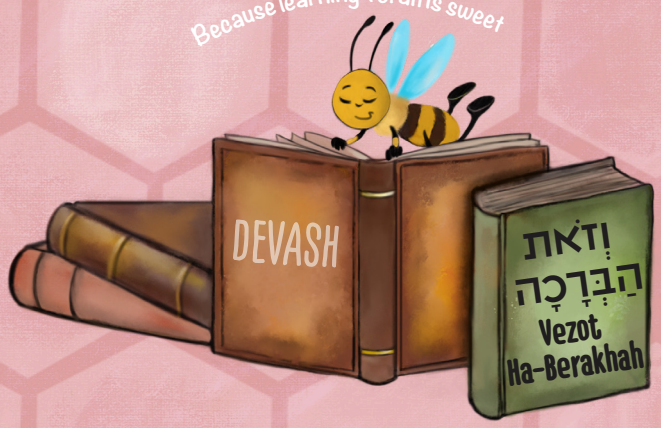
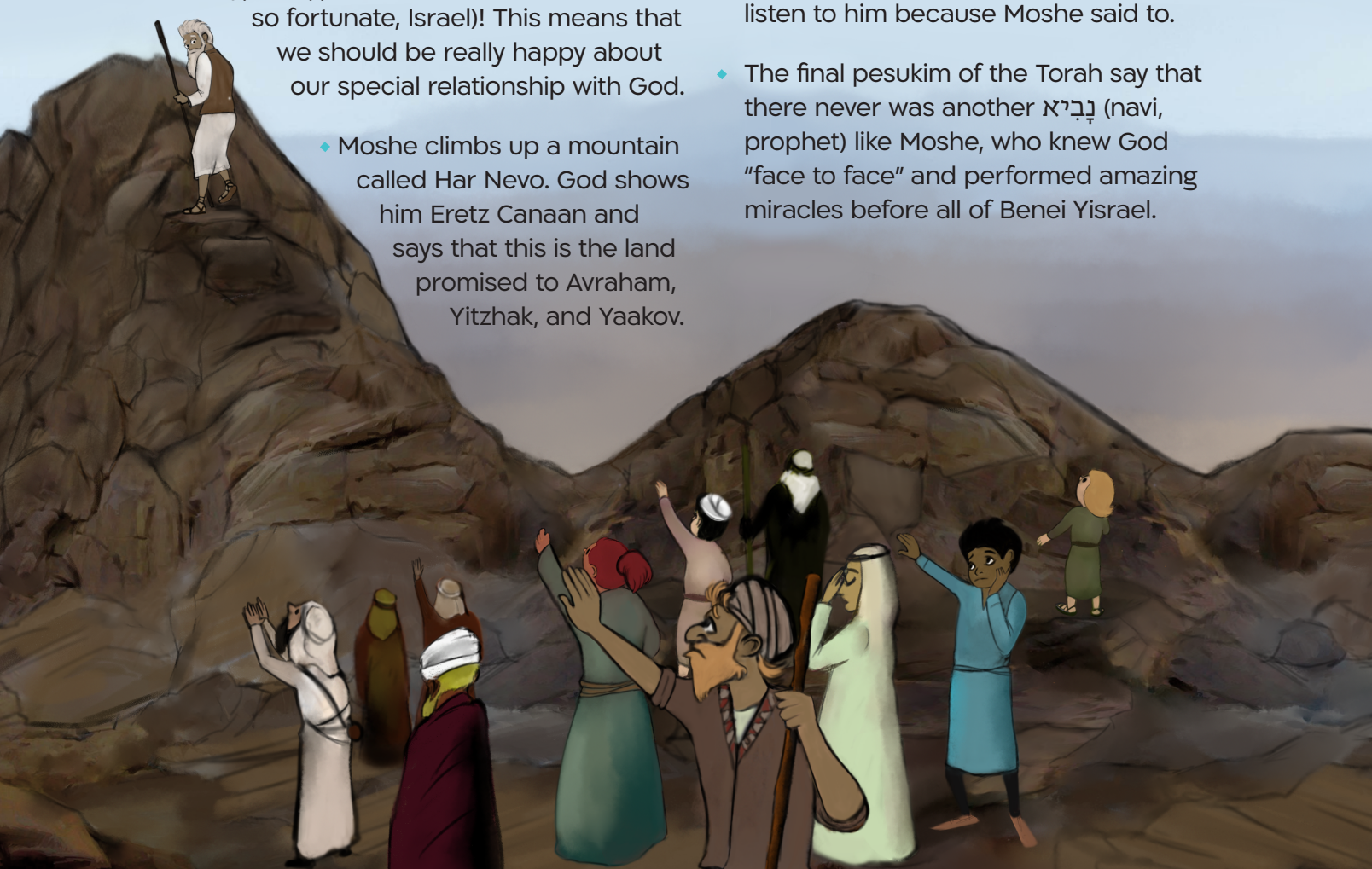
DEVARIM
VA'ETHANAN
EIKEV
RE'EH
SHOFTIM
KI TEITZEI
KI TAVO
NITZAVIM-VAYEILEKH
HA'AZINU
VEZOT HA-BERAKHAH




