

SOURCE NOTES
THE PHANTOM AKEIDAH AND OTHER BIBLICAL SURPRISES
BY RABBI DAVID FOHRMAN
LECTURE ONE

Selection I

God's Words to Eve; God's Words to Cain: "Timshal"
Genesis 3:16 and 4:7

- 3:16 To the woman He said, 'I will greatly increase your anguish and your pregnancy. It will be with anguish that you will give birth to children. Your passion will be to your husband, and he will rule over you.'
- 4:7 If you do good, will there not be special privilege? And if you do not do good, sin is crouching at the door. It lusts after you, but you can rule over it.'

Selection II

The Cloud Atop Mount Sinai
Exodus 24:15-18

- 24:15 As soon as Moses reached the mountain top, the cloud covered the mountain.
- 24:16 God's glory rested on Mount Sinai, and it was covered by the cloud for six days. On the seventh day, He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud.
- 24:17 To the Israelites, the appearance of God's glory on the mountain top was like a devouring flame.
- 24:18 Moses went into the cloud, and climbed to the mountain top. Moses was to remain on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

Selection III

The Cloud Descends Upon the Tabernacle
Exodus 40:34-38

- 40:34 The cloud covered the Communion Tent, and God's glory filled the Tabernacle.
- 40:35 Moses could not come into the Communion Tent, since the cloud had rested on it, and God's glory filled the Tabernacle.
- 40:36 [Later], when the cloud would rise up from the Tabernacle, it [would be a signal] for the Israelites to move on, [and this was true] in all their travels.
- 40:37 Whenever the cloud did not rise, they would not move on, [waiting] until the day it did.
- 40:38 God's cloud would then remain on the Tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night. This was visible to the entire family of Israel, in all their travels.

Selection IV

"Karahu" / "Happenstance" with Mordechai and Haman
Esther 4:7; 6:13

7 Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and ^(A)the exact amount of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews.

Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish origin, you will not overcome him, but will surely fall before him."

Selection V

Vayehi HaYom: Elisha and the Shunamite Woman

II Kings, 4:8-37

18When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father to the reapers.

19He said to his father, "My head, my head." And he said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother."

20When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and then died.

21She went up and ^(L)laid him on the bed of ^(M)the man of God, and shut the door behind him and went out.

22Then she called to her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and return."

23He said, "Why will you go to him today? It is neither ^(N)new moon nor sabbath." And she said, "It will be well."

24Then she saddled a donkey and said to her servant, "Drive and go forward; do not slow down the pace for me unless I tell you."

25So she went and came to the man of God to ^(O)Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, "Behold, there is the Shunammite.

26"Please run now to meet her and say to her, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?'" And she answered, "It is well."

27When she came to the man of God ^(P)to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came near to push her away; but the man of God said, "Let her alone, for her soul is troubled within her; and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me."

28Then she said, "Did I ask for a son from my lord? Did I not say, '^(Q)Do not deceive me?'"

29 Then he said to Gehazi, "^(R)Gird up your loins and ^(S)take my staff in your hand, and go your way; if you meet any man, do not ^(T)salute him, and if anyone salutes you, do not answer him; and ^(U)lay my staff on the lad's face."

30 The mother of the lad said, "^(V)As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." And he arose and followed her.

31 Then Gehazi passed on before them and laid the staff on the lad's face, but there was no sound or response. So he returned to meet him and told him, "The lad ^(W)has not awakened."

32 When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead and laid on his bed.

33 So he entered and ^(X)shut the door behind them both and prayed to the LORD.

34 And ^(Y)he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm.

35 Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and ^(Z)stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes.

36 He called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Take up your son."

37 Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and ^(AA)she took up her son and went out.

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LECTURE TWO

Selection I

Sarah and the Giving of Hagar to Abraham

Genesis 16:1-6

16:1 Abram's wife Sarai had not borne him any children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl by the name of Hagar.

16:2 Sarai said to Abram, 'God has kept me from having children. Come to my slave, and hopefully I will have sons through her.' Abram heeded Sarai.

