

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# *An Interactive* **PARSHA EXPERIENCE**



## שמות | Shemot

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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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Shemot

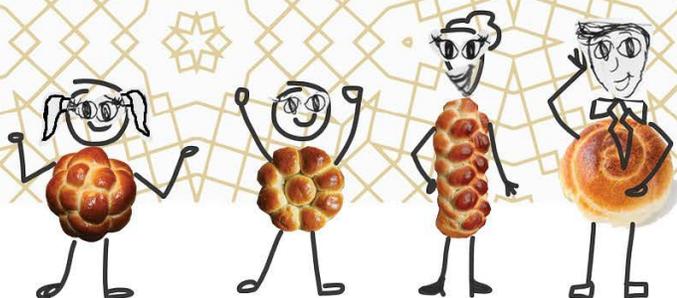
**Title:** Seeing the Other

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

Our *parsha* begins a new book of the Torah called *Shemot*, and a new chapter in the history of *Bnei Yisrael* (the children of Israel). Our story takes place in Egypt, where a new king, Pharaoh, has risen. He believes that Bnei Yisrael are stronger than the Egyptian people and fears they will become numerous and start a war against the Egyptians. His fear leads him to treat Bnei Yisrael horribly. He enslaves them and forces them to build with back-breaking work. Worst of all,



Bnei Yisrael are ordered to kill their own sons, in order to ensure that the nation won't grow.

At this point, the parsha zooms in on the story of one family who has a son and, fearing he'll be killed if he's discovered, places him in the Nile River. Miraculously, Pharaoh's daughter is walking on the banks of the Nile, sees the baby and rescues him. She raises him as her own son in the palace and names him Moshe.

### Zooming In:

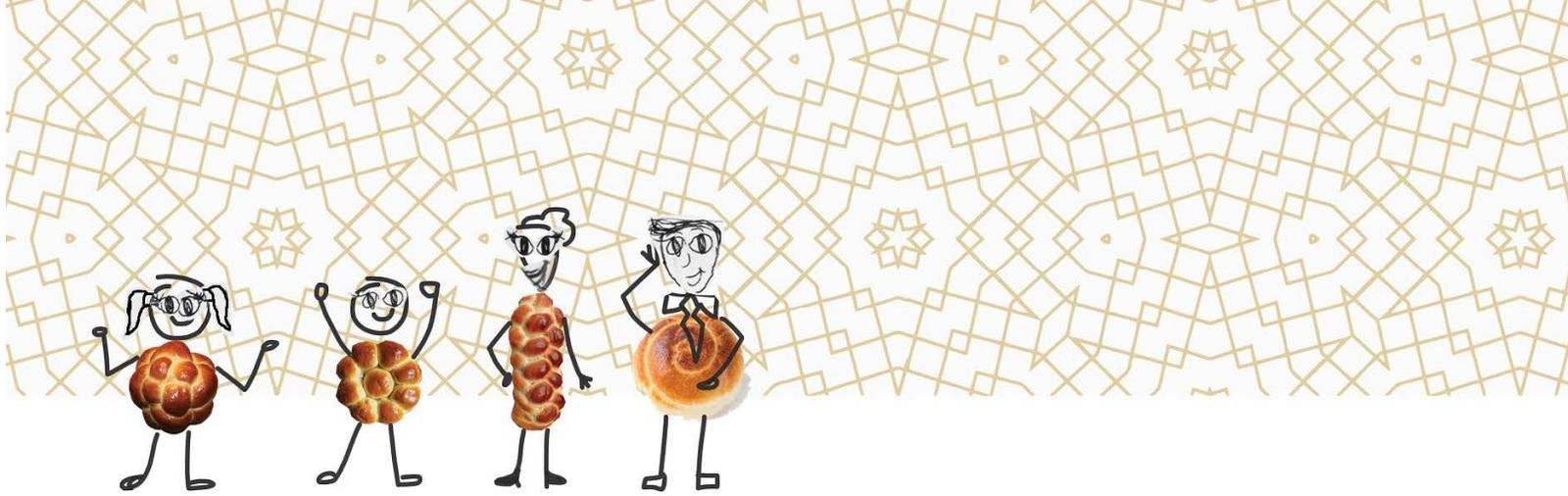
In this parsha, Moshe goes through a transformation. He is living as Egyptian royalty, when suddenly he seems to wake up to the reality of the Israelite people around him.

We read in Shemot 2:11:

<p><b>11.</b> Now it came to pass in those days that Moshe grew up and went out to his brothers and looked at their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brothers.</p>	<p>יָא וַיְהִי בְּיָמֵים הֵהֵם, וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-אֶחָיו, וַיִּרְא בְּסַבְּלָתָם; וַיִּרְא אִישׁ מִצְרִי מַכֵּה אִישׁ-עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו.</p>
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What do you think it means that Moshe grew up? Where and with whom did he grow up?

Our text says Moshe “looked at their burdens.” What were their burdens? When do you see other people’s troubles?



After Moshe saw what was going on around him, he acted.

12. He turned this way and that way, and he saw that there was no man; so he struck the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

יב ויפֹן כה וְכֹה, וַיִּרְא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ ;  
וַיִּדֹּ אֶת-הַמִּצְרִי, וַיִּטְמְנֵהוּ בַחֹל.

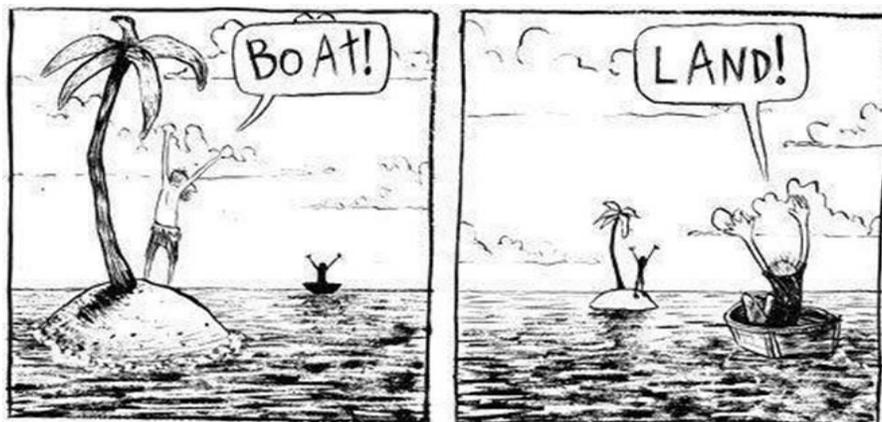
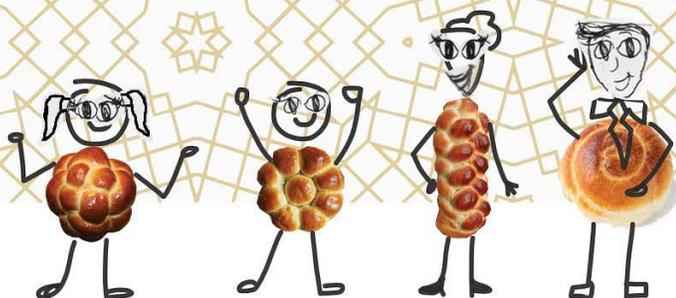
### Questions for Consideration:

- In each of our lives, there are people and problems that we suddenly “wake up to.” Who do **you** need to see more?
- When do you need to act more when you, like Moshe, see something you think is wrong?  
(Even though you are a kid and may feel powerless, we all have the ability to help others!)

## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### It's a Matter of Perspective:

Sometimes people get stuck in their own perspective of looking at the world, and how they see things. They think that there can be only one way to view the world - their own! Whether it be religion, politics or sports teams it is difficult for people to see other perspectives as the following cartoon shows:



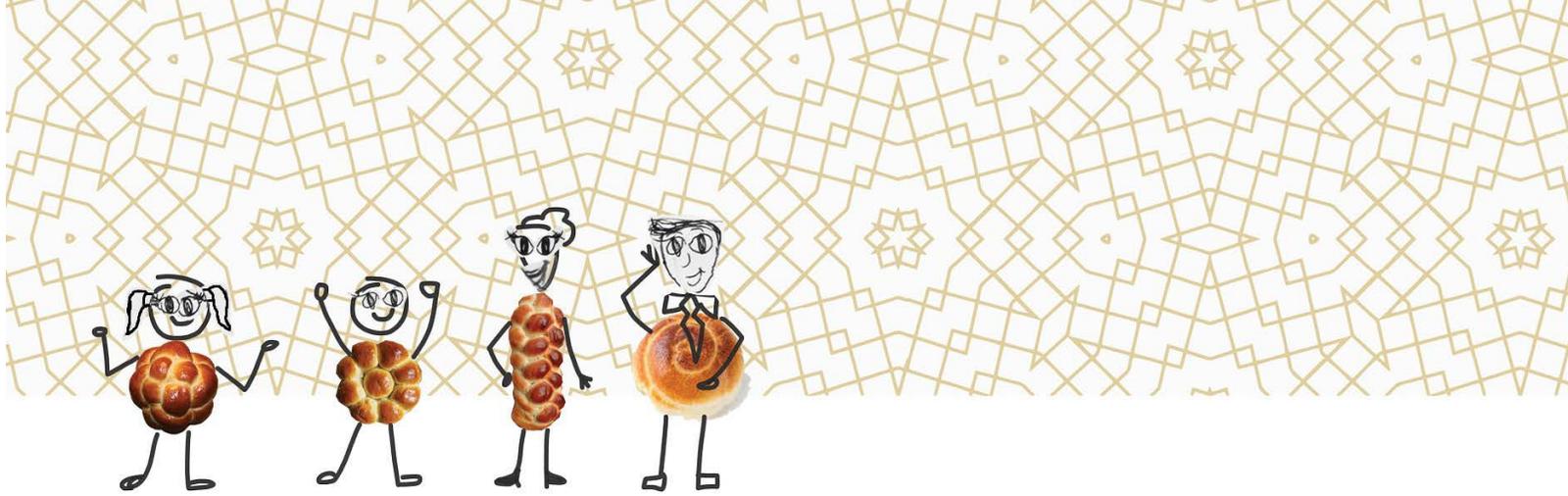
**Activity:** PMI stands for Plus points, Minus points, and Interesting points.

This exercise gets participants to see things through a different lens. It's called PMI and was devised by Edward de Bono (Tactics: The Art and Science of Success) who wrote:

*Many highly intelligent people are caught in the intelligence trap: they take a position on a subject and then they use their thinking skills solely to support that position. The more able they are to support the position, the less do they see any need actually to explore the subject: so they become trapped into one point of view. The PMI formula forces a scan. Once a perception has been broadened in this way, the thinker cannot unthink what is now in front of them.*

A group of people (3-4) take an issue and for one minute think about all the *Plus Points* of that issue, for another minute think about all the *Minus Points*, and then for one more minute note all the *Interesting Things* about that issue.

