**What did Jacob’s dream mean**

This is Webinar Number 4 in our series of webinars that we've been doing with you here on Facebook Live on the subject of Jacob's Ladder and its various permutations throughout Tanach.

In our very first webinar, we were talking about the story of Jacob's Ladder with reference to the laws of tithing which appear in Deuteronomy. In our second and third webinars, we were talking about Jacob's dream, the ladder, in relationship to another structure that starts from the earth and extends to the heaven, namely the Tower of Babel.

What I want to do with you now is to sort of extend our understanding of the permutations of the mystery of Jacob's ladder throughout Tanach by focusing on the very end of the connections between Jacob's dream and the Tower of Babel. What I want to do with you is share my screen with you over here. Here we go. You should hopefully see on the left hand side of your page on the screen a source sheet that's going to be in Hebrew. I'll try to translate that into English as we get to relevant passages. You're going to see a bunch of color-coded text over here. If you have no idea what that means, then just go back to our previous two webinars where we went through this little by little and so we've color- coded the corresponding text here. We saw a dizzying array of parallels between Jacob's dream and the Tower of Babel. I just want to show you one last one.

These parallels all extend in order. All the way from the beginning, Vayetze Yaakov miBe'er Sheva, these four words paralleling. "Vayimtze'u bika b'eretz shinar vayeshvu sham," the first four words of the Tower story and the first four words of the Ladder story. All of this continues and continues until it gets to one place where there are, I think, mind blowing implications.

I want to show you that place now and talk about some of the implications. Let's go to the very end of the story of the ladder. I'm just going to close this window over here because I think you're hearing these planes in the background so let's see if we can get rid of that. Okay. Here we go.

At the very end of the story of the Ladder, you'll recall that Jacob makes a promise to God. Let me just take you into this over here. "Vayidar Yaakov nedar lemor," he makes a promise and this is the promise he says. "Im yihye Elokim imadi u'shmarani b'derech haze," if God is with me and he watches over me on this path that I'm going, asher anochi holech. "V'natan li lechem le'echol u'beged lilbosh," and he provides food and clothing for me and care along this journey I'm taking. He's going down to Laban's house. He doesn't know he's going down to Laban's house. We talked before about Laban, actually, the man whose name means brick. Remember, levenim means brick. The Tower story was a story of a kind of enslavement, a totalitarian culture, the birth of technology in which people become overwhelmed.

By the way, that's sort of the challenge in general with technology if you think about it. technology can enslave. The drive to be hyper creative technologically, in as much as an individual can't really innovate technologically, it takes a community to create technological. It takes a town to build a 747, not a single individual. There is a challenge or a temptation to fall into slavery because slavery is the easiest way to organize. If you can have one powerful totalitarian ruler who can press every one into service, you can get what you want done. The beginning of that is the Tower, which seemingly is the beginning of slavery. You had all of these Egypt parallels in the tower. Let me just run quickly through them because they are going to become relevant again in just a moment. Remember when the people say hava nilbena levenim, come, let us make bricks. Nilbena levenim, that's not just Tower language. That's brick making language. The other brick making story we have in the Torah is the Jews forced into slavery in Egypt and making bricks. Speaking of making bricks and speaking of Egypt, what about this language, hava.

Come, let's do this. A leader exhorting a community. When else do you have that language of hava, where a leader exhorts a community? It's Pharaoh exhorting the Egyptians, hava nischakma lo," come let's deal wisely with them.

One final thing over here. Remember the people's fear. The people's fear was pen nafutz al penei kal ha'aretz. Lest we scatter over the face of all the land. There was a time when we were scattering over the face of all the land. That too is in the Egypt story when the evil Pharaoh presses us into service to make bricks and we scatter throughout the land to find straw.

All these echoes or these foreshadows of the Egyptian slavery story in the Tower story was if the Tower is the paradigmatic moment from which slavery emerges in the Torah and lo and behold, there is a man, the very first Israelite who experiences seemingly a microcosm kind of taste of what slavery will ultimately feel like for the community, for the entire people. That is Jacob's sojourn in the house of Lavan. We talked about Laban when we talked about this last time. We're talked about this in previous sort of stuff in Aleph Beta. If you go back again to our Hagada series, we talked extensively about -- four years ago, we put on a series on the Hagada for Passover. We really talked about that very curious parallel that the Hagada makes between Laban and Pharaoh. It seems like these people, Laban and Pharaoh, have nothing to do with each other, yet, in some deep kind of way, they do. Pharaoh is this paradigmatic ruler, task master. We have an experience of slavery there and we have an experience of slavery ourselves at a microcosm level where just one man becomes enslaved to the brick. Laban's name means brick. Jacob, without knowing it, is on his way down to a slavery like experience.

Anyway, here is Jacob making a promise to God. If you bring me out of here, if you bring me back in peace to my father's house, then God will be for me a God. "Vayihye Hashem li l'Elokim v'ha'even hazot asher samti matzeva yihye beit Elokim. This stone that I placed as a moment will be a house of God. This will be a cornerstone in a house that I'm going to build for God. This promise to ultimately build something that perhaps is the Temple. That's the long quest of the Jewish people, to somehow build a home for God in this world.

Then the very last words of the ladder narrative. "V'chat asher titen li aser a'asrenu lach," everything that you give me I will tithe to you. Everything that you give me, I will give a tenth of . this is Jacob's promise that he expresses what he's willing to do upon fulfillment of this thing that God has promised him. God has promised him that he's going to bring him back home, that he's never going to leave him and his sojourn in exile will be temporary. That's true, Jacob says, and when that happens, kal asher titen li aser a'asrenu lach. Everything that you give me, I'm going to give you a tenth of. This is how the story of Jacob's ladder ends.

What I want to query with you is if we have seen such a close level of correspondence between the story of Jacob's Ladder and the story of the Tower of Babel, literally like every point connects, then is it possible that this last point connects to? Is there something in the story of the Tower that would remind you of this promise at the end, kal asher titen li aser a'asrenu lach. Everything you give me I will give a tenth of. Does that remind you of anything at the Tower? At face value, the answer is no because look where the story of the Tower ends. If we go back -- let's just try to make this point so we can keep track of our colors over here.

Here's the problem. Take a look back at our last major parallel in the Jacob's Ladder story. It's going to be Verse 19 right over here. "Vayikra et shem hamakom Bet El." This is the moment when Jacob names the place. This of course is going to remind us of something that happened in the Tower. In the Tower, al ken kara shemo Bavel ki sham bilela sefat kal ha'aret u'misham hefitzam al penei kal ha'aretz. This is the naming of the place and the tower. The problem is that the Tower story ends here. This is it. The final act of the Tower story is the naming of the place Babel.

I think I already mentioned to you that the English word babble seems to come from this notion of Babel, to mix up language which is of course the end of the Tower story. "Ki sham balal Hashem sefat kal ha'aretz," there God changed or mixed up the language of the whole land and from there he spread them out on the face of all of the earth. This is the end of the story of the Tower.

The problem is that the end of the story of the Tower seems to correspond to something which is not quite the end of the story of Jacob's Ladder. Even after the name of the place, there was one final act which was the promise of Jacob. There doesn't seem to be any parallels to the promise of the Tower story. The Tower story ends with the calling of the place Babel. The question is where is this phantom connection to the promise of Jacob and the story of the Tower. Does it not exist?

I want to suggest to you that it does in fact exist. Let me show you something. Fair warning; this is a theory, but I think it's an extremely intriguing theory. There is a tantalizing reference to this notion of giving a tenth back to God that comes after the naming part of both stories. In Jacob's ladder, it is giving a tenth of his possessions back to God. In the Tower story, where is the tenth that goes back to God after the naming of the place Babel. Let's keep on reading. What happens right after the Tower story closes.

The Tower story closes right over here in Verse 9 with the naming of the place. Let's go forward a little bit. We're in Genesis Chapter 11 Verse 10. The very next verse; "ele toldot shem." These are the generations of Shem. Who's Shem? Shem is one of the three sons of Noah. Noah in an ark. Three kids. Oldest is Shem. Immediately after the story of the Tower of Babel, we get the generations of Shem.

Interestingly, when does the Tower of Babel take place? We're not really sure, but it sounds like it takes place shortly after the flood. Then all of a sudden you've got the generations of Shem. They just go one after another after another. I don't have them all written down here, but if you look in your Bible, in Chapter 11, you're going to find that the generations of Shem will continue and continue for how many generations? You guessed it. exactly 10.

So, boys and girls, here is the $64,000 question. Could this be the missing 10 that we've been searching for? Might it be that Jacob's promise, everything that you give me, a tenth I will give back to you, finds its expression in the Tower story in a different kind of tenth. A tenth generation. Where something goes back to God. What might that be? Who is the tenth generation after Shem? I've copied it right over here. After you go through all the generations, you finally get to Terach and the birth of Abraham.

Abraham is the tenth generation.

If you think about it, that's kind of interesting because what does Abraham do? Abraham is the father of this nation that does what? That somehow is supposed to be dedicated to doing God's work in this world. That's interesting. Here's this idea of Jacob saying everything that you give me, a tenth I'll give back to you. Is there some kind of dynamic at work where someone was given something and then someone gives back a tenth, but the tenth is part of the tenth generation, is Abraham.

Here's two kind of interesting things. Does Abraham ever give a tenth back or does Abraham ever give anything back. Well, look at the main event of the Abraham story. Isn't the main event of the Abraham story this horrific scary terrible event? It's giving a piece back to God, his child, in this case, Isaac. Is the Binding of Isaac somehow an expression of the tenth generation? To give this little bit back to God. But what does that even mean? Such a strange thing.

How else does Abraham give back to God? That's what I want to explore with you now. What would the meaning, if this is true, this tenth generation connection, be? Is this just a play on words, the tenth? Seemingly, the tenths are very different. In one case, the tenth is a tithe. Jacob's actually giving a tenth of his possessions back to God. It seems like a very convoluted play on words to relate that to the tenth generation. Is that play on words really as tortured as it seems or is there method to be found in this madness.

I think there might well be method to be found in this madness. It's interesting. If I asked you who is the first person in the entire Torah who's ever on record for having tithed, giving a tenth back to God, you'd say Jacob. Jacob is the one who says "kal asher titen li aser a'asrenu," everything that you give me, I will give you a tenth of. There was actually someone who did it before him. Interestingly, that was none other than Abraham himself. You can find it, I believe, in Chapter 14 in Genesis. There is that event that we're going to look at a little bit later on in the series. Maybe not this week, but perhaps next week we will get to it, which is Abraham's act of giving a tenth to God. The very first paradigmatic moment of tithing. It happens right after the war of the four kings and the five kings.

Abraham goes, interestingly, to Malki Tzedek, who just so happens to be a priest to the God most high. And where does he live? Shalem. A place where tradition says will ultimately become Jerusalem. Isn't that interesting? Think about the way the Torah ultimately talks about tithing. There's that ma'aser sheni that we talked about in our first webinar, the tithe that goes back to Jerusalem. You eat yourself in Jerusalem. Who was the first person who gave a tithe to eat in Jerusalem? It was actually Abraham himself, giving to Malki Tzedek, the king of Shalem, the king of Jerusalem. It doesn't seem coincidental. It really does seem that Abraham's act is a paradigmatic act of tithing.

We're going to ask why. Why then, of all things, did Abraham tithe to give a tenth back to God? What's the meaning of giving a tenth back to God? What's the common denominator between Abraham's moment in time when he give a tenth back to God after the war of the four kings and the five kings and Jacob's moment when he prays to God and says that if you do this for me, I'll give a tenth back to you. When do people do such things as give a tenth back to God? What does that mean to say that Abraham is the father of tithing? Maybe it has something to do with him himself being a tenth generation of Shem.

What I want to do with you now is try to take this convergence which we're starting to see between the story of Jacob and the end of the Tower story around this idea of tithing and try to bring these two stories together. I'm trying to show you a little bit more how the tithing, the giving of a tenth of what Jacob's promising to God is really one and the same thing with the advent of Abraham coming into the world in the tenth generation. These two things are not like apples and catalogues that have nothing to do with each other. They are very much the same thing. In order to do that, what I want to do with you is just kind of stop and breathe for a minute and get into Jacob's head and what it is that he's worried about and then think about Abraham for a moment. And for that matter, think about the Tower.

What is Jacob's fear? The fear that grips him before he is in awe of this House of God that he senses he's in in the story of the Ladder. He's fearful, he's running away from Esau. What's he afraid of? He's afraid he's going to be destroyed. If he's destroyed, what then? It's not just a matter of him meeting an untimely death, which is bad enough. This man has been promised something. He's been promised a legacy. He's been promised that he's going to carry on this Abrahamic tradition. He's going to build this great nation. If he gets squashed and destroyed by Esau as he's running away or if he gets squashed or destroyed in Laban's house, or if he dies of starvation and he doesn't have all these things that he wants from God, clothes to wear and food to eat, he perishes. It's not just him who dies, but everything goes. Nothing survives. The hope of the nation is dead. This is Jacob's worry. Maybe nothing will survive. Maybe this whole thing will just end right here. What does this have to do with the story of Abraham and the story of the Tower? Look at the right hand side of our screen.

What was the Tower builders' fear? Didn't the Tower builders' fear have something to do with that? Weren't they too worried that nothing would survive? Let's look at how they expressed that fear. "Hava nivne lanu ir v'rosho bashamayim v'na'ase lanu shem." Let's build a tower, its top will be in heaven and let's make a name for ourselves. What I want to do with you today is this idea right away, the making of a name. V'na'ase lanu shem, what exactly did the people mean when they said let's make a name for ourselves.

You look at this at first glance and you say oh well, it's just an expression of ego. It could just be. People put names on buildings because they're very proud of themselves and they want their name advertised all over town. But ask yourself why do you put your name on a building of all things? Why don't you put your name on a picture? Why don't you put your name on a tree? Why don't you put your name on a skyscraper? Because what do you intuit about the skyscraper? These people, these tower builders, the skyscraper will be their name. What is it that we intuit about building? What gets us so worried? What is the great fear that these tower builders were battling? The answer is their fear was the fear that all will be gone, that nothing will survive. A name would outlast them. If you put your name on a building, you may die at some point, but it's not all gone. There is a remembrance of you in the world. The world is different because of you. Your name is carried on even if you aren't. in the Torah, the word name is often a codeword for that which survives you. I may die, but my name can continue.

Of course, the great story of that is levirate marriage. Levirate marriage is the story in which a man dies childless and he's dead, but the question is what about his name? Will his name continue. There is a great commandment upon the brother of the deceased to marry the widow and somehow to have children that will carry on his name. Even though the deceased is dead, but somehow there will be children that will carry on his name. There will be a legacy, a fragment will survive. His name will survive.

Now think about the tower builders for a moment. The tower builders are obsessed with name. Why would they be obsessed with name? Are they worried about dying? Whether anyone will ever remember them? What was the generation that the tower builders lived in? they lived in a world after the flood.

The flood was the last great event. In the flood, everyone died. Could it be that the tower builders were worried about another flood? If they were worried about another flood, maybe the tower was their antidote. Maybe they said look, we can't build an ark to save ourselves from flood. We can't save our entire society from flood, but we can at least give it a name. People will know that we existed. There will be a tower that will be our remembrance. There will be a fragment of us that survives.

The problem with a name is that you invest everything that you are into a name. The name is the essence of you. To externalize yourselves into a tower isn't really saying much about who you are. What's the meaning of a tower? There is no meaning. It's just a monument to your own power. It's not what name is supposed to be. It's a sort of narcissistic version of name, but it is a version of name nevertheless. God doesn't like it. he destroys it. what were they trying to do? they were trying to survive. They were trying to make sure that even if they went away, that there would be something of theirs that survived and they engaged in a great building project to make sure that it would.

I want to share with you an idea from Josh Josephs. I'm not sure if he's the vice president of Yeshiva University but something like that. He shared it with me and you can reach out to Josh and say hello, any of you who know him. Josh came into my office about a year ago to share with me a fascinating idea. He said if the story of the Tower happens right after the story of th flood, is there anything about the Tower that reminds you of something in the flood?

Isn't it interesting that the two great building projects in the book of Genesis or an ark and a tower. The ark is this huge big thing. The Tower is this huge big thing. If you think about the orientation of that, the Tower has its foot on the ground and its top reaching into the heavens. Just flip it 90 degrees and it's an ark with its top neither on the ground nor its head in the heavens, but equidistant between the two, floating on water. Is the Tower nothing but a vertical version of the ark? It's an intriguing kind of notion to think about them as connected in that kind of way. Is it possible that there's something to that? That it's not just that there were two big building projects. Not just that one is oriented this way and the other one was oriented the other way, but their purpose was the same. Their purpose was survival. What will be survived? Will there be a fragment that survives?

Here's something that should make your bones shake? What was the purpose of the Tower builders? Why were they doing what they were doing? They wanted to make a name for themselves. Think about the ark. What was the there to preserve? Not everyone could survive, a fragment could. Who was in that ark? The oldest child of Noah just happened to be called Shem. His very name means name. It's almost as if humanity was going to be destroyed, but their name could continue. Almost like levirate marriage.

Almost like this law of an individual person who dies, but a fragment of him can continue. You can have a child for him and somehow continue his legacy. Now, humanity was being destroyed, but their name continued.

It's almost as if the story of the Tower and the story of the ark are two attempts to rescues humanity from oblivion. One attempt is undertaken by God. The other attempt is undertaken by man. God says humanity will be destroyed, but I will give you the fragment. I will keep your name alive. It's almost as if God is a brother doing levirate marriage. God is going to keep the name of humanity alive through an ark and a person in that ark called Shem. The oldest child will carry on the name. Somehow these children, Shem among them, is going to lead the charge to carry on the legacy of humanity. One way to carry on legacy is through children, but the other way to carry on legacy is through something inaminate, something lifeless. A monument to oneself that is stilted and dry. It's a tower. If you flip the ark on its side so that nothing can live in it. it's just a monument. It's another way to give name. Nothing will survive, but this lifeless thing will be our name. It will be a monument to who you were. That, God destroys. It's almost as if he's saying I gave you a gift of name. In the flood, in the ark, what are you doing trying to make your own name. If you think about name, to give someone else whose name is threatened a name, a fragment of survival, that is a laudable thing, but to give yourself a name, to worry about your own name, is itself kind of egocentric and narcissistic. It's like to give people meals is a wonderful beautiful thing, but to sit and feast myself is kind of gluttonous. If I provide you with a feast it's an act of kindness. If I provide you with a name, it's an act of kindness. If I indulge in my own name creating and that's the purpose of my existence, but now you're a tower builder, that's not worth much.

The first person to create a name for others was God. Now, I want to show you something really chilling. Look at this. Here's a document and in this document, I have taken some verses from the story of the flood. Let me show you a couple of things from these verses. Here are the children of Noah, over here. Here is the oldest, Shem. Let's just color him orange. Now, let me show you something else. Here's the flood. I've been talking to you about the law of the levirate marriage. You may consider that fanciful. Oh, Fohrman, he's always talking about levirate marriage, making these fanciful connections. Crazy.

God is like a brother who marries the widow of the deceased and to have a child from. Come on, that's very farfetched. You're saying humanity is the dead man and God is the rescuing brother and they're going to have this child just like Shem to carry on the name. Please.

Well, let's see if it's that farfetched. Here is the law of levirate marriage, right over here in Deuteronomy. Let's just read. "Ki yeshvu achim yachdav," when brothers live together. "U'met achad mehem," and one of them dies, "u'ben ein lo," and he has no child, "lo tihye eshet hamet hachutza l'ish zar," the wife of the deceased should not go out to a stranger. Instead, "yevama yavo aleha u'lekacha lo l'isha," the brother of the deceased should be intimate with her and take her as a wife and should perform levirate marriage for her to carry on the legacy of the deceased through the child. "V'haya habechor asher teled," the firstborn child of their union, that will be born, "yakum al shem achiv hamet." I struggle here to translate these words. Should be established, let's say, upon the name of the brother. But yakum doesn't mean to establish, it really means to get up. it's almost like a resurrection of the person. The person has died, but the person is going to be, not quite brought to life, but sort of brought to life. There's going to be some sort of resurrection of the person in the name of this fragment, this child. This child is going to be called al shem achiv hamet.

Let me just take that yakum. I'll color this green for a minute because we're going to pay attention to that word. We're going to come back to that strange word, yakum. By the way, here is that name that we were talking about before. The oldest of the children that is born from the union of the surviving brother and the widow of the deceased, that child should be established over the name of brother who died v'lo yimachesh me'am Yisrael. His name shall not be erased from Israel.

Let me show you something crazy. Do you see this really interesting phraseology? I want you to keep that in mind. I wish I had this side by side for you like we did before, but I don't have it. just remember green yakum, pink yimache and then the orange shem. Let's go to the flood for a minute. Now we have Shem in the ark. There he is right over here. Now, I want to show you something wild. Take a look over here in Genesis 7. This is the story of the coming of the flood. What does God say when He is going to make the flood? This is what He says. Look at Verse 4. "Ki b'yamim od shiva anochi mamtir al ha'aretz arba'im yom v'arba'im layla," in another seven days, I'm going to cause to rain on the ground for 40 days and 40 nights. "U'machiti," I'm going to block out -- there it is, that's the word form levirate marriage. "Et kal hayekum asher asiti al penei kal ha'aretz," and I'm going to block out all the yekum, what a strange word, all the standing up things that I have made on the face of all the world. Crazy, folks. Yekum is never the way you would say life in Hebrew. Machiti et kal hayekum, I'm going to block out all of the standing things. Blot out all life, say machiti et kal hachay. No. Machiti et kal hayekum. The Torah in Genesis is foreshadowing something. It's foreshadowing laws of levirate marriage. The first levirate marriage in the Torah really was the flood. God was the one who did it.