16:3 After Abram had lived in Canaan for ten years, his wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian her slave, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife.

16:4 [Abram] came to her, and she conceived. When she realized that she was pregnant, she looked at her mistress with contempt.

16:5 Sarai said to Abram, 'It's all your fault! I myself placed my slave in your arms! Now that she sees herself pregnant, she looks at me with disrespect. Let God judge between me and you!'

16:6 Abram replied to Sarai, 'Your slave is in your hands. Do with her as you see fit.' Sarai oppressed her, and [Hagar] ran away from her.

Selection II

The Promise of Children to Abraham

Genesis 15:1-6

15:1 After these events, God's word came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Fear not Abram, I am your shield. Your reward is very great.'

15:2 Abram said, 'O Lord, God, what will you give me if I remain childless? The heir to my household will be Damascus Eliezer.'

15:3 Abram continued, 'You have given me no children. A member of my household will inherit what is mine.'

15:4 Suddenly God's word came to him: 'That one will not be your heir! One born from your own body will inherit what is yours.'

15:5 He then took [Abram] outside and said, 'Look at the sky and count the stars. See if you can count them.' [God] then said to him, 'That is how [numerous] your descendants will be.'

15:6 [Abram] believed in God, and He counted it as righteousness.

Selection III

Interpreting Sarah's Anger Towards Abraham

***Rashi* to Genesis 16:5**

“When you prayed to the Almighty, Blessed is He, and said: ‘What can you give me, for I am childless’, you prayed only for yourself. You should have prayed for both of us, and then I would have been answered along with you” ...

Selection IV

The Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 21:1-20

21:1 God granted special providence to Sarah as He said He would, and God did what He promised for Sarah.

21:2 Sarah became pregnant, and she gave birth to Abraham's son in his old age. It was at the exact time that God had promised it to him.

21:3 Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son he had, to whom Sarah had just given birth.

21:4 When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded.

21:5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born.

21:6 Sarah said, 'God has given me laughter. All who hear about it will laugh for me.'

21:7 She said, 'Who would have even suggested to Abraham that Sarah would be nursing children? But here I have given birth to a son in his old age!'

21:8 The child grew and was weaned. Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

21:9 But Sarah saw the son that Hagar had born to Abraham playing.

21:10 She said to Abraham, 'Drive away this slave together with her son. The son of this slave will not share the inheritance with my son Isaac!'

21:11 This troubled Abraham very much because it involved his son.

21:12 But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be troubled because of the boy and your slave. Do everything that Sarah tells you. It is through Isaac that you will gain posterity.

21:13 But still, I will also make the slave's son into a nation, for he is your child.'

21:14 Abraham got up early in the morning. He took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, placing it on her shoulder. He sent her away with the boy. She left and roamed aimlessly in the Beer-sheba desert.

21:15 When the water in the skin was used up, she set the boy under one of the bushes.

21:16 She walked away, and sat down facing him, about a bowshot away. She said, 'Let me not see the boy die.' She sat there facing him, and she wept in a loud voice.

21:17 God heard the boy weeping. God's angel called Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What's the matter Hagar? Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy's voice there where he is.

21:18 Go and lift up the boy. Keep your hand strong on him, for I will make of him a great nation.'

21:19 God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, giving the boy some to drink.

21:20 God was with the boy. [The boy] grew up and lived in the desert, where he became an expert archer.

Selection V
Ishmael's Laughter
Rashi to Genesis 21:10

From Sarah's response "The child of this maidservant will not inherit along with my child...", you can infer [what Ishmael was saying when he was taunting Isaac]. He was struggling with Isaac over the right of the firstborn, saying: "I am firstborn and I will take a double portion". He would then take Isaac out into the fields and cast arrows towards him, [but when confronted], would say, "I was only joking..."

Selection VI
Abraham and Samuel: "It Was Evil in their Eyes..."
Genesis 21:11-12 as Compared to I Samuel, 8:6-7

21:11 This was very bad in Abraham's eyes because it involved his son.
21:12 But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be troubled because of the boy and your slave. Everything that Sarah tells you, listen to her voice; for it is through Isaac that you will gain posterity.

