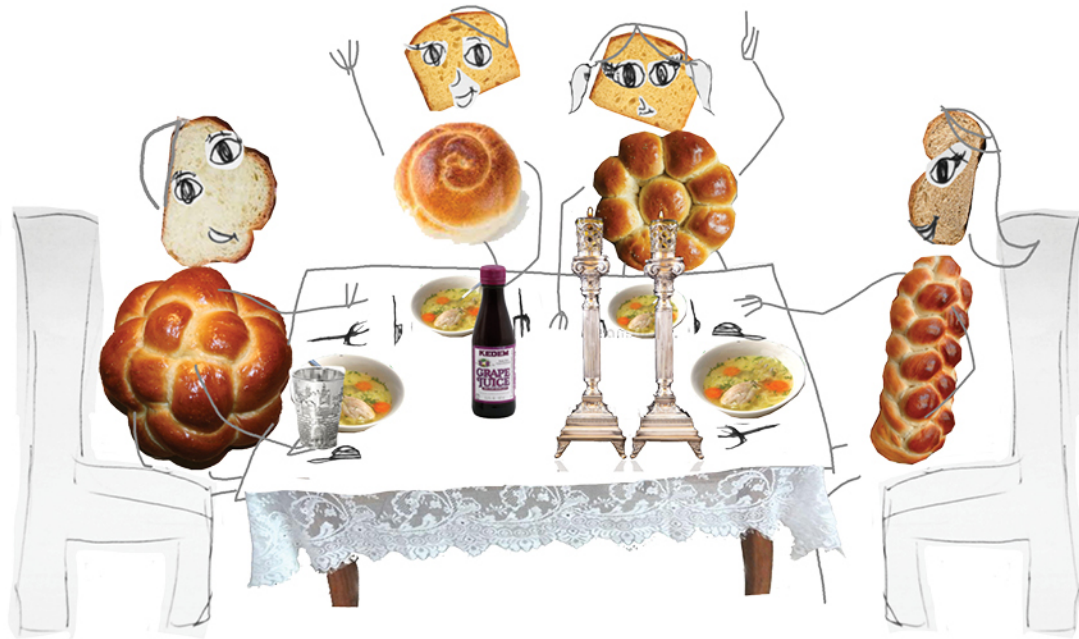


The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# *An Interactive* **PARSHA EXPERIENCE**



## **דברים | Devarim**

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.

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Devarim

**Title:** Deconstructing Moshe's Speech

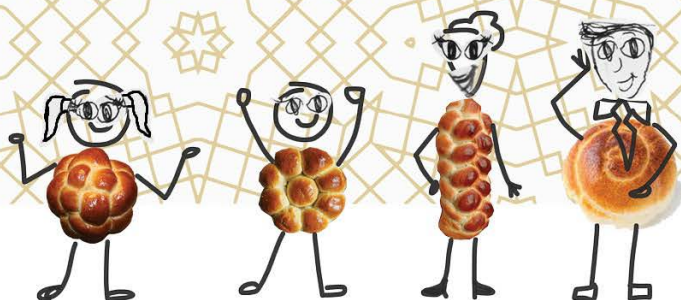
**Contributor:** Rachel Friedrichs, Assistant Director of the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators, Pardes Day School Educators Program '05-'07

## *The Parsha at First Glance*

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

*Bnei Yisrael* have been traveling through the desert for 40 years! They have had some pretty big adventures – the exodus from Egypt, receiving the Ten Commandments at Sinai, fighting enemies in the desert, receiving manna from





heaven, getting punished for not obeying God, and more! Throughout all that, the generation that was taken out of Egypt has passed away and now their kids and grandkids are camped near the banks of the Jordan River, waiting to cross into the land that God had promised them. But Moshe, who will not be going into Canaan with the people, decides to give them a 'farewell speech' before they cross the river without him. In fact, most of the Book of *Devarim* shares with us what Moshe says to Bnei Yisrael before they advance, for the first time, without his leadership.

### Zooming In:

So, what does Moshe say in this all-important speech? This is his last chance to tell them what they are going to need to know as they conquer the land, settle there and grow into an established nation. Imagine all the things running through his head...

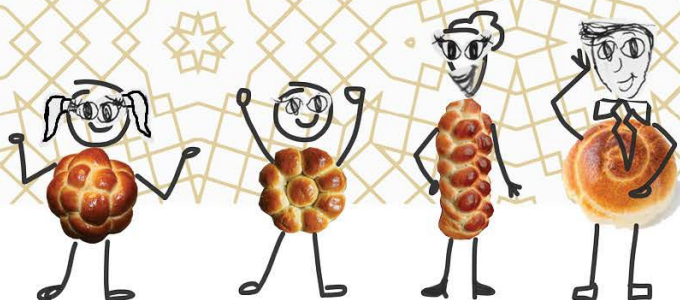
To really find out what Moshe did decide to say to the people, you need to read the entire Book of Devarim! But a quick summary can be divided into three main parts:

1. Reminding the people of their previous experiences in the desert, including their sins and mistakes and God's miracles
2. Reviewing all the commandments - to make sure the people know how to behave and follow God once they are living in their own land
3. A final strong reminder that the people must follow God's commandments in order to continue to receive God's blessings and to avoid punishment from God

### Questions for Consideration:

Hmmm... so what do you think Moshe should have said to Bnei Yisrael?

- What would be most important? What would be most helpful to the people as they cross the Jordan River and fight to settle in Canaan?
- What would YOU say to Bnei Yisrael at this time?



## The Parsha Through Another Lens

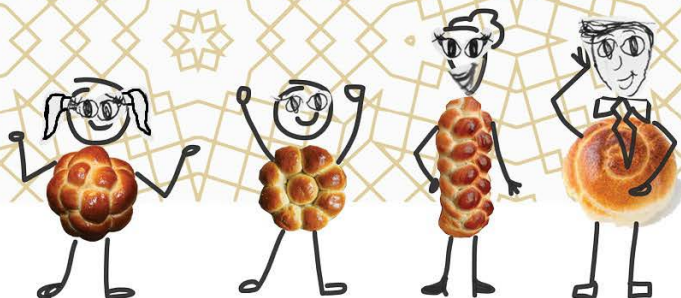
### Reconsidering Moshe's Considerations...

Let's try to get into Moshe's head and figure out what he might have been thinking as he chose his words to deliver to Bnei Yisrael at this important turning point in their journey. Below are some quotes from this week's *parsha* that Moshe said to the nation, with some context and questions alongside them...

**With your friends or family, consider the prompts and see if you can determine why you think Moshe included this in his farewell speech and whether you think it was a good idea.**

[Note to facilitator: The excerpted verses from this week's parsha, with the questions/prompts next to them, have been laid out so that each quote can be cut out into separate cards and passed out among different members of the group.]





Deuteronomy 1:8

רָאָה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיכֶם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ ; בָּאוּ,  
וּרְשׁוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה  
לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם, לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב  
לְתֵת לָהֶם, וּלְזָרְעָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם.

See, I place the land at your disposal.  
Go, take possession of the land that  
the LORD swore to your fathers,  
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to assign  
to them and to their heirs after them.

*[Moshe says this verse as one of his  
opening lines of his speech to the  
nation:]*

- Why does Moshe make a point to mention that the land (Canaan) had already been promised to Bnei Yisrael's ancestors Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov?
- Do you feel a different kind of connection to something that has been a part of your family for a long time?

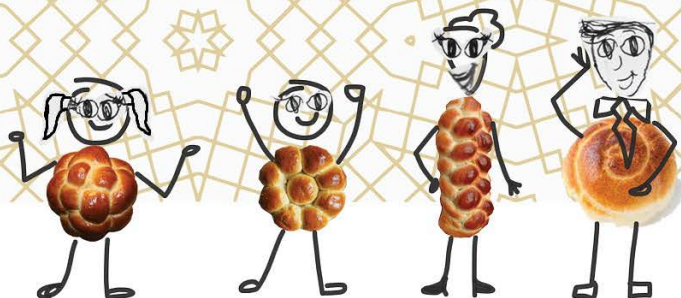
Deuteronomy 1:17

לֹא-תִכְבְּרוּ פָנִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט, כְּקָטָן כְּגָדֹל  
תִּשְׁמָעוּן--לֹא תִגּוּרוּ מִפְּנֵי-אִישׁ, כִּי  
הַמִּשְׁפָּט לְאֱלֹהִים הוּא ; וְהִדְבַּר אֲשֶׁר  
יִקְשֶׁה מִכֶּם, תִּקְרְבוּן אֵלַי וְשָׁמַעְתִּיו.

...You shall not be play favorites in  
judgment: hear out low and high alike.  
Fear no man, for judgment is God's.  
And any matter that is too difficult for  
you, you shall bring to me [Moshe] and  
I will hear it.

*[Moshe is reminding the people about  
an important aspect of the 'court  
system' they established while in the  
desert:]*

- Why is it important for Bnei Yisrael to be reminded of how they had conducted a fair justice system just before they cross into Canaan?



Deuteronomy 1:26-27

כּו וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם לָעֶלֶת ; וַתִּמְרוּ אֶת-פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. כִּי וַתִּרְגְּנוּ בְּאֶהְלֵיכֶם, וַתֹּאמְרוּ, בְּשִׁנְאֵת יְהוָה אֲתָנוּ, הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם--לָתֵת אֲתָנוּ בְּיַד הָאֲמֹרִי, לְהַשְׁמִידָנוּ.

26. Yet you refused to go up, and flouted the command of the LORD your God. 27. You sulked in your tents and said, "It is because the LORD hates us that He brought us out of the land of Egypt, to hand us over to the Amorites to wipe us out..."

*[Moshe does not hold back from reminding the nation of all the sins and mistakes they made while they were in the desert - including the time they believed their spies' false report about Canaan and refused to travel there:]*

- How do you feel when you have been reminded of a mistake you made in the past? Does it matter who is reminding you or when?
- Will hearing about this mistake help Bnei Yisrael as they cross into Canaan?

Deuteronomy 1:34-35

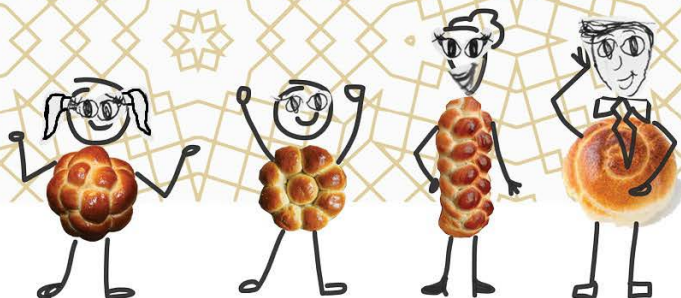
לֹד וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת-קוֹל דְּבָרֵיכֶם ; וַיִּקְצַף, וַיִּשְׁבַּע לֵאמֹר. לֹה אִם-יִרְאֶה אִישׁ בְּאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה, הַדּוֹר הַרְעָ הַזֶּה--אֵת הָאֶרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לָתֵת לְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם.

34. When the LORD heard your loud complaint, He was angry. He vowed: 35. Not one of those men, this evil generation, shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers...

