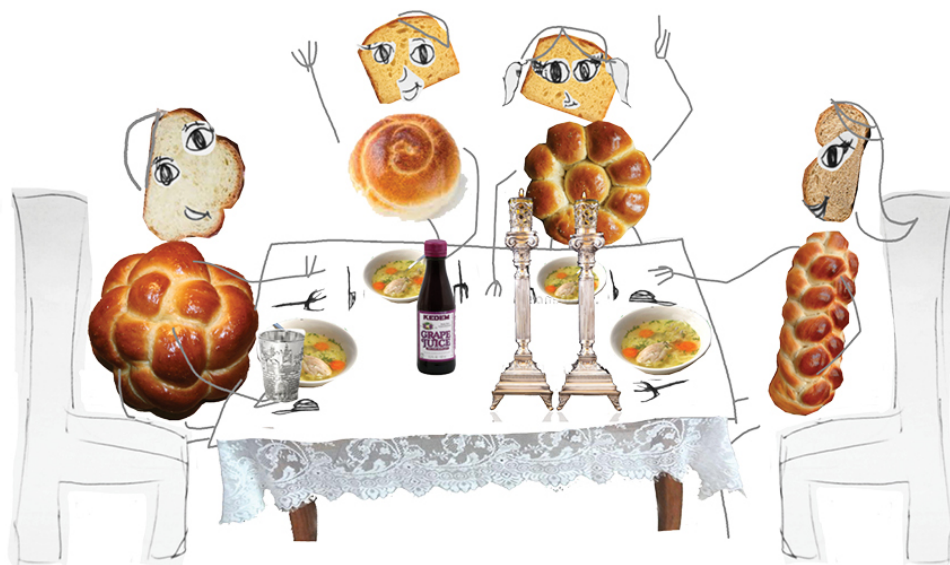


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An Interactive **PARSHA EXPERIENCE**



ויקרא | Vayikra

An Interactive Parsha Experience is a family-oriented parsha resource. Complete with summaries and related questions for the weekly parsha, this guide provides games, activities and other fun things for parents and educators to bring to their class or family Shabbat table.

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Parsha: Vayikra

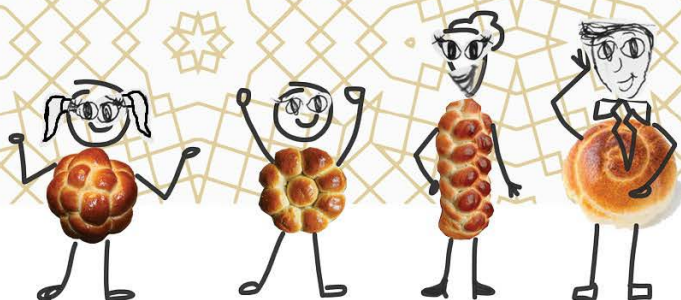
Title: Answering the Call

Contributor: Sefi Kraut, PCJE Faculty

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.

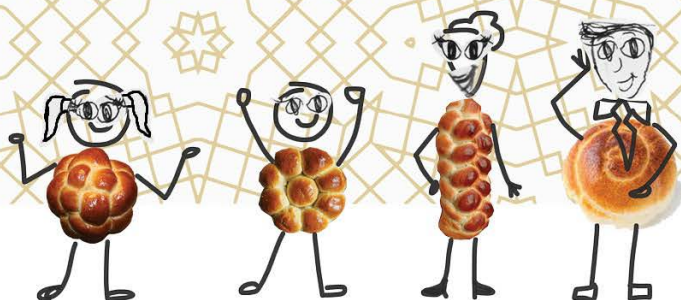
Zooming In:

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:

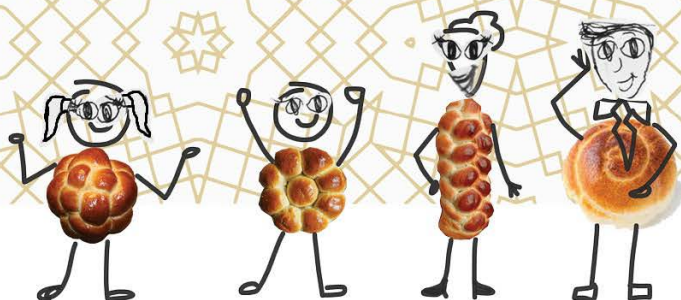
Vayikra 1:1

And [God] called to Moshe and spoke to him from the Tent of the Meeting, saying:	וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֵלָיו מֵאֵהָל מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר:
--	--

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 וִיקָר bubble, but it is a lot more satisfying to lead a וִיקָרָא 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.

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Parsha: Tzav

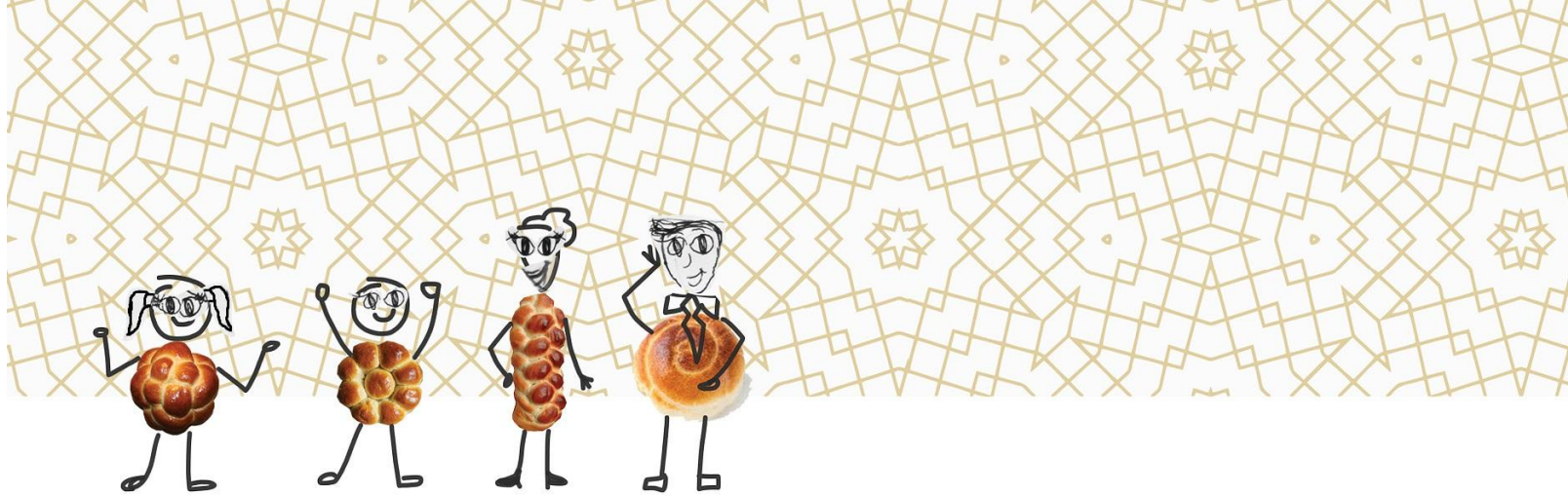
Title: It's No Sacrifice at All

Contributor: Reuven Margrett, PCJE Director of Digital Content and Pardes Day School Educators Program, '05-'07

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

This week's *parsha* carries on the theme of *korbanot* (offerings) from last week and teaches us what exactly Aharon and his priestly offspring are commanded to do with those offerings (the name of the *parsha*, *Tzav*, means "command!"). There are so many offerings: peace offerings, *mincha*/flour offerings, sin



offerings, guilt offerings, burnt offerings, thanksgiving offerings, freewill/voluntary offerings. Each one has its own rules and regulations: which animals or grain can be used for it, who can eat it, how long they have to eat it, where it is offered, the timeframe for offering it up, which parts get offered up and which get eaten.

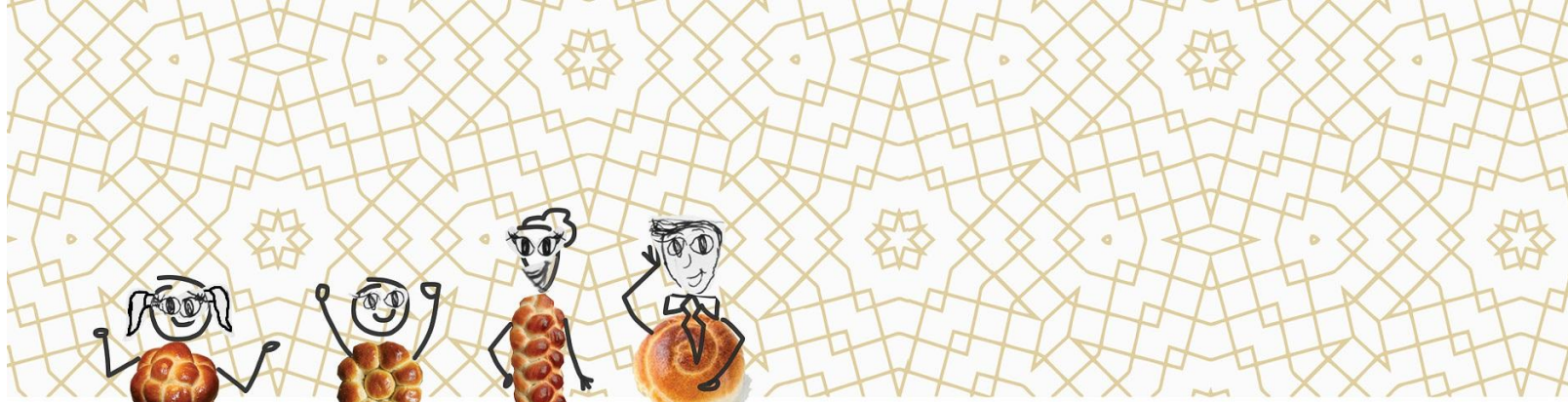
After speaking about all these offerings (are you hungry yet?) it makes sense that the Torah continues on with how Aharon is formally entered into the role of the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) through a special inauguration ceremony. It is, after all, Aharon and his descendants who are responsible for offering up all these *korbanot*.

Zooming In:

Why does the Torah take so much time and effort to explain *korbanot*? In fact, there are more verses in the Torah that deal with offerings and the place where they are offered than those that deal with the coming out of Egypt! Why are offerings so important? Does God actually *need* animal or flour offerings?

We often think of *korbanot* as *sacrifices* because in giving a *korban* we are losing something valuable. Sacrificing an animal is no small change! A sheep is worth \$200 plus, and a cow at least \$1,000. By giving up something of value we may think we are praising or saying sorry to God. Something like: “Hey God! Look, I just gave you a \$1,500 cow - that’s a whole lot of sorry! So I expect a little bit of forgiveness in return.” But is that really what’s happening? Perhaps something else is going on.