* * *

8:6. It was very bad in Samuel's eyes when they said "Give us a king to judge us", and Samuel prayed to God.
8:7. And God said to Samuel "Listen to the voice of this people, to all that they tell you; for it is not you who they despise, but they despise Me, not wishing Me to be kind over them.

Selection VII
The Akeidah
Genesis 22:1-14

After these events, God tested Abraham.
'Abraham!' He said.

'Yes.'

22:2 'Take your son, the only one you love - Isaac - and go away to the Moriah area. Bring him as an all-burned offering on one of the mountains that I will designate to you.'
22:3 Abraham got up early in the morning and saddled his donkey. He took his two men with him, along with his son Isaac. He cut wood for the offering, and set out, heading for the place that God had designated.
22:4 On the third day, Abraham looked up, and saw the place from afar.

22:5 Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go to that place. We will worship and then return to you.'

22:6 Abraham took the offering wood and placed it on [the shoulders of] his son Isaac. He himself took the fire and the slaughter knife, and the two of them went together.

22:7 Isaac spoke up to Abraham.
'Father.'

'Yes, my son.'

'Here is the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for the offering?'

22:8 'God will see to a lamb for an offering, my son,' replied Abraham.
The two of them continued together.

22:9 When they finally came to the place designated by God, Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood. He then bound his son Isaac, and placed him on the altar on top of the wood.

22:10 Abraham reached out and took the slaughter knife to slit his son's throat.

22:11 God's angel called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham! Abraham!'
'Yes.'

22:12 'Do not harm the boy. Do not do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God. You have not withheld your only son from Him.'

22:13 Abraham then looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. He went and got the ram, sacrificing it as an all-burned offering in his son's place.

22:14 Abraham named the place 'God will See' (Adonoy Yir'eh). Today, it is therefore said, 'On God's Mountain, He will be seen.'

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LECTURE THREE

Selection I

Rashi on the Double “And They Walked Together”

Rashi to Genesis 22:6-8

The verse states: “and they both walked together”. Abraham, who knew he was going to slaughter his son, walked with the same equanimity and happiness as Isaac, who knew nothing of what would transpire.

The verse states: God will show for himself a lamb. In other words, God will see for himself – choose for himself – the lamb. And if there is no lamb, then – “as an offering my son”. [In other words, Abraham’s words were ambiguous, and could be interpreted as suggesting that Isaac was the lamb]. And even though at this point, Isaac understood [between the lines] that he was going to die, still, the verse states again “and they both walked together” i.e., with shared purpose.

Selection II

Rashi on Yaakov’s “Lifting Up His Voice and Crying” When He Saw Rachel for the First Time

Rashi to Genesis 29:11

The verse states: “And Jacob cried”. He cried because he foresaw prophetically that she would not be buried with him...

Selection III

The Akeidah: The Binding of Isaac

Genesis 22:1-14

22:1 After these events, God tested Abraham.
'Abraham!' He said.

'Yes.'

22:2 'Take your son, the only one you love - Isaac - and go away to the Moriah area. Bring him as an all-burned offering on one of the mountains that I will designate to you.'

22:3 Abraham got up early in the morning and saddled his donkey. He took his two men with him, along with his son Isaac. He cut wood for the offering, and set out, heading for the place that God had designated.

22:4 On the third day, Abraham looked up, and saw the place from afar.

22:5 Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go to that place. We will worship and then return to you.'

22:6 Abraham took the offering wood and placed it on [the shoulders of] his son Isaac. He himself took the fire and the slaughter knife, and the two of them went together.

22:7 Isaac spoke up to Abraham.
'Father.'

'Yes, my son.'

'Here is the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for the offering?'

22:8 'God will see to a lamb for an offering, my son,' replied Abraham.
The two of them continued together.

22:9 When they finally came to the place designated by God, Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood. He then bound his son Isaac, and placed him on the altar on top of the wood.

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22:11 God's angel called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham! Abraham!'
'Yes.'

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22:13 Abraham then looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. He went and got the ram, sacrificing it as an all-burned offering in his son's place.

