's the desire of every dispossessed child? To be possessed or to express, to carry on, the lineage of his parents.

You missed this class, you missed the two sessions before this, but this is what we talked about two sessions before this.

We went through the lineage of Amalek, Amalek, the child of Timnah and Eliphaz, the children of Esau, and Timnah, with the desire to be part of Abraham's family, but instead just becomes a pilegesh (concubine) to Eliphaz, and because of that, has this dispossessed child that's not counted together with the other children, but is desperate to become part of the family anyway. Amalek inherits that desire to be part of the family, but is dispossessed anyway. He's angry about it.

Instead of funneling that anger at his own parents, which is always very difficult to do, he funnels that anger at the only kosher person to funnel it for, which is instead of being angry at my father Eliphaz or in the exact same way, at my father Esau for losing the birthright, I am angry at Jacob. All of my problems come from Jacob. Jacob is really the only kosher person that you can really argue with. I think that Amalek sees themselves, again, as the carriers of Esau's memory.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) kind of in charge, (inaudible) we were weak (inaudible) story about Mordecai, we were weak (inaudible) --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, right. So, we're going to talk about that. Here's the things. Here's what we talked about, kind of, last time. Just to refresh your memory, what we were talking about with the manna. What I asked you to consider was that names in Tanach are often suggestive. What are we to make of Haman's name? Haman's name sure sounds a lot like the manna. That's what it sounds like.

Is there any connection between Haman and the manna? We argued that our suspicion that there is a connection between Haman and the manna seems to be buttressed by the fact that the experience that they Jews had before confronting Amalek for the first time just happens to be their first experience with the manna. Before the Jews meet Amalek for the first time, they meet the manna for the first time. Is that a coincidence? Well, it doesn't seem to be a coincidence, but still, you could say ah Fohrman, you're crazy, it's a coincidence, right? Maybe.

If we investigate a little bit further, it really seems like something is going on with this connection between the manna, as it were, manna and Haman. You see it here. "Vayomru aleihem B'nei Yisrael mi yiten muteinu beyad Hashem be'eretz Mitzrayim beshivteinu al seer habasar be'achleinu lechem lasova ki hotzeteim otanu el hamidbar hazeh lehamit et kol hakahal hazeh bara'av."

The Jews said, and this is according to what Bobby (ph) was saying before, if only we had died in the hands of God in the land of Egypt, when we sat, when we had the fleshpots, "be'achaleinu lechem lasova", when we had enough bread to eat, "ki hotzeteim otanu el hamidbar hazeh lehamit et kol hakahal

hazeh bara'av", that You brought us out to this desert to kill us all through hunger. What are they basically saying?

They are saying anyway we are going to die. What difference does it make how we are going to die? Either we are going to die in the desert or we would have died in Egypt. It would have been much better to die in Egypt where at least we had enough bread to eat than to die in the desert when we don't have any bread to eat. What does this formula remind you of? Anyway I am going to die.

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: If I am going to die anyway, I might as well have the piece of bread. Who said that?

Audience Member: Esau.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's Esau. Esau with the lentil soup. This is the first story, this is what I am talking about, the parallels of the manna remind you of the first Jacob and Esau story, not the third story. This is the first story. "Mi yiten moteinu beyad Hashem be'eretz Mitzrayim", and strangely, who are the Jews acting like here? The Jews are acting not like Jacob, but they're acting like Esau. Now it's more than this.

Audience Member: They put in the yad Hashem (Hand of God). Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: They put in the Hand of God.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true. They put in the Hand of God, and we'll get to that in a moment.

Audience Member: (Inaudible), you talk about the fact they had plagues in Egypt, you talk about (inaudible) --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, okay, true, true. Not only that, but here's the point that I made to you last week, the last time we were together, that we went through in detail, which I'm not going to through with you again, but I argued to you that this is an important point, that the Exodus from Egypt was a significant event. Obviously, it was a significant event, but it was our national birth. It was our national birth in a very literal kind of way. God says "beni bechori Yisrael", My firstborn nation is the Jewish People. We become born to God, as His firstborn, in this event known as yetzias Mitzrayim (the Exodus from Egypt). It is actually through the korban Pesach (Passover offering) that this happened.

We talked before about the symbolism of the Passover offering and the birth symbols in the Passover offering. The idea of the bloody doorway, where there's blood at the top of the door, the bottom of the door and the sides of the door, and all night you wait and no-one's allowed to go through the door, and

you're waiting and you're waiting and finally you go out bechipazon, you go out in haste, through the door.

When you get through the door, God says "upasachti aleichem" which we said is possibly the language of "pas", of granting the coat. What's the coat? The coat says you're going to be the firstborn. It's like going through the birth canal and literally the Jewish People being born, and God declaring us firstborn. It's our national birth. Which is why "Hachodesh hazeh lachem rosh chadashim" is the topic sentence for all the laws of the Passover offering in Shemot (Exodus), Chapter 12.

Even though, a calendrical note about Nissan being the first of months seems to have nothing to do with the Passover offering, the reason why it does have to with the Passover offering is because if the Passover offering is a birth, the reason why we start counting our months from Nissan is because it's our birthday. That's the idea. This is your national birthday, this is where you begin to count time from. You are born.

If that's true, then when the Jews say here, if only we had died in Egypt, we should have gone back to Egypt, what are they really saying?

Audience Member: We should have been unborn --

Rabbi David Fohrman: We should have been unborn, we should never be the firstborn. Now think of what Esau said when he sold -- what did he sell for his bread and lentil soup? He sold the birthright.

Audience Member: He's getting unborn.

Rabbi David Fohrman: He is getting unborn. It's exactly the same as the Jews. Are you with me? The Jews are renouncing their birthright just as Esau renounced his birthright for bread and lentil soup, in this case, bread and pots of meat, because anyway I'm going to die, just like Esau. It's exactly the same as Esau.

Audience Member: I don't see (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Because in saying that we should have just gone back to Egypt already, insofar as Egypt is a process of birth, they're saying in effect, we should have been unborn, we should not have been born first. We're not going to be the firstborn, we're renouncing the birthright, the same way as "Vayivez Esav et habechorah", this is vayivez of the birthright for us. This is not a good thing. Are you guys with me? All right. Moving on.

Then, even this language, "Vayeitzei ha'am velaktu devar yom beyomo", so the Jews went and they had to go, "vayomer Hashem el Moshe henini mamtir lachem lechem min hashamayim vayeitzei ha'am velaktu devar yom beyomo", I'm going to cause bread to rain down from heavens and the people are going to collect it, "devar yom beyomo", they're going to collect it day by day. "Lema'an anaseunu hayelech betorati im lo", so that I can test them to see "hayelech betorati im lo". I'm sorry. This language, over here, is also very interesting and very significant.

"Lema'an anaseunu hayelech betorati im lo", now you have another Esau parallel, now it's going to go to story number two rather than story number one, but not story number three. This is my problem. All the parallels are for the wrong stories. Now we're going to have a parallel to story number two. Ready? "Lema'an anaseunu", God wants to test the Jews, " hayelech betorati im lo".

Now, if we take this little formula and we do a little algebraic substitution here. We're going to say let x equal yelech betorati. Now we're going to substitute x, the variable for it and we're going to make that a variable. So, we're going to have a question that begins with ha, ha always will introduce a rhetorical question, and we're going to see whether ha did in beginning as whether, so we have a ha whether question, we have a lema'an anasenu, we have a test whether x, because we're substituting x for yelech betorati and now, followed by im lo.

Where else in the Torah do we have this formula before this? A test, ha, whether, x, im lo, or not. We have it here, only one other time in the Torah before this do we have a test to see ha, whether, x or not. Anybody? Free Coke for correct answer.

Audience Member: (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Where else do we have, yeah? Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, God does say about the children of Israel, that's the third time we have it after that, but that's after this and I'll talk about that in a moment, so you get a Sprite.

Audience Member: We have with Moses, with the plagues, with Pharaoh in Egypt. Rabbi David Fohrman: Where?

Audience Member: With the testing (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Oh boy, I just realized another one. Oh, that's very interesting. A fourth one also connects to this. That's a whole chain of those. That's interesting. It's a whole chain. It starts with the first, in Bereishis (Genesis), and it goes all the way through the Torah. I'll tell you the fourth in a minute. Anyways, let's talk about the first.

Where's the first? I'll give you a hint. It's in Jacob and Esau two, which is the deception story. Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, I'll tell you. You forced my hand. Remember when Jacob is dressing up as Esau and Isaac tells him to come close so he can feel him? "Gesha na ve'amushecha", come close so I can feel you. Now listen to these words. "Haatah zeh beni Esav im lo". Are you my son Esau or not?

Now, this is really wild because the last parallel we just saw, the Jews were acting like Esau, right? The very next thing you have is Isaac saying are you my son Esau or not? You get that? "Lema'an anasenu hayelech betorati im lo" is really saying are you Esau or not? I mean, do you get this? Are you with me? This is really pretty wild.

When are the other times? Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: The other times are, you have it, are immediately, right before the attack of Amalek, actually, right? Literally, the sentence before the attack against Amalek, I'll show it to you in the text, in Exodus, and here we are in the manna story, here we go. "Vayikra shem hamakom Maase u'Merivah", they called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, Amalek is going to attack in the next sentence, "al riv B'nei Yisrael", on the fight that the Jewish People had, "ve'al nisotam et Hashem", and protesting God, "lemor hayesh Hashem bekirbeinu im ayin", this is the third place. Now listen to what happened.

This is the playoff of the second place. You understand? The second time was when God gave us the manna "lema'an anasenu", to test us, "hayelech betorati im lo", would we follow in God's Torah or not, would we keep by the laws of the manna or not, which echoes are we Esau-like or not? Now, this plays off of that, that what happened instead, God was testing us, but instead " ve'al nisotam et Hashem", we named this place Massah and Meribah because we ended up testing God, God didn't test us, we tested God, "lemor", saying, "hayesh Hashem bekirbeinu im ayin", is God in our midst or not?

Somehow that's connected, that's really like the opposite in a certain way of what was supposed to happen. What was supposed to happen is that we were supposed to be tested by God to see if we were Esau or not and instead, we tested God saying is God with us or not?

Now, here's the fourth time. The fourth time, as far as I remember is, I believe it's in Parashat Beha'aloscha, where the Jews again want food, they want meat, and Moses says how am I going to get meat for you? We're in the middle of a desert, how am I supposed to get meat for you? At which point God says I'm going to show you, "Hayikrecha devari im lo", I believe. Isn't that it? Let me see if we can just find it here for a quick second. All right, there it is. "Hatzon ubakar yeshachet lachem umatza lahem im et kol dagei hayam ye'asef lahem umatza lahem". If I got all the fish in the ocean together I couldn't feed all these people. "Vayomer Hashem el Moshe hayad Hashem tiktzor atah tireh hayikrecha devari im lo", you will now see whether I am trustworthy or not, "hayikrecha devari im lo."

What I want to suggest to you, but it's a little bit early for this, is that all four of these are really connected in a very even chain. That there is a conceptual link that links all four of these examples, of this formulation, and the beginning of it is "haatah zeh beni Esav im lo", and then it continues throughout the Torah. I will try to show how that it's so in a few moments. For the meantime, let me just get back to the main point that I am making.

The main point that I am making is without even explaining the significance of these parallels, it is odd that at the time when you are supposed to see parallels to Esau number three, you're not seeing parallels to Esau number three, you're seeing parallels to Esau's one and two. The Esau one and two parallels continue, right over here.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) stories, Jacob was strong? (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, let me just give you the data first and then we'll analyze it. We're not quite up to that yet. The next thing is "velaktu devar yom beyomo", what's the nature of the manna? The nature of the challenge of manna is that people need to collect "devar yom beyomo", they collect only as much as they need on that day. If we think about that language -- what?

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, that goes back to the machar thing, that goes back to Esau in one, Esau and Jacob in story number one is all about today and tomorrow. If you really think about it, let's go back to that story. Did we talk about -- we talked about "Vayazed Yaakov nazid", that language? Did we talk about that? Yeah? Right? "Vayazed Yaakov nazid", strange language, right? Jacob made porridge. What does that language remind you of? "Vayazed Yaakov nazid", the language "vayazeid?" If you didn't know that it meant make porridge, what would you think it meant?

Audience Member: Meizid.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Meizid. We talked about this, right? We didn't talk about this? Audience Member: You showed us that it's in the Chumash (Bible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: I showed it to you in the Bible. "Vayazed Yaakov nazid" you would have thought meant, the language of "vayazed" as a verb would normally mean to willfully premeditate something, it's specifically to premeditate murder. The only other time you have that language in the Torah, actually, is premeditation of murder which is "ki yazid ish al rei'eyhu lehargo be'ormah", when a person will willfully premeditate to lie in wait for a person and kill him. Which reminds you of Esau, by the way, when Esau decides that he is going to premeditate murder, "yikre'u yemei aivel avi", my father is going to die, "ve'ehergah et Yaakov achi", and I will be able to kill my brother.

It is almost as if Jacob's wanting to kill his brother is a response to "vayazed Yaakov nazid", you premeditated, what did Jacob premeditate? What it seems to suggest is that when Jacob was making porridge, he was premeditating something. What was he premeditating? He was doing it so he could sort of entrap Esau and he could get him to sell his birthright from him. If you think about that carefully, now let's talk about the relationship, and this I think is a very key point.

Let's talk about the relationship between Jacob and Esau in that original story. What is Esau focused on? Esau is focused on the present. All he wants is, why is he focused on the present? Because what does

tomorrow hold? Tomorrow holds death. I am going to die tomorrow so what difference does it make? Therefore, I might as well as just --

Audience Member: -- live for today.

Rabbi David Fohrman: I might as well just live for today. What is Jacob focused on? Jacob is focused on tomorrow. Let's just call it tomorrow. In what way is he focused on tomorrow? First of all, the only thing he cares about is getting the birthright which is only going to matter tomorrow. It's about tomorrow. Secondly, he's premeditating about tomorrow. He's thinking about food not in terms of today. He is thinking about, he is trying to plan something so he can sort of entrap Esau tomorrow. So you have Jacob completely focused on tomorrow and Esau completely focused on today, in this story.

Strangely enough, in our story in the manna, the test that God administers to the Jews is whether they will be able to focus on today. Again, Esau. Strange. God is testing us to see how Esau-like we can be. We talked about this a little bit last time, but I want to really understand what is going on here.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) tomorrow?

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Yes, well, in a certain way, yes. Notice that it's focused on, that's really the answer, but we're still focused on whether we can live with bread for the day as

opposed -- think really about bread for the day, focus on bread for the day instead of focusing on tomorrow. I ask you, is this Esau-like or is it Jacob-like? It's sort of, but it's not quite Esau-like either, for reasons that you said, because the reason that Esau focuses on tomorrow is why? Because you're going to die tomorrow. That's not really what's happening here. It's something else. So something else is going on.

I want to really clarify this. We really have to think very clearly about it. When we think really clearly about all this, a lot of things will come into focus and here's the final thing which I began to talk to you about last week. That ultimately, what does God reveal? God reveals breads from heavens and the bread is "mital hashamayim", it is bread coming from dew, dew coming from the heavens. Moses says "Hu halechem asher natan lecha Hashem", this is the bread that God has given you. If you take all of that language together, "mital hashamayim", right? Look at this.

"Vayitein lecha haElokim mital hashamayim", this is the blessings. The blessing that Isaac gave to Jacob, thinking that he was Esau, is the blessing that God is going to give you mital hashamayim. When did that blessing come true? It came true in the manna when God, in fact, gave lechem min hashamayim covered in tal (dew), it was the "lechem asher natan lecha Hashem Elokim," that's the language, "Vayitein lecha haElokim mital hashamayim." The blessings are coming true.

Basically, the whole manna story is a reenactment of the first two stories of Jacob and Esau, not the third story, which it was supposed to be, but for some reason the first two stories. You got it? This was my problem. Is something wrong here? If you follow the Jacob and Esau parallelism and the Egypt parallels,

you come to the inescapable conclusion we are up to Jacob and Esau three. If you follow these non- parallels, you come to the inescapable conclusion, we are up to Jacob and Esau one and two.

What's happening here? Which is it? How do they things jive? Are these two inconsistent things, did something go wrong? Were we supposed to be up to three? Did we do something wrong and therefore we're up to one and two? Maybe that's the answer? How is it that we understand this? What theory can make sense of this?

I want to suggest a theory to you, but first I want to think very carefully about what is really happening in the manna. We want to look very closely at the manna. This "devar yom beyomo." As I mentioned to you last time, there are three mitzvos (Torah laws) of the manna. When it says "hayelech betorati im lo", it really means God is testing us to see if we will follow the Torah of the manna. What is the Torah of the manna? The Torah of the manna are three Torah laws.

The three Torah laws are A; don't take more than an omer per person, B; don't try to save up for tomorrow by keeping it in the fridge and C; don't collect on the Sabbath because you get a double portion on Friday so you don't need to collect on Sabbath for Sunday; it's not going to work anyway. The common denominator of all of that is that not for tomorrow, only for today.

That succinctly is "devar yom beyomo." That's the language of "devar yom beyomo." I am going to give them only bread for the day and I am going to see whether they keep the laws. They didn't keep the laws. They tried to evade all three of these laws. They seem like such simple laws if you think about it.

Imagine, I told you here's the deal. I know you have to work hard for a living, all that, but I'm going to be very nice. You've won the lottery. Here's the deal. Every morning you are going to wake up and there's going to be $10,000 underneath your pillow, and this is going to happen consistently every morning, except for Saturday morning.

Saturday morning you will not find any money under your pillow, but don't worry because there'll be

$20,000 under your pillow Friday morning. You'll see it; $20,000. You can count it. Therefore, here are my laws. A, don't look under your pillow on Saturday morning because there's not going to be any money there. You're going to have $20,000 Friday morning.

B, don't try to look under the pillow more than once or don't try to take any of the money and put it in a bank. Spend it all that day because tomorrow you're going to get another $10,000. Don't worry about it, you'll see it consistently.

You're not going to have to worry about it, you'll see it consistently. You're just always going to get that

$10,000 and actually, everybody in your household is going to have their own $10,000 and don't try to save up and spend less of yours so you can save for Tommy (ph), because Tommy's going to have his own $10,000 (inaudible) Tommy. Now, do you think you can live with these laws? Like, you know, you could live with that. That would be a pretty good deal. You could keep those laws. The Jews could not keep those laws. Every single one of those things they tried to do. Why? What was so hard about

keeping the laws of the manna? Let's talk about that. Here I want to introduce you to -- yes?

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: When they struggled for 400 years. Could be. Audience Member: The story that you're giving (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. But it's also going to work because the manna is going to teach you the faith because every day you're going to get it and that's going to reinforce your ability to --

Audience Members: (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Right. I'll buy that, but I want to understand -- okay, so hold on for a second. Time out. Let me just continue. The model I want to provide for you to think about this which will help you negotiate through the cracks here is a model which actually comes from one of Stephen Covey's books, The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People. Wonderful little book and he provides a way of thinking about this. He doesn't apply it to the concept of emunah (faith), but it is very easy to imply the model of the concept of faith. He doesn't quite make this jump, but I am going to make the jump. Here's my modification of his model.