By articulating multiple opinions and perspectives people are able to 'unlock' their thinking about a particular issue to gain new insights and ideas. Hopefully, we'll be able to open our eyes like Moshe did!



Here are some sample issues/ideas for you to try.

General:

- Children should not be forced to go to school.
- Candy should be removed from stores.
- Schools should not give out any grades.
- The attitude of: I don't need to actively improve the world, I just don't need to harm it.

Jewish:

- It would have been better if the Jews had never gone down to Egypt.
- God should have taken the Jews out of Egypt without inflicting the ten plagues on the Egyptians.
- All Jews should move to Israel.

Come up with your own questions that will excite your children or students!

**Shabbat Shalom!**

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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



Sponsored by Michelle and JJ Berney in memory of Tomi Deutsch Berney

**Parsha:** Va'era

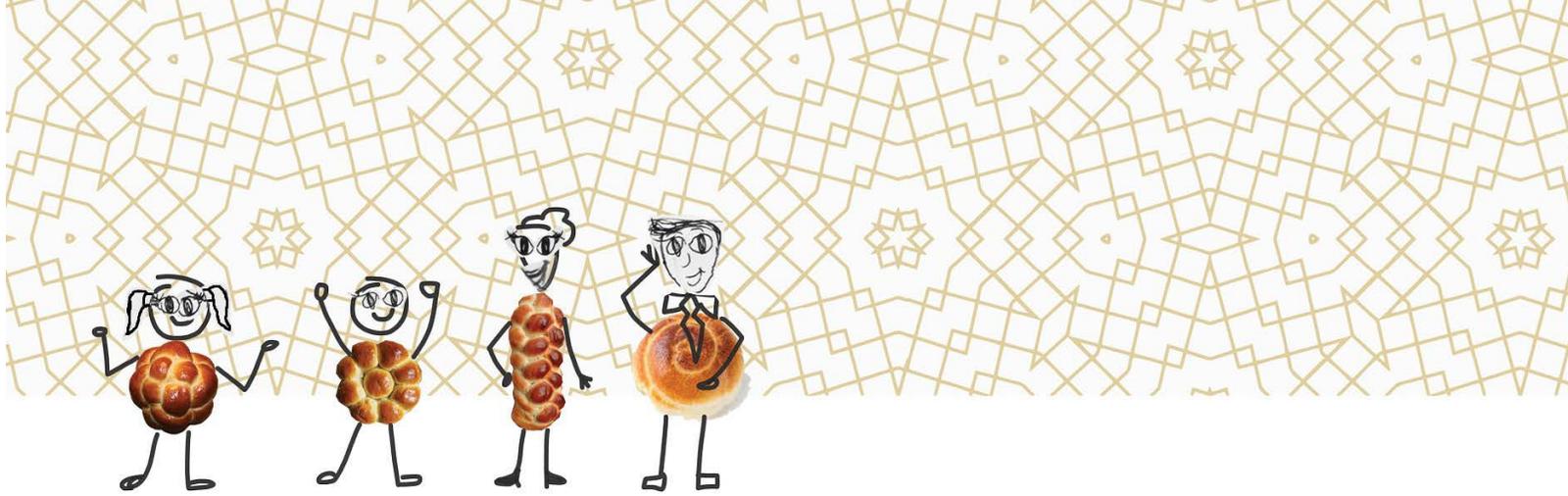
**Title:** Do Humans Have Free Will?

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

In this *parsha* God continues to speak to Moshe through the burning thornbush. God tells him the plan for how Moshe will go with Aharon to Pharaoh to ask for *Bnei Yisrael* to be freed. Moshe is still feeling a bit insecure about his ability to stand up to Pharaoh and be a leader to Bnei Yisrael. Aharon is told that he will help do the talking. In the instructions to Moshe, God says that God will "harden Pharaoh's heart, in order for God's many signs and marvels to be seen in the



land.” Moshe and Aharon go off to the palace and the marvels begin. The first one is that the staff that Moshe is holding turns into a snake! This is followed by the start of the plagues.

### Zooming In:

I can't read this parsha without thinking about the idea of free will. Moshe doesn't have a choice in following God's orders, even when he insists he is not fit for the job. Pharaoh has his heart hardened so we don't know what he would have decided on his own. Even Aharon is told exactly what words he is supposed to say. We also hear about the destiny of the whole Jewish people in the start of this parsha with the four expressions of redemption: God promises to take us out of Egypt, deliver us from enslavement, redeem us and acquire us as the chosen people at Mt. Sinai.

### Questions for Consideration:

- Is our whole life planned out for us? If so, what is our role?
- Do we have free will to change the course of our life in some or all aspects?
- Does everything good or bad happen for a reason?
- The plagues happened so Bnei Israel could see all of God's many wonders. Have you ever been able to take a difficult moment in your life and appreciate some good or learning that has come from it?
- How does believing or not believing in free will affect the way you look at life?



## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Getting Dramatic about Free Will:

Use the following text from this parsha, Shemot 7:1-4, to guide a discussion with your family and friends. I bolded the words that most connect to the topic of **free will**.

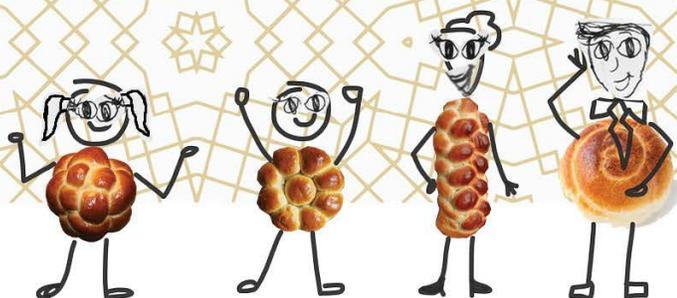
1. Answer the question first in first person as the character in the text. How would the character feel about this question according to what s/he is experiencing?
2. Next, answer it as yourself. How do you feel personally about the questions? How do you see this in your own life?

<i>Questions</i>	Are we just put places at the right time? As in the saying, "Right time right place"? Or are we making changes in our destiny depending on where we put ourselves?
<i>Moshe</i>	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, רְאֵה נִתְּנִיךָ אֱלֹהִים לְפָרְעֹה; וְאַהֲרֹן אֲחִיךָ יְהִיֶה נְבִיאֲךָ.</p> <p>God replied to Moshe, "See, I <b>place/give</b> you in the role of God to Pharaoh, with your brother Aharon as your prophet."</p>



<i>Questions</i>	Do ideas ever just come to you? Do you feel compelled to say things? Do we have free will over our speech?
<i>Moshe and Aharon</i>	<p>אָתָּה תְּדַבֵּר, אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֶצְוֶה; וְאַהֲרֹן אֶחִיד יְדַבֵּר אֶל-פַּרְעֹה, וְשַׁלַּח אֶת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶצוֹ.</p> <p>You <b>will repeat all that I command you</b>, and your brother Aharon <b>will speak</b> to Pharaoh to let the Israelites depart from his land.</p>

<i>Questions</i>	Are you ever fundamentally opposed to something and you can't figure out exactly why? Do we harden our own hearts to things or are we created with that predetermined? Are some things just harder for us to accept?
<i>Pharaoh</i>	<p>וְאֲנִי אֶקְשֶׁה, אֶת-לֵב פַּרְעֹה; וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶת-אוֹתַי וְנֹתָם מוֹפְתֵי, בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם.</p> <p>But I <b>will harden</b> Pharaoh's heart, that I may multiply My signs and marvels in the land of Egypt.</p>



<p><i>Questions</i></p>	<p>God is saying that even if Pharaoh doesn't listen to you it will be ok because I'll step in and fix it. Do some problems just solve themselves? Do we have control over that or is there a set plan?</p>
<p><i>Moshe</i></p>	<p>וְלֹא-יִשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים פְּרַעֲהַ, וְנָתַתִּי אֶת-יָדִי בְּמִצְרָיִם ; וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת-צְבָאתִי אֶת-עַמִּי בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, בְּשַׁפְּטִים, גְּדֹלִים .          When Pharaoh does not heed you, I will lay My hand upon Egypt and deliver My ranks, My people the Israelites, from the land of Egypt, with extraordinary chastisements.</p>

**Shabbat Shalom!**

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**Parsha:** Bo

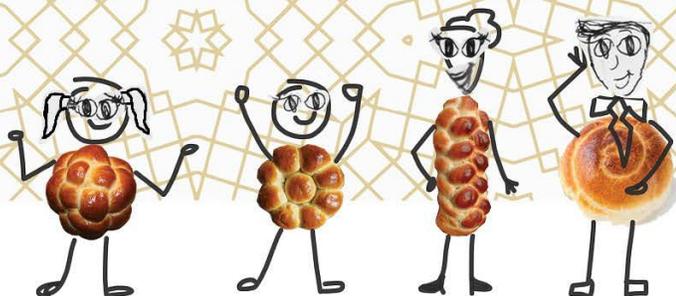
**Title:** The Eighth Plague – Cute Grasshoppers Fill the Land?

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

In last week's *parsha*, God smote Egypt with seven plagues - blood, frogs, lice, wild animals, farm animal disease, boils, and fiery hail - but none of those horrible attacks could convince Pharaoh to let the Children of Israel go! Nothing seems to affect the Egyptian king strongly enough to make him want to change



his mind. So as this week's parsha begins, God decides to step it up and send an even worse plague than the previous ones: a plague of locusts.

### Zooming In:

In Shemot chapter 10, Moshe and Aharon go to Pharaoh to let him know that if he won't free the Israelite slaves, tomorrow God will "bring locusts in all your territory. They will cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to even see the land. They will devour whatever is left over after the hail, and they will eat all of the trees that grow in the field. Even more so, they will fill your places and the houses of all your servants and all of the Egyptians - it will be something that neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers ever saw!"

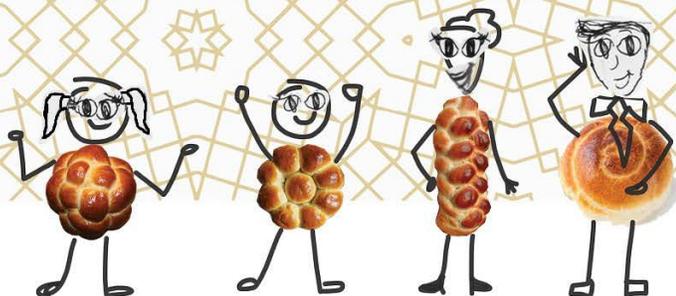
Pharaoh's servants are really upset by this news. Who wouldn't be?? The seventh plague, the fiery hail, destroyed almost all of the crops and grass in the entire country. And now locusts will eat up all of the rest? That is too much for the servants to bear, so they beg Pharaoh to just let Bnei Yisrael go already. As they say to Pharaoh, "Don't you see yet that Egypt is lost?!" For a minute, it seems like he will agree to free them. But then, he changes his mind and says that only the Israelite men can go - not the women or children. And that's certainly not enough for God! So God instructs Moshe to:

**12.** ...“Hold out your arm over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat up all the grasses in the land, whatever the hail has left.”