When a single person dies, it's up to the brother to try to carry on his name. When all of humanity dies, then what? God carries on the name of humanity. When everything is going to be erased, all of these people, then it's up to God to make a name for humanity. He does it with a boat. The boat allows Shem, a person called Shem to live.

Jacob, as he was running away from Esau, is worried about being destroyed. He's worried about the loss of his name. Not just that he would die, but everything would be lost. The first time, there was that fear, after the story, post traumatic stress disorder. After the flood. In the flood, all of humanity was lost. Now the question of name is front and center. There are two answers, one given by God and one given by the tower builders. The tower builders were the destructive kind of Shem. It's as if God was saying no, no, no.

Let's go back to our story of the Tower over here. After the story of the Tower, it's as if God was saying no, no, no, ele toldot shem, these are the generations of Shem. You guys were all about name building. That's what you wanted to do. That wasn't the way to do it. But here's how you build name generation after generation of people. Once there's 10 generations, humanity has been reestablished. It's on solid ground again. There is a civilization. What do you do if you're the recipient of that kind of gift? If you've received the gift of name from God, God has allowed humanity to survive after the flood, how does humanity ever pay God back? Ask Jacob.

If Jacob were to receive that gift, if Jacob were to not be destroyed, to have something left -- later on, by the way, when Esau comes to destroy him, notice that Jacob even concedes that he might die. Jacob says God, all I'm asking for is if he kills me, mother upon child, I'm just worried that everything will be destroyed. I'm going to break my camp into two, into three. Couldn't there just be something that lasts? Jacob just wants a fragment to survive. He knows that Esau's out to get him. Jacob's interested in name, a little fragment survivor.

What do you do if God will fulfill His promise and says I'm going to be with you. I'm going to make sure you make it out of this. I'm going to make sure that there's a legacy. Jacob says well, you tithe. It makes perfect sense. The fact that I should be able to survive and rebuild, that's a gift, but after I've rebuilt, after you've given me that gift, I have to have the recognition that I got that gift. I'm going to give a little bit back to you because you gave everything to me. That's the tenth.

If humanity, after the flood, was the recipient of the gift, what does humanity need to do once it's established, once the gift has really been given, once humanity can continue, once their survival is assured? When the fragment survives, when the name takes root, in the 10th generation, give a little something back. You give one man, one family, and dedicate him to God. After the Tower something happened.

Until the Tower, we were more or less working with Plan A. God wanted a relationship with all of humanity, but it wasn't working out. It didn't work out with the flood, but after the flood, God said with Noah, we'll start with you, build a relationship with you and all of your children. Then in the Tower story, something terrible happens from which humanity never completely recovers. They take their unity and use it for slavery. They take their unity and they use it for technological advance that knows no bounds. Technological advance by leaps, skips and bounds without any desire to make anything other than to express their own power and their name. They end up enslaving everybody. God says this can't continue. This isn't a good thing. He stops and destroys the tower, but He also destroys their unity.

Now, the people are fragmented. They're fragmented into families and nations. Plan A can't work anymore. There is no unified humanity for God to connect with anymore. All there is is disunified families. The broken building blocks of nationhood. The one nation is gone. The largest unit you have now are families. You want to have a nation. There's mishpechot adama.

At that point you need a Plan B. God's got to work out from there. He still wants a relationship with humanity. There's just no way to have one relationship with all of humanity. You've got to somehow

relate to one of these families and nations and then work out from there, through there, to try to relate to everyone again, to try to bring everyone together. That's what Israel is meant to do. give them some sort of common purpose that they can come together and unite around. Not just one nation in pursuit of that purpose, but an entire world in pursuit of that person. Can the families and nations reunite? Can Israel somehow bring them together in service of a common father, in service of one. We talked about that last week in our third webinar.

Abraham is going to be the beginning of that plan. It's as if humanity was paying God back for Shem. You allowed our name to continue, our name not to be destroyed. Once our name is established 10 generations later, we're going to give you something that you need. You need a connection with somebody to be able to reach out through these families and nations. God says Abraham, it's going to be you. "V'nivrechu becha kal mishpat adama," through you, blessing is going to come to all the families of the earth. You are going to be the one whose nationhood is not about themselves, is not about just living in Croatia or something. It's a nation devoted to some sort of Godly principle. That's what it's about.

That's the whole essence of your nation. You can't have a nation without that. You are the tithe.

Of course, if I'm going to ask anybody to give somebody back to me, to understand that you are on some fundamental level mine, then your child I'm going to ask you for. Will you be willing to give up Isaac? Will you be willing to give him to me? Will you be willing to understand that Isaac doesn't just have an earthly father and an earthly mother, but also a heavenly father that has at least as much a claim on him as an earthly mother and an earthly father. Would you withhold your beloved child from me or would you understand that in a custody battle, I have rights too. Abraham is the tenth, the one given back to God for the gift of Shem. It is, therefore, not coincidental that Abraham would tithe. His giving a tenth would be the paradigmatic moment of tithing, the idea through which tithing comes to the world. When did Abraham give that tenth? Why did Abraham think he was giving it? It had something to do with the tenth that Jacob thinks he's giving. That's the mystery that I want to come back and solve with you next week.

What was Abraham thinking when he gave that tenth? It's a window into how Abraham understood the coming together of his whole life's mission. There's also the possibility that in some deep way that only we, generations later, could understand, Abraham misunderstood an aspect of his mission. He didn't quite understand when it was fulfilled. Anyway, these are the mysteries that we're going to talk about next week. Thanks for hanging out with me with an hour. I encourage you to comment on our Facebook Live page. I'm eager to see -- you guys help this develop further, i can't tell you. Your comments are fantastic. Indeed, where we're going with this -- a lot of your comments, including Ezra Zuckerman Sivan and others. Keep on writing on that Facebook Live page. I enjoy it, I read it. It's great for me. Thanks for being a part of this and for really making this happen. I'll see you next week.

Hi everybody. This is me, Rabbi David Fohrman and welcome back to our webinar series that we've been doing on Jacob's ladder. I'm going to try and actually finish this series today. I do not know if I will get there. That's the exciting thing about webinar series. You never know if you're going to finish them until you just give it a whirl. So we're going to do that today.

I have a text here which I'm going to want to share with you. Let's see here if we can find it.

Anyway, hi folks. We've been talking about the story of Jacob's ladder and I want to, kind of, bring that

-- to try to tie things up in a little bit of a bow with you. The last you and I have been talking together we have been talking about this, I believe, about this concept of ma'aser, of tithing. Which is really the last thing that we see in the Jacob's ladder story. Jacob says, right after he has that vision of the ladder, "V'shavti b'shalom el beit avi," he expresses the hope that God will bring him home to his father's house, "v'chol asher titein li aser asrenu lach," and everything that you give to me I will give you one-tenth of. The idea of tithing.

The last thing you and I have been talking together, we had been, sort of, meditating upon that idea of tithes and I want to put that together for you in a way. I had suggested to you that there are some textual indications and I won't get into exactly what they are now. If you want to know what they are just go back, in the Facebook Live Stream, to our previous webinars and just watch the last one and I think you'll get a sense of what I'm talking about. But there were some textual indications that the idea of tithes, that ultimately expresses itself in Deuteronomy, can be traced through earlier points in Genesis and we've begun to do a little bit of that work.

Specifically, Deuteronomy says that when you come to the land "aser t'aser et t'vuat zaracha," you should give one-tenth of that which you have of your crops to God. We began to connect that in our very first webinar together to Jacob's promise of tithes in the story of the ladder. We never get any indication that Jacob, in fact, does give tithes. He promises it to God, but he never actually does it. Maybe the reason why he doesn't actually do it is because he never actually really comes home. Which is to say that if you think about where he is, in Parshat Vayeitzei, at that moment that he sees that vision of the ladder, he's on his way out of home. He just wants to be able to come home and he says that if you ever bring me home God, I will give you one-tenth of what I have.

He's off in Laban's house for, like, 21 years and he's finally coming home and he's almost home. "Vayeishev Yaakov b'eretz megurei aviv b'Eretz C'na'an." He's beginning to settle down and all of a sudden the story of the selling of Joseph happens and the family gets swept on down to Egypt. It's almost like centuries later when you have in Deuteronomy this command to the progeny of Jacob, "aser t'aser et t'vuat zaracha" which is playing off the "v'chol asher titein li aser asrenu lach," that you should take tithes.

It's almost like God is saying well, when did Jacob finally come home? He didn't really come home, but his children did. You did. You're coming into the land. When you come home, then I, God, am fulfilling my promise and that's the time for you to recognize that I fulfilled my promise. How are you going to recognize that I fulfilled my promise? You're going to do it by taking tithes from your things.

We suggested in our last -- so that was back in our first webinar -- in our last webinar, I suggested that if you trace back the idea of tithes a little bit further back in Genesis, before Jacob, you get to some other stories which foreshadow the story of Jacob and the ladder. The ladder is this great big thing that goes from heaven to earth, but there are other things that further connected heaven and earth.

We talked about the Tower of Babel as being a kind of an anti-tower. We also talked about -- and we began to talk about the tower and we began to talk about the flood. The tower in the wake of the flood. We talked about the tower and the flood as two great building projects; the ark and the tower. Those two building projects were, kind of, an inverse of each other. The tower is vertical and the ark is this great building project that is horizontal.

We also suggested that the ark and the tower are almost like competing ways of dealing with the aftermath of the flood. What was the flood about? The flood was about the destruction of humankind and in the response to the destruction of humankind, you had two attempts to surmount the problem that the flood put before humanity which is could we ever all be lost? Could we ever all be destroyed?

I suggested to you, I believe, that the story in the bible or the text of the bible was just a touchstone for dealing with the issue of could we ever all be destroyed is the text of the levirate marriage. A levirate marriage is when one man and his legacy is destroyed. A man marries a woman, they don't have children, he dies. He's destroyed. The issue is will his name survive. Will his legacy survive? So a levirate marriage is a way that his legacy can survive.

I suggested to you -- you know, last webinar, I believe and correct me if I'm wrong, I may have amnesia, but this is how I remember it -- that the ark, on the one hand -- Noah's Ark, on the one hand and the tower on the other hand were, sort of, two opposing ways of dealing with mortality. Dealing with the looming threat of maybe we can all be destroyed in some way, shape or form. The tower was an attempt to keep legacy alive. The word for legacy, in Hebrew, is sheim. "Lo yimacheh shemo m'Yisrael," the hope for a levirate marriage, of the man marrying the widow of the deceased, so that they could have a child that would carry on the legacy of the deceased and the Hebrew word for legacy is sheim.

The tower was an illegitimate attempt of legacy building. The people built a tower to make ourselves a name and God says in the aftermath of the tower it's like God had another plan for legacy. It wasn't a technical creation that would give humans a sheim, a legacy, but it was the salvation of Noah. It was another building project; it was the ark. The ark would give man a legacy, would recue his legacy. I've pointed out to you -- I think I pointed out to you -- last week -- I don't even remember offhand -- maybe I didn't. Maybe this is something new. We will see. But there's this crazy language of the ark and the levirate marriage story where you just see these crazy parallels.

So if you look at this, it's really, kind of, crazy, but here's this language in the flood. Which is God says it's going to make it rain for 40 days and 40 nights. "U'machiti et kol hayekum," and I'm going to wipe out all of these living things, "asher asiti mei'al p'nei ha'adamah," from the face of the land. Now, that language is even a little strange. That's not really the way you would say it. It's going to rain for 40 days, "machiti," you might say that's how I'm going to wipe out man, but "et kol hayekum"? Yekum isn't really the way you would describe humanity. Yekum really means all that stands. I will erase, wipe down the drain all that stands. All that stands is, kind of, a convoluted way of talking about humanity. Just say I'm going to destroy all humans.

Well, it turns out that that language "machiti et kol hayekum" foreshadows Deuteronomy. Genesis is foreshadowing a levirate marriage over here because look at this. You see it again, by the way, over here. When God makes the flood, "vayimach et kol hayekum," he wipes out all that stands with the flood.

Well, look at this language over here. Here's the levirate marriage story. When there are two brothers together and one them dies, it's a mitzvah upon the wife to marry the widow of the deceased. "V'hayah habechor asher teiled," and then the oldest child that's born to them, "yakum al sheim hameit." You see that green over there? "Yakum," will stand, "al sheim hameit," sort of in the shoes of the dead person will continue the legacy, the sheim, of the dead person, "v'lo yimacheh shemo m'Yisrael," and his name will not be erased. So there it is. Yimacheh and yekum -- pink and green -- and that echoes the pink and green over here -- "vayimach et kol hayekom."

So the language of the flood is foreshadowing the language of the levirate marriage story. Why? Why does it make any sense? The answer is because the very first levirate marriage there ever was in the Torah was God to mankind. God sees to it that name, the legacy of humanity will continue. All of humanity may dies, but it's going to continue. It's just going to be this little rescued piece. There's going to be an ark that rescues the legacy, rescues the sheim of humanity. Isn't it fascinating that the oldest child in that ark just happens to be named Sheim, name or legacy? It's about that child being preserved. So I did talk to you about this last time.

So God carries on the legacy of humankind through the ark. Then what happens 10 generations later? Ten generations later, after Sheim, Abraham emerges and what does Abraham do? "Vayikra b'sheim Hashem," over and over again, "vayikra b'sheim Hashem," he calls out in the name of God. What Abraham's doing is reciprocating the favor. It's almost as if the ma'aser, the 10th that humanity gives back to God is Abraham; a child from the 10th generation. A child who is there to bring God's name into the world. If God allowed humanity to survive, in a world that was hostile to it, then once we have a world back again in the 10th generation, a gift, a ma'aser-style gift, a 10th of a style gift -- not 1/10 in the terms of the fraction, but a 10th in terms of the 10th generation -- a piece of the 10th will be given back to God to reciprocate, to do for God what He did for us. To allow God's name to become resident in our world.

Just to, sort of, flush that out a little bit -- and this I don't think I talked to you about last week -- what God did for us really was God allowed us to exist in His world. Here's what I mean by that. If you think about -- maybe I did talk to you about it, we'll see -- if you think about what the flood was, if you think about that image from the flood -- the flood is very dark, it's very chaotic, there's water all over the place. Where else in the Torah do you ever have that image? Very dark, very chaotic, water all over the place? That's actually the second verse of the creation story.

When in the very beginning we hear three things. "Ha'aretz haytah tohu vavohu," it was very chaotic, "v'choshech al p'nei tehom," it was very dark and all there was was water everywhere. It was actually a flood-like state. For whatever reason it is -- well, let's not get into the details now -- God describes the pre-creation universe as like a flood. It's almost like that's the metaphor for something which is not habitable for humans. Now, it was habitable for God. That was God's, sort of, native environment.

Before anything got started God was just, kind of, hanging out in His own place. Whatever that was. A world beyond space and time. That, for humanity, was like a flood.

In other words, the flood is the ultimate in non-habitable human space. If we think about this in scientific terms before the Big Bang there was nothing, nothing, nothing. Like, not even space. No space, no time. Ultimately, no dimensionality. An uninhabitable place. It worked fine for God. It was God's world; it wasn't our world. The world of "tohu vavohu," the world of the flood is a metaphor for God's world. When God destroys the world He brings it back to the flood-like state of "tohu vavohu," of the original state of the world. As if to say I'm bringing the world back to My state where it's no longer habitable for humans. It's perfectly fine for Me.

Now, the funny thing is that the world what the God's create is not perfectly fine for God because God is not a space and time being. So He doesn't really exist in a world of dimensionality, in a world of space and time. Ironically, by making a habitable world for humans He's making the world "uninhabitable" in quotes for Himself. It's an issue for it being beyond space and time to come into a world of space and time. So God, for the most part, says that's fine. I'll just hang out over here in My world and I'll have to do with you. I'll have a relationship with you in your world, but I made this world for you.

So it's almost like when God brought the world back to His own world, He made the world of the flood was uninhabitable for humans so what did God do? He made this little box and put humanity into it.

That was a great gift that He gave us. He allowed us to survive in a place that we should not have survived and our legacy could continue, our sheim could continue.

How did we reciprocate that? When we finally had a fully developed world that was good for us and not so much for God, so Abraham would devote his life to reciprocate. To bringing God's name into a world that was, so to speak, hostile for God's presence because it's a world of space and time. Even if it says well, I'm a human being. I can bring Your name into this world. So he calls out in the name of God. Sort of giving God a footprint in the world. Bringing God, so to speak, into the world. Bringing God's legacy into the world so that God makes a mark on the world too not just in the world of God.

As it says in Psalms, "Hashamayim shamayim laHashem v'ha'aretz natan l'bnei adam," the heavens is for God, but the earth is for us. So in the world for us, Abraham reciprocates by making a place for God in a world that's hostile for Him.

How does that happen? Abraham's nation has a mission. What I want to suggest is that that mission is to fully reciprocate for what it was that God did. God made a home for Noah in God world, the world of "tohu vavohu," allowing a legacy of man to survive. Abraham's nation would have to reciprocate that.

Now, it begins with calling out in the name of God, calling out in the name of God. But ultimately God says that I'm going to make a nation out of you and you're going to come home and when you come home into your world, when you have a place, when I finally give you a place where I don't just give humanity a place by creating a universe for them, but I give you humans, the People of Israel a place in the land and that's your home. The way you will finally reciprocate that to Me is you will make a place for Me in your world and I will inhabit it.

That was the Beit Hamikdash, the Temple. That was the Tabernacle and where does God dwell in the Tabernacle? Well, if you take Leviticus seriously, Leviticus 16, God dwells in a particular place in the Tabernacle. God dwells hovering over the Ark. The Ark, isn't that interesting.

So I want to suggest something crazy to you here right now and it's crazy so if you tell anybody about it I'll just deny it and we'll just erase this webinar, but it's kind of crazy and the crazy thing that I want to suggest to you is that is it possible that the Tabernacle, and in particular the Holy Ark, where the tablets of the law were, the Ark that the movies talk about in Indiana Jones that Ark was the center of the Tabernacle -- is it possible that that Ark is for God, what Noah's Ark was for humans? Might there be a connection between Noah's Ark and God's Ark? Because they're sort of the reverse. Noah's Ark allows humans to exist in God world. The Ark that we build allows God to exist in our world.

Does the text suggest such a symmetry and here's how it might in a couple of ways. Here's one way that symmetry might be suggested. Abraham is the 10th, the 10th generation, the time that humanity reciprocates to God by giving one of its own back to God. So here's this human being whose whole desire is to make a place for God in the world -- to call, to give Him a legacy, to give Him a sheim in the world. But it doesn't happen immediately. Abraham doesn't do it in his generation. So he has a child, Isaac and that child Isaac has a child Jacob and still the nation isn't established. They're not really home.

They're always running away and Jacob's going to run away into exile. He's not really going to be able to establish his nation until Deuteronomy.

So as Jacob's on the run, Jacob makes a promise to God that if you ever bring me home then I will give you one-tenth. In a way, that promise was just, sort of, a continuation of Abraham's mission. The mission to make a place for God in the world. That God's name could be resident in the world. Isn't it fascinating that when Jacob says if You bring me home, I'll give one-tenth back to you and Jacob does come home, after 20 years, but just for a short time and right then there should be that moment that he brings that 10th back to God, but doesn't. Then you say well, when does it, sort of, happen? Then if you say well, if when we build the Temple that's when we really reciprocate this -- when we build a Temple for God, a place for God in the world -- that would be making a home for God in our world the same way that Jacob was brought home; that our nation was brought home.

Well, Jacob, in his generation, in that sliver of the time when he was home, Jacob had a child, Judah. And in that sliver of time that he was home, Judah had a child. A child that died, Er and a levirate marriage was necessary. In the end there was this miraculous act of a levirate marriage where it wasn't a brother of the deceased, but the father-in-law of the deceased that married the widow Tamar. The story of Judah and Tamar and Perez is born. Who is Perez? Perez is the child who could have and should have made the promise of Jacob happen. The promise that God had made to Jacob I will bring you home is that you're going to have a great nation, you're going to be in the land.

Who would have been the person? The kingship comes from Judah, the first child of Judah, the bechor of Judah, the oldest child is going to be Perez. Strange, isn't it that when God says you're going to have the land, you're going to have the land and children the language God uses to Jacob is "u'paratzta yamah vakeidmah tzafonah vanegbah," you will burst forth north, south, east and west and you will become this great nation -- that's the language of Peretz. Almost as if God is saying Perez should have been king.

Perez should have been king except for a devastating act that took place. The sale of Joseph. Which brings everybody down into exile and requires them all to come home once more and Perez is not king. Instead, we have to wait.

How long do we have to wait until the king is from Perez? The Book of Ruth tells us how long. When it gives the genealogy of King David and shows us that King David emerges exactly 10 generations after Perez. David is the 10th generation. Abraham was the 10th generation and David was the 10th generation. Abraham was the generation in which the 10th would be given to God. A little piece of it would be given to God. What does God ask of Abraham? Give me your child and Abraham complies.