The Hebrew root of *korban* – קֹרְבָן – is קרב, which means ‘to come close.’ This means that we are not sacrificing animals or money, but rather *giving* something in order *to come close* to God. This is why we translate ‘*korban*’ as an offering rather than a sacrifice. We are not losing a sheep, cow or money, but gaining a chance to deepen our relationship with God. This can mean being thankful for some good that came into our life, or trying to repair our relationship with God



after making an error. God does not want our animals or flour. God wants us to get close to Him!

Questions for Consideration:

- When you give a gift do you think more about what it cost you, or more about the happiness of the person who received it? Is your answer always the same or does it depend on what you gave and who you gave to?
- When you receive a gift do you care more about the actual gift, or about the thoughtfulness of the person who gave it?
- What feelings do you experience when someone gives you something really thoughtful?

The Parsha Through Another Lens

Text Study:

There is an idea that if you want to understand the root or underlying purpose of an action or word in the Torah, you need to go back to the first time that action or word occurred in the Torah. So when was the first offering in the Torah? Let's find out...

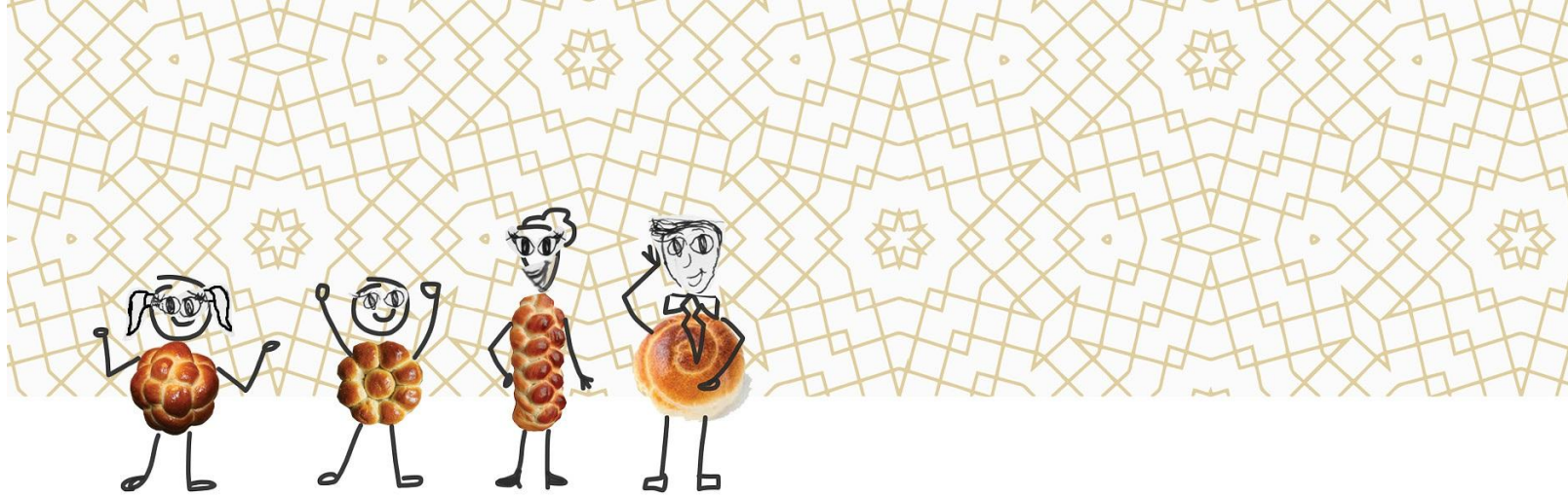
Bereishit 4:3-5

3. In the course of time, Kayin brought an offering to God from the fruit of the soil;

4. and Hevel also brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock. God paid attention

ג וַיְהִי מִקֶּחַץ יָמִים וַיָּבֵא קַיִן מִפְּרֵי
הָאֲדָמָה מִנְחָה--לַיהוָה.

ד וַהֲבֵל הֵבִיא גַם-הוּא מִבְּכֹרוֹת
צֹאֲנוֹ וּמִחֲלֵבֶהוּן ; וַיִּשַׁע יְהוָה אֶל-



<p>to Hevel and his offering,</p> <p>5. but to Kayin and his offering He paid no attention. Kayin was much distressed and his face fell.</p>	<p>הָבֵל וְאֶל-מִנְחָתוֹ. ה וְאֶל-קַיִן וְאֶל-מִנְחָתוֹ לֹא שָׁעָה; וַיַּחַר לְקַיִן מְאֹד וַיִּפְּלוּ פָּנָיו.</p>
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- Why did God pay attention to Hevel’s offering and not to Kayin’s?
- The text says that ‘*God paid attention to Hevel and his offering.*’ It would have been more efficient for the text to say that ‘*God paid attention to his offering.*’ What message could the Torah be giving us by adding ‘*to Hevel and his offering*’?

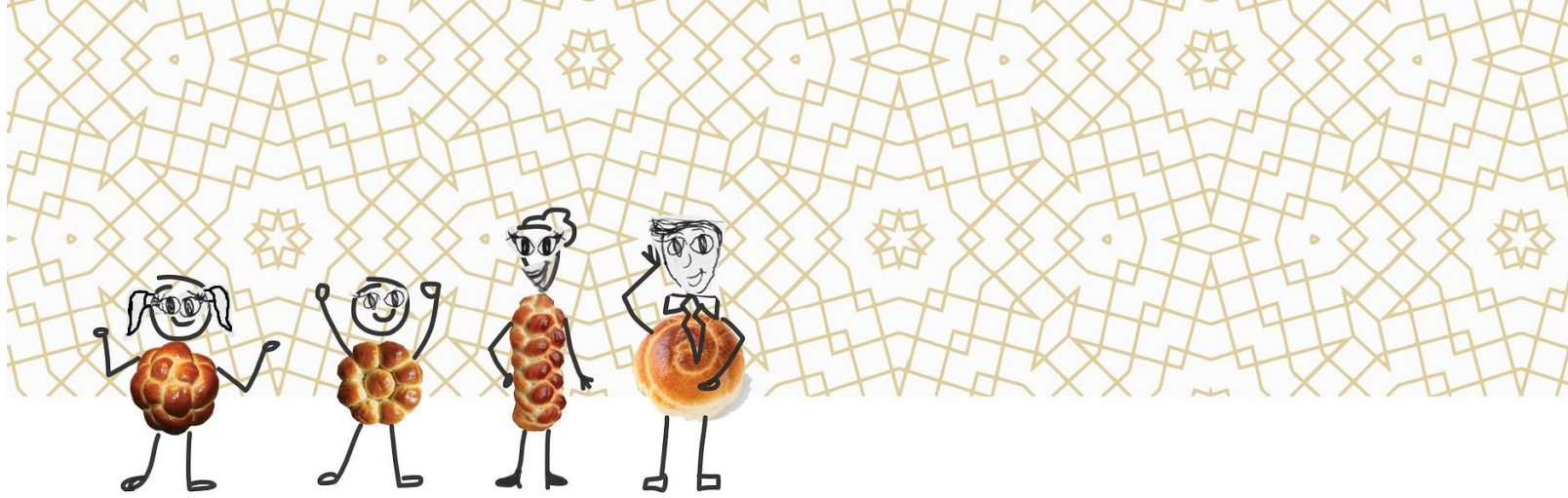
The following midrash highlights a particular problem with Kayin’s offering:

Sefer HaYashar 6:6

But to Kayin and his offering [God] paid no attention and had no respect; for he [Kayin] offered to God the very worst of the fruits of the ground.

Kayin’s offering was truly a sacrifice; he felt he was losing something and did not want to sacrifice his personal resources, so he gave second-rate produce. On the other hand, Hevel’s offering was from the best of his flock (notice in verse 4 above - it says he brought “the choicest”), no expense spared, and he *wanted* to give it. No wonder that God paid attention *to Hevel* and his offering, because the essence of an offering is not the produce or animal but the *motivation* of the person offering it.

- Why do you think God cares so much about people and their motivations?



Let's Make a Modern-Day Offering:

This week's parsha can inspire us to make our own offering! We are not going to buy a sheep or cow, since without a Temple it is forbidden to make that type of offering. But we can try and experience the tension between seeing a korban as a sacrifice ("I don't really want to give, but I will anyway") or as an offering ("I really do want to give!").

1. Choose a local charity that distributes used clothes, toys, etc.
2. Give each person a minute to think about one item they own that they will give (offer) to the charity.
 - Variation 1: If there are a few options for charities in your area, each person can choose which charity they want to donate to.
 - Variation 2: If the group is older, or there are no charities, each person could commit an amount of money or time to give to charity.
3. Discuss the following:
 - Were some objects too valuable for you to consider giving?
 - Were some objects too inferior for you to consider giving?
 - Did you experience any internal conflicts when deciding on your object? Can you describe the conflicts?
 - Can you think of other 'modern-day offerings' that we could make to God?

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Parsha: Shemini

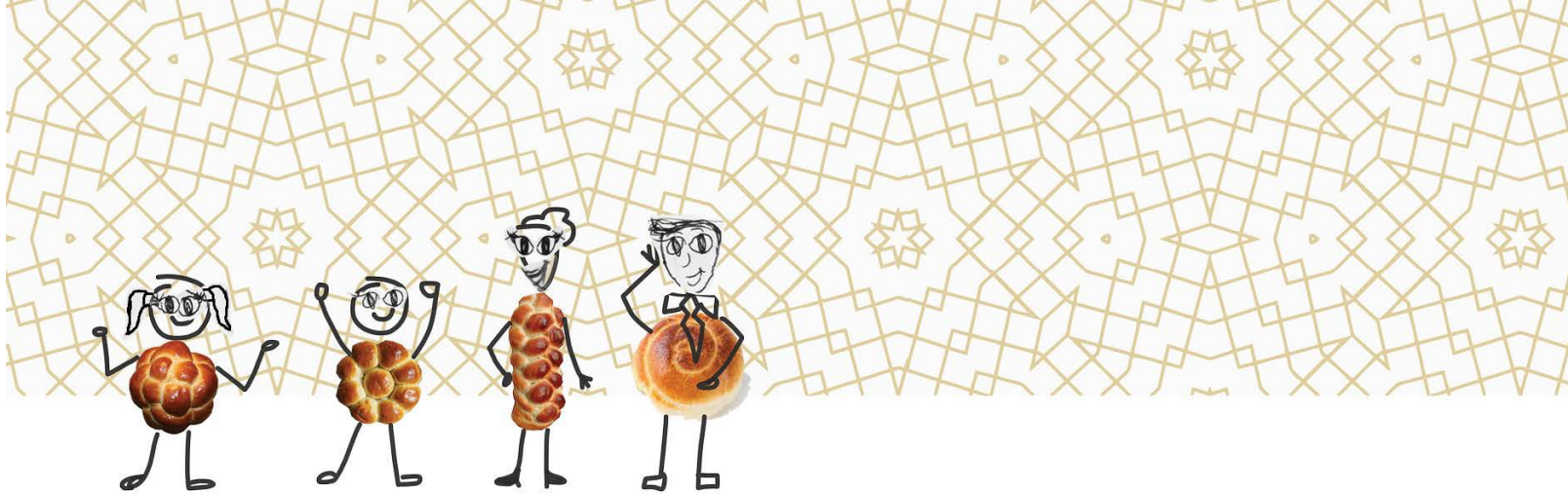
Title: Aharon's Silence

Contributor Aviva Lauer Golbert, Director of the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

Way back in the Book of *Shemot*, God instructed *Bnei Yisrael* to build the *Mishkan*. And indeed, they did a great job of obeying God's command! They contributed all sorts of items to build this special building that was going to be used as a religious center for the nation; a master architect was appointed; and



the walls, hangings, the ark, menorah, and other furnishings were crafted. The clothes for the *Kohanim* – the priests – were sewn, and they were taught about the special rituals and ceremonies they would be performing in the Mishkan. There were then seven special practice days where the Kohanim – Moshe’s brother Aharon and his four sons, Nadav, Avihu, Elazar, and Itamar – got ready for their very important work.

