

Rediscovering the Name of God

By Moshe Schwab

There has been a lot of speculation over how to pronounce the name for God, יהוה (Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey), because it is no longer pronounced by the Jewish community and the pronunciation is thought to have been lost. This is no longer true. God said this is His name, but some say that we cannot use God's name even though God's name is used 6,828 times in the Tanakh. Scholars have found God's name with the vowel markings in over 1,000 manuscripts to date. We now can speak the name of God correctly and understand what it means. God says in **Exodus 3:15 that, "This is my name forever."** The Bible shows us that God's name was to be used in blessings, in conversation, in worship, and in greetings; of course, with reverence.

Let's begin in Exodus 3:14 where God tells Moshe (Moses) that God's name is אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה - eheyeh asher eheyeh which means, "I will be that I will be." Eheyeh is the 1st person future tense of the verb הָיָה (hayah) which means to exist, to be. Why is that important? Because it relates to the name God tells us to use, יהוה (Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey), in the next verse. Let's read Exodus 3:15 CJB:

God said further to Moshe, "Say this to the people of Isra'el: Yuh-Vav-Heh [ADONAI], the God of your fathers, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitz'chak and the God of Ya'akov, has sent me to you." This is my name forever; this is how I am to be remembered generation after generation.

Verse 14 uses the verb הָיָה (hayah) and verse 15 uses the special name for God יהוה ("Yud-Hey-Vav-Heh [ADONAI]"). The name for God is usually substituted as ADONAI in capital letters. How does verse 14 connect with verse 15? First, let's begin with the pronunciation of the first two letters of יהוה (Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey) – namely, יה (yud-heh). Note, Hebrew is written from right to left when you look at the Hebrew words.

Some say that the first two letters are pronounced Yah which is a shortened name for God and used 49 times in the Tanakh.¹ "Yah" as part of a word is used at the end of Hebrew names and not at the beginning of a word (at the end of words as in -yah or -yahu; for example, the name Eli-**yahu**, אֵלִיָּהוּ). It is unlikely that the first two letters of God's name are pronounced as "yah." The pronunciation is better explained by how we see Hebrew names pointed (pointing determines the Hebrew vowels) at the beginning of a Hebrew name.

The first two Hebrew letters, yud-heh are used at the beginning of Hebrew names and are pointed as "yeho" (with the vav).² **Yeho**-yakim (יְהוֹיָקִים), **Yeho**-ram (יְהוֹרָם), and **Yeho**-shafat (יְהוֹשָׁפָט) are all pointed "yeho" and so are the other Hebrew names beginning with yud-heh, יה. So, we know how the first two letters of the name for God are to be pronounced, "ye-ho." Pretty simple so far, I hope. The next letter, vav, makes a "v" sound (some incorrectly assert that the vav makes a "w" sound)³ and the hey at the end of the name for God then forms the last syllable "ah" ("ah" is the sound that many Hebrew words make when hey is the last letter of the word). So, we have: Ye-ho-váh (**"y" is pronounced as a "y" as in you, not a "j"**). The word for God is Ye-ho-VAH with the accent on the last syllable.

What does Ye-ho-VAH mean? Now we can go back to Exodus 3:14 where God says He is, אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה - eheyeh asher eheyeh. Remember, I said that eheyeh correlates to יהוה (Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey). Like I said, eheyeh is the 1st person future tense of the verb הָיָה (hayah) which means to exist, to be. It turns out that Ye-ho-VAH represents three forms of the Hebrew verb hayah, היה to exist. It forms an acronym. An acronym is when the letters of a word stands for something.

Here are the three forms of the verb hayah, היה to exist, used for Ye-ho-VAH, יְהוָה:

Referring to the future, **Yi**heyeh – He will exist.⁴

Referring to the present, **HO**Veh – He exists.

Referring to the past, hay**AH** – He existed.

¹ Strong's Lexicon, H3050, <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H3050&t=KJV&ss=1>

² The vav is pointed to sound like an "o." We will see that in the name of God, the second letter is pointed to sound like "ho."