*[Here is the reminder of God's response to the people's complaints about going to Canaan:]*

- Notice how Moshe switches from talking about 'those men' to 'your fathers'...why do you think he does that, even if it makes the sentence awkward?
- The people Moshe is speaking to didn't actually sin or get punished - their parents did... so why mention this at all?
- What do you think Bnei Yisrael are thinking when they hear about their parents' punishment?





Deuteronomy 2:8

וְנָעַבְר מֵאֵת אַחֵינוּ בְּנֵי-עֵשָׂו, הַיֹּשְׁבִים  
 בְּשֵׁעִיר, מִדֶּרֶךְ הָעֲרָבָה, מֵאֵילַת  
 וּמֵעֵצִין גָּבֵר; וַנֵּפֹן, וַנֵּעַבֵר דֶּרֶךְ מִדְבָר  
 מוֹאָב.

We then moved on, away from our brother, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the road of the Arabah, away from Elath and Ezion-geber; and we marched on in the direction of the wilderness of Moab.

*[Here is one of several times where Moshe recounts the movements and battles they faced in the desert:]*

- Does it seem strange that after hundreds of years and so much history - we still consider the descendants of Esav “our brother”?
- Can you think of any way that being reminded of this part of their journey in the desert will help Bnei Yisrael in the future?

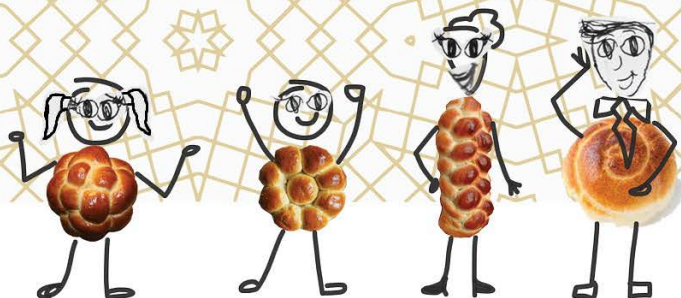
Deuteronomy 2:25

הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה, אֶחֱל תֵּת פַּחַד וַיִּרְאָתָךְ  
 עַל-פְּנֵי הָעַמִּים, תַּחַת כָּל-הַשָּׁמַיִם--  
 אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן שְׁמֶעָךְ, וַרְגִזוּ וַחֲלוּ  
 מִפְּנֶיךָ.

This day I [God] begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under heaven, so that they shall tremble and quake because of you whenever they hear you mentioned.

*[Moshe is telling the people what God had said - that all the surrounding nations in the desert would be afraid of Bnei Yisrael:]*

- Can you think of a time where you might ever want someone to fear you? When? Why?



Deuteronomy 3:21-22

**כא וְאֶת-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ צִוִּיתִי, בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: עֵינֶיךָ הָרְאִיתָ אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לְשְׁנֵי הַמְּלָכִים הָאֵלֶּה--בֶּן-יַעֲשָׂה יְהוָה לְכָל-הַמְּמַלְכוֹת אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵר שָׁמָּה. **כב** לֹא תִירָאוּם: כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא הַנֹּלְחֵם לָכֶם.**

21. I also charged Joshua at that time, saying, "You have seen with your own eyes all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so shall the LORD do to all the kingdoms into which you shall cross over. 22. Do not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who will battle for you."

*[Our parsha ends with Moshe telling the people that Yehoshua, who will soon be their leader, has been given a 'pep' talk:]*

- How do you think Yehoshua felt when Moshe first told him these words? Will this make Yehoshua a better leader?
- What do you think is important for a retiring leader to tell the new leader who is about to take their place?

**Shabbat Shalom!**



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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** VaEtchanan

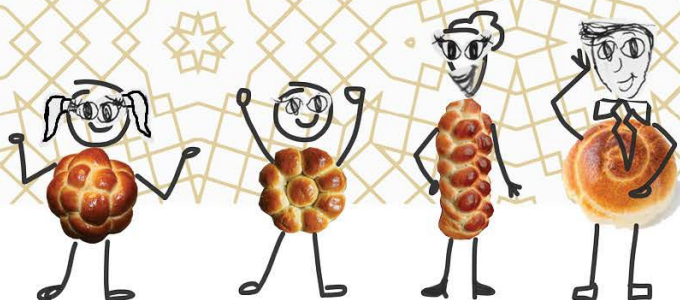
**Title:** Take It On

**Contributor:** Susan Yammer, Director of Novice Teacher Support,  
Pardes Center for Jewish Educators

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

*VaEtchanan* is a *parsha* chock full of stories that are very well known. We find Moshe continuing to review with the nation all that they have been through together for the last 40 years of wandering in the *midbar* (desert).



Here are some of the highlights:

*Let me, I pray, cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country... [Devarim 3:25]*

Moshe is recalling when he pleaded with God to allow him to join the Israelites when they cross over the Jordan River to enter the Land of Israel. Sadly, God had refused Moshe's request and Moshe will only be granted the opportunity to see the land from a mountaintop on the opposite side of the Jordan River.

*Face to face the Lord spoke to you on the mountain out of the fire. [Devarim 5:4]*

Moshe also reminds them of how they stood on *Har Sinai* as it was filled with fire and how God gave Moshe the Ten Commandments to bring down to the nation.

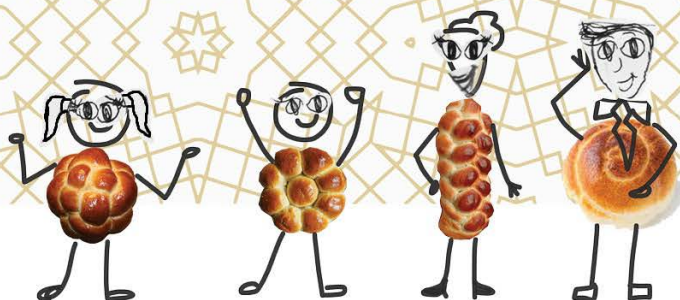
*Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. [Devarim 6:4]*

Moshe also tells the nation to obey these commandments and gives us the words of the *Shema* prayer, which forms one of the most well-known and basic prayers that Jews say up until today.

## Zooming In:

We're now going to zoom in on the Ten Commandments that God gave the Jewish people on Har Sinai. Specifically, we are going to focus on one particular commandment – the one that sits on the bottom of the first column:





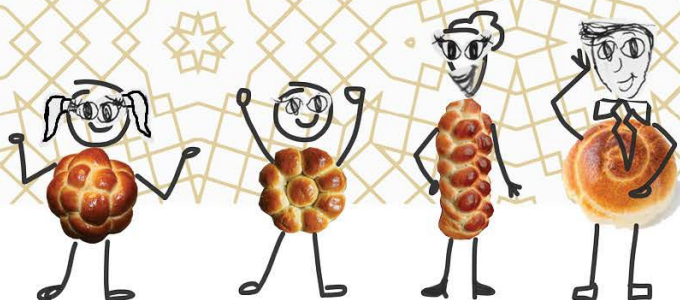
*"Honor your father and your mother."*

The first thing to notice if you read the four *mitzvot* that come before *"Honor your father and your mother"* is that all of these mitzvot concern our relationship with God – whether it's having no other gods, not misusing the name of God or observing Shabbat (which is a way we imitate God's resting on the seventh day of creation by resting ourselves). These mitzvot are in the category we call **בין אדם למקום**, 'between man and God.' It seems strange that the *mitzvah* commanding us to honor our parents would appear in the column of mitzvot that deals with our relationship with God. It would have been more logical to have this commandment appear in the second column, along with all the other mitzvot that are about our relationships to people, like: Do not murder, Do not lie, Do not be jealous....

### Questions for Consideration:

The first question to ask around the Shabbat table is:

- Why is the mitzvah of honoring your parents found in the same column as the mitzvot connected to our relationship to God? What could honoring your parents, *kibud av v'em*, have to do with God?



*One answer our rabbis give is: God was a partner in creating you along with your parents.*

## *The Parsha Through Another Lens*

### **Let's Go Deeper!**

Hopefully your conversation got everyone started in thinking about the importance of *kibud av v'em*, honoring one's father and mother. Let's now ask another question: what does *kibud av v'em* look like?

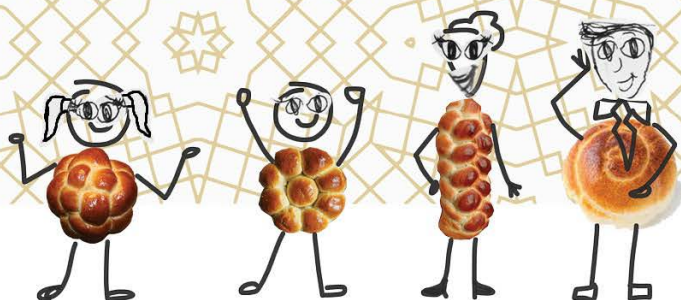
Our revered rabbis must have had the same question. In the most famous books of Jewish law, the Talmud, you can find a list of actions that the rabbis say are examples of *kibud av v'em*.

A child's obligations to his parents are:

- to give them food and drink
- to cover/shelter them
- to escort them in and out
- to wash their face, hands, and feet
- to not sit in their seat
- to not speak for them
- to not contradict their words

Looking at this list we see there are two kinds of examples: what a child *should* do to honor his/her parents and what a child *shouldn't* do in honoring his/her parents. Let's choose one example and see if we can understand it better.





Why would it be important to not sit in your parent's seat? Do your parents have a special place to sit at the table? How would it feel to them if you decided to sit in their seats?

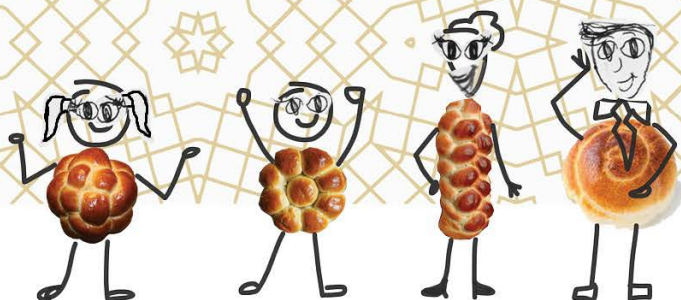
How would you update this list? Go around the table and ask for suggestions for how these actions might look today.

## Time to Role Play!

Let's try our hand at this very important mitzvah. Below are some situations where kibud av v'em may not be so easy. When taking on one of the characters in the story, try it from the other side – let the child play the parent's role and let the parent play the child's role. See how it feels to look at this mitzvah from the 'other side.' You might discover a new way of understanding kibud av v'em.

1. You are in the middle of an exciting game and your parent asks you to clean your room now. You really don't want to do it. What do you do?
2. Your parents bought you a new winter coat. They are very excited about giving it to you. When you take it out, you really don't like it. Do you tell them the truth?
3. You disagree with your parents about your bedtime. You believe that since you are older now it should be later. Can you respectfully disagree? How would you do it?

Having tried our hand at these more difficult examples of kibud av v'em, come up with a list of all the things you think you already do to fulfill this mitzvah. Maybe your parents can remind you, and then pat yourselves on the back.



Perhaps you can newly commit yourself to paying more attention to fulfilling this mitzvah. You needn't look for the big acts, even small ones will do.