שִׂמְחַת תּוֹרָה תשפ"ה  Simhat Torah, October 24-25, 2024

## מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- Moshe gives a בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing) to each שֵׁבֶט (shevet, tribe) of Benei Yisrael.
- Moshe teaches that the Torah is an inheritance that belongs to all of Benei Yisrael. The last thing he says to the people is: אַשְׁרֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל (ashrekha Yisrael, you are so fortunate, Israel)! This means that we should be really happy about our special relationship with God.
- Moshe climbs up a mountain called Har Nevo. God shows him Eretz Canaan and says that this is the land promised to Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaakov.
- Moshe dies and God buries him on the mountain. Nobody knows where this burial place is.
- Benei Yisrael cry and mourn Moshe's death for 30 days. Yehoshua takes over as leader of Benei Yisrael, and they listen to him because Moshe said to.
- The final pesukim of the Torah say that there never was another נָבִיא (navi, prophet) like Moshe, who knew God "face to face" and performed amazing miracles before all of Benei Yisrael.



## פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

After giving בְּרָכוֹת (berakhot, blessings) to every שֵׁבֶט (shevet, tribe), Moshe has one last thought for the whole people:

**Devarim 33:29**

You are so fortunate, Israel!

**דברים לג:כט**

אַשְׁרֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל!

What's the meaning of Moshe's final words for Benei Yisrael?

**Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)**

After Moshe listed all the berakhot, he said to them, "What more can I say? After all is said and done: Everything is yours!"

**רש"י**

לְאַחַר שֶׁפֵּרֵט לָהֶם בְּרָכוֹת,
אָמַר לָהֶם: מַה לִּי לְפָרֵט לָכֶם,
כְּלַל דָּבָר הַכֹּל שֶׁלָּכֶם.



- What could Moshe mean by giving us an "everything" berakhah? What is this berakhah about? Why would Moshe feel this is the right berakhah to give in his last words to Benei Yisrael?
- What does this tell us about how Moshe felt about Benei Yisrael? Who in your life would you like to give an "everything" berakhah to?
- In what way is this a good summary of all the things Moshe tells Benei Yisrael in the Torah?
- How does it make you feel to think that Moshe blessed you with everything? What will you do with that berakhah?



# מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Just before Moshe died, God gave him a chance to take a good look at Eretz Yisrael. The Torah tells us that God showed him the whole land, all the way to the יָם הָאַחֲרוֹן (yam ha-aharon, the western or Mediterranean Sea) (Devarim 34:1-2).

A midrash suggests that God actually showed Moshe much more than a nice view!

**Sifrei Devarim 357**

**"God showed him the whole land" (34:1)**— God showed him Eretz Yisrael settled in peace, and then God went back and showed it to him with oppressors holding onto it.