He talks in this book about something which he calls Circles of Control and the Circles of Influence. No, Circles of Concern and Circles of Influence. I'm going to call it Circles of Control and Circles of Concern. Those are not exactly the terms that he used. What I mean by that is the following. You can envision your life as comprised of two circles, really three circles. One circle is the stuff, is the outermost circle, which is the stuff that you don't care about.

Now, the stuff that you don't care about, it includes things like whether the Taiwanese government is making proper loan payments on their national debt. You just don't really care about that that much. It's not like the Taiwanese government is just on your list of things to care about this morning. That is just stuff that's happening in the world that you just don't care about.

Then inside that circle, inside that closer in, there's something called your Circle of Concern. Circle of Concern is the stuff that you do care about and you care a lot about it. It's stuff like your health. It's stuff like whether there's going to be nuclear war tomorrow. It's stuff like whether the climate change is going to cause sea levels to rise 16 feet and inundate your house. It's whether or not someone in your family is going to God forbid suffer from a terrible disease. I mean, all of these things are stuff that you are really concerned about. That's one circle.

There's another circle which is closer in, which is your Circle of Control. Your Circle of Control is the stuff that you can actually directly do something about. Your Circle of Control is always smaller than

your Circle of Concern. You're always worried about a lot more things than the things that you can actually control. That dichotomy between the Circle of Control and the Circle of Concern is the source of much of our anxiety and stress in life.

We lie awake in bed worrying about the Circle of Concern which we don't have direct control over and the question is what do we do about all that stuff, the stuff that we're really worried about, but we can't really control. The fateful question is how you negotiate these Circles because if you negotiate them wrong, you will destroy your life. If you negotiate them right you will live a happy life. It is almost like the one prescription to live a happy life is to figure out how to properly negotiate between your Circle of Control and your Circle of Concern.

Here's how you can mess up your life.

One way you can mess up your life is that instead of focusing on your Circle of Control, you focus all of your energy on your Circle of Concern. You start losing sleep, you're lying awake at night. You're trying to figure out how you can possibly change things and you get so little sleep that you don't actually have energy in the morning to do any of the things that you can do. You're so worried that little Jimmy is not doing well in school that you can't sleep and you sleep through and you don't wake him up in the morning and he misses school because -- right?

What happens is that your Circle of Control starts to diminish because your Circle of Control actually gets smaller because you're not focusing on the things that you can do and when you focus on the things that you can't do anything about and you're spinning your wheels, you have less energy and time. That's shooting yourself in the foot and you just can't even start controlling the things that you can control.

More and more things slip out of your control and you have a smaller and smaller Circle of Control and a greater Circle of Concern and then it starts ballooning because you get more and more worried about these things that you can't control and you're just not focusing on them. That is the way to, loosely, have a lot of stress and basically end up shooting yourself in the foot.

Now, the other thing you could do is you could focus on the things that you actually can control. When you focus on the things that you actually can control and not focus on the things that you can't control, you actually find that your Circle of Control starts to expand. This works, I want to argue, on both the very natural derech hateva (nature) kind of way, and even works in a sort of mystical nes (miracle) kind of way, if you will, it works in a sort of spiritual way. Just in a very natural kind of way, the more that you control what you can control, the more indirect influence that you have.

For example, the more you start bettering your relationships with your child, things like that, eventually Jimmy starts doing better in school. I don't have direct control over how Jimmy does in school, but if I focus on the things that I can control just between me and Jimmy, I can put him in a better place for school. My Circle of Control starts actually standing once I focus on the things that I can do in my Circle of Control.

You see it in a more spiritual kind of way also. My classic example of this is Miriam. Miriam goes and she has this prophecy, according to our Sages, that her mother is going to give birth to the child that's going to save the world, to save the Jews. Then, the house is full of light when they have this child. The parents come and they kiss her on the floor, as they say, our daughter, your prophecy has been fulfilled.

Then of course, the prophecy isn't really fulfilled because they can't hide the child. Three months go by and they still can't hide the child. What do they do? They put the child in the bulrushes, by a little boat, and our Sages say that they slapped Miriam at that point and said, "Biti, heichan nevuatech", they were so desperate. They thought that there was no way that Moses could live.

Miriam stood and Miriam watched. "Vatetatzev achoto meirachok", and if she stood and watched is because she had faith. She felt that no, it's possible. Something's going to happen. What happened is "Vatetatzev achoto meirachok ledeya mah ye'ase lo, mah ye'ase besof nevu'atah", she didn't give up on her prophecy and she stood there. Now, who shows up but the daughter of Pharaoh. The daughter of Pharaoh showing up is not good news, it's bad news. It's only good news in retrospect. As the story is happening, it's bad news. It's the worst possible person you can imagine to show up, but she still stands there.

If you would ask her, Miriam, what do you think is going to happen? The daughter of Pharaoh is here. She doesn't know the answer. It's not like the prophecy that she has tells her the answer. She doesn't know the answer. She says I don't know what the answer is, but just because I don't know the answer doesn't mean that there is not an answer. She stills stays within her Circle of Control. What can I do? All I can do is stand here and I can trust that there's a -- what Miriam is doing is she is providing the religious answer to the Circle of Control and the Circle of Concern. This is what Covey doesn't do because Covey is not a religious book. The real answer to Covey's problem with the Circle of Control is that this is what faith is all about.

What faith is all about is the following. Why is it that I spin my wheels trying ineffectually to control my Circle of Concern when I can't? The answer is, is because I fear, and this is the key, that what makes the Circle of Concern work is fate, is chance, is the cold winds of fate, and nobody wants to be subject to the cold winds of fate. It's a very scary thing to feel that fate and chance determine your life. Therefore, what you try to do, and it's such a scary possibility, that I will try to do anything and stop at nothing to try to control what I can't control because I don't want chance and fate and unpredictability to control it.

However, there's another possibility. The other possibility is that there's a loving God in heaven and the loving God in heaven controls my Circle of Concern and if there's a loving God in heaven that controls my Circle of Concern, and this is the key, that does not mean that I am going to get what I want. It does not mean that I'm going to get what I want. This is a key and it is a place where I believe a lot of frum (religious) people mess up in their understandings of faith. It doesn't mean you're going to get what you want.

It just means that the one who decides what's going to happen in that Circle of Concern is a loving God who loves you. You might get what you want, you might not get what you want. You can pray to Him,

you can ask what you want. You might be able to get Him to change His plans, you might not get Him to be able to change His plans, but either way, He loves you and what's happening is coming to you from a loving Hand that has you in the picture too, even though it might not be what you want.

Audience Member: (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: One second, I'm not up to that yet. I'm just giving you a model right now. I'm trying to show that what faith does is that faith allows me to get out of my Circle of Concern and to say God is in my Circle of Concern and because God is there it's okay, I can leave myself in God's hands.

What I can do is focus on my Circle of Control, which is exactly what Miriam does. Miriam says, it's in God's hands, God's a big boy, God's going to figure out what's going to be with Moses, I stay out of that; what can I do? The only thing I can do is stand here, far away, that's all I can do and I'm going to stand there.

Ironically, her standing there because of her faith ultimately becomes the way her Circle of Control expands. She becomes the vehicle through which Moses is saved in a way that she never could have imagined. She sees the indecision on the face of Pharaoh's daughter; the Jewish midwives on the one hand, she pities him on the other hand, she's not sure , the daughter of Pharaoh's caught in this moment; enter Miriam, I think I can find you a nursemaid. She gives her a way out. Her Circle of Control just expanded because she was able to stay in the Circle of Control, place God in the Circle of Concern, she was able to expand indirectly her Circle of Control.

That's the model; that's the model of faith. If you have faith you can win. Here's the key. This is a very, very powerful model. Let's take faith out of it for a moment. If you take faith out of it for a moment you have this inherent tension between the Circle of Control and the Circle of Concern. I keep on trying to expand my Circle of Concern because there's an unpredictable realm out here and I hate unpredictability. I hate being at the whims of faith and of chance.

How, without faith, am I going to deal with the tension between my Circle of Concern and Circle of Control? We've talked so far about one way of dealing with it and that is to artificially try to expand my Circle of Control by trying to control things that I can't control. That's not a good idea. The truth is that's only one way that human beings deal with it. There is a second way that human beings can deal with the dichotomy between the Circle of Control and the Circle of Concern. That is -- it's mathematical, you can see it -- that is either, if my Circle of Control is right over here and my Circle of Concern is right over there, either I can try to artificially expand my Circle of Control and spin my wheels trying to control things I can't control. The only other way to do it if I'm not willing to do that is what?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Is to shrink my Circle of Concern so that it's the same size as my Circle of Control. Because, if I'm so worried about unpredictability then what can I -- now what would that look like? What would it look like to artificially shrink my Circle of Concern?

Audience Member: Apathy.

Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Apathy. Audience Member: Apathy?

Audience Member: Narcissism.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes. It ends up being narcissism, but what do I have to say?

No, there's things about myself here too, I'm concerned about my long- term health, I'm concerned about my --

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, because there's parts of myself which I can't control which are part of my Circle of Concern; my long-term health, whether or not I will get cancer tomorrow.

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Stop thinking about tomorrow.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, stop thinking about tomorrow. That's what I have to do. What I have to do is I have to stop thinking about tomorrow. Now, what is the greatest unknown that creeps me out, that makes me not want to think about tomorrow? That I'm going to say I don't even care about tomorrow, because if I --

Audience Member: I'm going to die.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Death. I'm going to die. Death is the ultimate unknown so the other way to deal with this is, instead of trying to artificially expand my Circle of Control, I say if there is death in tomorrow and because there's death in tomorrow I just don't care. I don't care, we're all going to die, who gives a hoot about tomorrow because we're all going to die anyway. Therefore, I might as well have my piece of bread today because the only thing that matters is today. At least I'm alive now and I just don't care about tomorrow because it's too scary. Because there's death tomorrow, because there are unknowns tomorrow and therefore I don't even care about it.

I (inaudible) myself against the terrors of the tomorrow by saying I don't care, even though I do care. I stay within this very small Circle of Control, the things that I can actually control now and I just don't care. I live only for the moment. That's Esau.

Now, let's go back to Jacob and Esau in the narrative number one and you'll see a very chilling thing. Jacob and Esau, in narrative number one, I want to argue -- and this is the part where we're not going to put up on the internet because what I'm going to say now is controversial and I'm going to get stoned if this gets out. It's okay you can leave it here, but if you're listening to it, don't send it to your friends.

Here's the argument that I want to make. The argument I want to make is that Jacob and Esau, in story number one, represent two complete extremes. These two extremes of how I deal with the Circle of Control and the Circle of Concern.

Esau represents the extreme of today; artificially shrinking the Circle of Concern so that it's as small as possible, because death is tomorrow, all I care about is today. Jacob; "vayazed Yaakov nazid," the only other time you have that language is "ki yazid ish al re'eihu", those are not nice words, when you premeditate a nasty thing against someone else. Jacob is premeditating to get the birthright. All he wants is tomorrow. What is he going to do? He's going to take advantage of Esau's weakness by getting him to sell his birthright for the food because he knows that Esau's going to be hungry.

What is Jacob doing? He's trying to illegitimately expand his Circle of Control. He's trying to control stuff he has no business controlling. It's up to God what happens with the birthright. He was born second, for God's sake, that's just the way it was. He was born second. He's trying to control the ultimate uncontrollable thing; birth order. If Esau interestingly is looking at the end of life and is destroyed by the end of life, sees death, the end of life, as the ultimate meaningless thing, that I have to collapse my Circle of Concern, Jacob is the exact opposite.

Jacob looks to the beginning of life, birth, and tries to control that! He tries to go and get himself out of the womb first. What am I going to do? I'm going to get you to sell the birthright. He can't sell. Who says you can even sell a birthright? What does it mean to sell a birthright? Either you were born first or you weren't born first. This is Jacob. He's trying to control the uncontrollable. He's focused on tomorrow.

These are two models, neither of which works; one model trying to expand the Circle of Control, the other trying to collapse the Circle of Concern. What is the only way out? The only way out is to combine both; to combine both middos (traits) of Jacob and Esau. Do you remember what Isaac says the second before he blesses Jacob, when he cries out and supposedly he doesn't recognize Jacob? He says, the voice is the voice of Jacob and the hands are the hands of Esau. He thought the person he was blessing had qualities of both. Ultimately the only one who can be blessed is the one who can take the qualities of both.

In other words, if I can integrate Jacob's focus on tomorrow with Esau's focus on today you can win. Here's how. This is the way of faith. If I say, I care about tomorrow, just like Jacob, but I only focus on today, just like Esau, then I can win. Why? Because in who's hands is tomorrow? God's hands are tomorrow. I care very much about tomorrow, but I'm leaving that to God and I'm only focusing on today, then you know what you can have? You can have today and tomorrow.

Think about it. Ultimately, with the extremes you have neither today not tomorrow. Here's why. If I'm

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Audience Member: I'm just bothered by it because I think of it in terms of Olam Hazeh (This World) and Olam Haba (Next World). (Inaudible) going to have This World --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. First let me make my case and then you can argue with it. Here's the case I'm trying to make. Funnily, you can even put it on terms of This World and the Next World. You can if you want. The Next World is also the ultimate tomorrow, but I would argue that if you live life only for the Next World you also won't have today.

Audience Member: Right, but that's what Jacob realized, that you need both.

Rabbi David Fohrman: One second. Slow down. Let's keep it simple, for a moment. Today and tomorrow; what does it mean to integrate the two of them? You see, if I focus incessantly on tomorrow I don't even live today. I can't enjoy today if all I'm doing is living about tomorrow, I can't live in the moment. On the other hand if I only live in the moment because I don't care about tomorrow I also can't have success because the terror of death still scares me and I can't enjoy today either because death really destroys even my today.

If you have faith and I say I can leave tomorrow up to God and I can focus on what I'm doing today, you can actually enjoy today. Faith is really the only way to live a happy life, to live an enjoyable life. It gives you the strength and serenity and ability to be able to look at today and enjoy today while still caring about tomorrow, but in an indirect kind of way. Leaving that to God, trying to expand my Circle of Control naturally by focusing on what I can actually do.

That's the model. I'll argue that the manna is all about that, about trying to combine the voice is the voice of Jacob and the hands are the hands of Esau. It's trying to get Jacob and Esau together so that the child -- in other words, what's happening now is there's a new father. It not Isaac anymore, it's God.

There's Jacob on a private level in which Isaac is his father and Jacob is an individual and there's Jacob on a public level in which the Jews are Jacob and in which God is the father. Just as Isaac blessed Jacob thinking he was able to combine the qualities of Jacob and Esau, so too the only way that God will be able to bless the Jews, to grant them the manna as it were, is if we successfully integrate Jacob and Esau together, which is faith.

Now let me get to the model for this and I'm probably out of time so I'll try to do this quickly, but we'll get to some of it next week. Here's another problem; the Sages. The Sages say a strange thing. Our whole theory which we just came up with is that Haman is connected to the manna, Haman is the manna and the manna is connected to Amalek. Our Sages don't say that. Our Sages also wondered about the name Haman, but they didn't connect it to the manna. They connected it to something else? What did they connect it to?

They say where is Haman in the Torah? "Hamin ha'etz", it's from the pasuk (verse), "hamin ha'etz asher tziviticha lo le'echol achalta", have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? Why do they say that? The connections between Haman and the manna are so obvious, they're so out there. Why did they eschew the obvious connection between Haman and the manna instead settle on 'from the tree' as the verse from which it all comes from?

I want to argue to you that our Sages knew what they were doing and our Sages knew about the

connections between the manna and Haman, but what they were saying was if you really want to understand Haman you can't go to the manna, there's an earlier story you have to go to. The root of it all; the root of Haman, Amalek, and the manna, the source of everything, the trunk of it all is the story of the Eitz Hada'as (Tree of Knowledge), it's 'from the tree'. If you understand 'from the tree' then you really understand Haman and you really understand the manna too.

Let's try and see how that's true. What is the verse that our Sages say is the verse for Haman. It's this verse; it's when God finds Adam hiding He says, "hamin ha'etz asher tziviticha lo le'echol achalta", have you eaten from the tree about which I told you not to eat from?

Now I'm going to come back to some territory that I covered in my first book, The Beast that Crouches at the Door, but in rethinking this I have a slightly different approach to what I took in that book so this is a little bit different to what I suggested there. It's not contradictory, but it's another side of it which I didn't deal with in the book. Actually I didn't realize it until I started thinking about this. Here are some questions that I want to raise with you which this book will answer. Some questions about the manna and some questions about the Tree of Knowledge.

Questions about the manna; Moses says that the food that -- if you were Moses, you will say man hu, what is it? What would you have said? What is it? It is the?

Audience Member: It's the ochel (food).

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's the food that God gave for you. What's the definition of (inaudible)? God made some sort of organic substance, it's not quite a plant, it's not quite -- it's sort of like this new thing that God made, its stuff, its food, it's the stuff that you're supposed to eat that God made. That's not what he said. "hu halechem asher natan lecha Hashem", it's bread that God has given you. It's not bread, guys, it isn't bread.

Let's define bread. What is bread? Bread is wheat together with flour mixed with water, its stuff that people -- as a matter of fact, I would say that the definition of bread is man-made food. How does bread differ from everything else we eat; meat, plants, vegetables, fruit? All of that stuff is basically natural stuff. Bread is the ultimate processed food; man makes bread. So if God is providing you with food --

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's true. So, we're recognizing that even the bread that we've got, the raw materials come from God, that's very important, we'll get to that. The bottom line is what makes bread distinctive is that it is the quintessential man-made food so it is ironic, deeply ironic, to say that it is bread that God made because you would think that God making it, by definition, makes it not bread. In other words, the definition of normal food is -- the first thing I have to ask is did God make it or did man make it. If God made it it's a vegetable, it's a fruit, it's a plant, it's an animal. If man made it, its bread, so by definition, the last thing I would call manna is bread, but for some reason, no, Moses calls it bread.

I think this also goes to the question of why the people were so perplexed by it and why they called it manna and the name for it was ma hu, what is it? The reason why it was so perplexing was because it was bread. In other words, if it wasn't bread, if it was God-made food then you wouldn't have such a difficulty naming it; the same way as you name plants, plants. The same way as you name animals, animals. If there was some new organic substance so we come up with a name for it, it wouldn't be so categorically different than everything.

What makes manna so different is the fact that it is bread. That it is "lechem asher natan lecha Hashem", it is bread that God has given you. It is inherently paradoxical. God does not give you bread and so therefore when you look at it the only thing you could do was wonder and say what the heck is this?

This is not man, it's not God, it's something, it's -- Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, it was different. It was man-processed food that God made. It was like twinkies coming from heaven. That's what it was, it was processed food. So now let's talk about the Tree of Knowledge for a moment. I want to ask you about the Tree of Knowledge.

There were two special trees in the Garden. There was the Tree of Knowledge and there was the Tree of Life. Which tree were we not allowed to eat from?

Audience Member: The Tree of Knowledge.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The Tree of Knowledge. Where we not allowed to eat from the Tree of Life? Audience Member: (Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, we were never commanded not to eat from the Tree of Life. We were never told not to eat from the Tree of Life. Now, let me ask you another question. I talked about this a little bit in the book. Before eating from either the Tree of Life or the Tree of Knowledge, man as he was initially created, was he created mortal or immortal?