22:14 Abraham named the place 'God will See' (Adonoy Yir'eh). Today, it is therefore said, 'On God's Mountain, He will be seen.'

Selection IV

The "Binding of Ishmael"

Genesis 21:14-21

21: 14 Abraham got up early in the morning. He took bread and a [skin](#) of water, and gave it to Hagar, placing it on her shoulder. He sent her away with the boy. She left and roamed aimlessly in the [Beer-sheba desert](#).

21: 15 When the water in the skin was used up, she set the boy under one of the bushes.

21: 16 She walked away, and sat down facing him, about a bowshot away. She said, 'Let me not see the boy die.' She sat there facing him, and she wept in a loud voice.

21: 17 God heard the boy weeping. God's angel called Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What's the matter Hagar? Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy's voice there where he is.'

21: 18 Go and lift up the boy. [Keep your hand strong on him](#), for I will make of him a great nation.'

21: 19 God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, giving the boy some to drink.

21: 20 God was with the boy. [The boy] grew up and lived in the desert, where he became an expert [archer](#).

21: 21 He settled in the [Paran Desert](#), and his mother got him a wife from [Egypt](#).

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LECTURE FOUR
“HERE I AM: MAN’S *HINEINI* AND GOD’S *HINEINI*”

Selection I

Rashi on the Meaning of *Hineini*

Rashi to Genesis 22:1

“Here I am”: This is the response of the righteous; a language of humility; a language of preparedness.

Selection II

Moses’ Dialogue with God Concerning His Name

Exodus 3:11-14

3:11 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?' said Moses to God. 'And how can I possibly get the Israelites out of Egypt?'

3:12 'Because I will be with you,' replied [God]. 'Proof that I have sent you will come when you get the people out of Egypt. All of you will then become God's servants on this mountain.'

3:13 Moses said to God, 'So I will go to the Israelites and say, 'Your fathers' God sent me to you.' They will immediately ask me what His name is. What shall I say to them?'

3:14 'I Will Be Who I Will Be,' replied God to Moses.

Selection III

Rashi on “I Will Be That Which I Will Be”

Rashi to Exodus 3:14

The verse states: “I Will Be That Which I Will Be”. [Why the double language? It denotes the following:] “*I will be* with them in their current travail; [the same One] who *will be* with them in other travails imposed by other kingdoms”. When Moses heard this, he said before God: “Master of the Universe! Why am I mentioning to them other, future travails. It is enough for them the hardship they are going through now!” God replied to him: “You make a good argument. Thus you should say to them: “*I Will Be*’ sent me to you”.

Selection IV

God's Holiness, as Proclaimed by the Angels

Isaiah 6:3

And they will call to each other saying: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole world is filled with His Glory.

Selection V

***Rashi* on the Double Language "Do not send forth your hand" and "do not do anything to him"**

***Rashi* to Genesis 22:12**

Do Not Send Forth Your Hand. Abraham said to the Lord: "If so, I have come here for nothing. Let me make a wound, at least, and let out a little blood." What did God say to him? "**And do not do anything to him**". In other words, don't even make a little wound.

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SOURCE NOTES
THE PHANTOM AKEIDAH AND OTHER BIBLICAL SURPRISES
BY RABBI DAVID FOHRMAN
“THE SHUNAMITE WOMAN AND THE SHADOWS OF ISHMAEL”
LECTURE FIVE

Selection I

Vayehi HaYom: Elisha and the Shunamite Woman
II Kings, 4:8-37

18 When the child was grown, the day came that he went out to his father to the reapers.

19 He said to his father, "My head, my head." And he said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother."

20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her lap until noon, and then died.

21 She went up and ^(L)laid him on the bed of ^(M)the man of God, and shut the door behind him and went out.

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25 So she went and came to the man of God to ^(O)Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi his servant, "Behold, there is the Shunammite.

26 "Please run now to meet her and say to her, 'Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?'" And she answered, "It is well."

