

The background of the image is a dense, repeating pattern of Hebrew letters. The letters are rendered in a stylized, blocky font and come in four colors: orange, light blue, teal, and light green. They are scattered across the entire frame, creating a vibrant and textured backdrop.

# **Aleph Bet Help Packet**

## Refresh Your Memory Hebrew Letters

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### The Aleph Bet

ו "V" Vav	ה "H" Hey	ד "D" Daled	ג "G" Gimel	ב "V" Vet	ב "B" Bet	א takes the sound of its vowel Aleph
ך "CH" Chaf Sofet	כ "CH" Chaf	ק "K" Kaf	י "Y" Yud	ט "T" Tet	ח "CH" Chet	ז "Z" Zyin
ע takes the sound of its vowel lyin	ס "S" Samech	נ "N" Nun Sofet	נ "N" Nun	מ "M" Mem Sofet	מ "M" Mem	ל "L" Lamed
ר "R" Resh	ק "K" Koof	צ "TZ" Tzadi Sofet	צ "TZ" Tzadi	ף "F" Fay Sofet	פ "F" Fay	פ "P" Pay
*ch - makes the "ch" sound in "ch"allah *tz - makes the "tz" sound in pre"tz"el			ת "T" Tav	ת "T" Tav	ש "S" Sin	ש "SH" Shin

#### Why are the letters shown on a line?

The line can be a super helpful cue for distinguishing letters when reading Hebrew words. Have a look at all the letters. Most letters sit on the line. One floats above the line (yud). Five letters drop below the line (chaf sofeet, nun sofeet, fay sofeet, tzadi sofeet and koof).

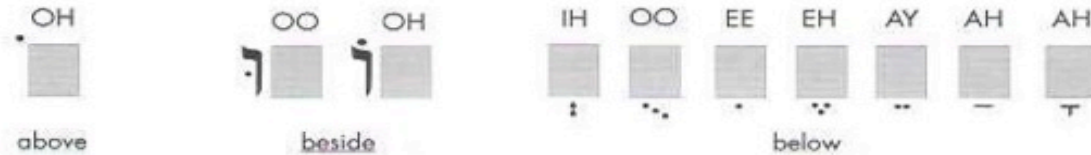
When reading, you can pencil in a line underneath any word to help you distinguish letters. This is a helpful tool to help eliminate confusion between similar looking letters like daled, resh and chaf sofeet; vav, nun and nun sofeet. It also helps highlight sofeet letters. See page 18, rule six.

Pick up  
your pencil  
and read!

# Refresh Your Memory Vowels

## 1. VOWELS

In Hebrew, vowels are symbols that come below, beside or above the letters. Most vowels appear under the letters. When reading, always look to see if the vowel is below, beside or above the letter. On this page, remember to read these vowels from right to left.



## 2. VOWELS WITH YUD

When the 'ee' vowel (ֵ), the 'ay' vowel (ַ), and the 'eh' vowel (ֶ) are followed by yud, they make an 'ee' bean, an 'ay' bean and an 'eh' bean. SPECIAL RULE: When the 'ah' vowel (ָ) is followed by yud and is also at the end of a word, it makes the "eye" sound. Drawing a "bean" around the vowel and the yud that follows helps us see this combination.



## 3. CHATAF VOWELS

1. Patach (ַ) and chataf patach (ְ) make the same sound, the "ah" sound.
2. Segol (ֶ) and chataf segol (ְ) make the same sound, the "eh" sound.
3. Kamatz (ָ) makes the "ah" sound, BUT, chataf kamatz (ֻ) is special. It makes a soft "oh" sound.

Special Rule:



ch = ch as in challah

## Refresh Your Memory Letters with Dots & Final Letters

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### 4. LETTERS WITH DOTS INSIDE

There are only six letters whose sound is affected by a dot or dagesh: bet (בּ), kaf (כּ), pay (פּ), shin (שׁ), sin (שׂ) and vav when it is the vowel (וּ or וֹ). You might see other letters with a dagesh. The dagesh does not change the sound of these letters. It gives them emphasis.

### 5. FINAL LETTERS (SOFEET LETTERS)

There are five final (sofeet) letters in the aleph bet. Sofeet letters appear only at the end of a word. All the sofeet letters drop below the line except for mem sofeet. The sofeet letters are: chaf sofeet (ך), mem sofeet (ם), nun sofeet (ן), fay sofeet (ף), and tzadi sofeet (צ).