³ Five Jewish Arabic communities used the "w" sound for the letter vav because there is no "v" sound in Arabic. In the 1800s, scholars visited Jewish communities **around the world** to determine the sound of the Jewish letters. Vav has a "v" sound. See, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xz27bG2k4JU&feature=push-u&attr_tag=RsjcJFzc5DZyV_Hz-6

⁴ When we put a yud in front of a verb (in this case, the verb hayah) it changes the verb to future tense (from the context).

There are so many atheists these days that say God does not exist. God says He does exist! As you can see from the letters that I bolded, it forms the name for God. From the verb to exist we can interpolate it to also mean, **He was, He is, and He will be!**

Ye-Ho-VAH is pronounced as, “Yě” like the word “yes,” “Hō” like “home,” and “Văh” as in “pah;” Yě-hō-váh. The accent is on the -VAH. Whenever we use any name for God we should use it with reverence whether that be God, Lord, Adonai, Elohim etcetera. Also, I think that using the name Ye-ho-VAH sparingly can help us to use God’s name with reverence. I personally would use it with awe and deep respect at appropriate times, especially for prayers and the Aaronic benediction. **I don’t believe we are to over use this name as some do.** I found the overuse to be annoying – it doesn’t sound like they are treating God’s name with respect.

It is apparent that Ye-ho-VAH is God’s name forever, so what happened? Around 200 AD, God’s name was outlawed by the Romans. Then, a rabbi got wrapped in a scroll and burned to death for using the name of Ye-ho-VAH. In order to stop any further deaths, the rabbis temporarily forbade the use of God’s name until a later date, but they never rescinded their order. They now say we are not to desecrate God’s name, but it is really God’s name they are desecrating by not using His proper name.

ADONAI is used for Ye-ho-VAH in the Complete Jewish Bible (CJB).

Referring to USING the name of Ye-ho-VAH,

“... May **ADONAI** lift up his face toward you and give you peace. ‘In this way they are to put my name on the people of Isra’el, so that I will bless them;” Numbers 6:26-27 CJB

“When David had finished offering the burnt offering and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of **ADONAI**-Tzva’ot;” 2 Samuel 6:18 CJB

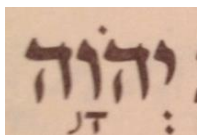
This scripture says that God’s people who do what is right use God’s name, Ye-ho-VAH.

“The name of **ADONAI** is a strong tower; a righteous person runs to it and is raised high [above danger];” Proverbs 18:10 CJB.⁵

Notice is doesn’t say to not use God’s actual name. Having respect doesn’t mean that we ignore a name.

Using people’s correct names shows them respect. We wouldn’t call our dad Rick (if that was his name); we would respectfully call him dad. In the following text it reads, “for those who feared יהוה and had respect for his name.” “Then those who feared **ADONAI** spoke together; and **ADONAI** listened and heard. **A record book was written in his presence for those who feared ADONAI** and had respect for his name;” Malachi 3:16 CJB.

Do you respect His name properly or do you avoid using His true name? God says He’s going to judge those who don’t respect the name of יהוה. You can do what you want, but I want to obey God. Recently, it has been reported that the name of God pointed as Ye-ho-VAH has been found in over a 1,000 manuscripts as of this writing.⁶



God’s name has been pointed many times that way in the Aleppo Codex which is considered the most accurate manuscript of the Tanakh (Old Testament portion). This is an **actual** picture from the Aleppo Codex.⁷ Genesis 2:4 in the Aleppo Codex is pointed יהוה which is pronounced **Ye-ho-VAH**.

⁵ Years ago, Muslims attacked the United States and destroyed two huge office buildings in New York City. I talked to someone while I was in New York City after the attacks who was across the street in an office building when the towers were hit. He said that the surrounding buildings were damaged and the windows were blown out all except for a church across the street from the towers. Inside the front of the church there are the letters יהוה, **the name for God**. So, people were running into this church for safety with the name of God in it, and they were saved from danger just like this scripture says in Proverbs 18:10. It is really amazing. It can’t be a coincidence – God wants His name to be known.

⁶ <https://www.nehemiaswall.com/1000-manuscripts-yehovah>

⁷ Genesis 2:4 from the Aleppo Codex. Note the name for God is fully pointed (all the vowels). Scholars have noted that this manuscript has the word for God with all the vowels shown 50 times. From: Jerusalem Crown, The Bible of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. N. Ben-zvi Printing Enterprises Ltd. 2000.

