

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



Parsha: Vayikra

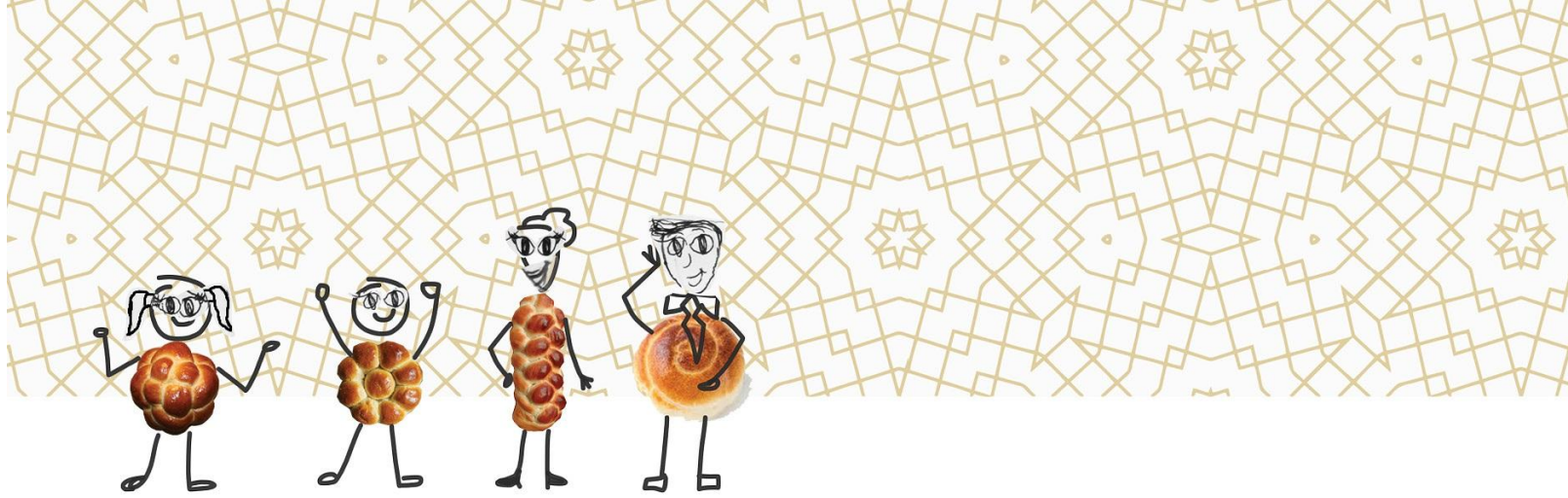
Title: Answering the Call

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The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

This week's *parsha* begins the third book (out of five) of the Torah. What do you think would be a good title for this particular book? Well, think of the name of one of your favorite books. Why did the author choose that specific title? Does the



title of your favorite book connect to anything important that happens in the book?

The Rabbis called this book **Torat Hakohanim**, which means “Instructions for the Priests.” Why? Yup, you guessed it! This book focuses on a lot of the instructions and laws that God gives to the Jewish priests, and details their responsibilities in the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle). Since the role of the priests is a main theme in the book, the Rabbis decided to name the book “Instructions for the Priests.”

The book is also popularly known by the name **Vayikra**. Open to the first chapter and first verse in the book and see if you can figure out why the book is called Vayikra. Any ideas?

You may have noticed that Vayikra (ויקרא) is the FIRST word of the whole book. Therefore, we call (pun intended!) the book by the name Vayikra, since it is simply an easy way to identify it.

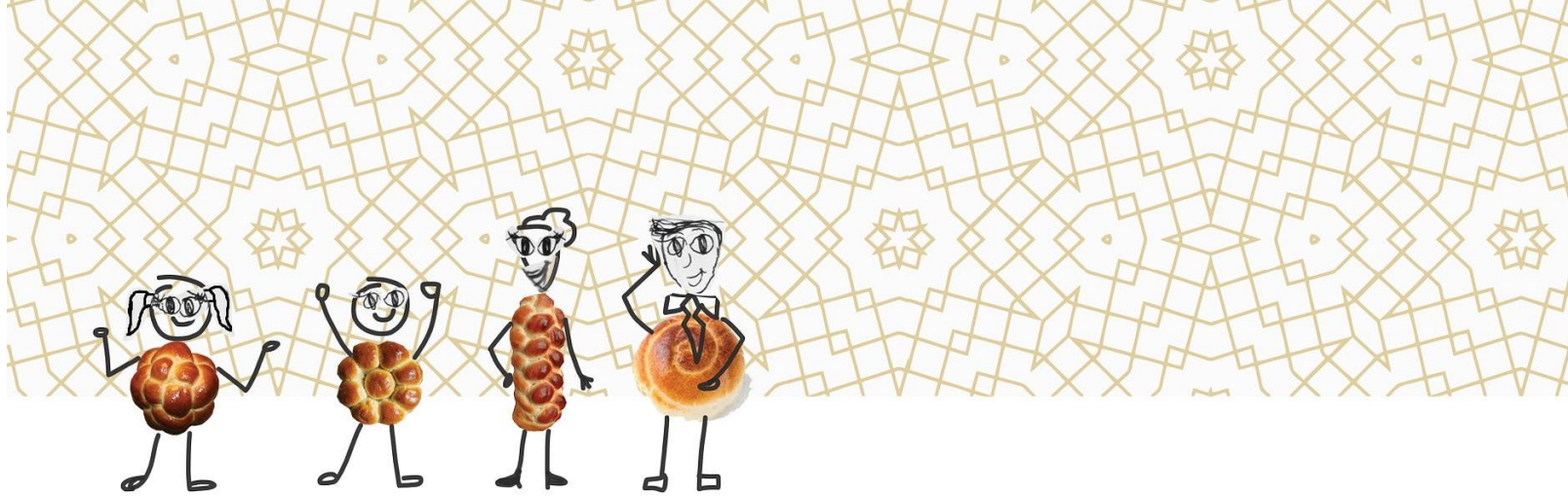
Zooming In:

If you go back to the first verse of the book and you look very carefully, you may notice something strange about the first word. Do you see anything odd about the way that the first word is written? (Hint: ויקרא)

The last letter of the word ויקרא appears smaller than the four letters before it! In fact, the א appears smaller in written Torah scrolls as well as in most printed *chumashim*!

Questions for Consideration:

- Can you think of any reason why the א in the word ויקרא is supposed to be smaller than the other four letters of the word?



The commentators offer a lot of answers to this question. One answer uses the small letter to teach us a big lesson.

The opening verse of the book says:

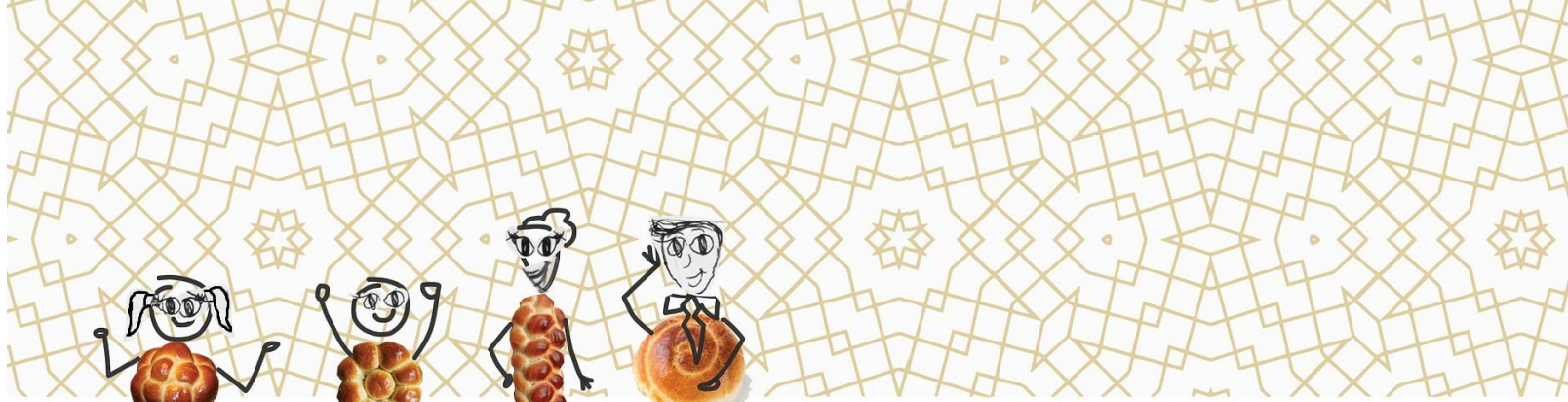
וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים מִתֵּן הַמִּוֶּעֵד וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֵלָיו מֵאֵהָל מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר:

[God] called to Moshe and spoke to him from the Tent of the Meeting, saying:

With the letter א, the Hebrew word וַיִּקְרָא means “and He called.” Without the letter א, the Hebrew word וַיִּקְרַח means “He happened/chanced upon.” The similarity of these two words in Hebrew is meant to teach us about two very different attitudes a person may have in life. The question is whether a person will recognize the “א” in his/her life or not.

What do I mean? Well, I can experience my day with a וַיִּקְרַח perspective, in which things just sort of “happen” to me and around me. So I don’t pay too much attention to all the reasons I have to be grateful, and I don’t really stop to think about how I can actively make this a good day for myself or someone else. For example, why would I notice that my dad made me lunch today when he makes me lunch every day? Why would I bother to welcome the new kid to class since I already have my own group of friends?

BUT...If I approach my day from a וַיִּקְרָא - life of calling – perspective, then I’ll experience my day totally differently. A life of calling means that I can imagine someone calling my name to get my attention. And once I’m paying attention then I’ll actually notice what is around me, think about what I want to accomplish, and make it happen. All of the sudden, I WILL notice that my dad makes lunch for me every day and that my lunch doesn’t just ‘happen’ on its own (thanks, Dad!). And I WILL say hi to the new kid in class, because I notice him standing by himself and I realize that he must be pretty lonely.



Sometimes it's easier to exist in a **ויקר** bubble, but it is a lot more satisfying to lead a **ויקרא** way of life!

The Parsha Through Another Lens

I Spy:

Let's build our "noticing" skills! First we're going to focus on what we notice in our own lives and then we'll focus on our surroundings. Here goes:

Part 1: Each person at the table should share something from this week for which he/she is grateful. Were you grateful for it in the moment or only now that you're thinking back on your week?

Part 2: One person at the table is designated as the SPY. The spy looks around the room and tries to NOTICE something that the others won't notice. Once the spy picks an object, he/she says, "I Spy with My Little Eye Something _____." The blank is filled in with any adjective (i.e., purple, fuzzy, tall, square). Everyone around the table takes turns guessing what the spy sees. The first person to guess correctly becomes the spy.

Shabbat Shalom!