

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# *An Interactive* **PARSHA EXPERIENCE**



**Parsha:** Vayetze

**Title:** Looking with 'Fresh Eyes'!

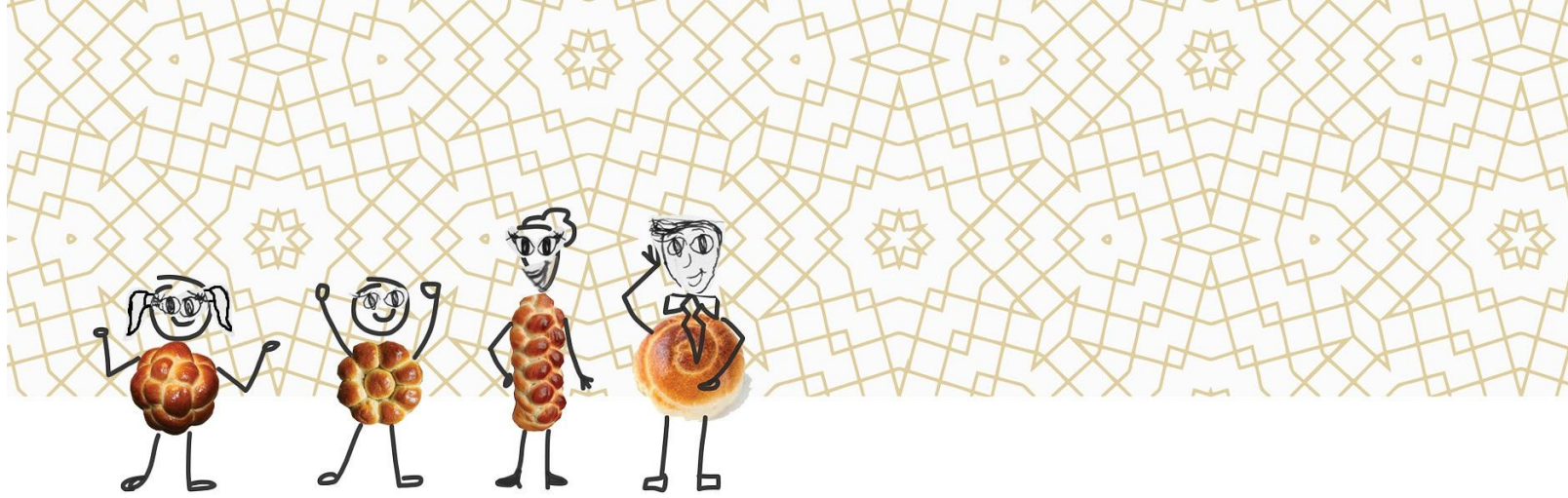
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## *The Parsha at First Glance*

### **Spotlight on the Parsha:**

In *Parshat Vayetze*, Yaakov begins his journey out of Eretz Yisrael, leaving behind his family in Beer Sheva. He leaves with nothing more than his walking stick!

Little does Yaakov know, but his 'visit' to Lavan will be much longer than he thought. By the time Yaakov leaves Lavan's house (20 year later) he will have 13 children, 2 wives, 2 handmaids, cattle and sheep! A lot more than a walking stick!



Along the way he goes to sleep and has a dream about angels going up and down a ladder. God reassures him that He will be with Yaakov and protect him wherever he goes. It's easy to imagine how important that dream was to Yaakov who was leaving Eretz Yisrael for the first time in his life! God also reassures Yaakov that he will eventually return to his homeland, Eretz Yisrael.

When Yaakov arrives in Haran he first meets Rachel, the daughter of his uncle Lavan, at the well outside the city. Rachel brings Yaakov to meet her father Lavan and Yaakov stays at the house of Lavan. Yaakov agrees to work for Lavan for 7 years in exchange for marrying Rachel.

After the 7 years are up, Lavan tricks Yaakov and gives him his older daughter Leah to marry instead of Rachel. Though tricked (and understandably angry) Yaakov agrees to work another 7 years in order to also marry Rachel.