This substantiates the correct pronunciation and understanding of the word Ye-ho-VAH. Some say the pronunciation of Ye-ho-VAH is a Christian invention, but that is not true. **It is the name and pronunciation shown in the Hebrew Bible.** So, whether or not you want to use the name for God, that is up to you. The biblical text says, יהוה (Ye-ho-VAH). What you decide doesn't change what the manuscript says.

I found it interesting that Strong's Concordance has יהוה (Ye-ho-VAH). for the name of God.⁸ According to M. Gerard Gertoux an inscription from around 1400 BC shows the pronunciation to be Ye-ho-VAH.⁹ "Paul Drach: De l'harmonie entre l'église et la synagogue (Of the Harmony Between the Church and the Synagogue), published in 1842": "Yehova, which was in agreement with the beginning of all the theophoric names, was the authentic pronunciation...."¹⁰ Even in the 2nd century **they considered יהוה to be an acronym** and pronounced God's name as Ye-ho-VAH. Nicetas, Bishop of Heraclea said (translated from Latin, "j's" and "i's" are pronounced as "y" as in you), "That mystic name which is called the Tetragrammaton, by which alone they who had access to the Holy of Holies were protected, is pronounced JEHOVAH (Iehovah), which means, Who is, and Who shall be."¹¹ Hope of Israel Ministries cites 20 scholarly articles showing that God's name is יהוה (Ye-ho-VAH) and encourages us to not be afraid to use God's true name.¹²

Again, ADONAI is used for יהוה (Ye-ho-VAH) in the Complete Jewish Bible (CJB). יהוה is what God wants to be called.

"God said further to Moshe, Say this to the people of Isra'el: 'Yud- Heh- Vav- Heh [ADONAI], the God of your fathers, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitz'chak and the God of Ya'akov, has sent me to you.' **This is my name forever**; this is how I am to be remembered generation after generation;" Exodus 3:15 CJB.

God wants us to use His name, Ye-ho-VAH, when we are together.

"Proclaim with me the greatness of ADONAI; let us exalt his name together;" Psalm 34:4 CJB.¹³

God's name was commonly used and was used in greeting each other.

"When Bo'az arrived from Beit-Lechem. He said to the reapers, "ADONAI be with you"; and they answered him, "ADONAI bless you;" Ruth 2:4 CJB.

God wanted Israel and Moshe to use an acronym for God's name. Because of the pointing found in over 1,000 manuscripts, we now can speak the name of God correctly and understand what Ye-ho-VAH means. Ye-Ho-VAH is used 6,828 times in the Tanakh (Old Testament portion). That is a lot! It doesn't even make sense not to use a name that is used so much, not to mention that we are commanded to use His name. It says in Exodus 3:15 that, "This is my name forever." How long is forever? It's forever, end of argument. God has the last word.

⁸ Strong's Concordance, H3068, <http://biblehub.com/hebrew/3068.htm>

⁹ <http://www.hope-of-israel.org/GodsName.html>, Under "Some Scholarly Comments." Jewish and Christians scholars closely agree that Israel left Egypt around 1300 BC. The archeological evidence places this find before Moshe which would be an amazing find! Yehovah speaks to Adam and Eve in Genesis so perhaps this is the name God has used for all of time.

¹⁰ <http://www.hope-of-israel.org/GodsName.html>, Under "Some Scholarly Comments."

¹¹ "Nicetas, Bishop of Heraclea: 2nd century, from The Catena On the Pentateuch, published in Latin by Francis Zephyrus, p. 156," <http://www.hope-of-israel.org/GodsName.html>, Under "Some Scholarly Comments."

¹² <http://www.hope-of-israel.org/GodsName.html>, Under "Some Scholarly Comments."

¹³ When Shaul (Paul) uses Father for Yehovah he probably does that because many new believers in the Jewish Messiah Yeshua wouldn't understand what Yehovah meant without a tedious explanation and they also could have trouble saying God's name correctly. Yehovah was also called Father in the Tanakh (Old Testament portion). It is better to use Father or an appropriate understood word for God (like Father, Lord, God, or Adonai) if a person doesn't understand what Yehovah means. Remember to accent the last syllable of Yehovah.