



# Venture into Yom Ha'atzmaut Israel Independence Day



*Activities, recipes, information, and more  
that will help you learn about and  
celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut.*



# Venture into Yom Ha'atzmaut Israel Independence Day



## tool • kit

a personal set of resources, abilities, or skills.

*"Venture into Yom Ha'atzmaut is a toolkit full of things you can use to learn, play, and celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut!"*

**In this kit,** you will find activities, recipes, information, and more that will help you learn about and celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut. If you have questions or are seeking more information, please reach out. jkidphilly is here to help!

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## TEN FAST FACTS!

1. Israel Independence Day **celebrates the day Israel became an independent country** in 1948.
2. Yom Ha'atzmaut usually happens in April or May, on the **5th day of the Hebrew month Iyar**.
3. Many families celebrate with a **big barbecue (called a mangal)** in parks and backyards. People also celebrate with **fireworks, parades, concerts, and parties** across the country.
4. **The national language is Hebrew.** Most street signs are written in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.
5. **Israeli flags are everywhere!** Many people hang them on their cars, balconies, and windows.
6. Yom Ha'atzmaut is a **national holiday**, so kids usually have no school that day.
7. **A big ceremony is held on Mount Herzl** in Jerusalem with music, speeches, and soldiers marching.
8. **Twelve torches** are lit during the ceremony to represent the **12 tribes of Israel**.
9. **Yom Ha'atzmaut comes right after Yom HaZikaron (Memorial Day)** for fallen soldiers and people who were hurt or scared by violence, making the celebration feel even more meaningful.
10. **Kids and adults sing patriotic songs like "Hatikvah,"** which means "The Hope" — it's also Israel's national anthem.



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## The Yom Ha'atzmaut Story\*

### For 3-5 year olds:

A very, very long time ago, a man named Theodor Herzl had a big dream: that one day, Jewish people would live together in a land that they could call home. Jewish people from around the world moved to old cities like Jerusalem, where many different types of people, including other Jewish people just like themselves, had lived for many years. They also built new cities like Tel Aviv.

A few about 50 years, there was a big meeting of many different countries and they voted that the Jewish people were allowed to have their own state. The Jewish leaders decided to call that land the State of Israel and signed their own Declaration of Independence. They wanted to make sure everyone in the land was protected and treated fairly.

Now, Israel is a mix of lots of Jewish customs from around the world and we are all working to make it a place where everyone can be safe, happy, and free.

### For 6-9 year olds:

Almost 150 years ago, a man named Theodor Herzl had a big dream: that one day, Jewish people would live together in a land where, no matter where they were from and what they believed, they could enjoy safety, freedom, and happiness together. Jewish people from around the world moved to places like the ancient city of Jerusalem where Jewish people had been living and practicing Judaism for thousands of years, and built new cities like Tel Aviv next to old cities like Jerusalem that had been home to many different people since ancient times.

Some of these Jewish people spoke languages and had traditions that were similar to some of the non-Jewish people who also lived in those cities for a long time.

In 1947, about 50 years later, the United Nations, a group of countries that wanted peace and friendship around the world, voted to establish the State of Israel. The next year, Israel's Declaration of Independence was signed, making sure there was protection for the holy sites of all religions in the land and equality for all.

Today, Israel is a mix of Jewish customs from around the world. As we celebrate, we continue to work on building a society where everyone can be safe, happy, and free.

### For ages 10+

Almost 150 years ago, a European man named Theodor Herzl, a writer and lawyer, had a big dream: that one day, Jewish people would live together in a land where, no matter where they were from and what they believed, they could enjoy safety, freedom, and happiness together. This was an important idea because for thousands of years, many Jews had been forced out of the places they had lived and had been treated unfairly. They wanted to return to a place that the Jewish people had called "home" for thousands of years--the land where the Jewish people originated.

Excited by Herzl's ideas, Jewish people from around the world moved to places like the ancient cities of Jerusalem and Tzfat where Jewish people had been living and practicing Judaism for thousands of years. They also began to build new cities like Tel Aviv next to old cities like Jerusalem that had been home to many different people, cultures and religions since ancient times.

Some of these Jewish people spoke languages and had traditions that were similar to some of the non-Jewish people who also lived in those cities for centuries.

In 1947, about 50 years after Herzl wrote about his ideas, the United Nations, a group of countries originally formed to promote peace, friendly relations among nations, social progress, and human rights, voted to establish the State of Israel. In 1948, Israel's Declaration of Independence was signed, reflecting Herzl's idea that Israel would be based on freedom, justice, and peace, ensuring equality for all citizens without regard to race, religion, or gender. It also guaranteed freedom of thought, worship, education, and culture, and protected the holy sites of all religions.

