

שפת
נקוד

גרית

nikúd

Learning Hebrew Vowels



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מנו כררת גיא

תרה

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Hello, young explorers! Welcome to The Magical Dots, a special book just for you. I'm your guide, Aleph the Adventurer, a friendly Hebrew letter who loves to travel through words. Today, we're going on a journey to discover the secret helpers of Hebrew letters called Niqqud (that's pronounced "nee-KOOD").

Hebrew letters are like strong knights—they tell us the sounds like “b,” “k,” or “sh.” But they need vowels to sing their songs! Vowels are the sounds like “ah,” “eh,” “ee,” “oh,” and “oo.” Without vowels, words would be silent and confusing, like a puzzle missing pieces. Niqqud are tiny dots, dashes, and marks that sit above, below, or inside the letters to show these vowel sounds. They're like magic that make words come alive!

In this book, we'll meet each Niqqud friend one by one. I'll show you what they look like, where they hide on the letters, what sound they make, and fun examples with words you might know from stories or songs. We'll even have little rhymes to help you remember. At the end, there's a game to practice!

Remember, Hebrew is read from right to left, like a mirror adventure. Let's start with a big picture of all the Niqqud friends together.



HEBREW VOWELS FOR KIDS

Kamatz

בַּ

Sound: 'a' as in 'father'
Example: בַּ (ba)



Patach

בַּ

Sound: 'a' as in 'bat'
Example: בַּ (ba)



Tzere

בֵּ

Sound: 'e' as in 'they'
Example: בֵּ (be)



Segol

בֶּ

Sound: 'e' as in 'bet'
Example: בֶּ (be)



Chirik

בִּ

Sound: 'i' as in 'machine'
Example: בִּ (bi)



Cholam

בֹּ

Sound: 'o' as in 'go'
Example: בֹּ (bo)



Kubutz

בֻּ

Sound: 'u' as in 'put'
Example: בֻּ (bu)



Shuruk

בּוּ

Sound: 'u' as in 'rule'
Example: בּוּ (bu)



Shva

בְּ

Example: בְּ



Sound: Can be silent or a quick 'e' as in 'pet'
Example: בְּ (b or be)



אָ
קָמָץ
Kamatz

אָ
פָּתַח
Patach

אֵ
צִירָה
Tzere

אֶ
סֵגוֹל
Segol

אִ
חִירִיק
Chirik

אֹ
חֹלָם
Cholam

אֻ
קֻבוּץ
Kubutz

אֹ
שׁוּרוּק
Shuruk

אֶ
שְׁוָא
Sheva

Meet Kamatz: The “Ah” Singer

Our first friend is Kamatz (קָמָץ). It looks like a little T-shape or a flat line under the letter:

Where it sits: Right under the letter, like a cozy rug.
Sound it makes: A long “ah” like in “father” or “car.”

How it’s used: Kamatz helps words sound open and happy. In some words, it can sound like “o” if it’s small (called Kamatz Katan), but mostly it’s “ah.”

Example: The word אָב (av) means “father.” See the Kamatz under the Aleph? It makes “ah-vuh.” Another one: כָּתַב (katav) means “wrote,” like “kah-tahv.”

Rhyme time:

*Kamatz under the letter so low,
Makes an “ah” sound, nice and slow.
Like in “father,” big and grand,
Kamatz helps words take a stand!*



Next up is Patach (פַּתַּח), which means “opening.” It looks like a straight line under the letter:

Where it sits: Under the letter, like a speedy slide. Sound it makes: A short “ah” like in “hat” or “cat.”

How it’s used: Patach is like Kamatz’s speedy brother. It opens the mouth quick for short sounds.

Example: אָבָא (aba) means “daddy,” pronounced “ah-bah.” Or פַּת (pat) means “piece of bread,” like “paht.”

Rhyme time:

*Patach dashes under with glee,
Short “ah” like in “happy” and free.
It opens words fast as can be,
Patach dances, come see with me!*



Say hello to **Tzere (צִירֵי)**. It looks like two dots side by side under the letter:

Where it sits: Under the letter, like twin stars.
Sound it makes: A long “ey” like in “they” or “day.”

How it’s used: Tzere makes words sound dreamy and long. Sometimes it has a Yod after it for extra length.