**"To the yam ha-aharon" (34:2)**—Don't read it as **yam** ha-aharon (the western sea); instead, read it as **yom** ha-aharon (the final day). This means that God showed Moshe the entire world, from the day it was created until the day when the dead will come back to life.

**ספרי דברים קנז**

"וַיַּרְאֵהוּ ה' אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ"— מְלַמֵּד שֶׁהֶרְאָהוּ אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְיֻשֶּׁבֶת עַל שַׁלְוָתָהּ וְחָזַר וְהֶרְאָהוּ מְצִיקִים הַמַּחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ.

"עַד הַיָּם הָאַחֲרוֹן"—אַל תְּהִי קוֹרֵא "עַד הַיָּם הָאַחֲרוֹן" אֶלָּא "עַד הַיּוֹם הָאַחֲרוֹן." מְלַמֵּד שֶׁהֶרְאָהוּ כָּל הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ מִיּוֹם שֶׁנִּבְרָא וְעַד שֶׁיִּחְיוּ הַמֵּתִים.

The midrash suggests that God showed Moshe the "whole" land, not just the way it was in that moment, but what would happen to Eretz Yisrael through history: the good times and the hard times. And not only that, but God showed Moshe the whole entire story of all the world—from the first moment of creation until מָשִׁיחַ (mashiah, the redeemer) comes.

The great story of the Jewish people would not always be an easy one. There would be ups and downs, and times could get very hard. That's still true even today. And we might wonder: When will the end finally come? What will be the end of our story? According to this midrash, Moshe saw it all.

- How do you think that felt for him?
- Could part of what he saw give you hope? How so?





# שִׁירֵי שִׂמְחַת תּוֹרָה • Simhat Torah Songs

Simhat Torah is the last of the special holidays in the season that began with Rosh Hashanah. So it's also a time to think about the year ahead and offer our last holiday prayers for health, peace, and goodness. That's why many of the songs we sing on Simhat Torah are actually prayers for God to bring peace and salvation. This year, the Jewish people need tefillah more than they usually do. Let's learn about some of the prayer songs you might hear in shul over Simhat Torah:

## אָנָּא ה׳ Ana HaShem

| | |
|---|---|
| אָנָּא ה׳ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא. | Please, God, save us please. |
| אָנָּא ה׳ הַצְלִיחָה נָּא. | Please, God, bring success please. |
| אָנָּא ה׳ עֲנֵנוּ בְיוֹם קָרְאֵנוּ׃ | Please, God, answer us on the day we cry out. |

These words are based on a mash-up of two pesukim from Tehillim (118:25 and 20:10). Mishnah Sukkah 4:5 tells us the first two lines were said in the Beit HaMikdash every day of Sukkot while doing a הַקָּפָה (hakafah, circle) around the מִזְבֵּחַ (mizbe'ah, altar). The mishnah then tells us that they would make seven hakafot (circles) around the mizbe'ah on the last day of Sukkot, the day we call Hoshanah Rabbah.

Today, many communities make seven hakafot around the shul when dancing with the Torah on Simhat Torah (Mishnah Berurah 469, n. 10). It's still common to sing these words during each hakafah. There's even a song that uses these words as its chorus. It calls upon God with different descriptions, using every letter of the aleph-bet.

The first three descriptions are אֱלֹקֵי הָרוּחוֹת (Elokei ha-ruhot, God of spirits), בּוֹחֵן לְבָבוֹת (Bohein levavot, Searcher of hearts), and גּוֹאֵל חָזָק (Go'el hazak, mighty Redeemer). The poem keeps going that way until it covers every letter.

Each line of the song ends the same way, following the pattern of these words.

The first two lines of this song also appear in Hallel. (Try to find them in your siddur!)

- Hallel is said for happy occasions, and Simhat Torah is also a happy day of singing and dancing. In what ways can a happy occasion be a perfect time to also think about the ways we need more salvation and help from God?
- Why is it important to describe God using every letter of the aleph-bet? What does this teach us about God?
- If every single hakafah starts with the same ideas—praying to God to save us and answer us—what does that teach us about the dancing and singing on Simhat Torah? How does that change the way we think about Simhat Torah?

## הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמֶּךָ
## Hoshiah Et Amekha

הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמֶּךָ וּבָרֵךְ אֶת נַחֲלָתֶךָ
וּרְעֵם וְנַשְּׂאֵם עַד הָעוֹלָם

Save Your nation and bless Your inheritance.
Tend to them and raise them up forever.

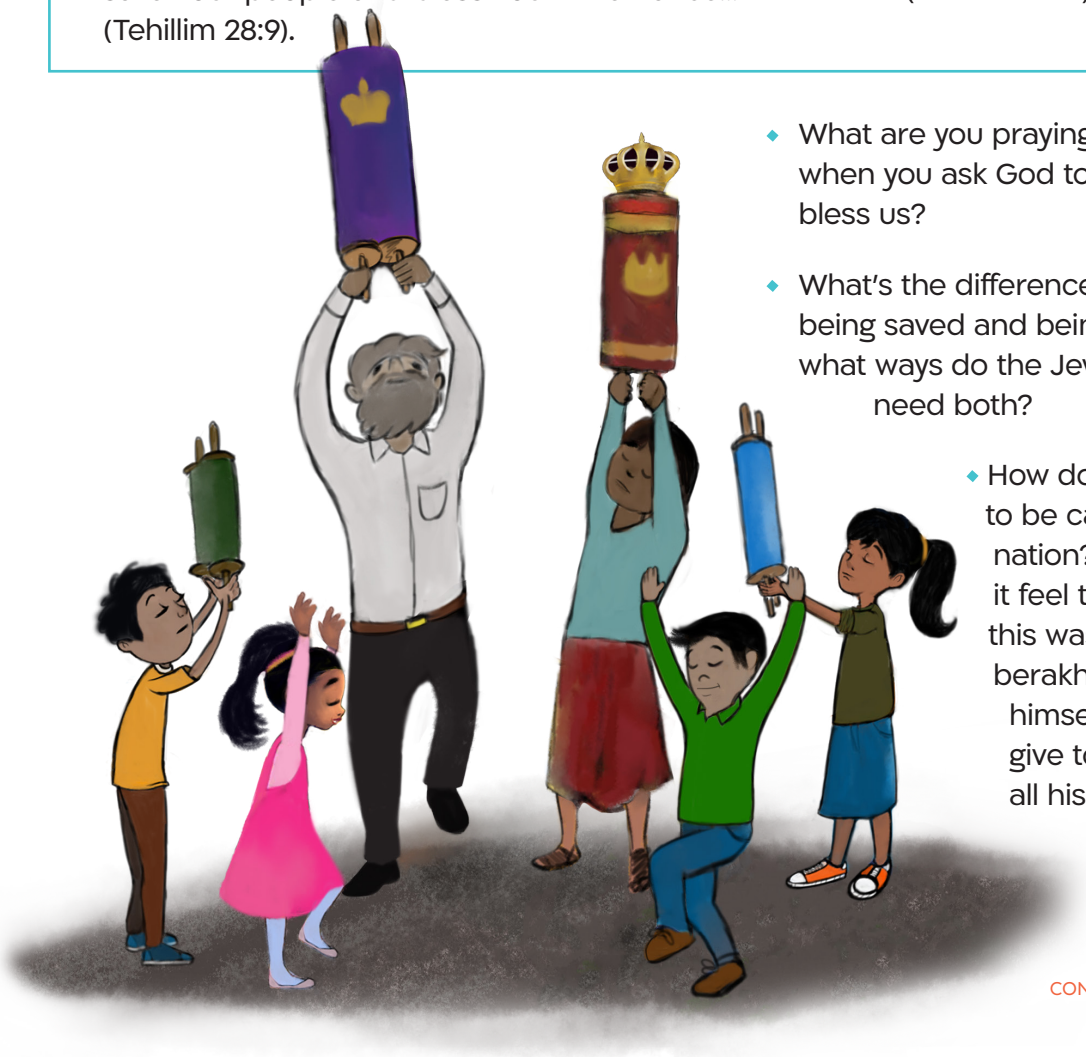
This song is a pasuk from Tehillim (28:9). During Sukkot, we recite this pasuk every day as part of the Hoshanot prayers, when we ask God for rain and other blessings. A midrash connects this pasuk to the last berakhah Moshe gave to Benei Yisrael (see p. 2).