Our *parsha*, which is called *Parshat Shemini*, meaning “Eighth,” begins on the eighth day. This is the moment all of the Israelites have been waiting for! No more practice days. The Mishkan is about to open for real.

Zooming In:

The Kohanim do their special opening day ceremonies, offering gifts to God on the altar. Aharon and Moshe bless the people, and they all feel that God is with them. But then something bad happens. Something really bad. Aharon’s two older sons, Nadav and Avihu, put something on the altar they aren’t supposed to put – some kind of “strange fire.” We can’t be sure if they made a mistake, or did it on purpose. But whichever it was, they offered something to God that God had not asked them to offer – and they got in big trouble for it. In fact, they died.

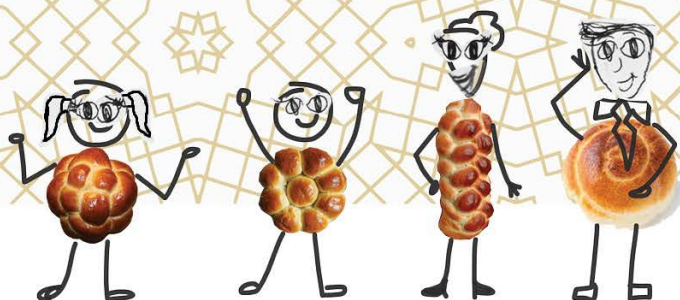
This was supposed to be the most special and happy day of the year for Bnei Yisrael, but it turned into the most terrible day! Moshe and Aharon were right there when Nadav and Avihu died.

Moshe’s immediate reaction was to say to Aharon:

Vayikra 10:3

“This is what God meant when He said: ‘Through those near to me I show Myself holy, and gain glory before all the people.’”

...הוא אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר יְהוָה לְאמֹר...
בְּקִרְבִי אֶקְדָּשׁ, וְעַל-פְּנֵי כָל-
הָעָם, אֶכְבֹּד...



And Aharon's response to what Moshe said? “וַיִּדַם אַהֲרֹן”.

The word וַיִּדַם means that Aharon stood still and was silent. He didn't make a sound or make a move. He stood like a דומם, like an inanimate object. Like a rock.

The Parsha Through Another Lens

Becoming a Commentator:

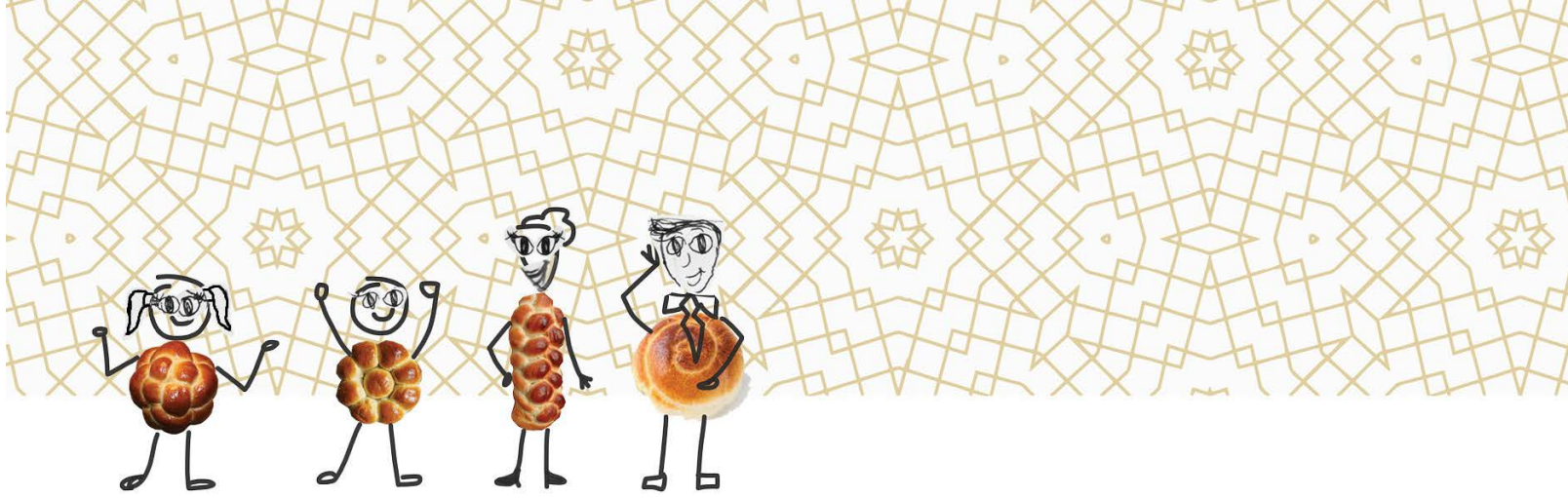
Commentators are people who write down what they think the Torah means.

One of the very famous rabbis who wrote a commentary on the Torah, the Rashbam, explained what he thought about this episode. He said that what he thought Moshe was actually saying to Aharon was the following:

“Do not mourn, and do not cry, and don't stop the work you are doing, because God told us that He wants to be shown to be holy by the Kohanim... [and in order to show that God is holy, they can't let their own feelings take precedence over their important work in the Mishkan, even if they are feeling very sad].”

The Rashbam then explained that he thought the words וַיִּדַם אַהֲרֹן mean that Aharon did not mourn or cry, even for a short time. He just kept on doing his work, like Moshe told him to.

One of the wonderful things about learning Torah is that we all can do it. And we can all be commentators. So now it's your turn! Answer the Questions for Consideration below from your own heart and mind. If you agree with the



Rashbam, that's fine. If you disagree with the Rashbam, that's also fine. Share your thoughts with everyone else at the table.

Questions for Consideration:

- What do **you** think Aharon felt when he saw what happened to his sons?
- What do **you** think Moshe meant when he told Aharon that this is what God had meant when he had earlier told him, 'Through those near to me I show Myself holy, and gain glory before all the people'?
- Why do **you** think Aharon stood completely still and was silent? Why do you think he acted like a rock that doesn't move or breathe?
- If **you** were Moshe, what do you think you would say to Aharon? Would you comfort him or tell him he needed to stay strong?
- What do **you** think a person should do when someone they know has lost someone close to them? How should they react to them? What should they say to them? What should they do for them?

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Parsha: Tazria

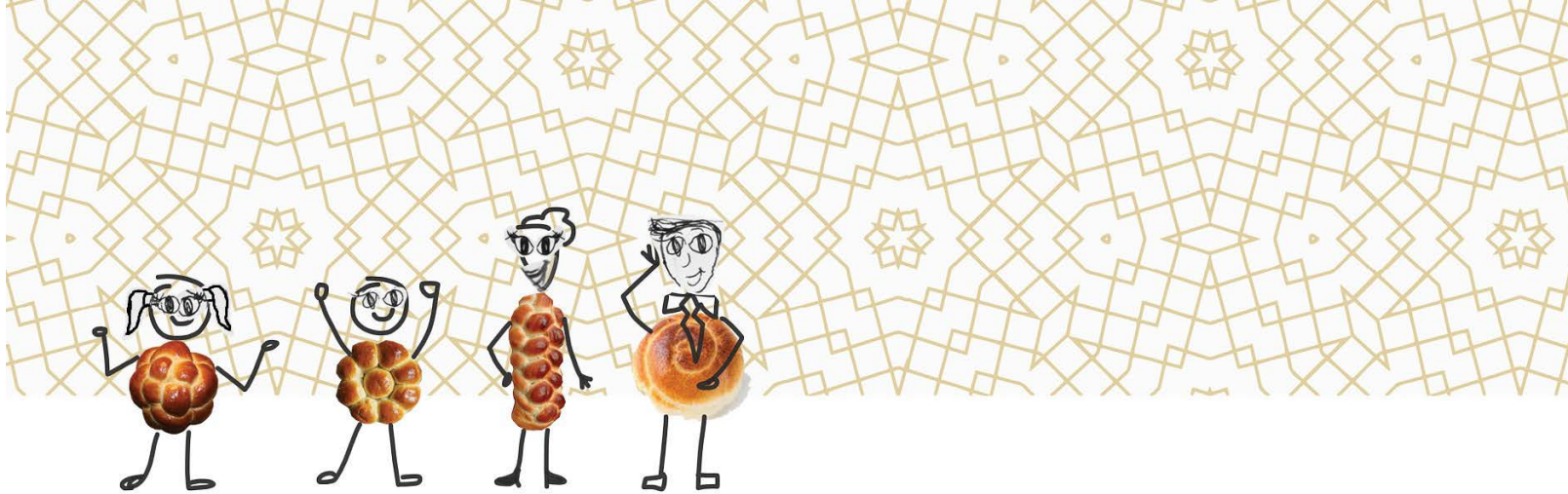
Title: Talking Face to Face

Contributor: Laura Marder, Pardes Day School Educators Program, '11-'14

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

One of the main topics in *Parshat Tazria* is *tzara'at*, a unique sickness that causes your skin to be uncomfortable, white and flakey. It can also affect fabrics, leathers and plastered building stones. This is notoriously one of the “yuckiest” parts of the Torah. This disease does not have a physical cause; instead it seems

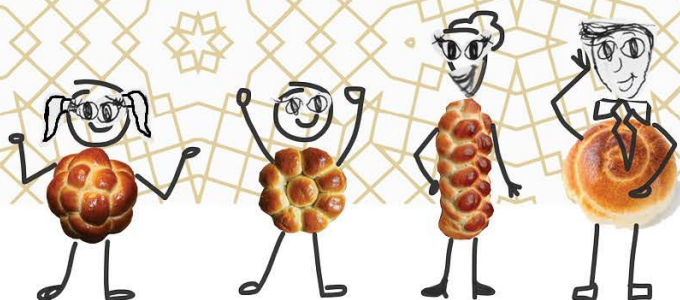


to have a spiritual cause. When you have a spiritual disease you are told to go to the *Kohanim* (priests), just like when you get sick with a physical disease and go to a doctor. The *Kohen* does not have some magical cure for it though. He simply meets with the person and diagnoses them. The *parsha* is filled with extreme detail of the disease and how the kohanim can detect if the person is pure or still infected. When a person is inflicted with tzara'at they are sent outside of the camp to be alone, only interacting with the kohanim who come to check on them. While infected the person takes on the special status of "impure." When someone is impure they are forbidden and exempt from doing certain commandments and participating in the community. Here is how the Torah says this:

Vayikra 13:46

<p>All of the days that the disease is touching the person, the person will be impure. While impure the person must sit/live alone outside of the camp where the person lives.</p>	<p>כָּל-יְמֵי אֲשֶׁר הִנָּגַע בּוֹ, יִטְמָא--טְמֵא הוּא : בְּדָד יֵשֵׁב מְחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה מוֹשְׁבוֹ.</p>
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This parsha emphasizes both the importance of going to seek help as well as spending time alone away from everyone. The Rabbis say that people who are sick with tzara'at need to be alone, and not even hang out with other "impure" people. Why is this the case? Usually when you want to keep someone away from others it is in order to not spread a sickness. If tzara'at is not caused by a physical disease then what is it that could spread to others? The Rabbis say that the cause of tzara'at is *lashon hara*, which means speaking badly about others. We see this in Bamidbar 12:10 when Miriam speaks about Moshe's wife behind his back with Aharon.



