



SUKKOT

with

BNEI AKIVA

SUKKOT:

Divrei Pticha.....1

Arba Minim Activities...3

Decoration making.....13

SIMCHAT TORAH:

Hakafot Song List.....14

Simchat Torah Board Game..15

Coloring Pages and Flags.....16



BNEI AKIVA
OF THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

DVAR TORAH – RAV SHAUL FELDMAN

Sukkah 5781: Simple yet Challenging to Accomplish!

The commandment to observe the holiday of Sukkot in the 23rd Perek in Vayikra is stated very clearly:

וַחֲגַגְתֶּם אֹתוֹ חַג לַיהוָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי תַחֲגֹגוּ אֹתוֹ:

You shall observe it as a festival of the LORD for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh month as a law for all time, throughout the ages.

בַּסֻּכּוֹת תֵּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל־הָאֶזְרָח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשְׁבוּ בַסֻּכּוֹת:

You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths,

לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דֹרֹתֵיכֶם כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהוֹצִיאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

In order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I the LORD your G-d.

The question is: what exactly are we remembering from the desert? In **Masechet Sukkah**, we find an argument between **Rabbi Akiva** and **Rabbi Eliezer**:

כִּי בַסֻּכּוֹת הוֹשַׁבְתִּי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲנִי כְבוֹד הָיוּ דְּבָרֵי ר' אֱלִיעֶזֶר ר"ע אומר סוכות ממש עשו להם

As it is taught in a baraita that the verse states: "I made the children of Israel to reside in sukkot"; these booths were clouds of glory, this is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Akiva says: They established for themselves actual sukkot.

The **Ramban** agrees with **Rashi** that the Sukkah mentioned in the Torah is referring to the clouds. However, he explains that the reasoning of the Sukkah for both opinions is the same: remembering the miracles Hashem did for us. Either with clouds or natural huts, in both scenarios we were protected and didn't lack anything reminding us how great Hashem is.

"He has commanded that all future generations should know the deeds of the great G-d, Who dealt so wondrously with you" (Joel 2:26) sheltering Bnei Israel under the clouds of His Presence --as in a booth. At the beginning of the dry season, we are commanded to remember the exodus by making Nisan the first month of the year, and by celebrating the chag of Pesach; here, at the beginning of the rainy season, a further observance is commanded, in commemoration of the ongoing miracle that was done for Bnei Israel throughout our 40 years in the wilderness.

According to the opinion that the phrase refers to actual booths, they did begin making them at the start of the rainy season because of the cold, as people do when they camp, and that is why our text commands that booths be made at this season. In that case, what the future generations are supposed to know is that they made their way in the wilderness



and “found no settled place” (Psalms 107:4) for 40 years. But G-d was with them, and they “lacked nothing” (Deuteronomy 2:7).

The **Rashbam** on the other hand wants to stick only with Rabbi Akiva’s opinion and says that the sukkah is an actual hut, and the reasoning of this holiday is to understand that everything we receive today is from G-D, as he is the one that gives us power to do.

למען ידעו דורותיכם, the plain meaning of the text is in agreement with the view expressed in Sukkah 11 according to which the word סוכה is to be understood literally. The meaning of the verse would then be: *“construct for yourselves the festival of huts when you gather in your grain and grape harvest (Deuteronomy 16,13) You are to do this at the time you gather in the produce of the earth and your houses are filled with all the good things the earth produces such a grain, grape, wine and oil (olives). This is to be done in order that you will remember”* **כי בסוכות הושבתי את בני ישראל**, in the desert for a period of 40 years when they neither owned land nor found themselves in a cultivated part of the earth. Remembering all this you will have ample reason to be grateful to the One Who has provided you with all of your present wealth and comfort.

If we combine both approaches, we learn that walking into the sukkah we are obligated to remember: 1) how great G-D is --and with that realization we can understand 2) that everything we have until this very day all comes from Him.

Sukkot 5781 is definitely a year that we can fully accomplish this request. Looking at the world today it is very clear that we are completely in the hands of Hashem. This realization must lead us to the outcome that the Torah commands us on sukkot.

וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:

and you shall rejoice before the LORD your G-d seven days.

This part of having ‘full joy’ is the challenging part. The world is hurting; however, the Torah tells us how to do it -- living before “Hashem,” realizing everything is all from Him- is the answer to achieving this part as well.