Today, Israeli society is a diverse mix of Jewish customs and cultures from around the world, melded together with modern achievements. As we celebrate Israel's independence, we still take part in building a society where all people can be safe, happy, and free.

\*We have distilled the story of Israel's independence to be appropriate for children and families. That said, history is multi-layered. Should questions arise and/or you would like resources to discuss both the history of Israel and the historical and current conflict surrounding the region, please see our [resource page](#) for guidance and information.



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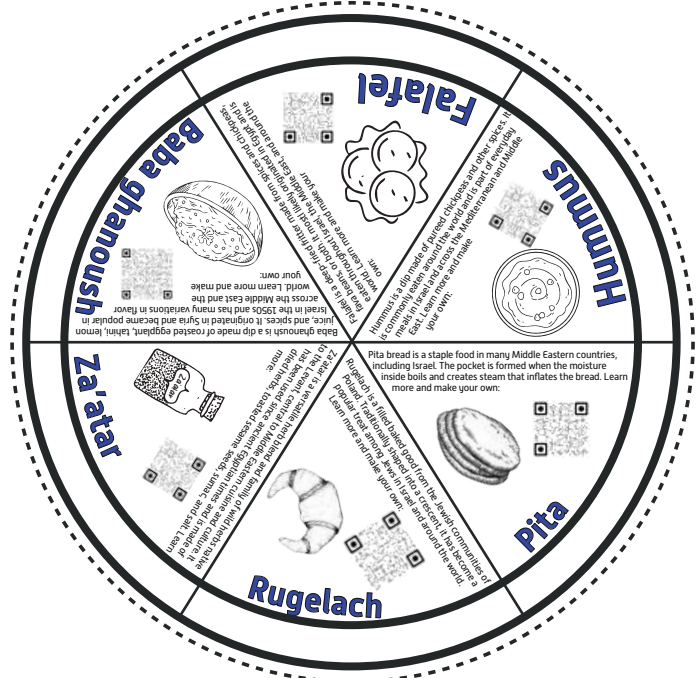
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## Keep Learning! Israeli Food

Israeli food is a mix of Middle Eastern, European, and North African influences, reflecting the diverse history and cultural makeup of the country. Many dishes have variations, depending on where they originated. Color, cut out, and assemble this Israeli food spinner to help you decide which recipe to try next!

### Activity: Israeli Food Spinner

After you color and cut out the two circles (full printable sheets at the end of the toolkit), poke a hole in the middle and secure with a brad. Spin and see what food comes up. Scan the QR codes to learn more about each dish.



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## Keep Learning!

### *Tikvah and Rodeph Shalom* | Hope and Seeking Peace

*Tikvah*, meaning hope, is a central value of Judaism. It's an active belief that even though there has been suffering and loss, there are still better times ahead. It's the hope that the peace we seek will come, that it can be built.

*Rodeph Shalom*, seeking peace, is more than just loving peace (*Ohev Shalom*) — it's seeking it out and making it happen, even when it's uncomfortable. Being a peace-seeker means taking responsibility for healing conflict—between people, within communities, and in the world.

## Activity | Make an Israeli Flag

*The Israeli flag is full of symbols: The blue stripes are designed to look like the stripes on the tallit, a traditional prayer shawl, connecting the flag to Jewish tradition and the white background is often symbolic of peace (*shalom*). The flag itself is a symbol of hope (*tikvah*) and the enduring spirit of the Jewish people.*

1. **Collect an assortment of small blue items** from around your house or outside. They don't all have to be the same shade of blue. (Some ideas: buttons, pompoms, candy, blueberries, flowers, toys, earrings, beads, etc.)
2. **Print the template of the Israeli flag** from the back of this toolkit
3. **Fill in the spaces** with the blue items, leaving the background white.
4. If you can't find enough items to fill all the space, **try ripping up some blue paper into small pieces or coloring** in the empty space with crayon or marker.
5. **Take a photo of your creation** and [share it with us](#) before returning all the blue items to their proper place.