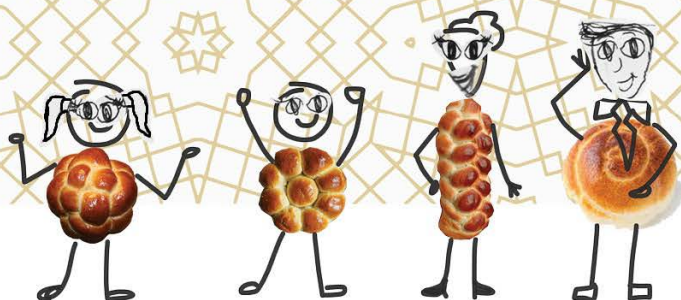
Zooming In:

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Erkin 16b

HE SHALL ABIDE SOLITARY — This means that people who are unclean from other causes than that of leprosy shall not abide with him. Our Rabbis said: Why is he (the leper) treated differently from other unclean persons that he should abide solitary? They replied: Because he, by slanderous statements, sowed divisions between man and wife and between friends, so shall he be alone ().

בְּדָד יֵשֵׁב. שְׁלֹא יְהִי טְמֵאִים
יוֹשֵׁבִין עִמּוֹ; וְאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ
מָה נִשְׁתַּנָּה מִשְׁאָר טְמֵאִים
לְיֹשֵׁב בְּדָד? הוּא אֵיל וְהוּא
הַבְּדִיל בְּלִשׁוֹן הָרַע בֵּין אִישׁ
לְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּבֵין אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ, אִף
הוּא יִבְדֵּל (עֲרֵכִין ט"ז):

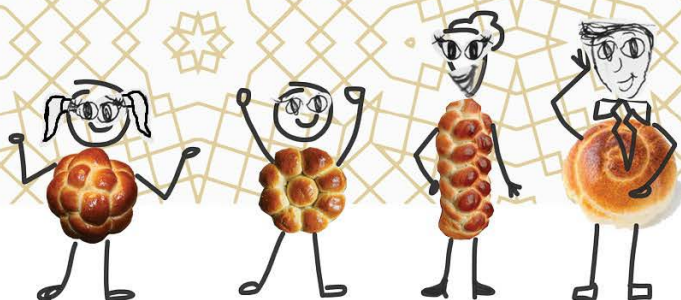
Speaking badly about someone (lashon hara) can make not only the people being spoken about feel bad, but it also makes the person speaking about them feel bad. It is “ugly” and uncomfortable just like the tzara’at. This parsha is trying to teach us how lashon hara affects us and can be cured. If you are caught up in talking badly about others you can sometimes not realize the damage you are causing or how it is making you feel. The Torah shows us here that this is us in an “impure” state. We are no longer in a place where we should keep interacting with the people around us. We need this time out, away from the camp, to sit with our thoughts alone. We need to recognize the ugliness and discomfort that our words have caused. We also need this time out so we do not spread it to others. It can be easy to follow someone’s example of speaking badly about others. It even seeps into the material around us. The memory of someone saying something unkind about you can stick in your memory for a long time. Before you begin



speaking about someone, take a moment to yourself to think about the ugliness that will occur if you do.

Questions for Consideration:

- Have you ever talked badly about someone because someone else was doing it?
- Why is the punishment for talking badly about others in the Torah a very “yucky” and uncomfortable disease?
- Who can you go to when you feel like you have done something that you are not proud of?
- How can taking some time to remove yourself from the situation and be alone help?

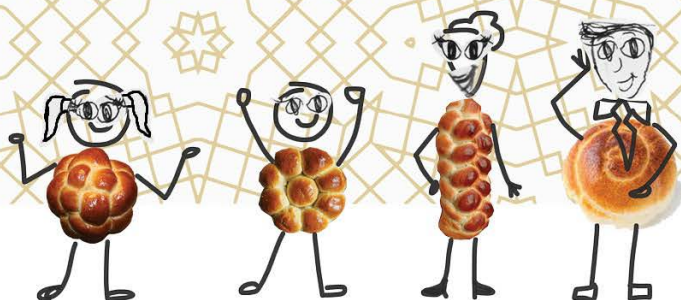


The Parsha Through Another Lens

Picture This, Part 1:



1. Ask your child to look at this picture and tell you a story about what is happening.
2. Ask them how each child feels in this moment. How will they feel later in the day?
3. Ask them to choose a child from the image that will decide to tell an adult about what is happening. Who would that child go to and why?
4. We don't get tzara'at today (thank goodness!). What kind of damage happens instead from speaking badly about others?
5. What does your child think is a fair consequence for someone who does this?



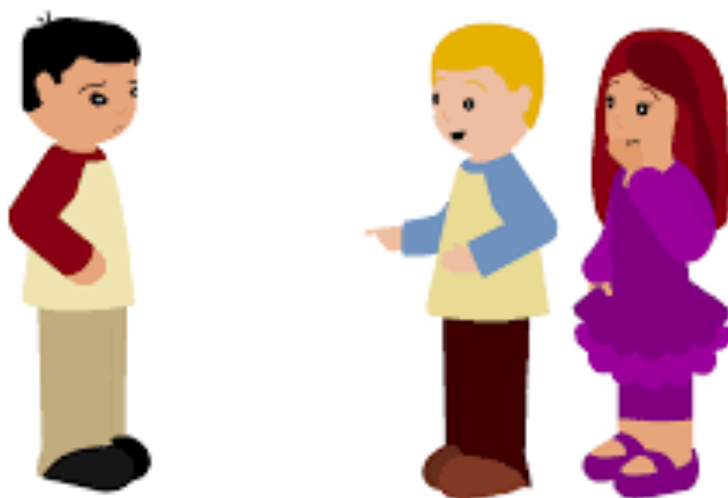
Picture This, Part 2:

When Miriam spoke lashon hara to Aharon about Moshe, here is what God said to her before making her sick with tzara'at:

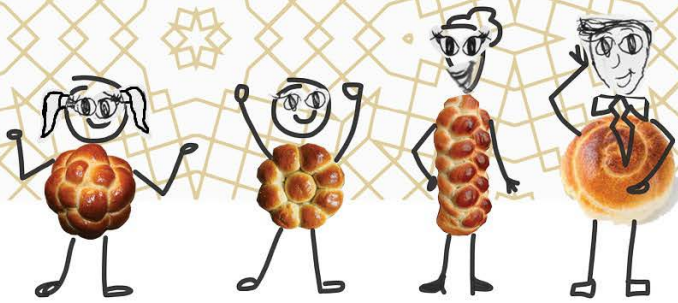
Numbers 12:8

With him (Moses) I (God) speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of the LORD. How then were you not afraid of speaking against My servant Moses!

פֶּה אֶל-פֶּה אִדְבַּר-בוֹ, וּמְרֹאָה
וְלֹא בְחֵידוֹת, וַתִּמְנַת יְהוָה
בְּבֵית; וּמְדוּעַ לֹא יִרְאֶתֶם
לְדַבֵּר בְּעַבְדִּי בְמוֹשֶׁה.



1. Miriam is unhappy about who her brother Moshe is married to. Instead of talking to him about it she talks to Aharon, her other brother. Why do you think she made this decision?



2. How can you tell someone face-to-face when they are doing something you don't like or you are concerned about?
3. Why does God make it clear that God talks "mouth to mouth" with Moshe? What lesson is God trying to teach Miriam and Aharon?
4. Create a story where the kids above decided to do the right thing and tell their friend face-to-face something that bothered them instead of talking behind his back.

Shabbat Shalom!

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Parsha: Metzora

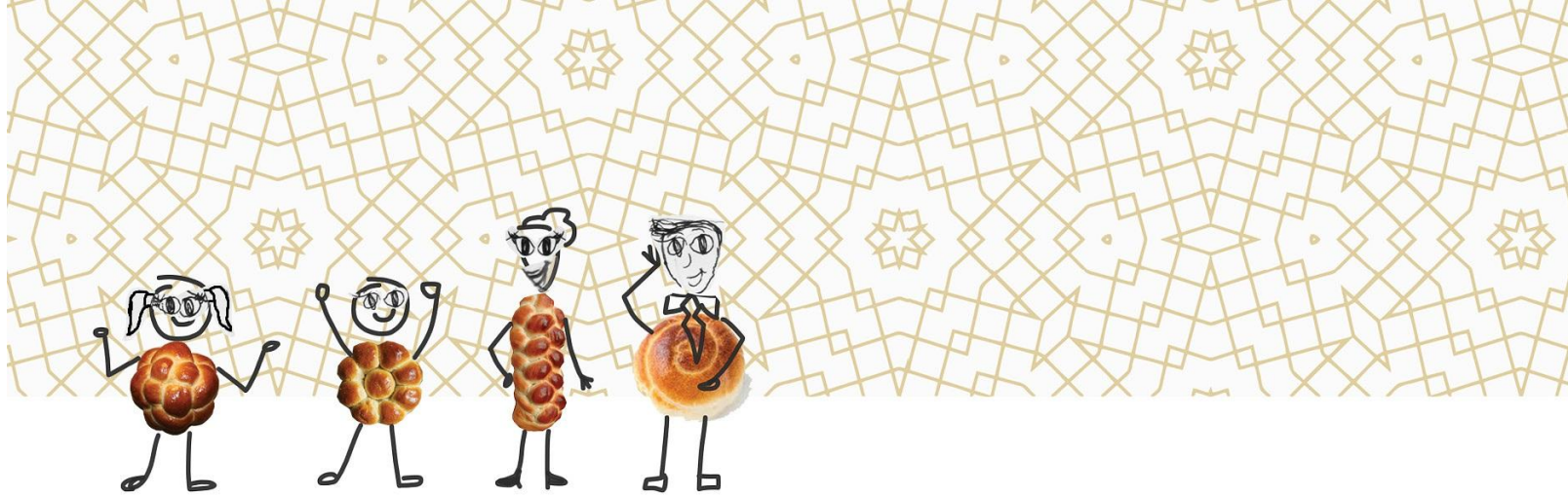
Title: Tzara'at and the Exodus Story: Connections, Community and a bundle of Hyssop

Contributor Rachel Friedrichs, PCJE Assistant Director and Pardes Day School Educators Program, '05-'07

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

This week's *parsha*, *Metzora*, is one of several in *Sefer Vayikra* which deals with things that seem rather strange and should no longer concern us today. After all, no one gets *tzara'at* (a skin disease similar to leprosy) any more, and we don't have a Temple to which we go to in order to bring sin offerings. This *parsha* (as



well as last week's parsha - *Tazria*) includes many peculiar details about tzara'at, what sacrifices to bring and what to do if the walls of one's house get tzara'at. And yet... there are some interesting lessons to be learned from the laws of tzara'at in this week's parsha that certainly are relevant to us today... especially the week before *Pesach*.