Chag Sameach

Rav Shaul Feldman

Director of Bnei Akiva US & Canada











THE ARBA MINIM

While we all know very well the Arba Minim we take on Sukkot, there are many symbolisms that are attributed to them, that convey deeper meanings behind the seemingly arbitrary species that we know so well. Some attribute them as representations of different aspects of Hashem; some as a representation of Am Yisrael. Some traditions claim they are also representative of Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Yosef, and some claim that each one has an intrinsic connection with water, an overarching theme for all of Sukkot.

We chose to discuss another tradition, based on the Midrash Tanchuma, which compares each of the minim to parts of our body, and furthermore that taking the Arbat Haminim constitutes a tikkun for the misdeeds of that part. In this next section, we will discuss which part of our body are represented by the Arbat Haminim, and have an activity for each one of the minim to help us fix those misdeeds.

In the meantime, let's see if you can match them up correctly!



Lulav- Spine



Goal: Recognize and give proper thanks to those who help us, and remember to be humble - we all need help from others.

The Lulav resembles the spine which has a dual symbolic representation. On one hand, our spine is what allows us to stand upright. It symbolizes confidence, capability, maybe even chutzpa. On the other hand, it allows us

to bow; show our honor and respect for others. We are commanded on one hand with a lot of responsibility and great level of expectation, something that may lead to arrogance - כחי - ועוצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה. But we are also commanded to be humble, and recognize that Hashem is the source of all of our strength - הוא הנותן לך כח לעשות חיל.

בבא קמא ט"ז; א'

a person's spine, seven years after his death, metamorphoses into a snake. The Gemara qualifies the last statement: And this matter applies only to a case where that person did not bow during the blessing of thanksgiving, the eighteenth blessing of the Amida prayer.

שדרו של אדם לאחר שבע שנים
נעשה נחש והני מילי דלא כרע
במודים

Tosfot explains that the reason why the spine turns into a snake is because if we don't properly say thanks, it is as if we have acted like a snake:

A. "rebelling" against Hashem by undermining authority, the opposite of what we express when we bow and thank Hashem, where we recognize that all our good comes from Hashem.

B. The snake provided an alternative "Torah" - a system of rules that he tricked Adam and Chava to think was ok, as opposed to our bowing from Hashem, recognizing that we are servants to Hashem and His Torah only, and that we owe Him our gratitude.

Therefore the spine turns into a snake as mida keneged mida.

Activity: Todah -o- Grams

Write a 'Todah -o- Gram' to Hashem, your parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers neighbors, friends, etc. Go ahead and sneak it into their mailbox or sukkah, put it by their place setting or just hand it to them.

What You'll Need: scissors, pens, markers, and other decorative art supplies

TODAH
-O-
GRAM

TODAH
-O-
GRAM

TODAH
-O-
GRAM

Arava- Mouth (Shmirat Halashon)

Goal: Impart an understanding of the power of our words and how we can be more mindful of them

The Aravot represent the mouth, which we can use to spread good or negativity. We should focus on Shmirat Halashon, or watching what we say, and know the Lashon Harah we say can have big impacts on other people that we can't always fix.



Lashon Harah Story:

A person once repeated a story (gossip) about a neighbor. Within a few days everyone in the community knew the story. The neighbor they had talked about heard what had been said about them and was very sad. Later, the person who had spread the story learned that it was not true. He was very sorry and went to a wise rabbi and to ask what he could do to repair the damage.

After giving this some thought, the Rabbi said to the person, "Go home, get one of your feather pillows, and bring it back to me." Surprised by the Rabbi's response, the person followed his advice and went home to get a feather pillow and brought it to the rabbi.

"Now," said the Rabbi, "open the pillow and pull out all the feathers." Confused, the person did what the Rabbi said to do.

After a few minutes, the Rabbi said, "Now, I want you to find every one of the feathers and put them back into the pillow."

"That's impossible," said the person, almost in tears. "The window is open and the wind has scattered them all over the room and blown many feathers outside. I can't possibly find them all."

"Yes," said the Rabbi. "And that is what happens when you gossip or tell a story about someone else.

Once you talk about someone, the words fly from one person's mouth to another, just like these feathers flew in the wind. Once you say them, you can never take them back."



Activity: Included are several statements of Lashon Hara. Hide them around the house, and then have a finder try to find and collect all of them. Just so they're a little easier to find, you can color them slightly or print them on colored paper. Similar to the Lashon Hara that we say and the feathers on the story, Lashon Hara can be hard to take back once it's all spread out.

The last row is a "free column" where you can write in examples of Lashon Harah you want to work on not saying this year. Although these examples may be easier to find and collect than the Lashon Hara we speak, it will still remind us of the importance of Shmirat Halashon. After you realize how hard it is to find all of them, think about how awesome it would be if these were good things...