### פסיקתא דרב כהנא נספחים א

אָמַר רַבִּי אָבִין כָּל יָמָיו שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה הָיָה מְבַקֵּשׁ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל... וּמָה בְּרָכָה בֵּרְכָם, הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמֶּךָ וּבָרֵךְ אֶת נַחֲלָתֶךָ... (תהלים כח:ט).

### Pesikta deRav Kahana

R. Avin said: All his days, Moshe wanted to be able to bless Israel... When he finally had the chance, what berakhah did he give them? He said, "God, save Your people and bless Your inheritance..." (Tehillim 28:9).



- What are you praying for this year when you ask God to save us and bless us?
- What's the difference between being saved and being blessed? In what ways do the Jewish people need both?
- How does it feel to be called God's nation? How does it feel to think that this was the kind of berakhah Moshe himself wanted to give to Benei Yisrael all his life?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >>



Copyright (c) 2024 by Hadar | Devash: Vezot Ha-Berakhah 2024 by Hadar is licensed under a Creative Commons. Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

## יִבָּנֶה הַמִּקְדָּשׁ
## Yibaneh Ha-Mikdash

יִבָּנֶה הַמִּקְדָּשׁ עִיר צִיּוֹן
תִּמַלֵּא וְשָׁם נָשִׁיר שִׁיר חָדָשׁ
וּבִרְנָנָה נַעֲלֶה

Let the Beit HaMikdash (Temple) be rebuilt, and may You, God, fill the city of Tziyon. We will sing a new song there, and ascend with joy.

This song comes from צוּר מִשֶּׁלּוֹ (Tzur Mishelo), one of the זְמִירוֹת (zemirot) that we sing on Shabbat. The words, "May the Beit HaMikdash quickly be rebuilt," appear many times in the Talmud. Hazal were worried we would forget what things were like in the Beit HaMikdash, and they were constantly hoping that it would be brought back quickly. According to a midrash, Moshe learned about God building a future Beit HaMikdash, and that brought him great joy and peace.

### Bereishit Rabbati, Vayetzei

The mashiah (redeemer) said to Moshe... Just as you see God building a Beit HaMikdash by hand in heaven, so God will build it by hand on earth, as it says, "The Mikdash of God—Your hands will make it" (Shemot 15:17). When Moshe heard these things while facing the mashiah, he rejoiced a great joy.

### בראשית רבתי פרשת ויצא

אָמַר לוֹ מָשִׁיחַ לְמֹשֶׁה... אִם אַתָּה אוֹמֵר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא יִבְנֶה לוֹ בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בְּיָדָיו [בַּשָּׁמַיִם], כָּךְ בְּיָדָיו יִבְנֶה אוֹתוֹ בָּאָרֶץ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מִקְדָּשׁ ה׳ כּוֹנְנוּ יָדֶיךָ (שמות טו:יז). כֵּיוָן שֶׁשָּׁמַע מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ עָלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה נִכַּח מָשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד שָׂמַח שִׂמְחָה גְּדוֹלָה.