Zooming In:

First, we will take a look at several strange details about tzara'at. Each one is a 'clue' that might help us better understand what this is all about... but you will have to be detectives! See if you can figure out what the four clues below all have in common (besides for tzara'at, of course!).

Note: Consider cutting out each of the clues and giving them to different members of the group to read aloud and consider.

Clue #1: Miriam

The only person in the whole Torah who actually gets tzara'at is Miriam. In Bamidbar 12:12, just after we are told that Miriam is now covered in tzara'at, Aharon says about his sister, "Don't let her be like one who is dead...". And so, Moshe prays on her behalf to be healed.

Clue #2: The "grandfather" of ritual impurities

There are different levels of ritual impurity (טומאה/*tum'ah*). Of the many different ways and things that can become impure, there are only two, which have the highest level of ritual impurity, which are called the 'grandfather' of ritual impurities (אבי אבות הטומאה). These two are someone with tzara'at and a dead body.



Clue #3: White scales

When someone has tzara'at, they are covered in white scales. They appear white, almost like someone who is bloodless.

Clue #4: "נגע"/Nega

The word נגע/*nega* (plague or a strike) appears only two times in the entire Torah. You guessed it, one time is our parsha (14:3), when it describes the healing of someone's nega tzara'at. Interestingly, the other time the word appears is in reference to the 10th plague in Egypt (the word מכה/*makah* is usually used for the other plagues) - which is the death of the first born of the Egyptians.

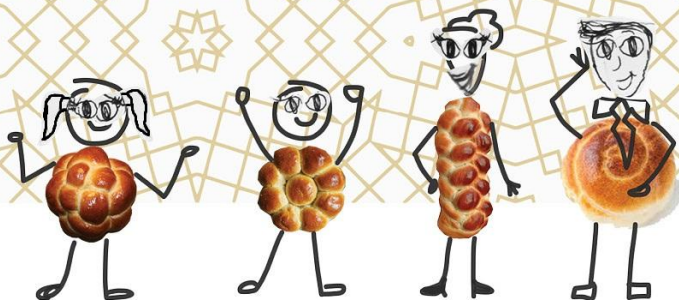
Questions for Consideration:

- So, detectives, what do all four clues seem to have in common? Based on these four clues, what might you compare tzara'at to?

[O.K., so here is the answer... did you notice that 'death' was a common thread?]

- But now we have another question to ask: In what way is someone with tzara'at 'dead'? After all, they can be purified from the affliction and then resume their life afterwards!? Why would there be these strong connections between death and tzara'at?

Rabbi David Fohrman and the medieval commentator Ramban team up to try and answer this last question. Keep reading...



The Parsha Through Another Lens

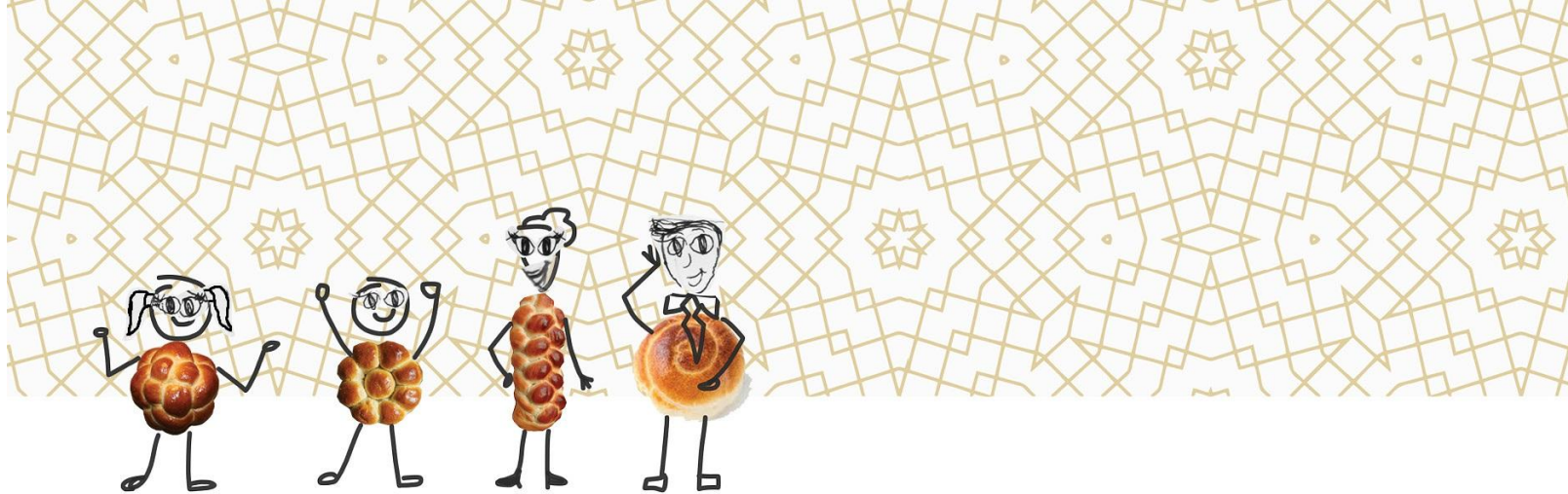
Torah Match-up:

The Ramban and Rabbi David Fohrman notice some interesting similarities between the purification process for someone with tzara'at and the events that took place just before and during the exodus story. Check out the 'Torah Match-up' below to see this for yourselves.

Instructions: See if you can match up the following elements from the exodus story with elements from the tzara'at purification process.

Note: The matching cards below could be cut out and cut in half, giving participants the chance to have to physically match up the connections between the Pesach story and tzara'at. Someone could read a "Pesach" card aloud and the other participants could try to match it with the tzara'at card that they are holding.

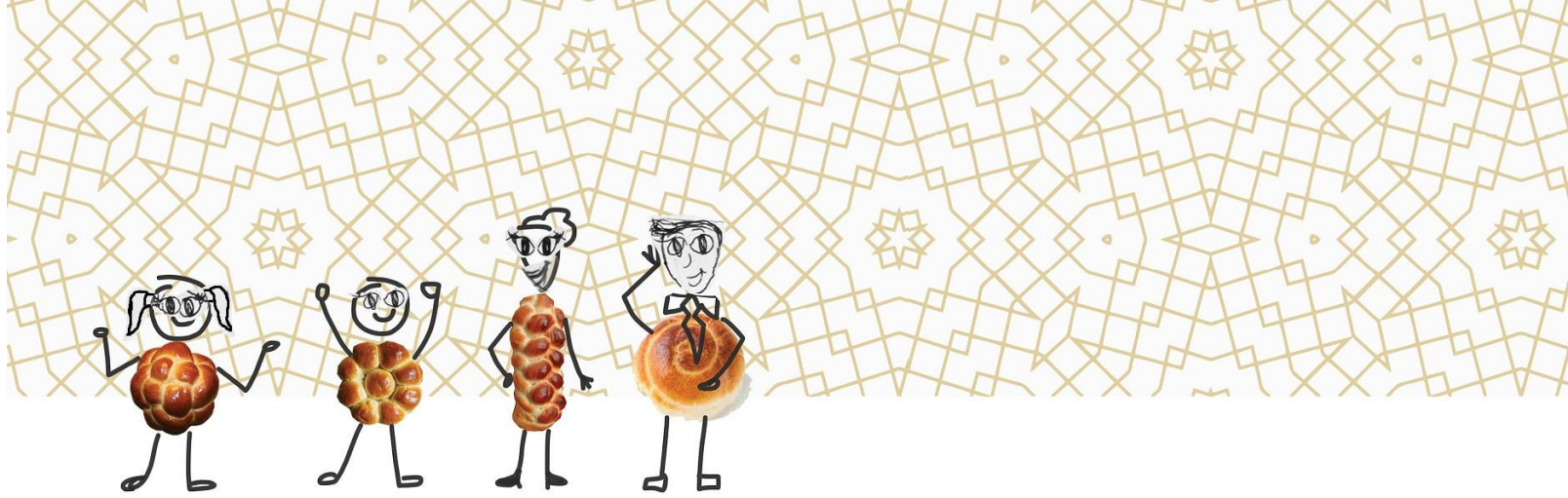
Pesach/Exodus story	Tzara'at
The Israelites paint the wooden lintels (doorposts) of their homes with the blood of a sacrifice on the night of the 10th plague.	A piece of cedar wood is brought by the person afflicted with tzara'at and it gets dipped in the blood of a sacrifice as part of the purification process.



Pesach/Exodus story	Tzara'at
<p>The first born of the Egyptian families are killed in the 10th plague, but the 'corresponding' Jewish first born are allowed to live and sent out of Egypt (אתכם מזה ישלח - "He will send you out from here" - Exodus 11:1).</p>	<p>Two birds are brought as part of the purification process; one bird is killed while the other bird is sent away alive (את הציפור החיה ושלח - "And send away the live bird" - Leviticus 14:7).</p>

Pesach/Exodus story	Tzara'at
<p>The Israelites use a bundle of hyssop (אזוב)* to paint the blood on their doorposts - Exodus 12:22.</p> <p>*The exodus story and the tzara'at purification ritual are the only two times in the Torah where hyssop is mentioned.</p>	<p>As part of the purification process, the person afflicted with tzara'at would have to bring a bundle of hyssop (אזוב)* which would be dipped in blood.</p>

Pesach/Exodus story	Tzara'at
<p>As part of our commemoration of the exodus from Egypt, Jews take all <i>hametz</i> (leavened food products) out of their home for seven days.</p>	<p>As part of the purification process, a person with tzara'at would have to remove him or herself from the entire encampment and wait for seven days before returning back home.</p>



Tying It All Together:

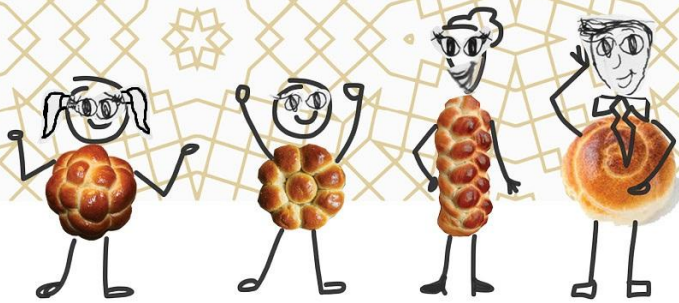
There are two more important details which you might need to be reminded of before you can try to make sense of all these seemingly strange connections.