What You'll Need: Scissors, creative hiding places

I think his shirt is ugly	Did you hear that she did badly on the test?	We lost that game because of him
You're not good enough to be on my team	I won't play with her because she's annoying	My brother is so messy, he gets dirt all over the place
You're not cool enough to eat lunch with us	She's so loud, I can't believe she talks all class	He got in trouble for always forgetting his homework
She's mean because she never shares with me.	Your drawing looks terrible, I can't even tell what you drew	He's so slow, he's never on time
_____	_____	_____

Etrog- Heart

Goal: Connect better to those around us

Rav Elimelech of Lizhantsk (Prayer before Shacharit)

Master (Hashem) Put into our hearts, that we should see the good qualities in our fellows, and not their faults. That we should speak to our fellows in the proper and righteous way that You desire, and that no hatred of others arises in our hearts.	אדרבה, תן בלבנו שנראה כל אחד מעלות חברינו ולא חסרונם ושנדבר כל אחד את חברו בדרך הישר והרצוי לפניך, ואל יעלה בליבנו שום שנאה מאחד על חברו חלילה
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These powerful and impactful words of Rav Elimelech's Tfila remind us every day how important it is to love all those around us, to the extent that we ask Hashem's help to give us the strength to see only our friends good qualities, and love and connect with them more. Given these times, when we cannot interact freely with our friends, neighbors, and acquaintances, we can at least try to learn more about our family.

Activity: Family Trivia!

The Etrog represents the heart of the Arbat Haminim. We can improve our own hearts in how we take the time to get to know and understand each other. Over the past few months, we've spent a lot of time with family. But do we understand each other better now? Well let's find out!



Instructions: Have each family member fill out their own sheet and then quiz each other on the answers. See how much you know and how much you still can learn about your family. Each answer to another family member's question that you guess correctly is worth 1 point. See how many points you can get by guessing the answers of all of your parents and siblings!

For those of you Kahoot!-savvy individuals - make a Kahoot!
Feeling creative? Make your own questions!

What You'll Need:

Paper, pens, point markers, TV screen (optional if Kahooting), and some hot chocolate (just for fun)



Trivia Sheet Suggested Questions:

Name_____

1: What is your favorite snack? _____

2: What is your favorite color? _____

3: What is your favorite Jewish Holiday? _____

4: Which season is your favorite?_____

5: Where is your favorite place to visit/vacation?_____

6: What is your favorite song? _____

7: What is your favorite subject to learn about?_____

8: What are two things you're very good at? _____

9: Which meal of the day is your favorite?_____

10: What is your favorite game? _____

11: What is a pet peeve you have? _____

12: What is your favorite pizza topping? _____

13: What is your favorite movie?_____

14: When is your hebrew birthday?_____

Points: _____



Hadas- Eyes

אבות פרק ב': ט'

[Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai] Said to them, go out and see which is the just path that man should cling to.
Rabbi Eliezer says, "A good eye"

אמר להם, צאו וראו איזוהי דרך ישרה שידבק בה האדם. רבי אליעזר אומר, עין טובה.

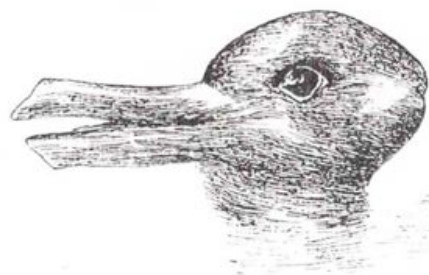
The commentators on this Mishna explain that having a "good eye" means that one is satisfied with what he has. Many times we may see things that others have (possessions, honor, etc.) and become jealous and wish we have those as well. This Mishna teaches us to focus on the things that Hashem has given us, although it is quite hard and there are things that sometimes can blur or skew our vision.

Activity:

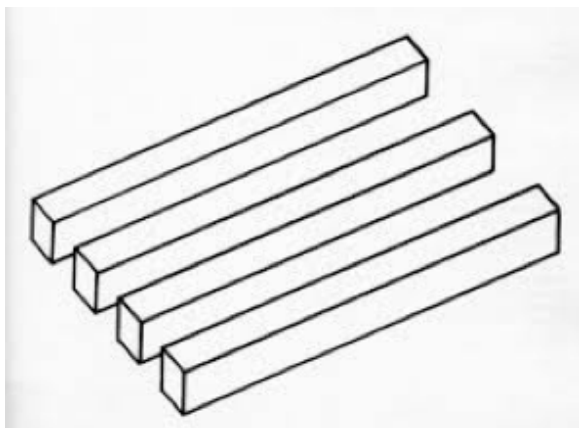
The Hadasim correspond to our eyes, which are super-important because they are the main source of our perception of the world around us. Let's Test your ability to see the right things with these optical illusions!