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29Then he said to Gehazi, "^(R)Gird up your loins and ^(S)take my staff in your hand, and go your way; if you meet any man, do not ^(T)salute him, and if anyone salutes you, do not answer him; and ^(U)lay my staff on the lad's face."

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32When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead and laid on his bed.

33So he entered and ^(X)shut the door behind them both and prayed to the LORD.

34And ^(Y)he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm.

35Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and ^(Z)stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes.

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Selection II

The Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael

Genesis 21:1-20

21:1 God granted special providence to Sarah as He said He would, and God did what He promised for Sarah.

21:2 Sarah became pregnant, and she gave birth to Abraham's son in his old age. It was at the exact time that God had promised it to him.

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21:4 When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded.

21:5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born.

21:6 Sarah said, 'God has given me laughter. All who hear about it will laugh for me.'

21:7 She said, 'Who would have even suggested to Abraham that Sarah would be nursing children? But here I have given birth to a son in his old age!'

21:8 The child grew and was weaned. Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

21:9 But Sarah saw the son that Hagar had born to Abraham playing.

21:10 She said to Abraham, 'Drive away this slave together with her son. The son of this slave will not share the inheritance with my son Isaac!'

21:11 This troubled Abraham very much because it involved his son.

21:12 But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be troubled because of the boy and your slave. Do everything that Sarah tells you. It is through Isaac that you will gain posterity.

21:13 But still, I will also make the slave's son into a nation, for he is your child.'

21:14 Abraham got up early in the morning. He took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, placing it on her shoulder. He sent her away with the boy. She left and roamed aimlessly in the Beer-sheba desert.

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21:17 God heard the boy weeping. God's angel called Hagar from heaven and said to her, 'What's the matter Hagar? Do not be afraid. God has heard the boy's voice there where he is.

21:18 Go and lift up the boy. Keep your hand strong on him, for I will make of him a great nation.'

21:19 God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went and filled the skin with water, giving the boy some to drink.

21:20 God was with the boy. [The boy] grew up and lived in the desert, where he became an expert archer.

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LECTURES SIX AND SEVEN

Selection I

Rashi on Jacob's Response to Joseph's Dreams
Rashi to Genesis 37:11

He watched over the thing; meaning, he waited and hoped for the time it would come to be...

Selection II

Rashi on Joseph's "Hineini"
Rashi to Genesis 37:13

Joseph said "hineini". The language of humility and alacrity. He quickly moved to fulfill the command of his father, even though he knew his brothers hated him.

Selection III

Rashi on "The Valley of Chevron"
Rashi to Genesis 37:14

Jacob sent him from the Valley of Chevron. But isn't Chevron in the mountains? Rather, it suggests, he sent him from the depths of a secret of that righteous person who was buried in Chevron [Abraham], to fulfill that which was said to Abraham at the Covenant Between the Pieces, "your children will be wanderers in a land not their own..."

Selection IV

Ramban on "The Valley of Chevron"
Ramban to Genesis 37:14

From the Valley of Chevron. The verse mentions the place he sent him from, so as to say that there was a great distance between the two places, and for this reason they were able to do harm to him with impunity, since his father was far away. And this also tells us how much Joseph strengthened himself to go after them even to a faraway place, and didn't say to his father "how can I go? They hate me!"

Selection V

Rashi on *Shechem*
Rashi to Genesis 37:14

And he came to Shechem. A place prepared for evil. There the tribes acted badly; there Dinah was raped; there the Kingdom of David would ultimately be split, as it says “Rechavam went to Shechem... (I Kings, 12:1).

Selection VI

Rashi on the Identity of the Man Who Finds Joseph Rashi to Genesis 37:15

And a man found him. [Who was the man?] It was the angel Gabriel, as we see that elsewhere, Gabriel is called a man (see Daniel 9:11).

Selection VII

Ramban, in Explanation of the Midrash Cited by Rashi Ramban to Genesis 37:15

The man found him wandering in the field. The verse goes at length to describe this, to say that there were many reasons Joseph could have given himself as rationalizations to turn back; but he put up with everything that came his way for the honor of his father. It also tell us that what God plans comes to be, and man’s contrivances fall away, for the Master of the Universe brought someone to show Joseph the way, without the knowledge of Jacob. This is what the sages mean when they say that these men were angels...