**Shabbat Shalom!**



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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Ekev

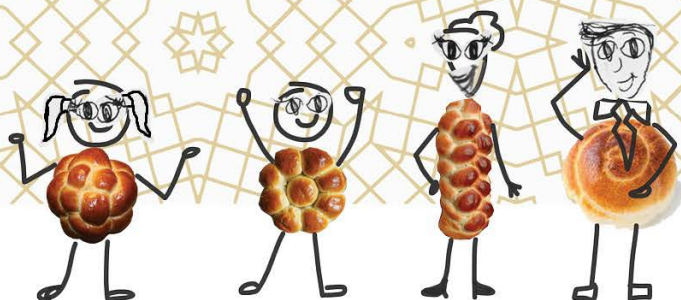
**Title:** Grow Where You've Planted

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

In this *parsha*, Moshe reminds the Israelites how difficult their journey through the desert has been all these years, and helps them to remember the things God has done to make their journey easier. The people also learn about the Seven



Species of Israel. These are: Wheat, Barley, Grapes, Figs, Pomegranates, Olives, and Dates. Moshe reminds the people of the details regarding their time at Mt. Sinai and of the golden calf they made while Moshe was speaking to God on the mountain. Moshe lets them in on what was happening in the background – that God wanted to wipe them out entirely, and that Moshe prayed for God not to. The point is made very clear: love and revere God and follow God's commandments.

### Zooming In:

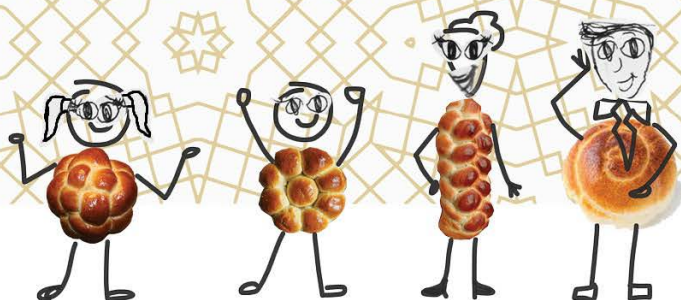
The Torah assumes that working the land as a farmer would naturally deepen a person's belief in God's direct involvement in their life. After all, a person works hard but God is the one who makes the plants grow from the ground! As the Israelites prepare to part from Moshe and are expected to remember everything they were taught in the desert, it must be helpful for them to know that through working the land for food, they will be able to continue their connection to God.

Fear of the unknown must also be very real for the Israelites at this point. Learning of the special Seven Species they will find once they cross the Jordan River should be an inspiring part of their journey.

### Questions for Consideration:

- Is there a danger in believing that everything depends upon God's involvement? Where do you see the effects of God's involvement in your life?
- What does it mean to work the land for food? Does your relationship with your food change when you help grow it?
- How does creating something give us ownership over what we do/have?





## *The Parsha Through Another Lens*

### **Planting a Garden Together!**

Discuss and plan creating a family garden together!

Some of the Seven Species plants might be challenging to tend for a first garden, but other fruits and veggies are easy. A small way to start could be by planting herbs such as basil and parsley in cups in your kitchen window. If you have a little more space, try planting tomatoes, cucumbers, kale, green beans, or carrots. Don't forget about flowers! Some flowers even keep bugs away from your other plants.

Planting and tending a garden together as a family is a great way to think about where food comes from and about the energy it takes to get the food we eat every day. Ask the questions listed above before and after, and see if the answers change!

### **Shabbat Shalom!**

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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Re'eh

**Title:** One for All and All for One!

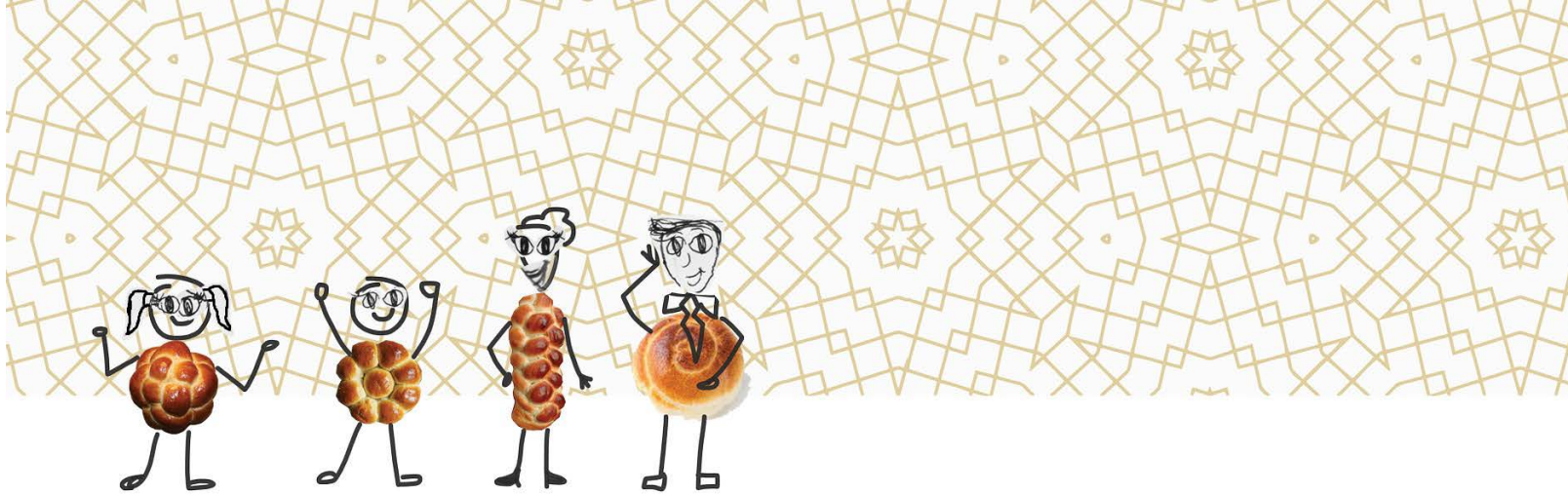
**Contributor:** Sefi Kraut, Faculty, Pardes Center for Jewish Educators

## 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





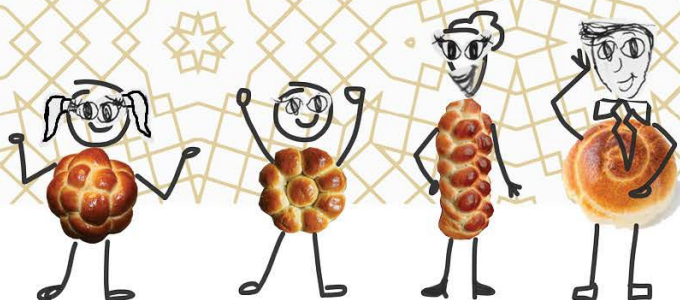
God in lots of different places spread throughout the land. It becomes clear later in Jewish history that God intended for the Temple in Jerusalem to be that special place. The second theme is that we are meant to treat each other kindly and to care for each other. For example, this parsha includes the *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>14. 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>יֵד וְשִׂמְחַת בְּחַגֶּךָ : אֶתְּהָ וּבְנֶךָ וּבִתְּךָ , וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמָּתְךָ , וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהַיְתוּם וְהָאֲלֻמָּנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ .</p>
<p>15. You shall hold a festival for the Lord your God seven days in the place that the Lord will choose...</p>	<p>טו שְׁבַעַת יָמִים תַּחֲג לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ , בְּמָקוֹם 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:

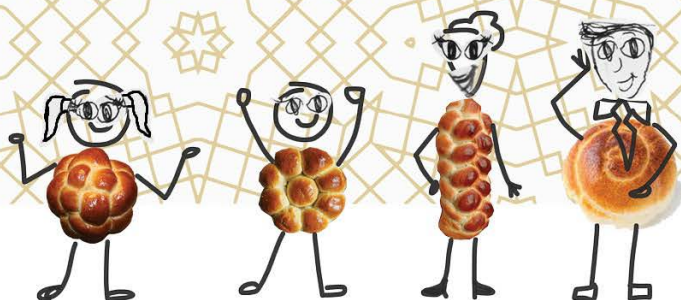
What is it about the Temple and Jerusalem during the three major holidays of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot that will unite the nation and make every person, no matter his or her personal circumstance, feel included in the celebration?

There is an interesting mitzvah in this week's parsha that gives us a clue about how 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!



The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Shoftim

**Title:** Trees Have Rights Too

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

In this week's *parsha*, *Shoftim*, the Torah mentions certain laws about war. One law is that when a city is at war with another city, its trees should not be destroyed, or cut down, if you can eat from them.



The parsha also teaches us about the prohibition of *bal tashchit* - respecting all that has been created and not wasting it. The *Shulhan Aruch* (a main code of Jewish Law) explains that it is forbidden to destroy or harm anything that could be useful to people.

## Zooming In:

Devarim 20:19 says:

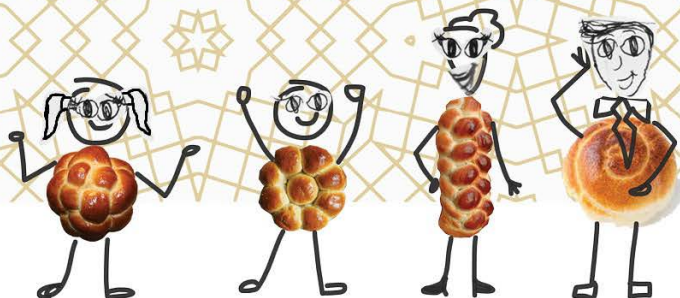
<p>When you besiege a city for a long time, in making war against it to take it, do not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them; for you can eat of them, but you shall not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged by you?</p>	<p>כִּי-תָצוּר אֶל-עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ לְתַפְשָׁהּ, לֹא-תִשְׁחִית אֶת-עֵצָהּ לְגֹדֵחַ עָלֶיהָ גְרוֹן--כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ תֹאכַל וְאַתּוֹ לֹא תִכְרֹת:  כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה לִבֵּא מִפְּגִידָה בְּמָצוֹר.</p>
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Rashi comments on the final part of the verse ('for is the tree of the field man'): *Is the tree of the field a part of the same (moral) world as a human being? No. The tree of the field is not the target of the war; the people of the town are. No one has the right to destroy the trees because of an argument between human beings - therefore the trees must not be destroyed because of an argument between human beings.*

## Questions for Consideration:

- Bal tashchit means that things that could be useful to people should not be destroyed. How are trees useful to people?
- How do Rashi's thoughts connect to the idea of bal tashchit?
- Do you agree that trees should not be destroyed because of an argument between humans? Why or why not?
- The *pasuk* states that trees that give food should not be destroyed, but what about the other trees that do not give food? Should they be destroyed? Is it worth protecting a tree if it doesn't provide food for people?





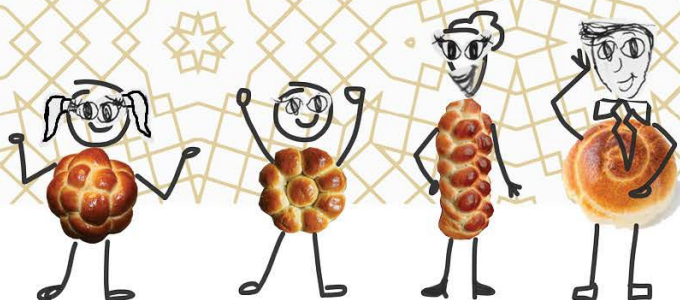
- Are there ways you can apply this to your life today? What if you had a disagreement with your friend at the park and then decided to take the branches off of a nearby tree because you were so upset. Is that fair to the tree? What do you think Rashi would say?
- What questions do you have for Rashi about his comments on protecting the tree?

## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Pick a Quote, Any Quote:

Below are 5 quotes from Rabbinic sources, commentaries, and other Judaic resources.

1	Even if the land is full of all good things, still you must plant...even if you are old, you must plant. Just as you found trees planted by others, you must plant them for your children. (Midrash Tanchuma, Kodashim 8)
2	When a tree that gives fruit is cut down, its cry goes from one end of the world to the other, but no sound is heard. (Pirke de-R. Eliezer 34)
3	When God created the first human beings, He led them around the Garden of Eden and said, "See how beautiful the world is! I give it into your care. Do not spoil it. For if you destroy the world, there will be no one after you to restore it." (Midrash Kohelet Rabbah I)
4	If not for the trees, human life could not exist. (Midrash Sifre)
5	If someone kills a tree before its time, it is as though they have taken a soul. (Rabbi Nachman)



### Questions:

1. Which of the quotes above do you think explains bal tashchit the best?
2. Which of the quotes would you use to convince or persuade someone to take care of the trees and not waste things that you use?
3. Which quote do you want to learn more about, or have questions about?
4. Design your own motto/slogan/phrase that can help others understand the importance of bal tashchit.

## Shabbat Shalom!



The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Ki Teitzei

**Title:** Animal Planet

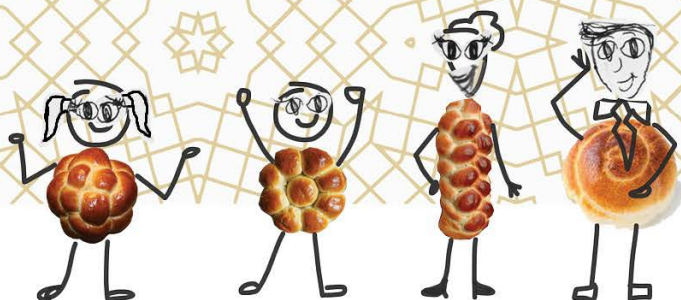
**Contributor:** Aviva Lauer Golbert, Director, Pardes Center for Jewish Educators

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

Our *parsha*, *Parshat Ki Teitzei*, is one of those that is chock-full of laws.

For example:



"When you build a new house, make sure to put a fence on the roof, so that the roof is safe for everyone who goes up there!"

"Put *tzitzit* on the four corners of your shirts!"

"When you harvest your field and by accident leave a bundle of grain behind, don't go back to get it! Leave it for the needy people who need it!"

The fact that the parsha is so jam-packed with laws makes a lot of sense. In *Devarim*, the last book of the Torah (and the book in which Parshat Ki Teitzei appears), *Bnei Yisrael* are really just about to enter the Land of Israel, and Moshe – who is not going to get to go with them – is doing his absolute best to set them up for success. That means giving them many, many rules to live by in their new home, where they will be building houses, working as farmers, living as neighbors, and worshipping God.

## Zooming In:

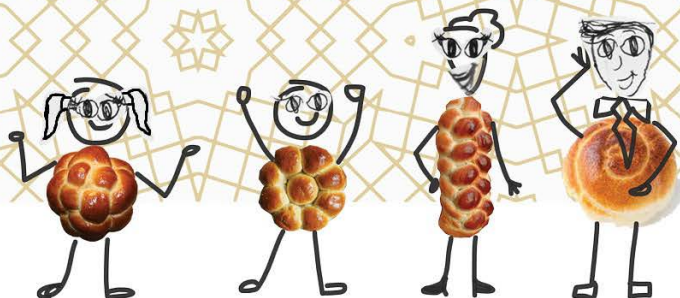
Interestingly, several of the laws that Moshe tells the people they will need to follow in the Land of Israel have to do with their animals! Today, a lot of us keep animals as pets – whether dogs, cats, iguanas, hamsters, fish... the list goes on and on. Back then, though, in the times of the Torah, Bnei Yisrael had animals to help them farm and do their other work.

- a) Oxen, which are male cows, were used to pull ploughs or thresh wheat
- b) Sheep and goats were used for their milk, meat, and wool
- c) Donkeys were used to ride on and carry heavy loads

So, what sorts of animal laws did Moshe put in place?

Here are some of the animal laws mentioned in Parshat Ki Teitzei!





**Chapter 22, verse 4**

If you see your friend's donkey or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. You must help him raise it.

**כ"ב:ד'**

לא-תראַה אֶת-חֲמֹר אָחִיד או שׁוֹרוֹ  
נִפְּלִים בַּדֶּרֶךְ, וְהִתְעַלְמָתָּ, מֵהֶם: הֵקֵם  
תְּקִים עִמּוֹ.

**Chapter 22, verse 6-7**

If, along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with chicks or eggs, and the mother is sitting over the chicks or on the eggs, do not take the mother together with her young. First send off the mother, and only then take the young...

**כ"ב:ו'-ז'**

כִּי יִקְרָא קוֹן צִפּוֹר לִפְנֵיךְ בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּכָל-עֵץ או  
עַל-הָאָרֶץ, אֶפְרָחִים או בִּיצִים, וְהָאִם  
רֹבֶצֶת עַל-הָאֶפְרָחִים או עַל-הַבִּיצִים, לֹא-  
תִקַּח הָאִם עִם-הַבָּנִים. שְׁלַח תְּשַׁלַּח אֶת-  
הָאִם, וְאֶת-הַבָּנִים תִּקַּח-לָךְ...

**Chapter 22, verse 10**

You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

**כ"ב:י'**

לֹא-תַחַרֵּשׁ בְּשׁוֹר-וּבַחֲמֹר יַחְדָּו.

**Chapter 25, verse 4**

You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing.

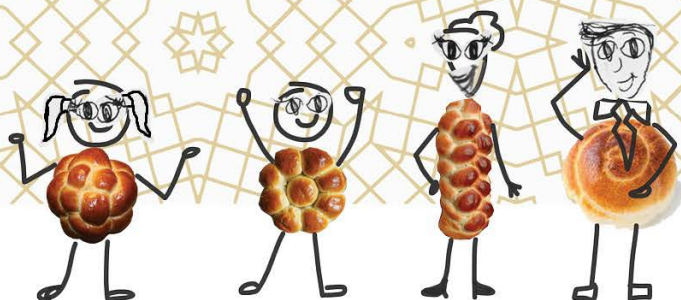
**כ"ה:ד'**

לֹא-תַחְסֹם שׁוֹר בְּדִישׁוֹ.

**Questions for Consideration:**

It is pretty clear why we should help an animal that has fallen down and can't get up itself because of the heavy load it is carrying. But,

- Why shouldn't you muzzle an ox while it is threshing wheat? (This means that you shouldn't put a mask on it that will keep it from snacking on grain while it is doing work with the grain.)
- Why do you think you shouldn't attach a donkey and an ox to the same yoke, or wooden beam, so that they can pull a plow together in your field?



- Why, if you find a bird sitting on its eggs, are you supposed to shoo the bird away before you take the eggs for eating?

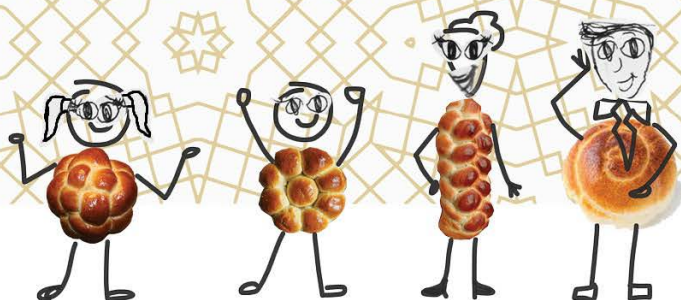
## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Acting It Out:

In order to try and understand why these animal laws are so important, play out the following scenarios.

- 1) Do an impromptu three-legged race, making sure that the tallest family member and the shortest family member are put together on one team. (The rest of the family members can be paired by more equal heights.)  
Then discuss:
  - a. Why was it harder for the team that had such differently-sized members to succeed in the race?
  - b. Which animal law in Parshat Ki Teitzei does this help us understand better? How so?
- 2) Ask one family member to serve dessert to the rest of the family, but for the first three minutes of eating, that family member shouldn't eat along with everyone else. Then discuss:
  - a. Was it fair to the server to make them do the work of serving but not let them join in dessert with everyone else?
  - b. Which animal law in Parshat Ki Teitzei does this help us understand better? How so?
- 3) Then continue to discuss: let's say one family member isn't allowed to eat dessert for serious health reasons, but everyone else is allowed to eat it.





- a. What would be the best way to serve dessert in the family – not have dessert at all? Only have dessert after that family member has gone to sleep? Other ideas?
- b. Which animal law in Parshat Ki Teitzei does this conversation help us understand better? How so?

Finally, raise the thought that the point behind the animal laws that Moshe gave Bnei Yisrael before they entered the Land of Israel was to make sure they were **fair** and **kind** to their animals. Discuss: What other laws in the Torah do you know of that ensure we are **fair** or **kind** to the people or world that surrounds us?

**Shabbat Shalom!**

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Ki Tavo

**Title:** First Fruit and Family

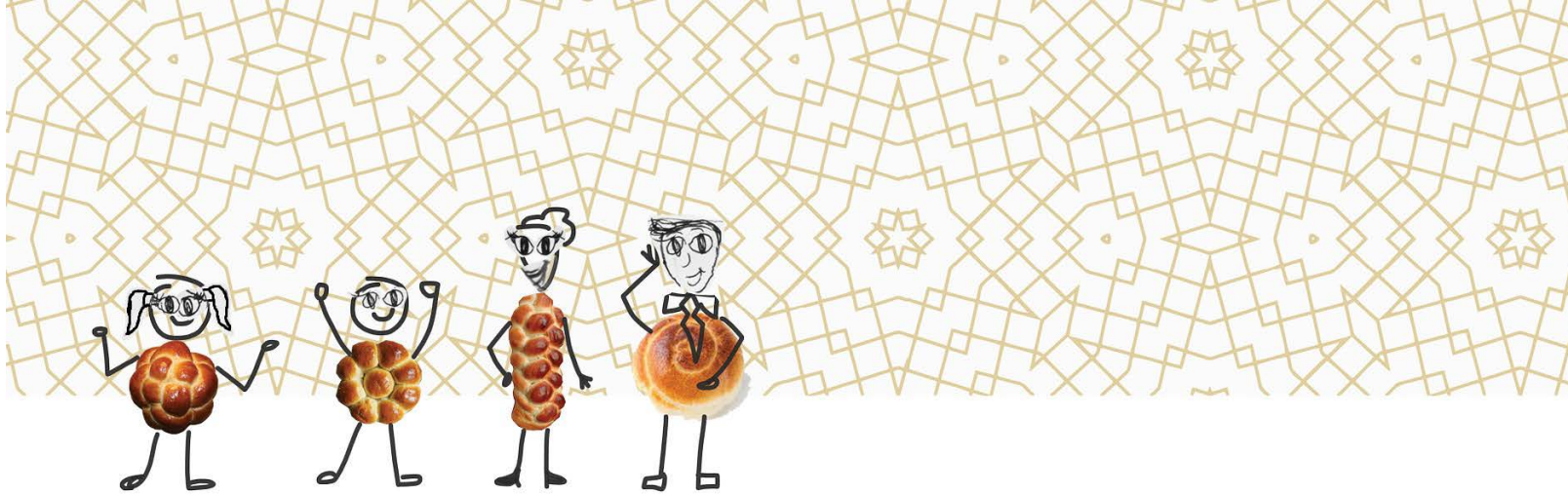
**Contributor:** Penny Joel, Director of Experiential Jewish Education, Pardes Center for Jewish Educators

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

In *Parshat Ki Tavo*, we learn about the *mitzvah* of *bikkurim* - the first fruits. The people are told that once they enter and settle Israel (and begin to farm the land), they should bring their first fruits to the *Beit Hamikdash*, the Temple, and give





them to the *Kohen*, the priest. The priest will place them in front of the altar and then people will say a prayer to God.

