

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive **PARSHA EXPERIENCE**



Parsha: Bereishit

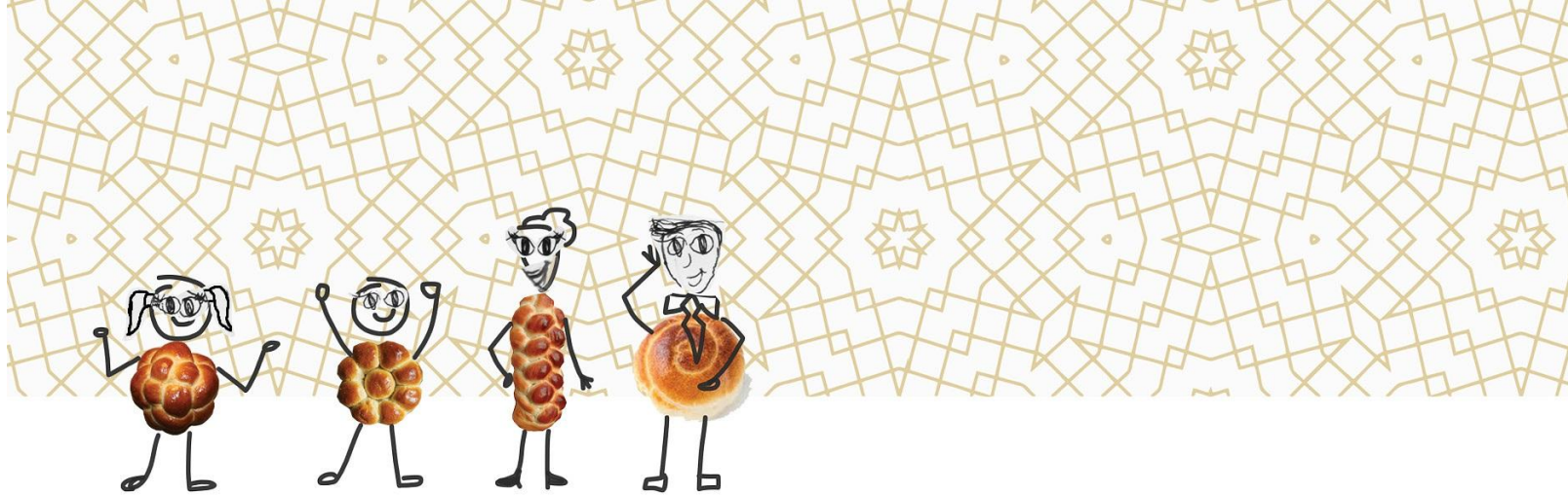
Title: The Blame Game - What a Shame

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The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

In the beginning God created... basically the whole universe (light, dark, heavens, trees, seeds, stars, sun, land, birds, beasts, and finally humans). After placing Adam in the garden of Eden God commands that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil not be eaten. And of course, like any child (or adult)



who is told not to do something - the temptation is too strong and they do. Both Adam and his wife Chava (Eve) eat the fruit from the tree and when confronted by God about whether they did it or not, Adam blames Chava, and Chava blames the sneaky snake. The classic 'It's not my fault! So-and-so made me do it' excuse - it's as old as the hills (give or take a day or two). God gives harsh consequences because of this: the snake loses its legs, Chava gives birth in pain, and Adam has to work the land extra hard. Everyone has to leave the garden called Eden. Not such a happy ending. So what do we learn from this?

Zooming In:

One of the first things that the first humans do is make mistakes, which means getting things wrong is a part of who we are. No human being has lived and not made some sort of mistake. It may be hard to admit - but we (and you) are not perfect. In fact everyone around this table has and will make mistakes. When Adam and Chava made a mistake, what did they do? Instead of admitting it they played the blame game, which could be worse than making the mistake in the first place! Perhaps the issue is how we handle the mistakes we, and others, make, rather than making them at all.

Questions for Consideration:

- a) How many mistakes did you make today already? (*I've made at least 10, and I don't even know when you're reading this.*)
- b) So when Adam and Chava made the mistake, why did they not just say 'Sorry God, I made a mistake'? Was it feeling bad at having made a mistake, feeling guilty, scared of punishment, or lack of self-awareness?
- c) Do you think God was more upset at Adam and Chava for not listening to the command not to eat from the tree, or for not admitting they made a mistake?
- d) How do you feel after making a mistake? Do you want to hide it, or admit it? Why?



The Parsha Through Another Lens

Getting Your Gameface On - Two Truths and a Lie:

Each person at the table has to say two things that happened to them today, and one made up thing that didn't happen to them today. The other people around the table need to guess which one is not true.

Follow-up questions:

- *How did it feel to tell a lie?*
- *How did it feel when you knew someone else was not telling the truth?*
- *What are the consequences when we are not honest with other people?*
- *Why do you think people don't always tell the truth about their actions?*

The Parsha in Practice - Table Truth:

You can do this once, every week, or every month.

Each person, in a blame- and consequence-free environment, says something they are sorry for. Rather than people covering things up, having internal feelings of guilt, and letting things stew, the Shabbat table can be an outlet for honesty, making mistakes, building trusting relationships, learning, and growing.

PLEASE NOTE: This activity requires trust and a safe environment. It also requires the caregivers to understand that it is better that a child admits a mistake and not get a consequence, rather than cover up and try and get away with it (*i.e., making the same mistake that Adam and Chava made*).

Shabbat Shalom!