1. Why does someone get tzara'at? According to the Torah, for speaking *lashon hara* (gossip, spreading rumors, slandering someone). Rabbinic commentators also suggest that when someone acts in a haughty manner, as if they were better than others, s/he would get tzara'at.
2. In addition to our freedom, another core element that we are celebrating on Pesach is that this is when we became a nation - a cohesive people. All of the Israelites were spared from the plagues, freed together and were united by God's covenant at Mt. Sinai.

Finally, let's see if we can bring this all together. Read the 'tying it all together' statement below and use the questions beneath it to help you fill in the dots.

Tying it all together: In the Torah, when someone gossips about someone in their community or acts haughtily... they get afflicted with tzara'at... which makes them appear dead and have the impurity status of someone who died... then they have to wait for seven days away from community... they come back into the encampment but then have to perform a purification ritual... which has many similarities to the exodus story... which was the time when the Israelites became a unified people...

1. When someone gossips about someone in their community or acts haughtily, how would you describe their relationship with the people around them?
2. Why do you think it might be a suitable punishment for someone who speaks lashon hara or acts haughtily to appear to be dead and have to be removed from their society (for seven days)?



3. When someone is brought back into their community, why would they have to perform a ritual which will remind them of the exodus story? What do you think the strange purification ritual is supposed to make them think or feel?
4. How might the strange connections between tzara'at and the exodus story - which you just uncovered! - impact the way you celebrate Pesach next week?

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Parsha: Acharei Mot

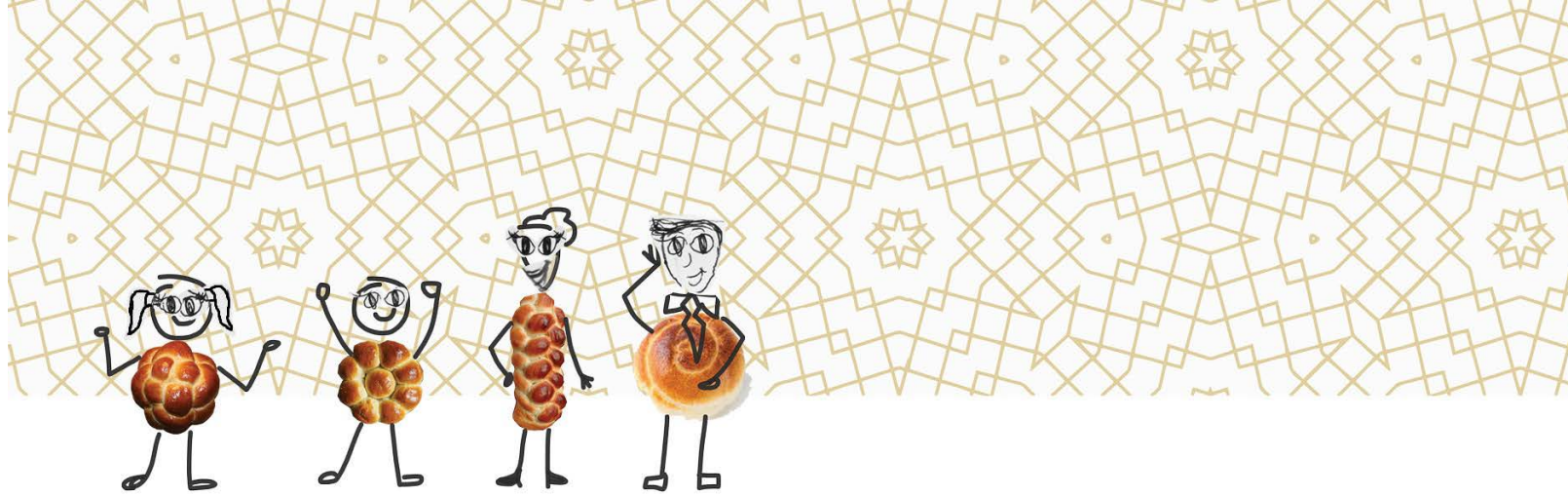
Title: Walk This Way

Contributor: Amy Martin, Pardes Day School Educators Program, '09-'11

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

Forgiveness and atonement, how to make our wrongs right, are the main themes of this *parsha*, which is called *Acharei Mot*. We learn all about using offerings – animals – to help *Bnei Israel* be free of their mistakes and regrets.



Zooming In:

Later on, in the parsha, there is a long list of the ways we should behave and live our lives.

These are divided into two types of laws: *mishpatim* and *chukim*. Mishpatim are laws that we are easily able to understand. For example: “Don’t Steal,” a law that is found in the Ten Commandments.

Chukim are laws that are harder for us to know why God asks us to follow them. For example: the law prohibiting wearing clothing made of wool and linen mixed together.

No matter how difficult it may be to understand the ‘why’ behind some of our laws, we are told that we need to follow them.

Vayikra 18:4

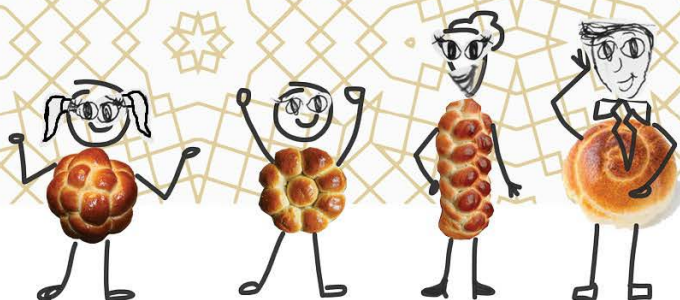
You shall fulfill My ordinances and observe My statutes, **to follow them**. I am the Lord, your God.

אַת-מִשְׁפָּטַי תַּעֲשׂוּ וְאֶת-חֻקֹּתַי
תִּשְׁמְרוּ לְלַכְתּ בָּהֶם : אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם .

Questions for Consideration:

The verb that is used is this pasuk, **לָלַכְת**, means to walk.

- Why do you think that the Torah chose this verb when talking about following laws?
- What does it mean to “walk in them”?



The Parsha Through Another Lens

Game On:

Play a round or two of each of the following games.

Simon Says

In case you need a refresher of the rules, one person is “Simon,” while the others are the players. Standing in front of the group, Simon tells players what they must do. Players should only obey the instructions that begin with the words “Simon Says.” If “Simon Says” doesn’t begin the instructions, and a player ends up doing the action, then they are out!

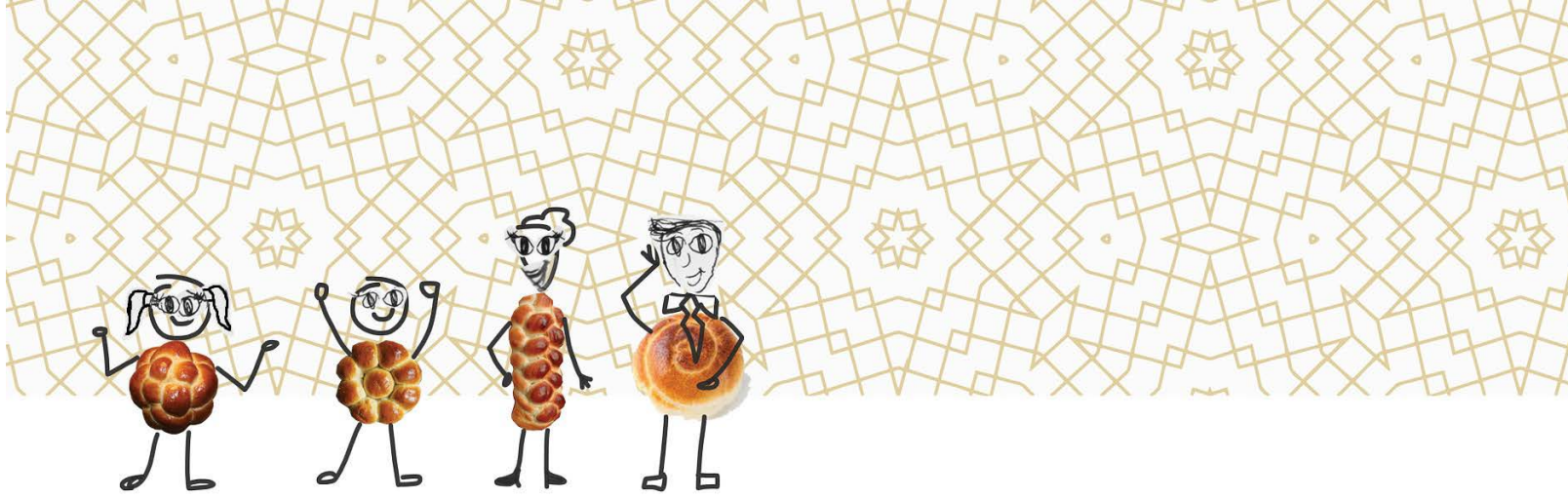
Shape Maker

Materials: Pre-cut strings of yarn, each cut into one-foot-long pieces.

Players must sit back to back. Player A gets the string. Player B will give instructions to Player A.

Player B must describe, step by step, how to make a shape out of the string without telling Player A what shape they are making.

For example: Player B might say to Player A, “Turn 5 inches of your string to the right. Take the next 5 inches and turn it south, etc.” Player B gives instructions until Player B believes Player A has built the shape. At this point, Player A and B can step out of their formation and look at the shape. Was Player A able to make the shape Player B envisioned just by following Player B’s instructions?



Discussion after your games:

- How did it feel to be the person listening to the rules in both Simon Says and Shape Maker?
- What do you have to do when you follow someone?
- Thinking back to our parsha, what do you think God is asking the Jewish people to do when God says: “לִלְכֹת בְּהֵם” – meaning, to follow both mishpatim and chukim?
- Is it easier to follow rules that you understand? Think about these examples: You understand why you can’t cross the street when the traffic light is green. You understand why it’s bad to be jealous of toys or clothes that your friends have.
- Why is it so hard to follow laws that you don’t understand as well? For example, when your parents say, “Why? Because I said so...”
- After your reflections, do you have anything to add to the idea of why the Torah would use the verb לִלְכֹת (to walk) to refer to following laws?