Before we get to the specific verses in the parsha that talk about what should happen during that visit to the priest, consider:

If you were a farmer, and bringing your first fruits to the Temple, what do you think you would want to say to God?

## Zooming In:

### Devarim 26:5-10

5. You shall then recite as follows before the LORD your God: "My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation.

6. The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us.

7. We cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression.

8. The LORD freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents.

ה וְעֲנִיתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לְפָנֵי יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֲרָמִי אֲבִד אָבִי, וַיֵּרֵד  
מִצְרַיִמָּה, וַיִּגֵּר שָׁם בְּמִתֵּי  
מְעוֹט; וַיְהִי-שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל  
עָצוֹם וְרֹב .

ו וַיַּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרִיִּים,  
וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ; וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבָדָה  
קָשָׁה .

ז וַנִּצְעַק אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי  
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ; וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת-  
קִלְנוֹ, וַיִּרְא אֶת-עַנְיֵנוּ וְאֶת-  
עֲמָלֵנוּ וְאֶת-לַחְצֵנוּ .

ח וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיָד  
חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה, וּבְמַרְא  
גָּדֹל--וּבְאֹתוֹת, וּבְמִפְתֵּיִם .



<p>9. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.</p> <p>10. Wherefore I now bring the first fruits of the soil which You, O LORD, have given me.” You shall leave it before the LORD your God and bow low before the LORD your God.</p>	<p>ט וַיְבִאֵנוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה ; וַיִּתֵּן-לָנוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת, אָרֶץ זָבַת חֵלֶב וּדְבַשׁ.</p> <p>י וַעֲתָה, הִנֵּה הֵבִאתִי אֶת- רֵאשִׁית פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה, אֲשֶׁר- נָתַתָּה לִּי, יְהוָה ; וְהִנְחִיתוּ לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ.</p>
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Now that you've read what the Torah says about this, consider:

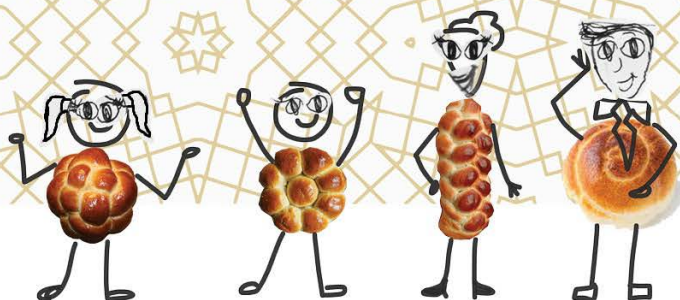
Why is this what we are supposed to say when we bring the first fruits?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks points out that most ancient cultures had a ceremony or holiday celebrating the first fruits, but that those cultures focused on nature and nature's power. In Judaism, we are focused on something else: our history, and on our ancestors' relationship with God. These verses remind us of that story. It emphasizes the importance of who we are and where we come from. It connects us to our Jewish identity.

**Questions for Consideration:**

- How do we connect to bikkurim today?
- When is another time we read אָרְמֵי אֶבֶד אָבִי each year, and how does that connect to when we say it for bikkurim?
- What are some times in your life when you have heard or told stories about your family? How did that make you feel?
- When are times when you feel connected to your ancestors?





## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Family Tree Time!

Note: This activity may require some preparation before Shabbat.

The aim of this activity is to get participants to connect to their ancestors. At the Shabbat meal they will recreate their family tree.

On the following pages are images of different types of fruit. Each generation in your family will be represented by a different fruit:

- grapes = the children's great-grandparents' generation,
- oranges = the children's grandparents,
- apples = parents' generation
- pomegranates = the children's generation

On each piece of fruit, write a family member's name and cut out the fruit. You can include extended family as well, and decide how far back you want to go.

At the Shabbat meal give the children all the fruits and ask them to put the generations in order of how they think the family tree looks. Use the whole table, and be creative about how they may want to show different parts of the family. It may be interesting for you to sit back and see how children understand your family.

You can connect this activity back to bikkurim, first fruits, and the idea of relating to our past as part of our identity, like when we say: My father was a fugitive Aramean – אַרְמִי אֶבֶד אָבִי.



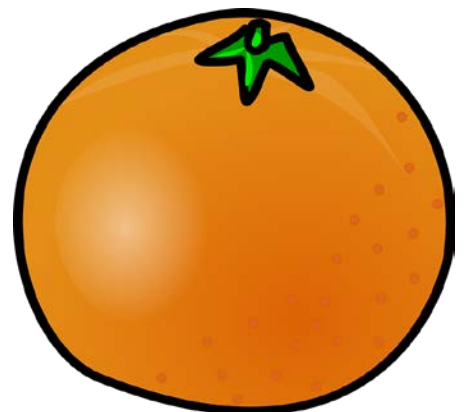
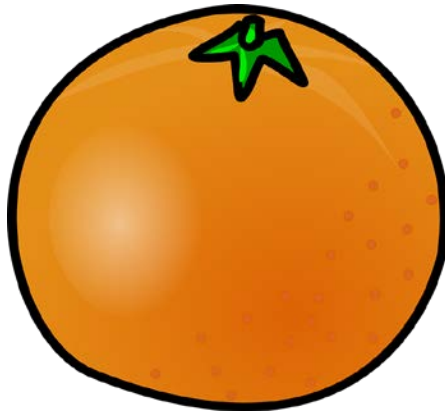
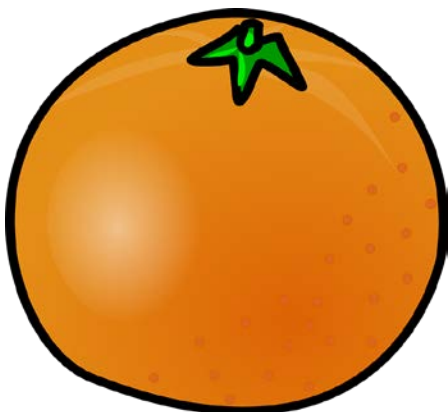
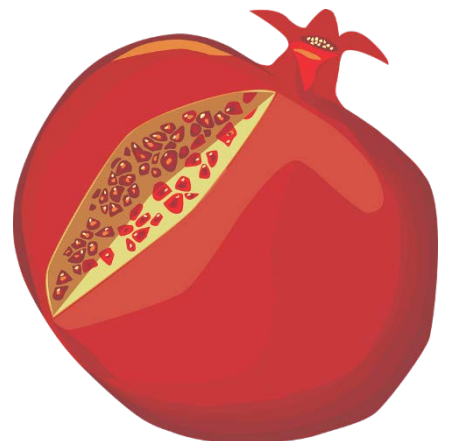
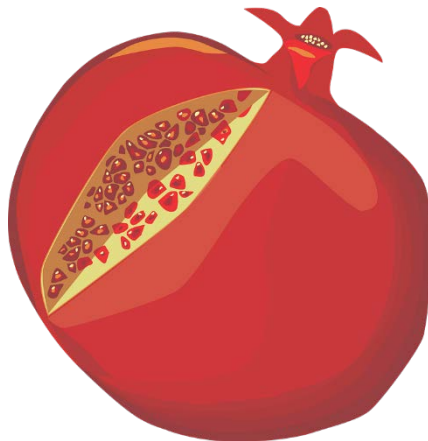
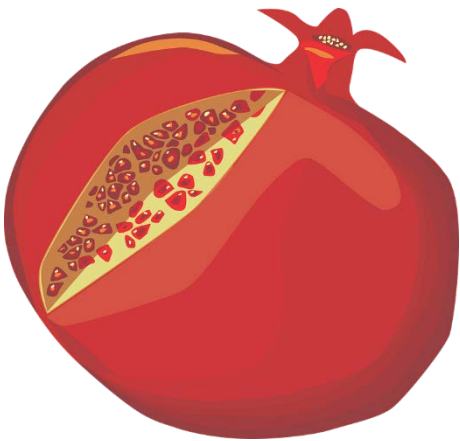
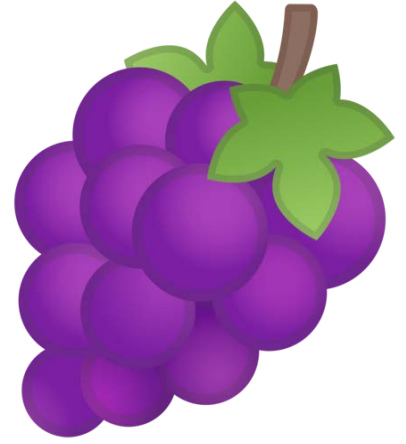
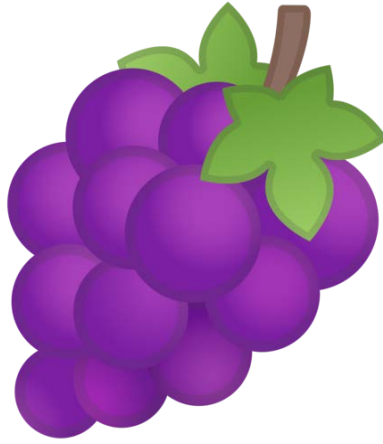
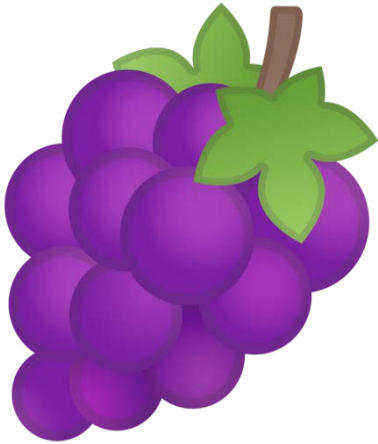
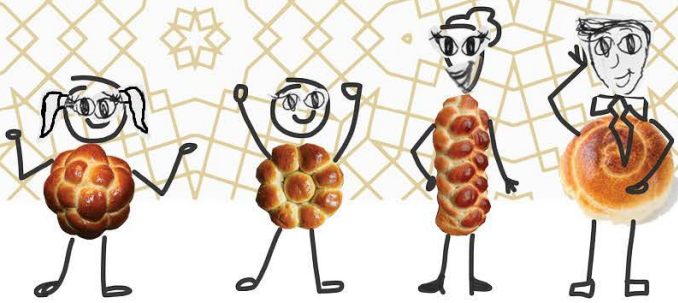
### Extension Activity:

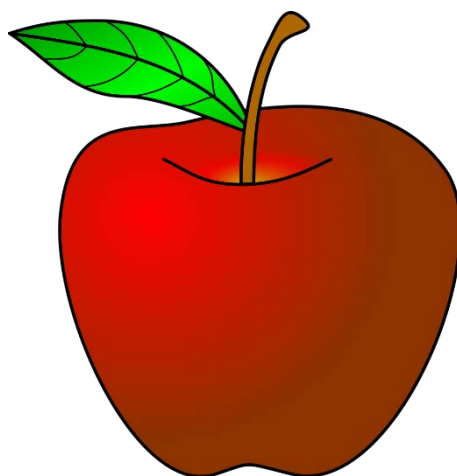
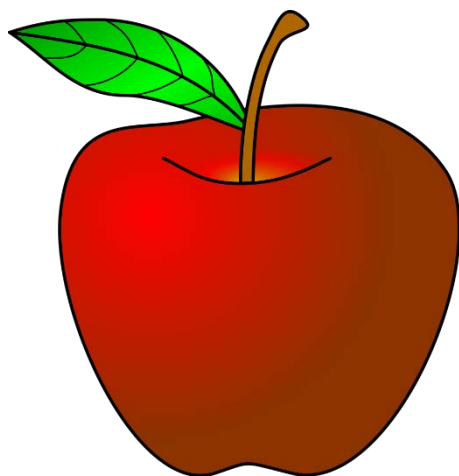
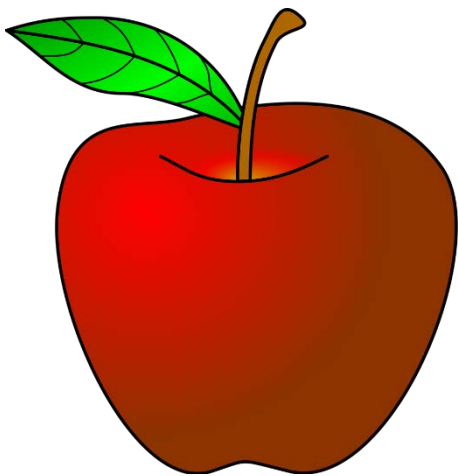
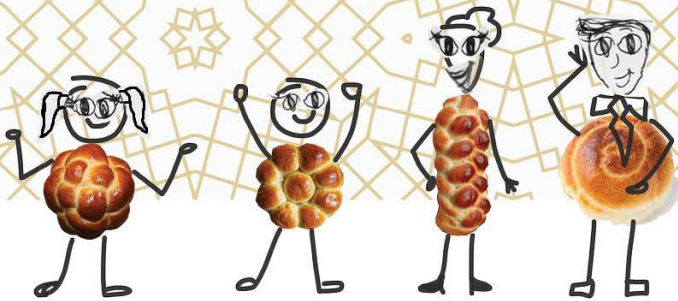
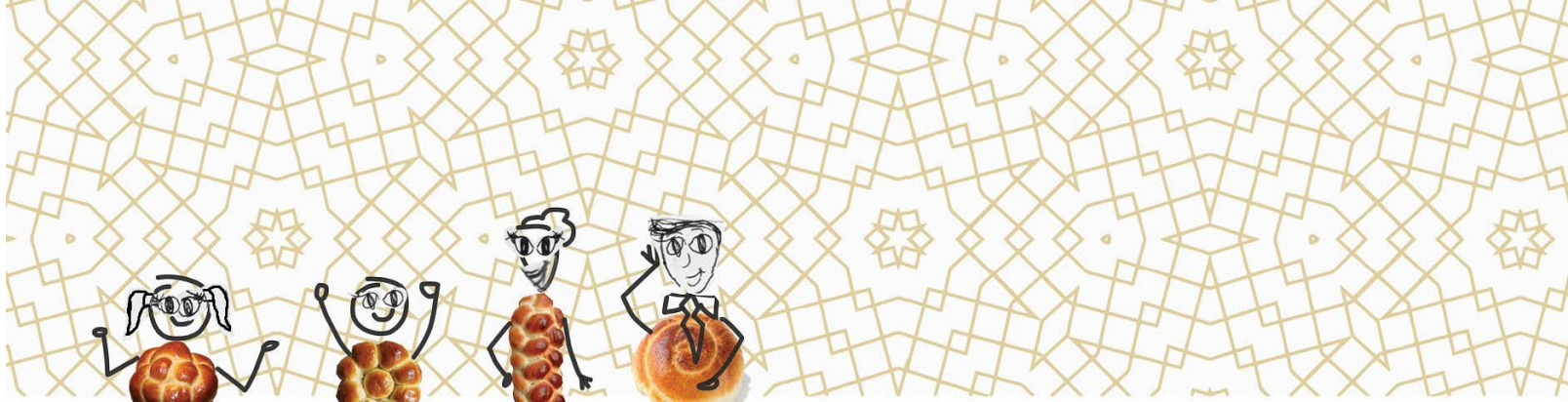
Cut out the following cards. Have each person at the table pick a “card” and either answer or ask the question on the card.

What’s your favorite story about your grandfather?	What is one thing you learned from your parents?	Where is your grandmother/ grandfather from?
What is your favorite story about your grandmother?	What is one fact about one of your parents?	What is a funny story about one of your siblings?
Where did your great-grandparents live?	What’s one thing you learned from your grandparents?	What is something that’s important to your parents?
What is your favorite family memory?	What is your favorite family story?	If you could ask a question of a family member you’ve never met, what would the question be and who would you ask?
What is a food that has been passed down in your family?	What is a story you’d want to tell your kids about your family?	Share a wish you have about your family.

**Shabbat Shalom!**









The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# *An Interactive* **PARSHA EXPERIENCE**



**Parsha:** Nitzavim

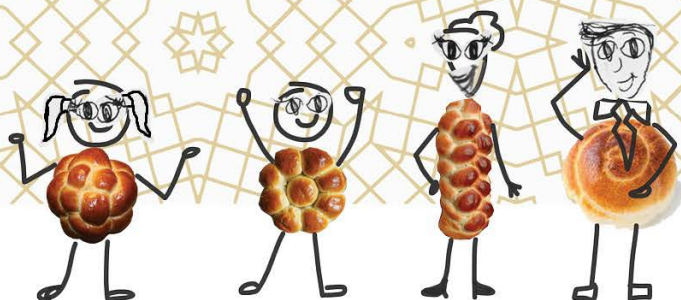
**Title:** To Stand or Not to Stand?

**Contributor:** Rachel Friedrichs, Assistant Director, Pardes Center for Jewish Educators, and Pardes Day School Educators Program Graduate '05-'07

## *The Parsha at First Glance*

### **Warming Up:**

Can you think of a synonym (in English) for the verb 'to stand'? (As in: I am standing, not sitting.) Hmm... it's a bit tricky, isn't it? (If you think of a really good one, let me know, because I am stumped! - [rachelf@pardes.org.il](mailto:rachelf@pardes.org.il))



Interestingly, even though there are WAY more words in English - 170,000 - compared to Biblical Hebrew - 9,000 - in Hebrew there are two roots for the word stand... עמד and יצב. Why would Biblical Hebrew, with about 1/20th of the words that English has, use two of its 9,000 words on the verb 'to stand'?

Ok, we will come back to this question. First let's catch up on the *parsha!*

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

Moshe has been speaking to *Bnei Yisrael* for a long time now... there is a lot that he wants to teach and remind them before they cross into Canaan without him. Moshe has been reminding them of the laws that they have to keep and the importance of being loyal to God. In exchange for this loyalty, Moshe explains to the people, God will bless you and protect you.

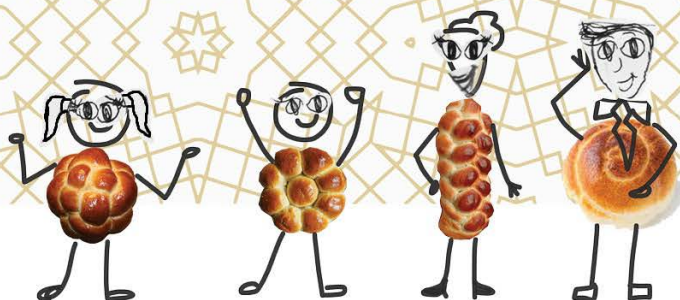
### Zooming In:

Even though Bnei Yisrael have already been standing before Moshe for a long time, listening to his teachings and warnings, this parsha begins with Moshe saying to them, "Today you are all standing (נצבים) before God... ." A little further on, Moshe reminds the people that if they listen to God He will make them a great and prosperous nation and protect them in the land.

### Questions for Consideration:

- Hmm... does that word נצבים (standing) sound familiar (hint, go back to the start of this document)?
- The people have already been standing for a LONG time... why does Moshe mention now that the people are standing before God?





## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Hyperlinked Hebrew:

A reminder, before we try to answer our questions above:

Often, when an unusual word is used in the Torah it is a clue for the readers to try to find connections between the text we are reading and other passages in the Torah which use the same unusual word. It is kind of like these rare words are hyperlinked with one another and all the stories that use the word are connected!

Hmm... so where else does the root נצב appear in the Torah and how are the stories connected?

The root נצב appears four times in just 12 *pesukim* during the account of Yaakov's escape from his angry brother Esav and the famous dream he has of a ladder which reaches the heavens. How are these stories connected?? Let me show you (and maybe you can come up with additional connections):

Yaakov & his dream	Parshat Nitzavim
Yaakov has stopped for the night at the border of Canaan, just about to leave the land.	Bnei Yisrael are camped near the border of Canaan, just about to enter the land.
In Yaakov's dream the text reads: וַהֲנִיָּה ה' נֹצֵב עָלָיו <i>And God <b>stands</b> over Yaakov.</i>	Our parsha begins with: אַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם כְּלַכֶּם לִפְנֵי ה' <i>You are all <b>standing</b> today before God.</i>
Yaakov promises to be loyal to God if God helps and protects him.	The people are being reminded of their promise with God... what will happen to them if they are loyal and follow God's commandments.



God promises that Yaakov's descendants will inherit the Land of Canaan.	Bnei Yisrael are about to enter Canaan to conquer it.
God promises Yaakov he will be a great nation.	Bnei Yisrael have become a large and powerful nation.

Do you think that now you can answer our question from above: **Why does Moshe mention now that the people are standing before God?**

### Standing Tableau:

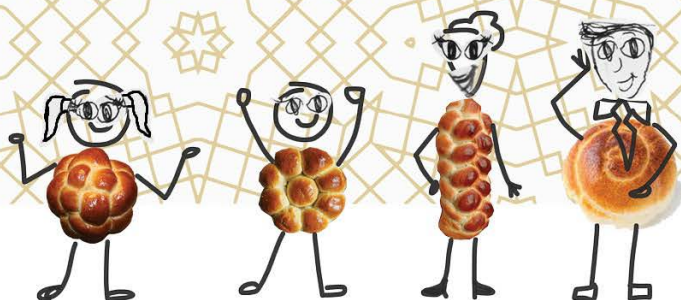
So, based on our two examples above (from our parsha and from Yaakov's dream) and several others from the Torah (such as: the word מצבה, which comes from the same root, which means a monument; or when three mysterious men come to tell Avraham and Sarah that they will have a son; several instances of building monuments to God and preparing sacrifices to God), it seems that the verb נצב meant **'to stand in a rooted way.'**

Now it's time to get up and try out different ways of standing! In comparing our two stories there are a lot of different 'postures' that the characters take. Let's step into their shoes and try to better understand our key verb נצב.

