

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



Parsha: Toldot

Title: Building Blocks

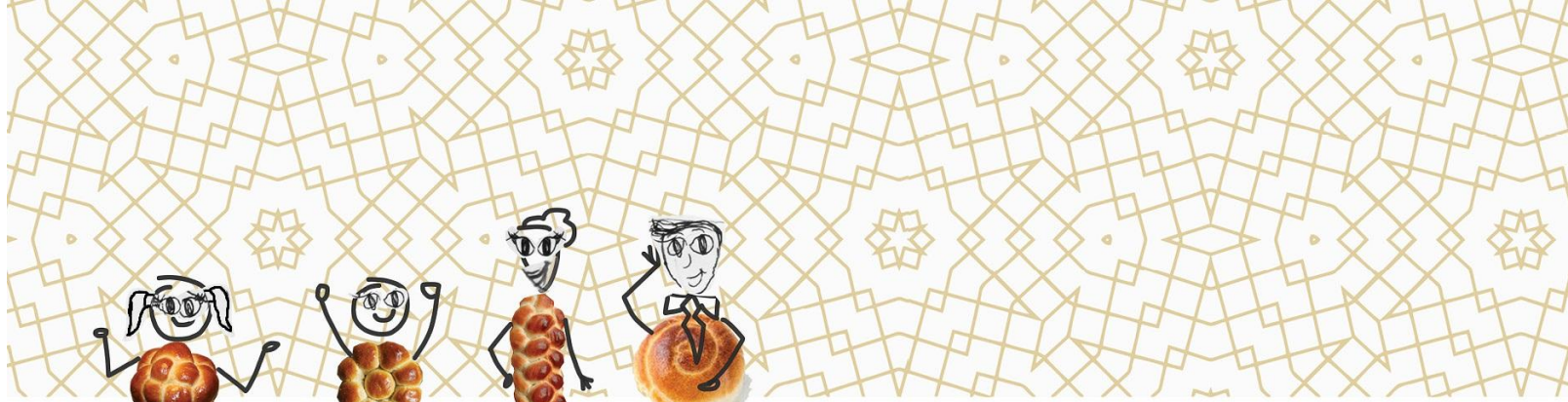
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The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

Chapter 26 of *Parshat Toldot* tells a lot of stories that might sound very familiar to you. Listen to the episodes from chapter 26 listed below and see if you can figure out where in Tanakh you've heard similar stories before:

1. There is a famine in the land of Canaan and Yitzhak wants to head toward Egypt to get food.



2. Yitzhak moves to a Philistine city in Canaan and tells the people living there that Rivka is his sister when, in fact, she is his wife.
3. Yitzhak re-digs the wells that Avraham had dug years earlier (the Philistines had sealed them), and he calls the wells by the same names that his father had given them.
4. Yitzhak makes a peace treaty with the Philistine leader named Avimelech.