What about David? David has a child who is Solomon and what does he do? He builds a House for God. Solomon is the one who in the 10th generation finally reciprocates the gift that God did for the Children of Israel. God brought the Children of Israel home on the national level, just as he brought humanity home on the international level in the story of the flood. When was that finally reciprocated? On the international level it was reciprocated when Abraham devoted his life to calling out in God's name and then on the national level when would it be reciprocated? When God brought Jacob home 10 generations later. When there would be a child. A child by the name of David and he would have to give his child back to God, so to speak. His child Solomon, who devoted his life to nothing, but reciprocating the gift to making God be able to come home in our world. Which is what the Temple is all about. "V'asu li Mikdash v'shachanti b'tocham."

I want to meditate with you a little bit on this idea. Noah's Ark and God's Ark. Are these two arks, sort of, the inverse of each other? It would be fascinating to suggest that that would be so. Here are a couple of things that come to mind. If that's so, whose the only other guy in the entire Torah that seems to go into an ark other than Noah -- into a teivah (ark)? Only one other person who ever experiences that. Do you know who it is? It's Moses. Moses, as a little baby, is also saved from water by an ark. It's the same words. A lifesaving ark, a teivah. Fascinating.

What do you make of that? Moses is in the ark. Noah is in the ark. What's especially wild about that is that later on this imagery of Noah and Moses really comes to afore in the story of the golden calf.

I spoke about this briefly in one of the Aleph Beta videos, I think in Parshat Ki Tisa our first year around. There you can watch the video, but basically God tell Moses "lech reid ki shicheit amcha," go down, your people have corrupted themselves. Now, that word shicheit appears earlier in the flood. The people corrupted themselves and in the flood they were going to be destroyed and now Israel corrupted itself and it was going to be destroyed.

God then says leave me alone and I'll destroy them. The word for leave me alone is "hanichah li v'yichar api bahem," but the shoresh, the root of hanichah li is Noach. Almost as if God was saying be a Noah to me. I'm making the same bargain with you that I once made with Noah; let me destroy everything and I'll start over with just one person. In Noah's case it was him; in your case it's you.

What did Moses say to that bargain? Moses didn't take it. The difference between Moses and Noah is that Moses rejected the bargain that Noah took and so Moses argues with God. "Va'y'chal Moshe et pnei Hashem Elokav," Moses entreats God and argues with Him.

That's strange because that same word va'y'chal actually also appears with Noah, but it doesn't mean to entreat, it means to wait. Whereas, Moses entreated God, used the time that he had to beg God for compassion, Noah waited for it to rain. The opposite of entreating is to just wait; wait for the apocalypse, wait for the doom.

Moses, by share force of will of his entreaties, actually managed to get God to reconsider and the language for reconsider vayinachem Hashem -- there's Noach again in the middle of vayinachem -- God changed his mind "al hara'ah asher diber la'asot l'amo," on the evil that He was going to do to His people, which is an inverse of what happened with the flood because at the flood there was also a vayinachem Hashem.

"Vayinachem Hashem ki asah es ha'adam ba'aretz vayisatzev el libo," God regretted that He had created man, becomes sad and then He destroys him. Back in the flood story God regretted that He created man and changed His mind to destroy him. In the Moses story God regretted to saying that He was going to destroy the people and instead decided to save them.

Moses by force of will ensures that another flood isn't going to happen almost as if to say, I'm not taking your bargain God, I already came out of an ark, I'm not going back in one. But in a certain kind of way he does because even though he is the inverse of Noah in one sense, in which that he fights for the salvation of the people, in a certain way he does go back into the ark again. That little ark that he was in that protected him from the waters of the Nile that would kill him, the water is a metaphor for God's world.

Well, when is he really in God's world? He is the one human being who at Mount Sinai goes up the mountain and when he gets up to the mountain, what's at the top of the mountain? God. Where is God? God's in an unknown. God's in a cloud. A cloud is water vapor. It's almost as if -- it's dark, by the way, "choshech anan va'arafel," it says it was dark and then there were kolot u'brakim so it was a storm. There was like -- there was thunderbolts and lightening. What does that remind you of a storm with water and darkness?

It's those very first words from Genesis again. It's God's world, it's the flood coming down on top of the mountain as if God's world is descending upon the mountain. God is taking the mountain and saying this is my embassy on earth. It might look like it's part of space and time, it might feel like it's part of space and time, but it's not. It's not part of your world; it's part of my world. I, in revelation, am becoming resident here and you are coming into my world so who is the only person who survives? Someone who can live in an ark because that is an ark. An ark is that which allows you to survive in that ultimately hostile environment, the hostile environment of God world.

Moses goes into the cloud and survives and it's strange because as he survives, he doesn't eat for 40 days and for 40 nights, but it's weird because the text doesn't even say that that was a miracle. It just says it offhandedly he didn't eat for 40 days and 40 nights and we can sort of understand why.

Why would that happen and not even be a miracle that you would trumpet? The answer is where did Moses go? He went into God world. What is God world? The world of the void, the world that is metaphorically dark, wet, uninhabitable, but what is it really? It's the world beyond space and time. Well, if you're in the world beyond space and time then there's no time for you, right? Yeah, relative to the people on earth it's 40 days and 40 nights. For you it's an instant. It's just a moment of God time that you're up there on the mountain. No big deal.

The last thing in Ki Tisa that Moses hears on the mountain is two things, all the instructions for building the Tabernacle. What's God saying? What we have up here is going to be down there. You entered My world. We're going to stay connected like this. Everybody is going to stay connected like this. How are we going to reproduce the Sinai experience so that everyone can be there so that there is going to be this connection between God and earth?

So I came down and put a little piece of God world and you were able to enter into this in your little ark, but now we have to do the inverse, we have to create an ark for me to exist in your world. Make an ark, make a Tabernacle. That's what Moses sees on top of the mountain, all the instructions for building the Tabernacle so that we can recreate the Sinai experience so then the God who inhabited a cloud on top of Sinai, would inhabit a cloud on top of the Aron, on top of the Ark and that's exactly how it's described. "Ki be'anan eira'eh al hakapores," I will be in a cloud over the ark cover, over the top of the Ark.

There is one more thing that Moses sees before his vision at Sinai is over at the end of Ki Tisa. After he hears about the instructions for making the Tabernacle, the next thing he sees is Sabbath. "V'shamru bnei Yisrael et haShabat." He sees this command that all of Israelis keep the Sabbath, Sabbath and Tabernacle.

Tabernacle is a place for God in space, the dimension of space in our world and Sabbath, a place for God in the dimension of time. God inhabits the time of Sabbath. He rested on the seventh day. His beingness is there. I'm not making anything anymore, I just am there. I am waiting for you to be there with me.

We can meet in Sabbath and we can meet in the Temple. We can meet in space and we can meet in time. This is how I come into your world.

Moses, the man who was once in an ark when he was a baby, when he's an old man, so to speak, now lives in God's world on top of the mountain almost as if he's encased in another ark. God says we have to be able to replicate this. We have to make an ark for me so that I can live in your world.

I wasn't able to finish with you today, but I want to show you something which I think is absolutely mind-blowing. In this notion that the ark that we make for God is an inverse of the ark which God told Noah to build for himself, there's actually a proof to that, a fascinating textual proof and I want to go through it with you.

There's a chiasm, an Atbash system, a very, very elegant one where if you look carefully, the building of the -- and I kid you not, this is actually true. The building of the ark of Noah -- if you look at those chapters in Genesis, they mirror precisely the building of the ark for God, the Tabernacle in Exodus. The chapters for the building of the ark in Genesis mirror the chapters for the building of the ark in Exodus. Exodus and Genesis mirror each other in an Atbash pattern. Literally one is the inverse of the other. A, B, C, D becomes D, C, B, A.

Fascinating as you might expect for something involving Sabbath. Sabbath is the seven part day of the seventh day. It turn out that the chiasm or the Atbash system has seven levels to it. There are seven parts to the chiasm and the seventh part of the chiasm itself has seven parts.

I know that sounds kind of crazy and you have no idea what I'm talking about, but come back next week and I will try to actually show it to you in the text how these two stories mirror each other. That's our plan next week. God's Ark and Noah's Ark textually. I'm want to show you that they are mirrors.

When I discovered this it was absolutely mind-blowing for me. I want to share it with you. It was very exciting and we'll try to mind the text to understand what it is that it's telling us and also if we can try to understand its implications, not just the evidence for the correspondent, but what the parallels really mean to its deepest meaning.

Come back next week and we'll talk about that. Until then, it's been good hanging out with you.

All right, boys and girls, all you premium Facebook friends, Aleph Beta listeners, how are you? This is Rabbi David Fohrman and this may be our last webinar for this particular topic. We're going to be heading off to a new topic either next week or the week after. We will be in touch with you. I have some exciting things planned coming up which I'm going to do.

I was actually going to do something relating next to sort of the miracle of Jewish history and where it seems to originate in the Bible. We have this notion which is somehow considered adduced to a proof to God in the world that the Jewish people seem to have been the kind of thing that should've been destroyed many times over, but never really gets destroyed. It gets close, but never quite happens.

There's always a phoenix rising from the ashes. Where exactly does that come from? Look at where that emerges from in Biblical text and some of the mysteries surrounding that.

I'm excited to get into some of that with you in our next round, hopefully, of premium webinars, but in the meantime, I wanted to finish taking you on a journey through this last piece of this Jacob's ladder series.

We're talking about a tale of two arks really, a tale of Noah's Ark and God's Ark and whether those two things kind of matched up. I suggested to you that they were sort of in a way inverses of each other. I want to try to show you how that, in fact, is the case as you remember I mapped out a conceptual motto for you last week how they're inverses of each other; how the kind of flood experience of Noah in a way might be an expression of God's world, what the precreation world looks like, that world of "tohu vavohu v'choshech al pnei t'hom v'ru'ach Elokim m'rachefes al pnei hamayim," that world of utter chaos and utter nothingness sort of anthropomorphized as a world that looks like a flood, a world with water all over the place, it's chaotic and dark.

The same way if that's God's world before creation, we exist in God's world only through artificial means, this little box that is made to support our life, could it be that we are meant to reciprocate that kindness, the children of Abraham that God allowed us to continue to survive through that ark -- with an ark for God.

We're just saying that we want God to sort of survive in our world, in the world of space and time because God is not a space and time being. How does God survive in our world? We've got to create that environment for him and to do so we create an ark. That ark is the ark in the Temple for the Tablets.

David Curwin made a point, I think, at our last webinar, on the comment section about how it's not the same word. You have teivah as being used for the ark of Noah and you have aron being used for the ark of God. That's true, but I do think -- it's interesting that in English it's the same word, but you're right that in Hebrew it's not the same word, but it does appear to mean the same concept.

I want to show you how that's so textually through a fascinating series of intertextual parallels in chiastic fashion. I want to show you something which really, really blew my mind and I hope that I can recreate it in as mind-boggling for you as what it felt like for me when I was originally getting into the material so I hope I'm not too rusty in it, but let me take you into this and show you what I'm talking about.

I want to actually take you into the Biblical text that describes the creation of these two arks, the creation of Noah's Ark and our creation of God's Ark. I want to show you how they tantalizingly converge.

When I say tantalizingly converge I really mean, you know, quite literally converge.

By the way, if you want to comment, I am checking out the comments on Facebook live so if you're there on Facebook live and you want to kind of check in -- I see that are at least a couple of you, feel free to comment and kind of be a part of the fun here.

Let me take you into this text. What I'm going to do is I'm going to kind of share my screen with you here. Let me try to do that. Let me show you what I'm talking about. Over here on the right-hand side of the screen you have Genesis that is the story of the making of Noah's Ark. You have it in Hebrew so if you don't read Hebrew that well, I'll translate. On the left-hand side you have Exodus, sort of the making of God's Ark. Let me take you through this.

Let me just tell you in advance what it is you're going to be seeing because it's really pretty wild. We're going to be seeing a chiastic structure which is an Atbash structure, which is there's a series of intertextual parallels between these stories; which means the language in Exodus is going to mirror the language in Genesis. The concepts in Exodus are going to mirror the concepts in Genesis, but there is a very intricate pattern to that mirroring which is really mind-blowing.

It's a chiastic pattern or an Atbash pattern which is a pattern -- we talked about this before in Aleph Beta land that sort of is an A, B, C, D, D, C, B, A pattern where the first element mirrors the last, the second- to-first element mirrors the second-to-last element, third-to-first third-to-last et cetera except this is not a chiasm like every other chiasm. It's not an Atbash like every other Atbash. It has its own fascinating features to it.

How many parts are there in this Atbash thing? Are there three parts, an A, B, C, C, B, A? Are there four parts, an A, B, C, D, D, C, B, A? Five parts, an A, B, C, D, E, E, D, C, B, A? Turns out there are seven parts to this chiasm. It's a seven-part chiasm. Not only is it a seven-part chiasm, the middle part, which is the seventh and final part, the part where these pieces converge because you have one in Exodus and one in Genesis. Then as you get towards the last pieces in Genesis and the first pieces in Exodus, as you get to those parts, what you're going to find is something absolutely mind-blowing. The seventh and final part which is the center itself is composed of seven subparts which mirror each other in order. Rather than in backwards order, in the final seventh part, the seven parts of the seventh part mirror each other in order, which is how you know they’re one part.

If that sounds confusing, it is a little confusing, but let me try to show it to you in the text and make it as least confusing as possible. I have already sort of sketched out the colors for you so let me show you what it is I'm talking about.

Here we have in our nice story in Genesis which is on the right-hand side of the page. I want you to take a look at Verse 13 over here which is in red. Just follow me right over here into Verse 13 which is in red. I'm just going to read it for you. What we're going to do is we're going to look for the red on the other side. That's the game plan. We're going to look for the red on the other side.

Here's the red on the right side. "Vayomer Elokim l'Noach," God says to Noah. "keitz kol basar ba l'fanai," the end of all flesh has come before me, "ki malah ha'aretz chamas mipneihem," because the world is filled with all kinds of cruelty, with all kinds of injustice, mipneihem, because of them, "v'hineni mashcitam et ha'aretz," and therefore I'm going to destroy the world. This is the beginning of this declaration to go build an ark for Noah, an ark in which they will be able to survive the flood.

I want to come with you now into the story of the building of the ark for God, the building of the ark in the Tabernacle and interestingly you're going to find this language. In other words, this language which I have highlighted here "keitz kol basar," the end of living things, you're going to have an echo of that. The same word "chamas mipneihem," of this evil -- mipneihem specifically, the world is filled with evil from before them. You're going to find that kind of language too.

Let me show you what it is that I'm talking about. Let's just kind of scroll down here and as you scroll down at the very end of the left-hand side is going to be our little piece of Exodus, creating the aron, you're going to find this. After you create the aron, after you create the ark -- because remember, it's a chiasm so we're going from the beginning of the story of Noah creating the ark now to the end of the story of our creating of the ark. At the very end of the story of our creating the ark, look what you have.

"V'asei k'ruv echad mikatzah mizeh u'k'ruv echad mikatzah mizeh," you should make kruvim, you should make these heavenly creatures "mikatzah mizeh," from one side, but literally from the end -- from the end of the ark, "u'k'ruv echad mikatzah mizeh," and one kruv -- another kruv from the other end of the ark, "min hakaporet ta'ase et hakruvim," and you should make sure that the kruvim are made out of the gold of the ark itself.

What does that remind you of back with the flood? First of all, we had that word keitz, which is the end of. The kruvim are made of that same word keitz from the ends of the ark, there's fashion these kruvim, these living beings. Now, there were living beings that also had to do with keitz back over here in the flood story. Let me just show it to you again. God says "keitz kol basar," the end of all flesh. So in one case you have the end of all human flesh and in the other case you have Godly beings, Godly flesh so to speak -- these kruvim, these angels being made or emerging out of the ends of the ark.

By the way, fascinatingly, in both cases the Godly or earthly beings are emerging from the environment, almost from the ground, right? The ground of the ark is the golden cover from out of which the kruvim are organically fashioned and that of course is how all animal life and human life emerges from in the description of creation given in Genesis Chapter 2. "Totzei ha'aretz nefesh chayah l'minah," let the earth give forth to all these living things. "Vayitzer Hashem Elokim et ha'adam afar min ha'adamah," God creates man dust from the earth.

Just as the man -- the type of man and the type of animals that are going to perish in the flood develop out of the ground, so too these angels develop out of another kind of ground. Not the crusty hard cold earth, but the smooth refined gold of the layer of the ark.

You have that language of "keitz kol basar" mirroring the katzah from which the kruvim emerge and the same language of "ki malah ha'aretz chamas mipneihem," that the world was filled with all of this evil mipneihem, from them is going to show up right over here on the left-hand side. "V'hayu hakruvim porsei ch'nafayim l'malah sochachim b'chanfeihem al hakaporet u'pneihem ish el achiv," the faces of one will be towards the other.

That's kind of interesting because if you think about chamas which is evil or robbery, right, robbery is another kind of evil in which one person faces the other. One person faces the other and does harm to them. Here you're going to have these two kruvim, these two angelic things that are going to look like innocent children that their faces are towards each other, but instead of doing violence towards each other which is what chamas is, violence acted out towards two people facing each other. They lovingly face each other and they're actually protecting one another with their kanfeihem, with their wings.

So instead of protective -- sort of a remedy to the flood -- during the times of the flood there were people that were facing each other in violence, here they're heavenly beings whose wings are facing each other in connection and in love.

That is element one. We'll call element one the red element. Let's go back to the beginning of Genesis and I'll sketch out to you our second element which is our green element, Element Number 2.

“Asei lecha teivat atzei gofer," God says to Noah make yourself a box -- a box out of acacia wood, "kinim ta'aseh et hateivah v'chafarta otah mibayit umichutz bakofer," and you should cover it with pitch in order to make it waterproof. Look for that green element v'chafarta, you should cover it. Over here that's after the red, but in a chiastic pattern you're going to expect to find that before the red. Going down over here lo and behold there it is before the red that same language Kaf, Pei, Reish, Taf and it's going to mean covering again, but this time it's a covering in the ark. Just look what it says "asitah kaporet," the covering over the ark is called a kaporet literally, taken from the same language of the original ark of Noah that chafarta, you would cover over with pitch. Over here you make a covering out of not pitch, but gold. Notice again how they're inverses.

We had angelic beings and earthly beings. Earthly beings wiped out, angelic beings surviving and thriving. We have a chafarta, we have a covering in the original covering of the ark with this dirty, sticky, black stuff and over here you have the covering of "chaporet zahav tahor," of beautiful, beautiful gold, pure stuff.

Look over here, we're just going to go back to our right-hand side over here, notice that "v'chafarta otah," what do you do? You cover it with pitch, but "mibayit umichutz bakofer," you cover it with pitch "mibayit umichutz," which is inside and outside and lo and behold let's look over here for the yellow, there it is. "V'tzipita oto zahav tahor mibayit umichutz titzapenu," we're covering it not with kofer, not with pitch, but with -- "mibayit umichutz," inside and outside with gold.

By the way, I believe these are the only "mibayit u'michutz" in Chumash so this is -- we're talking about unique word connections over here. The only other "mibayit umichutz" is the third element in each chiasm. It's pretty mind-blowing. "Mibayit umichutz" again means from the inside and the outside.

Noah's Ark was covered from the inside and the outside with black, sticky pitch. God's Ark was covered in the inside and the outside with fine, non-sticky gold. Notice how they're inverses of one another.

Now, if you think about the reason for that or the meaning of that, it goes back really to something we talked about last week a little bit which is that the point of each one of these boxes is to allow a being to exist in a world that is not native for it. If human beings want to exist in the world of tohu vavohu, in the primordial world of creation, in the world of the flood, in the world where everything is chaotic when there's water all over the place and it's dark, that's not a world that is fit for human habitation so they need a spacesuit. Their spacesuit, so to speak, is the ark.

An ark is made to do what? To keep out the toxic outside. What is the toxic outside for man? The toxic outside for man or the unwanted outside for man is God's world because that's not man's environment so the water, emblematic of God's world, needs to be kept out. What do you do? You get black, sticky stuff to keep out the water and you put it in the inside and the outside of Noah's Ark.

Well, for God, what is God keeping out? God is keeping out man's world, right? God's native environment isn't man's world. That he made for us. He doesn't want to live in man's world. Here is this little box inside the ark, that's where God is going to reside. Well, if you think about God residing in that little box, what does he need to do? He needs to keep out man's world. What's the first element of man's world he has to keep out? What's the first thing God did when he created man's world? He created light, vayehi or.

Light is the first emblematic element of God's world. The closest thing that you can get to to God's world in man's world is light. The light is the thing that needs to be kept out. How do you keep light out? You need something reflective. Rather than black, sticky stuff which would absorb light, you need something reflective of light which is going to be the gold, the gold smooth stuff inside and outside which will reflect the outside unwanted environment in this case of man's world.

So far we have the red element, we have the green element, we have the yellow element and that is going to bring us to the blue element, a triplicate element which is length, depth and width; dimensions

-- the dimensions of the original ark of Noah.

"Vzeh asher ta'aseh osah," this is how you should make it. "Sh'losh meiot amah orech hateivah," 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high. The only other thing I think in the entire Torah that gets measured with length, depth and width, I believe, maybe I'm wrong, is the ark of God, the fourth element in blue "v'asu aron atzei shitim amatayim vacheitzi arko v'amah vacheitzi rachbo v'amah vacheitzi komatoi," you should make an ark out of cedar wood two-and-a-half cubits long, a cubit and- a-half wide and a cubit and-a-half high. It's element number four in blue.

That brings us to element number five in pink. Element number five in pink in the book of Genesis, in the creation of the original ark for Noah is going to be something by which you can see. Something by which you can see internally inside the ark. "Tzohar ta'aseh lateivah," make a window for the ark such that light can filter in and you can see. What would be the inverse of a window through which light can filter in, something that would allow for internal vision? It would be something for external vision that you'll be able to see outside.