**13.** So Moshe held out his rod over the land of Egypt, and God drove an east wind over the land all that day and all night; and when morning came, the east wind had brought the locusts.

יב...נְטָה יָדְךָ עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
בְּאֲרָבָה, וְיָעַל עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם ; וַיֹּאכַל  
אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב הָאָרֶץ, אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר  
הִשְׁאִיר הַבָּרָד.

יג וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת-מִטְהוֹ עַל-אֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם, וַיְהִי וְנִהַג רוּחַ-קָּדִים בְּאֲרֶץ  
כָּל-הַיּוֹם הַהוּא וְכָל-הַלַּיְלָה ; הַבֹּקֶר  
הָיָה--וְרוּחַ הַקָּדִים נָשָׂא אֶת-הָאֲרָבָה.



14. Locusts invaded all the land of Egypt and settled within all the territory of Egypt in a thick mass; never before had there been so many, nor will there ever be so many again.

15. They hid all the land from view, and the land was darkened; and they ate up all the grasses of the field and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left, so that nothing green was left, of tree or grass of the field, in all the land of Egypt.

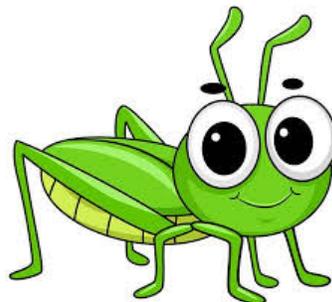
יד ויעל הארבה על כל-ארץ מצרים,  
 וינח בכל גבול מצרים: קבד מאד--  
 לפניו לא-היה כן ארבה כמוהו,  
 ואחריו לא יהיה-כן.

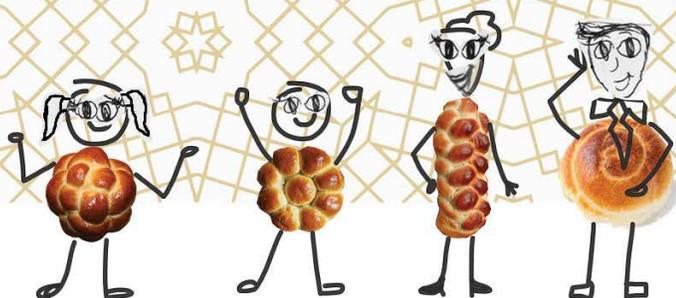
טו ויכס את-עין כל-הארץ, ותחשך  
 הארץ, ויאכל את-כל-עשב הארץ  
 ואת כל-פרי העץ אשר הותיר הברד;  
 ולא-נותר כל-ירק בעץ ובעשב  
 השדה, בכל-ארץ מצרים.

### Questions for Consideration:

- Did you know that a locust is actually the same exact bug as a grasshopper? How could something that looks like this destroy Egypt??

Grasshoppers actually look like this:





And locusts like this:



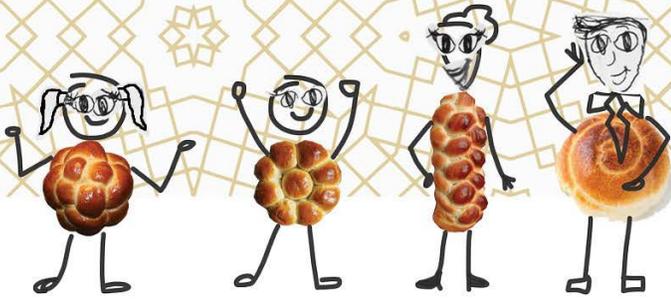
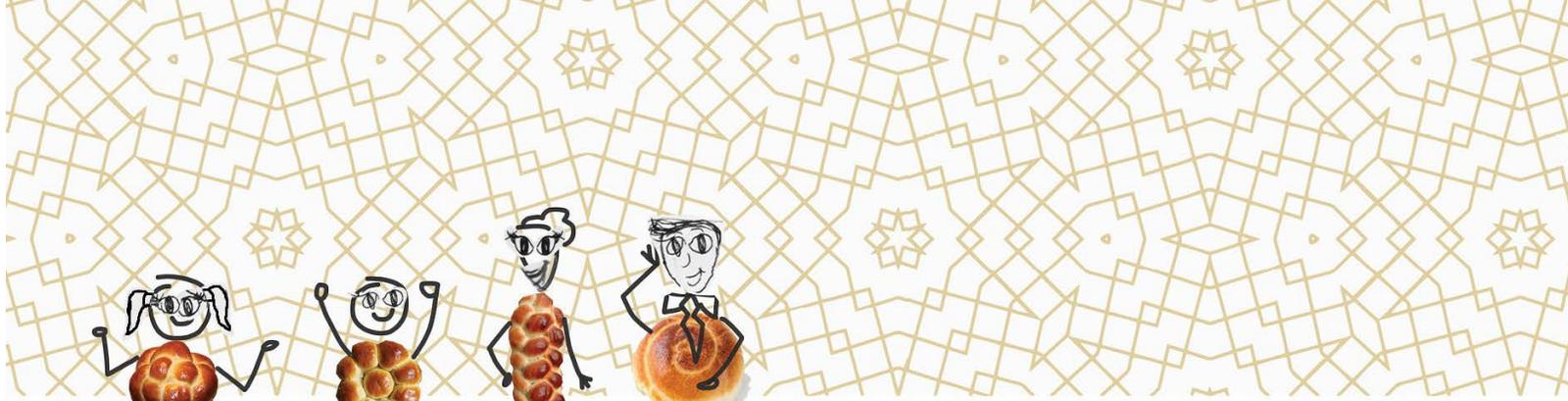
- And grasshoppers are usually considered nice bugs, while locusts are one of the plagues in Egypt!! What makes the difference between them?

## *The Parsha Through Another Lens*

### **Torah Tag:**

In order to try and understand how something as small and seemingly slight as a grasshopper/locust can destroy the entire land of Egypt, play a game of tag. Since we are assuming you are playing this near your Shabbat table, you may want to take a break and move to the family room or playroom for a bit!

- Choose one player to be "it."
- The player chosen to be "it" should count to 10, and then begin to chase the others, attempting to get close enough to "tag" one of them (touching them with a hand) while the others try to escape.

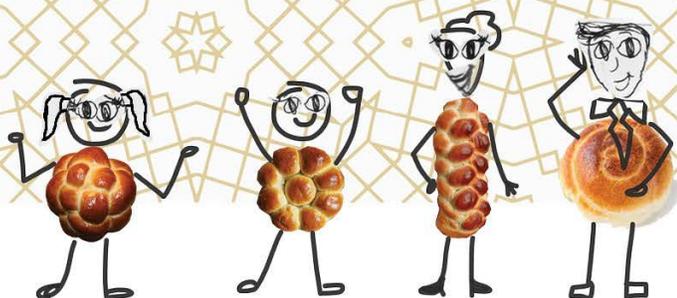


- If a player is tagged, s/he joins "it" as another "it." Meaning, both players remain "it"!
- The game ends when all players have become "it."

Discuss: How much faster and easier was it for a group of "its" to catch and tag the last player standing than for one "it" to catch and tag players? Why do you think that is?

Explain that one grasshopper/locust may seem harmless, but a large group of them that gets together and does something called "swarming" can eat all of the plants in an entire country, like this:





## Another Look at Pharaoh and Locust Fun Facts:

You may want to continue the discussion by using the plague of locusts to help your family understand how someone like Pharaoh - just one person - could enslave an entire people!

In order to do so, here are some interesting facts about grasshoppers, locusts, and swarming:

- When these grasshoppers are in what is called “the solitary phase,” they are harmless, and do not pose a threat to plants or farming.
- However, under certain conditions, the grasshoppers begin to produce a brain chemical called serotonin. This is the same brain chemical we humans have that makes us feel happy! In the case of the grasshoppers, the serotonin causes major, major changes in their bodies and behavior.
- They begin to breed profusely, and feel the need to be together with other grasshoppers. This is called “the gregarious phase.” They form groups of wingless babies, which later become swarms of winged adults.
- Both the babies and the adults move around, traveling great distances, eating most of the green vegetation wherever the swarm settles.

Discuss: How could Pharaoh, who is just one person, enslave a whole nation (Bnei Yisrael)? Can you make an analogy between Pharaoh, his servants, and his people and one harmless grasshopper that ends up turning into a swarm of harmful locusts that flies around destroying things?

## Shabbat Shalom!

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**Parsha:** BeShalach

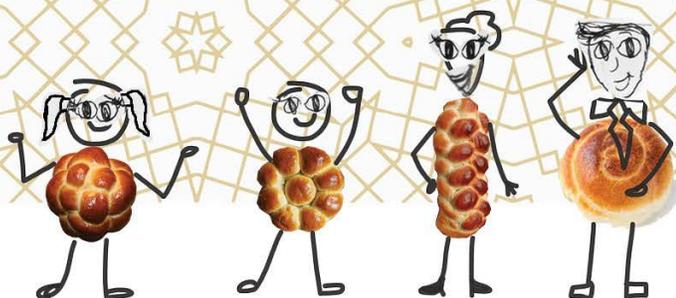
**Title:** Selective Memory

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

This week's *parsha* begins with *Bnei Yisrael* making a harrowing escape from Egypt only to find themselves trapped by a raging sea in front of them and an angry Egyptian army charging behind them. The people are understandably terrified and they turn to Moshe and exclaim, "What have you done to us, taking



us out of Egypt... it is better to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness!” (Shemot 14:11-12).

Then a miracle happens! The sea splits, Bnei Yisrael cross on dry land, and the waters return just in time to crash down on the Egyptian enemy. Bnei Yisrael watch in safety on the seashore as their Egyptian oppressors drown in the sea. After experiencing this life-saving miracle, the people “had faith in God and in His servant Moses” (Shemot 14:30), and they burst into song and dance.