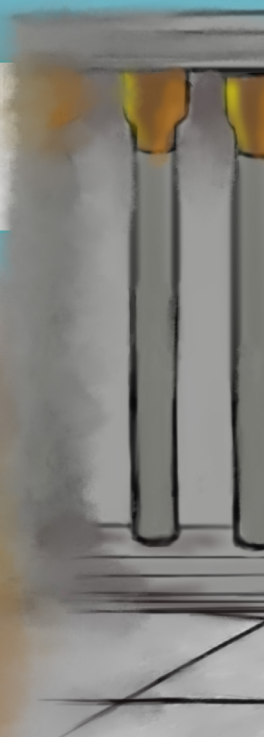
- Why is the rebuilding of the Temple and Yerushalayim a symbol of hope?
- How does it feel to think that God will build a special Beit HaMikdash with God's own hands? Why would that bring Moshe great joy?
- What are some actions you can take to bring about the hopeful future we sing about in this song?

## אַתָּה תָקוּם
## Attah Takum

אַתָּה תָקוּם תְּרַחֵם צִיּוֹן
כִּי עֵת לְחֶנְנָהּ
כִּי בָא מוֹעֵד

God, stand up. Have mercy on Tziyon. It is high time to show love to her (Yerushalayim). The time has come!

This song is also a pasuk from Tehillim (102:14). That perek opens up from the voice of someone who is suffering and pouring out their prayer before God, begging God to listen: "God, hear my prayer, let my cry come before You. Do not hide Your face from me on the day of my suffering. Tilt Your ear to me. On the day I call out—quickly, answer me..."



- What feelings and hopes are expressed in these pesukim?
- What's something that you would like God to stand and do this year?
- In what way has the time come? Why is this idea repeated so much in these pesukim?