Example: **סֵפֶר (sefer)** means “book,” like “sey-fehr.” Or **בֵּית (beit)** means “house,” “beyt.”

Rhyme time:

*Tzere’s two dots, shining bright,
Long “ey” sound, day and night.
In “they” it plays, so fun and light,
Tzere dreams under the height!*



Segol (סגול) is our triangle friend. It looks like three dots in a pyramid under the letter:

Where it sits: Under the letter, like a tiny mountain. Sound it makes: A short “eh” like in “bed” or “red.”

How it’s used: Segol is for quick, adventurous sounds in words.

Example: אֶלֶף (elef) means “thousand,” like “eh-lehf.” Or מֶלֶךְ (melech) means “king,” “meh-lehkh.”

Rhyme time:

*Segol’s three dots, like a tent so neat,
Short “eh” in “bed,” can’t be beat.
Exploring words with feet so fleet,
Segol climbs, what a treat!*



Jump for joy with Chirik (חִירִיק)! It's a single dot under the letter:

Where it sits: Under the letter, like a bouncy ball. Sound it makes: "Ee" like in "machine" or "see."

How it's used: Chirik can be short or long. If followed by Yod (י), it's extra long.

Example: שִׁיר (shir) means "song," like "sheer." Or דִּבֵּר (diber) means "spoke," "dee-behr."

Rhyme time:

*Chirik's one dot, small and sweet,
"Ee" like "see," jump to the beat.
In songs and words, it's elite,
Chirik bounces, oh so neat!*



Cholam (חֹלָם) is magical! It can be a dot above the letter: ך̇ or inside a Vav: וּ

Where it sits: Above (Cholam Chaser) or in Vav (Cholam Male). Sound it makes: "Oh" like in "go" or "no."

How it's used: Cholam makes round, wizardly sounds for wonder.

Example: שׁוֹר (shor) means "bull," like "shohr." Or תּוֹרָה (Torah) means "teaching," "toh-rah."

Rhyme time:

Cholam dots above or in Vav so bold,
"Oh" like "go," stories told.

Many words, treasures of gold,
Cholam creats awe, brave and old!



These two are twins for the “oo” sound! Kubutz (קבוץ) is three slanted dots under:
Shuruk (שורוק) is a dot inside Vav: ו

Where they sit: Kubutz under; Shuruk in Vav.
Sound they make: “Oo” like in “rule” or “moon.”
How they’re used: They team up for deep, mysterious sounds. Shuruk is like a full Vav with a dot.

Example for Kubutz: סִפָּה (sukah) means “booth,” “soo-kah.”

For Shuruk: שׁוּם (shum) means “garlic,” “shoom.”

Rhyme time:

Kubutz three dots, slanted and true,
Shuruk in Vav, dot shining through.
“Oo” like “moon,” for me and you,
Twins together, what a crew!



Sheva (שְׁוָא) is sneaky! It looks like two dots stacked under:

Where it sits: Under the letter.

Sound it makes: Sometimes silent (Sheva Nach), like a pause. Sometimes a quick “eh” (Sheva Na), like in “the.”

How it’s used: Sheva tells us when to whisper or skip a sound. It’s important for rhythm!

Example: בְּרֵאשִׁית (bereshit) means “in the beginning,” the first word of the Bible! The Sheva under Bet is a quick “eh”: “beh-rey-sheet.”

Rhyme time:

*Sheva’s two dots, quiet and sly,
Sometimes “eh,” sometimes a sigh.
Pauses in words, under the sky,
Sheva whispers, oh my!*



Not a vowel, but a super helper! Dagesh (דָּגֵשׁ) is a dot inside letters like בּ, פּ, כּ.