Audience Member: Immortal

Rabbi David Fohrman: How do you know he was immortal? Because if he eats from the Tree of Knowledge he's going to die, so it must be he was immortal. So now I have another question for you. What was the Tree of Life doing in the Garden? The Tree of Life says that if you eat from the Tree of Life you become immortal. It must be I'm not already immortal. These two trees contradict each other. If you look at the Tree of Life it looks like I'm created mortal and if I eat from the Tree of Life, I'll become immortal. If I look at the Tree of Knowledge it looks like I'm created immortal and if I eat from the Tree of Knowledge I'll become mortal. Are you with me?

Audience Member: Yes.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Problem, the trees contradict themselves. What's the only answer? The only answer is that we're neither mortal nor immortal, we are in a state of limbo and our choices are a choice between life and death. If we eat from the Tree of Life we will have eternal life and if we eat from the Tree of Knowledge we will become beings that die; life and death in these two trees.

Now, let me ask you something else. This might sound like a heretical question. How exactly did these trees grant life and death? Was it like magic? We always think of it like magic, there's this magical garden and it's this fairy kingdom and there's these two special magical trees. There's this tree of knowledge, a magic tree and if you eat from eat it's going to kill you eventually, right? We don't know how but it's magical, but there's this fairy dust on the tree of life and if you eat from this tree of life, this wonderful thing, it's going to give you this fairy dust tree of life and you'll be, you know -- tree of life.

That's how I viewed it all for many years. I want to argue that that's nonsense. We're not talking about a magical garden. There's actually an understandable mechanism by which the Tree of Life grants eternal life and there's an understandable mechanism by which the Tree of Knowledge grants death. It makes perfect sense once you understand it. How does the Tree of life grant eternal life? How does the Tree of Knowledge grant death?

Audience Member: It's like a conscious decision (inaudible), like in other words, if you listen to God (inaudible) if I eat from the Tree of Life then --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. We're getting there. Let's just take this carefully -- Audience Member: (Inaudible) awareness --

Rabbi David Fohrman: Let's slow done. Let's just assemble our questions. How did the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge work? Here's another perplexing thing. As we know there's another tree of life. After we were banished from Eden, the same angels that keep us away from Eden, the Cherubim, give us access to another tree of life too and that is the Torah. How is the Torah a Tree of Life? The Torah is called the Tree of Life lemachazikim bah and the Tree of Life is called a Tree of Life. Now, the Torah doesn't really grant you eternal life, because learning Torah doesn't make you live forever. How exactly is it that the Torah is a Tree of Life?

Audience Member: (inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: What? Audience Member: (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah, our Sages do say that, right, with David, but generally it hasn't worked for most of us? I mean it's a problem, generally the Torah doesn't give you --

Audience Member: Maybe you have to go to sleep sometimes

Rabbi David Fohrman: Maybe you have to go to sleep sometimes. Audience Member: (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: How does the Tree of Life really -- how does it work? Okay. That's another question. Here's another question. Death is not the only consequence of eating from the Tree of Knowledge. There is another consequence to eating from the Tree of Knowledge. If you're a man, "bezei'at apecha tochal lechem", bread, there we go. Right? By the sweat of your brow you will eat bread.

Now the question is how do those things work? Why are these the two punishments from the tree? If you eat -- input, you eat from the Tree of Knowledge, output a; you die, b; you have to work for your bread. What do those two things have to do with each other, it seems like such random punishments. What's the connection between death and making your own bread?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. I'm just raising questions right now, okay? We're just taking inventory of our questions. How do all those things fit together? All right, so here is the theory I want to give.

Let's go back to the source for Amalek according to our Sages. The source for Amalek is "hamin ha'etz." Let's listen to that language very carefully. When God took Adam to task for eating from the Tree of Knowledge, He did not say, why did you eat from the Tree of Knowledge? Instead He said, why did you eat from the Tree about which I commanded you not to eat from?

I want to argue that that's very significant. Why is that significant? I want to argue to you that what God was saying, what God was getting to the root of the motivation for eating from the Tree. Let me ask you a very simple question. What was the first commandment in the Torah according to creation story number two?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: God creates man in the Garden and what does He tell him? Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. We often think that the first commandment was don't eat from the Tree of Knowledge, but that's not true. The first commandment actually was, "mikol etz hagan achol tochal mimenu. Ume'etz hada'as tov vera lo tochal mimenu ki beyom achalecha mimenu mot tamut." The first thing is the mitzvat asei (positive commandment), it is not negative. The first commandment is "you must eat from all the trees of the garden."

Now, think about it. Where was the Tree of Life? It was "betoch hagan", at the center of the garden.

There is a command to eat from all the trees of the garden, it's only a matter of time if you're God before they're going to eat from the Tree of Life. You think it's a good thing for them to eat from the Tree of Life, you have to. Somehow once they eat from the Tree of Knowledge it's not a good thing anymore.

Now let's talk about another Chazal (saying of our Sages). The other saying of the Sages says that the reason why they had to be banished from the Garden after they ate from the Tree of Knowledge was because -- Rashi quotes this -- because everyone would look at Adam and say that he's another God. If he would eat from the Tree of Life and live forever, everyone would say, "hen adam haya ke'echad mimenu lada'at tov vara". They would think he is another Deity, because he can live forever.

Let me ask you something. According to that Rashi, why wasn't it such a problem before he ate from the Tree of Knowledge? Why was it that it was okay to eat from the Tree of Life? It was clearly okay, he was never told not to, you're supposed to eat from all the trees of the garden, it's right there in all the garden. Ah, everyone is going to think he is another God if he lives eternally? Why wasn't it a problem there?

Audience Member: Because everyone was doing it. Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: Everyone (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Everyone was doing it. So what? Everyone is going to live forever now too. Either way man's going to live forever. If he looks like a God he looks like a God. How come it's going to be "zeh (inaudible)." What's the answer to that? I want to -- it gets to the mechanism by which the Tree of Life grants eternal life. Okay? Here's the mechanism. Oh gosh, I'm totally out of time.

Audience Member: (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, here is the mechanism very fast. The mechanism is -- there is going to be all these trees that you can eat from, 5,000 trees that you can eat from. Now, let's talk about this.

Instead, Adam actually ate from the one tree he couldn't eat form. Why does he do that? There were 5,000 delicious trees to eat from and you had to eat from the tree that you can't eat from? Why, why did you do that?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) control.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. He is trying to expand his Circle of Control. There is the Circle of Control and the Circle of Concern. In this case the circle -- there is as small as hair's breadth between the two of them. My Circle of Control includes 5,000 trees. My Circle of Concern includes one tree. I'm trying to illegitimately expand my Circle of Concern so that I can have illegitimate control over the one tree that I'm told not to have control over.

Now, let me ask you another question. Why did God make the Tree of Knowledge if He didn't want people eat from it? This is the question I always get asked, I never have an answer to it. Like why put it there? Obviously, well, there has to be nisayon (test), you have to choose something, but what's the real answer to that question? How come God made a tree which He didn't want us to eat from? I'll tell you what I think the answer is.

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) why He wants to (inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, but why did God do it from God's perspective? God is the ultimate parent. Look at yourself as a parent. Or let's put it from Adam's perspective. What does Adam want out of controlling that Tree? Why does he want to eat from that Tree? Why, why does he need control of that? Why can't he just have 4,999 other trees? What does he want? He wants control over what he can control. What does that control give him?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, what does he want? If you're Adam what do you want? Why do you -- Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, I want what I can't have, it's more than that. What are these trees? These trees are my food sources, right? What do you want to control? I want to control, I want to have ultimate control over my food sources. Now, the problem is that's not reality. That's not the real world that he's in. He has just been created. He's been put in Paradise. He's getting these trees from God. He wants to be self-sustaining. He wants to live in the illusion that he has full control over the sources of food, because he wants to feel like it comes from him, that's all in his (inaudible), that he has independence, that he has independent kind of control, but he doesn't have that kind of independence.

That's the reason why God put that one tree there. The reason why God put that -- what does God want from man in the garden? God wants nothing, but the following "Mikol etz hagan achol tochel", I want you to enjoy life, I want you to live in Paradise. I want you to have a delicious great time. It's what every parent wants from their kids. I want you to enjoy life, but the one thing you need to realize is we have a relationship. The world that you have -- you're six-years old. What do I want out of my six-year old? I created the whole world for you. The only thing you need to do is to acknowledge that reality. You need to know that the world you're enjoying is my world.

Now how you are going to know that if there is no restrictions what so ever on what you can eat? You can easily succumb to the illusion that you're in total control and think that you're not getting this from anyone. You can live in this illusion that you're in a self-created world. That's just an illusion.

God says, I'm giving you all trees, but one tree, symbolically, I'm leaving out of your control and the way that we're going to have relationship is by you not eating from that tree, that's going to be the way you remember that you don't have total control, that it all comes from Me. In that way we're going to have this great relationship. You know what we call that relationship, boys and girls, mostly girls? We called that d'veikus (cleaving to God). Cleaving to God is not such a fancy thing, it's not the kind of thing that you get by smashing the ice on the mikveh and running into the mikveh at three in the morning.

Cleaving to God is a very simple thing. You get it by being happy. You get by living in God's world and understanding it's God's world and saying, ah this is delicious, this is the amen-group, right? You get it by making blessings. You get it by understanding that the world that you're enjoying is coming from God. That is cleaving to God. It's the happy smile on your face, on the kid's face as he is goes down the slide understanding that it comes from a parent. That is cleaving to God and that is the Tree of Life.

You see, it doesn't even make a difference whether you actually eat from the tree that was named the Tree of Life or not. Merely the act of eating from all the trees in the garden is eating from the Tree of Life. Why? What is the only eternal thing in the universe? God. What's the only way you could possibly get eternality? By clinging to God, "Etz chaim hi lamachazikim bah", by clinging to God. Eating from the tree is the way you cling to God.

Now you think to yourself, how can I cling to God, how can eating be a mechanism for cleaving to God? The answer is, eating is a mechanism for cleaving to God because it is the act of enjoying what God has given you while understanding that I'm not eating from the Tree of Knowledge and honoring the fact that there are some limits, it is that act which is an act of clinging to God which grants me eternal life, because if I'm clinging to God I have eternal life.

Which is the answer to why Our Sages say what they say. Of course, no one's going to think there is two gods in the universe if the way I get to God is by clinging to Him. Right, they are going to understand there is only one eternal thing, but if they cling so much to God they can partake of God's eternality. It doesn't look like it's a separate thing.

Now, how do you get death? You get death by eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Why? Not because there is fairy dust in the Tree of Knowledge that says, if you eat this you're going to die, watch out, poison, but because the choice to artificially expand my Circle of Control and eat from the Tree of Knowledge is a choice to abandon what?

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: To abandon God, to abandon cleaving and when you abandon cleaving to God obviously you're going to be mortal. You have a breath of life that God is going to give you, but that breath is eventually going to run out because you're not constantly holding on to the breathing machine, you're not holding on to God. Of course, if you eat form the Tree of Knowledge and you try to exercise this illegitimate control you are ultimately going to die. That's why you die if you eat from the Tree of

Knowledge.

That's also why "beze'at apecha tochal lechem." Because what am I saying when I say, I want illegitimate control over my food sources? What does God say? God says, you so desperately wanted to be independent and control your food sources? Okay, I'll give you control over your food sources. You don't want My food, you don't want the trees?

"Beze'at apecha tochal lechem." At least let's make it reality, let's not lie about it, let's not have you pretend that you're really independent and you're eating My trees when you're not independent, so be independent. Make your own food, call it bread, you'll have processed food, that's what you want, processed food, you think Twinkies taste good? You will see, they are bad for health. But fine, eat them already, you'll see -- pretty soon you'll start with whole wheat flour, then you'll make white flour, you'll process the heck out of it, it will be bad for you. You want to be independent? Be independent, make your own bread.

Which is why death and make your own bread go hand in hand and then for centuries and centuries and centuries we had this food, this processed food and until -- I'm out of time so I'll stop here -- something happened. That something was the manna. When, for the very first time, God crossed to our side of the fence and actually gave us bread. We'll talk about that when we come back next week.

(END RECORDING - 01:32:16)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Thoughts here are flowing on my head and just watching now. What I'm doing with you now is something which I never taught before, it's stuff like this come up with --

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: It's -- what?

Audience Member: (Inaudible) Will we get mention in the next (inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: Absolutely. You guys always get mentioned.

Audience Member: Okay. All right. Audience Member: Is it a new topic?

Rabbi David Fohrman: No, it's the same topic, but because I haven't taught it and because it's complicated I'm using you as guinea pigs.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: You have to keep your hats on and your minds alert and to follow. Audience Member: We are raised as GP.

Rabbi David Fohrman: What is GP? Audience Member: Guinea pig.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Guinea pig. All right. Last week we talked about a puzzle. The puzzle began with the observation we had that on the one hand (inaudible) begins with Haman as it were. We were speculating about Haman's name and we said that if you look at Haman's name it seems to remind you of the man (manna). Indeed, when we looked at the manna we found a whole series of textual allusions which really brought you to Haman, to Amalek and to Jacob and Esau. We said it's not a coincidence the

-- you know -- Haman reminding you of the manna and then of course Amalek attacks immediately after the manna. As you look through the story of the manna you hear a lot of Jacob and Esau themes; we're not going to get into that now, but we'll come back to it.

The puzzle was that Haman seems to, in the eyes of Chazal (Sages), refer to something else. The Sages say that if there is an allusion to Haman in the Torah, "Haman min haTorah minayin?" The allusion is "hamin ha'etz", the pasuk (verse) with which Hashem queries Adam and Eve after they eat from the Tree of Knowledge, "hamin ha'etz asher tziviticha levilti achal mimenu achalta?" Right, the tree that I commanded you to not eat from (inaudible); that is the allusion to Haman in the Torah.

The question is, what did the Sages mean by that? Also, why did the Sages overlook what seem to be the obvious parallels between Haman and the manna and if they're going to say that Haman is connected to anywhere in the Torah, the obvious thing would have been to say it's connected to the manna. "Hamin ha'etz" seems like more of a stretch. What is the meaning of that? What were they thinking?

Last week I launched you half-through a theory and this week I want to finish up that theory and examine its various ramifications. The theory was that if you really want to understand, the theory was that the Sages were aware that Haman is also connected to the manna. The Sages are aware of those textual allusions.

Yet, the Sages seem to be saying that if you want to understand the root of it all, you really want to understand Amalek back at source, if you even want to understand why it is that the manna is connected to Amalek, you have to go to an earlier story. You have to understand the story of the eitz hada'as (Tree of Knowledge). If you understand the story of the Tree of Knowledge you understand in particular the verse "hamin ha'etz asher tziviticha levilti achal mimenu achalta?" That's the key, that's the key to everything. If you understand that then you understand the manna, you understand why Amalek is connected to the manna and then we can understand Haman.

The idea is that the Sages are bringing us to the source. What does that mean? We began to talk about that. Last week we launched on an investigation of the story of the Tree of Knowledge, which we got most of the way through. Our conclusions can be summarized as follows. There are two trees in the garden, there are two special trees. The trees are the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. If you eat from the Tree of Life, it grants you eternal life. If you eat from the Tree of Knowledge you die, or you become beings who die. You don't die immediately, but you become mortal.

The implication we suggested last week is that somehow Adam and Eve before eating from either tree are in a state of limbo. They're neither mortal nor immortal. They have a choice to make. Will they become mortal by eating from the Tree of Knowledge or will they become eternal from eating from the Tree of Life?

Yet, we asked what is there about these trees? Normally when you just think of the story, it's just this little child's story and you assume that these trees are -- they just have fairy dust on them. It's magic. There's this Tree of Life, and if you eat from it poof, the fairy godmother waves her wand and you live forever. If you eat from the Tree of Knowledge you've been a bad boy and poof, you're going to die. That's the punishment. It's just magic. There's nothing to be said about it.

What I suggested last week is that it's not magic. There's actually a mechanism by which these trees work. It makes perfect sense that the Tree of Life grants you life, and it makes perfect sense that the Tree of Knowledge grants you death. You just have to understand what the mechanism is. The mechanism is very important. What's the mechanism?

A clue to the mechanism comes from the other consequences of eating from the trees. In particular, if you eat from the Tree of Knowledge, not only are you going to become a being that dies, a mortal

being, but also "bezei'at apecha tochal lechem," you're going to end up eating bread by the sweat of your brow.

One question is what's the common denominator in the punishments? Why should it be that death gets paired with eating bread by the sweat of your brow? Those two things seem to have nothing to do with each other. Is there any rhyme or reason in these two consequences from eating from the tree?

What I suggested last week was that this verse which our Sages say is the source of Haman in the Torah, "hamin ha'eitz," is interesting in that it does not identify the forbidden tree by its name. God doesn't say have you eaten from the Tree of Knowledge? God says have you eaten from the tree about which I commanded you not to eat from. What I want to suggest is that that is significant. That is significant because it gets to the motivation for eating from the tree. The motivation for eating from the tree was it was the tree that we weren't supposed to eat from. That's why you would want to eat from the tree.

Now, that's kind of silly if you think about it. Let's just examine the psychology for a moment. Why would it be that Adam and Eve placed in the Garden of Eden with thousands and thousands of wonderful trees available to them would be tempted to eat from the one tree, the one tree that they can't eat from? Was it really that much more delicious? I mean, there's so many trees you haven't even eaten from that are wonderful trees.

Moreover, as we said last week, the first command of the Torah is not a negative command, don't eat from the Tree of Knowledge. The first command in the Torah actually is, "mikol eitz hagan achol tochal," which is phrased in tzivu'i which means it's a command. From all the trees of the garden, you shall eat. God wants you to eat from all the trees in the garden, even apparently the Tree of Life.

Now, God has not told mankind that there even is a Tree of Life. We, the reader, are told that there's a Tree of Life, but the people are not aware that there is a Tree of Life. But it's "betoch hagan," it's in the middle of the garden. Presumably you're going to eat from it. If you're supposed to eat from all the trees, it's only a matter of time before you eat from the Tree of Life. God wants you evidently to eat from the Tree of Life.

It's a little strange, because after you eat from the Tree of Knowledge, you're forbidden to eat from the Tree of Life, so what happened? Evidently, before you eat from the Tree of Knowledge, it's okay to eat from the Tree of Life. It's more than okay to eat from the Tree of Life; you're supposed to eat from the Tree of Life. It's just that after you eat from the Tree of Knowledge, then you shall not eat from the Tree of Life. It's bad.

Audience Member: (Inaudible)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well, see, Rashi seems to say that you would become immortal if you eat from the Tree of Life after eating from the Tree of Knowledge, because that's what Hashem says, that the reason why he has to be banished from the garden is because "hein ha'adam hayah ke'achad mimenu lada'at," this is the verse, "hein ha'adam hayah ke'achad mimenu lada'at tov vara." Now mankind has

become like one of us knowing good and evil.

"Hein ha'adam hayah ke'achad mimenu lada'at tov vara," now mankind has become like one of us knowing good and evil, "ve'atah pen yishlach yado velakach gam mei'eitz hachayim ve'achal vachai le'olam," now maybe he's going to eat from the Tree of Life and he will live forever. He would live forever even after having eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. Eat from the Tree of Life, he would live forever. Now, there's an interesting Rashi here, which I don't know if we mentioned last week, but you should see. Did we talk about Rashi here?