Selection VIII

Ramban, on the “Angel’s” Words to Joseph: Understanding the Relation Between *Peshat and Derash* Ramban to Genesis 37:17

They left here... It means “they left brotherhood behind, to find ways to kill you” [a play on words of the verses phrase *they left here and went to Dotan*. Rashi comments on this “a verse doesn’t leave its simple meaning”, [as if to say this comment of the sages departs from the simple meaning of the verse]. But the sages don’t mean that the man actually said these words to Joseph. Clearly, he couldn’t have; for if he did actually warn Joseph of the danger, Joseph clearly wouldn’t have gone to Dotan because he would have known he was endangering himself. What they mean is that Gabriel told Joseph the truth, in that he used words that could have two meanings – and both meanings are true; its just that Joseph didn’t understand the second, hidden meaning, and he went about his way, trusting only the open meaning of the words.

Selection IX

**Rashi, explaining “These Are The Generations of Yaakov – Yosef”
Rashi to Genesis 37:2**

The verse hangs the generations of Jacob on Joseph for a number of reasons. First, Jacob labored in Lavan’s household only for Rachel, the mother of Joseph. Second, Joseph’s face looked just like Jacob’s. Third, everything that happened in Jacob’s life happened in Joseph’s. Each was hated; the brothers of each tried to kill him, etc.

Selection X

**Rashi, explaining why Jacob Loved Joseph
Rashi to Genesis 37:3**

The child of zekunim. He was born when Jacob was old. Onkelos translates it to mean that he was a wise son, in that everything Jacob learned from Shem and Ever, he passed on to him. One more thing: His face looked just like Jacob’s.

Selection XI

**Ramban, explaining the Brothers’ “Doubled” Hatred of Joseph
Ramban to 37:8**

What does it mean when the verse says “they hated him for his dreams and for his words”? It means they hated him not just for the dreams, but for his *telling* these dreams to them as well, as if to taunt them. It was like he was saying “hey, listen to this dream I just dreamt!”.

Selection XII

**Rashi, explaining the Significance of Joseph’s Coat
Rashi to Genesis 37:23**

When the verse says they stripped him of his cloak, that means they stripped his coat. When it adds “his cloak of many colors”, this refers to a second garment, the one his father added for him, more than all the other brothers.

Selection XIII

“When a Man Shall Have Two Wives...”

Deuteronomy 21:15-17

(Compare Red Highlights Here to Red Highlights in Sections XIV-XVI)

טו כִּי־תִהְיֶיךָ לְאִישׁ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים הָאֶחָת אֶהְיֶה
וְהָאֶחָת שְׁנוֹאָה וְיִלְדוּ־לּוֹ בָנִים הָאֶהְיֶה וְהַשְּׁנוֹאָה וְהָיָה הַבֵּן הַבְּכוֹר

לְשֵׁנֶיהָ: טוֹ וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַנִּחַלְוֹ אֶת־בָּנָיו אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־יְהִיָּה לוֹ לֹא
יִוָּכַל לְבַכֵּר אֶת־בְּן־הָאֲחֻבָּה עַל־פְּנֵי בְן־הַשְּׂנוּאָה הַבְּכֹר: יז כִּי
אֶת־הַבְּכֹר בְּן־הַשְּׂנוּאָה יְכִיר לְתֵת לוֹ פִּי שְׁנַיִם בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יִמְצָא לוֹ
כִּי־הוּא רֵאשִׁית אֲנֹנוּ לוֹ מִשְׁפֵּט הַבְּכֹרָה:

Selection XIV

The Sale of Joseph

Genesis, Chapter 37

37:1 Meanwhile, Jacob settled in the area where his father had lived in the land of Canaan.

37:2 These are the chronicles of Jacob:
Joseph was 17 years old. As a lad, he would tend the sheep with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. Joseph brought his father a bad report about them.

37:3 Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, since he was the child of his old age. He made [Joseph] a long colorful coat.