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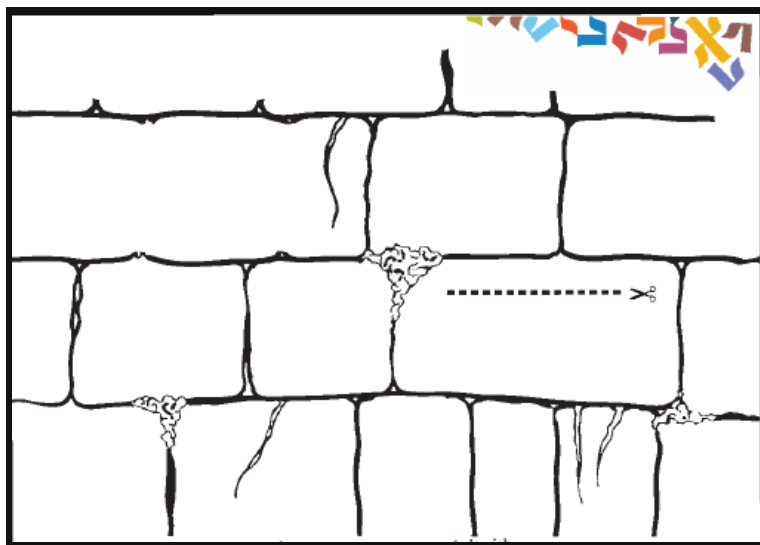
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## Keep Learning! The Kotel

The Kotel (the Western Wall or the Wailing Wall) is the last remaining wall of the ancient Jewish Temple in Jerusalem after it was destroyed. It has been standing in the same spot for over 2,000 years! This is one of the holiest places in Judaism (it's actually officially considered a synagogue) and many people visit the wall to pray. The Western Wall is made of limestone bricks and is home to many creatures, including small lizards, swallows, sparrows, and doves that build their nests within the cracks. It is also home to six different types of plants!

### Activity: Make your own Kotel

Visitors may write prayers on paper and place them inside the cracks of the wall, believing that God can see what is written on them. The prayers are collected every two years and then buried on the Mount of Olives. Print and color this drawing of the Kotel (printable version at the back of the toolkit) and the notecard and tuck your prayer into one of the cracks!





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## Israel Independence Day Play Dough Prompts

Many Jews all over the world feel a deep connection to the State of Israel as a home for Jewish people and a place of historical significance in Jewish history. Many stories of the Torah take place in the land and many Jews turn their bodies to face the direction of Jerusalem when it is time to pray. As a modern country founded in 1948, Israel is home to many cultures and is an important holy place for many religions, including Muslims and Christians. Through play, children can gently explore some of the complexities around Israel, such as Israel's diverse cultures and landscapes. Play is an important part of learning and adults have a critical role during play.

*Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, a psychologist at Temple University, said, "The best toys are 90% the kid, 10% the toy". Sensory play is 90% kid!*



### What is your role during sensory play?

- Observe + listen to what the children are saying
- Use PRIDE play skills:
- Praise their play
- Repeat what they say (only if it's appropriate - IGNORE if it is not appropriate)
- Imitate how they play (do what they do)
- Describe what you see them do with objective words like: I see you are rolling the dough.
- Enthusiastically engage in the play!

### Expand the play by adding an, "I wonder if..." statement.

- If you could visit any place in Israel, what would you want to see and why?
- What do you think it's like to live in Israel? What are some things you might do there?
- If you could bring something special back from Israel, what would it be?
- How do you think the land of Israel looks and feels? What are some things you might see or hear there?"
- "If you could travel to Israel, what would you want to take with you to help you understand the culture?"

**When the play is finished, reflecting is an important step to construct meaning and compound learning. Ask a question like this when you are finished playing:**

- What do you think makes Israel a special place?
- What are some things you would like to see or learn about Israel when you get older?



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## More Resources

*More to learn, cook, read, watch, and listen to celebrate Israel!*

### LEARN

- Check out PJ Library's [Israel Hub](#) for great learning resources.
- Learn [Hebrew](#) with PJ Library.

### COOK

- Try your hand at cooking some [Israeli food](#).

### LINKS

- [All about Yom Ha'atzmaut](#)
- More info about the [Israeli flag](#)
- PJ Library discusses the Jewish value of [Tikvah](#).
- [A deeper look](#) at the meaning of the Jewish value of [Rodeph Shalom](#).
- Learn more about [the Kotel](#) in Jerusalem.
- Learn the [lyrics to Hatikvah](#), the Israeli national anthem.

### READ

- [3 Falafels in my Pita](#)
- [ABC Israel](#)
- [And a Cat from Carmel Market](#)
- [The Cats on Ben Yehuda Street](#)
- [The Colors of Israel](#)
- [Does Your Dog Speak Hebrew?](#)
- Explore the beautiful diversity of Israel with books like [Snow in Jerusalem](#) and [Yalla and Fatima: Shalom, Salaam](#).