Audience Member: No.

Rabbi David Fohrman: So let's look at Rashi. What would be so bad if mankind would live forever? Rashi's bothered by it. "Ve'atah pen yishlach yado u'misheyichyeh le'olam," if you would live forever, "harei hu karov lehato'os habriyos acharov," creatures, other creatures, presumably animals, but other creatures, would be confused. "Lomar af hu Eloka," they would say even he is a God, because he lives forever just like God, "veyesh midrashei agada, aval ein miyoshvin al peshuto," he says that's the simple explanation. There are other midrashim, but that's the simple explanation.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) before eating from the Tree of Knowledge?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Good. So now the question is, how do you understand that Rashi? That Rashi doesn't seem to make sense because the same logic that Rashi is using now should also apply in -- originally, before he's eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, we just said that evidently it's okay to eat from the Tree of Life.

In other words, the Tree of Life was there. He's never commanded not to eat from it, it was okay originally. It was just after eating from the Tree of Knowledge. The question is if living forever makes you look like God, and if it's going to be confusing to everyone that they'll say there are two Gods in the world, then God should have thought of that originally.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: We'll get back to that. We just need to refine that. Here's the question. What does Rashi mean? I do think that the approach which we suggested last week will help us understand this Rashi. Let's come back to that approach. Basically, the theory I gave last week was the following. The way to kind of answer all these questions is again to get back to what the mechanisms in the reading are. Why is it that the Tree of Life would grant you eternal life and why is it that the Tree of Knowledge grants you death, and why is it that you want to eat from the tree, just because you can't eat from it?

The answer I believe is, if you think about the Tree of Life, is that the Tree of Life is an access point. There really is only one thing that lives forever in the world and that's God. If the Tree of Life grants you eternal life, there really can only be one mechanism by which it grants you eternal life. It is by eating from the tree, what happens? Somehow you partake of God's eternality. How does that work? By eating

from the tree, you're somehow going to become eternal like God.

The answer is that -- and remember of course there's another Tree of Life in the Torah. The other Tree of Life is the Torah itself. It's called an "eitz chayim hi lemachazikim bah." The other Tree of Life is also guarded by cherubs. The same way that the cherubs guard access to the original Tree of Life, the cherubs grant us access to the other Tree of Life, the Torah.

The verse we have in Proverbs which describes how you get eternal life from the Torah is "eitz chayim hi lemachazikim bah." It's a Tree of Life to those who grab hold of it. What I suggest is that even the original Tree of Life was a Tree of Life to those who grab hold of it. In other words, the mechanism was that by eating from the tree, you were so to speak grabbing hold of it. What were you grabbing hold of? You were grabbing hold of the original Tree of Life, the real Tree of Life which is God. The word we have in Hebrew for this is dveikus (cleaving), really, right, grabbing hold of.

What does it mean cleaving? Cleaving gets to the following thing, we talked before about -- Audience Member: As opposed to eating from it?

Rabbi David Fohrman: Well let me explain, it's a little complex. Let me try to just pull it out a little bit. As we said before, the -- let's get to the yetzer hora (evil inclination). The evil inclination from eating from the one tree which you cannot eat from --

Audience Member: Restriction.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. Now, what don't I like about restriction?

Audience Member: It will ultimately give you freedom and we don't want that restriction -- Rabbi David Fohrman: Because?

Audience Member: -- you're giving up your control.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Because I'm giving up my control. The idea is, is that what I want more than anything else, is control. Now, this brings us back to something we talked about last week, which is our circles, Circles of Control and Circles of Concern. We said your Circle of Control is always smaller than your Circle of Concern. The question is, how do you deal with the gap between the Circle of Control and the Circle of Concern? So, I am always concerned about more things than I can control.

In the Garden of Eden, the gap between the Circle of Control and the Circle of Concern was the smallest it could possibly be, it was one tree, that's it. It was just one tree that was different between what I can control and what I concern, but there's still the evil inclination even with one tree, to close the gap. The tension between these two circles is always very great. the evil inclination is always going to be to bring the circles together.

There's two ways to bring the two circles together, this is very crucial. the way we are talking about now is to expand your Circle of Control. That's one thing I can do to illegitimately try to control what I can't control. But it's an illusion, right, because in other words, the Circle of Control, by definition, is everything that I can control. In life, everything that I have some direct control over, when I try to exert direct control over things over which I don't have direct control, I am doing by definition only one of two things. Either I'm spinning my wheels in illusion, because I can't control it, or I am resorting to illegitimate means to control what it is that I oughtn't control.

For example, let's say I'm running for office, so, what is within my Circle of Control to get elected? Well, I can campaign well, I can get my debating points up, I can go and raise money, I can do all these things, these are all the things which I can do, these are all the things in my Circle of Control.

What are the things that are outside of my Circle of Control? Well, I could consult a psychic and I could use voodoo dolls on my opponent. I could do that. That, we say, is illusory. In other words, I'm spinning my wheels, I'm trying to control things I can't control.

However, there are (inaudible) ways that I actually could control it, but those are the illegitimate ways. For example, I could stuff the ballot boxes or I could intimidate my opponents, or I can break into the hotel rooms of the Democratic National Convention and steal their plans. I could do those things, but they're outside of my Circle of Control because they're illegitimate. The idea is, when you try to expand your Circle of Control illegitimately, you're either doing something illusory, or you're doing something evil.

In the case of the Tree of Knowledge, it's interesting that the Tree of Knowledge is the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, I can eat from that tree, but it would be evil.

There is another way to close the gap between the two circles, the other way to close the gap between the two circles also, is just to say that I don't care. That's apathy. I don't care about the Circle of Concern, I draw down my Circle of Concern to just the Circle of Control.

The sweet spot, what we all aim for in life, is some sort of mixture of the two and that was what God was trying to help us aim for in Eden. Really, the reason why God was doing this, in a certain way I think, is because it's really the only key to living a happy life. You see, in life, again, and we talked about this last week but just to summarize it, in life you can get very frustrated with these Circles of Control and Circles of Influence. If you spend your whole time trying to illegitimately expand your Circle of Control, either you're going to be living an illusion or you're going to be doing bad things.

You're going to be so busy living an illusion and doing bad things, you're not going to spend time doing anything which you could actually do and you won't enjoy what life is, because you're always worried about this stuff that you can't control, we can call like tomorrow, the uncontrollable tomorrow.

You don't have anything. You don't have today, you can't enjoy anything today and you don't have tomorrow because you can't really control tomorrow, or you're doing it illegitimately and you feel

guilty, or you're doing it and you're spinning your wheels and meanwhile your Circle of Control shrinks and it's not great.

On the other hand, if I say I just don't care about tomorrow, I just don't care about what I can't control, it's not true. You do care about what you can't control, you do care whether global warming will cause glaciers to melt and sea levels in Woodmere to rise by 16 feet, inundating your home. You care; you just don't have any direct control over that. You care whether or not your family and loved ones are going to have health and happiness over the next 10 years, but, you don't have direct control over all of those things.

So to say I just don't care, is a kind of giving up and is also illusory. It's an illusion, but I can try to do that. But I can be so scared about the unknown -- we talked about the greatest of unknown being death

-- and death is the greatest scary thing, that I can just be crushed by them and say I just don't care.

The only way to really live a happy life is to have both, to somehow say I care about my Circle of Concern, I really do care, it's there, it matters to me. Yet, the only thing where I'm going to stay within my Circle of Control and I'm going to do the things that I can do and that's what I'm going to do.

What gives you the strength to do that? We talked last week about that, that is emunah (faith) really. If the gap between my Circle of Concern and Circle of Control is ruled by fate, by chance, nobody wants to be subject to chance, so the drive to illegitimately expand your Circle of Control is very, very strong. I try to do whatever I can to not be subject to the whims of chance.

However, if the gap between the circles is controlled by a wonderful, loving God, even a God who I may not always get what I want from, but He loves, He cares and He's powerful, so I can have the menuchas hanefesh (peace of mind) to say, God this is in Your circle, I'll talk to you about that circle, I'll beseech You, I'll plead with You, but that's Your circle and this is my circle.

Then you can have both. You can have tomorrow, you can be concerned about tomorrow, you live for tomorrow. It's interesting, what's his name once said that the -- I forgot the name of this guy -- Stumbling on Happiness is the name of his book, Daniel Gilbert is his name. It says that one of the things that makes us human is our ability to not just live in a momentary present, but to recall the past and to anticipate the future. Those things in form are present.

If I destroyed my anticipation of the future, I'm not really human, right? Part of what it means to be human is to think about the future, to anticipate the future, but yet not to be crushed by our anticipation of the future. That really is what faith done right allows me to do.

Getting back to the garden, that was the challenge of the garden. God was trying to teach us this in the garden. The garden was a test case. There's only one tree separating the two circles, there's only one tree out of your control. Now, why is that tree out of your control? The tree is out of your control for a reason. It's because, again, it's reality testing. The reason why I want to eat from that tree, as we said before, is because I want to exert control.

What does that control allow me to do? If I had ultimate control over all the trees, then I would be living in an illusion. I would be thinking this is my refrigerator, I would be thinking this is my garden, where do I have control? I have control in my home, I have control in what I've made. What I'm doing is, it's a lot more comfortable for me to feel like -- by the way, I think this is the trap -- there is a -- let's bring this down, brass tacks. Restaurants in Cedarhurst.

What is the most successful new restaurant in Cedarhurst? Off The Wall. Why is Off The Wall so successful? It's so expensive. I believe that Off the Wall contributes, it's successful because of precisely this dynamic. Its yogurt is overpriced, it is double the price of any other yogurt store around, it's not significantly better yogurt than any of the many other stores and yet it is packed and the other stores are not. The answer is, Off The Wall allows you to control your own yogurt. Okay?

You have all these (inaudible), you have all the trees of the garden, nothing is forbidden, and the thing underneath it is, just go crazy. Off The Wall yogurt, just go crazy, and there's all the toppings in the world and you can put them all, of course you have to pay for every ounce at a very high rate, but you're not thinking about that, you're living in your little illusion. The idea is that I can control every topping, I can put this on and I can put that on and I don't have to tell the proprietor you do this for me, because I don't want to live in the illusion that it's his store and it's his yogurt, it's all my yogurt.

Now, at the end, there is this little thing that gets in the way of the illusion, which is I have to fish out my wallet and pay for it. Then I can put my wallet back and I have it and it's mine, it's all mine, I control it. There's something about food, our relationship with food and control which is a big deal. That's what's going on with the trees, the trees is that I want to be in control of every last tree, because then I can say it's all mine and I don't have to pretend that it's yours and I'm getting it from God. The problem is, that that's an illusion. It's an illusion because mankind was just created, he's living in God's garden, this is God's garden, it's not his world.

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: (Inaudible).

Audience Member: (Inaudible) tell them that there was another -- make this tree available to them also.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Precisely and the answer, I believe, to that is, let's get to the meaning of what adherence is. It wasn't a magic adherence tree. It wasn't like, eat from this tree and you get adherence, it's like here's a little scarlet thread, if you just tie it around your (inaudible). It wasn't magic. There was nothing magic about this; it made perfect sense.

What do we mean by adherence? Let's get to what adherence actually means. What does adherence mean? God is your Parent in the sky. Adherence just means a close relationship. What does a close relationship with your parent really mean? If you're a child and your parent gives you this whole world, which we all give our kids, we give our kids the whole world. What do we really want from our kid?

We want two things from our kid. We want our kid to enjoy the world, enjoy that world, and we want

the kid to understand that the world they're living in is the world that we've given them, the world that we prepared. That's it, that's all, that's the only thing we want.

When you see your kid enjoying what it is that you've given them and understanding that you've given it to them, you see that smile on their face and that gratefulness that I'm living in this world, this is wonderful Mommy, thank you so much. That's it. That's great. That's adherence, right there, bingo, that's the moment of adherence.

What is not adherence? What not adherence is, is when the kid tries to pretend to live in your world and pretend that it's not your world, that it's his world, to try and pretend that he's created this for himself.

What God has done is, He put one tree off limits as a symbolic way of suggesting to man that it's not your world. Just honor this one thing and honor this one restriction and through it you come to understand that the world that you occupy is not your world. You don't have control over it, that you're not living in your own refrigerator, but you're living in My world, honor that and then everything is fine.

Therefore, it doesn't even matter, I want to argue, it doesn't even matter whether or not mankind actually eats from the Tree of Knowledge, all the trees are Trees of Knowledge. Tree of Knowledge is betoch hagan (middle of the garden), what tree is in the middle of a garden? Look at a garden, tell me, what tree is in the middle? The tree you're looking at is the tree that's in the middle. All the other trees are around it, that's what a forest is.

You eat from the trees. If you live in this world where you avoid the Tree of Knowledge, that's eating from the Tree of Life, it doesn't matter whether you eat from the tree or you don't eat from it, you are going to live forever. Why? Because you were davek (stuck) to God, you were "etz chayim hi lemachazikim bah", you were holding on to the ultimate Tree of Life, which is God, because he's developed a close relationship to Him. Therefore, you're going to be eternal just like Him.

This is the answer to Rashi's question. Therefore, when people look at you, they're not going to get confused and say there are two God's in the world. They'll look at you and say, obviously, he's so close to God that's why he's living forever. He's just holding onto God. So, you don't look like you're second God, you just look like something that's holding onto the tree. Everyone knows if you're holding onto God you going to -- it won't look like two Gods now.

God says, now, if you eat from the Tree of Knowledge, what are you doing? If you're giving in to your illusion of control and you want to control everything and you want to pretend it's your world, you can't deal with any lack of control, you want to live in that illusion, God says illusions are very dangerous.

What do you really want? You are trying to craft an illusion of independence for yourself. If it's independence that you want, what are you getting independence from? You're getting independence from God; you're getting independence from the Source of all life. The only reason you have any life at

all, is what? How did mankind get any life at all? Because, "vayipach ba'apov nishmas chaim", because God blew the breath of life into man. That breath eventually expires unless you're connected to the respirator. The only way that you can have eternal life is if you're connected to the respirator, if you're connected to the actual eternal life. Otherwise, obviously, that breath of life, like any breath, is eventually going to dissipate.

So if you want independence, you'll have independence, but what does it come with? It comes with death. There's nothing magical about eating from the Tree of Knowledge that gives you death.

Obviously, if you eat from the Tree of Knowledge you're going to die, but you want independence.

There's another consequence of independence. The other consequence of independence is "bezei'as apecha tochal lechem", that you're going to eat bread by the sweat of your brow. Why? What was the whole point of the garden? The whole point of the garden is that you're eating from the hands of God, you're eating the fruits of God. You want the illusion of pretending that you're eating your own food? So God says if it's so important for you to eat your own food, you might as well live in reality and not illusion. So that's the way we'll do it, we'll have a new scheme. You don't like My food, you don't like My fruit, you want (inaudible) instead, you want great processed food, that makes you happy, man-made food. You want to pretend you're doing it, so then fine, we'll change things around, you'll like bread.

You'll do the bread thing.

What is bread? The definition of bread is man-made food, is where you take natural ingredients and you put them together and you make something new out of it and you become the maker of your food.

It's even a little deeper like that, it gets a bit deeper than that, it gets into something that we talked about two years ago, which is the spiritual significance of bread making. You remember that. We talked about the spiritual significance of bread making, in reference to Passover and Passover being removing yourself from one aspect of that, which is the Sabbath from leavened food.

The idea we argued is, there is a God-like process about making bread. It is where mankind and the relationship to the plant world plays God, where you till wheat, then you make wheat, you enliven it, which is what leben is. You put yeast back into the bread and bring it to life and then you put it into the oven and you till it again, these death and life cycles that you're creating with bread, you're really acting like God. That's a whole other schmooze (lecture).

The bottom line is, God says you want to do your own food, you want to play God, you want to have your own world? So we'll change things around, so you won't like fruit that much, therefore "be'zei'as apecha tochal lechem" is the obvious consequence of this independence.

This is what our Sages are talking about when they talk about hamin ha'eitz, what they're saying is, that at some level, what Amalek is really about is this kind of energy. We'll elaborate on that in a moment.

Audience Member: (Inaudible) didn't have any trees in the Tree of Life, in terms of (inaudible). Why did God mention that --

Rabbi David Fohrman: To the narrator, why does the narrator even mention it?

Audience Member: Then it would just be, do not eat from this tree, you've got all the other trees. (Inaudible), which means that the (inaudible) Tree of Life, is not just not eating from the Tree of Life, there is something else about that.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, there is. Well, I would say is what there is, is eating. Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: One second. Slow down. I'm not arguing that failing to eat from the Tree of Knowledge is tantamount to eating from the Tree of Life. I agree with you, but because the first mitzvas asei (positive commandment) is "mikol eitz hagan achol tochal." If you think what cleaving is, cleaving is not honoring the restrictions that your parents put on you. That's not what it is. That's just a tanai (condition). Do you understand? What cleaving really is, is what?

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: What?

Audience Member: Doing the asei's (positive commandments).

Rabbi David Fohrman: It's doing the positive commandments. What cleaving really is, is enjoying what your parent's given you while understanding that it's your parents who gave it to you. If you never eat from all the trees of the garden, you don't get eternal life. That's hakarat hatov (gratitude). It's more than gratitude.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes. It is enjoying the world and through that -- and that itself, if I'm enjoying it, understanding that it comes from my Creator, that is -- I enjoy it as a gift. That's key. In other words, if I don't enjoy the world that God has given me, I don't get eternal life just because I didn't eat from the Tree of Knowledge. I'm still in limbo. I haven't done anything yet.

It's like your kid. What if your kid walked around and said, Mommy, I'm never going to eat and I'm never going to enjoy anything. I know you bought me all these toys, but I'm not going to play with any of them. I'll never take the cookie from the forbidden cookie jar. You wouldn't feel happy. As a parent, you want your kid to enjoy your world. The point is not the restriction. The point is to enjoy, but to enjoy in the right way. The focus is on eating.

My point is just a minor point, which is that whether there's a Tree of Life or whether there isn't a Tree of Life is just immaterial. Is there a particular tree that once you eat from that tree that's the tree -- maybe there is, maybe there isn't. I don't even know. But the bottom line is I'm suggesting the mechanism is

kind of the same.

The mechanism is eating from all the trees one of which is the Tree of Life. But if you do that after having eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, then what you're doing is that you are faking, basically. I mean, that's really the bottom line. What you're doing is faking.

What you're doing is that you are trying to achieve cleaving through an outer act of eating, which isn't real. Because how can you transgress God's command and seek to assert control and then also say I'm touching You, and I'm holding on to You, and I'm eating from Your tree? If you do that, that's faking. Faking is going to lead everybody astray. Then everyone's going to look at you and say well, you're not really holding onto the tree. If you have eternal life, it's because you must be another God, because you're basically separate from God, so you're not really listening to God. Getting eternal life that way is a faking kind of way to get it. You can't do that.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What is the what? Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yeah. I don't know the answer. Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't know the answer to that. That's a good question. Who are the other creatures? I don't know. You're asking, who are these other creatures who would look at man and be confused?

Audience Member: Right.