37:4 When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than all the rest, they began to hate him. They could not say a peaceful word to him.

37:5 Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.

37:6 'Listen to the dream I had,' he said to them.

37:7 'We were binding sheaves in the field, when my sheaf suddenly stood up erect. Your sheaves formed a circle around my sheaf, and bowed down to it.'

37:8 'Do you want to be our king?' retorted the brothers. 'Do you intend to rule over us?' Because of his dreams and words, they hated him even more.

37:9 He had another dream and told it to his brothers. 'I just had another dream,' he said. 'The sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.'

37:10 When he told it to his father and brothers, his father scolded him and said, 'What kind of dream did you have? Do you want me, your mother, and your brothers to come and prostrate ourselves on the ground to you?'

37:11 His brothers became very jealous of him, but his father suspended judgment.

37:12 [Joseph's] brothers left to tend their father's sheep in Shechem.

37:13 Israel said to Joseph, 'I believe your brothers are keeping the sheep in Shechem. I would like you to go to them.'
'I'm ready,' replied [Joseph].

37:14 'Then see how your brothers and the sheep are doing,' said [Israel]. 'Bring me a report.'
[Israel] thus sent him from the Hebron valley, and [Joseph] arrived in Shechem.

37:15 A stranger found him blundering about in the fields. 'What are you looking for?' asked the stranger.

37:16 'I'm looking for my brothers,' replied [Joseph]. 'Perhaps you can tell me where they are tending the sheep.'

37:17 'They already left this area,' said the man. 'I heard them planning to go to Dothan.' Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

37:18 They saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they were plotting to kill him.

37:19 'Here comes the dreamer!' they said to one another.

37:20 'Now we have the chance! Let's kill him and throw him into one of the wells. We can say that a wild beast ate him. Then let's see what will become of his dreams!'

37:21 Reuben heard these words and tried to rescue [Joseph]. 'Let's not kill him!' he said.

37:22 Reuben tried to reason with his brothers. 'Don't commit bloodshed. You can throw him into this well in the desert, and you won't have to lay a hand on him.' His plan was to rescue [Joseph] from [his brothers] and bring him back to his father.

37:23 When Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of the long colorful coat that he was wearing.

37:24 They took him and threw him into the well. The well was empty; there was no water in it.

37:25 The [brothers] sat down and ate a meal. When they looked up, they saw an Arab caravan coming from Gilead. The camels were carrying gum, balsam, and resin, transporting them to Egypt.

37:26 Judah said to his brothers, 'What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover his blood?'

37:27 'Let's sell him to the Arabs and not harm him with our own hands. After all, he's our brother, our own flesh and blood.' His brothers agreed.

37:28 The strangers, who turned out to be Midianite traders approached, and [the brothers] pulled Joseph out of the well. They sold him to the Arabs for twenty pieces of silver. [These Midianite Arabs] were to bring Joseph to Egypt.

37:29 When Reuben returned to the well, Joseph was no longer there. [Reuben] tore his clothes in grief.

37:30 He returned to his brothers. 'The boy is gone!' he exclaimed. 'And I - where can I go?'

37:31 [The brothers] took Joseph's coat. They slaughtered a goat and dipped the coat in the blood.

37:32 They sent the long colorful coat, and it was brought to their father. 'We found this,' explained [the brothers when they returned]. 'Try to identify it. Is it your son's coat or not?'

37:33 [Jacob immediately] recognized it. 'It is my son's coat!' he cried. 'A wild beast must have eaten him! My Joseph has been torn to pieces!'

37:34 He tore his robes in grief and put on sackcloth. He kept himself in mourning for many days.

37:35 All his sons and daughters tried to console him, but he refused to be comforted. 'I will go down to the grave mourning for my son,' he said. He wept for [his son] as only a father could.

37:36 The Midianites sold [Joseph] in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers, captain of the guard.