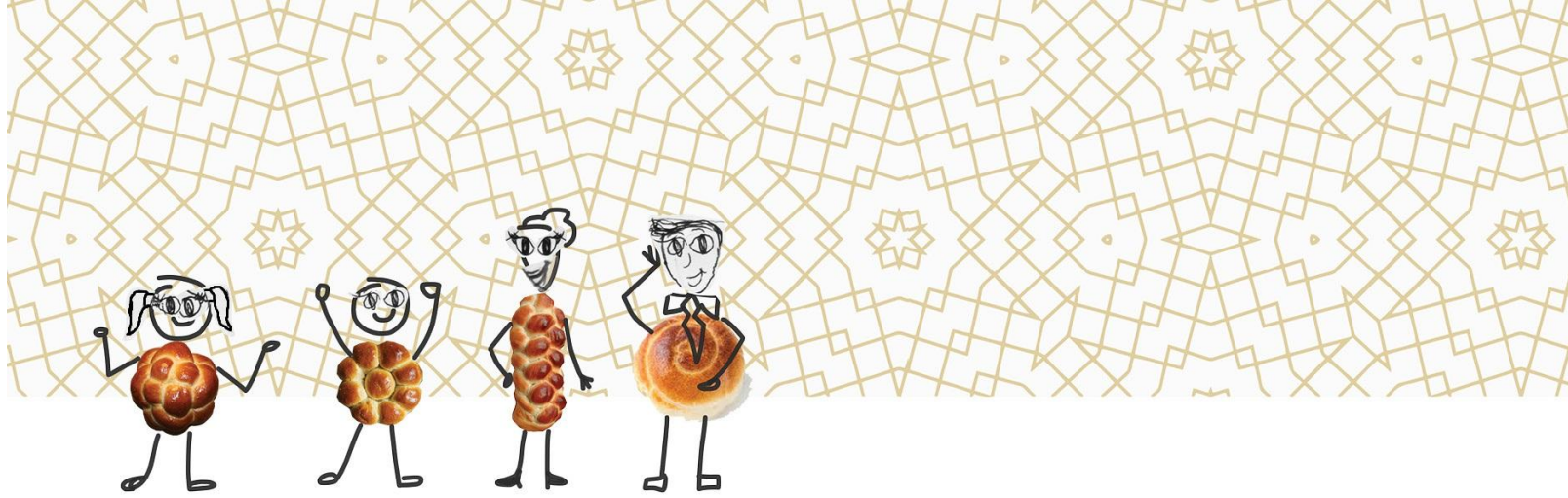
Zooming In:

Where have you heard some of these things before? Yes, **Avraham** also faced a famine in the land of Canaan, pretended that his wife was his sister, dug the original wells, and made a peace treaty with Avimelech. Why did Yitzhak face so many of the same situations as his father Avraham? Did Yitzhak do anything important or was he just an Avraham copycat?!

The Midrash describes Avraham as the first person to recognize that there is only one God and to reject the idolatry that everybody around him believed in and worshipped. Avraham *publicly* declared his belief in God despite the fact that others probably mocked him for being weird or crazy.

It takes a lot of insight to come up with a new idea and a lot of courage to stick with your convictions when you stand alone. But for a new idea to have lasting impact, someone has to ensure that the idea gets passed down and further developed by the next generation. If not, sadly, a great new idea will die with the person who invented it.

Yitzhak's main role was to take the 'radical' new ideas of Avraham and firmly establish them in society. Avraham built the foundation, and Yitzhak needed to make sure that the foundation stayed strong and grew. It was not a coincidence that Yitzhak chose to re-dig the wells Avraham dug and rename them with the identical names that his father had given them. Yitzhak understood that his job was to ensure that Avraham's legacy would last forever so he made sure to reinforce what his father had started.



Questions for Consideration:

- Do you think that it would be easy or hard to be Avraham's son? Why?
- Do you think that the role of the 'inventor' (Avraham) or the role of the 'establisher' (Yitzhak) is more important? Why?
- We talked about the ways that the Yitzhak stories in Genesis 26 are similar to the earlier Avraham stories. But can you think of the way(s) these stories are different from the Avraham stories?

The Parsha Through Another Lens

Story Sequence:

(Please note: This activity requires the use of picture books in your house.)

We just talked about the fact that the story of the Jewish nation began with Avraham and it only continued forward thanks to Yitzhak's conscious effort to continue what his father had started.

Today, everyone around your Shabbat table will work together to create a story, each person in turn, in a game called "Story Sequence." Here's how it goes:

Every person around the Shabbat table chooses a random picture book found on a bookshelf in your home. Each person opens his/her own picture book to a random page. One person then starts making up a story that incorporates whatever is on *his/her* picture. The next person adds to the made-up story – continuing what the previous person started – by incorporating the picture in his/her picture book, and so on, until every person at the Shabbat table has contributed to the story.

Shabbat Shalom!