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't know the answer to that. Either animals or angels presumably. (Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Could be. I'm not one to speculate. I'm not getting into that. I don't know. You can use your imaginations.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't want to get into that right now. I want to get into what I want to get into. I don't want to get into an exhaustive treatment of the Tree of Knowledge story, because that's not what I'm trying to do now. I'm trying to give you enough of it to understand what I'm talking about the manna. We're going to go and fast-forward back. We're leaving the Tree of Knowledge now, and I'm

now going to elaborate my theory which is that the manna is connected to all of this. Now let's go forward.

This is the complicated part, so I need you just hold onto your hats for a moment. All right. Now you remember, I did this with you last week. Now let's get back to these parallels here.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: I will. We talked about this before. There are a very curious set of parallels between what happens to Jacob himself and what happens to Jacob's children. In essence, as Jacob leaves Laban's household, we hear a language that reminds us later of Jacob's children leaving Pharaoh's household, "vayugad leLavan bayom hashlishi ki barach Yaakov"; "Vayugad lemelech Mitzrayim ki barach ha'am." This language continues. "Vayikach et echav imo." "Ve'et amo lakach imo." "Vayirdof acharov." "Vayirdof acharei B'nei Yisrael." "Vayaseig Lavan et Yaakov". "Vayasigu otam."

You see all this language? Everything that happens when Jacob leaves the house of Laban happens to his children when his children leave the house of Pharaoh. Similarly, Jacob's experience in the house of Laban is similar to his children's experience in the house of Pharaoh. They work hard, they're slaves. One is enslaved for 21 years; one is enslaved for 210 years. It's kind of like a microcosm/macrocosm sort of thing.

What I'm going to say now is something I didn't really say last week. Similarly, it's not just that the way that Jacob left the house of Laban reminds us of the way that the Jews leave the house of Pharaoh, and it's not just that Jacob's experience in the house of Laban is similar to the Jews' experience in the house of Laban. But how Jacob got into the house of Laban is similar to how the Jews got into the house of Pharaoh. Now, let's talk about that.

How did Jacob get into the house of Laban? The answer is he tricked his brother. He was running away from Esau after having deceiving Esau. The truth is from Esau's perspective, he is trying to kill Jacob because Jacob tricked him twice. Remember the verse? "Hachi kara shemo Yaakov vayakveini zeh pa'amayim." When was the first time in Esau's view that Jacob tricked him?

(Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: When he got him to sell the bechorah (firstborn rights) with the soup. Now, let's remember that story. "Michrah kayom et bechoratcha li," Jacob had said, sell me today your firstborn rights. "Vayozed Yaakov nazid," Jacob made himself that porridge. We talked about that language of "vayozed" being a very one time intentional language, anticipating tomorrow and taking advantage of Esau's Achilles heel, which is just looking at today.

"Michrah kayom et bechoratcha li," sell me today, "hishavah li kayom," swear to me today. Knowing that Esau is only focused on today, and that Jacob is focused on tomorrow and he's planning. That "vayozed" word for the porridge is a planning word, planning to sort of entrap Esau. This is the way

Esau says it, you took advantage of me and he gave bread and he said, "michrah kayom et bechoratcha li," sell me today your firstborn rights.

By the way, these themes should be familiar to you now. If we now think of Jacob and Esau in terms of the Garden of Eden story, what do we have? We have Esau on the one hand. Who is Esau? Esau is just focused on today. Why is Esau just focused on today? Why is it that he does not care about the firstborn rights, about tomorrow?

The answer is because "hinei anochi holeich lamut." What is death? Death is the ultimate unknown and tomorrow. Esau is the one who is crushed by the great unknown and the Circle of Concern. What is Esau's way of dealing with it? Contract the Circle of Concern so that it's no larger than the Circle of Control, which says the only thing I care about is the immediate things that I can control; nothing else matters to me, and he lives in that illusion.

What I want to argue to you, and this is the controversial part, is that Jacob at this point is the other extreme. What Jacob is doing is "vayazed Yaakov nazid." Those are illegitimate words. The word zadon is an illegitimate word for planning for tomorrow. That's the definition of illegitimate planning, is zadon. The word that Jacob made for that porridge, "vayazed Yaakov nazid," the only other time that word appears in the Torah is "vechi yazid ish al rei'eihu lehargo be'armah," when a man will lie in wait to kill another man, premeditated murder, which is the ultimate illegitimate control of tomorrow.

Whereas Esau is crushed by the possibility of the end of life, of death, Jacob is the complete opposite. What Jacob is trying to do in this story is he's trying to change the beginning of life. He's trying to change birth order and he's going to buy the firstborn rights, something which probably you can't even buy. How are you going to buy that you were born first? How can you change that? But somehow this is what he's going to do.

You have an obsessive focus on today by Esau, and just not caring about tomorrow. You have Jacob trying to control things, so desperate to get the firstborn rights that he's either spinning in illusions, which is like I'm going to buy something that I can't buy and maybe both. He's trying to sort of illegitimately get what he can't really get in any other way, which is to take advantage of my brother and lie in wait for him, make this porridge, and then maybe he'll sell me the firstborn rights.

You have these two energies at the beginning of the story; the energy of the tomorrow on the one hand, the energy of today. The answer is neither is great. The story castigates Esau "vayibez Esav et habechorah," Esau degrades the firstborn rights. Yet, the story isn't so complimentary of Jacob either. It doesn't seem --

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. I'm not going to go there now. Just stick with me. To frame this back to the series of parallels of Laban and Jacob. Now, let's talk about this. If Jacob gets down to Laban's household through these two deception, story of Esau and Jacob number one, with the porridge, story of

Esau and Jacob number two, with the deception of the firstborn rights; if that's the way he gets down, let's talk about how the Jews get down to Egypt. They get down to Egypt through the mechiras Yosef (the selling of Joseph).

Now, if you think about the selling of Joseph, the selling of Joseph as we said before reminds us a lot of the deception of Jacob and Esau. A father treats the younger child as if he's the bechor (firstborn) in the sale of Joseph, just like father had treated --actually an older child has abused the firstborn rights, but the brothers tricked the father about that child, killing a goat, and then they present their brother's coat to their father, wearing Esau's coat. Just the whole thing, it's basically -- it's a replay at some level as Jacob being deceived the way that Jacob deceives his own father with goats and coats.

What I just noticed this morning is that the selling of Joseph actually doesn't only parallel the story, the deception story number two, it also parallels deception story number one. Let's think about Jacob and Esau in deception story number one, which is the selling of the firstborn rights story. What about the selling of the firstborn rights story reminds you of the selling of Joseph?

Audience Member: Selling.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Selling. Selling what? Audience Member: A person.

Rabbi David Fohrman: What kind of person? The firstborn. Who was Joseph? Audience Member: Firstborn.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Joseph was the firstborn of Rachel. Now the words "michrah kayom et bechoratcha li" back in the sale, take on a chilling new tone. When Jacob had said sell me "et bechoratcha" sell me your -- another way to read it is sell me your firstborn rights today, he said to Esau, well, what would Jacob become the victim of in his own life? Somebody else selling his own firstborn out from under him. You think you can force Esau to sell his firstborn rights? Your firstborn will be sold from under you. In fact Joseph is sold in a kind of picture tab.

Audience Member: One is literally and one is --

Rabbi David Fohrman: One is figurative firstborn, firstborn rights, right to firstborn. One is a physical manifestation of your firstborn, which is Joseph. Now, just to cap it off, what did Jacob give to Esau in order to get his firstborn rights?

Audience Member: Lentil soup. Rabbi David Fohrman: And?

Audience Member: Bread.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Bread. Now, where do we have bread in the Joseph story? (Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. Noa (ph) knows what happens here. The brothers are sitting down and eating bread just like Esau, after having sold their firstborn, their brother the firstborn. After having let go of their firstborn, they're eating bread just like Esau after having sold his firstborn rights. Esau is sitting down eating his bread. It's the same story. You with me?

What happens is you hear in the selling of Joseph the echoes of "vayakveini zeh pa'amayim," both deceptions; deception story number one and deception story number two. Are you with me guys?

Audience Member: Yeah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Now, inquiring minds want to know what about story number three? Story number three is the third and final story of Jacob and Esau which is the reconciliation story in Parashat Vayishlach. Let's keep on going. This is what I did with you last week. If you keep on going after the Jews leave Egypt, as we said before, they then cross a sea. After Jacob left the house of Laban he crossed a river. You with me?

Audience Member: Yeah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: After Jacob crosses that river, he meets up with Esau. After the Jews cross the sea, they meet up with Amalek, the grandson of Esau. What should have happened in that story was reconciliation, but it didn't. Instead, Amalek attacked.

Now, keep all this in the back of your mind. This is the complicated part. I have been talking about these parallels in terms of what happens with Jacob happens later with his children. But the word children is tricky because there's a metamorphosis that happens with those children along the way. What metamorphosis happens? At some point they're not just his children anymore. What are they? They're a nation.

There are really three levels of existence. There's Jacob's own existence, there are Jacob's family, and then there is Jacob's --

Audience Member: Nation.

Rabbi David Fohrman: -- nation. Now, here's what happens. At a certain point the Jews become a nation. At what point do they become a nation? They become a nation in yetzias Mitzrayim (exodus from Egypt). When? They become a nation with -- when they -- and this gets to korban Pesach (Pesach offering). We go back to the Pesach offering.

There are two things and this is what I was talked about in Young Israel of Cedarhurst, for those who were there, that there are two -- I talked about it even here, but to just review. There are two very powerful motifs that you would hear in the Pesach offering.

One very powerful motif here in the Pesach offering is birth. There are birth metaphors. There's the bloody doorway, there's the waiting all night to go through the bloody doorway, blood on all sides of the door, and then there's the idea that you're going to be -- then "hachodesh hazeh lachem rosh chadashim," it's your birthday. There's all that sense of birthdays.

There's also all these goats and coats parallels too. Everything that happens in the Pesach offering reminds us of stuff that happened in the two Jacob and Esau deception stories. I don't have time to go through all this now, we did this before. If you go through all the language of the Pesach offering, it reminds you of goats and coats. Stuff like "U'matzos al merorim yochluhu," eating the bread, like the brothers ate the bread in family groups; "al merorim," Esau's great and bitter cry; izim (goats), the fact that you can use a goat. It's goats and coats, (inaudible), covering the blood. Moses. I mean all the language is there. Not eating it raw, "u'bashel mevushal bamayim," no water. Why? Because of Joseph with the pit, there was no water in the pit. It's all the memories of that.

What seems to be happening, and bottom line is with the Pesach offering, is that we are replaying the goats and coats stories, the two deception stories that God has bound Egypt and we're cleansing ourselves of them. If we got down to Egypt through the two deceptions of the selling of Joseph and Jacob, the goats and coats stories, we are letting go of all of that as we leave. We are proclaiming that we are the firstborns of God. We literally become firstborn. We become born. We're born again.

Here's the theory I want to give you. This is the complicated part. There are three levels of reality; there is Jacob, Jacob's family, and Jacob's nation. We become a nation at the moment of the Pesach offering. We're also a family, but we become a nation at the Pesach offering.

Now, if the experience of Jacob's family, Jacob's children, mirrors Jacob's own experience, we saw that, is it possible that the experience of Jacob's nation is also going to mirror Jacob's own life? It's certainly possible. Now, if it were true, then at the moment of birth, what point in Jacob's life would we be up to?

Audience Member: (Inaudible). Rabbi David Fohrman: No. (Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Let's look at it this way. Audience Member: Can you rephrase the question?

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right. I'm going to rephrase the question. At the moment of the Pesach

offering, when you are waiting by the doorway to go through the bloody door, what part of Jacob's life does that remind you of?

(Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Jacob in the womb. We hear about Jacob in the womb. Now, what do we hear about with Jacob and the womb?

(Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: He's struggling with Esau. Now, what's happening here in our story, magically is, there's no Esau. It's only Jacob. Jacob is in the womb now, and one of the great questions is what happened to Esau. Are you with me?

Audience Member: Yeah.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Now let's try to find the missing Esau. Audience Member: Maybe Esau's in Egypt.

Audience Member: No. Maybe it's Laban.

Rabbi David Fohrman: One second. Let's slow down. Where's the missing Esau? Here's Jacob in the womb and he's struggling with Esau. But now there's Jacob in the womb, the nation of Israel, and they're going through the womb and they're anointed firstborn and there is no Esau. Okay. Now, let's slow down. Now, the energies of Jacob and Esau that we're talking about, I want to argue that you see in their early lives are the energies of tomorrow and the energies of today. "Vayozed Yaakov nazid," and all of that.

What I want to argue to you about is that the nation of Israel's nisayon (challenge), their main challenge in their early life is to replay the stories of Jacob and Esau the right way. Slow down. The right way. Just listen for a second. They need to do it the right way.

The first time around, it wasn't great. Story number one wasn't great and story number two wasn't great. What they just did in the Pesach offering was they committed to God to do it the right way. They said we remember all the bad stuff, we remember goats and coats, we're bringing You an offering that is suffused with the memories of all of this stuff that we went through that brought us down to Egypt, and we are committed to not doing it again.

God says, you're committed? Let's see. You're born. Do it again. We go in the womb and this time there's no Esau. What do you mean there's no Esau? Now, here's the tricky thing. If Jacob the person is Jacob and Jacob the nation is the nation of Israel, now let's talk about Isaac. Isaac is the father of Jacob. Who would the Father of the nation of Israel be? God. Now, God is the Father. Now, we're proclaiming

to Father we are the firstborns, and Father is granting us the firstborn rights.

Now, let's talk about Isaac. What did Isaac really want? Who did Isaac want to bless? Audience Member: Esau.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Esau.

Audience Member: He wanted the one who had both.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. The answer really is he wanted the one who had both. That's the only way to really make sense of the story, because otherwise, why when he screams out "hakol kol Yaakov vehayadayim yedei Esav", why doesn't he stop right there and say, imposter, get out of the room? I mean he saw that "hakol kol Yaakov vehayadayim yedei Esav," but what he was really thinking was, I thought that I only had Jacob or I had Esau. Two poles, neither of which I was entirely happy with. I really wanted a merger of the two, if I had to choose one of those, I'd choose Esau.

If you're telling me that the child before me, I don't care who it is, but if there's a child in front of me, whether it's Jacob or Esau, that has the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau, I want that. Therefore, I'm going to bless that child. When Esau stands up he says, no, gam baruch yiheyeh. He confirms the blessing even after he realizes who it really was, even though he's upset.

Now, this doesn't mean that Jacob did the right thing. Jacob did deceive him. The right thing would have been, I want to argue, to show up -- and this is where I argue with Hirsch -- but the right thing would have been to do essentially what I think his mother had originally told him to do, which is, Esau, your father wants a guy who can produce, your father wants somebody who can make things, who can make food.

You know what, you're not a lemelle (little lamb), you're not just a guy in a tent, you can do it too. You go to your father with the stuff, with the matamim (delicacies) and you say to your father, here I brought you delicacies, bless me. If you listen to her words, that's exactly what she says. She never says deceive in the beginning.

Now, he says, one second, I'm going to look like I'm deceiving my father if I do that. So she says, you're not up to doing that, you don't have the confidence or whatever, so fine, so go deceive him, put on the clothes, actually do that. But the real truth is that had he done that, he would have really showed that he has the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacob. He would have shown that I have the integrity, I think about tomorrow, but I can also do things today, and even more than that, he would have shown himself to be a man of faith.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What's that? It's my theory, I might be wrong, I could be wrong --

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Let me finish my theory and then you can yell at me. If he would have gone to his father and said bless me, basically what he would have been saying is -- here's where I'm going to make you guys uncomfortable -- there's no story that makes people more uncomfortable than the Jacob and Esau story because we come from the story and the story gets us very, very nervous.

What I want to suggest is, is that in the story the attempts to deceive, it seems to be wrong. It's not just me, our Sages say it. When our Sages say "vayitzak tze'akah gedolah umarah" and we hear from that from Haman, when Haman has license in the heavens to destroy all the Jews because of the tears of Esau. That can't have come from something which was right.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: This is not a hundred voices, this is genocide. This is the holocaust that would have actually happened and destroyed all the Jews because of the tears of Esau. That's not just a little thing. It's even more than that, I'll show you another saying of our Sages. Here's another saying of our Sages you need to know.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right. That's what he could have said. I'm having a hard time finding this particular thing here. Let me just see. Here it is. Midrash Rabbah on Bereishit says the following thing. "Hakol kol Yaakov," the midrash says, "omar Rav Berachia", Rav Berachia says, "besha'ah sheYaakov merakin bekolo", when Jacob minimizes his voice, or when Jacob doesn't say the right things with his voice, then "yedei Esav sholtot", then Esau has power with his hand. "Dichtiv", and listen to the proof, as it says, "vayivolnu kol ha'eidah" with the manna, that the Jews complained with the manna, and the next words are "vayavo Amalek," and then Amalek comes, Esau comes. When you do the wrong things with your voice, then Esau has power over you.

"Ubesha'ah shehu metzaftzef bekolo", but had he screamed out with his voice, at the time when he screamed out with his voice, "ein hayadayim yedei Esav," the hands are not the hands of Esau, they're my hands that are in front of you, then "ein yedei Esav sholtot." Esau's hands cannot reach him anymore.

This is what our Sages are saying, this is not Fohrman, this is our Sages. Our Sages are saying that had Jacob gone and answered his father, no, those are not the hands of Esau. You're looking at Jacob, they're my hands and I have the ability to do, they're not Esau's hands. If he could take responsibility to answer that, Esau has no power anymore because he has done the right thing, and if you think about it even in terms of faith, he's had faith.

What he's saying is I can control what I can control, I can't control what I can't control. This is what our Sages are suggesting, which is that don't deceive your father, don't try to have illegitimate control over a situation that you can't control. No, have as much control as you can and put yourself in God's hands.

You say, Dad, I'm me. This is me. You like it, bless me. Make your case as strong as you can and then let the chips fall wherever they may, and aye, you have a gap between your Circle of Control and Circle of Concern, so that's God's business, that's your father's business. Your father and God will figure it out.

This is how our Sages seem to paint this picture. You don't see it in what our Sages say? (Interposing).

Rabbi David Fohrman: What I what to argue is that now God is saying, do it right. There is no Esau. You know why there's no Esau? Because it's up to you to be Esau and Jacob together. Show me Jacob's hands and Esau's voice. Show me the synthesis of the two. Show me tomorrow and today. You know what tomorrow and today together is? Tomorrow and today is faith, where you care about tomorrow but you focus on today. Do you know what a compound is in chemistry? A compound in chemistry is when you bring two different things together and then the merger of them creates something which is unlike either of them.

What God is saying is that the primal Jacob and the primal Esau are just elements that are supposed to come together in a compound. The true firstborn is the compound of both of them, and you, my chosen child, Jacob, the Jewish people, are meant to be the firstborn by incorporating what Esau has into you, and when you do, that will be the strongest possible thing you can imagine. Then take your tomorrow focusness and incorporate a little bit of today into it. In other words, stay within today, focus only on today just like Esau, but not because you're crushed by tomorrow. No, keep your focus on tomorrow. If you bring those two together you have what we call faith.

You're back in the womb; there's only Jacob. So now let's go to the text. Now immediately as they come out of Egypt, these are the words in Chapter Twelve. "Vayofu et habatzek asher hetziyu meMitzrayim ugot matzos ki lo chometz" they went and baked their matzah, "ki gorshu miMitzrayim velo yochlu lehismahmeihah vegam tzeidah lo asu lahem." Tzeidah reminds you of what? Esau. Now look at the next words, two words later, after tzeidah. What do you see?