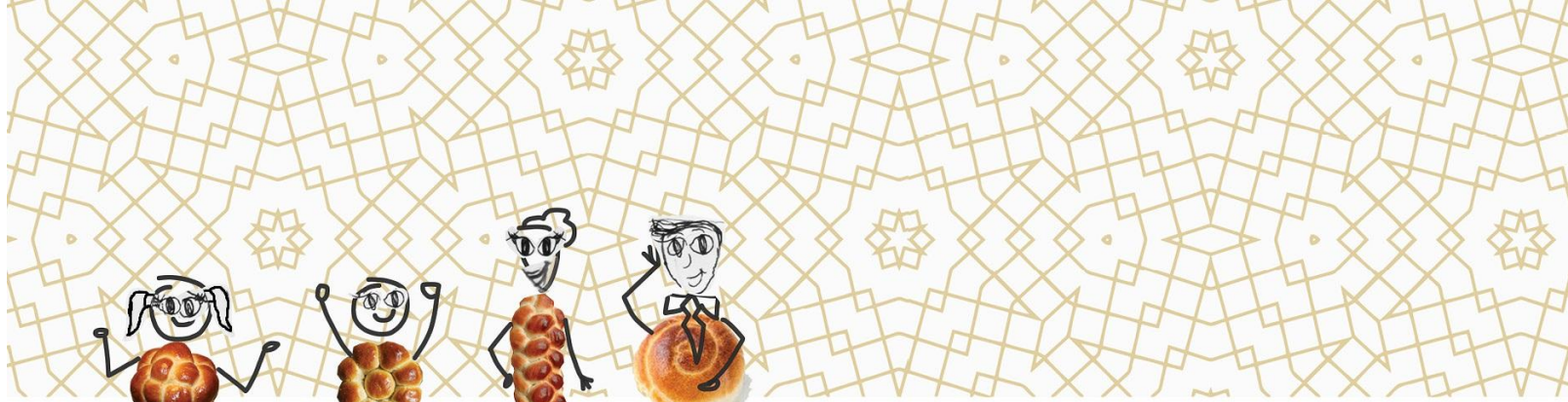
Yaakov remains at Lavan's house for 20 years. During that time he builds a family with Leah and Rachel. Leah gives birth to one daughter, Dina, and six sons: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda, Yissachar and Zevulun. Sadly, Rachel remains barren. Rachel gives Yaakov her handmaid, Bilhah, as a wife to bear children in her place, and two more sons, Dan and Naphtali, are born. Leah does the same with her handmaid, Zilpah, who gives birth to Gad and Asher. Finally, Rachel's prayers are answered and she gives birth to Yosef.

At the end of our *parsha*, Yaakov, remembering God's promise to him long ago, decides along with his wives that it's time to leave Haran and begin their journey back to Eretz Yisrael.

### Zooming In:

Let's now zoom in on the scene right after Yaakov wakes up from his amazing dream of ladders and angels.

Yaakov, on his journey to Haran, stops at what to him seems like just a good place to rest and sleep. He gathers some stones to rest his head on and closes



his eyes. While he is sleeping he has an amazing dream about angels going up and down a ladder. When he awakens he says,

טז... אכן יש יהוה במקום הזה; ואנכי לא ידעתי  
יז מה-נורא המקום הזה; אין זה כי אם-בית אלהים, וזה שער השמים

16 ...“Wow, God is in this place and I, I didn’t even know it!”

17 “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gateway to heaven!”

Yaakov then names this spot Bet El, meaning a 'house of God.'

### Question for Consideration:

Have you ever looked at something or someone with ‘fresh eyes,’ seeing something good or special about that place or that person that you never noticed before?

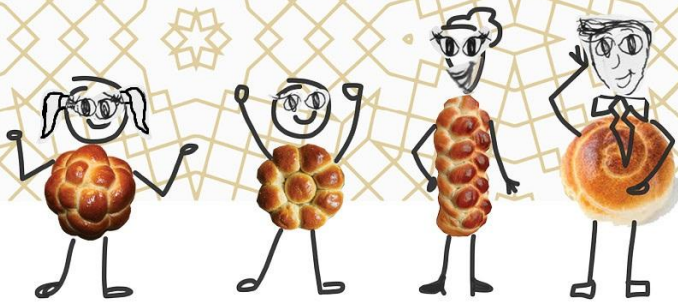
When Yaakov awoke he realized the ‘good place to sleep’ was really a ‘house of God.’ He looked at this place where he slept with ‘fresh eyes’ and saw something far more holy and special than just a circle of stones.



### The Parsha in Practice:

Turn to a person or persons at your Shabbat table and look at that person with ‘fresh eyes’ (Yaakov eyes)!

Tell that person something wonderful about him/her that you hadn’t noticed before.



Pay attention to what you feel when you try that. How do you think the person who you spoke to feels?

Remember: Your 'Yaakov eyes' are always available to you!

**Shabbat Shalom!**