



# MEG GOLDBERG ON PARADE

Written by Andria Warmflash Rosenbaum

Illustrated by Christopher Lyles

*Israeli Independence Day is a holiday in Israel – but many people around the world celebrate it, and New York City throws a parade, too. Lucky for Meg – she adores a parade!*

## JEWISH CONCEPTS

Meg is in the big city of New York to see the annual Celebrate Israel Parade. This parade is one way that Jewish people and their non-Jewish friends commemorate *Yom HaAtzmaut*, Israel's Independence Day. Just as citizens of many countries recognize their independence with a special holiday (think: Fourth of July, Canada Day, Australia Day, etc.) so, too, do Israelis. Unlike most Jewish holidays, *Yom HaAtzmaut* has not been around for so long -- only since 1948 when the State of Israel was established.

In Meg's dream she carried the Israeli flag, adorned with its bright blue stripes and one six-pointed star. The stripes are symbolic of a Jewish prayer shawl, traditionally worn by men during morning prayers, and today, by some women as well. The star is called a *Magen David*, literally the Shield of David, but known as the Star of David. How it came to symbolize Judaism is not completely clear; some believe that as Christian houses of worship were identified by a cross on the outside, Jews chose to put a symbol on their synagogues for the same purpose. Today, the *Magen David* is the most universally accepted and easily identifiable Jewish symbol.

The lyrics of *HaTikvah*, the Israeli national anthem hummed by Meg, were written at the end of the 19th century. Its title, "The Hope," refers to the longstanding dream of Jewish people to live freely in their homeland, Israel.

## USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Everybody loves a parade! What can beat the music, balloons, floats, decorations and high-spirited crowds? The parade Meg attended had all of that, sprinkled with special sights and sounds of Israel: the music of Yemen, one of many countries from which Israeli citizens hail; the tastes of couscous and pita, Israeli delicacies; folk dancing, a longstanding Israeli pastime; and of course, the sounds of Hebrew, Israel's national language.

Expand your horizons! Pick something from the story that you've never heard of or tasted or tried before. Here are some suggestions:

- Purchase some Israeli foods (pita, hummus, couscous, olives...) and have a healthy Israeli snack.
- With white and blue construction paper create an Israeli flag.
- Using the Internet, find a recording and the lyrics of *HaTikvah*. Try to learn to sing it – as well as your own national anthem!
- Learn some Hebrew. The glossary at the back of this book gives you a head start with *Shalom* – three words in one: hello, goodbye and peace. Can you learn to say please, thank you, excuse me, "My name is...." or some other phrase of your choice?