All participants should be on their feet with enough space around them that they could swing their arms or step side to side. After each posture all participants can reflect aloud in response to the questions below.

- Stand = עמד
  - Where are your feet?
  - Where are your shoulders?
- Stand in a rooted way = נצב
  - What did you have to do differently?
  - What makes you feel more rooted?





- What else in your body changes when you try to feel more rooted?
- How does this feel?
- Position yourself like Yaakov fleeing from Esav = ויצא
  - What did you have to change about your feet?
  - What is your facial expression?
  - How does this feel?
- Position yourself like a monument = מצבה
  - Is it hard to stay perfectly still?
  - Would you change your position if you were a war monument?
  - What about your body might you change if you were a monument to God?
- Position yourself like one of Bnei Yisrael wandering in the desert for 40 years
  - What have you changed in your body's position? Why?
  - What is your facial expression?
- Position yourself as Bnei Yisrael standing in a rooted way before God = נצבים לפני ה'
  - Is this different from the way you stood rooted before?
  - Is there something you can do with your body to show that you are before God?

**Shabbat Shalom!**

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Vayelech

**Title:** The Strength to Remain Calm

**Contributor:** Reuven Margrett, Director of Digital Media, Pardes Center for Jewish Educators, and Pardes Day School Educators Program Graduate '05-'07

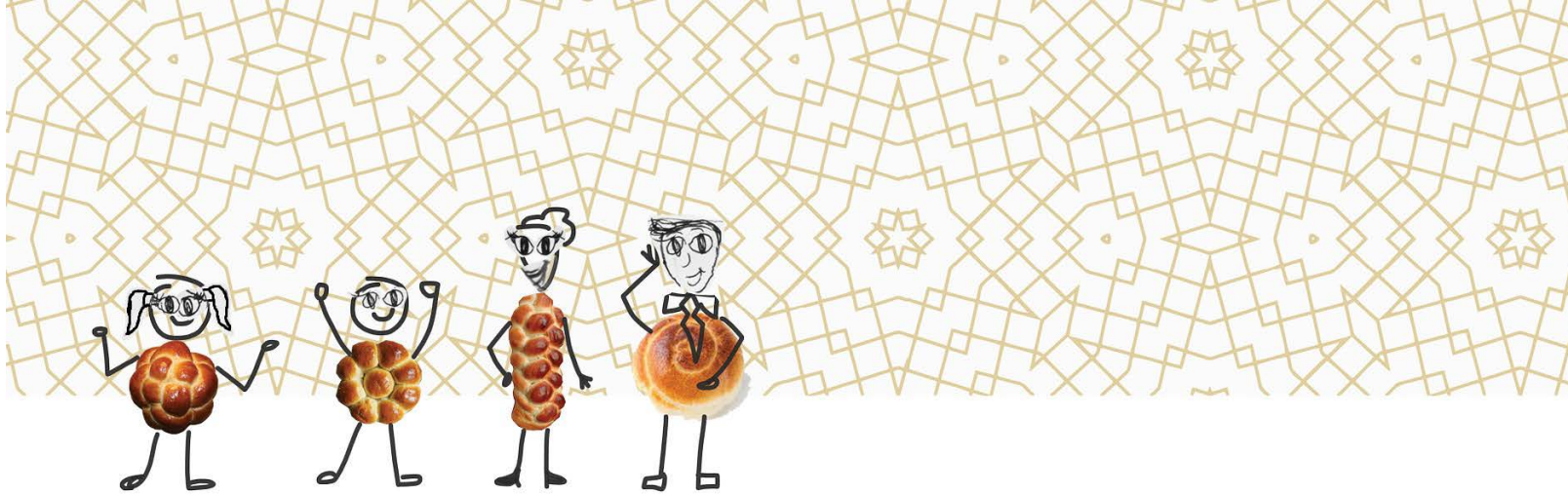
## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

Welcome to the shortest *parsha* of all the *parshiot* – only 30 verses! This means that every word counts.

Moshe has reached the ripe old age of 120 and as part of his final preparations before he dies gives final instructions to *bnei yisrael* (the children of Israel). He





appoints his student Yehoshua in front of the whole nation to be the next leader of the Jewish people as they prepare to cross over the Yarden river and enter the land of Israel.

### Zooming In:

If a tennis coach says to their student "When you serve you have to keep you eye on the ball." the student *may*listen. If the coach says it a second time, the student *hopefully* will listen and do it. What if the coach says it a third time? Wouldn't the student feel they have to do it, because it is so important that the coach had to repeat it three times. But hang on, *why* did the coach have to repeat it three times?

In our very short parsha, where every word counts, we have something similar – a threefold repetition of the necessity to *be strong and courageous*. Look at these three verses from our parsha, Devarim 31:

<p>6. <b>Be strong and courageous!</b> Neither fear, nor be dismayed of them, for the Lord, your God He is the One Who goes with you. He will neither fail you, nor forsake you."</p>	<p>ו חֲזָקוּ וְאַמְצוּ, אֶל-תִּירְאוּ וְאֶל-תַּעֲרְצוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם: כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ, הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ עִמָּךְ--לֹא יִרְפֶּךָ, וְלֹא יַעֲזֹבֶךָ.</p>
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<p>7. And Moshe called Yehoshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "<b>Be strong and courageous!</b> For you shall come with this people to the land which the Lord swore to their forefathers to give them. And you shall apportion it to them as an inheritance.</p>	<p>ז וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לַיהוֹשֻׁעַ, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו לְעֵינֵי כָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲזַק וְאַמְץ--כִּי אַתָּה תָּבוֹא אֶת-הָעָם הַזֶּה, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתָּם לָתֵת לָהֶם; וְאַתָּה, תִּנְחַלְנָה אוֹתָם.</p>
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<p>23. And He commanded Joshua the son of Nun, and said: "<b>Be strong and courageous!</b> For you shall bring the children of Israel to the land that I have sworn to them, and I will be with you."</p>	<p>כג חֲזָקוּ וְאַמְצוּ, אֶל-תִּירְאוּ וְאֶל-תַּעֲרְצוּ מִפְּנֵיהֶם: כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ, הוּא הַחַיִּל עִמָּךְ--לֹא יִרְפֶּךָ, וְלֹא יַעֲזֹבֶךָ.</p>
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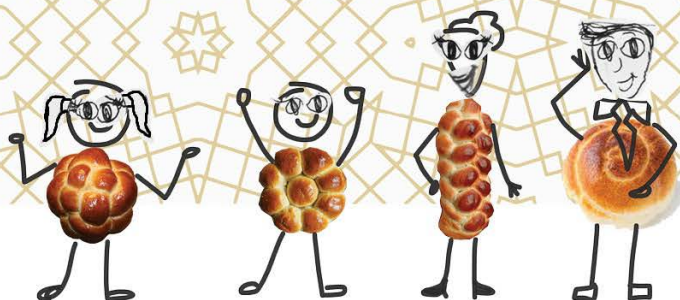
As Moshe is about to pass on to the next life why are we being reminded that the most important thing is to *'be strong and courageous'*? And what does that mean? Stop those who are weaker than us being bullied? When everyone else is doing the wrong thing to stand up and do the right thing? When times are hard to stick at it and persevere? I imagine the answer is yes to all these. We need to be strong and courageous in many aspects of life, especially when it comes to doing the right thing.

Yet there is another aspect of these words brought in a midrash from Yalkut Shimoni, 941 (a collection of midrashim from the middle ages), which explains what *'be strong and courageous'* in verse 7 means:

*Moshe said to Yehoshua, "this nation that I am giving you are like young goats. They are still young children. Do not be too harsh with them as even their Creator called them children, as it is written (Hoshea 11:1) "Israel is but a beloved lad."*

The Jews at that point in time needed to be treated with patience and calm – which can be really hard! Especially when all you want to do is shout, lash out, storm off, or break something. Being patient and calm when those around you are not requires true strength and courage.





Did you ever have a younger (or older) sibling that annoyed you, or a fellow student in class that irritated you in some way? How did you react? Did you have the strength to remain calm? Were you courageous in not lashing out?

### Questions for Consideration:

- Did you ever experience someone giving you instructions and repeating it often? If so, what were they?
- Why do you think people repeat instructions three (or more!) times?
- How do you normally react when people do irritate and annoy you?
- Why do you think the Midrash suggests that the words strength and courage are connected to being patient and calm?

## *The Parsha Through Another Lens*

### Endurance!

Being patient and calm can be difficult, it requires courage and strength to do it. This game aims to test your students or Shabbat guests ability to stay calm in a physically stressful situation. Ask them to pay attention to facial expression.

The following are physically tough exercises that will test how people respond to stress. This can be played one person at a time, or several people doing the same test all together. Who can stay calm the longest?

1. Have the person stretch out their arms holding a can of corn (or other weighty can) in each arm. How long does it take before they falter?



2. See how long they can do the plank exercise.



3. Have them do a wall squat and see how long they can last.



### Questions to discuss the endurance exercise

- Could you control your body?
- How did your feelings change throughout the activity?
- How much in control of your facial expressions were you?
- What was going through your mind when it was getting tough?

The game is really a trigger to get people thinking about how they behave when they are aggravated by the people around them.

This can move onto a discussion about the types of situations where a young person (or adult!) needs to have strength and courage to remain calm and patient. Everyone can contribute to a brainstorm about tactics to give them the strength and courage to remain calm. Here are some example annoying/stressful situations...

- A sibling who does something annoying
- A parent asking for chores to be done
- A doctor who is giving an injection
- Not getting a toy/object that you really want
- Have the people around the table add their own stressful situations...

## Shabbat Shalom!



The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Haazinu

**Title:** Haazinu, The Prep Talk Poem

**Contributor:** Laura Marder, Pardes Day School Educators  
Program Graduate '12-'14

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

*Parshat Haazinu* is a fiery poem delivered by Moshe in the ears of *Bnei Yisrael* (the Children of Israel) right before they cross into the Land of Israel. Moshe is to die soon up on a mountain with the land in his view. The name of this *parsha* has



the root of נ-ט-א which means: "to give ear, to consider, to give obedience to." Moshe is getting in his final words to the people he has been leading all of these years. His final desire as he stands in front of them is to make sure it really *sticks in their ears* that it has not been a perfect journey to this point. It has been filled with some pretty low points and disregard for the rules. Even so, they are all - minus Moshe - at the point of crossing into the Land of Israel. I keep wondering why so much negativity is brought up in this final poem. How is this the best pep talk for a people who are just about to need a lot of courage and excitement as Yehoshua leads them across the Jordan River???