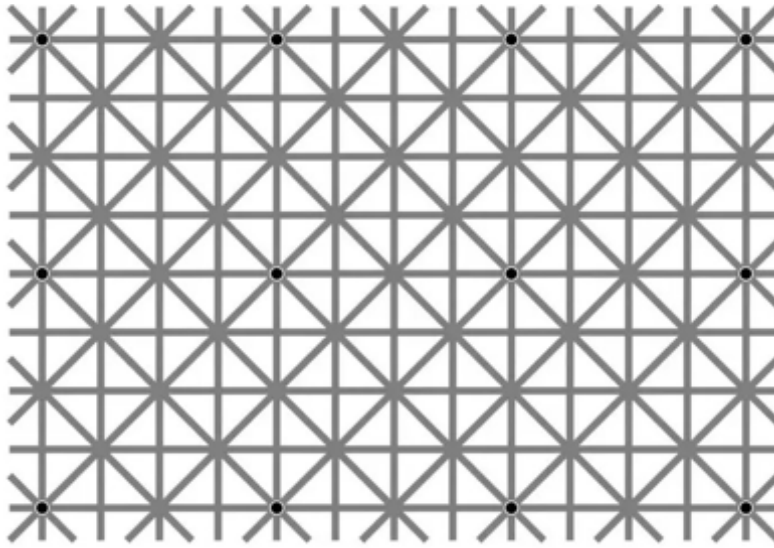
What do you see in this picture?



What animal do you see here?



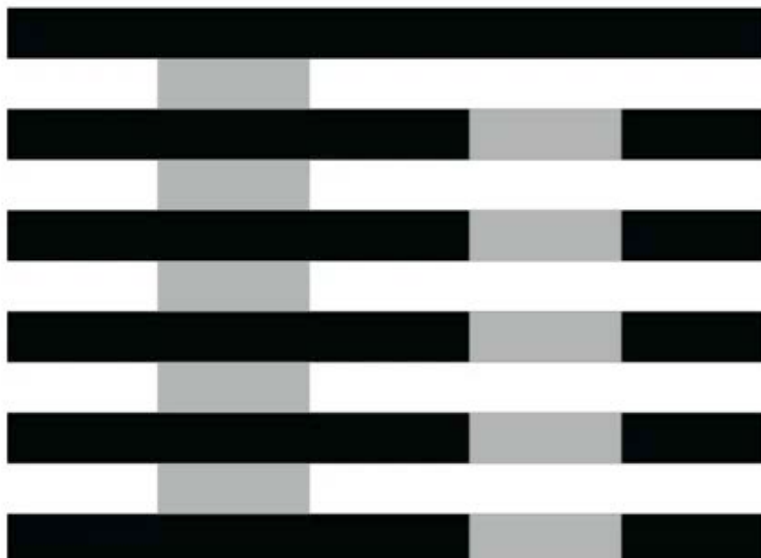
How many blocks do you see?



