

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



Parsha: Re'eh

Title: One for All and All for One!

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The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha (based on [this](#) essay by Rav Alex Israel):

This week's *parsha* has two main themes. The first theme is that God wants *Bnei Yisrael* (the Jewish people) to have one central location to worship Him in *Eretz Yisrael* and to offer Him sacrifices there, rather than for Bnei Yisrael to worship God in lots of different places spread throughout the land. It becomes clear later in Jewish history that God



intended for the Temple in Jerusalem to be that special place. The second theme is that we are meant to treat each other kindly and to care for each other. For example, this parsha includes the *mitzva* of giving charity.

Zooming In:

There are some passages in *Parshat Re'eh* that combine both themes. Toward the end of the parsha, we learn about the three Pilgrim Festivals - Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot - where every member of Bnei Yisrael is required to go to Jerusalem. What should they do in Jerusalem? *Devarim* 16:14-15 says:

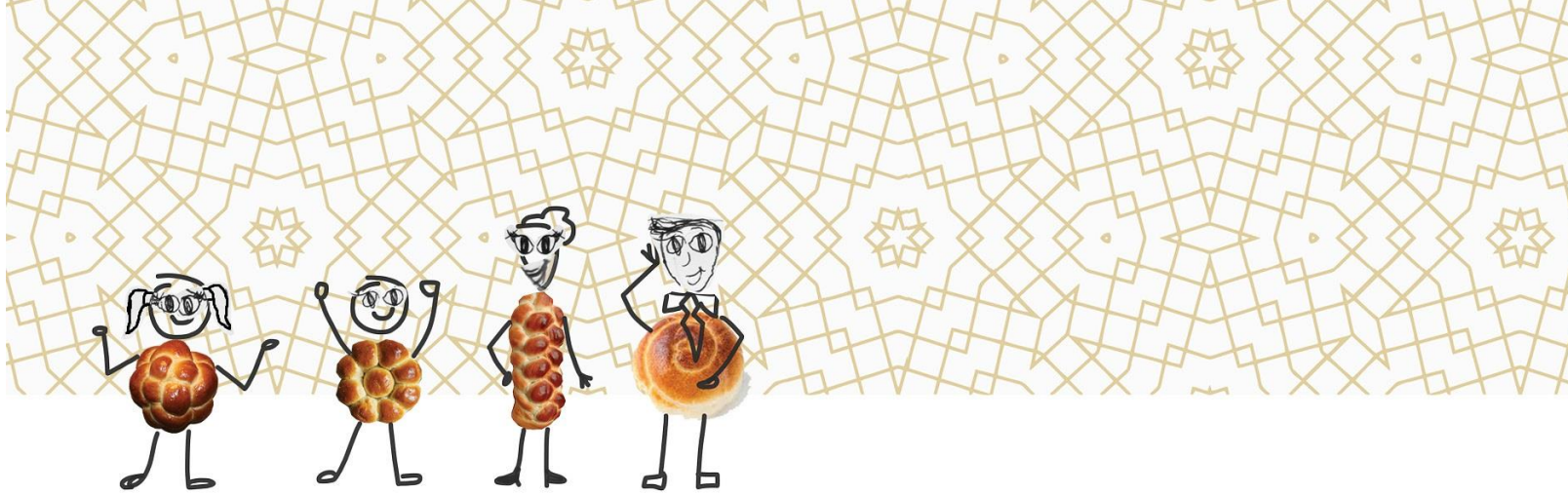
<p>You shall rejoice in your festival with your son and daughter, your male and female servant, the Levite, the stranger, the orphan and the widow in your communities.</p>	<p>יָד וְשִׂמְחַת בְּחַגֶּיךָ : אֶתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ , וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ , וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהַיְתוֹם וְהָאֵלְמָנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ .</p>
<p>You shall hold a festival for the Lord your God seven days in the place that the Lord will choose...</p>	<p>שִׁבְעַת יָמִים תַּחֲגַל לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ , בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר ה'...</p>

These verses highlight the fact that EVERYONE is obligated to celebrate and enjoy the holidays together in Jerusalem. Everybody counts and every person is an equally important part of the celebration at the Temple, no matter their financial or social status.

Questions for Consideration:

What is it about the Temple and Jerusalem during the three major holidays of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot that will unite the nation and make every person, no matter his or her personal circumstance, feel included in the celebration?