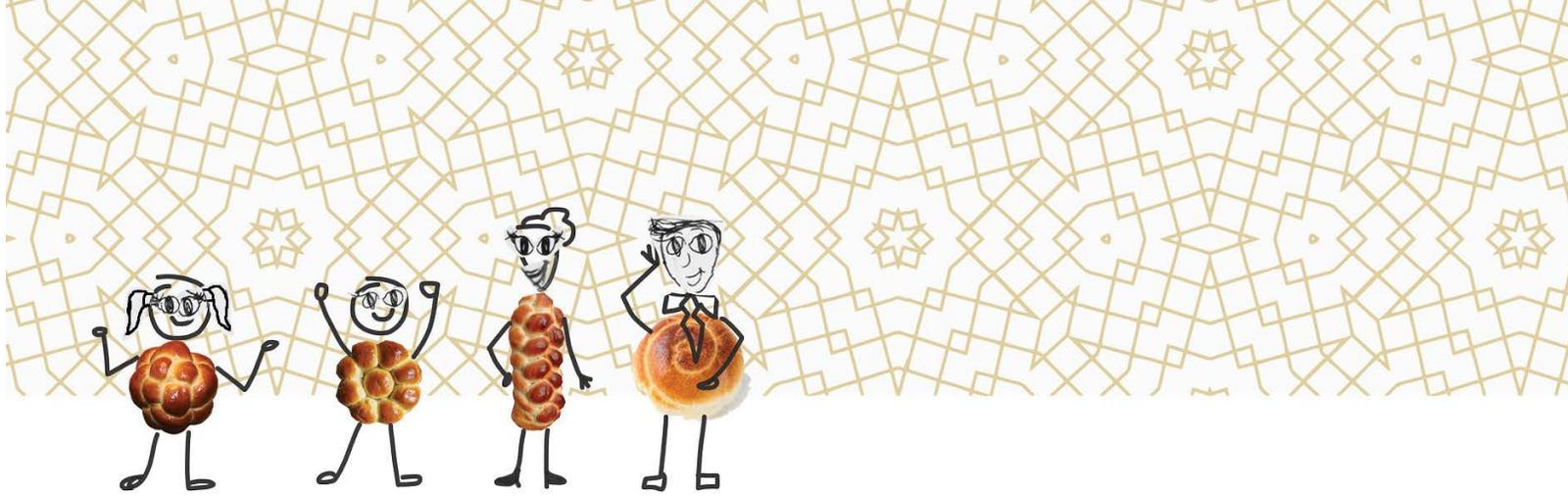
### Zooming In:

The strange part is that this massive miracle does not seem to have a lasting effect on Bnei Yisrael’s faith in God and Moshe. Following the miracle at the Red Sea, the people face a series of challenging situations in the wilderness. They typically respond by declaring how much better life was in Egypt than in their current situation. Here are two examples:

- A. The people are hungry -  
“If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in Egypt when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we ate our fill of bread! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to starve.” (Shemot 16:3)
  
- B. The people are thirsty -  
“Why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock...?” (Shemot 17:3)

### Questions for Consideration:

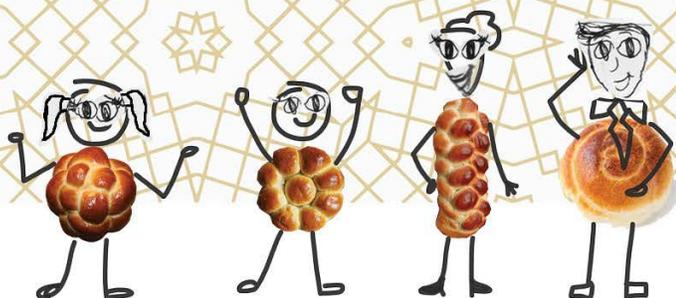
- Is it really true that life was so good in Egypt?!
- Is it possible that in just a few months, Bnei Yisrael have forgotten the back-breaking work quotas the Egyptians imposed on them or the decree that every Jewish baby boy was to be thrown into the river?!
- Why are the people so quick to despair when the going gets tough?



Many commentators point out that although Bnei Yisrael are now free of oppressors, they still operate in a slave mentality. In other words, they still think like slaves and experience the world as slaves because they don't know how to live as free people.

A slave doesn't have any practice making his own decisions since his master makes all the decisions for him. For example, the master decides what a slave eats, when he drinks, and how he spends his time. A person experiencing freedom for the first time is likely to panic at the first sign of trouble, because he has never learned how to take care of himself.

Life in Egypt was not actually better for Bnei Yisrael. However, they fondly remember Egypt as the "good ol' days" each time they face frightening circumstances because they don't know how to handle the scary situation themselves. They become nostalgic for the time when their Egyptian masters took care of everything, but they forget that those same Egyptian masters worked them until the point of death and killed their baby boys. Through the challenges that Bnei Yisrael face in the wilderness, God will teach the people to shed their slave mentality and transform them from a nation of slaves into a free nation that bravely looks forward to their next stage of life in the land of Canaan.



## The Parsha Through Another Lens

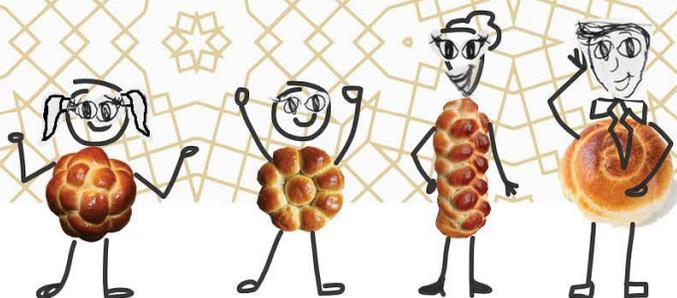
### Would You Rather...?:

It's not always easy to make our own decisions in life, but the freedom to do so is a privilege. Let's embrace that privilege by playing the game "Would You Rather...?"

Each person around the table is asked one of the 16 "would you rather" questions listed below. For a slight variation of the game, try to make up a "would you rather" question yourself.

(Questions taken from [this](#) website)

1. Would you rather be a detective or a pilot?
2. Would you rather live in a house shaped like a circle or a house shaped like a triangle?
3. Would you rather do school work as a group or by yourself?
4. Would you rather be the author of a popular book or a musician in a band who released a popular album?
5. Would you rather have a magic carpet that flies or a see-through submarine?
6. Would you rather everything in your house be one color or every single wall and door be a different color?
7. Would you rather see a firework display or a circus performance?
8. Would you rather start a colony on another planet or be the leader of a small country on Earth?
9. Would you rather be a wizard or a superhero?
10. Would you rather be able to see things that are very far away, like binoculars, or be able to see things very close up, like a microscope?
11. Would you rather be an incredibly fast swimmer or an incredibly fast runner?



12. Would you rather be able to jump as far as a kangaroo or hold your breath as long as a whale?
13. Would you rather be incredibly funny or incredibly smart?
14. Would you rather be able to type/text very fast or be able to read really quickly?
15. Would you rather have the chance to design a new toy or create a new TV show?
16. Would you rather become five years older or two years younger?

**Shabbat Shalom!**

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Yitro

**Title:** The Sound of Silence

**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:

In last week's *parsha*, the Jews had one of the most awesome redemptions ever when they left Pharaoh and *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) - from the intensity of witnessing ten plagues to the excitement of crossing the Red Sea. Only three months later,



in our parsha, the Jews are about to have a hair-raising, spine-chilling, soul-elevating experience that one can barely imagine.

Receiving the ten commandments (or 'utterances') was one of the most theatrical and awesome moments in Jewish history: the Jewish people experienced thunder and lightning, next to a smoking Mount Sinai enveloped in a thick cloud, with the sound of the shofar ringing in their ears. The ultimate 4D experience!

The commentators pick up on this and say that it was so amazing that God's voice could be heard all over the world, that God's voice actually spoke 70 languages so that everyone could understand, and that the impact of God's voice pushed the Jewish people back 12 miles after which the angels had to push them back around Sinai.

Amidst all the noise, and all the commotion, it is strange that one midrash focuses on silence.

### Zooming In:

When getting ready to hear God speak to the Jewish nation one would expect the noise and theatrics mentioned in the Torah. Yet amidst all the background noise, one midrash (Exodus Rabbah 29:9) prefers a quieter, subtler approach:

*Said Rabbi Abbahu in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: When the Holy One gave the Torah, no bird screeched, no fowl flew, no ox mooed, none of the ophanim (angels) flapped a wing, nor did the seraphim (burning celestial beings) chant "Kadosh Kadosh Kadosh (Holy, Holy, Holy)!" The sea did not roar, and none of the creatures uttered a sound. Throughout the entire world, there was only a deafening silence as the Divine Voice went forth speaking: Anochi Adonai Elohecha (I am the Lord your God)."*



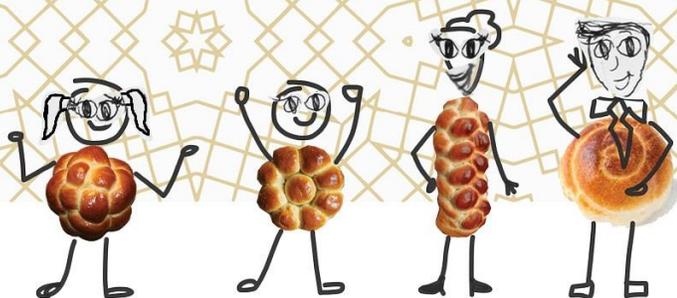
So why was there absolute silence when God spoke? Maybe you have seen this happen in everyday life. When the head of school enters the room, does everyone become quiet? Or when the rabbi gets up to speak in your synagogue, does the room become quiet?

Another piece we can add to the puzzle is that the Torah was given at Mount Sinai, which is in the desert, a place known for its barrenness and quiet. It may be no coincidence that our ancient ancestors were shepherds and lived in the desert and could hear God speak. It could be that we need to have quiet space and quiet time in order to hear God.

As a side note: desert in Hebrew is called a *midbar*, but that word, with just a few vowel changes, can also mean 'one who speaks.' So the desert/*midbar* is a place of silence where you can hear the 'One who Speaks,' i.e., God.

### Questions for Consideration:

- What do you think happened first: the creatures and natural world were quiet and then God spoke, or because God spoke everything else was quiet?
- It may make sense that all the animals were quiet, but how do you understand that the seas did not make any noise? What does that add?
- What do you think the midrash is trying to tell us by saying that everything was quiet?



## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Acting Out - Silence and Listening:

Let's do an experiment. Everyone around the table will be silent for a minute (or 20 seconds if you have little kids) and focus on what noises you hear. Then discuss:

- What noises did you hear?
- Was it hard for you to be quiet?
- Did you feel comfortable or uncomfortable in the silence?
- When do you think you are most likely to hear the Creator - when there is noise, or when there is quiet?

Make a commitment every Shabbat to have a 'moment of silence': one minute to think, focus, and maybe, hear the voice of God.