Audience Member: It could be read as Esav.

Rabbi David Fohrman: It could be read as Esav. Esau actually comes from the word asu, to make. Now what does this mean? These are Esau words, two Esau words right over here, here's a missing piece of Esau. Let's explore this. First of all, let's talk about this. They're going off into the desert without provisions. What does that remind you of in the Jacob and Esau story? Who went into the fields without provisions?

Audience Member: Esau.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Esau went, because when Esau came back he was hungry, he hadn't packed lunch, that's why he had to buy it from Jacob. The Jews also didn't pack lunch, they had breakfast but they didn't have lunch. They're going off in the fields just like Esau. On the other hand, it's not like Esau. "Tzeidah lo asu" almost sounds like but not Esau. So the question is, is this not Esau or is this yes Esau?

The answer is, it's sort of. It's bringing Esau into Jacob. Let's see how. So look at this Rashi. This Rashi will knock your socks off.

Here's what Rashi says. "Vegam tzeidah lo asu lahem laderech," they didn't make any food. Why didn't they make any food? "Magid shevcham shel Yisrael." This tells you the great praise of Israel. "Shelo omru heich netzei lamidbar belo tzeidah," they didn't say to God, how can I possibly go into the desert without food for tomorrow, "ela he'eminu", they had faith, "vehalchu," and they went, "hu shemefurash bekabalah."

This is what Jeremiah later on says "zacharti lach chesed ne'urayich ahavat kelulotayich lechtech acharai bamidbar be'eretz lo zerua," you have gone into the desert into a land where there is no food, and that's what? It's the greatest gift of faith, that is the greatest gift. You've just given God the most unimaginable gift and God will always remember that. You trusted Him so much that food, the one thing you want control over, you say I have no control over, I have breakfast but I don't have lunch, God, lunch is up to you for the next 40 years and I'm putting myself in Your hands and I went into a desert where you can't make food, you can't grow food. That was a great gift.

Now, umah sechar, what was the reward for that gift? That is the gift of faith. By the way, this is back to what they needed to do in the Garden of Eden. This is leaving what needs to be in God's hands in God's hands. I make the bread I can make, but I only make bread as much as I can make and then it's up to God. Your Circle of Control and your Circle of Concern is exactly where it needs to be. This is cleaving, this is faith, and the greatest gift of love is when you can give the gift of faith.

What happens when you give someone faith in a relationship? When you love someone and you trust them, what happens? The other person lives up to the trust by what? You can conceive of a relationship as like a tennis court. There's my side of the fence and there's your side of the fence. Faith is crossing the tennis court. Faith is when I go and I put myself in your hands. I say it's uncomfortable for me to go outside of my circle over here, but I am delivering myself. I'm saying I am vulnerable and you're in charge. You take care of me.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: Let's not get into that. You can read the Chazon Ish for that. What happens when you do that? How do you reciprocate that? What you reciprocate is by going over -- what you can do is reciprocate by going over the other side of the tennis court also. Let me explain what I mean.

Look at Rashi. "Umah sechar mefurash acharov," what's the reward? The reward is the very next verse in Jeremiah. What is the next verse in Jeremiah after zacharti lach chesed ne'urayich ahavat kelulotayich?" It is "kodesh Yisrael laHashem reishit tevu'atah kol ochlav yeshamu." Now listen to those words. The Jews are "kodesh laHashem reishit tevuatah," tevuatah is grain. Now go back to the last verse, where were they?

Audience Member: In the desert.

Rabbi David Fohrman: In the desert, a place where you can have no grain. What's the reward? God says you ran into the desert in a place where there was no grain; do you know what that trust is? That trust is grain, that's my grain. You've just given me grain. "Kodesh Yisrael laHashem reishit tevuatah," you guys, you're the grain. That what you've just done, that's grain. Do you know what I'm going to make out of that grain? I'm going to take care of you. After your food is used up, 30 days later, I'm going to take care of you. After 30 days there's the time when a father takes responsibility for his firstborn. We call it pidyon bechor (redemption of the firstborn).

The date of the manna was 30 days after the exodus from Egypt. When the food is used up and it's time for the father to take responsibility for the child, and the child puts himself in the father's arms, God says, I will give you the manna. What is the manna? The manna is bread. Bread? What's the definition of bread? Bread is man-made food. It's not bread, it's God-food. The whole definition of manna is from God, how can it be bread? The whole definition of bread is food that's not made by God, it's the independence food that man can make. No, that's the greatest gift that God gives us in response to our gift of faith.

I know you like Twinkies. I know you like processed food. Do you know what I'm going to give you? I'm going to give you bread. It's very uncomfortable for me to make bread; I usually make food, I usually make fruit, I usually make animals. I make raw materials, that's what God does. God says no, I know you like bread, I'm going to give you bread. I'm going to take this grain, this faith as it were, and I'm going to process it and it's going to be bread, which is why the people didn't know what the manna was.

It's an oxymoron. The manna, it's bread that comes from God. There is no such thing as bread that comes from God. There's fruit that comes from God, there's raw materials that comes from God, there's no man-made food that comes from God. That's the paradox of the manna. It's man-made food and what it is, is a rectification of the Garden of Eden.

You're going back to the Garden, and God is saying, back in the Garden you wanted independence and because of that you had to make your own bread? Now that you have given me the faith that I asked for in the Garden, you have given me that cleaving, I'm going to provide you with food again. It's not going to be "bezei'at apecha tochal lechem," I'm going to give you food every morning and it's going to be easy, and it's going to be bread. It's going to be the very food that you said that you like, that food I might be a little angry about because it symbolizes your belligerent independence. No, I'm going to give you that food, it's going to be bread.

When I give you that food, it's going to come from tal (dew), "veyiten lecha ha'Elokim mital hashamayim." It was the blessings that God gave, in the sadeh (field), when they looked out at the field, "re'ei reiach beni kerei'ach sadeh asher beracho Hashem" is what Isaac said when he smelled Jacob. They look out and they see the field that God has blessed, the field with the manna. God, the father and not Isaac has now given them the blessing and it is the blessing of the manna, which is the realization of the blessings of Jacob, because the people of Israel did what they were supposed to do. What was Jacob looking for? "Hakol kol Yaakov vehayadayim yedei Esav." He was looking for both. They synthesized

both, except they blew it.

Right before this happened they then say "mi yiten muteinu beyad Hashem be'eretz Mitzrayim." They go back and they get Esau-like and they drop tomorrow and they get crushed by tomorrow and they just focus on today, and they say, if only we would have died in Egypt, we just want bread, we're going to die anyway. At that point, they become Esau-like, willing to trade in their firstborn rights. At which point God says you can't trade anymore, you are my firstborn, you've given me that faith, all you're doing is testing Me. This can't work. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to give you the Torah.

What's the Torah? The Torah of the manna. I'm going to help you deal with this manna. I'm going to give you some rules. All you've got to do is to follow these rules. What are the rules? The rules are to let you focus on tomorrow and today at the same time. No collecting more for tomorrow. There's going to be just food every day, but you're going to care about tomorrow. What is the Torah of the manna? All that is, is the scaffolding and laws to help them get back to the faith which they had before "vegam tzeidah lo asu lahem." They had that faith, it's just the laws that help you get to that, but they don't keep the laws.

Then they shift to the other way. First they were shifted and just focused on today, ah, who cares about bread, we're going to die anyway, who cares about the firstborn rights; we're going to die anyway, just like Esau without any Jacob. Then what do they do? They don't keep the laws and they try to illegitimately gather for tomorrow, which is the sin of the Tree of Knowledge all over again, when they're gathering for tomorrow and they're not keeping the laws. So now they shift to the other extreme, they become only Jacob, and they're vacillating between only Esau and only Jacob. At this point, what happens is, who shows up?

Audience Member: Amalek.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Amalek shows up. Who is Amalek? Amalek is the grandson of Esau says, it's the midrash again, besha'ah sheYaakov merakin bekolo," when Jacob uses his voice right and presents himself properly to his father, "ein yedei Esav sholtot." When he can take responsibility for his hands, when he screams out and says no, the hands are mine, I have both together, he's not deceiving father, everything is fine; but when you deceive father, everything is not fine. What God is saying is you're playing around with Me, you're deceiving me. Who are you? You're Jacob, you're dressed up as Esau. But it is not -- you haven't integrated the two. There's no compound here and at that point Amalek can come and has the ability to say what's going on.

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. This is all I can do now. Next time we'll get to the battle against Amalek. We'll talk about that in light of this.

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right. Welcome back. I know Monday morning's very exciting. Okay. I have a little PowerPoint presentation for you here; by way of review. Just to put things in context. I kind of left you in the middle last week.

So here's what we're in the middle of. The argument that I was making to you last week is that Jacob's life becomes the paradigm for his children and his nation. There are -- classically this is known in the Rishonim as something which the Ramban often calls, "Ma'aseh avot siman labanim." It's an idea that I think is often misunderstood. In the sense that "history repeats itself." And that we do nothing but relive the events of the past. Or that children are somehow destined to relive the experiences of their parents.

I don't think it means that. I think it means that the lives of our forefathers are a -- that they charter a path, which -- the path that we too take, but we have choices. We have complete freewill. We can do whatever we want. But whatever we want, we're going to be acting in relation to the same thing our forefathers reacted to. We're going to be struggling with the same things. We can choose how we're going to deal with that. But, one way or another, our lives our going to be played out in relation to the lives of our forefathers.

I think we see this in two successive iterations with Jacob. We see it if we take Jacob the man, and that is one life. Then we take Jacob's children, and they live lives. Then we take Jacob's nation, Klal Yisrael, and they live a (collective) life. Somehow the lives of Jacob's children on the one hand, and Jacob's nation on the other hand, are going to be played out, that is, their experiences, with reference to Jacob himself.

They'll have their choices to make, but their choices will be in reference to Jacob's life. What does that look like? Basically we argued that the idea here, these descendants we classified in orders of magnitude, as it were. The first order of magnitude contains his children. The second order of magnitude contains his nation. At some point his children transform into a nation. They're still his children, but at that point, an additional layer of existence compiles on top of this; namely, the layer of nation. At some point, his children become a nation.

Audience Member: Why does it have to be that way? I mean, just because (inaudible) something else doesn't mean that the (inaudible) have to follow all of the same route.

Rabbi David Fohrman: I don't know the answer to that question. I'm not saying, it's always that way in life; that your children have to go through the same route as you. But I am saying that, in this case, that's the way it is. I mean, with Jacob, that's the way it is. I can demonstrate that that's the way it is. Why is that the way it is? You'll have to ask God. I don't know. I can specualte.

One possibility is that, if you don't quite do it right the first time, you get a second chance. If you don't quite do it right the second chance, you get a third chance. Somehow you keep on getting chances until you do it right. In Kabbalah, mysticism, this is the idea of gilgul. Right? You come back. You get another chance. I'm not necessarily a mystic, but you see something like this. If you want to go to Hollywood, you have a similar idea in the movie, Groundhog Day.

(Irrelevant discussion 00:05:09-00:08:01.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: So basically we can look at there being three episodes. These are -- the three episodes are sort of markers on the life of Jacob. Jacob interacts, in the course of his life, with Esau in what amounts to three encounters.

In encounter number one, Jacob "skins" Esau into selling his Firstborn-rights for lentil soup and bread. Two, Jacob deceives Isaac into giving him Esau's blessing. Three, Jacob meets Esau and ultimately reconciles with him.

How do the lives of Jacob's children relate to these episodes? Last week, just to review, we charted this. The summary of the chart looks like this slide on the screen. If you can't see it, I will read it to you. Just relax. Okay?

Jacob and Esau, number one. First, Esau sells his Firstborn-right. Then he sits down to eat bread. In other words, Esau brazenly sells his Firstborn-right. Then, he's got bread to eat. He still needs his bread.

Later on in life, Jacob deceives his father. A different child, Jacob deceives his father about the Firstborn- right; using "goats and coats." Isaac says these words, "Mah zeh michartah limtzo, beni?" Remember when Jacob comes back with the food. Isaac thinks he's Esau, and asks, "Gee, how did you come back with food so fast?" "Mah zeh michartah limtzo, beni?" How come you came back with the food so fast? Similarly, when he didn't recognize him, the text says, " - velo hikiro -- " Isaac did not recognize who Jacob was.

If you take all of these elements, that I colored in on the slide, Jacob-Esau one and Jacob-Esau two, you find that these two events in Jacob's life resonate with a single event, in immediate succession, in the lives of Jacob's children. That event is the sale of Josef. Let's think about the sale of Josef in terms of Jacob and Esau "one." That is, from Jacob's own life.

Esau sells his Firstborn-right, and sits down to eat bread. What does that remind you of in the sale of Josef? The brothers sell an actual firstborn, namely Josef. He is the firstborn of Rachel. Then they sit down to eat bread. It's a mimicry of the first event in Jacob's life. Immediately after that just as the children sell him, they have to come up with an alibi for their father. When they do, they deceive their father, about his firstborn, using goats and coats. That reminds you of Jacob and Esau "two". Right?

When Jacob deceives his father about his firstborn using goats and coats. Now the children deceive their father about the firstborn using goats and coats.

Remember how Isaac said, "Mah zeh michartah limtzo, beni?" How did you find the food so fast Jacob [sic]? Then, " - velo hikiro -- " and he didn't recognize him. Those words resonate in the story of the sale of Josef. Instead of "Mah zeh michartah limtzo," spoken by Isaac, the brothers say, " -- zot matzanu;" this is what we found. "Haker na -- " do you recognize it? This echoes both the "Mah zeh michartah limtzo," and the "velo hikiro," of the other story.

What you see here then, is that Jacob-Esau one and Jacob-Esau two in Jacob's life, are being mirrored by the sale of Josef in his children's life. This slide shows how the diagram of this might look. When Jacob's life replays itself in the lives of his children, using an arrow to represent the trajectory of Jacob's life, we have Jacob-Esau one, which represents the sale of the Firstborn-right. We have Jacob-Esau two, which represents the deception of Isaac story. Also, Jacob-Esau three, which represents the reconciliation story. The arrows on the slide signify the events in the lives of Jacob's children that mirror those two events.

Right? Jacob-Esau one and Jacob-Esau two are mirrored in the sale of Josef. Are you with me?

Now we continue from Jacob's life. This should be a sort of a bridge between episodes two and three. I'm sorry about that. If we go to Jacob's life, and we go from Jacob-Esau two towards Jacob-Esau three, we see the following event.

After betraying his brother and deceiving his father, Jacob goes down to exile in Laban's house. He works hard there. He leaves with great wealth. Laban runs after him. He catches up, but God saves Jacob. Jacob crosses the river. He meets Esau. That's the bottom line in Jacob's life, after he deceives his father.

A thirty-second snapshot of Jacob's life. Well, that thirty-second snapshot of Jacob's life gets mirrored in the thirty-second snapshot of the lives of his children.

After the sale of Josef, and remember the sale of Josef sale is analogous to Jacob-Esau one, Jacob-Esau two. If we look for the bridge between those two Jacob-Esau events and Jacob-Esau three in the lives of his children, we're going to see something similar to this bridge in Jacob's own life. Ready?

Here are the lives of his children. After the great (inaudible) scene following which Jacob went down to exile in Laban's house, and after the brothers deceive their father, the children of Jacob go down to exile into Pharaoh's house. Just like Jacob worked hard in Laban's house, they work hard in Pharaoh's house. Just like Jacob left with great wealth from Laban's house, they leave with great wealth from Pharaoh's house. Just like Laban ran to catch them and caught up with them, so too Pharaoh ran and caught up with them. Just like God saved Jacob, God saved them. Just like Jacob crossed the river, they crossed the sea.

Then, Jacob met Esau; but the Jews met Amalek, the grandson of Esau. And, instead of reconciling, Amalek attacked. That is the break. Something went wrong. In other words, until now everything was fine. Somehow, though, there was no reconciliation. Instead there was this terrible attack.

You might say, it's because, again, Amalek (inaudible). Remember the reconciliation story. They don't know, they would -- but the truth is Amalek knows very well about the reconciliation story. How do we know? Look who they attack. The people who they attack, " -- vayezaneiv becha kol hanecheshalim acharecha -- " They tailed after you; after all the fragile ones.

Why would they specifically attack the fragile ones? If you think about the Jacob-Esau reconciliation story, in Jacob's own life, in that reconciliation story Jacob references to Esau the fragile ones.

Remember? Because Esau says, "Come with me down to Seir." Jacob's response is, "I can't. I have all these fragile people." Esau says, "Fine. You go your own way and take your time with the fragile

people."

Amalek remembers that, but instead of Amalek conceding to Jacob, and saying, "It's okay. You have the fragile people;" he specifically attacks the fragile. You with me?

Okay. Something went wrong. What went wrong? All right. If we look at what we've seen thus far, this is what we've seen. Jacob-Esau one, Jacob-Esau two both get mirrored in the life of Jacob's children with the sale of Josef.

Jacob-Esau three gets mirrored in Amalek's attack. The reconciliation also serves as the bridge between two and three, as we just saw. All of this specifically is padding on the bridge from one to the other.

The problem with this is, the fly in the ointment, what I was bothered by, weeks ago, when I shared with you my innermost struggle over here. One, if this were true, then you would expect that, when we get to the story of the manna, we should be hearing about -- if you see the cursor on the screen -- so where would the manna be?

So the manna would be somewhere on the trajectory of Jacob's children up until right before Amalek's attack. That means that, if we're going to find parallels to Jacob and Esau in the manna, it should parallel something over here in the area of the sale of Josef. Why? Because if the sale of Josef parallels Jacob-Esau two, and Amalek's attack parallels Jacob-Esau three, this whole bridge of parallels, taking all the way from Jacob-Esau two to Jacob-Esau three, gets mirrored in everything that happens from the sale of Josef to Amalek's attack, so you would expect that, if you're going to find Jacob-Esau parallels in the manna, it's going to have to mirror something pretty close to Jacob-Esau three.

What was Jacob-Esau three? It was the reconciliation story. Right before that you would say, Jacob's crossed the river, fought with the angel, maybe something like that we should see in the manna story. But, you don't see any of that in the manna story. You, in fact, see Jacob-Esau parallels. But they go back much earlier to the beginning of the Jacob-Esau story. I'll show you what those parallels are in a moment. Let’s just -- we couldn't talk about them last week, but they're there.

The problem is, because the parallels that you see in the manna, you see them, except the parallels are all the way over here. Are you with me? They take you all the way back to the Jacob-Esau one story and pre-Jacob-Esau one. So the problem is the parallels are all wrong.

The parallels break the pattern. That was my problem. All of the parallels of the manna break the pattern. So the theory which I began to suggest to you last week, and I wanted to try to make clearer to you, is that it all works out.

In the history of science, before the Copernican revolution, which is the idea that there is a heliocentric universe [sic], up until then, when everyone thought that the earth was the center of the universe, and everything revolved around the earth, it became harder and harder to reconcile the data. So they came up with these successive iterations of the sun-cycle. This is what it reminds me of, all these false theories; but

this one's true.