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Parsha: Kedoshim

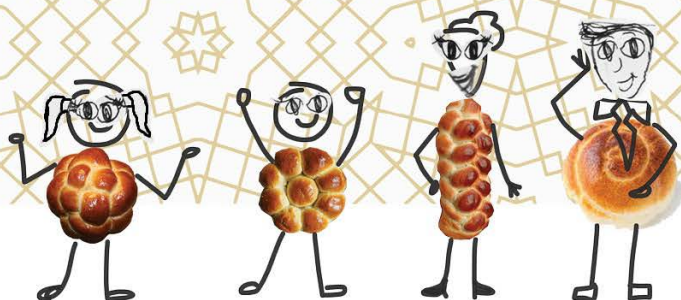
Title: Love and Holiness

Contributor Leah Beck, Pardes Experiential Educators Program
'17-'18

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

In our *parsha*, God speaks to Moshe, instructing him to speak to the Israelites and say... a lot of things. It's a pretty detailed list of what to do and what not to do in order to be good people. God starts with a huge ask in 19:3: "You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy." Then God goes on to instruct that the people



keep Shabbat, not pray to idols, leave the edges of fields unharvested as food for the poor, not steal, be kind to the stranger, and then again in 20:7-8, “you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I the Lord am your God. You shall faithfully observe My laws: I the Lord make you holy.” And once again in 20:26, “you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and I have set you apart from other peoples to be Mine.” There is a clear trend here if you ask me.

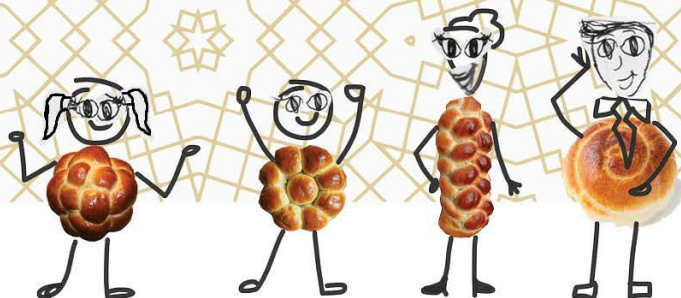
Zooming In:

The expression “I am God” appears 19 times in our parsha. This brings an added layer of importance to the words that God is expressing and sets a serious tone.

Earlier at Mt. Sinai in Shemot 19:6, the people were told that they’d become a Holy Nation. Here in our parsha, they are instructed to bring about that holiness *themselves!* How are they supposed to accomplish this?

The Torah commentator Ramban takes this challenge and flips it around. He says that instead of asking if an action is allowed or illegal, one should ask instead if through that action I will be expressing that I’ve been made *‘B’tzelem Elohim,’* in the image of God. God answers the challenge of becoming holy by taking the opportunity to command the people to love their neighbor as themselves.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch writes about how difficult it is to be commanded to feel a particular emotion, and that it might be impossible to literally love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Hirsch writes that more than an emotional bond, God is instructing that our actions towards other people be based in kindness and be an attempt to understand them.



Questions for Consideration:

- Is there anyone you'd consider holy? What about them makes you feel this way?
- What does it mean for you to love your neighbor?
- Is there a difference between loving your neighbor and loving your neighbor as yourself?

The Parsha Through Another Lens

The Parsha in Practice:

NOTE: This activity might require writing/drawing.

Step One: Think about/write about/draw all of the ways that you exemplify holiness. You were created 'B'tzelem Elohim'! What does that actually look like? Are there physical qualities about you? Are there emotional qualities that show you how you were made in the image of God? What about your actions? Do parts of how you act at home make you a holy being?

Step Two: How do you love your neighbor? Think about your actual neighbors and think about the people you pass by on the street or who sit with you on the school bus. Some of those are people you know, and some are complete strangers. Do you interact differently when someone is a stranger? Are you still kind to them? Do you smile and hold the door for people walking behind you?

Step Three: What are some things you could do after Shabbat ends that would add to the love you show for your neighbor? Talk about how these actions would bring you closer to holiness. Make a concrete plan and challenge yourself to make holiness a habit!

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Parsha: Emor

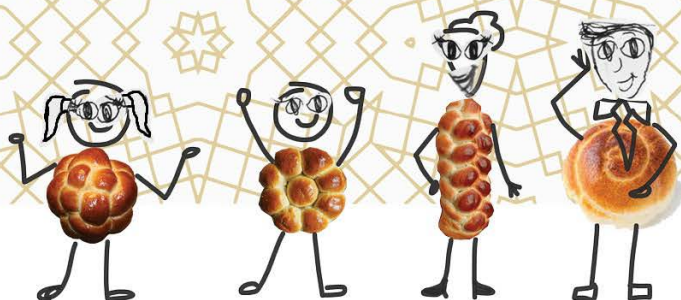
Title: The Gift of the Chagim

Contributor: Susan Yammer, PCJE Director of Novice Teacher Support and Pedagogic Coach

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

In this *parsha* God, through Moshe, gives us the most detailed list and explanation of the *chagim* – Jewish holidays – found in the Torah. Below are the *chagim* as described in *Parshat Emor*. Can you guess which *chag* is being described?



1. *"On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a day of complete rest, a sacred day. You shall do no work..."*

And the chag is?

2. *"...on the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall eat unleavened bread for seven days."*

And the chag is?

3. *"And from the day on which you bring the...offering—the day after the sabbath—you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: you must count until the day after the seventh week—fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the LORD. On that same day you shall hold a celebration; it shall be a sacred occasion for you; you shall not work at your occupations. This is a law for all time in all your settlements, throughout the ages."*

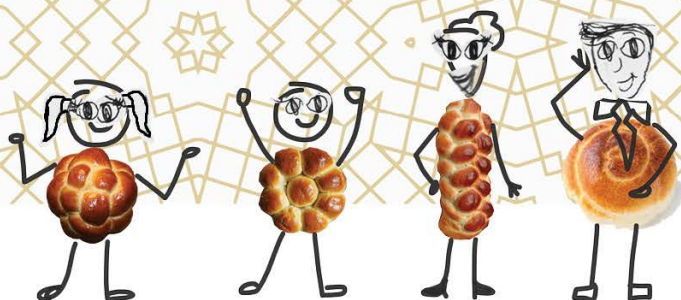
And the chag is?

4. *"...In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts."*

And the chag is?

5. *"...the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you: you shall deny yourself (no eating), and you shall bring an offering by fire to the LORD; do not do any work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God."*

And the chag is?



6. *"...on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruits of your land, you shall observe the festival of the LORD [to last] seven days: a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. On the first day you shall take the product of Hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days."*

And the chag is?

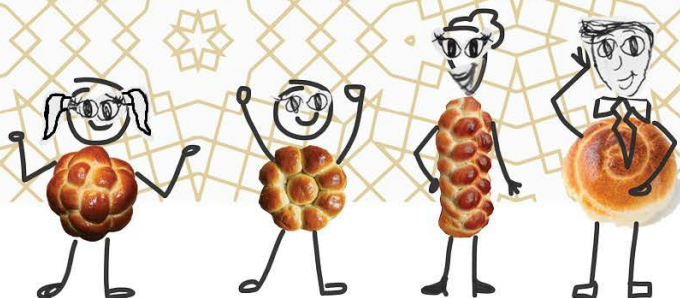
Answer key:

1. Shabbat
2. Pesach
3. Shavuot
4. Rosh Hashanah
5. Yom Kippur
6. Sukkot

Zooming In:

You may have noticed that there are some chagim missing in the list that we are given in the Torah. That's because chagim such as Purim, Chanukah and Simchat Torah (and others) were set after the Torah was already completed.

In any case, the chagim have remained for all these thousands of years an integral part of our Jewish year. It's the way we mark time and milestones. It's the way we choose to celebrate, mourn, and tell our Jewish story. Perhaps it's such a part of our lives as Jews that we take them for granted! What would happen if we didn't take them for granted?



The Parsha Through Another Lens

Parsha Puzzle:

Note: In preparation for this parsha activity, the puzzle template needs to be cut out into pieces and (preferably) colored in. To set up the activity, place the puzzle pieces in the center of the Shabbat table.

Step One: *Imagine* there are no more chagim. They have disappeared from the year. Go around the table and have each person share what they would most miss.

Step Two: Next, each person should *choose* one of the chag-labeled puzzle pieces in the center of the table. Then, going around the table, each person should *complete* the following sentence:

“ _____ (name of your chag) is the most important chag of the year because without it we wouldn’t _____.”

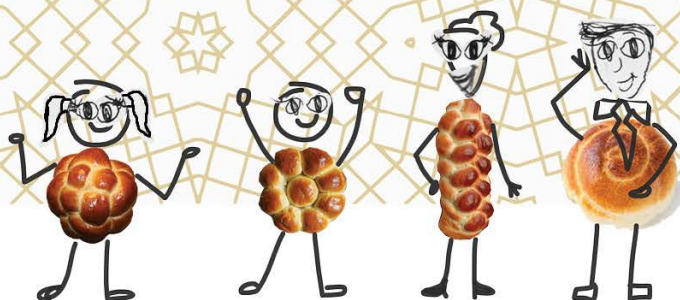
Step Three: *Put* all of the puzzle pieces back. This time everyone should *choose* a different chag puzzle piece and *fill in* the same sentence.

(I hope you discovered that each chag could be considered the most important one of the year!)

Step Four: Now, *assemble* the puzzle and *wonder* together out loud:

- Why is the puzzle in the shape of a circle?
- Why is Shabbat in the middle?

Step Five: *Think:* What would happen if you took out one of the puzzle pieces? The puzzle would not be complete. The same is true for the chagim. If one of the chagim were missing from our year, it would be missed!



(As we celebrate the circle of chagim this year, try and appreciate that each chag has its special gift for us!)



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Parsha: Behar

Title: Giving People a Head Start

Contributor: Penny Joel, Director of Experiential Education,
Pardes Center for Jewish Educators

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

Parshat Behar opens by telling us that all of the following laws were said to Moshe on Mount Sinai. It then goes on to focus most of the *parsha* on the concept of *shmita* (the sabbatical year). *Shmita* means that we must let the land in Israel rest every seventh year. Within the discussion of *shmita*, there are many details



about what happens during that seventh year and verses that talk about how we are supposed to treat people in business, relate to the stranger and help the needy.

Zooming In:

Within the conversation of shmita the following verse appears:

Vayikra 25:35

<p>And should your relative come to [financial] ruin and he stumbles, you shall uphold him as though a sojourning settler, and he shall live with you.</p>	<p>וְכִי יָמוּד אָחִיךָ, וַיִּמָּטָה נְדוּ עִמָּךְ, וַיִּהְיוּקֶתְךָ בּוֹ גֵר וְתוֹשֵׁב, וַיְחִי עִמָּךְ.</p>
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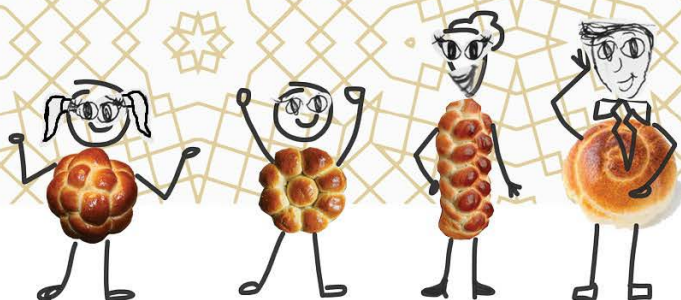
Rashi asks, what does the verse mean when it says “וַיִּהְיוּקֶתְךָ בּוֹ” (you shall uphold him)?