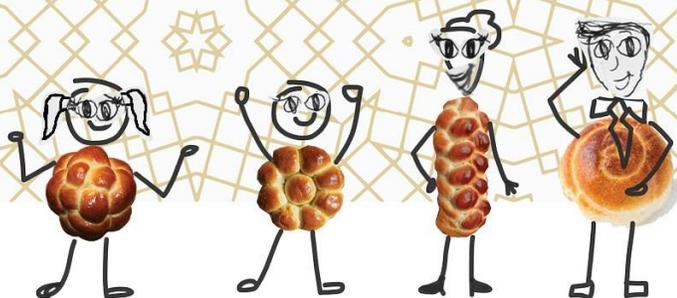
### Text Study:

There was a prophet called Eliyahu (Elijah) who also heard God speak. Study the passage below and discuss the questions that follow:

#### I Kings 19:11-12

11. "Come out," He called [to Eliyahu], "and stand on the mountain before God." And God passed by. There was a great and mighty wind, splitting mountains and shattering rocks by the power of God; but God was not in the wind. After the wind — an earthquake; but God was not in the earthquake.

יָא וַיֹּאמֶר, צֵא וְעַמְדָהּ בְּהַר  
לְפָנַי יְהוָה, וְהִנֵּה יְהוָה עֹבֵר  
וְרוּחַ גְּדוּלָה וְחֹזֶק מְפָרֵק הָרִים  
וּמְשַׁבֵּר סֻלְעִים לְפָנַי יְהוָה, לֹא  
בְרוּחַ יְהוָה; וְאַחַר הָרוּחַ רָעַשׁ,  
לֹא בְרָעַשׁ יְהוָה.



12. After the earthquake — fire; but God was not in the fire. And after the fire — a soft murmuring sound.

בְּאַחַר הָרָעַשׁ אֵשׁ, לֹא בָאֵשׁ  
יְהוָה; וְאַחַר הָאֵשׁ, קוֹל דְּמָמָה  
דָּקָה.

- In what ways is this similar to the giving of the Torah at Sinai?
- Why in both cases are there 'theatrics' beforehand? What does it add to the experience?
- Why, in these examples, do you think God chooses to communicate with humans in quietness?
- In your own lives have you heard God speak or reach out to you?
- How would you imagine God sounding if God spoke with you?

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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Mishpatim

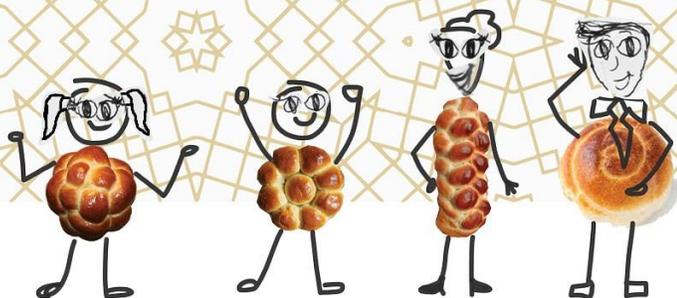
**Title:** Building a Society

**Contributor:** Stef Jadd Susnow, Pardes Day School Educators Program, '07-'09

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

After receiving the Ten Commandments in last week's parsha, *Bnei Yisrael* are now ready to learn even more of God's laws/*mitzvot* - 53 new mitzvot to be exact! The parsha opens with this long list of mitzvot on a variety of different topics ranging from how to deal with damaged property to holiday observance. We then



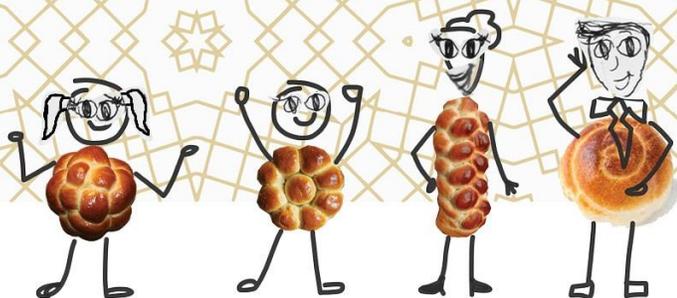
see that Moshe tells all these new laws to Bnei Yisrael and they reply: “All the words that God has spoken, we will do.” At this point Moshe writes down all the words of God in a book referred to as the *Sefer HaBrit*, the Book of the Covenant. Again, Moshe teaches all of God’s words to Bnei Yisrael but this time reading it from the book he wrote. To this, Bnei Yisrael reply: “Everything that God has spoken, we will do and we will listen/obey!”

### Zooming In:

The majority of the new laws presented in Parshat Mishpatim teach Bnei Yisrael how to interact with each other, *mitzvot bein adam l’chavero*. From laws about slavery, murder, honoring your parents and lending money to prohibitions about lying, stealing and mistreating animals, these mitzvot begin to lay out the groundwork for a functioning society. While there are many more mitzvot to come in later *parshiyot*, this is the longest list so far that we’ve seen and our first major glimpse into God’s plan for and expectations of the lives Bnei Yisrael will lead as a free people. For example: we learn in this parsha that if a person borrows something from another person and the object gets lost or damaged, the borrower is responsible to pay back the owner. Through mitzvot like these we start to see how God wants us to behave amongst each other, how we are expected to treat each other, even in complicated social situations, and how we’re meant to live our lives with one another on a daily basis.

### Questions for Consideration:

- Why is it important to have clear interpersonal laws when setting up a new society?
- What laws do you think are most important for teaching a big group of people how to live with each other?



## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Game On:

PLEASE NOTE: This activity requires writing.

Imagine you had to lay the groundwork for creating a functional home/community. Where would you begin? What kind of community would you try to build? What laws would you choose?

With your family/group, create a list of at least 10 laws *bein adam l'chavero* that you think are fundamental for creating your society. Each person should cut a piece of paper into strips and write down each law onto a strip of paper. Everyone will then arrange their laws in order of importance. Afterwards, each person will share their list. How are the lists similar? How are they different? Is there any law that you would personally add, remove or change from the list?

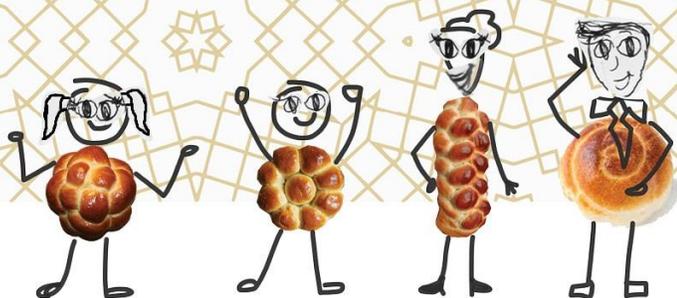
### Alternative 1

Before Shabbat create, print and cut out your own 10 *bein adam l'chavero* laws and have the participants arrange them in order.

### Alternative 2

Or print and cut out the following 10 laws:

- Always say 'Please' and 'Thank You'
- Do not interrupt someone else when speaking
- Whenever you see someone struggling offer to help



- Smile whenever you enter into a room.
- Express your feelings to others rather than getting angry at them.
- Always be the first person to greet someone else.
- Never use your hands (hitting, pushing etc.) to solve a problem with a friend.
- Always look at the positive aspects of others (and not the negatives)
- If you see people behaving not nicely to another person, step in and help.
- Regularly give your time or money to a charity of your choice.

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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Terumah

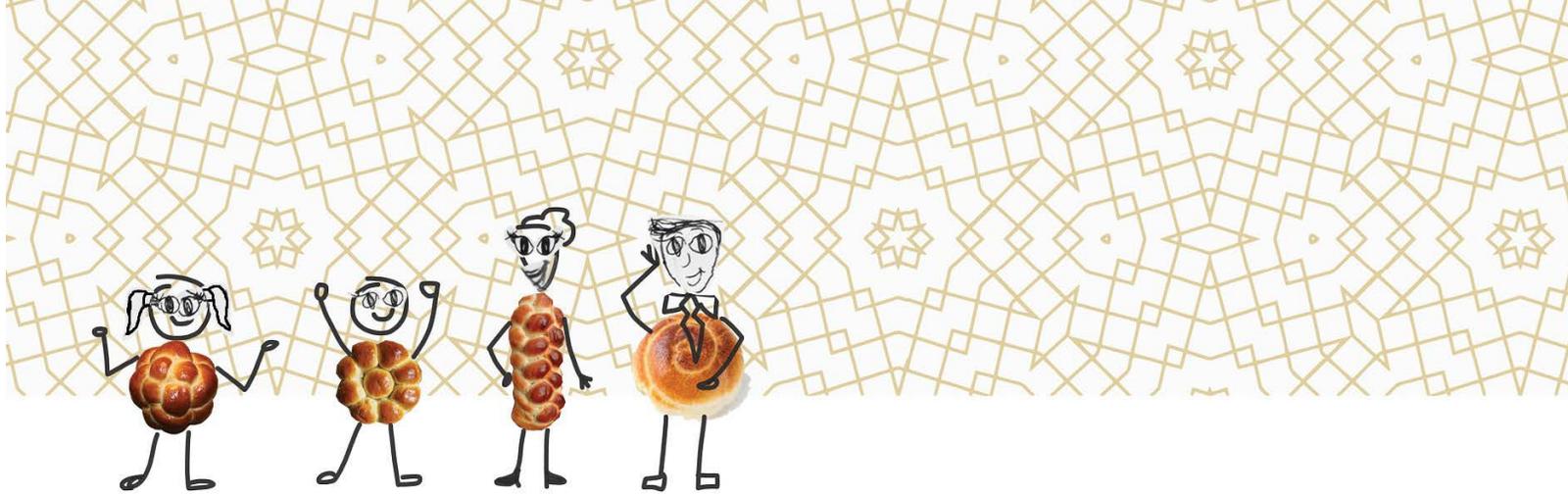
**Title:** Giving from Our Hearts

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

At the end of last week's *parsha*, Moshe went up to the heavens to learn from God for 40 days and nights. So at the beginning of this week's *parsha*, *Parshat Terumah*, while Moshe and God are together, God instructs Moshe to collect donations - gifts - from *Bnei Yisrael* so that they can build a *mishkan* - a



tabernacle. The mishkan will be a very special place where the *kohanim*, the priests from the tribe of Levi, will connect to God, on behalf of all of the people, by offering different kinds of sacrifices.

God asks Moshe to collect the following specialty items from Bnei Yisrael: “gold, silver, and copper; blue, purple, and red yarns, fine linen, and goats’ hair; reddened ram skins, and orange-dyed skins, and acacia wood; oil for the lamp, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense; lapis lazuli and other stones for setting in the *ephod* and the breastplate.” Basically, these are all kinds of precious metals, fancy colorful fabrics, and gorgeous jewels that will be used to decorate and beautify the mishkan.

### Zooming In:

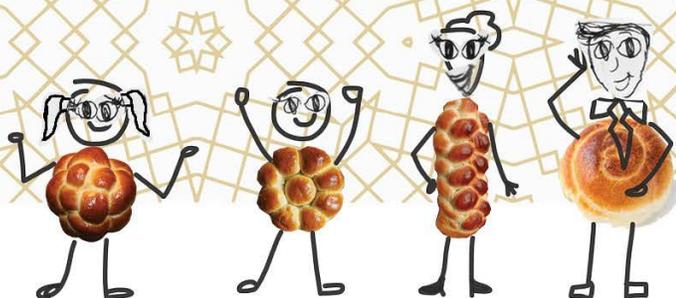
The words that God uses when He tells Moshe to start collecting donations so that Bnei Yisrael can build the mishkan are the following (Shemot 21:2):

2. Tell Bnei Yisrael to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts for Me from every person **whose heart so moves him**.