Look we have in the pink element, Verse 9. "K'chol asher ani mareh otcha," God says according to everything that I show you, Moses, "et tavnit hamishkan," the way I show this should be built that's what you should do. God is showing from the outside the way it should look like to Moses in a theoretical diagram and in the actual ark you want something by which Noah will be able to see on the inside and that is the window of the ark. That is the fifth element of the chiasm, the fifth element of the Atbash structure.

That's going to bring us to the sixth element. The sixth element is "V'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'tocham," on the Exodus side which is a place in which God can safely reside. "V'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'tocham," make for me a place that will be separate for me in which I will be able to dwell within you.

Well, what's the opposite of a place in which you can safely reside? The inverse of a place you can safely reside is the blue element over here, a place where mankind cannot safely reside, "hineni meivi et hamabul mayim al ha'aretz," I will bring a flood, I will bring precreation back, God's world back and it will have the effect of "l'shacheit kol basar," to destroy all flesh, "asher bo ruach chaim mitachat hashamayim kol asher ba'aretz yigva," everything in the land will be destroyed. The inverse of a place where a man can't live is, again, this little box in which God can live. That is the light-blue element. "V'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'tocham," and I will be able to dwell among you.

We've done six elements. We're up to the seventh and final element. The seventh and final element is going to have seven parts which proceed in order in terms of their intertextual parallels.

Part number one in the seventh and final part -- seventh part, part one "Vahakimoti et briti itach," the mention of a brit God says to Noah. I'm now in Verse 18 of Genesis Chapter 6. "Vahakimoti et briti itach," I shall establish my covenant with you. God says to Noah and you will come into the ark, you and your children and your wives because I'm going to establish my covenant with you and everything is going to be fine.

Well, let's look for the corresponding purple over here in Verse 18 in Genesis. This is in the revelation story in Exodus Chapter 24 if I'm not mistaken Verse 8. "Vayikach Moshe et hadam," and Moses -- this is one big seventh part which is -- this is going to be the earliest parts of the ark creation story, but you're going to see it's going to happen in seven parts. Again, I mention a brit. "Hinei dam habrit," there is going to be the blood of a brit, "asher karat Hashem imachem al kol hadvarim ha'eila," that God makes with you upon all of these things.

So there is the blood of a covenant, of a brit that God makes that you're going to keep the Torah. That is right over here. "Vayikach sefer habrit vayikra b'oznei ha'am vayomru kol asher diber Hashem na'aseh v'nishmah." "V'yikach Moshe et hadam vayizrok al ha'am vayomer hinei dam habrit asher karat Hashem imuchem al kol hadvarim ha'eilah." This is a covenant sealed in blood which is evoked from here "Vahakimoti et briti itach," I will establish my covenant with you.

Let's move on. That is element number one. Element number two, this purple text right over here in Verse 20 on the right-hand side of the page. In the flood story "Meiha'oif l'mineihu umin hab'heimah l'minah mikol remes ha'adamah l'mineihu," from all these different kinds of animals, "mikol yavo'u eilecha l'hachayot," from all they will be able to come with you into the ark and live. The idea of life coming to the world -- and again, each one of these elements can either be the same or they can be opposites. Here is a same element. "Mikol yavo'u eilecha l'hachayot," everything is going to come into the ark with you and be able to live.

What does that correspond? Well, when there was a covenant over keeping of the Torah, what happened is there was a moment of revelation there. "Vayiru et Elokei Yisrael," they literally saw God and they should've had some sort of visual experience of the Almighty, whatever that might mean, some sort of vision and you would imagine that could be the kind of thing that could kill you, but nevertheless "v'el atzilei bnei yisrael lo shalach yado," but those special ones of Israel were not killed through that "vayechezu et ha'Elokim," see God and not die.

Similar, over here there's an event that should cause everyone to die, the living within God's world. Seeing something you shouldn't see, being part of something you shouldn't be a part of, God's world, the flood, the darkness and nevertheless "mikol yavo'u eilecha l'hachayot," you will be able to come in and you will be able to live.

It strikes me also that there's probably a parallel right over here too with what it looks like. What it looks like, fascinating, is the vision of God looked like "uch'etzem hashamayim latohar," the footstool beneath God's throne looked like the very heavens themselves in all of their purity, like a sky-blue sky with nary a cloud to be seen and of course as they were going into the flood "mikol yavo'u eilecha l'hachayot" as the people were going into the flood, what would they have not seen? A sky that was sky-blue. They would have seen the very opposite, a sky that was covered over in clouds.

Let's move on, element number three, the dark purple highlight of the chiasm on the right-hand side. "Va'atah kach lecha mikol ma'achal asher yei'achel," Noah, make sure to take food with you into the ark. That parallel is over here in Verse 11 that when these special ones of Israel did not die, what do they do? "Vayochlu vayishtu," they ate and they drank provisions just like the provisions of Noah, just like the food.

Next element, I think we're up to element number four. Element number four is this bright purple over here in Verse 4. Noah says "ki l'yamim od shivah anochi mamtir al ha'aretz," seven more days I'm going to bring all of this water -- I'm going to bring all of this rain.

What happened after another wait of seven days? We hear about Moses. God had literally a cloud. A cloud was covering the mountain "vayechas he'anan et hahar." "Vayishkon kevod Hashem al har Sinai," that cloud was there and it didn't rain for six days and he called Moses on the seventh day from inside the cloud. In both places, the clouds, but no rain. God is saying that in seven more days there's going to be rain and then over here on the seventh day something happens that changes, God calls out to Moses.

Our next element of the chiasm is another purple element over here. Let's see its parallel a little bit below. "B'etzem hayom hazeh," on this very day "ba Noach v'Shem v'Chom v'Yefet bnei Noach v'eishet Noach ushloshet n'shei banav itam el hateivah," on this very day here are all of these people that were going to be saved and came into the ark.

Here too, God's presence is on the mountain, it could kill everyone, but someone is going to get saved, someone who once lived in an ark. That was Moses. He was born out of an ark and now he's coming into another lifesaving place, a place where the presence of God will not kill him, that there's somehow safety to be found in this cloud. "Vayavo Moshe b'toch ha'anan vaya'al el hahar," Moses goes into this cloud and goes up into the mountain. Here comes Noah going into an ark that will eventually come to rest on a mountain where they will be able to get out.

Next element as we go further down in Genesis is the 40 days of rain. "Vayehi hamabul arba'im yom al ha'aretz," 40 days of rain. Forty days where something happens where you shouldn't be able to live. The 40 days of rain.

What's the 40 days where something happens where you shouldn't be able to live? "Vayehi Moshe bahar," Moses was in God land where you shouldn't be able to live, a world without space and time, a world where there's no food, where he didn't sleep or eat food for 40 days.

It's not just 40 days in one case, 40 days in the other. Isn't it in the exactly same place? The sixth part of the seventh element -- the sixth subpart of the seventh element of the chiasm. Mind-blowing. It's, like, in exactly the right spot.

Finally, you get to the seventh and last part of the chiasm. The closest that these two stories will get to each other and it is the idea of terumah, fascinating. Here is the final element of the chiasm. "Vayehi hamabul arba'im yom al ha'aretz," the flood was for 40 days on the land and "vayirbu hamayim," and there was lots and lots of water, "vayisu et hateivah," but the ark began to be carried "vataram mei'al ha'aretz," it was carried from upon the land.

Turns out that that word taram is going to appear right over here after the 40 days that Moses is on the mountain in Exodus also, just like taram appears after the 40 days in Genesis. "Vayedaber Hashem el Moshe leimor," God said to Moses, "daber el Bnei Yisrael," tell the people of Israel, "v'yikchu li terumah," and take for me terumah. Now, what does terumah mean? Terumah means money, a kind of tithe. Why is it called terumah, literally a lift-upping? You lift up stuff and you give it to God. Out of that, you're going to make the Tabernacle; out of that you're going to make the ark.

The parallel would seem to suggest almost that what the rain is doing for the ark, the terumah is doing for the Tabernacle that is going to be built. The rain comes from God to people. The terumah comes from people to God. Again, this is sort of the final piece of the puzzle.

What are we doing? We're reciprocating what God did to us. God allowed us to live in a world that we, by rights, shouldn't be able to live in, Noah's world through a life-saving ark. We are going to make a house for God. We are going to recognize that we came out of the ark alive, that God made a house for us not just in the ark, but then recreated a world for us so we are going to siphon off a part of our world. Just like God allowed us to exist in his world, in a world of tohu vavohu, in a world encompassed with water through Noah's Ark, we are going to allow God to exist in our world, a world that's not native to Him through this ark that we're going to lovingly build for Him.

When our world was being destroyed, when our world was no longer a place for us, God saw to it that the ark would come off of our world, would be lifted up off of our world, because if it remained part of our world then it would be flooded, it would destroyed and we would all die. We somehow had to float on the surface of that world so we floated on the surface of that water.

The same thing has to happen for God. It has to be somehow that the ark can't be part of our world. The ark too has to lift itself off of our world and it does so by means of terumah. People, so to speak, lift it off of the world by what they give from their full hearts to create the ark. It's a way of lifting the ark off of the world so it's no longer part of the world. We give something of ourselves. When we give it to God, we say here, let this lift the ark off of the world so it's no longer a part of human world. Instead, it exists natively and float on the surface of our world.

With this it's kind of interesting that the Sages say something fascinating about the ark, the Holy Ark, the ark of the covenant that aron nosei et nosav. Even though the ark was carried -- same language by the way as the carrying -- how the rain carried the ark of Noah. You see right over here this language "Vayisu et hateivah" so too the Sages say "ha'aron nosei et nosav," the ark, the Holy Ark would carry those who carry it. It would seem like we were carrying the ark, but the ark would really be the one carrying us.

God doesn't need our money to create the ark, but we take that as a way of kind of lifting God's Ark out of our world and then God sort of magically allows His ark to survive as not part of this world. In the end, we have reciprocated. We have created for God that which He's done in creating something for us.

In the end it's all part of I think the dream of Jacob's ladder. In Jacob's dream, Jacob saw something which could be his nation; a ladder that connected heaven and earth. It would be his destiny to connect heaven and earth. It's all about connecting heaven and earth. Connecting heaven and earth can destroy. When the waters of heaven come down to earth and make it a place that you can't be alive anymore, but there's a good way of connecting heaven and earth too. A good way of connecting heaven and earth -- if you can be a connecter of heaven and earth, you can allow God to come down into the world and Him to have a name in the world in a way that doesn't destroy humanity.

That's the job of Abraham's nation. That's the job that we have in making the Temple, a place where we can safely encounter God in the world. We can successfully create a bridge between heaven and earth.

That was the dream of the ladder. That was the vision of the ladder. There's a corruption of the ladder. The corruption of the ladder is the tower or a way that you can bridge heaven and earth which isn’t about bringing God into the world safely, but it's about causing us to invade an area where we shouldn't be, in God's world. That's what the tower is all about. This is sort of a narcissistic effort to make our impact in heaven.

God says look, it's not about that, it's about me. What did I do? When I connected heaven and earth destructively -- the flood, I made sure that there was a way that you could survive; that you could survive in my world. Because of that, it was up to you to give tithe -- it was up to you give a tenth and so in the tenth generation there was an Abraham. In the tenth generation there was a new nation, a nation that would eventually have as its mission the ladder of Jacob. When Jacob's nation was complete, when a man whose children would become that nation had a dream, that's what he saw. He saw a ladder that could be him and it was up to him.

Ten generations after him, we encounter the kings of David's household, the beginning of kingship coming to Israel and the beginning of the quest to actually build the Tabernacle, to build the ark that we'd reciprocate Noah's Ark that God made for us allowing us to survive in a moment when heaven and earth are connected. God allowed us to survive in that environment; we want God to survive in an environment where heaven and earth connect also. We want that connection to come through a house that we create for God and that is our destiny as a people.

That's what I want to say about Jacob's ladder. I want to thank you very much for hanging out with me and talking with me about this and I look forward to seeing your comments on the Facebook live and keep with us as we kind of venture to other webinars kind of like this. I look forward to talking to you again soon. Thanks.

By the way, John, is there a resource that lists all the chiasm in the Torah? Well, there isn't one that I found so I am not sure if there is a resource that lists this. There is actually a secular book which you can get out there called Chiasmus in Antiquity. You can probably order it on Amazon. The editor is John Welch and they have an article in there written by Yehudah Radday (ph) who was a professor at Bar Ilan University with all the chiasms that he can find or at least many of the chiasms that he could find throughout Tanach. Evidently, chiastic structure was an element of the way the ancient world put together text. The way the Bible uses chiasms is very elegant, very complex as you can see and that article sort of dwarfs what was used in contemporaneous society, but that's another schmooze. You can check it out. Chiasmus in Antiquity.

Okay, folks, happy trails. I'm just going to close out the webinar. Again, I look forward to seeing you guys next time.

Hi everybody, this is Rabbi David Fohrman coming to you on Facebook Live from Aleph Beta Central over here in Hewlett, New York. I wanted to share with you some thoughts that I have been working on over the weekend. I actually saw this about a week ago or so and I have been playing with some of the ideas and I really think it's quite fascinating. So let me just give you a taste of that. I actually brought you into this discussion a little bit on Friday with a little tease. So I'll review the whole tease with you and see if we can develop it.

I mentioned to you that -- I think I mentioned to you that if you look at the story of Jacob's dream, the famous dream with the ladder and one of the questions really is what was the meaning of that dream?

Why is it that Jacob saw that ladder with the angels coming up and down?

I happen to notice something interesting about it. I just want to point out to you. I'm going to point out to you a fascinating textual pattern and suggest some possibilities of what it might mean. The pattern involves an understanding of Jacob's dream, of Yaakov's dream and the pattern began with this little piece over here.

If you look at the very end of Jacob's dream -- I'm actually going to share my screen with you so you can see what it is that I am doing here. What I have over here is two texts that I want to compare. A text in Deuteronomy from actually this past week's parshah and the text of Jacob's dream and I have this just in Hebrew, but I'll sort of translate as I go along here.

Anyway, what I pointed out to you is that if you look here at the very end of Jacob's dream -- I'm just going to highlight this, this very last language. Jacob says "v'chol asher titen li aser a'asrenu lach". The idea here is that Jacob says that at the very end of this promise that God gives him because God promised him some very nice things; I'm always going to be with you, I'll take care of you and everything is going to be wonderful. So Jacob says that if that in fact happens, I'm going to establish this stone as a matzeivah, as a monument and then it's going to be the House of God, "yihiye beit Elokim," the House of God, "v'chol asher titen li aser a'asrenu lach," everything that you give me I will tithe to you, I will give you one-tenth of it.

What got me thinking is that there's another time that you have that sort of phraseology used in the Bible and it's right in Deuteronomy -- in Deuteronomy 14, in Devarim Yud-Daled and I'm going to highlight it right over here. It's in the laws of tithing. Aser ta'aser, the laws of tithing, that you should surely give a tenth. You should give a tenth of what you have back to God.

It struck me, you know, is that connection coincidental or not. What you see about this connection is -- by the way, it's not just the language of tithing, but it's that particular way of doubling that language.

Remember the way that Jacob puts it is "v'chol asher titen li," everything that you give me, "aser a'asrenu lach," I will surely give you a tenth of it, where aser a'asrenu, you see that double kind of language and over here too aser t'aser, you have that same double kind of language in Deuteronomy 14 that begins these laws of tithing.

My question was, are these connected? I think the challenge I left you, if you have a chance to take a look at it, was do the connections between these two parshiot proliferate or not? Is this the only connection between these stories or are there more? I want to suggest that there are more.

I'm actually going to give you a little analogy here. The little analogy here is almost like the way you see stuff like this. It is almost like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. When you put together a jigsaw puzzle, you know, 500 pieces and you put together the whole puzzle and what if someone came to you and said wow, you're such a genius, you figured out where all 500 pieces of those go. You'd say I wasn't a genius, but there's a methodology behind it. The methodology basically is that if you get done turning over all the pieces; you start with the corner pieces because you know where the corner pieces go. The corner pieces help to find the frame and then you sort of build out from the edges once you see that and once you see that, you can build out towards the middle.

That's the same thing over here. Once you see something like this, that sort of suspiciously looks like a corner piece. It's like the Torah is shouting at you aser t'aser, it's supposed to remind you of "v'chol asher titen li aser a'asrenu lach," everything you give me, I will give you a tenth of.

Now, you might be right about that or it might just be coincidental. It's possible that the Torah just coincidentally uses the same language. How do you know if it's coincidence or not? The way you know if it's coincidence or not is whether you see more. Again, to borrow an analogy from the laws -- from sort of archeology. You're brushing stuff off in your archeological dig and you find a fossil and it looks suspiciously like a dinosaur bone, it looks like a rib, but you don't know whether it's a rib or maybe it's just a rock that just happens to look like a rib. How do you know whether it's really a fossil of a dinosaur rib or not? If you keep on looking around you're going to find the rest of the rib cage and if you do, then it's probably a rib.

Here too, if you keep on looking around in this parshah, as you read the story of Deuteronomy will you continue to hear echoes of Jacob and the dream story. If so, you know that it's probably real. If not then you know maybe it's just a coincidence.

That was the challenge I left you with, are there further echoes and if there are, they might help us understand perhaps the story of the dream and the story of Deuteronomy. In other words, because whenever you have two texts that are kind of intertextually connected in that way, typically both texts will comment upon each other. You'll begin to understand each text better by virtue of what the other text tends to say about it.

Let's take a look -- let's quickly kind of remind ourselves of the basic idea behind the Deuteronomy. The Deuteronomy episode is a little bit less famous than the Jacob's dream episode, so let me just kind of summarize some of what it says to you. What it says is "aser t'aser et kol t'vuas zarecha hayotzei hasadeh shanah shanah," every year you should tithe what it is that God gives you in your fields. "V'achalta lifnei Hashem Elokecha bamakom asher yivchar," and you should eat that which Hashem gives you in the place that God has chosen. Here what we have is one of the kinds of tithing.

For those of you who are familiar with the laws of tithes, the way the halachah eventually expresses -- the way the Jewish law eventually expresses these laws is that there are three basic kinds of tithing, three basic kinds of tithes and on any given year of the seven-year shmittah cycle, you give, you know, two of these tithes. It just depends which, which year.

One of them is called the first tithe, the second is called the second tithe and the third is called the tithe of the poor. Ma'aser rishon, the first tithe, goes to the Levi, the Levite. The second tithe is eaten by the owner in Jerusalem. The owner actually takes this tithe and takes it with him from wherever he lives and eats it in Jerusalem. Then the tithe of the poor, the third kind of tithe is actually given to poor people.

One of the general questions I sort of have for you, that I think these connections sort of illuminate, is what is it that sort of binds together all the various different laws of tithes because why is that I even call all these three different things tithes when they're so different? I mean, maybe the first tithe, giving to the Levite, has something to do with giving to the poor person, you know, the Levite doesn't have any land in Israel so he's kind of poor, but what does it have to do with the second tithe, which is, you know, eating your own food in Jerusalem? Why is there even such an idea? What's the rationale behind the second tithe? If it's to come to the Temple, I mean, you know, there are pilgrimage festivals that you can come to the Temple for. Why is it a special law that you're supposed to take a tenth of your stuff and you're supposed to eat it in Jerusalem in the Temple precinct? It just seems like a strange kind of thing to do.

I think we're actually going to get a picture of that here from these comparisons. Because it's interesting as you begin, by the way, to read this chapter on tithing over here in Deuteronomy, if you asked which one of these three tithes does the Torah sort of give pride of place to; it's actually surprising, right?

Because if I would ask you, you know, if you're God and making your own religion, you 're going to have three different kinds of ma'aser, three different kinds of tithing, which one do you think is the most primary? The first tithe, the second tithe or the tithe of the poor? The tithe that you give to the Levites, the tithe that you eat yourself in Jerusalem or the tithe that you give to the poor? I would say the tithe that you give to the poor followed by the tithe that you give to the Levite and then last place is the tithe that you yourself eat in Jerusalem.

Actually if you look at these laws in Deuteronomy Chapter 14, it's exactly the reverse. The main bulk of these laws are all about the tithe that you yourself eat in Jerusalem. You can see it right over here. Look at what it is we're talking about. When you take your tithe, you know, the main focus here in Pasuk Chaf-Gimmel, in Verse 23, is "V'achalta lifnei Hashem Elokecha bamakom asher yivchar," you should eat it. What are we talking about? We're talking about the second tithe. We're talking about this tithe that you yourself eat in Jerusalem. Eat it before God in the place that He will choose, "l'shakein shemo sham," to invest His name there.

Interesting that why is that the way that we talk about the Temple specifically with reference to tithes, the place that God will invest His name? Anyway, "ma'aser d'gancha tiroshcha v'yitzharecha," all these different things that the God gives you whether it's your crops or whether it's u'v'chorot b'karcha, whether it's your cattle and here is why you do that. Why is there this law of the second tithe, of coming to Jerusalem to eat these tithes?

The Torah is not shy. I don't know if the Torah tells you but if you think about the reason the Torah tells you, it's just astounding. It just actually doesn't seem to make any sense. Here is why you do this. Here is why you bring all these tithes to Jerusalem. "L'ma'an tilmad," In order to learn, "l'yirah et Hashem Elokecha kol hayamim," to fear God, to be in awe in God all of the days of your life. That's the strangest thing in the world. How is it that the act of taking tithes from the Galilee down to Jerusalem and eating it in Jerusalem is going to teach me to fear God, to be in awe of God all the days of your life? I mean it's just astounding that we would even say that it's true. I mean it's sort of the least likely commandment in the Torah to be designed to cultivate a sense of awe in people. So where is that even coming from?