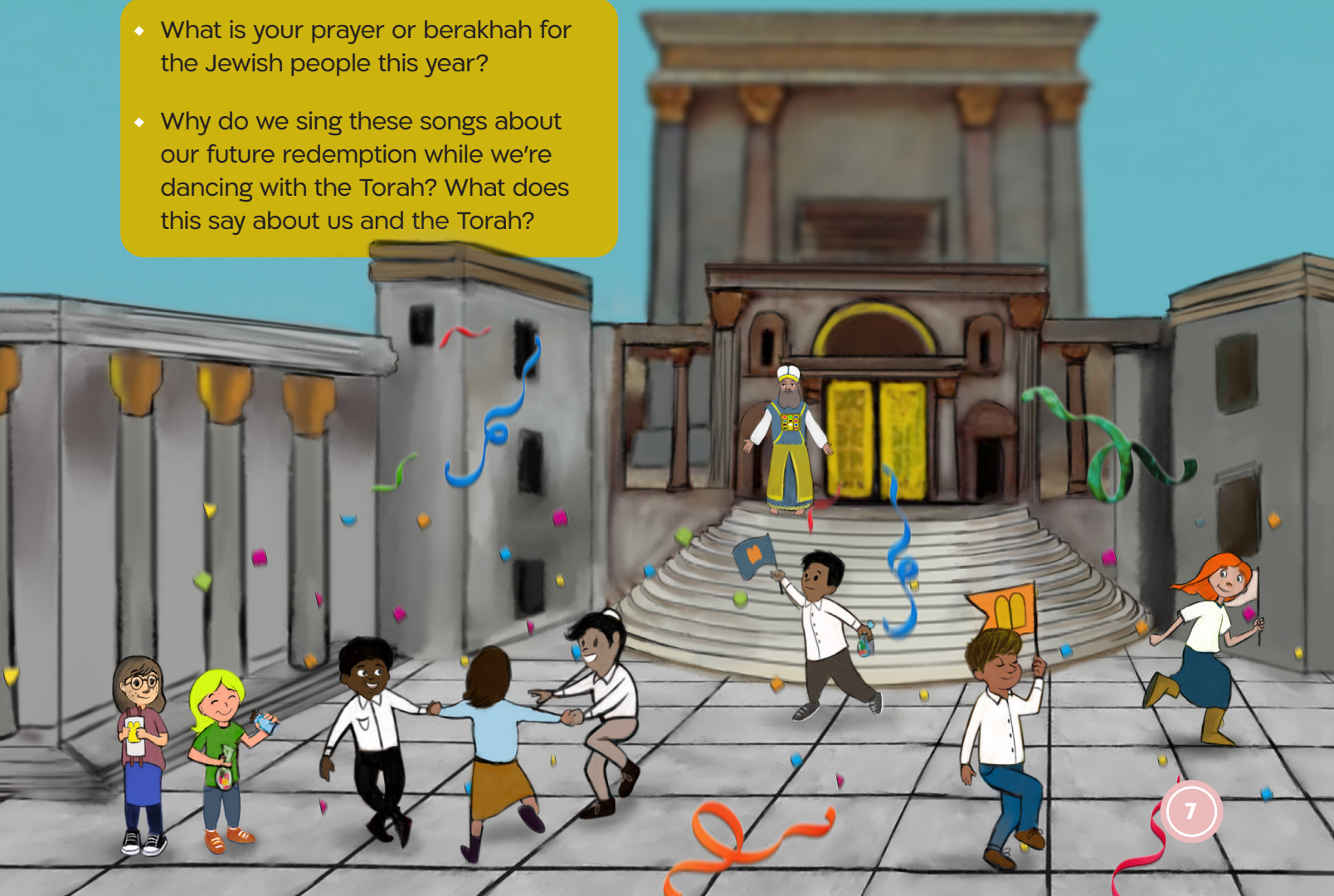

## לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה
## Leshanah Haba'ah

Next year in
Yerushalayim, rebuilt!

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה
בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם הַבְּנוּיָה

The words in this song are familiar from the end of the Pesah Haggadah. We also sing them after Ne'ilah at the end of Yom Kippur.

- Yerushalayim has many buildings nowadays. Why do we keep singing this song? What has to be there for Yerushalayim to be rebuilt? (Hint: Find the answer above in one of the other songs we sing on Simhat Torah.)
- Why are holidays like Pesah, Yom Kippur, and Simhat Torah incomplete without a rebuilt Yerushalayim?
- What is your prayer or berakhah for the Jewish people this year?
- Why do we sing these songs about our future redemption while we're dancing with the Torah? What does this say about us and the Torah?



## הַפְטָרָה • Haftarah

The haftarah for Simhat Torah comes from the next book in Tanakh, Sefer Yehoshua, which picks up right where the Torah ends.

Moshe has just died, and God commands Yehoshua to take Moshe's place and bring Benei Yisrael into their land. Yehoshua is also Moshe's spiritual successor, and God warns Yehoshua to stay loyal to the Torah that Moshe taught him (Yehoshua 1:7–8).

Moshe teaching Torah to Yehoshua marks the beginning of the שַׁלְשֶׁלֶת הַמָּסוֹרָה (shalshelet ha-masorah, chain of Torah transmission). This is one way to describe the process of how Torah gets passed from generation to generation, creating a chain that links all students and teachers of Torah back to Moshe.

**Pirkei Avot 1:1**

Moshe received the Torah at Sinai and passed it to Yehoshua. Yehosha passed it to the zekeinim (elders). The zekeinim passed it to the nevi'im (prophets). The nevi'im passed it to the anshei keneset ha-gedolah (the men of the Great Assembly, who came just before the Mishnah).

**מסכת אבות פרק א משנה א**

מֹשֶׁה קִבֵּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינַי, וּמְסָרָהּ לִיהוֹשֻׁעַ, וִיהוֹשֻׁעַ לִזְקֵנִים, וּזְקֵנִים לִנְבִיאִים, וּנְבִיאִים מְסָרוּהָ לְאַנְשֵׁי כְנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה.

Moshe started something amazing! Just one single teacher passing along the Torah has allowed it to spread to millions of people through thousands of years.

- What does this mishnah teach us about Moshe and about the power of teaching Torah?
- Who are your teachers? Who do you learn Torah from?
- Have you ever taught Torah to anyone else? What was that like?
- Why is it important to know that the Torah we learn goes back to Moshe? How does that affect the way you celebrate Simhat Torah?