ב. דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וַיִּקְחוּ-לִי תְרוּמָה: מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לִבּוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת-תְּרוּמָתִי.

### Questions for Consideration:

- What do you think God means when He says that Moshe should accept gifts for the mishkan from people whose “hearts move them”? What does it sound like it means for a heart to be “moved”?
- Why do you think God only wants gifts for the mishkan from people who really want to give them?



## The Parsha Through Another Lens

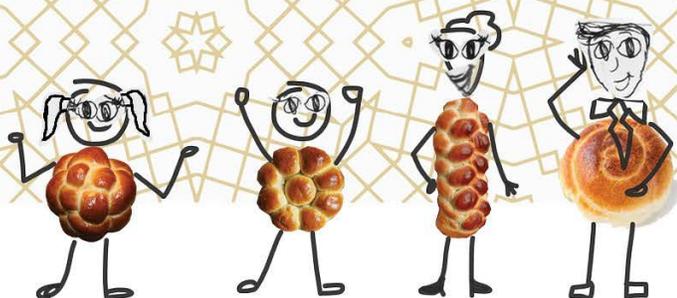
### Game On - Play Dreidel in February:

Even though the holiday of Hanukah ended about two months ago, pull out your dreidels and some jelly beans/M&Ms/raisins/chocolate chips, and play a few rounds of the game. To remind you, these are the rules:

- Each player starts with an equal number of candy pieces. At the beginning of each round, all players put one candy piece into the center “pot.” In addition, every time the pot is empty or has only one candy piece left, each player should put one in the pot.
- In turn, each player should spin the dreidel. Depending on which letter they land on, they give or get candy pieces from the pot.
  - If the player lands on a נ (nun), they do nothing - they neither get nor give.
  - If the player lands on a ג (gimmel), they get all of the candy pieces that are in the pot.
  - If the player lands on a ה (heh), they get half of the candy pieces that are in the pot. (If there is an odd number of pieces, they get half plus one.)
  - If the player lands on a ש (shin) or פ (peh) - in Israel the dreidels have פ and outside of Israel they have ש - the player puts two candy pieces into the pot.

Focus on the experience of landing on פ/ש.

Discuss: how did it feel to have to put your candy pieces into the pot? In other words, what does it feel like when you are forced to give something away that you did not choose to give? Does that feel good in your heart? Why or why not?



Next, try to come up with a board game, card game, a story you know, or other such experience in which one gives something away only when they want to do so.

Discuss: how does that feel - to give something away when you are choosing to give it away? Does that feel good in your heart? Why or why not?

### Word of the Week:

As we learned earlier, the way the Torah says “you shall accept gifts for Me from every person **whose heart so moves him**” is:

”מֵאֵת כָּל-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת-תְּרוּמָתִי.”

The root of the word יִדְבְּנוּ is נ.ד.ב. A modern Hebrew word from that same root is להתנדב, which means to volunteer.

Discuss: What does it mean to volunteer? What do people usually volunteer (their time, their energy, their talents, etc.)? Have you ever volunteered? If so, how did that feel in your heart?

It seems that God, in preparing Bnei Yisrael to build the mishkan, understands that the giving of מתנדבים - that of volunteers, people who give freely, based on their own generosity - is the very best kind of giving! This is a lesson God teaches Moshe, and in our reading of Parshat Terumah, teaches us too.

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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Tetzaveh

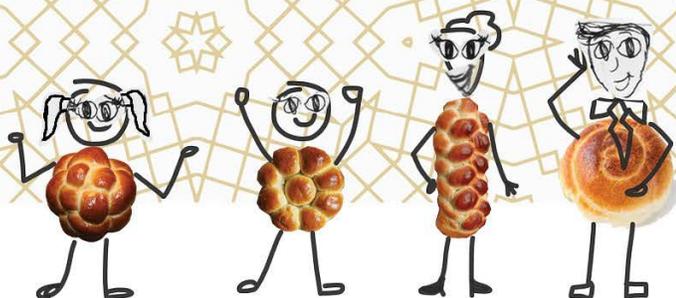
**Title:** Do Clothes Make the Person?

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

At the beginning of the *parsha*, God tells Moshe to get olive oil from *Bnei Yisrael* to light the *Ner Tamid*, the eternal flame, of the *menorah*. Aharon is supposed to light this special flame each day, so that it is lit from evening until morning. The *kohanim's* holy clothing is also described. Then the *Kohen Gadol*, the high



priest's, clothing is explained. This includes an *Efod*, a piece of clothing like an apron, the *Choshen*, a breastplate with 12 precious stones with the names of the 12 tribes on them, and a golden plate, the *Tzitz*, worn on the Kohen Gadol's forehead. All of these details are important to the priests doing holy work/service in the *Mishkan*, the Tabernacle.

### Zooming In:

The priests had to wear very specific clothing and accessories to do their jobs in the Mishkan. Do you think that they would have done as good of a job had they been wearing the same clothing as the rest of Bnei Yisrael? Why does it matter what someone is wearing as long as their heart is in the right place and the person has holy intentions?

### Questions for Consideration:

- Do certain clothes make a person better at their job or help them achieve their goals?

## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Mahloket Time:

See if you can have a friendly debate, a *mahloket*, about the importance of clothes/the priests' clothing when serving in the Mishkan. Try to make arguments for both sides (that is the sign of a true debater - the ability to see and therefore argue for both sides!).

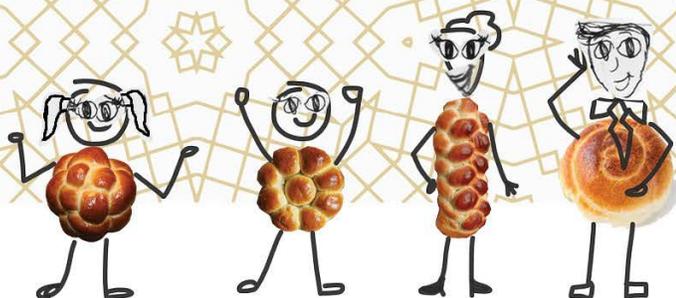


## The 2 Opinions

1. <u>Clothes matter</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. <u>Clothes do not matter</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the priests weren't wearing this special clothing, then their work would not have been holy nor respected.</li> <li>• Clothes matter today in different professions as well.</li> <li>• It also might have given Bnei Yisrael more trust and confidence in the job that the priests were doing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The priests did not need to wear special clothing because what matters most is one's intention or <i>kavanah</i> when completing holy work.</li> <li>• It also might have made the rest of Bnei Yisrael feel badly that they were not worthy of special clothing.</li> </ul>

### 3 Tips for a Healthy Mahloket

1. **Avoid putting down the other person's** ideas and beliefs.
2. **Use "I" statements** to communicate how you feel, what you think, and what you want or need.
3. **Listen to the other point of view.** When you listen to someone else's view, it shows the other person that you respect them. This also helps the other person feel comfortable listening to your opinion.



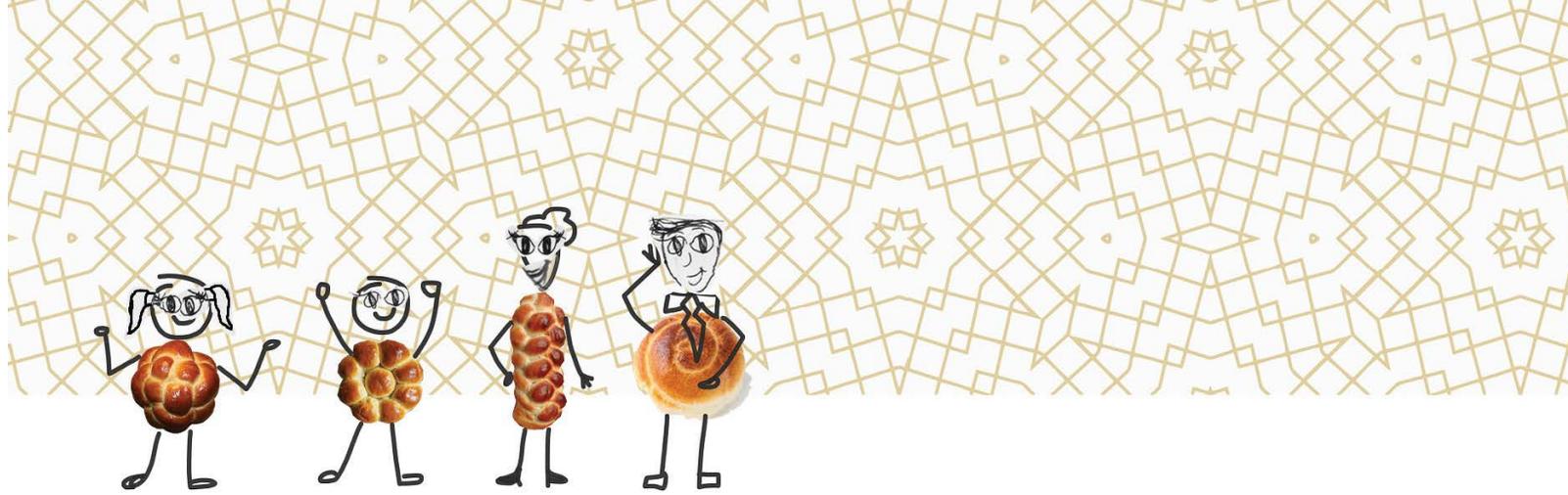
## Guiding questions for your Mahloket

### Questions in General

- Do you belong to a group or organization that requires you to wear a uniform or special clothing? Do these clothes set you apart from others?
- Would you trust a pilot or doctor if they were wearing jeans and a t-shirt while they were working?
- Why did it matter what clothing Cinderella wore to the ball? Do you think it should have mattered?

### Questions connected to the Parsha

- Does putting on special clothing affect one's feelings or emotions?
- Why do you think that the Choshen, the breastplate, had the stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel?
- How might have the special clothing that Aharon and the other priests wore affected them? How do you think it made them feel while they did their jobs? How do you think it made the rest of Bnei Yisrael feel?



### Picture This:

This is a picture of the Kohen Gadol's clothing (the middle and right picture), and the Kohanim's clothing (left picture) when doing service in the Temple.