Then we get this long sort of digression which seems very technical. "V'chi yirbeh mimcha haderech," and if the way is too long, like if you live in the Galilee and you know, it's a real burden to take 10 percent of your crops and haul them all the way down to Jerusalem. What do you do if it's a long way? "Ki lo tuchal s'eito," it's very hard for you to carry everything, "ki yirchak mimcha hamakom asher yivchar Hashem Elokecha lasim shemo sham," because it's far away this place that God makes for you to come to eat this tithe. "Ki yivarechicha Hashem Elokecha," because God has blessed you, He has given you a lot of food, He spread you out so you're far away, so what do you do then?

Then you transfer it to money. "V'natata bakasef v'tzarta hakesef b'yadcha v'halachta el hamakom asher yivchar Hashem Elokecha bo," you take your 10 percent and you sell it. You sell it for $13,000. You bring your $13,000 now with you to Jerusalem and that's where you buy a big feast and you enjoy your feast -- a very big feast for $13,000, right? If you're a small town farmer, your tithe is $50, right.

Anyway, "V'natata hakesef bechol asher t'aveh nafshecha," once you get to Jerusalem then you can buy whatever you want with the money, "babakar, u'batzon, u'bayayin, u'vasheichar," you can buy wine, you can buy cattle, you buy whatever you like. "U'vchol asher tishalcha nafshecha," whatever it is that you choose, "v'achalta sham," there you should eat before God, "lifnei Hashem Elokecha v'samachta atah u'veisecha," there you're going to be happy, you and your household. That is the second tithe.

Now you have an allusion to the first tithe, to the law of giving tithe to the Levite because look what we have left. Next, "V'halevi asher bisharecha," and the Levite in your gates, "lo ta'azvenu," don't forget about him, do not leave them behind, "ki ein lo chelek v'nachalah imach," because he doesn't have any part with you, he doesn't have any land. So presumably the p'shat, the simple meaning is, when you make your big feast, invite the Levite to join with you.

Now, the Jewish law exegesis, the way we -- the Jewish law exegesis of this verse is as a separate tithe. Not just should you eat this tithe, this tenth for yourself, but you should also take a tenth and give it to the Levite, okay?

Then finally now we're going to get an allusion to the tithe of the poor, to giving to the poor as well.

"Miktzei shalosh shanim totzi et kol ma'aser t'vuascha bashanah hahi," if you set aside tithes year after year, but you haven't gotten the chance to take it down to Jerusalem, you have three years of tithes all stored up, "v'hinachta bisharecha," and you keep it in your gates. "Uba halevi ki ein lo chelek v'nachalah imach v'hager v'hayatom v'halmanah," you should allow the Levite and you should allow the less fortunate of society, the stranger, the orphan, the widow, "asher bisharecha," in your gates --

A lot of mention, in your gates. The Levite is in your gates and you should put the tithe in your gates and these widows and stuff and orphans are in your gates; strange why we always describe these people being in your gates. But anyway, "v'achlu v'saveiu," they should eat and they should be satisfied, "l'ma'an yivarechicha Hashem Elokecha," so that they should eat and they should be filled, "l'ma'an yivarechicha Hashem Elokecha," so that God should bless you, "b'chol ma'aseh yadecha asher ta'aseh," in all of the things that it is that you do. Here we have an allusion to the tithe of the poor, to giving to the poor as well, which again, in Jewish law exegesis, is a third type of a tithe, the tithe that you give to the poor.

This is Deuteronomy Chapter 14, the laws of giving tithes. Again, about some strange stuff, why is it that the gates are always mentioned and even more than anything, why is there one idea of tithe that covers all these three different kind of tithes? Why even is there this idea, this rationale, to come to Jerusalem and eat your food? Why does it remind you to fear God? It's all very, very strange.

I believe that to illuminate this again, we can go back to the Jacob's ladder story. I believe it's connected and you see already in the beginning possibly what these connections are like. What's interesting is that isn't it interesting -- isn't it interesting that it's the very end of the story of Jacob's ladder where you have Jacob saying "v'chol asher titen li aser a'asrenu lach," that everything that you God give me, I will give you a tenth and it's the very beginning of the Deuteronomy there of aser t'aser where you have that notion of giving a tenth; the beginning and the end.

It's interesting that the end of the Jacob ladder story mirrors the beginning of the Deuteronomy story. Is there some sort of reverse correspondence here and I think that in fact there is. It's actually a chiastic structure, an A"t-Ba"sh structure. Remember, an A"t-Ba"sh structure is when you get sort of a reverse correspondence.

Remember for those of you who watched Aleph Beta for a while, the chiastic structure is A, B, C, D, E, D, C, B, A, right? There's a reverse order, right? As you're going in it's like this and as you're coming out it's like that and there may be the beginnings of a chiasm here. Let's kind of see if this is true, let's sort of fill it out.

Let's sort of read through -- let's see, how should we do it? I guess what we can do is we can start from

-- I guess we know the story of Jacob's ladder backwards as -- it's a little strange, but the story of Jacob's ladder if you remember is -- just so we remember, Jacob leaves Beersheba, he comes to Haran, he finds this place, the sun goes down, he takes these stones, he places them under his head and then has this dream -- this dream with this ladder and there are angels going up and down and in that dream God comes to him and tells him something.

God says that -- we'll just pick up here from Verse 13, "ani Hashem Elokei Avraham avicha," I am the God of Abraham your father, the God of Isaac. The land that you're sleeping on I will give it to you and your children. Your children are going to be like afar ha'aretz, they're going to be like the dust of the earth, you can spread out in all the different directions ,north, south, east and west and through you blessing is going to come to all of the earth. "V'hinei anoichi imach ushmarticha bechol asher telech," I'll always be with you and I'll eventually bring you back to this place. "Lo e'ezavcha," I will not forsake you and will not leave you behind, "ad asher im asiti et asher dibarti lach," until I have done everything that it is that I have promised you.

Then what happens is Jacob wakes up. "Vayiketz Yaakov mishnato," he wakes up from his dream and says, "achein yesh Hashem bamakom hazeh v'anochi lo yadati," God is here in this place and I didn't even know. "Vayira," he's awed, he says "mah nora hamakom hazeh." Again, you can already see some of these elements that we saw from the tithes reappearing in the story over here. What's fascinating is the way they reappear. It's an exact chiastic pattern. It's really quite remarkable.

He's in awe; he puts this matzeivah there with the stones. He puts this monument there at the bottom where he sees the ladder. He calls the name of the place Beit El and he makes a promise. In his promise he says if God will stay with me, "im yihiyeh Elokim imadi ushmarani baderech hazeh asher anochi holech," if God will watch over me in this path that I am, "v'natan li lechem le'echol ubeged lilbosh," and He'll give me bread to eat and He'll give me clothes to wear. "V'shavti b'shalom el bets avi," and he returns me in peace to my father's house, then "v'hayah Hashem li leilokim," and God will in fact be a God for me, "V'ha'even hazot asher samti matzeivah yihiyeh bets Elokim," then this stone will be the beginning, the foundation, what will eventually be this House of God that sort of I will build for him, "v'chol asher titen li aser a'asrenu lach," and whatever you give me I will give you a tenth of. This is Jacob's promise.

If we just sort of go through this backwards, we're going to see a fascinating thing. Take a look at this over here. "V'natan li lechem le'echol," right? So Jacob says God, if you give me -- remember he's on his way out, he's on his way out to exile and he's worried about just the basics. This poor guy, he has nothing, he needs food. So he says to God, "v'natan li lechem le'echol ubeged lilbosh," right? He wants just, you know, food to be able to eat so God if you will give me bread to eat -- what does that remind you, sort of element number two in aser t'aser.

If you kind of read through this -- let's just look at this right over here. "V'achaltah lifnei Hashem Elokecha," right? There is this notion in eating, that's what you do. You eat this tithe, this is this notion of the second tithe, that you should tithe and then "v'achalta lifnei Hashem Elokecha," you should eat before God. So we have eating as sort of the second-to-last element perhaps in the Jacob story and eating as the second-to-first element in the aser t'aser story.

Now, I just want to sort of outline the pattern and then we can talk briefly a little bit about what it might mean, but I'll kind of leave that to you also to sort of wonder about.

Let's go a little bit farther and see what we can find. If we go a little bit farther we have this notion of this place that Jacob says. What is so special about this place? "Vayikra et shem hamakom hahu Beit El," he called this place the House of God, right? It's a very special place. He says "ein zeh ki im beit Elokim v'zeh shar hashamayim," this place is the House of God and this is the gates to heaven.

Well, that sort of reminds us of something. Let's sort of look at sort of the next element, next major element we can find in Deuteronomy 14, and oh, lo and behold, what does it write over here? Right over here we have exactly the same thing. Where is it that you eat these tithes? You eat them "bamakom asher yivchar l'shaken shemo sham," in the place that God is going to choose, i.e., God's House, the place of the Beit HaMikdash, the place of the Temple, where God is going to invest His name.

Lo and behold, here it is Jacob naming this place the House of God where he is and dedicating its cornerstone. For element number three you have -- sort of our pink element here -- you have the House of God, the special place.

Aser t'aser, element number one. Achalta, eating, element number two. The place of God, element number three. Let's keep on going forwards. You're going to find that every step forwards in Deuteronomy is going to be a step backwards in the story of the ladder. Let's keep on reading, okay? Now actually the pattern gets a little bit more complicated so let me just show you the complicated piece of this pattern. Let me try to show it to you right over here.

Let's take Verse 14 down through here. "V'hayah zaracha k'afar ha'aretz ufaratzta yamah vakeidmah v'tzafonah vanegbah," I'm reading now from the story of the dream. Your progeny is going to be like the dust of the earth and then it's going to spread out, those children of yours are going to spread out, God says, north, south, east and west, "v'nivrichu v'cha kol mishpichos h'adamah uvzarecha," and through you all of the families of the earth are going to become blessed.

"V'hinei unochi" -- and by the way that's kind of ambiguous, like what does that even mean? Through you all of them -- exactly how will Jacob's progeny bring blessing to everyone? Well, we will see that the parallels to Deuteronomy 14 are going to help us understand that.

"V'hinei unochi imach," and I will be with you God says, "ushmarticha b'chol asher teileich," I will watch over you wherever you go, "vahashivoticha el ha'adama hazot," and I'll bring you back to this place, "ki lo e'ezavcha," because I will never forsake you.

Okay. Let's see if we can find anything that sort of parallels this orange on the left side of the page when we're looking at Deuteronomy 14. As we keep on reading here, do we see anything that sort of reminds us of this? You can take a look with me and we can turn all of this very broadly speaking -- orange, right? In other words, what do we have here? We have the idea of -- in the story of Jacob -- of Jacob's progeny spreading out, spreading out throughout the land. This was God's promise, which is that your progeny are going to spread out throughout the land.

Well, look what we have in tithing. "V'chi yirbeh mimcha haderech." Right after we have this law that everyone is supposed to come to Jerusalem and eat this food, we say well, what if it's too far away? Why would it be too far away? Because God has spread you out. Listen to how it is. "V'chi yirbeh mimcha haderech" -- reading now from the left side of the page. If it's very, very far, "ki lo tuchal s'eito," you can't carry it that far, "ki yirchak mimcha hamakom," it's very far that God made His place to you.

Why is it far? "Ki yivarechicha Hashem Elokecha," because God blessed you. How did God bless you? Because He fulfilled exactly one of the things He told Jacob. He told Jacob that He's going to have all of Jacob's progeny going all the way out throughout the Land of Israel and there are going to be some in the Galilee, there'll be some in Beersheba, there'll be some in Eilat, they'll be all over the place and so therefore it's far. If you're going to come back -- so here's how you come back. "V'natatah bakesef v'tzarteh hakesef b'yadacha," you should buy it with money and you should come back to this very, very special place.

Now, notice right in the middle of this orange section, there is going to be a section we'll call the blue section. Look right over here, this idea of blessing, right? Through you, God said to Jacob, blessing will come to all of the children of the earth. Well, do you have this little blessing section right inside of the orange section, which basically has to do with spreading out, in Deuteronomy as well? It turns out that you do. Look at it right over here -- let me see if I can find it, here we go.

"Ki yivarechicha Hashem Elokecha," same idea, right? Which is right in the middle over here, God says that you're going to be all spread out. Why are you going to be spread out? Because God has blessed you. Over here you have this little blue section of blessing, right in the middle of the orange. Now let's further offer the contours over here. What about this over here?

The last thing God says in our little orange section on the right-hand side to Jacob is that I'm going to bring you back to this place, "v'hashivoticha el ha'adama hazot" -- let's color this in a new color. Let's call it red. I will return you to this place. Where do we have this idea of being very spread out, but then returning? Oh, we totally do because of course what happens when you're spread out? When you're spread out, you're spread out in all these places, but "V'natata bakasef v'tzarta hakesef b'yodcha v'halachta el hamakom asher yivchar Hashem Elokecha bo," you should all return. You should all come back to the Temple. There's our return section which was our red section.

Right after we have our red section, we have one last idea which is God says to Jacob, don't worry, I'm going to return you to this place, you'll always come back, "ki lo e'ezavcha," because I will not forsake you. You're going off into exile. It's going to be tough. You're going to Laban's house and going to be there. You're going to wonder if you're ever going to get out. It's going to feel like slavery, but remember I will not leave you. I will always be there for you. I will eventually return you even if it takes decades, and that in fact is what happens. Let's color this another color. Let's color it green. "Ki lo e'ezavcha," because I will not forsake you.

Well, is there an idea of not forsaking people, not forgetting people, same language of azivah, of leaving people behind? Lo and behold it's right over here -- there it is. "V'halevi asher bisharech lo ta'azvenu," don't forget the Levite and there's that exact same language. Do not leave them behind. The root ayin- zayin-beit, do not leave them behind.

Look how remarkable this is. You have this whole section over here -- whole section over here. Look how it goes. It is orange, blue, orange, red, green on the right-hand side; orange, blue, orange, red and green on the left-hand side. This is one big section in the chiasm. So the chiasm goes, right? Right over here we start with light-blue, light-blue to red, red to pink. Again from the top of Deuteronomy, light- blue to red to pink and then in each case you have this big section, this big section we call orange, blue, orange, red, orange, green in both sections. Orange, blue, orange, red and green; this big section all together.

Then the chiasm continues. Keep on reading a little bit earlier in the Jacob and the ladder story; is going to appear the next phase of the Deuteronomy story. Let me find it for you. The last idea I think that I can find it in this chiasm is when God introduces himself and says to Jacob "ani Hashem Elokei Avraham avicha," I am the God of your forefather Abraham and your forefather Isaac, "ha'aretz asher atah shochev aleha lecha etnenah ul'zarecha," right? The land that I am going to give you -- let's call this a new color; let's make this purple. This land that I'm going to give you, "ha'aretz asher atah shochev aleha lecha etnenah ul'zarecha." This land that I'm giving to you, this land that you're sleeping on, Jacob, I'm eventually going to give it to you. Even though you're going into exile, trust me. You'll be back; I'm going to give you this land.

Well, let's keep on reading Deuteronomy, after all this orange is there anything that reminds us of this. Now remember, in a chiastic structure each of the chiastic pairs A, B, C, D, E, E, D, C, B, A; each one of those pairs A to A, B to B, C to C, D to D, there's always sort of two possibilities. One possibility is that the pair mirrors it and it's exactly the same thing. A reminds you of A, B reminds you of B. The other possibility is that they're opposites of each other. A reminds you of the opposite of A, B reminds of the opposite of B and we can mix and match, right? A can remind you of the same thing over here, B can remind you of the opposite.

Over here you have an opposite. What is the opposite of the land that you have that's all going to be yours? The opposite is right over here. Remember Deuteronomy, who do you have to not leave behind? Don't leave behind the Levite, why not? "Ki ein lo chelek v'nachalah imach," because he does not have any land. Well, what's the opposite of I'm giving you the land? The opposite of I'm giving you the land is that somebody doesn't have a land. Even as you have the land, remember the Levite who doesn't have the land.

Now, there's more to this pattern then this. Another part of this pattern is the idea of gates. You take a look at the notion of sha'ar, of gates, that we just made so much of in the Deuteronomy on the left-hand side; look at gates on the right-hand side. Where do we have gates? Of course the answer is in Verse 17, right over here, you see this? Let's highlight this in a different color. Let's call this highlight yellow.

What does Jacob say? "Ein zeh ki im beit Elokim v'zeh sha'ar hashamayim," this is the House of God, "v'zeh sha'ar hashamayim," this is literally the gates of heaven, it says. He's in awe, "mah nora hamakom hazeh," how awesome is this place and "zeh sha'ar hashamayim" -- and of course over here on the left- hand side we have all of these gates, but not God's gate; your gate. Remember the Levite, the Levite in your gates, remember the poor person in your gates, remember all these people in your gates. So you have your gates mirrored by God's gates in this story.

What did Jacob do? "Vayira vayomar mah nora hamakom hazeh," where is that? That's in Verse 17 in the story of Jacob, right? "Mah nora hamakom hazeh" -- let's color that in a light-purple highlight. "Vayira vayomar mah nora hamakom hazeh." Where do we have that over here on the left-hand side? Jacob is in awe and he says how awesome is this place.

Let's see if I can find it in my notes. Here you go. Remember "l'ma'an tilmad l'yirah et Hashem Elokecha?" It seems part of this pattern also, this purple part of the pattern. So after -- "l'ma'an tilmad l'yirah et Hashem Elokecha kol hayamim."

Take a look at all this. What does it all mean to you? What it suggests to me broadly speaking, and I will let you kind of play with it and see what you think, but I think the pattern is remarkable and I suspect that there is a great deal of meaning to be uncovered. I just saw recently this and I haven't really gotten around to thinking about all of its implications, but let me just tell you just sort of off the cuff what I think, you know, some of it seems to mean.

What is the basic idea of these tithes? Why is that second tithe, the tithe of actually coming to Jerusalem with food, why is that a thing? Like, why is that even something we do? The reason is "l'ma'an tilmad l'yirah et Hashem Elokecha," so you should learn to fear God, so you should be in awe of God. What does that really mean?

It seems like the whole purpose of this tithe is to echo something in the story. Remember if you look at the Jacob's ladder story, it's interesting that Jacob never does this. He promises giving a tenth, but never really does it. When does Jacob give a tenth of his things to God? The answer the Torah might give is that this is the law of tithing.

One of the themes of Aleph Beta which we sometimes talk about a little bit is -- if you take a look at -- a lot of our videos, especially from our second year of parshah, we talked about this theme how our stories become our laws, that sometimes we have these stories that develop into laws. I think here, too, you have a story that's kind of developing into a law. The story of the ladder is developing into the law of tithes.

It's almost like God is saying well, Jacob, you know, you never really got a chance to give that tithe, did you? All of your children are going to give tithe; all of your children are going to give that tithe; all of the Bnei Yisrael, all of the children of Israel, all the children of Jacob, they are eventually going to give that tithe and they are going to do it in a way -- right? In other words, it's like, Jacob says so God, I'm going to tithe to you, I'm going to give you all this stuff. So what do you give the person, the being who has everything? What is it that you're going to give God? I mean, what is it that God really needs? God has everything.

So God says look, I don't need anything -- I don't need anything, you need it. Take the tithe and you yourself eat it, but here is what I want you to do. I want you to remember. I want you to remember the promise I made to you, the fact that I fulfilled that promise. Because when you were on the run, when you were an evyon, when you were a poor person, when you had nothing, you didn't even have any food, you didn't have anything, you didn't have clothes to wear, you had nothing, you begged me and you asked me for help and I promised you that I would always be with you. I promised that I wouldn't leave you until I had brought you back here; that you were leaving the land of Israel, but you would eventually come back and I would assuredly bring you back and I would spread you out throughout the whole land, remember when I keep that promise.

When I keep that promise, when ultimately I bring Jacob back, when ultimately after 400 years of Egypt you come through with signs and wonders back into the land, when that happens, remember; remember that promise when I told you I wouldn't leave you. Remember that I fulfilled that promise. Therefore, come and bring the tithe.

Wherever you are, you're all spread out all over the place, come to that one place. Come to that place that Jacob in his dream said "zeh sha'ar hashamayim," this is the gates of heaven; this is the House of God. Come to that place, build me that place. Build the rest of it. Jacob put the first stone in; you guys put the rest of the stones until you build that whole edifice, that House of God.

Then come to that House of God from all of the far places that I promised that I would spread you throughout the whole land. Come even if it's far, even if you have to buy things with the tithe and then come and redeem the money when you get there to transport it. Do that and come and feast and when you do it learn, learn to do what? To be in awe of me because when tithing was first conceived of by Jacob, when he first made that promise that he would give me a tenth, when he did that, he was in awe. He couldn't believe that this is the nexus between the heaven and earth. Well, you're going to be living on the nexus of heaven and earth.

Therefore, come to that place and try to experience a little bit of that awe that Jacob had when he had that dream. When you eat there and when you thank God for bringing him back and not leaving Jacob behind, experience that awe, but don't just experience that awe, do what I did. Learn to do what I did. What did I do? When Jacob was an evyon, when Jacob was a poor guy just on the run and he was desperate and he needed food, I promised him I would not leave him, I would take care of him.

