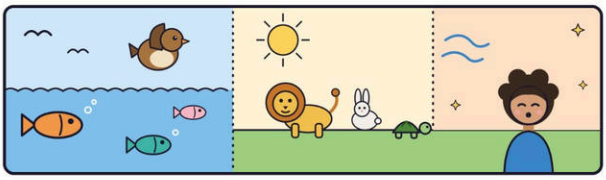
Nefesh Chaya

A Living Being



Name: _____ Date: _____

When God made the fish, the birds, the animals, and people, the Torah called every one of them **nefesh chaya**: a living being!

Say it with me!

נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה

NEH-fesh chy-YAH

The letter ח (Chet) makes a sound in the back of your throat, like a cat's soft hiss: **chhh**. "chy" rhymes with "sky."

NEH-fesh נֶפֶשׁ

soul, breath, being: the "you" inside of you

chy-YAH חַיָּה

living, alive (it can also mean "animal"!)

Say it three ways! Whisper it like a fish, say it like a person, then ROAR it like a lion: **NEFESH CHAYA!**

Word detective: חַי (**chai**) means "life." Circle it inside חַיָּה!

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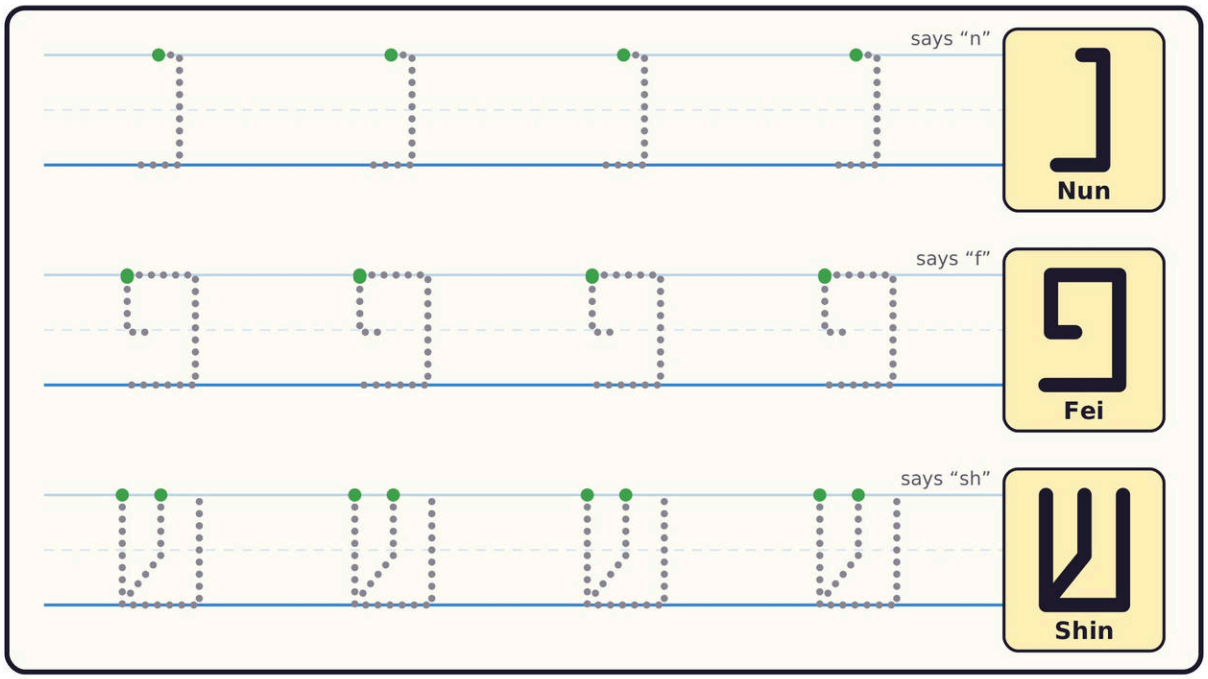
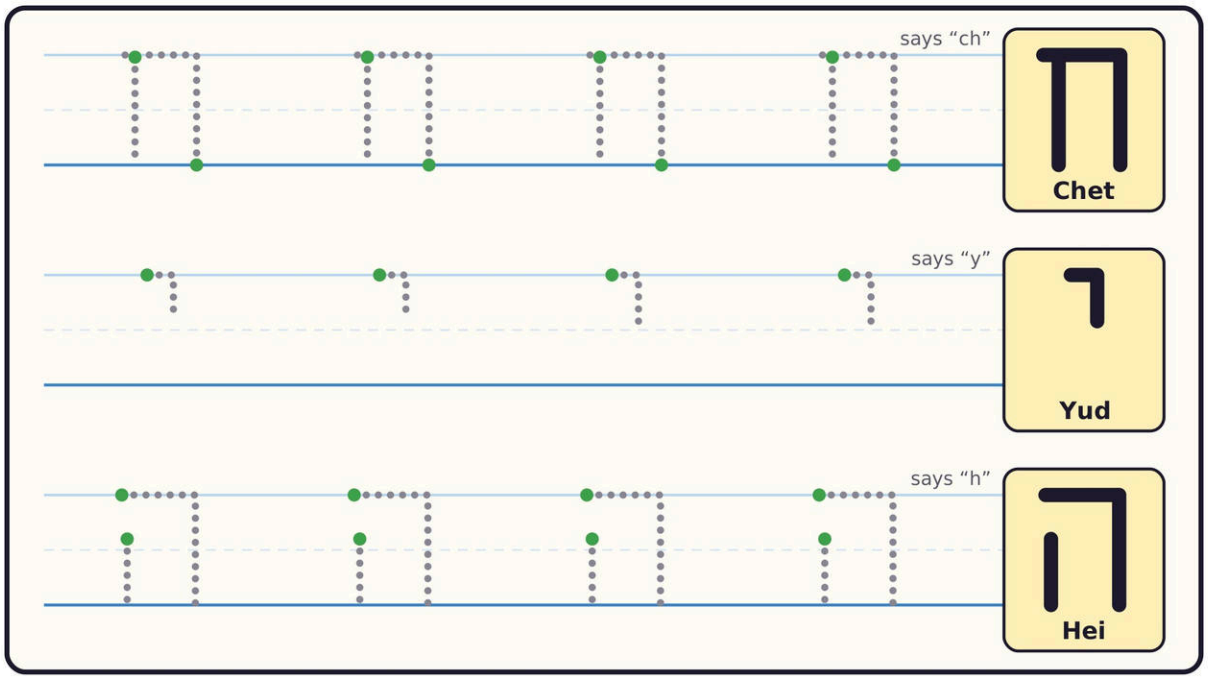
Trace the Letters!