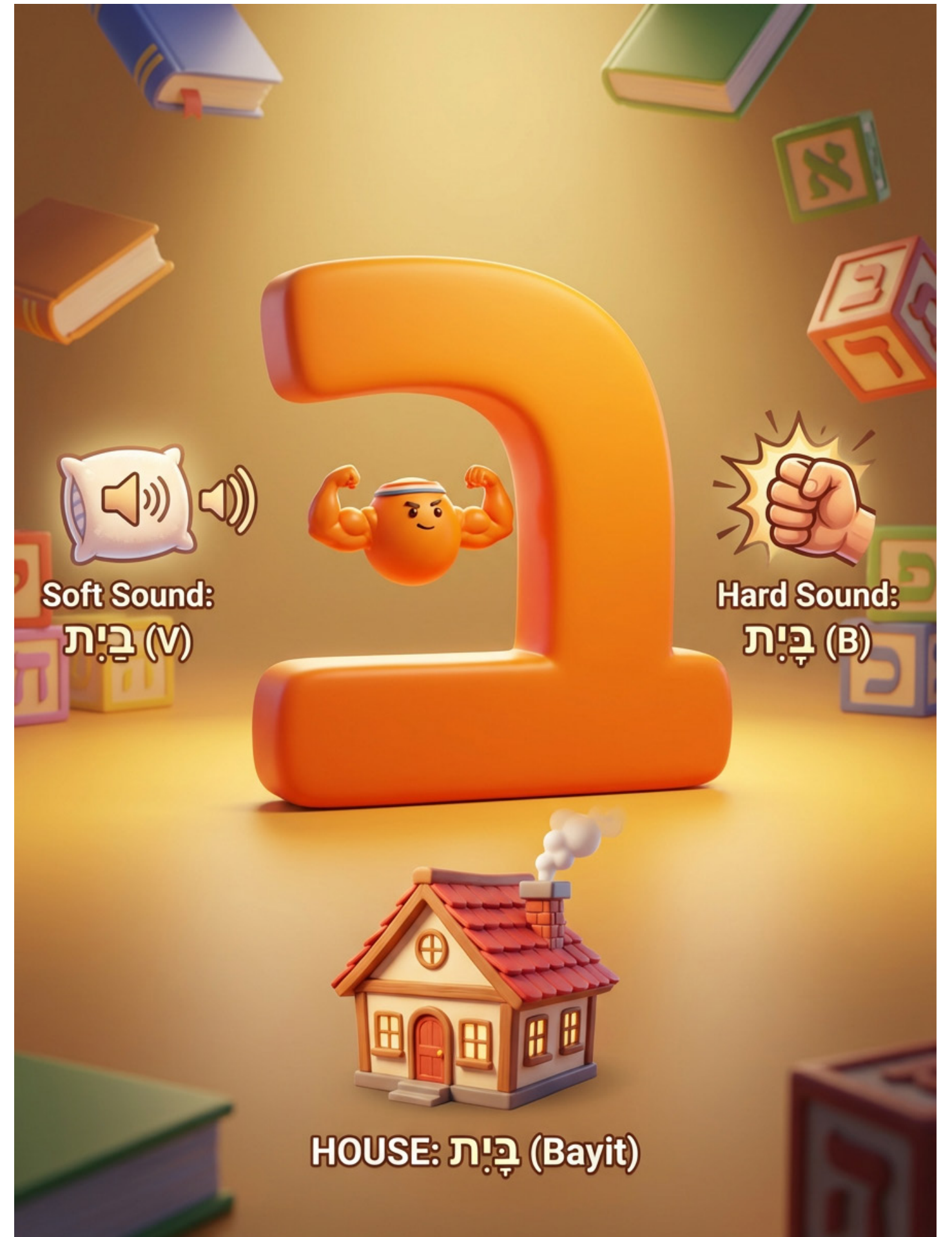
Where it sits: Right in the middle of the letter.
Sound it makes: Makes letters strong (plosive) instead of soft (fricative). Like Bet with Dagesh is “b” (strong), without is “v” (soft).

How it’s used: Dagesh doubles sounds or changes them for emphasis.

Example: בַּיִת (bayit) means “house,” with strong “b.”

Rhyme time:

*Dagesh dot, inside so tight,
Makes letters strong, full of might.
From soft to hard, day to night,
Dagesh powers the fight!*



Now it's your turn! Look at these words and say their sounds with Niqqud:

שָׁלוֹם (shalom) - "Peace" (Kamatz, Cholam)

יְלֵד (yeled) - "Child" (Segol)

סִפּוּר (sipur) - "Story" (Chirik, Shuruk)

Draw your own letters with Niqqud and make up words. Share with friends!

Thank you for joining the adventure, explorers! Niqqud makes Hebrew magical. Keep practicing, and soon you'll read like a pro. Shalom from Aleph!





Watch For More Adventures