### WATCH/LISTEN

- Check out [Shalom Sesame!](#)
- Rock out to [this celebration of peace](#).
- Watch [this video](#) by CBC Kids News for a brief overview of the recent history and relationship between Israelis and Palestinians.
- For older kids, [this episode](#) of Crash Course: World History does a deeper dive into the relationship, and its historical context, between Israelis and Palestinians.



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## Play Dough Recipe

### Ingredients:

- 2 ½ C Flour
- 1 ½ Tbsp Cream of Tartar
- 1 ¼ C Salt
- 5 Tbsp Oil
- 2 ½ C Water & food coloring

### STEP 1:

Pour flour, salt + cream of tartar together in a large pot. Stir until the ingredients are well combined.

### STEP 2:

Add in oil. Mix.

### STEP 3:

Add in water + food coloring of your choice.

### STEP 4:

Mix over medium-high heat until ingredients become dough! Careful, it will get hot!

### STEP 5:

When dough cools, remove from pot and knead.



Source: [tinkerlab.com/rainbow-play-dough](http://tinkerlab.com/rainbow-play-dough)



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## Food in Israel



Name

\_\_\_\_\_



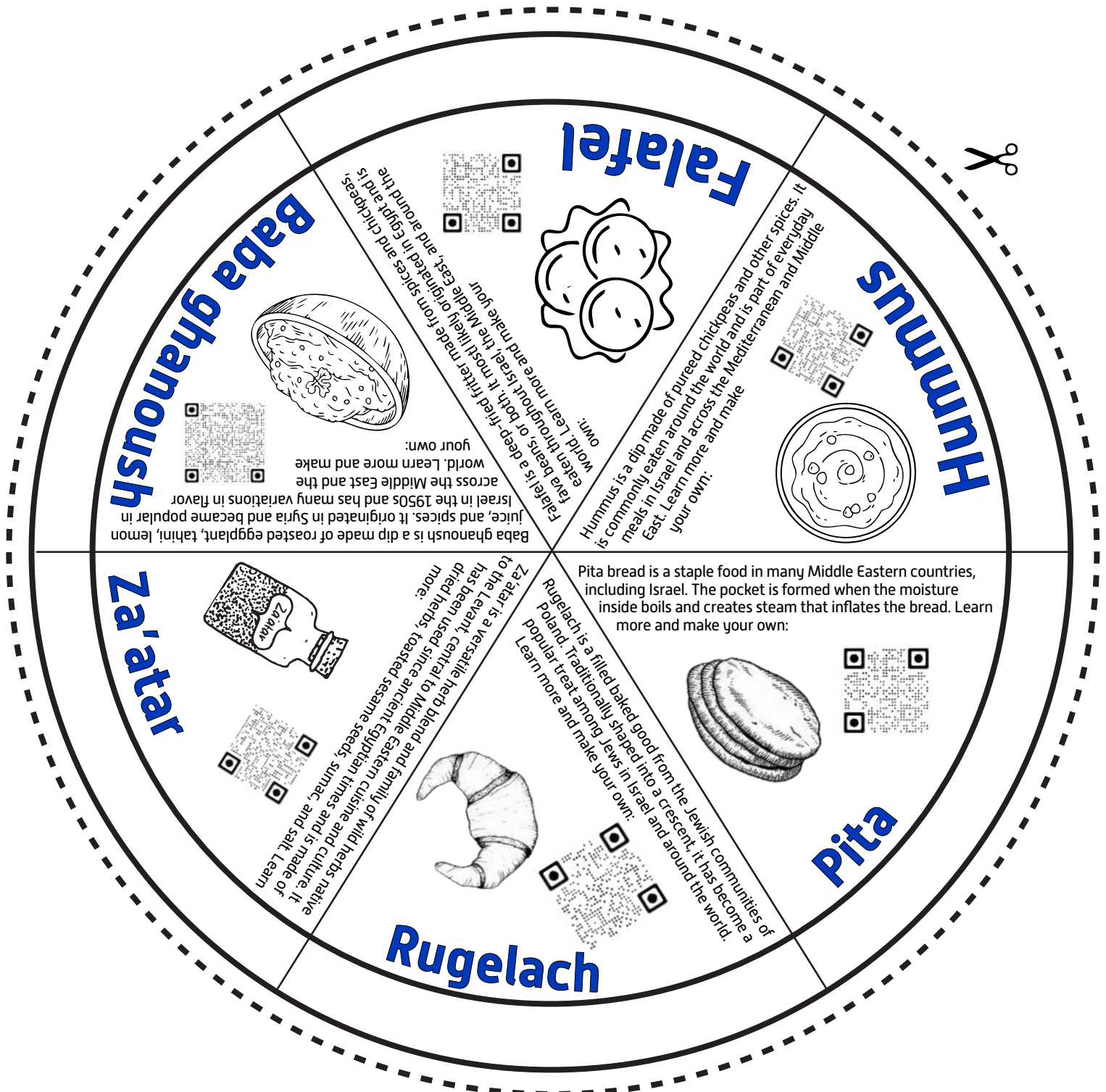


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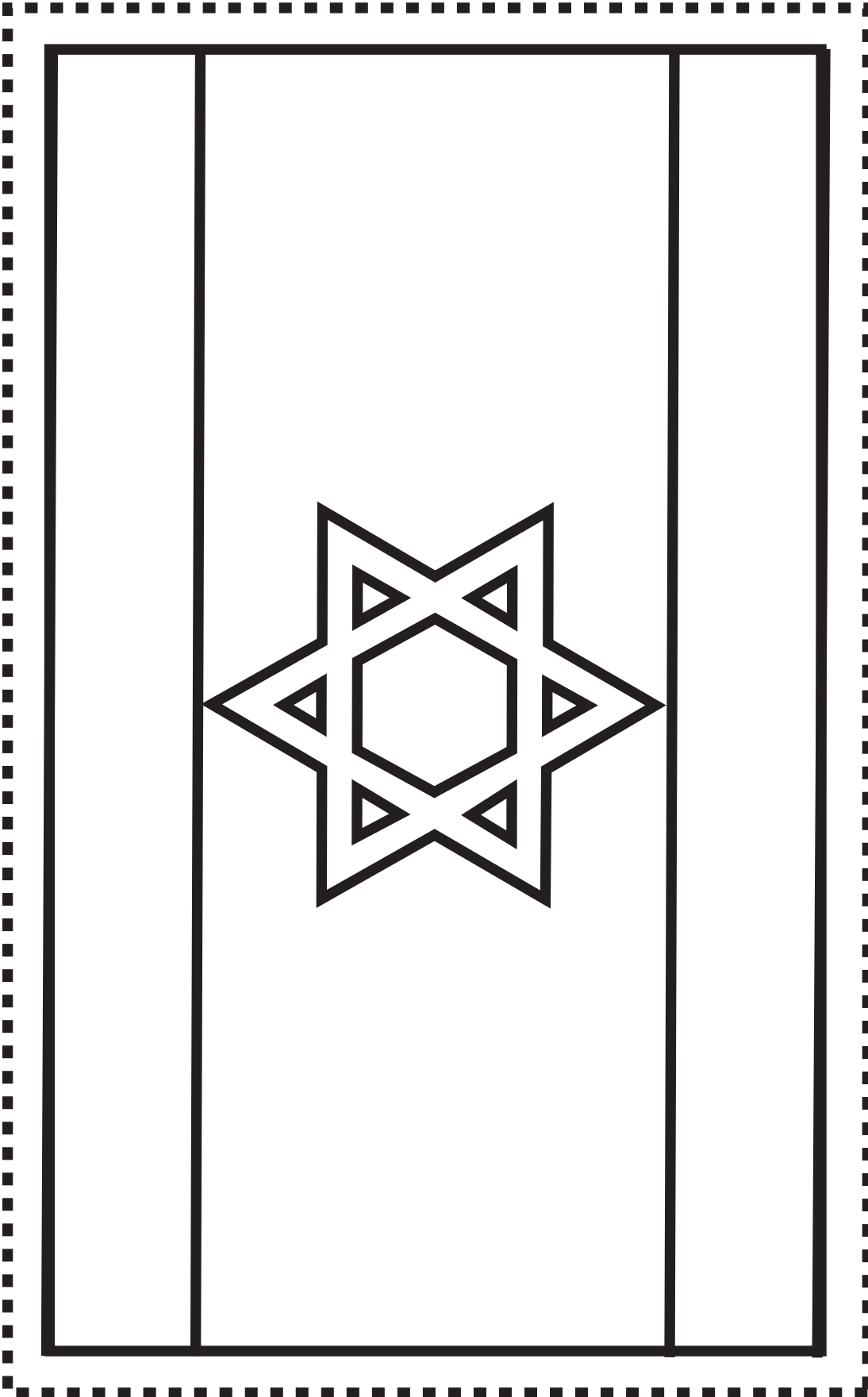
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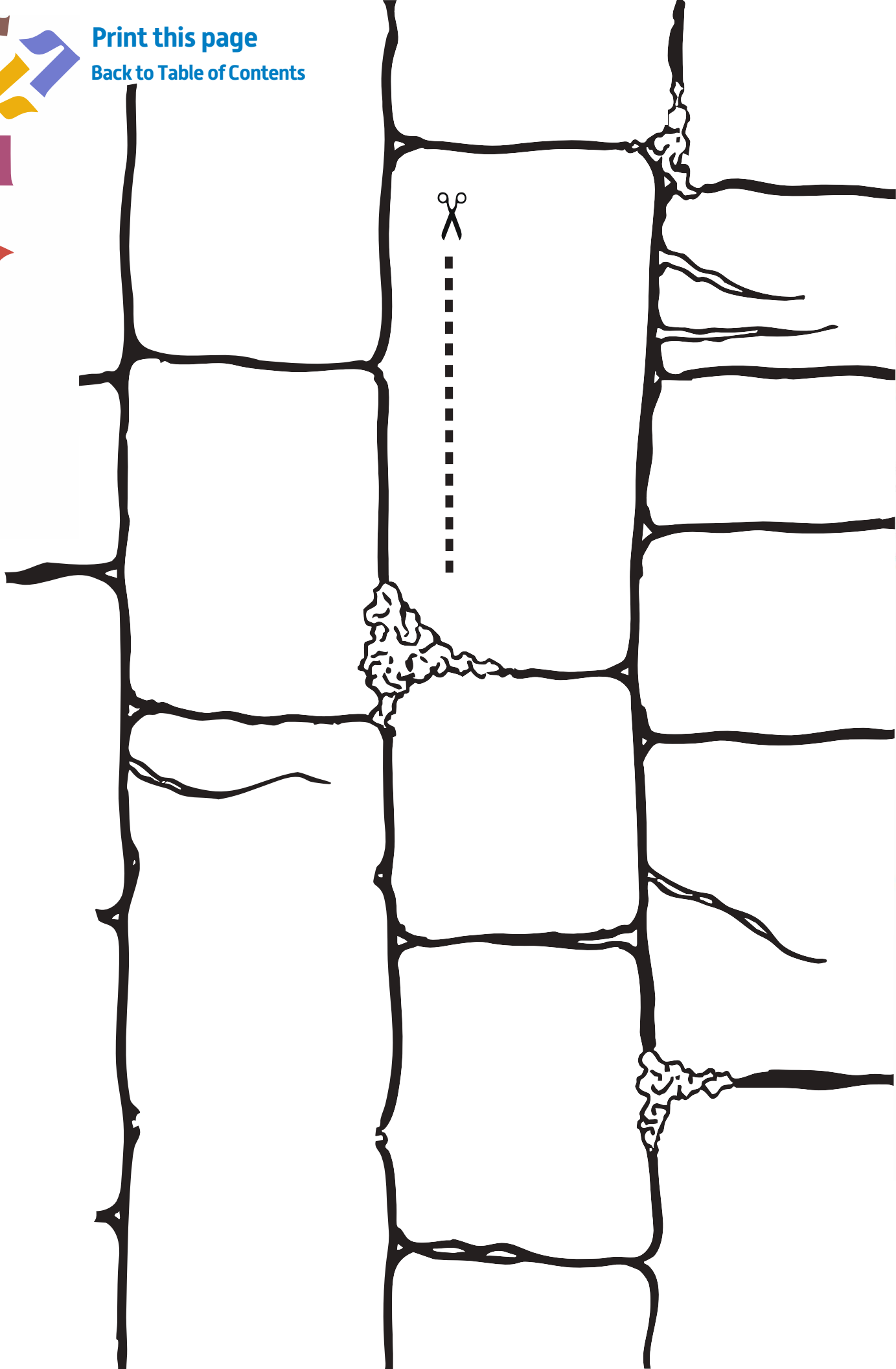


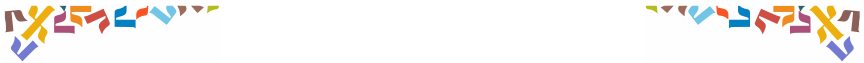


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# My prayer is...

# התפילה שלי...

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