

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive **PARSHA EXPERIENCE**



Parsha: Yayechi

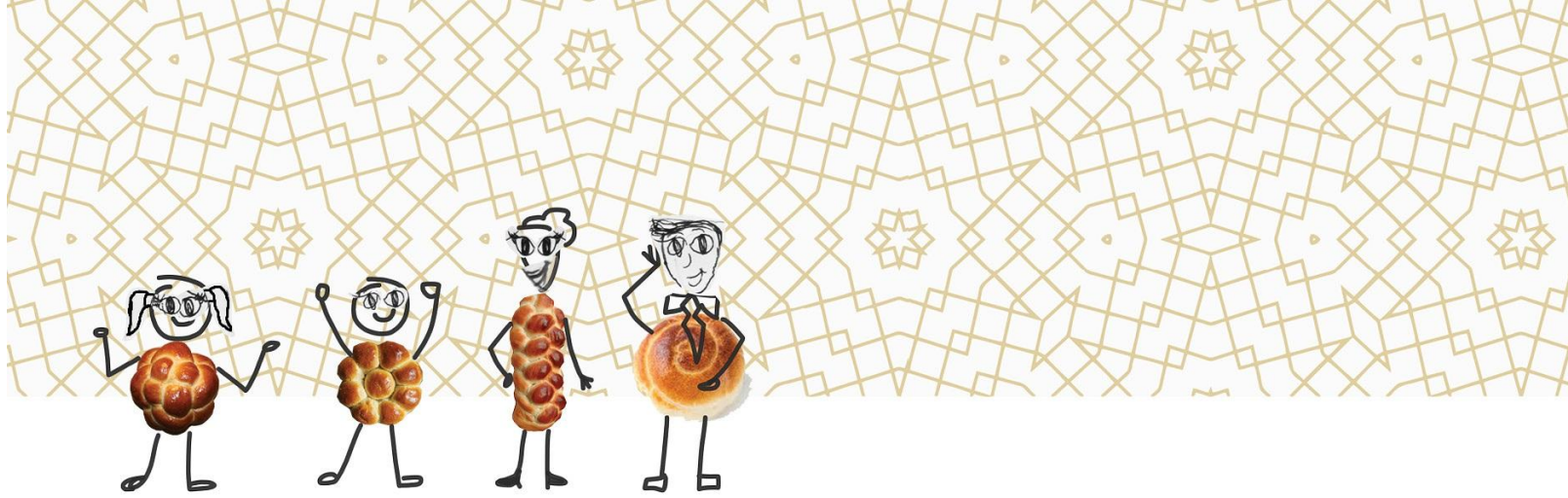
Title: Status Symbols

Contributor: Penny Joel, Director of Experiential Education, PCJE

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

In Parshat Vayechi, Yaakov asks his sons to come to him so he can share some last words with each one of them. His message to each child tells a little bit about their past and their future and for most of the sons, what symbolizes each of them. Often those symbols were then used to symbolize each son's tribe.



Zooming In:

For example, Yaakov told Yehuda that he was like a lion, because he was strong and a leader (like the lion, which is sometimes referred to as the king of the animals). Later on, the tribe of Yehuda used the lion as its symbol.

The verse in Gen. 49:9 reads:

גֹּר אַרְיֵה יְהוּדָה, מִטְרֹף בְּנֵי עֲלִיּוֹת; כָּרַע רֹבֵץ כְּאַרְיֵה וְכָלְבִּיא, מִי יִקְיָמוּנוּ .

Judah is a lion's cub; on prey, my son, have you grown. He crouches, lies down like a lion, like the king of beasts—who dare rouse him?

Now try to guess what the symbols of some of the other sons were by reading the verses about them, and what those symbols might have meant about the sons themselves!

Zevulun (Gen. 49:13):

זְבוּלֹן לְחוֹף יָמִים יִשְׁכֵּן; וְהוּא לְחוֹף אֲנִיּוֹת, וַיִּרְכָּתוּ עַל-צִידוֹן.

Zebulun shall dwell by the seashore; he shall be a haven for ships, and his flank shall rest on Sidon.

Dan (Gen. 49:17):

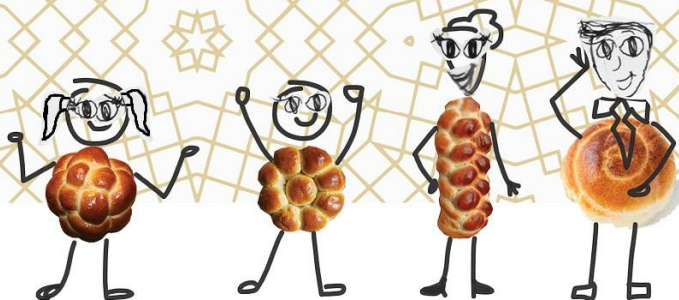
יְהִי-דָן נָחֵשׁ עַל-דֶּרֶךְ, שֹׁפֵיפִן עַל-אֶרֶץ--הַנֶּשֶׁף, עֹקֵב־סוּסוֹ, וַיִּפֹּל רֶכְבוֹ אֲחֹרָר .

Dan shall be a serpent by the road, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that his rider is thrown backward.

Binyamin (Gen. 49:27):

בְּנֵימִין זָאֵב יִטְרֹף, בַּבֹּקֶר יֹאכַל עֵד; וְלָעֶרֶב יִחַלֵּק שָׁלַל .

Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he consumes the foe, and in the evening he divides the spoil.



The Parsha Through Another Lens

Table Talk:

- What are some famous symbols you can think of? What do they symbolize?
- What symbol would you pick for someone else at your table and why?
- What symbol would you choose for yourself and why?

Shabbat Shalom!