Rashi answers that it is telling us the following way to behave: if we see someone start to fail, we should not wait until they have totally failed to offer help.

He provides the image of a donkey carrying an extra-large load. If someone is there to help the donkey while it starts to stumble, the donkey and its load will be okay. But if a person waits for the donkey to fall over, it will be almost impossible to get the donkey up with all it is carrying. In the same way, if someone starts to struggle financially, we should help them before they lose all of their money.

Questions for Consideration:

- What does this verse say about our responsibility to our community?
- What does it really mean for us on a day-to-day basis?
- What is the difference between this and *tzedaka*?
- This seems to be teaching us that it is important to help people before their situation gets worse. But *why* is that important?



It may teach us to be aware of people in our community and make sure they are okay; to not wait until people ask for help but to offer help before it is obviously needed; to be thoughtful and help people maintain their dignity. This highlights the importance the Torah places on creating a thoughtful and sensitive community. Not only do we let the land rest and behave thoughtfully about how we relate to the land, but we also try to create a community that is thoughtful about its people as well. We do not want to wait for someone to be in dire straits before we help them! Rather, we want people to feel noticed and supported, and in this way create a holistic community of caring.

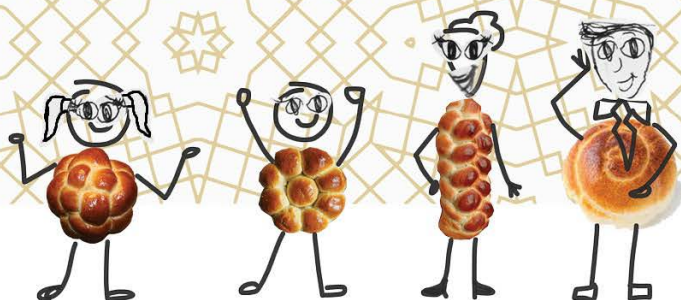
The Parsha Through Another Lens

Discussion Triggers:

Here are some triggers that can be used to generate a discussion.

Option 1: Have children help serve and clear the first course of Shabbat dinner (if this isn't normally done). Then discuss: how did it feel to help? Ask the person they were helping how they felt getting more help. Then go to the discussion questions below.

Option 2: Put a bag or box on the floor and spread out a bunch of objects near it (so that it would be difficult for one child to collect all of the objects quickly). Then ask one child to gather all the objects into the bag or box in a short, specific amount of time (say, 1-2 minutes). Once the allotted time is up, ask the child how it felt to have had to do that all by themselves. Then, ask those that "stood by" and watched how it felt to watch the child have to do this alone. Ask: If they saw that happen again would they do anything different? Then go to the discussion questions below.



Discussion questions:

- When is a time you could have used help and no one helped?
- When is a time that you helped (or you saw someone help) someone before they asked for help or before it was obvious they needed help?
- When is a time someone helped you? How did that feel?
- What is something as a family/class we can do to help people before they completely stumble and fall? (volunteer at a soup kitchen, visit a hospital or senior home, donate food, clothes or toys, etc.)

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Parsha: Bechukotai

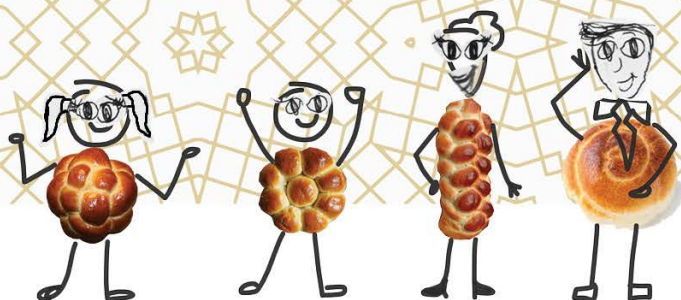
Title: Every Day Has Its Own Reward

Contributor: Hannah Perlis, Pardes Day School Educators
Program '11-'13

The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

In this week's *parsha*, God promises *Bnei Yisrael* different types of rewards if they keep God's *mitzvot*, commandments. God also warns *Bnei Yisrael* of the curses that will happen to them if they do not keep their promise to God, and follow the laws given to them.



Zooming In:

In reality, there are rewards and consequences for our actions all of the time!

Questions for Consideration:

- Are there rewards you receive that you are not aware of?
- Are there consequences you get if you do not follow the laws of life seen every day?
- Does one reward lead to more blessings?

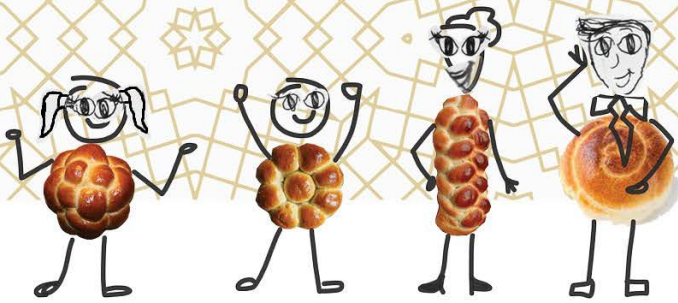
The Parsha Through Another Lens

Game On:

Note: This game requires cutting before Shabbat.

Test your parsha knowledge! What rewards do Bnei Yisrael receive if they keep God's *brit*, promise? What consequences do they have if they do not keep the brit with God?

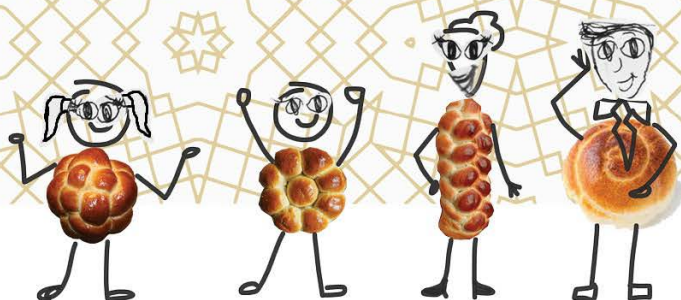
Directions: Place 3 rewards mentioned in the Torah under the "Rewards" column and place 3 consequences from the Torah under the "Consequences" column. Here's the hard part: there are rewards and consequences in this game that are NOT from this week's parsha - YOU will have to decide which ones belong in the chart!



Rewards	Consequences

Cut along the lines below to have your choices for the Rewards/Consequences Game:

There will be peace in the land	The sun will shine very brightly
Bnei Yisrael will be God's people	There will be diseases
Bnei Yisrael will all have large houses	There will be rain, and fruit from the land



The land will not make fruit	There will not be peace
The flowers on the trees will bloom	Bnei Yisrael's animals will run away

The Parsha in Practice:

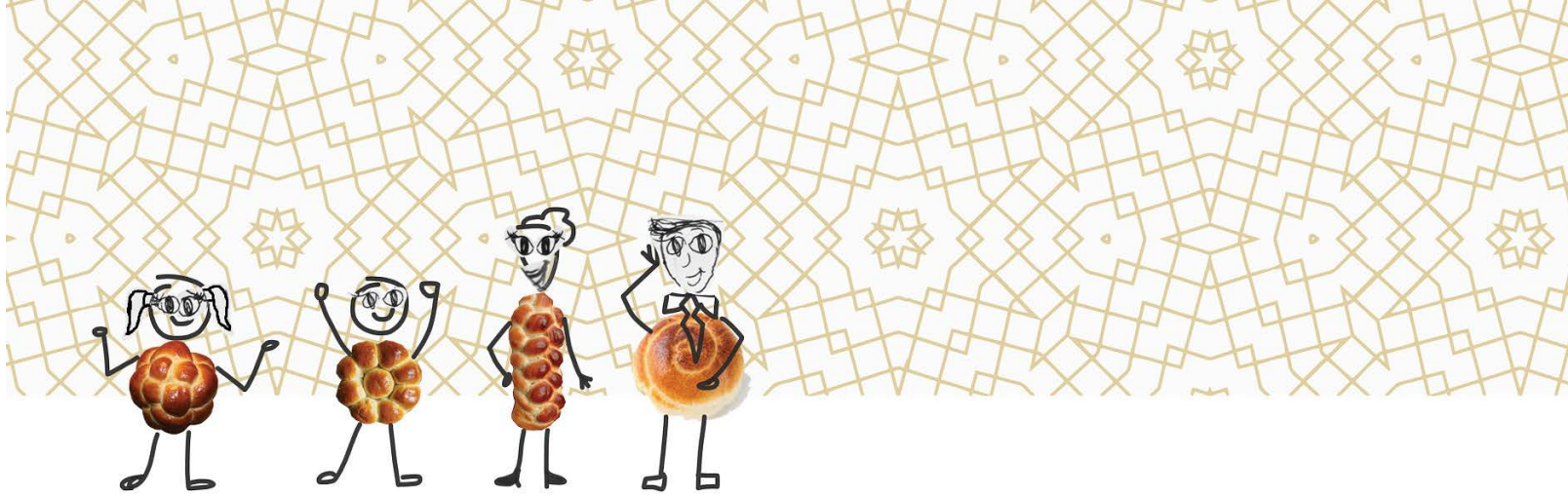
There are additional chances to receive rewards for small actions we take every day. The list below includes examples of the “Everyday Opportunities Brit” or “The Menschlichkeit Brit,” actions we do every day that lead to rewards and blessings for ourselves and others.

Some of the actions listed below fall under categories of mitzvot drawn from the Torah, and others are smaller events that we might not realize lead to blessings. Discuss which rewards and blessings can come from the items below:

1. Treating my friends and family with respect
2. Listening when my friends are speaking
3. Inviting a new friend for a Shabbat or holiday meal
4. Holding the door for the person behind me
5. Cleaning my hands before I eat
6. Showing kindness and patience with others, even when they are not my closest friends

Challenge: Think of 3 more “everyday opportunities” with rewards that help make the world a better place to live in!





Mishnah Matters:

The *Mishnah* in Pirkei Avot 4:2 says:

A commandment leads to another commandment...
the reward for a commandment is another commandment...

שְׂמִצְוָה גּוֹרֶרֶת מִצְוָה...
שְׂשִׁכָר מִצְוָה, מִצְוָה...

Questions to Consider:

- How can doing a mitzvah, or commandment, lead to another mitzvah?
- How can receiving a blessing lead to another blessing?
- Are our motivations to continue to do good things only strengthened when we receive rewards?
- How are our motivations strengthened when we make a promise that we want to keep?

Shabbat Shalom!