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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Pekudei

**Title:** Coming Together to Zoom Way Out

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

As the book of *Shemot* comes to an end, God instructs *Bnei Yisrael* on the specifications needed to build the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*). This is where they will make sacrifices to God for the remainder of their journey, so it is important that it's built just right. These instructions include how to make the vest of the High



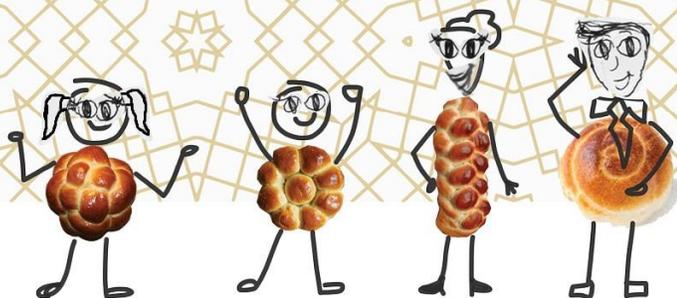
Priest, as well as the symbolic significance of the 12 stones in the vest. Each stone represents one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The Israelites complete the work for the Tabernacle, just as God had commanded Moshe, and Moshe blesses them. Moshe then consecrates the Tabernacle and when the work is finished, a cloud of God covers the Tent of Meeting during the day, and a pillar of fire covers it during the night.

### Zooming In:

The book of Shemot reverses a pattern that took place in all of *Bereishit*. Bereishit is a book about descent from Paradise (the Garden of Eden) to Egypt. Shemot works backward from that rock-bottom place, and begins the journey that returns the Israelites to a kind of paradise – the Land of Canaan. The difference in the original Paradise and the paradise that the Israelites are now striving towards is that the former is a work of God's perfect creation, while the latter is found in a human world created through a process of trial and error.

### Questions for Consideration:

- Have you ever heard about the butterfly effect? The butterfly effect is an idea that the very smallest action can have major repercussions, or consequences, elsewhere in the world, by suggesting that a butterfly flaps its wing and something major happens on the other side of the globe because of it. It is a similar idea to dropping a rock in the water and watching the rings that form grow and continue out across the water's surface.
  - Have you ever done something small and then realized that it had a much greater effect on your family, your school community, or the world, than you thought it would?



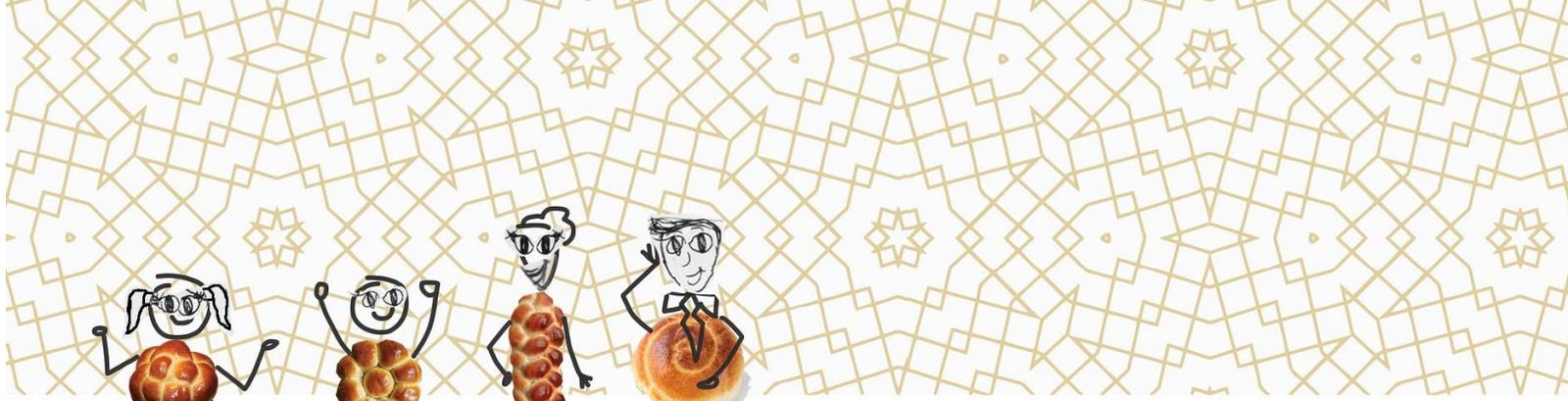
- What parts of the story before *Parshat Pekudei* might have had an impact on the story we read this week? What trial and error had to happen before the Israelites could succeed in the building of the Tabernacle and earn Moshe's blessing?
- In order to receive Moshe's blessing, the Israelites needed to work together as one united people. This unity is what pushes the Israelites to grow. (And this is why the different stones, representing the different tribes, are 'unified' on the High Priest's vest!)
  - What is a situation you've experienced that was challenging by yourself but easier when you worked with a group? Is there an opposite situation you've experienced where it was easier to work alone?

## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Life Consequences

Have one person at your Shabbat table suggest a "small" action that could happen in daily life (for example, you decide to skip school, or you take your dog for a walk, or you take a photo of your best friend posing with her ice cream and forget to turn the flash off). Go around the table as many times as you can, with each person adding a consequence (either positive or negative) that could result from the original action and all of the actions that followed. For example:

1. You take that photo of your friend and her ice cream;
2. Because the flash was on, somebody walking by got distracted;
3. Because they got distracted they bumped into your friend;



4. When they bumped into your friend her ice cream fell on the sidewalk, etc.

Continue until you've zoomed so far out that everyone has a fun understanding of the impact small actions can have.

**Shabbat Shalom!**

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# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Vayakhel

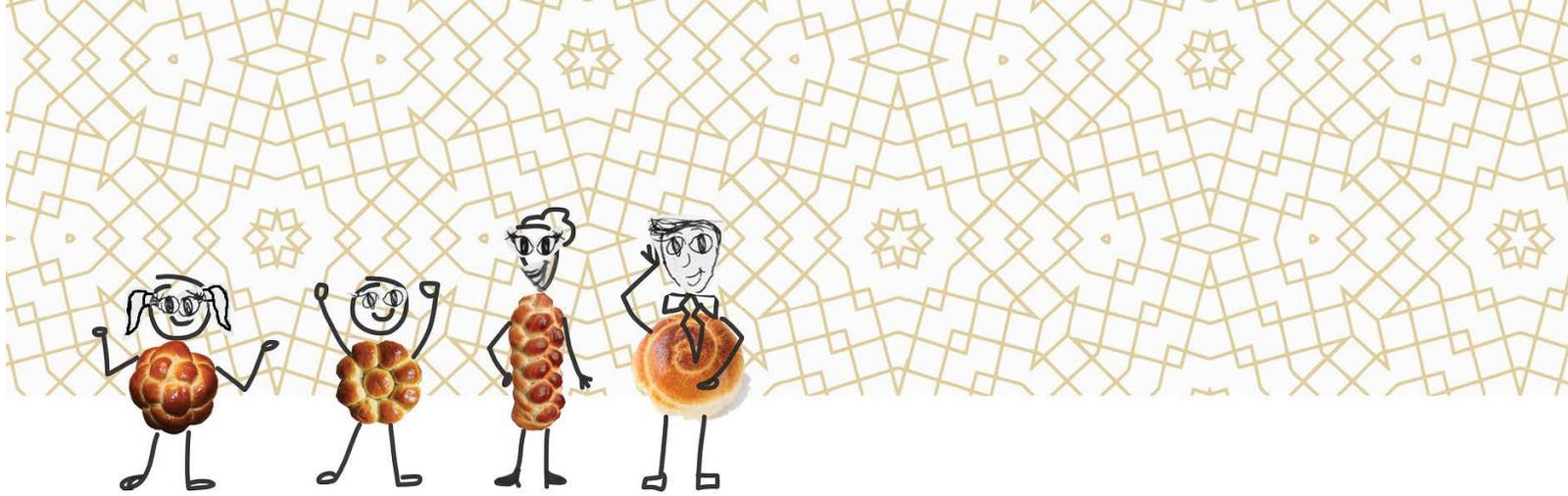
**Title:** Time for 'Timeout'

**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:

At the beginning of our *parsha*, Moshe gathers all the Jews together and tells them about *Shabbat* - that for six days one can do work, but that the seventh day is Holy, so no work can be done on it. After a quick intro about Shabbat, the rest of the *parsha* goes into detail about the construction of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*)



and its sacred objects (Ark of the Covenant, Menorah, Table of the Showbread, and Incense Altar).

### Zooming In:

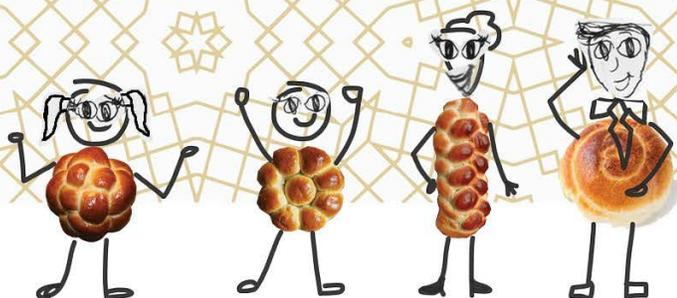
There is a glaring question about this week's parsha that spends over 97% of its words talking about the items of the Tabernacle. Why does the parsha begin by talking about Shabbat? What is the Torah trying to tell us by placing a reminder to keep Shabbat before the construction of the Tabernacle?

Rashi, a famous 11<sup>th</sup>-century French commentator of Torah, in Shemot 35:2, points out the simple meaning of the text by saying: *The Sabbath was put before the command about the building of the Tabernacle in order to hint that it does not set aside the Sabbath.* This means that when the Jews were busy preparing and constructing the Tabernacle, they stopped all the 39 different kinds of creative work they were doing in order to celebrate Shabbat. Basically: keeping Shabbat is more important, or of more value, than building the Tabernacle.

But we can ask: *why* does Shabbat override building the Tabernacle? The Tabernacle represents *holy space*, the places and spaces that inspire us to become great people (like synagogue, school, or Israel). Shabbat represents *holy time*, a chance to not be so busy and creative, and gives us the ability to breath, think and just be.

Holy *space* (Tabernacle) can only be effective if we have *time* to enjoy it. Sometimes we can be so busy rushing through the day that we never get time to sit back and enjoy the day. How tragic it would be if we were so super busy in our lives that we never got a chance to enjoy the things that matter the most to us!

Shabbat is a Godly gift of time to enjoy all the amazing things around us. It is more important than earning money, making things, or even building a Tabernacle. Shabbat is the ultimate 'timeout'!



## Questions for Consideration:

- How, for you, is Shabbat different from the rest of the week?
- Have you seen people who are always busy and do not stop and take time to appreciate what is around them?
- How often do you stop, pause or take a 'timeout'?