Therefore, you emulate me.

When you are going to have or be the one to provide, when you're going to have all the riches and you're going to have this great feast and you'll have this great food in Jerusalem, you share. You take care and you make sure not to forsake those who don't have anything, just like I didn't forsake Jacob when he didn't have anything. You take care, make sure not to leave behind the Levite, the Levite doesn't have any of the land. You take care of the Levite, you take care of the poor person; Jacob was a poor person on the run. Jacob had nothing. Jacob was like an orphan without a father when he went into Laban's house. He was so desperate for a father to take him in. He was like -- you take care of the orphan and the widow too because God took care of you that way.

You thought of this place, this special place as the gate of heaven. Well, you're going to be -- in the Jacob story I was the provider, God was the provider. You were in my gates, the gates of heaven and I took care of you. So when you're the provider in the Land of Israel, I'm going to take care of you. So then you're the provider, you're going to have gates. Remember, there are poor people in your gates; there is a Levite in your gates. Make sure you take care of those people also.

I think this is a fascinating example of stories becoming laws. There's an intricate chiastic pattern here, an interesting A"t-Ba"sh pattern. The Torah wants you to understand what tithing is about, what the second tithe is about, what all of these tithings are about. The various three different kinds of tithing are the three different ways that we respond to the promise and the counter-promise that God made to Jacob and that Jacob made to God in turn.

When that promise is fulfilled, when God has fulfilled His promise then the way we take tithes in aggregate is our complete response to that. We come to God's house and we share that bounty and we enjoy that bounty and we understand that God has fulfilled His promise, we've come to that place, that place from Jacob's dream and we take care of those who are less fortunatem the way that God took care of Jacob when he was less fortunate too. Together these become the laws of tithing.

That's what I wanted to share with you, that's what I have come up with lately. I'm actually in the middle of building this out into -- this is really just a little piece of what I think is a much larger, astonishing kaleidoscope of stories connected to Jacob's ladder. This is one piece of Jacob's ladder. Jacob's ladder becomes the basis for the laws of tithing, but there are many other aspects of the Jacob's ladder story and how the Jacob's ladder story interfaces with many, many other aspects of the Five Books of Moses.

I have been working on that lately and I can't wait to share some of that with you so I will try and do that in the weeks ahead. In the meantime, write your comments, give me your thoughts. I would love to hear what you guys think of this. If there's anything I missed, put it down in the comments and I'll try to read it through and hear what it is that you have to say.

Thank you so much for listening and in the meantime, until next time this is David Fohrman, Aleph Beta offices, signing out.

Rabbi David Fohrman: Okay. Ladies and gentlemen. This is Rabbi David Fohrman and I am coming to you through the good graces of Zoom and Facebook Live. I apologize for the difficulties in technically setting this up. It's a matter of a whole bunch of things cooperating. Zoom has to cooperate with Facebook Live which has to cooperate with your computer and yesterday my computer started to be uncooperative and today other aspects in the whole situation are uncooperative. So we're trying to, kind of, work out the kinks, but hopefully this will work.

Anyway, I wanted to, kind of, continue with what I was talking to you about yesterday. This is going to be the second in a series of webinars that I'm doing with you, exploring some new stuff. We were talking about concerning Jacob's dream, Jacob's ladder. The piece that I want to discuss with you today

-- what I'm going to do is just, kind of, quickly review what I did in the, sort of, aborted Facebook Live session which I did with you yesterday. It lasted for about 20 minutes. I'll try to summarize that a little bit more quickly and then move on.

We were talking about another aspect of Jacob's dream. In a previous episode, of this that I did with you, we discussed connections between the story of Jacob's dream, the ladder and the later laws of tithing, that of ma'aser. One of the things that had happened in that story is that the Temple was called the place that God has caused His name to reside. One of the things that I mentioned to you yesterday is that that description of the Temple, in Deuteronomy, I think, actually is one of the aspects of the connections between the story of tithing in Deuteronomy, taking tithes and Jacob's dream. But there's something about Jacob's dream that sheds light on the laws of tithing in such a way that makes it such that the Temple has particularly that character within the laws of tithing.

It is the place that God has caused His name to reside. I think that goes back to the story of Jacob's ladder and to, kind of, shed light on all of that I want to explore another fascinating aspect of Jacob's dream, the story of Jacob's ladder. That fascinating aspect is another story which, I think, this is connected to you namely the story of the Tower of Babel. The Deuteronomy piece is a part later in the bible. That seems to connect to Jacob's ladder, but Jacob's ladder also seems to be connected with episodes earlier in the bible, in particularly, the Tower of Babel.

What I want to do with you today is try to outline how those connections might exist, as well as to explore what their meaning might be. Before I do that I want to actually relate to something that Steve Kowarsky, one of our members here mentioned in one of his comments on Facebook to, I think, our last webinar. Where he talked about the notion of, I think, it was called lucid dreaming or so. This, sort of, very interesting state of wakefulness. I think, actually, we've been talking about this concerning a piece which I did on the Song of Songs, which I'm preparing to eventually do with you guys, but basically this Steve was talking about this very interesting state of wakefulness where you're dreaming, but in the dream you become aware that you're dreaming. So there's, sort of, self-referential aspect to it that the dreamer becomes aware that he's dreaming in the dream.

It may well be, I want to suggest to you, that something like that is going on in the story of Jacob's ladder for better or for -- well, not for better or for worse -- but I don't know what to make of it, but it seems like something like that might be happening. Here, I want to share with you an insight that comes from Menachem Leibtag. I was hanging out with Menachem, in Gush Etzion, a couple of weeks back and he actually gave me this kind of observation on Jacob's ladder, which is if you take a look at the language Jacob seems to wake up twice from his dream which is a little bit odd.

In other words, first if you look at Verse 16 -- and I'll share you my screen in a second -- I just want to show you over here Verse 16 so "Vayikatz Yaakov mishnato," Jacob, he gets up from his sleep. So you think Jacob's up because he just got up, "vayomer achein yeish Hashem bamakom hazeh v'anochi lo yadati," God is here in this place and I didn't even know. Then he feels awestruck. "Vayomar mah nora hamakom hazeh ein zeh ki im Beit Elokim v'zeh sha'ar hashamayim." He can't believe this is the place where God is resident and then, lo and behold, a couple of verses later "Vayashkeim Yaakov baboker," he wakes up in the morning. So you say what is that, he already woke up -- over here "Vayikatz Yaakov mishnato," he woke up and over here "Vayashkeim Yaakov baboker," he wakes up again.

So Menachem suggests that the first time that he woke up, he didn't really wake up, right? In other words, in his dream he woke so that's that experience of lucid dreaming. He has that sense that he's dreaming and that he wakes up in the dream and becomes aware of the dream and then he wakes up later on in the morning. In other words, what that essentially means is that Jacob's interacting with God in the dream. He has this dream about God and the ladder, but then wakes up in the dream and is able to cognize what it is that's happening within the dream and sort of make decisions and interact with God within the context of the dream.

With that as, kind of, a background I want to just jump in and outline some of the connections between the story of Jacob's ladder and the story of the Tower of Babel. As I mentioned to you yesterday, this got my, sort of, consciousness got jogged into thinking that there might be a connection between Jacob's ladder and the Tower of Babel when I was chatting with my daughter, Ariella, who is 13-years-old and we were on our cross-country trip and she happened to notice what you see in orange, here on the screen, which we talked about yesterday. That if you look at the tower, you had this language that the tower has its top in heaven, "v'rosho magi'a hashamaymah," which is the language that suspiciously echoes the tower over here where the people say come let's build this tower "v'rosho bashamayim," and it's top is in heaven.

As a matter of fact, there are very few times that you have the head of something being somewhere else. In the Torah these are the only times that you actually have that. "Rosho bashamayim," "rosho magi'a hashamaymah" and the question is whether that's just a coincidence or whether it is a sign of a larger connection between these two narratives and if so what might that connection mean?

I want to suggest to you right now that it's a sign of a larger connection. What happened when I first found this with Ariella is, kind of, that seems suggestive to me and then on the plane, on the way back I began to look at these two narratives and began to see some of the rest of what I want to show you now. I think I gave you the source sheet on Facebook which you could download and you could see if you could find connections yourself, but let me share some of you and I know that Karen Goldberger, I think, had seen some of these so I'll share with you some of her ideas, as well.

Anyway, we yesterday began to look at some of this and what I've done is I, kind of, kept our highlights from yesterday -- let me come into this file here and you could see what it is I'm talking about -- so we talked about "rosho magi'a hashamaymah" and we talked about some of these other highlights "V'hayah zar'echa k'afar ha'aretz u'faratzta yamah vakeidmah, tzafonah vanegbah." This is the idea of scattering which seems to exist from both stories.

Of course, in the story of Jacob's ladder, your children are going to scatter all over the land, but they are going to come to possess the land. It's a good kind of scattering that seems to mirror, sort of, a bad kind of scattering in the tower. "Vayafetz Hashem otam misham al p'nei kol ha'aretz," that as punishment for building the tower, God would scatter the people upon the face of the whole earth. Remember, in the story of the tower the kind of scattering is almost the opposite of the kind of scattering which we have in Jacob's ladder. Jacob's ladder seems to be kind of blessing, a blessed kind of scattering where by scattering all over Israel you come to possess the land. "V'hayah zar'acha ka'afar ha'aretz u'faratzta yamah vakeidmah v'tzafonah vanegbah," your children are going to be like the dust of the earth and they're going to burst forth in all directions north, south, east and west.

When you think about that bursting forth, it's by the way the same language almost, it's a play on words of the word for scattering back in the tower. I mentioned this yesterday. "Vayafetz," the pei and tzaddi of "vayafetz" gets mirrored in the "u'faratzta," to burst forth of Jacob's ladder.

By the way, I just want to, you know, share with you just a quick idea again in terms of these intertextual parallels that you have between stories. When you have a bunch of parallels between the stories it doesn't necessarily mean that the parallels are -- and I think I might have mentioned this to you before -- my biconsonantal -- no, no what's it called; I had a fancy name for it -- I think I called this the binary theory of biblical intertextuality. That sounds like a mouthful. Just to, kind of, review what I mean by that is that when you have two stories that are intertextually connected like this that the language of one seems to mirror the other.

So why does the Torah do that? It's not just that the Torah is saying well story number a is a repeat of story number b. It's the same thing that's happening in story b is happening in story a and in this case it's not the case that the ladder is another version of the tower or the tower all over again. What it means is that if you're going to understand the ladder you have to understand in relationship to the tower and what I mean by this by the binary theory of biblical intertextuality is that when you think about computers, computers, sort of, have two possibilities; they have binary possibilities. The only thing a computer really knows is zeros and ones, but zeros and ones you could do a lot with, right? You can take the binary possibilities of zero, one and you say zero, one, one, zero is a blue pixel and zero, one, one, zero, one, one is a red pixel and pretty soon you can paint the Mona Lisa. Even though the Mona Lisa is very, very subtle, you could paint it out of ones and zeros.

So too, you can paint the meaning of a relationship in a biblical text also out of ones and zero, for each of these intertextual links. If you have 17 ways that Jacob's dream mirrors the Tower of Babel, what that means is there's, sort of, 17 binary possibilities. It might mean that in nine respects the Tower of Babel is just like the ladder and in eight respects it is the opposite of the tower. Zeros and ones, same or opposites, but same or opposite run 19 different parameters can give you a very subtle relationship between Jacob's dream and the Tower of Babel.

In this case, what you have when it comes to scattering is a, kind of, same but opposite. There's both scattering, but in one case the scattering serves to make Israel into a nation. They become a nation by virtue of their ability to possess the land, by being scattered over all four corners of it and possessing of it. And of the tower, the scattering is a kind of dispersal where their nationhood is actually destroyed. They were originally one nation and somehow that one nation is being dispersed.

So you have that scattering element in addition. So far we have a ladder with its top in heaven. In both cases we have a structure with its top in heaven. A ladder, in one case; a tower, on the other case. Now, we also have this notion of scattering. Finally, we get to this light-blue highlight over here. "Vayikra sheim hamakom hahu Beit El," I think this where our audio and visual cut out last time, where it says that in both stories we actually have at the end of the story the naming of the place. In the case of Jacob's ladder the name of the place was Beit El and in the case of the tower, the place was called Babel.

Here, by the way, I want to actually reference one of the comments which one of you made in Facebook Live. Let me see if I can actually see that comment if I go and scroll over here. If you scroll down -- I can't see it right now, it doesn't allow me to see this, but if you actually go back to some of our earlier comments you'll find a very, very fascinating thing. That is that one of you had mentioned -- I forget if it was Mark Bodner. I think it might have been someone -- no, it was somebody else, actually. So forgive me that I don't remember your name offhand without looking at the comment, but one of you had suggested that linguistically Bavel actually seems to be a playoff of an Aramaic conjugation and in Aramaic -- it actually might be short for bava El.

Now, bava actually in Aramaic means the gate of and El, of course, means God which actually means something fascinating. You would think that's crazy, which is that Beit El, the name of the place in the ladder actually means exactly the same thing as the name of the place of the tower. Which is Bavel and Beit El actually just mean the same thing in two different but related languages; Aramaic -- or Hebrew- Aramaic rather and Hebrew. So Bavel which, of course, has become Babylonian later on becomes the seat of Aramaic. So you have a Babylonian-esque name, Bavel, the gates of heaven and Beit El.

By the way, the gates of heaven, of course, is very striking because even though the word gates of heaven is actually a little bit different than the name of the place Beit El, so the name of the tower place Bavel, meaning gates of heaven is a little bit different than the name of the ladder place which was Beit El, which means not the gates of El, but the House of El. But, of course, it fits with this over here -- if you look at this little highlight over here in Verse 17 when Jacob says "Ein zeh ki im Beit Elokim," this is really the House of God. The next thing he says is "v'zeh sha'ar hashamayim," this is the gates of heaven.

So that notion of gates of heaven and House of God is now being mimicked, perhaps, or foreshadowed in Bavel, which might just mean bava El, the gates of God. So it's really, kind of, chilling, the names. So it begins to seem like these stories might actually be related. I want to actually show you something else. Which is that to, sort of, further this there are many, many other connections. You know at some point the connections don't seem to be random and here's the fascinating thing too which is that as you look at these connections, look at the order in which they appear. It's not just the fact that there's a bunch of things in the Jacob's ladder story that previously recall the story of the tower, but look at the order.

You see this? Orange and then blue text and then blue highlight over here on the left-hand side of the page. Now, look on the right-hand side of the page. Orange, blue text, blue highlight. At least in these three connections it's the same order. Now, here's the fascinating thing. There's, like, a zillion connections between these. It's, like, 17 connections between them and as you fill in all 17, at least the way I see it, they're all in order. It's, like, 17 connections in order and it's mindboggling the connections between these stories. It really, really feels like the Torah considers them connected.

So without trying to, sort of, too much parse the mystery of what it means yet --and we'll get back to that later -- let's actually just look at what is; just, you know, the actual connections here. You know, I found what I found, but I'm very interested if you guys find other stuff or different things or argue or whatever it is so please do chip in on the comments and let me know. I'm actually very interested in what it is you guys come up with. Maybe we could help flush this out together.

So let me begin to show you some of the other stuff that I've found. I'm just, kind of, consult my notes over here and see. So maybe what we can do is or a good way to do it might be as July Anders (ph) says start from the very beginning, a very good place to start. With that in mind, let's really start from the beginning.

One of the things that's interesting is -- and this is one little piece of it -- one little piece of it which does seem a little bit out of the ordinary which is -- or a little bit out of the picture is at the very end of the story of the ladder over here you have "Vayisa Yaakov raglav" -- at the very end of the story -- "vayeilech artzah b'nei kedem," he gets up and he travels to the east or he travels to the land of the children of the east. Look at the very beginning. "Vayehi kol ha'aretz safah echat" on the right-hand side when we're talking about the story of the tower so everybody has one language and "Vayehi b'nasam mikedem," they're traveling from the east. So in one story they're traveling from the east and in another case they're traveling to the east. So just, kind of, an interesting possibility here.

Let's pick up and watch what happens over here. At the very beginning of the story of the Tower of Babel, after its prelude happens that when they're traveling from the east "vayimtzi'u bik'ah b'Eretz Shinar vayeishvu sham," they find a plain in the land of Shinar and they stay there. A plain is going to mean like a valley. A plain, P-L-A-I-N. I just want to, sort of, meditate upon those four words for a moment and just think about the relationship between those four words and the first four words of the Jacob's ladder story. Because it's, like, crazy, but it seems like there's this interesting connection here.

Now, one of the kinds of connections which the Torah will make I found in intertextual connections is wordplay connections. Where the Torah is going to connect words which grammatically are not related, but are, sort of, plays off other words. The Torah is going to do all sorts of plays where there's a words over here, but it's, like, if you take those letters and just rearrange them it creates this word over here. You seem to have a bunch of really interesting stuff over here, just in the first four words.

For example, take "vayimtzi'u bik'ah b'Eretz Shinar," they found a plain in the land of Shinar. Now, in "vayimtzi'u," and they found, can you find the first word of the Jacob's ladder story hiding? There it is, right, "Vayeitzei Yaakov m'Be'er Sheva." We'll just, like, put this in say gray over here. So you have "vayeitzei" -- well, it is rush hour in Hewlett and you can hear all the horns.

By the way, one of the fun things is when you live in Aleph Beta land, as we record videos over here and we, kind of, pretend that we have a studio even though we don't. When you try to record things in a crowded, urban area like this, one of the craziest things is when you have this really good take and all of a sudden you have this blare of car horns and it interrupts things. So it's a, kind of, a constant work around over here, but it's not so easy to work around it in a webinar.

Anyway, "vayimtzi'u bik'ah b'Eretz Shinar," right, you see this -- this over here, these guys seem connected. We'll just put that in gray. "Vayimtzi'u," of course, you have the Vav-Yud-Tzaddi-Aleph in "vayimtzi'u" in that exact order, Vav-Yud-Tzaddi-Aleph is vayeitzei, "Vayeitzei Yaakov m'Be'er Shava."

Next, on the left-hand side, you have Jacob. Jacob is our second word on the Jacob's ladder story. So if you look at Jacob, our second word in the Jacob's ladder story, does that connect it in any way to the second word in the tower story right after "vayimtzi'u" and they find a plain. Oh, look at that word for plane. That word for plane, "bik'ah" it seems suspiciously similar to Ya'akov. As a matter of fact, you see in "Ya'akov" the Ayin-Kuf-Beit? There you got it. Ayin-Kuf-Beit backwards is "bik'ah." All right.

That's kind of interesting.

What about the next word? Does the pattern continue in the next word? Let's see the next word. "Vayeitzei Ya'akov m'Be'er Shava," Jacob leaves from "m'Be'er Shava." Let's put that in red, right over here. Let's look at the third word in the tower "vaymitzi'u bik'ah b'Eretz." Now, isn't that interesting. "B'eretz," if you look at these letters, three out of four of them, just happen to be the Beit-Aleph-Reish of "be'er" becomes the Beit-Aleph-Reish in that exact same order of "b'eretz." Fascinating.

Now, the next one. It's possible that the pattern even continues here with a little word play, right. Sheva is only three letters and if you look at sheva -- let's put that in green -- sheva looks suspiciously like -- looks suspiciously like the first three letters right over here. And I say looks here because if you don't read Hebrew it actually looks closer than if you do read Hebrew. Because Shin-Nun-Ayin is very close to Shin-Beit-Ayin in how it looks. Right, because what is a nun after all? You just elongate the nun on both ends and walla you've got yourself a beit and the Shin-Nun-Ayin becomes a Shin-Beit-Ayin.

It's, kind of, remarkable. It really sounds like it, unless this is just me being crazy, but it really sounds like the first four words of the Jacob story are plays off of the first four words of the tower story. Somehow, Jacob leaving Be'er Shava evokes the memories of the people finding this plain in the Land of Shinar. Of course, in both case, what happens there? "Vayeishvu sham," right? "Vayeishvu sham" in the case of Jacob is something which he does there which is he settles down there. What do the people do -- I'm sorry I mixed this up -- "vayeishvu sham" is what the people do in the Land of Shinar. They settle down there. What does Jacob do as he travels from Be'er Sheva? "Vayifga bamakom vayalen sham." He doesn't settle down there, but he sleeps there and he dreams.

Let's continue. So if so far we have our first four words and then what he does there is connected. Let's go to the very next element and see whether there might be a connection there. Let me see here. Our next little piece, actually, we'll only skip one little piece. Isn't it interesting that here, in Jacob, "vayikach mei'avnei hamakom," Jacob takes from the stones of the place? Let's put that in another color. We'll put that in dark red or something. "Vayikach mei'avnei hamakom," Jacob takes from the stones of the place.

What do the tower builders do? Do they take from the stones of the place? Do you have any reference to stones? Oh, look what happens. "Vayomer ish el rei'eihu," so people are saying to each other, "havah nilbinah l'veinim v'nisrifah lisreifah," come let's make bricks and let's throw them into the fire, "vatehi lahem hal'veinah," and the bricks are for them like even. So what happens is that the people actually reject the stones of the place and instead of the stones of the place, the people are doing what? They are -- let me make this a little bit darker so it corresponds -- the people are making themselves bricks. So they make themselves bricks instead of stone and Jacob comes and instead of rejecting the stones of the place, takes the stones of the place and uses them. You have the stone or the lack of stone connection.