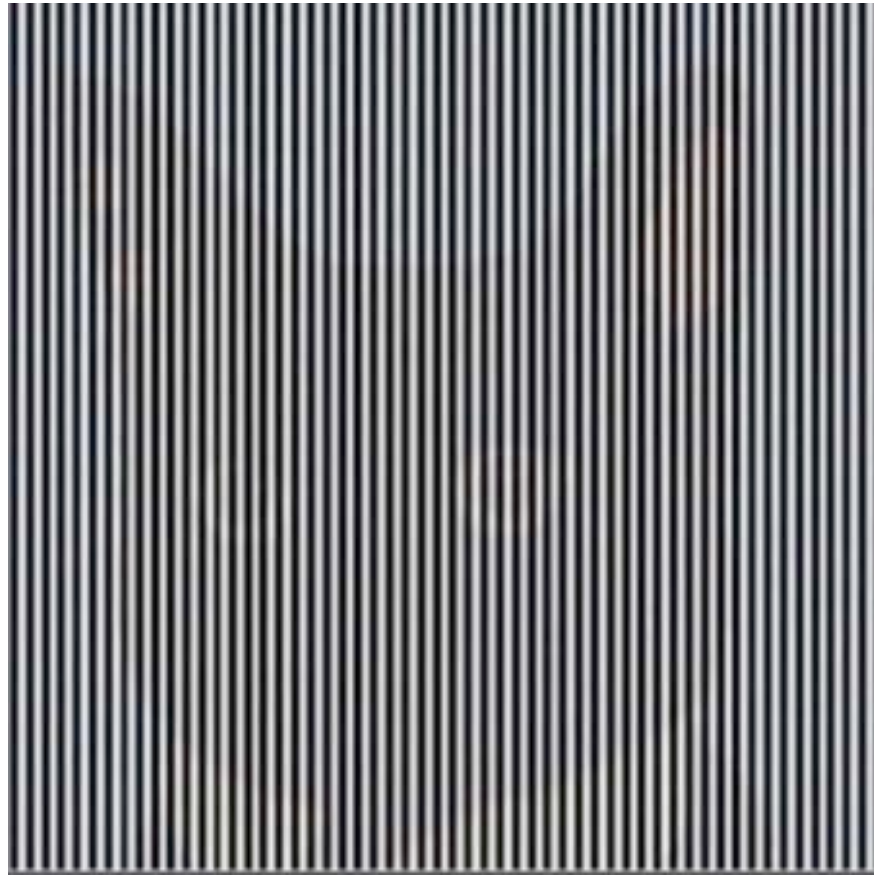
How many black dots are in this picture?



Is this cat going up or down?



Which rectangle is darker?



What animal do you see in this picture?

Those of you who have succeeded in focusing correctly will have noticed:

- The dalmatian
- Both a rabbit and a duck
- An impossible image where there are 3 sticks on one side and four on the other
- 12 dots but you can't really see more than 2 at once
- The cat is going both up and down (but how???)
- The rectangle on the right is darker.Just kidding, they're both the same.
- If you look from far away you will see a cat, but you can't see it close up

Ponder points:

- What might be some of the things that “skew our vision” and prevent us from being happy with what we have?
- What are the things that we should be focusing on instead?

SUKKAH DECORATIONS AND TABLE SCAPING

Water bottle hanging decoration:



Materials: empty water bottles, colored sharpies, scissors, whole puncher, string.

Take off the sticker from a water bottle. Use sharpies to color the water bottle with different colors. Cut the water bottle on a diagonal so that way once it is fully cut it will leave a spiral hanging design. Whole punch, put a string through, and hang from your sukkah for a cool decoration!

Citrus fruit poster:



Materials: A lemon or orange, paper, ink. Cut the lemon or orange in half to get the cross section. Color the open face of the citrus fruit with ink or any other form of color. Use the fruit as a stamp on the paper to create fun designs. In the middle, write a Yom Tov message to your family!

Sukkot straw accessories:



Materials: paper, pens, scissors.

Draw sukkot related images on colored construction paper. Cut out the shapes and drawings. Cut two slits, one on the top, one on the bottom, on the drawing. Bend a bit and place the straw through the openings. Enjoy drinking from this fun straw!

Etrog sun catcher:



Materials: yellow construction paper, yellow tissue paper, scissors, glue/tape whole puncher, string. Cut the yellow construction paper into a big circle. In the center, cut out 5 oval shaped slits to act as the center of the etrog. Flip the etrog over and place the circle of yellow tissue paper and attach with glue/tape. Punch a whole in the top and put through a string. Hang in your sukkah to get some beautiful light!

HOME HAKAFOT SONG LIST



<p>ישראל בטח בה', עזרם ומגינם הוא אנחנו מאמינים בני מאמינים, ואין לנו על מי להישען, אלא על אבינו שבשמיים</p>	<p>אשר ברא ששון ושמחה חתן וכלה, גילה רינה דיצה וחדווה, אהבה ואחוזה ושלוה ורעות</p>	<p>אתה תקום תרחם ציון, כי עת לחננה כי בא מועד</p>
<p>הושיעה את עמך וברך את נחלתך ורעם ונשאם עד העולם</p>	<p>דוד מלך ישראל, חי וקיים. סימן טוב ומזל טוב יהא לנו ולכל ישראל אמן</p>	<p>ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה', והיה ה' מבטחו</p>
<p>אשרינו מה טוב חלקנו ומה נעים גורלנו (בדגל תורה ועבודה שאיפת בני עקיבא קדש חייך בתורה וטהרם בעבודה</p>	<p>השיבנו ה' אליך ונשובה חדש ימינו כקדם</p>	<p>הרחמן הוא ישלח לנו את אליהו הנביא זכור לטוב, ויבשר לנו בשורות טובות, ישועות ונחמות</p>
<p>כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר ה' מירושלים</p>	<p>יחד כולם קדושה לך ישלשו</p>	<p>יבנה המקדש, עיר ציון תמלא. ושם נשיר שיר חדש וברננה נעלה</p>
<p>משה אמת ותורתו אמת</p>	<p>מצווה גדולה להיות בשמחה תמיד</p>	<p>לשנה הבאה בירושלים הבנויה</p>
<p>עוז והדר לבושה ותשחק ליום אחרון</p>	<p>עם ישראל חי עוד אבינו חי</p>	<p>עבדו את ה' בשמחה, בואו לפניו ברננה</p>
<p>שישו ושמחו בשמחת תורה, ותנו כבוד לתורה</p>	<p>שמחה לארצך וששון לעירך וצמיחת קרן לדוד עבדך ועריכת נר לבן ישי משיחך</p>	<p>שאו שערים ראשיכם והינשאו פתחי עולם, ויבוא מלך הכבוד סלה!</p>