It actually is pretty elegant. Here's what I want to argue to you. What I want to argue is, the reason why you're seeing Jacob-Esau parallels going over here, and that we are all confused by that is because we're no longer in the world of Jacob 's children at this point. We're in the world of Jacob 's nation. Right?

One section of this slide is the world of Jacob 's children. But the other area is the world of Jacob 's nation. There are three lines that are parallel. There is Jacob's life. There's Jacob's children. And there is Jacob 's nation.

At some point, Jacob's children take on a second identity. In addition to being Jacob's children, they are also Jacob's nation. What I want to argue to you is that, at that point something complicated happens. There is still the playing out of everything in relation to Jacob's own life, except that, if you look at them as Jacob's children, they're at one point in this playing out of Jacob's life. If you look at them as Jacob's nation, they're at a different point in Jacob's life. But both things are true at the same time, and the really cool thing is that, even though these timelines are different -- in other words, where they are as Jacob's children and where they are as Jacob's nation are different, there's one point at which the timelines intersect exactly. That point is Amalek's attack.

That's when they're all at exactly the same place. That's where everybody is up to Jacob-Esau three. In other words, what I'm arguing is that, as Jacob's nation they are undergoing a very quick replay of Jacob-Esau one and Jacob-Esau two. This leads up to Jacob-Esau three, which is exactly where their children are up to at the manna, and that's where everything converges. Are you with me? That's the idea.

Now, let me show you how this plays out in later life. Okay? Along the way, the two -- does this sound like a repeat of what I did last week? Or, is this --

(Interposing.)

Audience Member: No, this is a summary.

Rabbi David Fohrman: This is a summary of what I did last week. Actually, it's understandable. Okay. Along the way, the Jews transform themselves into a nation. Now, when does that happen?

(Irrelevant discussion 00:20:46-00:21:01.)

Rabbi David Fohrman: So along the way, the Jews transform themselves into a nation. I haven't come up with the graphics to be able to illustrate this part properly yet. I have to figure out how to do that. Here, on this slide, is where they transform themselves into a nation. They transform themselves into a nation at the Exodus from Egypt. Particularly, the night they leave; at the Passover offering.

We talked about this before. What's interesting is that now, when we think about the way we were at

the time of the Passover offering, it makes so much more sense. What we saw when we looked at the Passover offering was that, if you look at the Passover offering carefully, you get all these strange laws that seem to have nothing to do with each other. But, if you follow the trajectory of those laws, you find they all remind you of things.

What do they remind you of? They remind you of Jacob and Esau's lives. What do they remind you of? They remind you particularly of goats and coats; of the sale of Josef, and they remind you of events in Jacob's life and events in Jacob's children's lives.

They remind you, for example of -- there is this -- remember there's this animal. The animal cannot be eaten with water. You cannot cook them in water. Why? What does that remind you of in the sale of Josef? No water. " -- vehabor reik ein bo mayim." Remember, the pit was empty. There was no water in it.

The blood "asher besaf". "Saf-saf;" you dip it in the blood. " -- utevaltem badam - " (with korban Pesach). You have to dip the hyssop in the blood. Where's our dipping of blood? When the brothers dipped Josef's coat in the blood. It was supposed to be Josef's blood. " -- badam asher bassaf;" samech-pei. It's a play off of Josef (yud-samech-pei). Everything that happens in that story, it's all Jacob and Esau stuff.

There are these memories of goats and coats everywhere. Why? Because it's goats and coats that brought you down to Egypt. So it's goats and coats (inaudible) over here while you're in Egypt. Therefore, to get out of Egypt -- how are you going to get out of Egypt? You've got to somehow deal with goats and coats. The Passover offering is our way of dealing with goats and coats. Looking it straight in the eye.

What was goats and coats all about? It was all about this attempt to sort of illegitimately become the firstborn. To try to deceive father into thinking that you were the firstborn. Whether it was Jacob himself doing it to Isaac. Or, whether it was Jacob's children doing it him. One way or the other, there was this desperate attempt to become the firstborn at all costs; even at the price of deceiving father.

In the exodus from Egypt, in order to get out of Egypt, we have to confront that past. But in confronting that past, we were born again. And we were born again as God's firstborn. " -- beni bechori Yisrael." We become born as God's firstborn in the exodus from Egypt.

That leads to another layer of imagery in the Passover offering that we talked about. This is the birth analogy with the Passover offering. There's the idea of this bloody doorway. Blood on the top of the doorway. Blood on the bottom of the doorway. Blood on the sides of the doorway.

" -- ve'atem lo teitzu ish mipetach beito ad boker." That until the morning no-one can go through the doorway.

Then you rushed bechipazon through the doorway. Then God said, "Ufasachti aleichem." Pas, by the way, also reminds us off what in the Josef story? The ketonet pasim, the striped garment.

"Ufasachti aleichem," I will give you the pas. What were the pasim? The pasim were the way that Jacob signifies to Josef that he was the firstborn. God says, you'll go through this doorway; you'll be my firstborn. " -- beni bechori Yisrael." All the firstborn will die in this plague; except for my firstborn.

Right? My firstborn will live. We become God's firstborn.

When that happens, we are literally born again, and we're transformed into a nation. At this point we are two things. We are Jacob's children, again; but we're also Jacob's nation. We are Beit Ya'akov, we're the House of Jacob as Jacob's nation. But as Jacob's nation we are not at the same place in Jacob's life as where are his children. In his children we just got out of Pharaoh's household which is like just getting out of Laban's household, so we're pretty far along Jacob's life. But as Jacob's nation we're being born so what part of Jacob's life are we up to now?

Audience Member: In the birth.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The very beginning. The birth of Jacob when he's struggling with Esau in the womb. Right, that's where we're up to. So now what's happening is that we're going to see a whole series of parallels now between Jacob's nation and Jacob's life that are going all the way back to pre-Jacob one; to Jacob's struggle in the womb with Esau and all that stuff.

Now, what do we see? In the womb, Jacob struggles with Esau and they struggle about who's going to be the bechor (firstborn). The interesting thing is that now there's no Esau. In other words, if we think about Jacob in the womb, Jacob in the womb would be the Jews in Egypt or the Jews right about to leave on the night of Passover. They were slaughtering the Passover offering. There is no Esau there; there's Jacob, there's no Esau. What happened to Esau? One of the great questions is where is the Egyptian Esau in the story? If the parallels continue, and I'll show you that the parallels are there, but one of the strange things is we have a missing Esau. We have a phantom Esau.

The theory I'd like to suggest to you is that the reason why we have a missing Esau is because the Jews are supposed to be Esau too. In other words, this is your chance to do it right. The only way that you do it right is becoming both Jacob and Esau. The Jews, in order to succeed have to be both Jacob and Esau. Because both Jacob and Esau are sort of the firstborn. Esau was born first. The Jews have to integrate Esauness into them in order to really be the firstborn. In order to really -- that's what God wants from them.

Why? Because that's what Isaac wanted, also. If we go back to the original story, that's really what Isaac wanted. How could Isaac have said the words, "Hakol kol Yaakov vehayadayim yidei Eisav" and then blessed the kid? He knew he was being deceived, he should have said "Hakol kol Yaakov vehayadayim yidei Eisav", the only possible answer is he wanted someone with the kol (voice) of Jacob and the yadayim (hands) of Esau. He just didn't think he had a kid like that. So whichever kid it is, I don't care if it's Jacob and I don't care if it's Esau, but if there's a kid that integrates both "Hakol kol Yaakov vehayadayim yidei Eisav," fine, I don't recognize you, but I'll bless you. And then I'm surprised when I see it's Jacob. I didn't think but I say, "Gam baruch yihiyeh", so too you should be blessed. That's what Isaac wanted. Isaac was looking for a doer, an (inaudible), a person with hair, somebody who could

accomplish and he didn't think that Jacob had that.

Jacob actually was a doer. He got himself the blessing. It was through deception, it wasn't nice, it was Machiavellian, but Jacob proved himself to be a doer. But that wasn't nice and Jacob suffered greatly in his own life, for that deception. He suffered eternal enmity, Jacob. He suffered his children doing the same thing to him. He suffered getting Laban doing the same thing. Doing the switch of the younger one before the firstborn. Jacob's life is a panoply of pain coming from the fact that he didn't do it straightforward.

He could have done it straightforward as we already said last week -- he could have done what Rebecca essentially said that was the way to do it. Which is basically go to your father and bring him the stuff and say I heard you say to Esau to go hunt food, Father, here is food. I can provide food for you too, bless me. Which is the literal words of what Rebecca says before Jacob says I can't do it, he's going to think I'm deceiving him (inaudible). But before that it was go to your father and get the blessing and give him food. He didn't need to do that.

What I want to argue is that right now we're going to be replaying the stories and what God wants from us is to do it the right way. So we're going to go through the blessing story, but what God wants from us, the Nation of Israel, is God says right now I am the Father. I, God, am the Father. If Isaac is the father of Jacob the man, God is the Father of Jacob the Nation. Now, you have to relate to me the way that Jacob was supposed to relate to Isaac in that story, which is look me in the eye and tell me I can do this.

Tell me I'm a doer, tell me I am Jacob and Esau together. I'm the "Kol kol Yaakov vehayadayim yidei Eisav."

This goes back to a Midrash which I shared with you last week. The Midrash says that "Besha'ah sheYaakov meracheim bekol bo", when Jacob degrades his voice and says and allows Isaac to say -- and lies basically and says I am Esau, then when Jacob degrades his voice "hakol kol Yaakov", then "yidei Eisav shalto", the hands of Esau have power. But when Jacob is "metzatzech bekolo", when Jacob raises his voice and said, "Ein hayadayim yidei Eisav", the hands are not the hands of Esau, they're my hands. When Jacob said that then "Ein yidei Eisav shalto," then Esau can't be sholet (rule) anymore.

Jacob has to take responsibility for those hands and the proof that the -- interestingly, in the Midrash the proof of this is when the Jews complain in the man (manna) they meet Amalek. It's fascinating. You see what the Midrash is doing? The Midrash is making the jump. The Midrash is saying what's happening with the manna is relating to Jacob and Esau's own life. It's the replay, which is exactly the argument we're making, but the Midrash writes the argument long before us.

Let me show you how it works. So Jacob's in the womb. There is no Esau, why? Because he's supposed to be the Esau. Now, let's talk carefully about what it means to be Esau. Let's talk about the two qualities we know of that Esau has. One quality shines through -- what do we know about Esau? Tell me what he are his qualities.

Audience Member: (Interposing) ish tzayid.

Rabbi David Fohrman: One quality is tzayid befiv. One quality is that he's a hunter. A hunter has to do with his ability to accomplish. He's a man who can go out and to get things done, to get food, to prepare food, he can make things, who is a man of action. That fits with Esau's name. Eisav which comes from the word la'asot, right? The doer, the man who can do. That is one quality of Eisav.

What's another quality of Esau? Audience Member: Focus on today.

Rabbi David Fohrman: The other quality is focus on today. That we see that with Jacob and Esau one where I am going to die tomorrow. I don't care about tomorrow, as long as I have the Torah I don't care about that, either way I'm going to die. I want to be happy today, I want the bread today. So the two qualities of Esau are doer and focus on today.

The theory that I want to suggest to you is that what it means for Jacob to integrate with Esau is to somehow integrate both of those qualities into his persona. So the Jews are going to be faced with the nisayon (test) coming out of Egypt where they're going to have to integrate these two qualities of Esau: A, doer; and B, focused on today. Except that both of those qualities will be the same, as you'll see in a moment. They will come together rather eloquently in exactly the same thing. They will be one expression of both qualities.

Let's see how this works. Now, here's what we get. One final thing we need to be able to understand this. When we look at Jacob and Esau in Jacob and Esau one, or we look at Jacob and Esau as paradigms, we see Jacob as Jacob and Esau as Esau. Now, what I want to suggest is who does Isaac really want to bless? Who Isaac really wants to bless is a merger of Jacob and Esau. Which means that neither Jacob nor Esau, as they first appear in the Torah, are the ideal that Isaac their father is looking for. It is the merger of both of them that is the ideal.

Now, in this I want to also suggest another thing. When we talk about mergers, I am not suggesting a mixture to use that term from chemistry, a mixture kind of merger, I am suggesting a compound type of mixture. The difference between a mixture and a compound is that in a mixture you just have two things and they're together, but theoretically you can separate them. You can get them apart again because there is no fundamental change. Two things have transformed themselves. It's just like buying salt and pepper seasoning, lemon pepper seasoning from Malky's Fish. It's a little bit of lemon, a little bit of pepper, but there's lemon there there's pepper there. You can see the lemon and you can see the pepper. And if you wanted to you could separate out the two of them.

That's not what a compound is. A compound is when the two fuse become something different than either of them. For example, water. Water is hydrogen and oxygen. You'd never know it by looking at water because water is a compound. It is a fusion of hydrogen and oxygen to create something that is utterly unlike any -- salt is the fusion of sodium and chloride. It doesn't look like sodium. It doesn't look like chlorine. It is sodium chloride. If you ingested chlorine, you're dead, but if you ingest salt you're not dead. It's a compound, right?

What I want to suggest is that what Isaac is looking for is not a mixture of Jacob and Esau, a little bit of Jacob together with a little bit of Esau. He's looking for a compound of Jacob and Esau. He's looking for something that happens when you take Jacob and Esau together and really integrate them, that's when you get something really, really special. What is that? You see that in the life of Israel as a nation.

In order to see this most clearly let's look at Jacob and Esau as they express themselves in Jacob and Esau Number One. In Jacob and Esau Number One the two elements that are not yet a compound are both lacking in some fundamental way. Esau is just focused on -- is a hunter, a doer and Jacob is not such a doer. Esau is a doer focused only on today and Jacob is not such a doer focused exclusively on tomorrow. Jacob's focus is exclusively really on tomorrow and Esau's focus is exclusively on today. Esau is crushed by the possibility of death in the future and we talked about this in terms of circles of control and circles of concern, right? Esau deals with the dichotomy between the circle of control and the circle of concern by constricting a circle of concern that's no larger than a circle of control. There's death out there that I can't control, and therefore the only thing I really care about is today.

Jacob on the other hand, is exactly the polar opposite. Jacob only cares about tomorrow. He is obsessed with getting the bechorah (firstborn rights); whereas Esau sees death, the end of life, as the crushing blow that causes me not to care about anything, Jacob looks to the beginning of his life and wants to try to change it. I want to be firstborn. I'm going to buy it from him. You can't buy that. The problem is that when you try to expand your circle of control beyond where it really is, directly, you can't do that.

So one of two things happen. You either spin your wheels and you're doing something ridiculous because you can't control more than you can control. So I'm trying to change my birth order. You can't change your birth order. Or you do something illegitimate like you stuff the ballot boxes, which you get hints of with what Jacob is doing with "vayazed Yaakov nazid." We talked about this before. That language of "vayazed" is the language of zadon. He's plotting -- he's really lying in wait for Esau to like get him so that he can take advantage of Esau's focus on today and get himself the firstborn rights for this piece of bread. Jacob is really personally not so nice because he desperately wants tomorrow and he's going to expand the circle of control until he gets it.

Now, what is the compound, if you mix the two together? The compound would be perfect and here's why. Because what does God really want from us? God wants someone who, like Jacob, cares about tomorrow, who is not crushed by the possibility of death. But God also wants someone who is able to stay within their circle of control today and focus on today without illegitimately trying to manipulate tomorrow.

How does someone have that? How can someone be that? And the answer is that's where emunah (faith) comes in. Faith in God is that. Faith in God does two things. A, Faith allows you not to be crushed by the possibility of death, because if I live "Eitz chaim hi lamachazikim bah", if there's a God in the world then I can confront death and not wither. I can make it through death. Either because death means reunion with God, or it means that okay so I won't live forever but even in this life I have a connection to the eternal so that's enough. But somehow or another death is "Gam ki eilech begay tzalmaves lo ira ra

ki atah imadi." It's a great thing of faith that even as I walk through the shadow of death I don't fear because You are with me. That's the bottom line, that is what faith is about. It's our ability to confront death and not wither in the face of it and therefore care about tomorrow because otherwise there is no caring about tomorrow. Tomorrow still matters even though there's death. That's the one thing that faith does.

The other thing that faith does is not just allow my circle of concern to remain large, it also allows my circle of control to remain where it ought to be because I don't have as much of a temptation to illegitimately spin my wheels and manipulate things that I don't control because I can say it's not faith that controls those things, it's not just randomness.

There's a loving God. So sometimes I get what I want from my loving God and sometimes I don't get from my loving God. But then the loving God who knows I'm here, He cares about me, is working all that out and therefore I can leave that in His hands, I can pray to Him, I can say God, you know, I really would love it if You can make some allowances for me over here. I could do that, but I can leave that in God's hands. I can stay within my circle of control.

That is the fusion of Jacob and Esau. It is Jacob-like in the sense that I care about tomorrow unlike Esau who doesn't care about tomorrow. But even though I care about tomorrow, Esau-like in the sense that I am only working with him today. I am not trying to manipulate for tomorrow. I am not deceiving anyone. I'm not going to go and do things I shouldn't do. I can say that God, You're a big boy, You'll figure out. That's for You, I'm working on what I can do. Are you with me? That is the fusion. That's both of them together.

So, here come the Jews, coming out of Egypt, and the first thing they do, as we talked about last week is they pack as much food as they possibly can. They pack 30 days of bread, right? The matzah in their knapsacks, but "Gam tzeidah lo asu lahem", they don't pack provisions beyond that. And those words "Gam tzeidah lo asu lahem," are Esau words. Say them. Eisav -- asu -- Eisav, tzeidah -- tzayid befiv.

Those are Esau words.

Jacob, the Jews, are integrating Esau. Are you with me? Apparently it's Esau-like. They are going out into the fields, into the desert, not packing any food. Just like Esau did when he went not packing any food. Now, Esau did it because he didn't care about tomorrow. He didn't think about tomorrow. The Jews are not doing it because they're not thinking about tomorrow, they care about tomorrow. Why are they doing this? They're doing it because they have faith and that is the great merger. That's the Rashi of "Gam tzeida lo asu lahem -- zeh keheminu", that they had faith and that because of that was what Jeremiah said in the Book of Jeremiah, Jeremiah said that "lechtech acharay bamidbar be'eretz lo zaruah." God remembered how we went into the desert like a bride, we called him, and He is going to take care of us because we allowed Him to control the circle of concern and that is the greater thing. And that's why He's going to give us the manna, right? "Bemah haschar?" and what's the reward? That the nation of Israel is "reishit tvu'ato", we are this first of God's grain. God's going to provide us with grain. God's going to take grain. He's going to make bread. It's going to be great.

That was the ultimate. We had it there, if we could have just stayed there, but at that point things started to go disastrously wrong. Take a look at Jacob's life for a moment. Here is Jacob's life. Jacob struggled with Esau in the womb. Jacob is born, not the firstborn, holding onto the heel. Then Esau goes out into the field without provision. Esau says either way he'll die, he might as well have some bread. Then

Jacob-Esau Two the father, Isaac, wants to test Jacob by asking him are you my son Esau or not? The father wants a child with the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacob. The father eventually blesses the child who has both. Then he gives Esau blessings, as well. Then Esau looks forward to the death of his father as the time that he can kill Jacob. "Yikrivu yimihem veladi." You're going to find that every one of these events is now going to be nearer to the life of Israel as a nation.