Look at the dark letter in the yellow box. Then start at each **green dot** and follow the dots with your pencil.

Letters in נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh)



Letters in חַיָּה (chaya)



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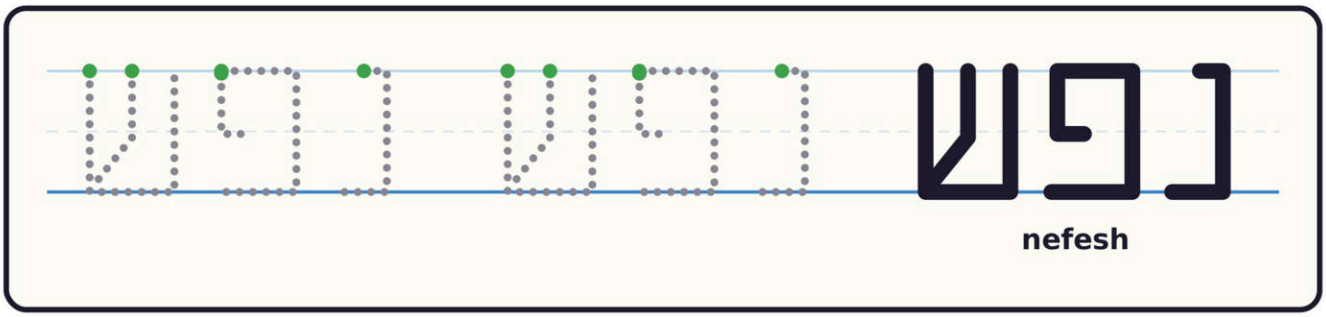
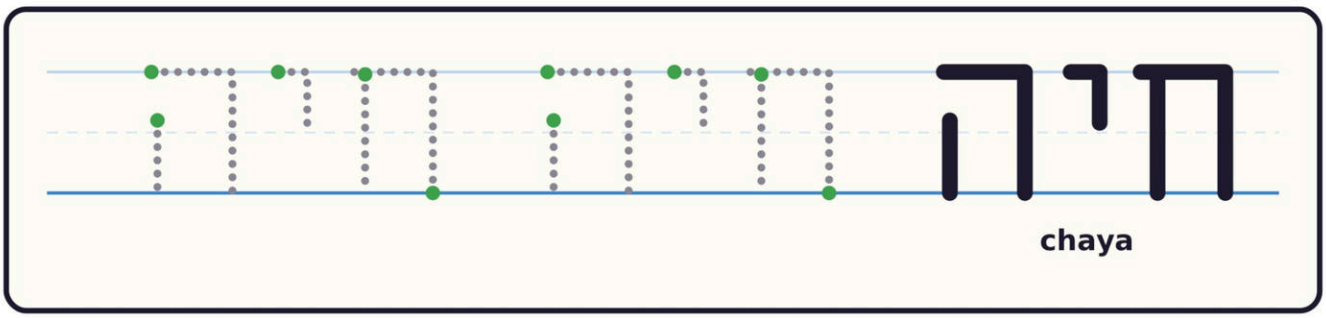
Trace the Words!