Selection XV
Leah and the Birth of Reuven
Genesis 29:31

לא וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי־שָׁנוּאַה לְאֵה וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת־רַחֲמָהּ וַרְחֵל עָקְרָה:

Selection XVI
Jacob's Deathbed Words to Reuven
Genesis 49:3

ג רְאוּבֵן בְּכֹרִי אַתָּה כַּחַי וְרֵאשִׁית אוֹנִי יָתֵר שְׂאֵת וַיִּתֵּר עֵינַי:

Selection XVII
Jacob Tries to Tamp Down the Impact of Joseph's Second Dream.
Rashi to Genesis 37:10

Shall we come and bow? “But didn’t your mother already die?” That’s what Jacob meant to say. But he didn’t realize that the dream was referring to Bilhah, the maid of Rachel, the surrogate mother, as it were, of Joseph.

Selection XVIII
How Could God Lie? Rashi's Analysis of God's Command at the Akeidah
Rashi to Genesis 22:12

Rabbi Abba said: Abraham asked God to explain himself. “Yesterday, you said through Isaac I will have progeny. And then you said take your son and kill him. And now you tell me don’t touch him. [What’s going on?]” God said to him: “I don’t desecrate my covenant, and I don’t lie. When I told you to take him, I never said slaughter him. I just said bring him up. You brought him up. Now, bring him down.”

SOURCE NOTES
THE PHANTOM AKEIDAH AND OTHER BIBLICAL SURPRISES
BY RABBI DAVID FOHRMAN
LECTURE EIGHT

Selection I

**The Satan and Abraham; “Please” take your son...
Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin, 89b**

Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of R’ Yose ben Zimra: [What does the verse mean when it says that the Akeidah happened “after these things” (literally: after these words)? After what words? After the words of the Satan. For it is written: “And the child Isaac grew and he was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast...”. The Satan said to the Holy One, Blessed is He: “Master of the Universe! This old man, at the end of a hundred years, you freely granted him a biological son. From the entire feast that he made to celebrate, did he have one pheasant that he left over to give you as an offering?”

God replied to him: “Didn’t he do all this for his son? If I ask him to sacrifice his son before me – [you’ll see], he’ll immediately do it!”

Immediately afterwards, “God tested Abraham” [and the Akeidah began...].

* * *

God said to him: “Take, [*na*] please, your son”. R’ Shimon bar Aba said: Whenever the word *na* appears it indicates a request. The akeidah can thus be compared to the story of a king of flesh and blood who went through many wars, for he had a certain mighty warrior who battled on his behalf and won them for him. After a while, a certain very difficult battle loomed ahead. The king said to him: Do me a favor; please stand in for me in this war, so that people shouldn’t say, the first victories really weren’t substantial.”

So too, the Holy One, Blessed is He, said to Abraham: “I have tested you a number of times before, and you were successful in all of them. Now, withstand for me this one test, so that people shouldn’t say: [Your] first [victories] weren’t substantial.

Selection II

**The Brothers Discuss their Guilt Over Joseph’s Sale
Genesis 42:21**

And one man said to his brother: But we are guilty on account of our brother, for we saw his pain when he cried out to us for mercy and we didn’t listen to him. That’s why this trouble has come upon us...

Selection III

The Angel's Hidden Message to Joseph

Rashi to Genesis 37:17

[The verse states:] They have traveled from “that”. [That is to say: You ask where your brothers are?] They have traveled themselves away from brotherhood.

Selection IV

The Prelude to the Test of Job

Book of Job, 1:1-6

Red Highlights Denote Connections to Akeidah; Purple Highlights Denote Connection to Midrashic Elaboration on the Akeidah.

There was once a man in the land of Utz and Iyov was his name. And this man was “tam” and straight and **one who feared God** and he shunned evil. And he had seven sons and three daughters; and **seven thousand sheep** and three thousand camels... and **this man was greater** than all the people of old.

His sons went and **made a feast**. Each day a new feast at a different son's house. And they sent and called for their three sisters to join them in eating and drinking. And it happened, when the days of the feast finished at the end of the week, Job would send out to sanctify them. **And he woke early in the morning** and offered offerings for all of them, for Job said to himself, perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Such would Job do all the days...

And it happened one day, when the children of God came to stand before God, **that the Satan came among them...**