### 6. LETTERS THAT LOOK ALIKE

There are groups of letters in the aleph bet that look similar and can be easily confused. The clues to what makes each letter different are in its corners, curves, toes and tails.

Does the letter have a corner ב or a curve כ ?

Is the opening on the top ט or the bottom ט ?

Does the letter sit on the line or extend below it ך or ם ?

Name these other look-alike letters: נג עז םס יון רדך החת

See *The Aleph Bet Story* for more letter clues and descriptions.

### 7. CHAF SOFEET ENDINGS

The chaf sofeet is read with its vowel and appears in the following forms. You will notice that these chaf sofeet endings appear frequently in the prayers.

יך יך  
"eh-cha"  
(yud is silent)

ך  
"cha"

ך  
"ch"

בְּעִינֶיךָ בְּשִׁלּוֹמֶךָ

עֲמֹךָ

בְּרוּךְ



## 9. THE 'CLEAR YOUR THROAT' SOUND

In Hebrew, there is no "ch" sound as in chair. The "ch" sound in Hebrew is the clear your throat sound that you say in the word *challah*. The three letters that make the clear your throat "ch" sound are chet ( ח ), chaf ( כ ) and chaf sofeet ( ך ). The "ch" is underlined to help you remember to make the clear your throat sound.

## 10. ACH SOUND

When the letter chet is the last letter of a word and has the patach vowel below it ( חַ ), it is read as "ach". It's not "cha". At the end of a word, it always makes the "ach" sound.

בַּח רַח שְׂמַח

## 11. WHEN THE KAMATZ VOWEL IS READ AS THE SOFT "OH" SOUND

When you see the word קָל, it is not read as "kal", it is read as "kol" with a soft "oh" sound. Other forms of קָל that you will see are קָל, קָלָל and וּבְקָל. Sometimes forms of the word קָדֵשׁ are also read as the "oh" sound. One example is קֹהֵד שִׁיחַ, read as "kohd-shih-cha". In this book, the asterisk \* means that the kamatz vowel ( ך ) is read as "oh".



## GOD'S NAME

God's Name is not read the way it is written when it is spelled as YUD-YUD ( יי ) or YUD-HEY-VAV-HEY ( יהוה ). These spellings are usually pronounced as Adonai. Your congregation may have different ways of saying God's name. In addition, do not confuse these spellings of God's name with the word יְהוּה which is a verb and means 'will be'. Books with God's name, including this one must be treated with respect and buried in a genizah rather than discarded. English nouns and pronouns in the prayer section of this book are capitalized when they refer to God.

## Beats and Baskets

### The Handiest Reading Trick Around

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#### Syllables

Hebrew words break down into syllables just as words do in English. Many times, one letter and the vowel beneath it form one syllable or beat. Several letters can also combine to create one syllable.

הָאֶרֶץ

3 Beats

שָׁלוֹם

2 Beats

הוּא

1 Beat

#### Shva

The shva vowel ( : ) is very important in forming syllables. It has two roles:

1. At the beginning of a word, the shva ("ih" sound) emphasizes the sound of the letter and forms one beat. This vowel is called *shva nah*.

לֵעֵת

לְסוֹף

שְׁמוֹ

2. Inside a word, the shva ends a beat. Put the shva letter together with the letter before it. Together, they make a beat. This vowel is called *shva nach*.

יִשְׂרָאֵל

יְהוּדָה

מִלְכִּי

3. When double shva appears, the first shva ends a beat, the second shva is its own beat.

בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ

נִפְשֶׁךָ

#### COOL RULE!

'Beats and Baskets' is the handiest trick or skill you will learn. Make 'beats and baskets' (or loops) your first step when reading in Hebrew. You will quickly see that long words become a lot easier to read.

Remember, when you are working on a copy of your Haftarah, Torah portion or any prayer, you can pull your pencil out at any time and do beats and baskets to break down a long word or any word that seems particularly challenging. **Exercise:** For the words below, put each beat in a basket.

מִמָּלַךְ עוֹלָם תְּהִלָּה יוֹדוּךָ נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