## The Parsha Through Another Lens

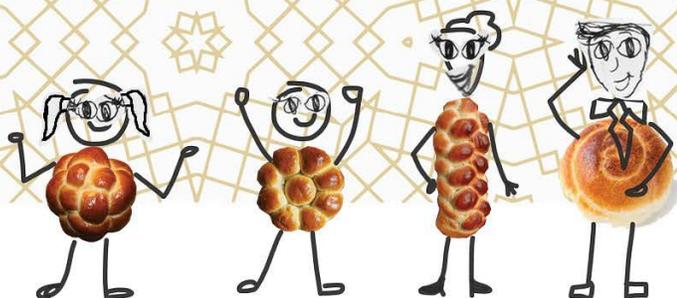
### Timeout!

Too often we don't see the amazing and the wonderful things around us.

In this game, everyone around the table takes a 'timeout' (30 seconds) to think about something that happened to them this week that they may have taken for granted, but was actually a wonderful moment. Everyone goes around and shares that moment.

*Variation:* Play a game called 'Awesome' (inspired by *The Book of Awesome*), where you take time to think of something from the week you thought was ordinary but, upon reflection, realize was actually awesome. Here are some examples:

- If you forgot your text book and someone shared theirs with you?  
Awesome!
- When you made your cereal there was just enough milk left to fill the bowl. Awesome!
- The teacher asked for a volunteer for something fun and they picked you.  
Awesome!



If you want to make this a regular activity then consider buying [The Book of Awesome](#), which is filled with great examples that will get your table's awesome juices flowing.

## Be a Giver

During the week most people focus on what they have, on owning things and controlling people or situations. Shabbat gives us a break from these ways of thinking and directs us to use the gifts we have been given, to share with people around us, to give and to contribute. The following games focus on what we can give, rather than receive.

Each person around the table needs to think of how they can contribute to the Shabbat experience. This might include: clearing the table, playing a game with a younger sibling for 10 minutes, leading a Shabbat song, making everyone's bed in the morning, sharing a dvar Torah, tidying up toys, reading a book to a sibling, etc.

*Variation:* Before Shabbat, everyone thinks of one thing they can give specifically to another person during Shabbat (a shoulder massage, play a game with them, sharing some candy, etc.). Write each thing on a piece of paper with the giver's name. Collect the papers and place them in a bag/envelope. During the Shabbat meal, have each person who wrote something take one of the pieces of paper from the envelope. At the following meal discuss whether they were more excited to give or receive a gift.

## Shabbat Shalom!

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

# An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



**Parsha:** Pekudei

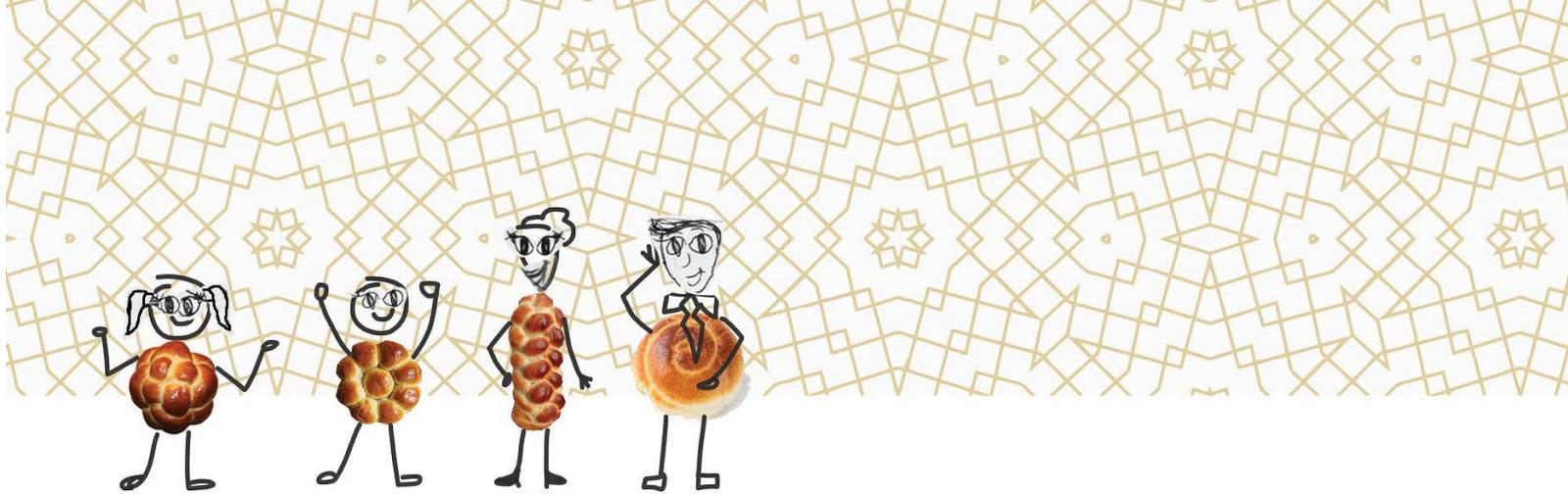
**Title:** Coming Together to Zoom Way Out

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

## The Parsha at First Glance

### Spotlight on the Parsha:

As the book of *Shemot* comes to an end, God instructs *Bnei Yisrael* on the specifications needed to build the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*). This is where they will make sacrifices to God for the remainder of their journey, so it is important that it's built just right. These instructions include how to make the vest of the High



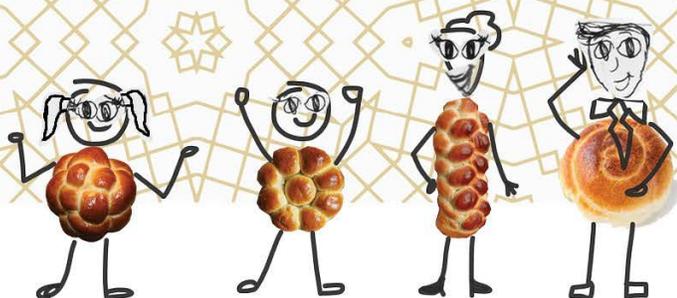
Priest, as well as the symbolic significance of the 12 stones in the vest. Each stone represents one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The Israelites complete the work for the Tabernacle, just as God had commanded Moshe, and Moshe blesses them. Moshe then consecrates the Tabernacle and when the work is finished, a cloud of God covers the Tent of Meeting during the day, and a pillar of fire covers it during the night.

### Zooming In:

The book of Shemot reverses a pattern that took place in all of *Bereishit*. Bereishit is a book about descent from Paradise (the Garden of Eden) to Egypt. Shemot works backward from that rock-bottom place, and begins the journey that returns the Israelites to a kind of paradise – the Land of Canaan. The difference in the original Paradise and the paradise that the Israelites are now striving towards is that the former is a work of God's perfect creation, while the latter is found in a human world created through a process of trial and error.

### Questions for Consideration:

- Have you ever heard about the butterfly effect? The butterfly effect is an idea that the very smallest action can have major repercussions, or consequences, elsewhere in the world, by suggesting that a butterfly flaps its wing and something major happens on the other side of the globe because of it. It is a similar idea to dropping a rock in the water and watching the rings that form grow and continue out across the water's surface.
  - Have you ever done something small and then realized that it had a much greater effect on your family, your school community, or the world, than you thought it would?



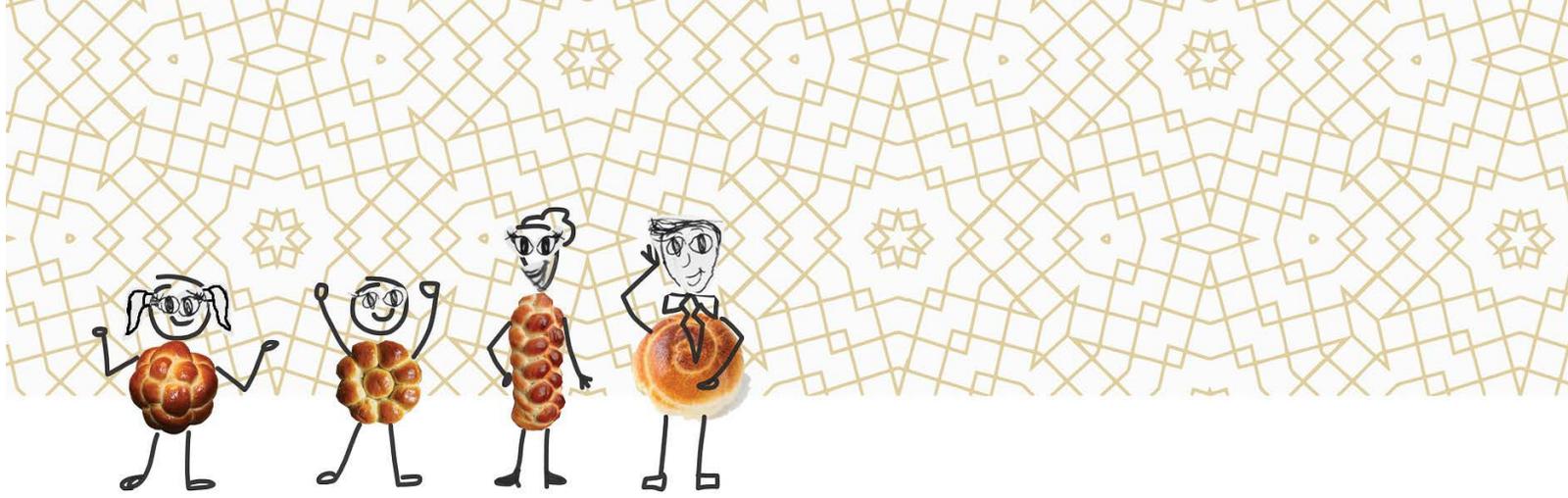
- What parts of the story before *Parshat Pekudei* might have had an impact on the story we read this week? What trial and error had to happen before the Israelites could succeed in the building of the Tabernacle and earn Moshe's blessing?
- In order to receive Moshe's blessing, the Israelites needed to work together as one united people. This unity is what pushes the Israelites to grow. (And this is why the different stones, representing the different tribes, are 'unified' on the High Priest's vest!)
  - What is a situation you've experienced that was challenging by yourself but easier when you worked with a group? Is there an opposite situation you've experienced where it was easier to work alone?

## The Parsha Through Another Lens

### Game On: Life Consequences

Have one person at your Shabbat table suggest a "small" action that could happen in daily life (for example, you decide to skip school, or you take your dog for a walk, or you take a photo of your best friend posing with her ice cream and forget to turn the flash off). Go around the table as many times as you can, with each person adding a consequence (either positive or negative) that could result from the original action and all of the actions that followed. For example:

1. You take that photo of your friend and her ice cream;
2. Because the flash was on, somebody walking by got distracted;
3. Because they got distracted they bumped into your friend;



4. When they bumped into your friend her ice cream fell on the sidewalk, etc.

Continue until you've zoomed so far out that everyone has a fun understanding of the impact small actions can have.

**Shabbat Shalom!**