There is an interesting mitzva in this week's parsha that gives us a clue to answer this question. The mitzva is called *Ma'aser Sheni* (the Second Tithe). God instructs a Jewish farmer living in Eretz Yisrael to set aside 1/10th of all of his agricultural produce - grains, wine, and oil – to take to the Temple in Jerusalem, where the food must be eaten. If the



farmer lives so far from Jerusalem that the food will spoil along the journey then the farmer is allowed to sell the food, but he has to bring the money from the sale to Jerusalem and spend all of it on food and drink in Jerusalem and eat it there. Either way, no leftovers are allowed.

This seems to be a very strange obligation!

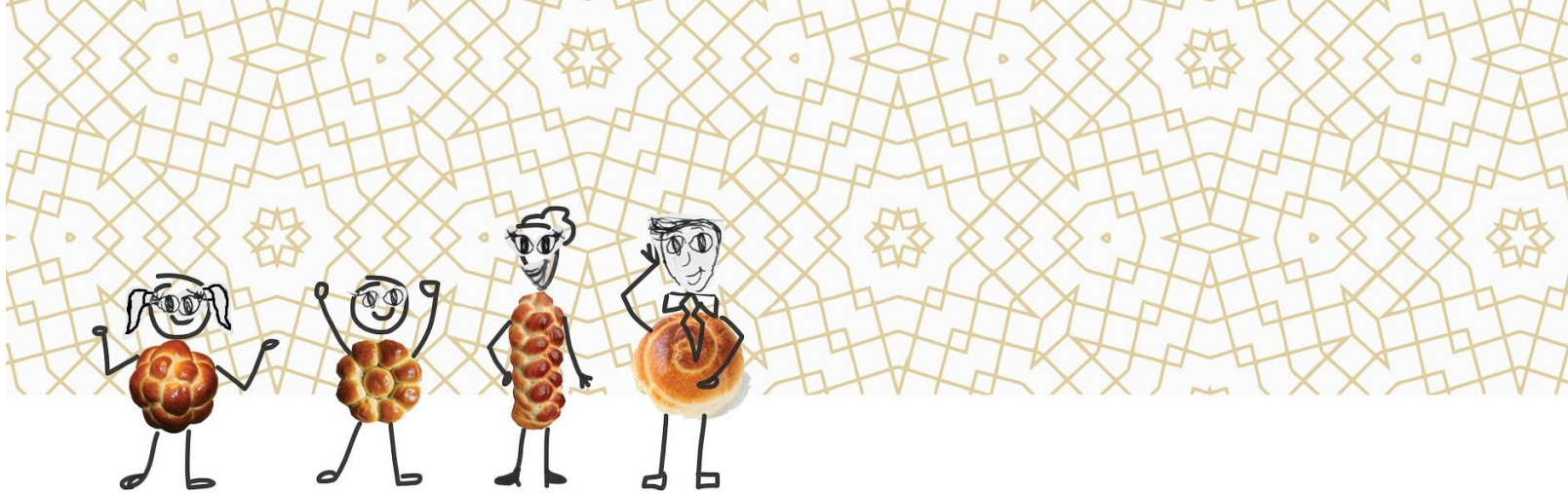
1. Why should the farmer bother to bring all of this food to eat in Jerusalem instead of just eating it with his family at the kitchen table like they always do?!
2. 1/10th of a full year's harvest is a HUGE amount of food!

a) If a farmer decides to bring 1/10th of his produce to be eaten in Jerusalem then he and his family are going to get big stomachaches! Let's say a farmer grows 3,000 apples on his farm each year. 1/10th of 3,000 is **300**...what family can possibly eat 300 apples over the course of a 7- day holiday?!

b) If the farmer sells 1/10th of his produce then he must bring that money to Jerusalem and spend **ALL** of it on food and drinks for the holiday. The supermarket owners in Jerusalem will be really happy for the tons of business, but the farmer and his family are *still* going to get big stomachaches! What family can possibly eat or drink that much over the course of a 7- day holiday?!

The Jewish philosopher Maimonides (1135-1204) says that it is impossible for a family to eat that much, which is *precisely* why they must bring the food to Jerusalem during the holidays. He explains that the obligation to visit the Temple in Jerusalem on the holidays means that every kind of Jew, rich and poor, will be in the same city at the same time. And the obligation of Ma'aser Sheni means that farmers and their families will be in Jerusalem on the holidays with *too much* food that must be eaten there before they can head home.