Now, what's interesting is is that here you can, sort of, go a little bit further and suggest and you say well, you know, the first four words here mirrors the first four words there. After that "vayalen sham" mirrors "vayeishvu sham." After that "vatehi lahem hal'veinim" mirrors "vayikach mei'avnei hamakom." Now, the interesting question is what about the middle over here? "Ki vah hashemesh," is it possible that the middle -- between the sort of violet and bright red -- in both cases mirror each other?

Over here, you have "ki vah hashemesh." Let's just experiment and take "ki vah hashemesh" and darken it into something or other. We'll make it into, say, pink. "Ki vah hashemesh," just the math would suggest that "ki vah hashemesh" connects to that which is between the violet and the red over here, which is the people saying to themselves "havah nilbinah l'veinim v'nisrifah lisreifah." Now, how might that connect to the pink over here? If you think about it, how are bricks made? Bricks are made in the fire and the most elementary way of making bricks is to fire them. In the olden days is you'd take the mud and then you'd put them out in the baking hot sun.

So, here you have another reverse. Which is, in this case, the bricks are made that they're products of the baking hot sun and over here "ki vah hashemesh," Jacob went to sleep specifically in the exact opposite circumstance when the sun was no longer around. Right? The sun was down.

So over here the sun is down and over here the sun is up and you have products of the sun, the burning fire that allows for the bricks to be able to be baked. Perhaps, the sun made bricks, or like the sun bricks are a source of sun, a sort of cauldron which humans create themselves, the artificial furnace, sort of, the artificial sun. So over here God makes sun go down. Over here, human made sun, perhaps, in the form of a furnace, ignites. So then you have bricks and lack of bricks or stones and lack of stones and let's continue.

What might you have next? Notice before, remember I told you how sheva might be a playoff of Shinar. You were probably thinking uh, that's like a bridge too far because that nun over here, you're telling me, Fohrman, that you're stretching the top of the nun and the bottom of the nun so it's a beit. Does it really a play on word of sheva? Shin and Shinar? That sounds like crazy, but I'm just going to show you that maybe it's not so crazy because if we add up all these connections the very next connection also might connect and have the exact same characteristic of a nun that elongates into specifically a beit; exactly the same thing.

We have one, two, three, four, five, six, seven elements and now we're going to get to the eighth element and I want to suggest to you that the eighth element in each is a play on words where there is a word that is exactly the same except that a nun, once again, converts to a beit and that word over here is "v'hinei." In the case of -- let's color that -- what should we color that? We'll color that another color a brown or something -- "Vayachalom," so he dreams, "v'hinei sulam mutzav artzah," and behold there is this not a tower, but a ladder.

Now, you see over here, "v'hinei." So that's what happens in the dream. So let's find the "v'hinei" over here. It's not the hinei, instead it's going to be what the people declare which is "vayomru," these people having, sort of, gotten rid of their stone instead of using bricks. "Vayomru," they say, "havah nivneh lanu ir," come, right? But their word for come, their exhortation in this case is "havah" and we're going to color that brown. Of course, "havah" is the same hei at the beginning and hei at the end of the three letter word, just like you have hei at the beginning and hei at the end of the "hinei" except that the nun converts to a beit one more time. In both cases, by the way, the "hinei" and the "havah" actually do the same thing in both stories. Which is they are some sort of exclamatory declaration. "Vayachalom," and he dreamt, "v'hinei," and behold, "sulam mutzav artzah."

Here, too, "vayomru," and the people said, "havah," come! exclamation mark, "nivneh lanu ir." So there's this exhortation in the building of something, the great building project. Of course, the great building project is going to be the ninth parallel between these stories. In one case, the great building project is a sulam, a ladder, in the Jacob story. So let's color the ladder -- what color should we make it -- we'll make the ladder a blue highlight, no, we already used blue highlight, let's use yellow highlight. Here we go yellow highlight -- so "vayachalom v'hinei sulam mutzav artzah" is now going to become "vayomru havah nivneh lanu ir u'migdal v'rosho bashamayim" instead of the building project in this case is a migdal, is a tower. In one case it's a ladder and in one case it's a tower.

Now, lo and behold, we get to little Ariella's point. So it's not just little Ariella that "rosho magi'a hashamaymah," right, is connected to "v'rosho bashamayim," its top in heaven which is a whole story. That is not just a random connection. That just so happens to be the what 10th connection; one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10. Yes, it's the 10th parallel between these things in order where every single one of these things were, sort of, parallel in order. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 equals one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10. It's, like, mindboggling.

Then it actually continues. Let me just show a little more of this and then I'll, kind of, let you go and we'll leave towards for next time pondering the meaning of all of this, but let's just do a little bit more.

"Rosho bashamayim." Right after that what have you got? You have and this is, I think, one of the great mysteries, I think, that the mathematics of this is going to force us into and that is the following. "V'hinei malachei Elokim olim v'yordim bo." Now, if this is part of the connections between two stories and we're going to underline it without giving the color because I don't know what it means yet. We'll come back to this next time, but I think one the great mysteries is that the pattern would seem to suggest, perhaps, that what happens right here after the orange on the left-hand side "hinei malachei Elokim olim v'yordim bo," that there are angels going up and down the ladder. That might just be parallel to what happens right after the orange in the tower. Which strangely is going to be "na'aseh lanu sheim," let us make a name for ourselves.

The people -- let's just put this in underline over here -- the people are seeking to make a name for ourselves so name for themselves might that in some way be related to these angels going up and down the ladder. It doesn't seem like those things are connected, but the math of it, sort of, this is where the 11th connection should be, would seem to suggest that there is some sort of connection, sort of challenging us, the reader, to, kind of, figure out what it is.

Of course, here we get to how I opened this webinar with the question of the Temple. Isn't it interesting that the Temple, in another story that's connected to the ladder, namely the story of ma'aser, the story of tithing, in Deuteronomy, just happens to be described as a place where God's name resides. Isn't that interesting? The Temple is a place where God's name resides. Over here, in the tower, the people were making for themselves a name and then in the Jacob's ladder story which is, kind of, the nexus between both of these stories you have angels going up and down in heaven, where? In a place that ultimately becomes the Beit Elokim, becomes the House of God. It becomes the prototype for the Temple.

Could it be that the Temple, as a place where "malachei Elokim yordim v'olim bo," a place which is a transient point for these angels going up and down, a transient point between heaven and earth, has something to do or is the definition of a place on earth that the name of God resides and what exactly would that mean? It seems like the math is pointing us there.

Let me just finish up with you by showing just a little bit more here. If we continue going, right, see what happens in the tower, "vayeired Hashem lir'ot et ha'ir," God then goes down, God is interested in seeing what is doing with what is happening below. Let's put this into some sort of color. We'll color this green highlight. "Vayeired Hashem" so we have a position of God; God is going down. What would that remind you us on this side. It might remind us in this "yordim bo," over here, something else is going down, but it's not God, it's angels of God going down. And we might add this too, where is God, "v'hinei Hashem nitzav alav."

So these things might be related. Meaning to say that over here something is going down, but it's not God it's angels. Over here, "vayeired Hashem," something's going down, but it's God and over here "hinei Hashem nitzav alav." Where is God? The position of God is give, top of the ladder. Here position of God is given going down.

Let me just see. Let me just give you one last piece of this and then we'll, kind of, close up shop for now and we'll continue with this and try to meditate upon its meaning in a future piece. But if we keep on going in both stories, the next thing that's going to happen is this declaration of God in the ladder story. "Vayomar ani Hashem Elokei Avraham avicha v'Elokei Yitzchak ha'aretz asher atah shocheiv alehah lecha etnenah u'l'zarecha." The next thing that happens is God introduces Himself. He says I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac -- we're going to change this into light color blue -- and the place that you were sleeping, the land that you were sleeping on I'm going to give it to you and your progeny and right after that we hear about the progeny is going to spread forth to possess the land.

This is really God telling Jacob Who He is. That He's the God of his forefathers to whom He made promises and that, sort of, Jacob is going to be the fulfillment of those promises where this nation's going to come from him and that the nation's going to be a nation because we're not just going to be a group of people, but they're also going to possess this land. This very land that you're sleeping on I'm going to give it to you and your progeny that are going to burst forth in it and that is going to echo the blue right after the orange over here, which is when God goes down to see the tower that the people are making for themselves so what do we find?

We find, I would say, the following connection. I would suggest possibly the following connection or contrast. In one case, God says you are sleeping, but the place that you're sleeping on I'm going to give you and it's going to be the foundation of your nationhood. So what are you doing? Not very much.

You're sleeping. What am I doing? God, I'm doing a lot. I'm giving you -- I'm making you into a nation.

Let me go to the right-hand side over here, the tower. By contrast, so again, on the left-hand side God is saying look, you're not doing anything so you're not making yourself validation, you're sleeping, but I'm giving you this land and thereby making you into a nation contrasts that over here the people are making the city, "asher banu b'nei adam," they're very actively making the city and what is God saying? "Hein am echad," they are in fact in a nation, but God is upset about them being a nation. God is actually going to take steps to disperse them, which is the very next element which we're going to have.

Again, these stories begin to seem to connect. What I want to do with you is get together with you another time, finish these connections and meditate upon what they mean and specifically to begin to think about some of the larger themes of the ladder and the tower. If you add up, right now we've been looking, kind of, at the trees in the forest, but the trees add up to a kind of forest. What is the forest here? What is the story of the tower really about? How does it relate conceptually to the story of the ladder?

And what might that tell us about some of the larger themes really of the ladder. The ladder is a moment where God assures Jacob that He's going to become the father of a great nation. I think we're going to get a great deal of insight into the meaning of nationhood. Of what it means for Israel to be a nation.

What their mission statement is by contrasting the ladder and the tower and seeing how these stories really fit together.

I'll see you next time, probably in about a week. In the meantime feel free to comment on this. Give me your further thoughts on this. I look forward to reading it and I'll try to review that and react to it as we go forward in this journey together next week. I'll see you then.

Howdy, folks, this is Rabbi David Fohrman. This is Part 3 in a series of webinars which I'm doing on Jacob's Ladder with you. It's good to be back. It's Tuesday afternoon in Aleph Beta offices. The reason why I called this Part 3 is Part 2 was kind of aborted. We had 20 minutes and we continued with that so I'm just calling all of that Part 2. This is Part 3. I'm entitled this talk over here the ladder and the window. It gives us on to Israel's mission. I'll try and tell you what I mean by that in just a minute, but what I want to do with you today is see if we can pick up on this really, what I consider, a fascinating series of parallels between the story of Jacob's dream and the story of the Tower of Babel.

Last week, we had gone through a number of these and this week I want to show you some other pieces that continue to flesh out that picture and meditate with you upon what that might mean as a bridge for us going even further into the exploration next week. With no further ado, let me share my screen with you and I'm going to show you these correspondences that we've found thus far between the Jacob's Ladder story and the Tower of Babel. Again, it almost seems as if the Torah wants us to overlay these stories. There's a kind of elegant and beautiful inter-textual mapping system going on where the Torah is sort of taking the story of Jacob's dream and almost overlaying it on the story of the Tower of Babel.

Let me show you what I mean by that and give you a sense of what the two texts look like side by side. Let me show you what I found last week very briefly. We had talked about a number of correspondences between these texts. I'm just going to talk quickly and just very briefly summarize some of them. We've begun to talk a little bit about its meaning, but we really want to focus on that today.

The tipoff had come from my daughter, Ariella, 13 years old. I've been learning with her what I wrote over here rosh bashamayim, this language that we have by the tower. That the tower builders hoped to build this tower which will extend into heaven. It's very reminiscent of the kind of language we have with rosho magi'a hashamayma, with Jacob's ladder. At the top of the ladder ascended all the way up to the heaven. It is very, very reminiscent of it. the question is is that just a coincidental link between these stories or it's more significant. I suggested to you that it's a more significant link.

What we found is that there are 20-25 connections between these stories. What's baffling about these connections is that they are not just 20 or 25 connections that happen to be interspersed between two stories, but the order of the connections appears significant also. The connections seem to appear in order. Twenty-five correspondences between these two stories in order. I began to show you about how that worked a little bit last week. We talked about the first four words of each story. The first four words of the ladder story, Vayetze Yaakov mi'Be'er Sheva plays off of vayimtze'u bika b'eretz shinar.

Vayimtze'u in grey over there, vav, yud, tzadi, alef. The same vav, yud, tzadi, alef order over here. The second word Yaakov is bika spelled backwards, ayin, kuf, beis, there's the ayin, kuf, beis right there.

Mi'Be'er, the same beit, alef, reish, we find beit, alef, reish over there. Just a remarkable series of correspondences and these are only the first three correspondences. Sheva seems to be a playoff of shinar. You notice that the shin and the ayin are the same. The difference is the beit, but if you think about the structure of a nun, a nun, really, visually at least, is just an elongated nun. While that seems kind of strange, the truth is that it's a parallel which seems to happen again. There's another playoff of hei and nun which we saw a little bit later. Those are the first correspondences between the stories, but then it continues.

"Vayimtze'u bika b'eretz shinar," in the story of the tower, they find this plain, this valley in the land of Shinar, were they settle. Over here, "vayalen sham ki ba hashemesh." Yaakov sleeps there and the tower builders have settled there. If you think about it, by the way -- and this is something which I don't think we mentioned last week so let me elaborate a little bit this week for you. "Vayeshvu sham," with th tower builders, really it suggested that they were settling somewhere and in a way, in the Jacob's ladder story, what we have is kind of a playoff of that where it's the opposite of settling there. What's the opposite of settling? If you think about it, there are really two kind of opposites of settling. One kind of opposite of settling is given right over here in terms of what Jacob is doing. He's doing anything but settling. He's on the go. He's a man on the go, a man on the land, running away from his brother in distress. "Vayelech Charana," he's running away to Charan, "vayifga bamakom," and he by chance happens to encounter this place where he takes a nap.

All of this is very transient. There is Jacob as a transient versus the tower builders were settling down somewhere as a society. That's one contrast between the settling and the sleeping. Another difference, of course, is vayeshvu is they were actively settling down there. Vayalen is you're passively going to sleep. There's that sort of contrast as well. But vayeshvu sham seems to play off vayalen sham.

In any case, we then have ki va hashemesh. Ki va hashemesh is the sun went down. Think about the sun; a great source of fire. Then the very next element over here, a great source of fire. "Vayomer ish el rei'ehu hava nilbena levenim v'nisrefa la'serefa." Come let's make bricks and we'll throw them into a kiln. If you think about the way bricks were made, primitive bricks were made by leaving them out in the sun. over here the sun went down. More sophisticated bricks like they're making over here are made by throwing bricks in a kiln. A kiln is an artificial fire. It's man mimicking the sun, taking white hot heat and actually using that to make bricks. Indeed, the name for bricks comes from the name white. Lavan becomes levenim, bricks; they're named for the white hot kiln. It's almost as if human beings are creating an artificial version of the sun. sort of chilling. If you think nowadays with the nuclear arms race going on, North Korea and all of that, it's taking that up another level. The tower is really a story about the birth of technology and the birth of technology begins with human being mimicking the sun in our own time where the technological story is continued until now. It's interesting that we've reached a time where nuclear energy again mimics the sun, but takes that up another level.

If you think about this question about North Korea with their nuclear test and the difference between different kinds of nuclear bomb. The nuclear bomb with Hiroshima, Nagasaki and North Korea's argument or claim to have developed a hydrogen bomb. If you think about what a hydrogen bomb is, technically, a hydrogen bomb is just more sunlike than an atomic bomb. It's literally exactly the same reactions. An atomic bomb is certain subatomic reactions, but what happens is that those get fueled and taken to another level and magnified up to 100 or 1,000 times through the existence of lighter ice tubs like hydrogen, which can then interact with neutrons from the original atomic reaction and can double the reaction. Those neutrons can then split apart the hydrogen atoms and then create a synthesis for hydrogen to helium which lets out a great amount of subatomic nuclear energy which is the destructive power of the hydrogen bomb. All the sun is is hydrogen bombs. It's the same thing. It's all this hydrogen fuel. It's going to convert it into helium and these nuclear reactions that fuels our life 83 million miles away, a safe distance away, we have our lives because of the sun. human beings get closer and closer to mimicking the sun, but possibly in the destructive kind of way with the creation of this kind of awesome and mighty nuclear energy. You have the origin of all of this, the natural thing which technology mimics, which is the sun over here in Jacob's Ladder story. There, we're dealing with the natural real thing, ki ba hashemesh. The sun goes down. It's sort of the closing of the sun and over here we have the opening of an artificial sun. The earliest advent of technology in brick making where you make white hot bricks, venisrefa le'serefa, through the kiln in which they are thrown.

We have the pink connections over here and then we have another kind of artifice. Over here, we have an artificial son in hava nilbena levenim. Then, we get the artificial products of the sun in the Jacob story. The original products are stones. "Vayikach me'avnei hamakom," Jacob takes from the stones of the place. The people are also dealing with stone, but they reject the stone in favor of brick. "Vatehi lahem halevenah l'even," for them bricks become stones. Notice also that levenah is actually a play on l'even.

There's the lamed, there's the lamed. There's the beit, there's the beit. There's the nun, there's the nun. The difference is that the hei in levenah goes earlier in the world. It transforms into an alef, the letter which it's similar to. The levenah literally becomes an even, not just in concept, but in language as well.

In any case, we have back to back Jacob preferring the natural form of the things. The natural form of the sun goes down and he's taking from the stones of the place. The people are eschewing the sun, creating their own artificial sun, creating their own artificial stones out of bricks.

Anyway, if we continue on to the next connections, the next connections is that other beit and nun connection. This is where hava nivne lanu ir, come let us build for ourselves a city. Their exhortation, the first things they say mimics the beginning of Jacob's dream and that is right over here on the other side that we have hei, beit and hei. Vayomru hava nivne lanu ir, come let us build for ourselves a city. That seems to mimic right over here. Let me actually turn this into its proper color. This is the beginning of the dream. "V'hinei hashem nitzav alav," the declaration that begins the dream, the declaration that begins the tower. The declaration that begins the tower, look how you spell it. "Vayomru hava," hei, veit, hei. Actually, look at this over here. See this vav hanging on to the end of vayomru. Let's turn that around too. Vayomru hava, vav, hei, beit, hei, beginning of the tower, beginning of the ladder. V'hinei, vav, hei, nun, hei. Remember how we talked before about how the nun and the beit seem to kind of transpose in these stories. Here again is another example of that. The nun turns into the elongated beit so you have the same v'hinei, the same declaration of the tower. It's just crazy, but that's what's here.

"Vayomru hava nivne lanu ir u'migdal," then you of course have the structure itself. The structure in one case is the tower; the structure in the other case is the ladder. Where is the ladder? It's bottom is on the earth. Same thing with the tower. Again, as I mentioned to you last week, it's not just the correspondences; it's th correspondences in order. As you're going through the story, just one thing matches up with another thing which matches up with another thing.

One thing which I mentioned to you last week gets left out of the ladder story seems to be this over here, v'na'ase lanu shem. The motivation for building the tower is let us build a name for ourselves.

Interestingly, the motivation for the ladder is unclear. Here's the interesting question. Who really is the builder of the ladder. I guess this is really an interesting thing to ask about. In the story of the tower, we know who the builder was. The builders were human being. Who was the destroyer of the tower? It was ultimately God. The ladder doesn't get destroyed, but the ladder does get built or does appear. The question is whose ladder is it.

I can actually make two claims about this if you really think about it. One claim is that it's God's ladder. It certainly is God's ladder because it seems like God's ladder, it's this heavenly ladder where God is at the top of it. on the other hand, one might argue that, in a way, it's Jacob's ladder because Jacob, in a way, is at least a partner in producing the ladder because it's part of his dream. It's his subconscious, conjuring the ladder. Is there a partnership in some strange way between God and Jacob in the building or the creation of this ladder, subconscious of Jacob sort of causing this ladder to materialize out of thin air. And God together, in prophecy, causing the ladder to come out of thin air. It's an interesting type of possibility. Let's kind of keep that in mind. Is the tower the work of man and the ladder fundamentally the work of God, but also perhaps a partnership between God and man.

In any case, there is a ladder in one case, there's the tower in the other case. Let's keep on reading. I mentioned to you that v'na'ase lanu shem doesn't seem to have an analogue. If you look at the tower over here, the tower has a purpose and the purpose of the ladder isn't clear. The purpose of the tower is to make a name for ourselves. The human beings were trying to make a name for themselves. Whatever is the purpose of the ladder? Does that have to do with making a name for oneself and what does it really mean to make a name for oneself and whose name would be made with the ladder? We'll come back to those questions in a moment.

Let's continue on. I want to show you some of the other parallels here and then we'll again come back and assess their meaning. "Na'ase lanu shem pen nafutza al penei kal ha'aretz," let us build for ourselves a name, lest we scatter all over the place of the whole world. The next thing is that God goes down to see the city of the tower. Well, look what happens over here. We actually should probably get rid of the lirot. "Vayered Hashem lirot," God goes down and that is perfectly connected to right over here -- you see this over here on the right hand side? Vayered Hashem, God goes down. Where do you have Vayered Hashem hiding out here in the ladder. What happens with the ladder? Its top is in heaven, angels are going up and down. There's the vayered. Do you see that same vav, yud, reish, daled right over here? Now, over here there's a yud and a mem added to it because there are plural angels going down it. but there's this vayered and over here there's vayered. Who is vayered? Vayered Hashem. Can you find the Hashem working here? There it is. "V'hinei Hashem nitzav alav," there is God going down the ladder as it were. God is on top of the ladder. There are angels going down the ladder. That's just in the structure of the words. The words are the same. Vayered Hashem and vayered Hashem over here.