Hebrew reads from **right to left**, so start on the right side.





Match It! Draw a line from each word to what it means.

נֶפֶשׁ	life
חַיָּה	soul, the "you" inside you
חַי	living, alive

Did you know? Jewish tradition teaches צַעַר בַּעֲלֵי חַיִּים (*tza'ar ba'alei chayim*): we must not cause animals pain. Animals are living beings too, so we take care of them!

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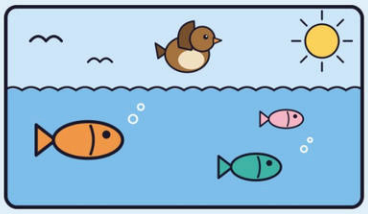
Torah Time Travel!

The words **nefesh chaya** come from the very beginning of the Torah, in **Bereshit (Genesis)**, the story of creation. They show up three times.

Underline נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה each time you see it!

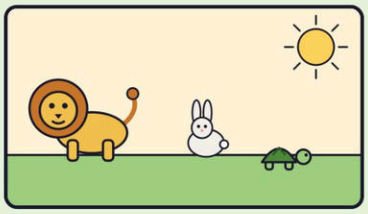


Day 5: Sea and Sky

Genesis 1:20

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שֶׁרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל־הָאָרֶץ

God said, “Let the waters fill up with swarms of **living beings**, and let birds fly above the earth.”



Day 6: Animals of the Land

Genesis 1:24

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ

God said, “Let the earth bring out **living beings**, each of its own kind.”

Torah Time Travel, Part 2



The First Person

Genesis 2:7

וַיִּיצֶר ה׳ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח
בְּאַפָּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה

God formed the person from the dust of the earth and blew the breath of life into their nose, and the person became a **living being**.

Think About It

The Torah uses the **same words** for a fish, a lion, and a person. What does that tell us about animals and people?

For Teachers

Big idea: The Torah calls sea creatures, birds, land animals, and humans by the same name, *nefesh chaya*. Every living being shares the gift of life, and each person carries a unique, God-given breath.

How to use it: A warm-up before the art lesson, or a reference at the table while students work. Pages 1–3 build the words (meaning, sound, tracing). Pages 4–5 show where the words come from. Print this page for teachers only.

Tracing: Letters are simple block print without vowel marks. Students start at the green dot and follow the strokes; the vowels stay with the big נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה on page 1. In נֶפֶשׁ, the פ has no dot, so it says "f" (Fei).

Sources: Genesis 1:20, 1:24, and 2:7. The English is a simplified, kid-friendly rendering, not a formal translation. The divine name in 2:7 is written ה׳.

Word notes: *Nefesh* ranges from "breath" to "soul" to "self." *Chaya* means "living" and, as a noun, "animal." Linking it to *chai* (חַי) gives students a familiar anchor.

Pronunciation: NEH-fesh chy-YAH, stress on the last syllable of each word. Throughout the worksheet, "ch" always means the throat sound of ח (as in "Chanukah"), never the "ch" in "chair."

Art connection: In Genesis 2:7 the person becomes a nefesh chaya when God breathes into them. Ask students how they might show breath or life in their artwork.

If students draw animals: *Tza'ar ba'alei chayim* (kindness to animals, page 3) is a natural link.

Match It answers: נֶפֶשׁ = soul · חַיָּה = living, alive · חַי = life

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