These two obligations create the perfect scenario for everyone to help each other! The farmers and their families can't possibly eat all the food that they are required to eat so they need to find other people to help them finish it. The people in Jerusalem for the holiday who can't afford to buy food will be happy to accept the extra food from the



farmers who want to give it away. It is a win-win situation that leaves EVERYBODY feeling welcome and happy on the holidays celebrated in Jerusalem.

The Parsha Through Another Lens

Helium Stick:

This parsha teaches us the importance of including **everyone** in the celebration of the Jewish holidays. Let's have some fun playing a game that requires **100% participation** in order to meet the challenge and win the game.

Equipment: broom stick (detach the broom) or hula hoop

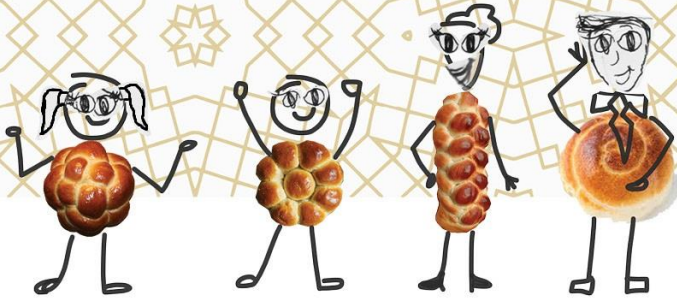
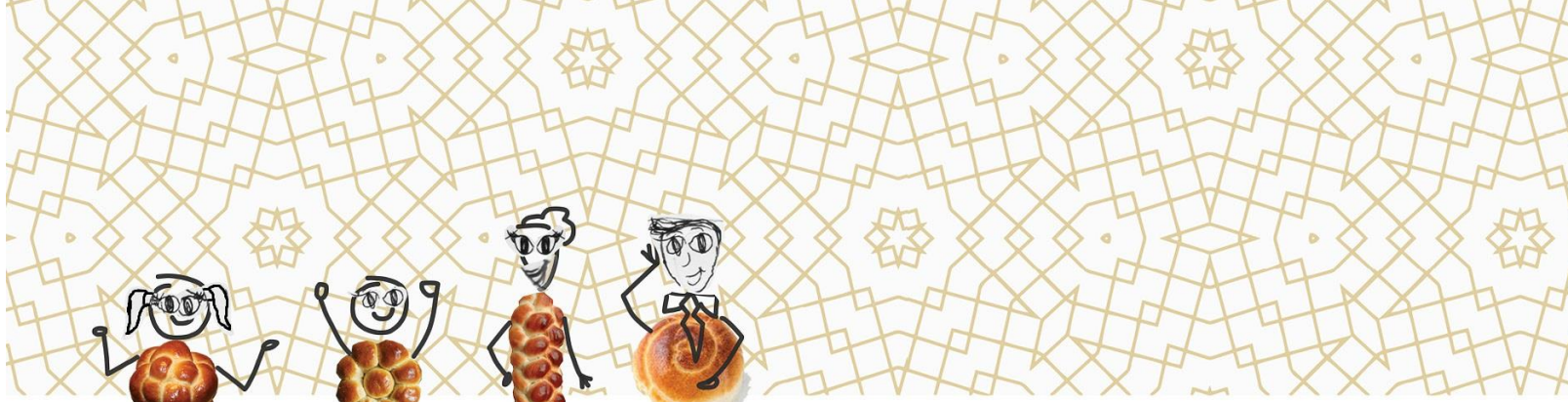
All the group members should line up in a line in pairs facing each other (it doesn't matter if there is an odd number). Get each person to be staggered and place one hand in front of them with their index finger pointed out. Place the broom stick on top of all of the index fingers so it is resting evenly. Make sure all index fingers are touching the pole.

The aim of the activity is to get the group to lower the pole completely to the ground without anyone losing touch with it at any stage. Note: you may want to designate one person as a judge to make sure there isn't any cheating... this activity is harder than it sounds.

To add to the challenge and fun, play a few rounds and time yourself each round to see if the group can beat its previous time.

Variations:

- a) Run the activity with multiple groups (at least 3 people/group) as a race.



- b) Use a hula hoop instead of a broom stick and have the group members stand around the hula hoop and try to lower it to the ground using their index fingers.

Shabbat Shalom!