Really, one is a playoff of the other.

Then we had our blue. This is I think where it starts getting a little bit interesting and it's sort of where I left you off last week. Let's look at it a little bit more carefully. What is the blue? I have it marked down here as "vayered Hashem lirot et ha'ir v'et hamigdal asher banu bnei ha'adam." Vayomer Hashem hein am echad." The people have made this tower and God says here is one nation with one language. "V'ze hechilu la'asot," and this they began to do. Now, anything that they want to do will not be withheld back from them. Somehow I have to stop them. There's something threatening that God feels about the tower over here and this language.

Now, why does this seem to parallel on our other side? I think this is a little bit of a mistake. The correspondence, just to make it a little bit sharper, is going to be -- vayomer Hashem hen am echad is going to parallel vayomer ani Hashem. Vayomer Hashem is going to parallel vayomer ani Hashem. God says something here and God says something here. Let's see what they say. In the story of the tower, God says hen am echad. This is one nation. Now, does that mimic what's happening over here in the blue?

Let's take a look at the blue a little bit more carefully.

Vayomer, what does God say in the case of the ladder? God addresses Himself to Jacob and what does He say. He said I am God. I am Eloke Avraham avicha, v'Eloke Yitzchak. I am the God of Abraham, I am the God of Isaac. What does He tell him? This land that you are sleeping upon, I'm going to give you and your progeny. If you think about it, what is God really saying? What God is saying to Jacob is that the significance of Jacob isn't Jacob. If you think about it in a temporal way, if you think about time, Jacob's right here in the present tense of time. Let's talk about before Jacob and now let's talk about after Jacob. God says before you, there was Abraham your father and there was Isaac your father, your father and your grandfather. After you, there's going to be all these children and I'm going to give them the land. You're the link in a chain in the creation of a nation. It begins with one man, Abraham. He then has a child. Then you have a child and then you're going to have all these progeny and I'm going to give them this land. Ha'aretz asher ata shochev aleha lecha etnena u'l'zaracha, this land that you, one individual, are sleeping on, I'm going to give it to you and to all your many children that will burst forth. And your children are going to burst forth like the dust of the land.

If you think about it, Jacob has been promised land and your children are going to be like the dust of the land. They're going to burst forth north, east, west and south. If you think about it, this is nation building. This is God talking to Jacob about his nation that is going to come from him. However, what do we know about the nation? Think about this. Look at the contrast of the tower. What does God say looking at these people? Isn't it interesting? He's also focused on nationhood. Here's what he says. Hen am echad. Here is one nation.

If you notice, one of the contrasts between the tower and the ladder is it's almost like the tower is a story where everything goes wrong. Where there are these curses that God unfolds that are destroying the construction of this society and these plans of tower building. Somehow, in the ladder story, there are no curses, there's just blessing. God giving these blessings. It almost seems like the ladder is some sort of redemptive story that somehow almost turns the curses of the tower into blessing. We're going to see that actually playing out as we being to look at the words. One of the ways it plays out is that God, instead of trying to get rid of the single nation, this totalitarian society of tower builders that have somehow organized around the birth of technology and have built this huge tower and somehow there's something faintly wrong about that. The nationhood of the tower is threatening. Instead of destroying the nation of the tower, God is actually building the nation of Jacob. We have destroying a nation versus building a nation.

Now look at the nation itself. The characterization, the adjective that comes with this nation over here in th tower, here is one nation. Fascinating. Think about the idea of oneness with connection with nation. When it comes to the tower, the tower builders are one nation. When it comes to Jacob's ladder, what do we know about that nation? Think about time again. Here's Jacob, but it started with Abraham, one man's commitment to God. Then Isaac and his children and then Jacob and then all of these people were going to be given the land by God. Somehow, this nation is different from all other nations. This is a nation that is devoted to God. Who is God? The great single oneness. The unity on high. Yud, kei, vav, kei. It's not the time to really talk too much about that. We talked about it a little bit in the last book I wrote as a name that signifies God as the prime basic existence, the single unitary existence, the one existence from which everything derives, suggesting the contrast is that in the tower we had one nation coming together and over here, in the story of the ladder, we have a nation devoted to the one. One nation versus a nation devoted to service of the One, i.e. service of God. A nation that becomes a nation by virtue of the one, by virtue of God giving the land rather than them conquering it. It's a nation that comes into existence because of God making it into a nation and it's a nation devoted to serving that one. Here you kind of get one of the evolving contrasts between the tower and the ladder.

What is the problem with the tower? The problem with the tower is people building a tower -- I mean, people build towers all the time. Skyscrapers are so bad? Look at their motivation. They're building a name for themselves. A lot of times, people build names for themselves. That's what people do. people name libraries after themselves. But it seems like there's something about this thing which is foul, which is problematic, God is concerned about it. We've talked about the story of the tower before, not in this series of webinars, but I refer you to a more detailed treatment of this which you can find in the Genesis unveiled series on Aleph Beta, which is a long 80-part series. In there, towards the end, there is a treatment of the tower of Babel story. The basic argument that I make there is that the tower builders were people who were infatuated with their own power.

If you think about power, there's a right way to use power and there's a wrong way to use power. The right way to use power is to define a goal that's worthwhile and then to do what you can to try to marshal your power to achieve that goal. Power is a means, not an end. When it's a means not an end, then it's valuable. If I have a goal that's worthy and then I am able to bring everyone together and marshal our power, you have a civilization, a society, that can come together to build things, that's great. Nobody builds a 747 on their own. Society comes together and builds a 747. If you're building good things, that's wonderful. The tower people, they're not even building such a bad thing, are they. They're building something neutral, a tower. There's nothing wrong with a tower. It's not a good thing, but it's not a bad thing. It just is. We'll get more into the motivation of v'na'ase lanu shem in just a moment.

For the meantime, just look at how they built the tower. Over here, hava nivne lanu ir. Before, you have hava nilbena levenim. There are these two sort of exhortations. Notice that they are two separate organizations, like Speech A and Speech B. Speech A is separate from Speech B. It's not like one big speech. It's not like hey, let's make bricks and build a tower. It's hey, let's make bricks. That's Speech A. Hey, let's build a tower is Speech B. The point I made in my longer series on the tower is that there's something corrupt about that process. It's about a means becoming an end. Why are you making bricks? You're not making bricks to build a tower. That's later. It's like once we have bricks, oh, let's build a tower because we already have bricks. The answer to why they're making bricks is because they can.

The bricks are an end in and of themselves.

The story of the tower builders is the story of people who are infatuated with technology for what it can achieve, for power for its own sakes. It begins with bricks. Once we have bricks, hey, let's build a city, let's build a tower. Why? Because we can and we will name ourselves after that. We will be the tower builders. That's how we're known. After we're long gone, we will be known for our power. If you think about it on gravestones, nobody gets known for power. You get known for what you do with power.

For the relationships that you build, for the good that you do in the world, but power as an end in itself is never on anyone's gravestone. This seems to be the problem with the tower builders. They are enthralled with power for its own sake and they name themselves that. Your name is your identity. It's who you are. It's what outlasts you. What outlasts you is not your power, it's what you do with it and the value of what you do with it. There's something recursive about what the people are doing. They're powerful and then the purpose of the power is just that they should be named after that so that everybody should know that they were powerful. That just increases the power. But where is all this going? That's what God is concerned about. This is just a snowball. This is getting bigger. What are they going to build next? What are they going to build next? There's nothing constructive actually happening here. There's just something scary.

If you think about how totalitarian societies emerge, totalitarian societies are societies that are infatuated with power for its own sake. Winners and losers. Just being a winner is the highest value. Think about where that goes without making any modern day political commentary, but it's scary when one thrives on power for its own sake. If you think about it, the hen am echad piece over here, I think really fits into that. The nature of nationhood with the tower and the ladder. This gets to the title that I gave to this week's webinar which is the story of a ladder as a window into Israel's purpose in the world. The purpose of Israel seems to be expressed by the story of the ladder rather than the story of the tower. It's an inverse in a way of the story of the tower. The tower was about a narcissistic focus on one's own name. The tower is about expressing one's own tower as an end in itself. The tower is about taking the greatest resource of all. What is the greatest resource or power, if you really think about it? More than natural resources, more than gold, more than oil, more than anything else you might find in the ground, is human resources. The greatest human resource is unity. There's power to be found in number. If I can organize a society and pool its resources, I have tremendous power. That's hen am echad. There's one nation, a nation that is unified. That nation coming together is a huge expression of power. But if all it is is a single nation and that is its whole value, it's one nation united and it stops there, then that is narcissistic and it's going to fold in on itself.

There is another possibility. One nation united under God. If you think about the Pledge of Allegiance; one nation under God. There's that power, but then devoted to something more than itself, something beyond itself, in this case God. That over here is the contrast between the two nations, a nation that is one or a nation conceived by the one and devoted to the one. A nation that is not in service of itself, but it's in service of the great beyond, of something beyond itself, of its creator, of its national creator, of the creator of the world.

Getting back to the implications over here, let's talk about the motivation for building the tower and the motivation for the ladder. One of the great questions which I think these correspondences leave us with is when it comes time to build the tower, the tower is rosho bashamayim and it's there v'na'ase lanu shem. Now, next week, when we come back, we're going to talk about na'ase lanu shem a little bit more dramatically, about what that might really mean. I'll give you that for homework to think about other stories in the Bible where the building of name is important, it takes primary importance. Is the story of the tower and the story of the ladder connected to those stories.

But even before we got there, if you just think about that idea, na'ase lanu shem, to build ourselves a name, to build ourselves a legacy. Legacy building is a strange kind of thing. When you do it for other people, that's a beautiful thing. That's the whole idea of levirate marriage, building someone else's legacy. When you do it for yourself, it begins to smack of narcissism. If the only thing that matters to you is the creation of your own legacy. Not what you do in life, but you are nothing else productive, but you're just focusing on building a name, it doesn't really work. Ironically, your name comes as a byproduct for what you build. You build something useful and then that becomes your name as a matter of course because that's just the way it is. That becomes your name. But you don't focus on building your name because then what is it that you're really building?

V'na'ase lanu shem, over here on the right hand side, is a plot, is a reason for living which is destined to disintegrate. Here's we're building this tower and it's going to be there to create a name for ourselves. The question is what really is the purpose of the ladder. Does the ladder relate at all to the building of a name? Who is the name builder. One's tempted to say that the story of the ladder is about the building of a name, but the building of God's name. Now, the question is is that the motivation for the tower.

Notice that v'na'ase lanu shem, interestingly, is absent from the story of the ladder. There is no correspondence to na'ase lanu shem. There's just rosho magi'a hashamayma. The top of the ladder is in the heaven and then the angels are going up and down. The question is what is the purpose of that.

What I'd like to suggest here is that maybe it is about building a name, but not as a direct desire, but as a byproduct, which is the way it's supposed to be. Again, when I make a name for myself, the way it really works is I don't focus on making a name for myself. I do stuff and then I get known for the stuff that I do. maybe that's what's happening over here. There's a healthy version of let us make a name for ourselves. Not a name for humanity, but a name for God. What does that even mean? What does God want? What does God actually want to achieve? Don't ask about the means, ask about the end. What is the end desire that God is trying to achieve out of which a name would come? Maybe it's this; hinei malachei Elokim olim v'yordim. Because the notion of a ladder with God on top and earth below -- what's the natural realm for God? The natural realm for God is the heavens. The natural realm for people is the earth. Each builder is seeking to penetrate another realm which is not natural for it. the people are seeking to penetrate the heavens for the express purpose of building a name for themselves. That's all they want. What does God want? God also wants to penetrate the earth, to come from heaven to earth. For what purpose? Not to make a name for Himself, but because hinei malachim olim v'yordim bo. To simply establish that connection. The connection is valuable in and of itself. God is the creator. He doesn't want to be divorced for his creation. The creation lives on a different realm as we talked about before.

I think I've mentioned to you a couple of times that analogy that I often give to God and the world in terms of the Monopoly game. Where does Parker live? The Parker atheists, the little hand and shoe going around the board, they never can find Parker. Parker Brothers makes the game, but they're not resident on the board. Why? Because you wouldn't expect Parker to be on the board. That's not his realm. The creator doesn't live in the creation. He lives in a realm beyond creation. Parker lives in the real world. Little hand, little shoe go around on the monopoly board. Same thing with God. God lives in heavens. Hashamayim shamayim laHashem, the heavens are for God and the earth is for people.

Nevertheless, God doesn't want to be a prisoner of the heavens. God wants to have something to do with this world. Even though it's not His native environment. Even though it's not a place where God would survive, that God would live. God doesn't live in the world, He's not a physical being. Space and time are not the constructs within which God lives. The ladder is some sort of device to connect that's very important to God. To actually connect heaven and earth; to come together in that kind of way. That is what the ladder is seeking to do.

Now, that connection is of infinite value to God in and of itself. That is the analog to na'ase lanu shem. That is to say that instead of the motivation being to make yourselves a name, it's not about legacy, it's not about me ensuring my own legacy, it's about God ensuring some sort of connection. That's the motivation. Connection. The end is the motivation. Now, once that's true that the purpose is malachei Elokim olim v'yordim bo, human being and the heavens being connected, there being some sort of transit point between then, so now it's an interesting question of perspective.

From God's perspective, what's the purpose of the ladder? It's this transit point where you can go back and forth and God can be connected to humanity. If you'd switch perspectives, though, switch the perspective to human kind, humanity may view that a little bit differently.

I suggested to you before who is the architect of the ladder. The answer to that may not be so clear. I suggested that maybe God and Jacob are partners in that; they're co-builders of the ladders. Maybe on some level, if you ask who is the ladder or what is the ladder, maybe the ladder is the nation. The ladder is the people of Israel. The ladder is this nation. That is their purpose in the world. To be that connecting force. Here I refer you to the argument I make in my book, The Exodus You Almost Passed Over. The purpose of the nation is to connect heaven and earth. To be some sort of way that you can bridge that, but there's human beings below who are connected who provide some sort of connection through humanity. That's why they're called a nation of priests. What do priests do? They're there to forge some sort of connection. Israel is there to forge some sort of connection, to be some sort of role model. To be some sort of way that humanity, as a whole, can connect with God.

If that's true, if they are the ladder, what's their final version of this? The final achievement is not just the creation of the nation, but the creation of a nation that ultimately builds a house for God on the land.

Think about Bet El, the house of God. This is the house of God. There's that sense of awe. This takes you back to our very first webinar of the story of Jacob's dream where I connected the story of Jacob's dream to the laws of tithing. If you remember those laws of tithing, they were all about coming back to this place, but what was this place? It was the house for God that people built. That's a manifestation of the conclusion of their mission. To be able to really bring God down into this world. To make a house for Him in this world where people can come and worship God and where God, somehow, is resident. That his being, that's outside of space and time, can somehow come into the world of space and time in this temple.

By the way, what is the name of the temple as the laws of tithing describe it? This goes back to that tithing piece. If you look at the laws of tithing, look what we say about this. What do you do when you tithe which was, again, connected to the story of Jacob's ladder? If you missed this, I refer you back to our very first webinar where we connected these two as well. Look at how we describe the temple in the law of tithing. "If you come to bring the second tithe to the temple, it's very far away." What do we call this place? We call it the place which God chooses to make His name resident, to bring his name into the world. Isn't that interesting? That's how humanity would perceive it. It's almost like God is describing in terms of our perspective. What are we doing for God? We're making a name for God in the world.

We're allowing God to have an impact on the world. It's not quite how God would see it. God, in and of Himself, sees it as a ladder. It's a transit point between. There's angels going up, there's angels going down; it's a way that God can connect with the world. But from our perspective, the significance is, in a way, we're giving a great gift to God, almost like the gift of levirate marriage. We're giving God the chance to actually have a legacy in this world.

When you focus on your own legacy, it's narcissistic. When you focus on building someone else's legacy, that's levirate marriage. That's a wonderful thing. That's a great gift. We see the temple's significance is a place where God's name is now resident in the world, where God has a legacy in this world. That's part of the way we see our mission if you think about what Abraham does over and over again. Vayikra b'shem Hashem, he calls out in the name of God. It's the antithesis of the tower. The tower was all about building your own name. For Abraham, it's all about building the names of other. In this case, building the name of God. Even though God doesn't see it exactly this way. God sees it as there's a transit point. Man sees it that I've built a house for You, I've helped establish your name.

We're just about out of time here. I'm trying to keep these webinars to around 45 minutes or so, but let me leave you, if I can, with, I guess, one other thought here. The final thought I want to point out to you is one more thing which I think brings our mission as a nation into focus. God says here is one nation. Let's go a little bit further in the tower story and see its reflection in the story of the ladder.

Here's what God does. "Hava nerda v'navla sham sefasam asher lo yishme'u ish." This is God's curse here He's going to destroy the nation. By doing what? By mixing up their language. Nobody can understand each other. People can't understand each other's language anymore.

The question is if all these parallels are this, what would that be paralleled to in the story of the ladder? It would have to be somewhere after the blue. Do we have an example of something like this? Just look for the language cues to see if you can find it. Over here, this is the destruction, the ultimate curse of the tower. Is there a great blessing that would be the opposite of this in the story of the ladder? If we keep on reading, you're actually going to find something which is kind of fascinating.

See over here how this start vav, nun, beis, v'navla. See how that's the same. I'm going to show you another piece of this. See this sefatam over here, their language. I'm going to make up their language. Look a bit further here. V'nivrechu vecha kal mishpechot, shin, pei, and then here's the tav right over there. One is a playoff of the other. The navla sham sefasam becomes v'nivrechu becha kal mishpechot ha'adama v'zaracha. I think this is the correspondence. I want to suggest that these guys correspond. The curse of the tower is a perfect inverse of what becomes the blessing of the ladder. If you think about it, the blessing of the ladder is there to undo the curse of the tower because what was the curse of the tower? The curse of the tower was fundamental dispersion, disunity, which was that their unity got them into trouble. I'm going to disperse them and they're all not going to understand each other's languages.

They're all not going to be able to get along. They're all going to have all these different kinds of ideas. They're going to become not one nation, but what's the unit out of which nations are made? The next unit, the next size family, there are family units. Family units come together to make a nation. A nation disperses and becomes just families.

Look what happens over here. There used to be one nation, but now what are they? They become families of the earth. The great Abrahamic blessing, as it was expressed to Abraham and as it is expressed to Jacob over here is the same language. Through you, blessing will come to who? To all the families of the earth. Where do all the families of the earth come from? They came from the tower of Babel. The tower of Babel disperses everyone so they become all the families of the earth. You see it, by the way, in Genesis Chapter 10. There it talks about that language of families of the earth is associated with the tower of Babel. Now, what is the story of the tower about? It's about somehow undoing the curse. You have these disunified families. Could you possibly bring them together.

I think this is what really brings a mind-blowing perspective into the purpose of Israel. The purpose of Israel is not just to do spiritually wonderful things. It is. But what's significant about it is coming up with a purpose literally outside of humanity. Humanity lives in its own world of space and time. As long as it's all about us, then it's recursive. If you live just to be able to live to be able to live, then what's the meaning of your life. If you can devote yourself to someone beyond, then it means something. The ultimate beyond is someone beyond this world. To our creator who lives in an entirely other realm. If we can devote ourselves to God, if we can be not just an am echad, but a nation devoted to the one, so then now look. Through that, blessing will come to the world.

The problem was disunity and fragmentation. Nobody understanding each other. Through that, look hat happens. There are all these families of the earth that are disunifed. They don't understand each other. It's not just that they can't build a tower together. Ultimately, what comes of not understanding each other? Misunderstanding. Conflict. War. All of that emerges. If you think about a messianic vision, a messianic vision is somehow getting beyond that. Getting to a point where there is no more war. How could that happen where somehow the unity of the tower is recaptured, but it's a constructive unity. A unity in which people come together for the purpose of something outside of themselves. A service of the one. Somehow, that's what Israel is meant to do. To be able to somehow conquer the misunderstanding and to give people a unifying objective to unify around them. To say yes, you're Chinese and yes, you're French and yes, you're African, but it's about you. Let' come together. Of course we're different. You bring this to the table and you bring that to the table. Your culture is different from mine and that's great. Let's celebrate the cornucopia of differences between us and bring them all together towards a unifying purpose of something outside of ourselves. Come with us together and serve the one. That is the purpose of Israel. It's the way blessing comes to the fragmented humanity which is created by the ashes and fragments of the tower. The fragments of one nation which is a family group can become blessed and finding in recapturing a kind of unity in the service of something beyond themselves.

There's more to talk about in the story of Jacob's dream and the tower of Babel. There's one other final series of parallels which I will show you next week, which is really pretty mind blowing, as well as connections between this text and a couple of other texts. Maybe I will post something between now and our next get-together as a kind of homework for you to give you a little taste of the next text that I want to show you I think interfaces with the tower of Babel and the story of Jacob's dream as we continue to build this picture of the meaning of th story of Jacob's ladder. Thanks for hanging out with me. Please give me your comments. I love your comments. I love to hear what you have to say. You guys are really my partners in this. The comments are really helpful in helping me see a larger picture and build out the meaning of this.

There was a great comment by Karen which I didn't get to this week about he'echilam and hachalom which I'm going to talk to you about next week if I get a chance, really very mind blowing. But please give me your comments. I love to see them and I will try to respond to you as I've been trying to do on Facebook Live. Looking forward to seeing you guys next week and between now and then, a very good Shabbos to you. This is David Fohrman signing out.