SIMCHAT TORAH BOARD GAME: TORAH CHUTES & LADDERS

Rules:

Choose the order of players and decide who goes first!

When it is your turn, roll the die and move that many spaces on the board.

If you land on a square with a ladder, you will have to complete a challenge. If you complete the challenge successfully, you can move up the ladder. Otherwise, stay where you are.

If you land on a space with a slide, follow the slide down.

If you land on a space with a slide AND a ladder, you must complete a challenge. If you succeed in completing the challenge, go up the ladder. If you fail to complete the challenge, go down the chute.

Whoever reaches Eretz Yisrael first wins!!

When the game is over, play again!

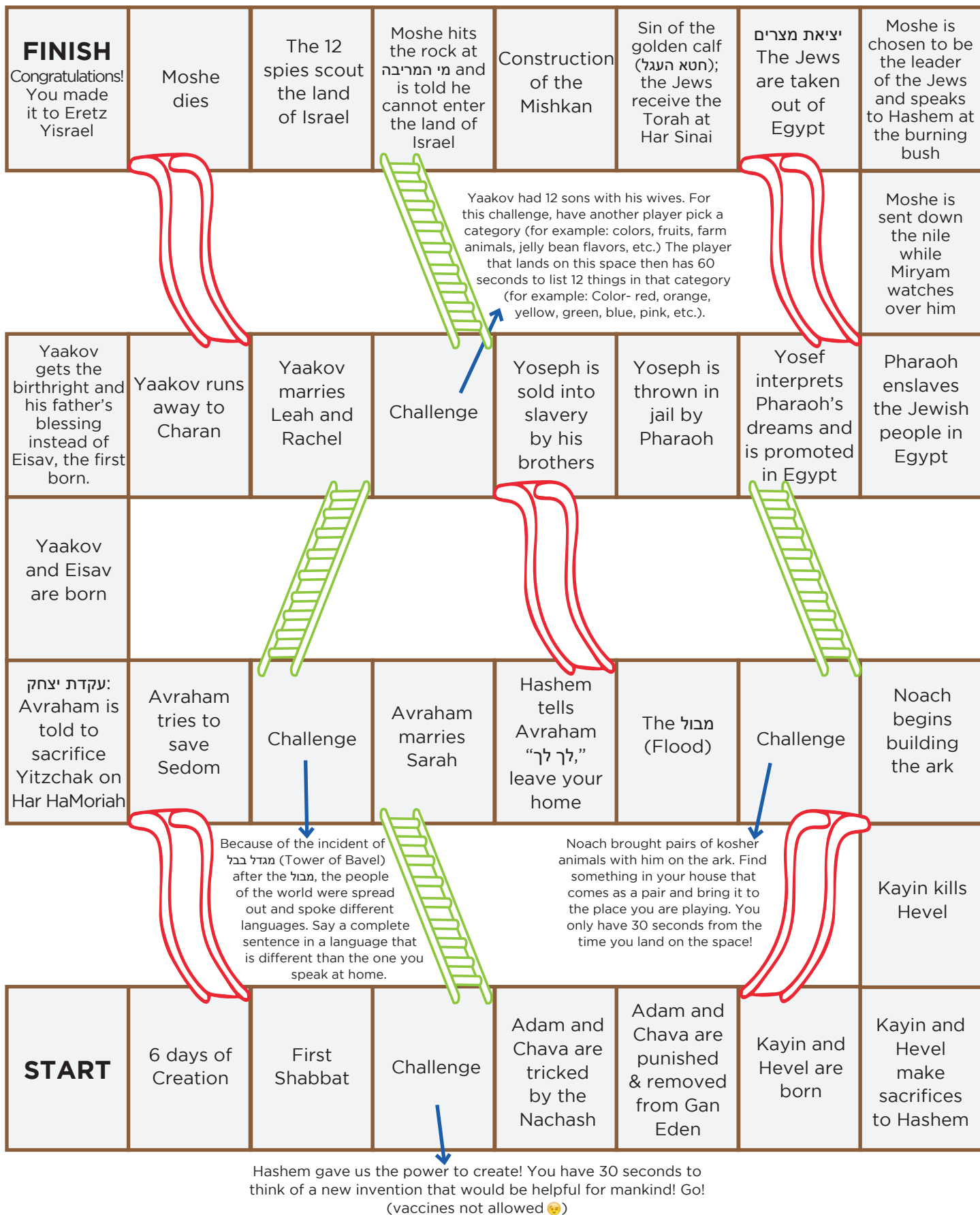
What You'll Need:

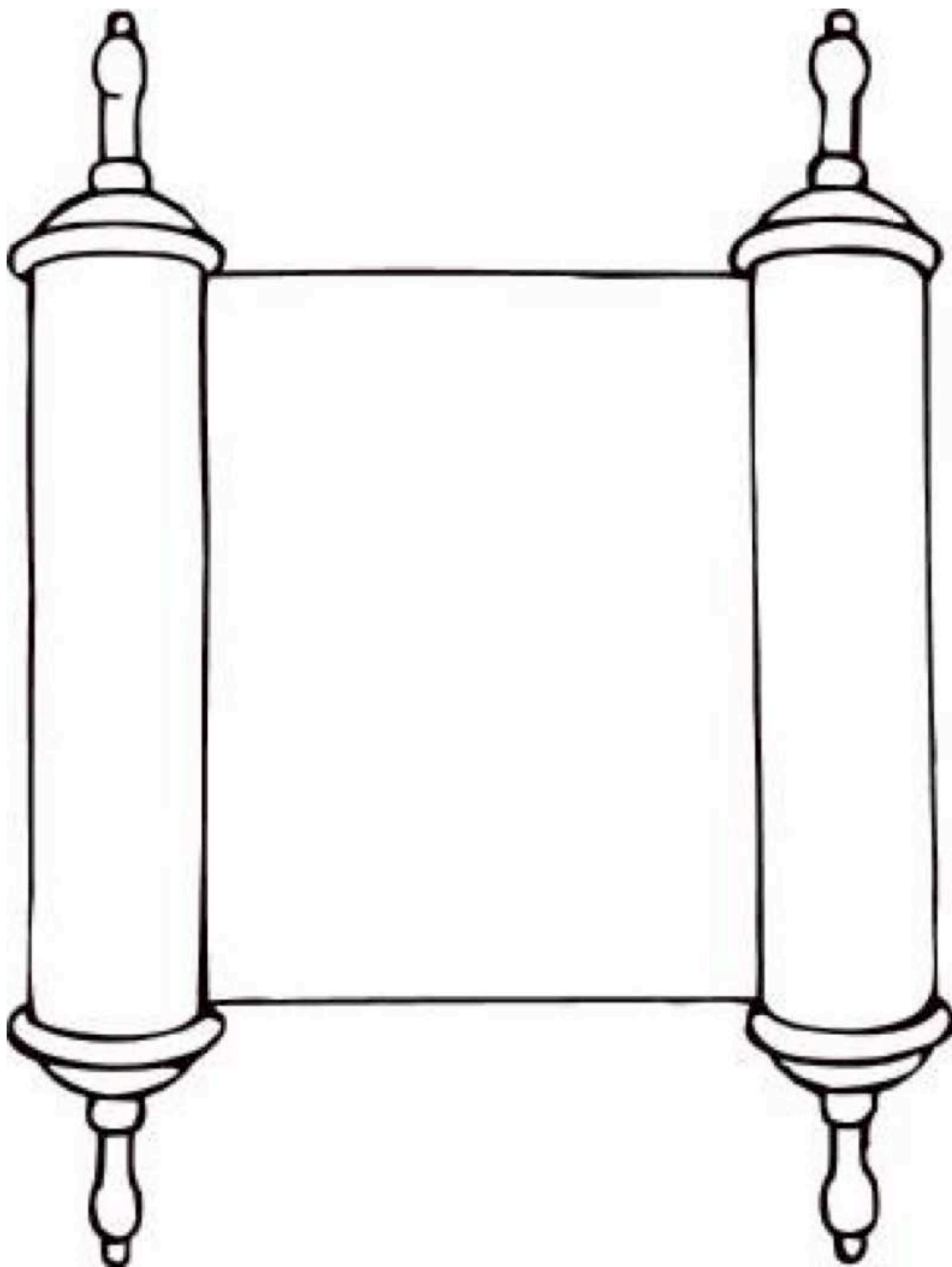
A die

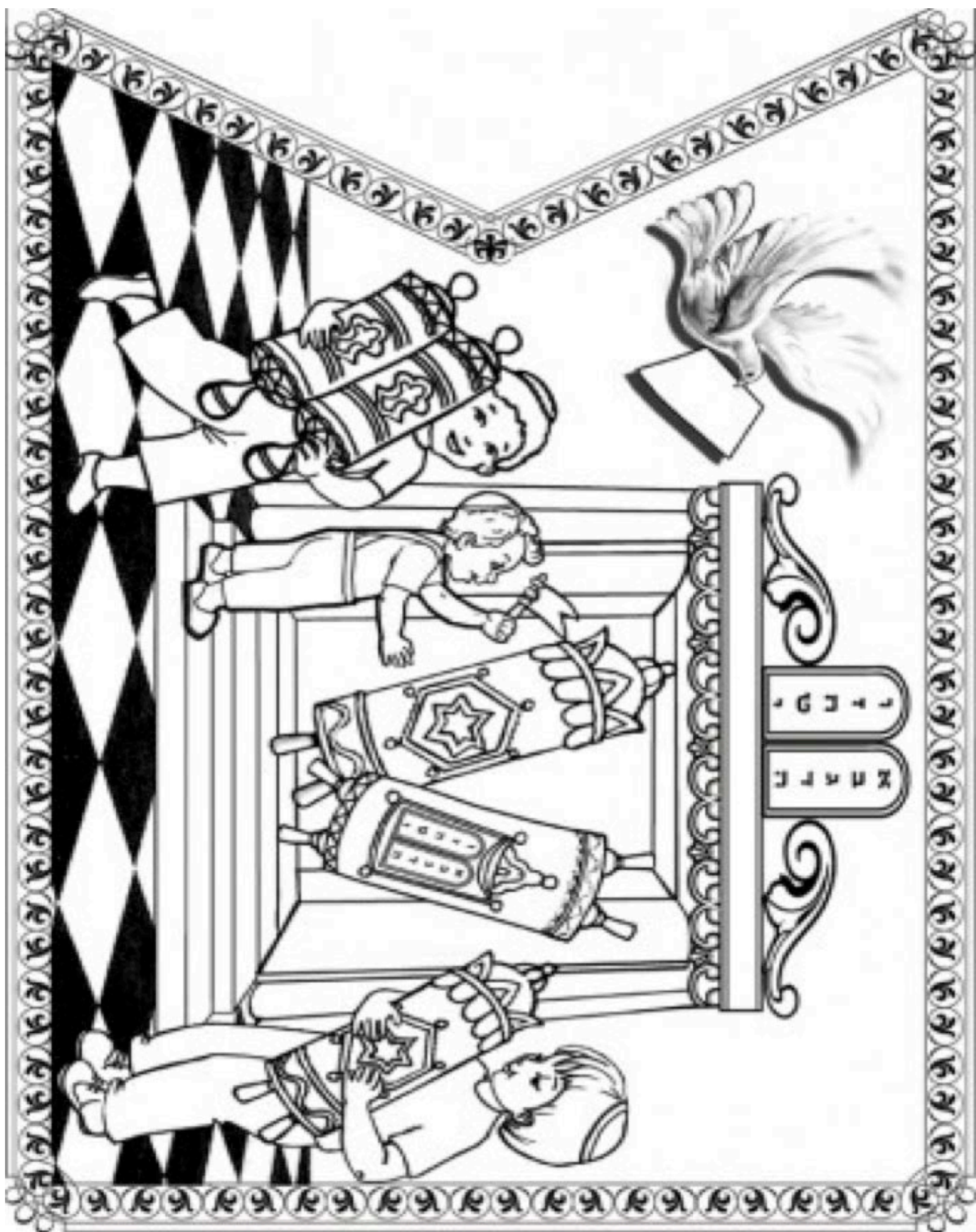
Board game pieces of your choice

Running Shoes Optional - you're going to need to run fast to complete those challenges

START your journey through the Torah







מזמור ליל הולדת פסח