Let's see. The Jews right now is goats and coats before being born. They say we're turning over a new leaf. We're not going to do this again and they go and they're born in the Passover offering. Israel is born the firstborn. It is not the case that Jacob is born not the firstborn holding onto his heel. Now Jacob is the firstborn. Why is he the firstborn? It's only because he can integrate Esau. Esau goes out into the field without provisions while the Jews go into the desert without provisions. When they do, that is when God says that's the greatest thing in the world, I'll give you the manna.

What happens next? Right before the manna comes, right on the 30th day when they run out of provisions, when the manna was going to come, they falter and then you have these words, "Vayilonu kol adat B'nei Yisrael al Moshe ve'al Aharon bamidbar. Vayomru aleihem B'nei Yisrael mi yitein muteinu beyad Hashem b'eretz Mitrayim bishivteinu al sir habasar b'achleinu lechem lasova", if only we would have died in the desert when we had "b'achleinu lechem lasova", when we had enough bread to eat. "Ki hotzeitem otanu el hamidbar hazeh lihamit et kol hakahal hazeh bera'av", you brought us into this desert to kill us all in starvation. So the idea is either way we're going to die. We're going to die in Egypt, we're going to die here we might as well die with some bread in our hands. Who are we hearing now?

Audience Member: Esau.

Rabbi David Fohrman: This is Esau. What happens is that the Jews who had so nicely integrated Jacob and Esau before --

Audience Member: Yeah, but it's yad Hashem though.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Yes, that's true. "Mi yitein muteinu beyad Hashem b'eretz Mitzrayim", you're right. If we had only died at God's hands when we were in Egypt, but it is still we're going to die anyway, we might as well have some bread. At this point they are more Esau-like than they are Jacob- like. They're focused on today without thought of tomorrow. They have taken it too far. Not their Jacob, thinking about tomorrow, integrating Esau, but now they're only Esau, like they're just looking at today and they're being crushed by the possibility of tomorrow. At this point, God says okay, I'm going to give them the manna, but I am going to give them the manna with rules. What's the point of the rules? The rules are -- the rule is designed to allow them that if they follow the rule they'll be integrating Jacob and Esau.

What are the rules? The rules are I'm giving you manna, but you can only collect what you want today. There's just enough for stay and you're going to have to believe that it's there tomorrow. Circles of control and circles of concern. God collects it today and you do what you can today, you can care about tomorrow, but you trust Me that there's a tomorrow. So the rules are doing nothing but getting them back to the place where they were in the first place when it was "gam tzeidah lo asu lahem." The rules are just a scaffold which are allowing them to achieve the level of faith which they had before.

Now in those rules, what do you have? "Hineni mamtir lachem lechem min hashamayim", now the bread is going to come down from heaven and it's going to be "lechem min hashamayim", it's going to be covered with dew. What does that remind you of in the Jacob and Esau story?

Audience Member: The blessings.

Rabbi David Fohrman: These are the blessings. Isaac gave these blessings to Jacob thinking that Jacob has integrated Jacob and Esau together. The Jews can do this. If they can integrate Jacob and Esau together they can get the blessings of father, which is the blessings of the manna which is nothing but "Yitein Hashem Elokim mital hashamayim umishmanei ha'aretz" which are the blessings of Isaac. That's what they need to do.

Then you have these words, "Vilaktu dvar yom b'yomo lema'an anasenu", God says, I'm going to test them, "hayelech betorati im lo", to see if they follow my Torah or not. Those words echo words that Isaac had said to Jacob when he said, "gesha na v'amushecha", come close that I could feel you, "ha'atah zeh beni Eisav im lo", are you Esau or not? The idea is can you integrate Jacob and Esau together? I know that you're the voice of Jacob, but are you also Esau. Can you integrate them together or not?

Going back to our PowerPoint. The Jews left Egypt without provisions, but the next thing that happened was that Esau had said either way he'll die, might as well have some bread. While the Jews said that either way we'll die, might as well have some bread. Now, we're up to the deception story. In the deception story, father wanted to test Jacob asking him are you my son Esau or not? Now, God, the Father, wants to test the Jews, will they keep my Torah or not? Same language. Will they be able to integrate Jacob and Esau together? Will they be able to keep these rules?

Now, the problem is, what does father want? Father wants the child with the hands of Esau and the voice of Jacob. God wants Israel to integrate Esau's and Jacob's focus on today and planning for tomorrow through these rules. Father blesses a child who has both. Here God blesses the Jews with manna; same thing. The problem is that the Jews don't keep the rules. When they don't keep the rule they start collecting -- trying to collect stuff for tomorrow and keep it in the fridge. Now when they're doing that who are they being like?

Audience Member: (Inaudible).

Rabbi David Fohrman: They're being Jacob-like, only Jacob-like without any Esau-like so they just switched from being a fully Esau-like to completely Jacob-like and they're having a hard time keeping it

in the middle; keeping the compound between the two of them. At that point, let's go back to the text, so God says here are the rules. You have to select it, you have to be careful.

"Vayomer Hashem el Moshe." Finally, after they don't keep the rules, God says, "ad ana mei'antem lishmor mitzvotai v'torotai," how long are you not going to keep my mitzvoth and my Torah? "Re'u ki Hashem natan lachem hashabbat, al kein hu notein lachem bayom hashishi," God gave you the Sabbath, why are you going (inaudible)? Finally, the place. "Vayikra shem hamakom masah u'merivah al riv bnei Yisrael," because the Jews struggled with God.

Now, look at these words. "V'al nasotam et Hashem laymor hayesh Hashem b'kirbeinu im ayin." What does that remind you of? Look at the structure of that sentence, "hayesh Hashem b'kirbeinu im ayin".

Audience Member: (Inaudible) know.

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's right. It reminds you again of "ha'ata zeh beni Esav im lo." There's a train here. "Ha'ata zeh beni Esav im lo," remember, got paralleled with the end of the story of Jacob as a nation with "lema'an anasenu hayeilech b'torati im lo." God was (inaudible) to do to see if they would follow His Torah and be a bridge between Jacob and Esau. What happened? They weren't.

Now, when they weren't, the Jews turned it around. Instead of God testing them to see whether they could be Jacob and Esau together, they ended up testing God. "Al nasotam et Hashem laymor hayesh Hashem b'kirbeinu im ayin." They tested God by saying, is God with us or not? What does that mean? Again, this gets back to the following idea. This is the great tragedy of trust. Trust is a big deal. Trust is the greatest possible gift that you can give someone that you're in love with. To be able to place yourself into their hands and let them be in charge, and to make yourself vulnerable to them; it's a really big deal. That is such a big deal that that's God's memory of "lechteich acharai bamidbar b'eretz lo zeruah" after all of those years, that trust always matters. You always remember that trust. It's a very, very big deal.

The problem with trust is that it's a gamble, and that if you fail in the test of trust, it's also a big deal. It's not like you can stay neutral. If someone gives you the reason to trust them and you fail to trust them, right, you have a great choice to make. It's not like you're remaining neutral. You degrade your relationship by failing to trust them. You don't keep your relationship at what it once was.

How do you degrade the relationship? It's very simple. If I don't trust someone who loves me when they show that they're worthy of trust -- what does it mean to show that you're worthy of trust? Let's be careful, we want to understand what that means. When is someone worthy of trust? How does someone show you that they're worthy to be trusted?

Audience Member: They have to prove themselves beforehand.

Rabbi David Fohrman: They have to prove themselves. So what do I need to know in order to trust someone? Logically, rationally?

(Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Right, so I need to know a couple things. A, I need to know that they love me. If they don't love me, why bother? But just because I know someone loves me doesn't mean I'm necessarily going to trust them. I also need to know that they're powerful, that they have the power to be able to take care of me, but still, even though someone loves me and even though they have the power to take care of me, I still don't know enough to have trust in them. The final (inaudible) that I need to be able to trust someone, is that I need to know that they love me, I need to know that they have the power to help me, and I also need to know that they will help me and that they will help me consistently. Which is to say that they will consistently be there. In other words, I actually have to have experience. I have to see time and time again, there has to be a track record.

This was exactly what God was seeking to establish with the manna, which is that it's going to be there day by day. You're going to wake up in the morning, it's going to be there, it's going to be there tomorrow, it's going to be there the next day. All you need to do is trust. That's the idea.

Now, if you fail to trust when someone shows you those three things, that they A) love you; that they B) have the power to help you; and that C) they're there for you consistently, you then have a choice. In rare cases you can admit that you were a coward and that you just failed to trust them, and then your relationship could perhaps still survive. But in most cases, that's not what we do. In most cases, what we do is we seek to rationalize our lack of trust. That's where it gets insidious, because we have to rationalize our lack of trust. The only way we can (inaudible) the fact that we didn't trust is by telling ourselves that trust was not warranted.

So then we have to do one of three things. We have to either say the person didn't love us, the person didn't have the power to help us, or the person wasn't reliable. Now, if you look at the times that the Jews didn't trust God, for example. Remember in Deuteronomy -- let me just read this to you. We'll go to Deuteronomy for a quick second.

Audience Member: Why does God (inaudible)? It's very difficult, you have over a million people with no food. Why shouldn't you say, I realize you're running out of food tomorrow, I'll be there for you? It's not 20 people, it's a million people with no food or water. You can't say, I'll be there for you? Why did you have to get them --

Rabbi David Fohrman: That's a good question. I'll get to that in a minute. Just wait a bit. (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: All right, take a look at this, with the meraglim (spies). (Interposing)

Rabbi David Fohrman: Here, look. Remember, the Jews heard the report of the spies and they got afraid.

Look at Moses's response. "Va'omar aleichem," I said to you at that time, "lo tei'artzun velo tira'un meihem," don't be afraid of those (inaudible) level. "Hashem Elokeichem haholech lifneichem." Now, listen to the argument he's facing. It's a very interesting argument. "Hashem Elokeichem," your God, "haholech lifneichem," that even now is walking before you. "Hu yilachem lachem," He's going to fight for you.

Now, how is he asking -- he's appealing for trust now. But on what grounds? Look at the grounds he's appealing. He's not saying you should have blind faith in God. He saying, "hu yilachem lachem kechol asher asah itchem b'Mitzrayim l'eineichem." God has a track record. He has done all of this in your very eyes in Egypt, He fought for you. Not only did it mention Egypt, "u'bamidbar asher ra'ita," in the desert that you yourself have experienced, "asher nesa'acha Hashem elokecha," that God has carried you, "ka'asher yisa ish et bno," like a man would carry his son "bechol haderech," for 40 years, "asher halachtem ad bo'achem ad hamakom hazeh." I think He's earned trust. Trust Him. "U'badavar hazeh einchem ma'aminim ba'Hashem Elokeichem," but you failed to trust. "Haholech lifneichem baderech latur lachem makom lachanotchem ba'aish layla, lar'otchem baderech asher teilchu bahh u've'anan yomam." God even now is finding a way for you.

What's fascinating is that if you look at what the people say -- Audience Member: This is talking about the spies?

Rabbi David Fohrman: This is in Deuteronomy, looking back at the spies. But now look what the people said -- "vateiragnu v'oholeichem," the people complained of their tents, "vatomru b'sin'at Hashem otanu hotzi'anu me'Eretz Mitzrayim," it was in God's hatred of us that He took us out of Egypt. How could they say that? This is how they can say it.

When you fail in trust, what's the only way you can fail? I have to say that you weren't worthy of trust. There are three elements that you need to trust someone: they love me, they're powerful, they're consistent. Over here, they couldn't really argue with God's consistency. They couldn't really argue with His powers, so what did they say? One of the three had to go. It's love. In God's hatred of us, He took us out of Egypt. I have to somehow make it make sense. So you say the craziest things in the world, because you have to rationalize your lack of faith.

Now, in Rephidim there was a similar lack of faith, but they expressed themselves somewhat differently. A different piece of the tripod went out. The tripod is love, power and consistency. So now let's look at Rephidim back in our story in Exodus. They named it masah u'merivah "al nasotam et Hashem," because they tested God "laymor, hayesh Hashem b'kirbeinu im ayin." Is God really there for us or not? Is He consistent or not? That was the tripod. Maybe God loves us, maybe He's powerful, but how consistent is He really? So what they did is they imputed lack of consistency -- can we really count on God? Is He really there for us? Is God really there with us? We just don't know. The great idea of doubt; we just don't know. Is He there for us? Is He not there for us? And that question mark allows us not to trust, when the whole point was that it was Him establishing consistency. The whole point of the manna was the establishment of consistency. But again, well we all know, God's consistent about it. It's the only way

that we can allow this to work.

Now, who shows up at this point? The very next words, "vayavo Amalek". Amalek comes. Who is Amalek? Later on, "asher korcha baderech". The word karah with a Hey means what? Happenstance, inconsistency. What the Jews had just said is that God is an inconsistent Father. Now, let's go back to Amalek.

Remember when we were talking about the psychology of Amalek? Where does Amalek come from? Who are Amalek's heirs? What's Amalek's life experience? The life experience of Amalek from parent after parent after parent with Eliphaz and Timna and Esau is that I am dispossessed, but I can't really blame my father and I take it out at someone else. There's this anger at the father, which is that the father just can't be counted on. The father can't be counted on. Amalek is nothing but the externalization of what the Jews are feeling right now -- Father can't be counted on. But it's a lie. They're feeling that because of their own lack of faith. But Amalek is the person devoted to Father can't be counted on.

Therefore, Mr. Father Can't Be Counted On now confronts the truth and battles with us -- that's what the Jews are battling with right now, the family where the father can't be counted on. So here comes Mr. Father Can't Be Counted On.

I want to argue now -- so just to finish it off, the very next phase we go back to our PowerPoint. So understand now, we've gone through Jacob's life on the level of nation in a very short time. We've gone through the manna, we've gone through Jacob and Esau One, which was I'd rather die, I just wanted some bread in my hands; that's the beginning of the manna story. We went to Jacob and Esau Two, which was are you going to follow My commandments or not, are you going to be Esau or not. Now where are we up to? Jacob and Esau Three, which is the moment of reconciliation. We now have an answer to the question which we started this class with, which is how come Amalek comes? Why wasn't there reconciliation? Jacob's family was on this great trajectory, and it was supposed to end with this great reconciliation just like before.

The answer is that something went wrong. Something went wrong on the level of nation. On the level of nation, as they were playing out Jacob's life, they failed in that goal to completely integrate Jacob and Esau. They remained dichotomous, splitting between Jacob and Esau, not making them a compound.

Because of that, they didn't have space. Because of that, they ended up deceiving Father. They ended up testing Father's love for them. They weren't supposed to deceive Father. They were supposed to be like the Midrash says which is no, I'm Jacob and I'm also the hands of Esau. They're my hands. I've integrated them both. Look at me; I'm your firstborn.

But instead, what they did is they just sort of dressed up like Esau. They did this cheap imitation of Esau when they were really Jacob, but then they were Esau and they couldn't really bring the two together. So they ended up testing Isaac or testing Father once again by not really putting it together. They became vulnerable to the real Esau. What does the real Esau say? "Yikrevu yemei evel avi va'ahargah et Yaakov achi," soon my father will die and I will kill my brother. Now, I will never kill my brother while my father's around because I love my father, but my father will die and then I can kill my brother.

What happens? They now meet Amalek and instead of the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau, they meet the Esau who's flaming back about the deception, who right after being deceived says, soon my father's going to die. Or I eliminate the father, and then I can kill Jacob. Think about Amalek. What is Amalek? That's Amalek. Amalek is angry at anything of Jacob's. They really shared one father; they have nothing against God, except that God is unreliable, except that the desire to kill Jacob requires something else of them. I can only kill Jacob if I get rid of God, if I get rid of Father -- just like the original Esau.

That brings us to Hitler. That's exactly where Hitler was, which is the Jews brought morality into the world. I can only kill the Jews -- as long as there's Father in the world, as long as there's God in the world, then you can't kill. But if you get rid of God -- or it's not only if you get rid -- what's interesting about Esau is that he doesn't really proclaim himself an atheist. It's just that God is irrelevant for him. It's not that God doesn't exist; He's just not relevant. If you read Mein Kampf, it's not this anti-God thing.

It's that God just doesn't matter. Why? God is around, but what's the one reason why Father might not count, why Father might not matter? Because he's unreliable. If he's unreliable, then I don't need to relate to him anymore.

This is Amalek. Unreliable father; I get rid of father; I can take out my venom against the Jacob who deceived me. This is where we end up with, with (inaudible). But what happens now? We're at the same moment. Jacob as a nation and Jacob as family is not just a Jacob and Esau story, the moment of potential reconciliation with Esau. But instead of meeting Esau and reconciling, they meet Amalek because they've deceived Father once again -- not deceived Father, but they failed Father in some type of way when he said, are you my son Esau or not.

Now, a bit of (inaudible) history. What could happen if they'd done it right? We'll never know. But if they've done it right, I want to argue to you that there wouldn't have been Amalek that they met. They would have met Edom. They would have not met the part of Esau that can never reconcile with you.

They would have met actual Edom, and what would have happened, perhaps, is reconciliation. The same way that Jacob and Esau kissed when they first met, there would have been even a greater kiss and they would have been really friends. Why? Because think of what it would have meant. Who would have been meeting Edom?

Audience Member: Esau.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Part of Esau would have been meeting Edom as an integrated with Jacob to become something greater than what either of the two could have been as children. So the being that would have met Esau would say, we are only who we are because of you. We are your legacy. We have taken your legacy and made it into the greatest thing it could possibly be. It's only because of your focus on today that our focus on tomorrow can together lead us to what this is. Then that's when you reconcile with Edom. When you affirm Edom and you say no, your focus on today is important. It's only your focus on today that's a crucial element in what thing has to be done. Then they can part as friends.

This is like, I didn't deceive our father. What I did is I took the best of both of us, I said here's what we

are, and Father said that's great. Then there's no deception. You've done it right, and then there's a perfect reconciliation. That's what could have happened.

Another topic. I'm going to stop here, but what I want to show you when we come back next time is that these parallels then continue a little bit farther. They help us understand how to battle Amalek.

Think about it. If everything we've seen is correct, the trajectory is correct, then when we get up to the battle of Amalek, where are we up to? We're up to the point in time where after the deception of Isaac story, so the question is do the parallels continue? What we want to see is that as Amalek comes into battle, do we continue hearing the echoes of the story of Jacob and Esau? The answer is yes, we do.

We hear immediately after Jacob and Esau Two, the next thing that happens is that Isaac blessed Esau also. Isaac gives Esau a consolation blessing. If you look carefully at that consolation blessing, remember when he says in that consolation blessing, "gevir samtiv lach," and then he says "vehaya ka'asher tarid u'farakta ulo me'al tzavarecha." It shall be when you go down, that you can break the yoke of your brother from upon your neck. That was the blessing to Esau.

Do you know that this is the second time "vehaya ka'asher" appears in the Torah. Sorry, that's the first time. The second time "vehaya ka'asher" appears in the Torah, the next time after that blessing of Esau -- "vehaya ka'asher yarim Moshe yado," when Moses raises his hand. It's from Esau's blessing. To keep winning the battle against Esau comes from Esau's blessing. The parallels continue. We'll talk about that when we come back next week.