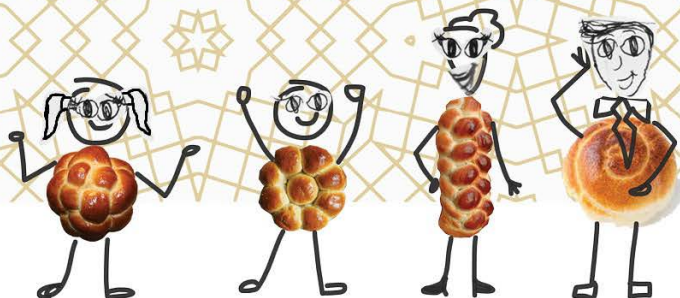
### Zooming In:

How is this a pep talk? I actually think it is more of a "prep talk for the future." Moshe is so worried about his words really sticking with the people that it says in Devarim 32:1:

...Listen the land, the words that come from my mouth.	...וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ, אִמְרֵי-פִי.
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Is Moshe speaking these words to הָאָרֶץ - *the land* - meaning the Land of Israel itself, which he is not going to be allowed to enter? Or, as Rashi suggests, is it really for all of the heavens and earth to hear just in case the people claim to never have heard it? Either way, there is clearly some worry coming from Moshe, as he stands there reciting his prep talk poem, that he is not being heard. We all know that that is not the best feeling to have. Especially when you know you aren't going to be there to follow up and remind people of what you said. We can see that Moshe desperately wants this journey to be remembered and the experiences along the way to be passed down. In Devarim 32:29 we get the clear reason why, as it says:





<p>Were they wise, they would think upon this, gain insight into their future.</p>	<p>לו חֲכָמוּ, יִשְׁכִּילוּ זֹאת ; וְבִינוּ, לְאַחֲרֵיהֶם.</p>
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Moshe is just asking that the people be wise in this next step of their journey. That their mistakes are not forgotten as they move forward. He doesn't want those mistakes repeated! He wants to feel some control over what is to happen in this future that he is not going to be there for. Devarim 32:46:

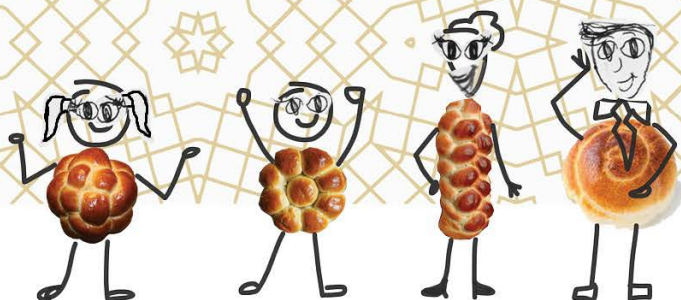
<p>He [Moshe] said to them: Take to heart all the words with which I have warned you/ witnessed to you this day. Enjoin them upon your children, that they may observe faithfully all the terms of this Teaching.</p>	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, שִׁימוּ לְבַבְכֶם לְכֹל-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְעִיד בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם : אֲשֶׁר תִּצְוֶם אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת.</p>
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Here he implores the people who are listening to do that same thing he is trying to do - take to heart these things that we have witnessed and been there for and "command them" down to your children - so that they can guard and do all of the words of this Torah.

**Questions for Consideration:**

As we begin our new year, we too are on "הַר הָעֹבְרִים הַזֶּה" *This mountain of crossing* (Devarim 32:49)," upon which Moshe went and stood for his death as the people went into the Land of Israel. We cannot control everything that will happen in this new year. All we can do is think back and reflect on our year, our past, and gain insight from it for the future. *Were they wise, they would think upon this, gain insight into their future* (Devarim 32:29).

- How do we give pep talks to others and even ourselves?
- What is important for us to reflect on and pass to the next generation or to our future self so they/we can do better?
- What are we worried about while giving this advice?
- How will our words stick with our listeners? What is our clear instruction, what examples are we using, what visual aids can we bring up?



## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Prep Talk Poem:

Let's give each other a pep/prep talk from our past year! Everyone should think about something from this past year that they can learn from and do better in the new year. How can you, like Moshe, pass along your experience in order to be wiser and more insightful in the future?

### Use the following steps to prepare:

1. What is something from your past year that you can think about and learn from? Maybe it was something you or someone else did that wasn't really great. How can thinking about this help you be better in the future?
2. How are you going to present this to everyone listening? Moshe used a poem. Will you use a poem? Picture? Will you act it out? Sing it?
3. What is the Torah you are teaching? What is the bottom-line value you want people to learn after listening to you and carry on into the future?

\*For younger children I would suggest modeling this and passing down a lesson to them first. Then ask them to think about something that they learned and how they want to teach you about it.

## Shabbat Shalom!



The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** V'zot Habracha

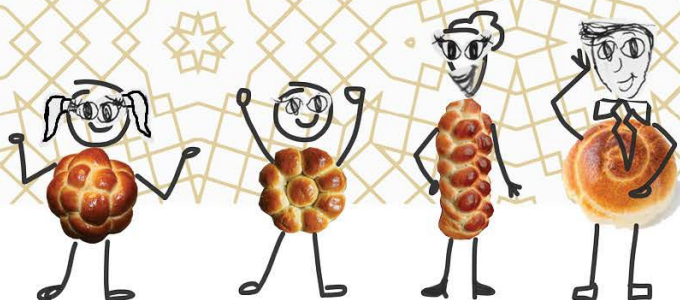
**Title:** Teach Your Children Well

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

Our *parsha* opens with Moshe's final blessing to *Bnei Yisrael* before his death. As part of his blessing, in *Devarim* 33:4, we are told:



The Torah that Moshe commanded us is a legacy for the congregation of Yaakov.

תּוֹרַה צְוָה-לָנוּ, מִשָּׁה : מוֹרְשָׁה,  
קִהְלַת יַעֲקֹב.

There is an **active** aspect here of our inheritance of the commandments that Moshe has given us.

As Rashi comments, “We have taken it and we will not abandon it.”

### Questions for Consideration:

- What do you think the *p’shat* (simple meaning) of this verse is?
- What does it mean to inherit something? (Young people may need your help in defining this term, depending on their age.)

### Zooming In:

This verse has come to epitomize our relationship with Torah. In many communities we sing this verse right after opening the ark and taking out the Torah.

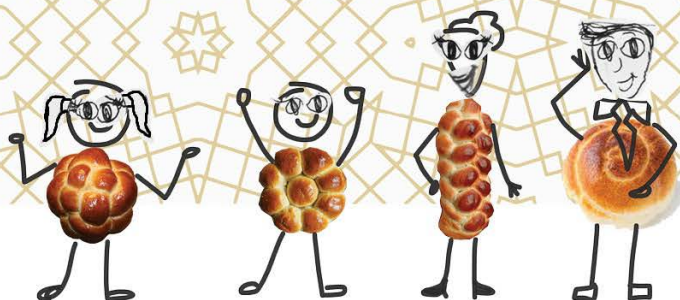
In the Talmud we are told that it should be recited from generation to generation and is the first Torah verse taught to a child (Tractate Sukkot 42a):

What is the Torah [taught to a child who has just learned to speak]? Rav Hamnuna said: “*The Torah that Moshe commanded us is a legacy for the congregation of Yaakov.*” [Devarim 33:4]

תורה מאי היא? א"ר המנונא  
(דברים לג, ד) : "תורה צוה לנו משה  
מורשה קהלת יעקב."

- **Why** or **what** about this verse do you think made the Rabbis of the Talmud pick it as the **first** verse a child should say when they learn how to speak?
- What lessons might this verse teach a young child?





## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Creating Our Own Chain:



*(This activity requires stapling and writing. If you want this to be a shomer shabbat-friendly activity, you can do this as a thinking and sharing activity without the crafting piece.)*

Give children strips of paper of two different colors, similar to those used to construct a sukkah chain. (See picture for guidance.)

Ask them to identify three people that they feel they “inherited” Torah from. Encourage them to think about Torah in a broad sense, as Jewish identity, Jewish lessons, etc.

Have them write the name of each person on a separate piece of paper and create links for a chain from each piece of paper.

Then have students think of three lessons or ideas from the Torah that they feel they have “inherited” and that they would feel strongly about teaching someone else (a younger children).



An example could be: *Ve'ahavta l'reacha kamocha* - loving your neighbor as yourself.

Have the children use their second color of paper and summarize each teaching with a title or group of words and write them on a separate chain in their link.

Then have them link all their circles together to form a chain.

As a group, have the children come together with their chains. Ask each person to share at least one piece of Torah they have inherited and one person they feel they have inherited Torah from.

After each person shares, start linking the individual chains together so they form one large chain.

### Wrapping Up

Have the children reflect on some common themes or ideas they heard about the Torah that the group felt they have inherited and the people they felt they inherited Torah from. Did anything stand out to them?

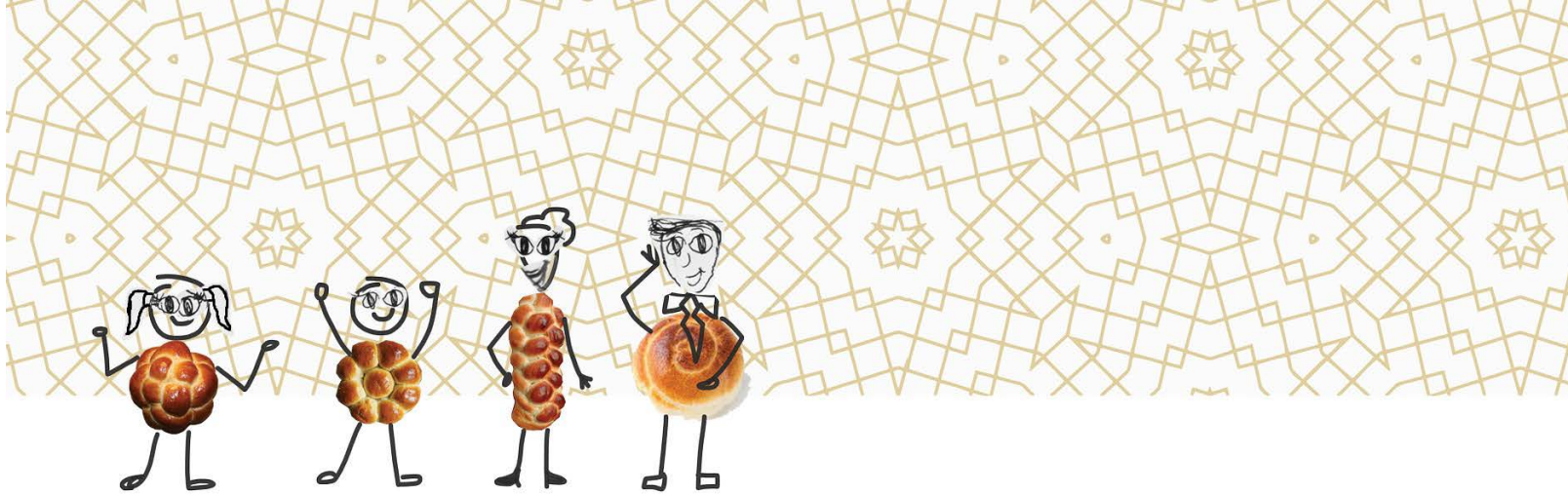
Revisit our verse, Devarim 33:4:

4. The Torah that Moshe commanded us is a legacy for the congregation of Yaakov.	ד תּוֹרַה צְנֹה-לָנוּ, מֹשֶׁה : מוֹרְשָׁה, קְהֵלֶת יַעֲקֹב.
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Ask the children after this activity:

- How do you understand this verse?
- What does it mean for us to inherit the Torah that Moshe commanded?
- How do we continue the chain of inheritance?
- How do you understand Rashi's idea that we will inherit this Torah and not abandon it?





Hang your chain somewhere prominent in your home/classroom to be reminded of the importance of our inheriting the Torah of Moshe and continuing this legacy.

**Shabbat Shalom!**