

# THE HEBREW YEHOVAH VS. THE ROMAN YAHWEH

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The Name of the Creator of the universe, Yehovah, the four Hebrew letters, יהוה, commonly referring to as the Tetragrammaton, appears in the Scripture more than 6,000 times. This comes to show us that He clearly wants His Name to be known, not forgotten. But what is His Name and how is it pronounced in Hebrew? Many believers around the world sincerely seek the answer to this question, because they need to praise the Creator of the universe in truth.

*Who has gone up to the heavens and come down? Who has gathered the wind in His fists?  
Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who established all the ends of the earth? **What is His Name, and what is His Son's Name, if you know it?** (Pro 30:4)*

## What is His true Name?



Hebrew language is phonetic. This means we can look at a written word and know how to pronounce it and upon hearing a word we know how to spell it.

In other words, with the phonetic languages, there is a direct relationship between the spelling and the sound of the word. Very often in the phonetic languages there is a simple rule: one letter one sound. It is important to understand that unlike Hebrew, English is not a phonetic language. In English, a word is not said the same way it is spelled, and it is spelled not the way it is said.

But how does Hebrew language work? Hebrew words have a tri-consonantal root consisting of three consonants separated by vowel sounds. Prefixes and suffixes are added to roots to modify the meaning of the word and thus a new word is created. Letters can be added inside the word, which also can modify its meaning. All words in Hebrew, nouns and adjectives, actually stem from tri-consonantal verbs, which makes Hebrew an action-oriented language.

What is important to know about Hebrew is that a Hebrew word has only one meaning, but can have different applications, unlike other languages whose words can have different and sometimes even opposite meanings.

In Hebrew there are only two genders, masculine and feminine, which are found in the verb as well as in noun forms.

Hebrew has only two tenses: perfect and imperfect. In perfect tense the action is completed, and the results of the action are present. This tense is translated as past tense. In imperfect tense the action is incomplete, and no results are accomplished. Usually, this tense is translated as present, present continuous, or future tense depending on the context.

The Biblical Hebrew has a specific syntax and melody. This is true for all languages, but what makes Hebrew distinctive from them can be demonstrated with this simple example.

In English we say: “An artist creates a painting.” But in Hebrew we may want to say: “A painter paints a painting.” And to be even more Hebraic and to use the language in its full scale, and since Hebrew is a language based on verbs, the same sentence will sound like: “One who is painting is painting what is being painted.” That would be poor English, for instance, but excellent Hebrew.

So, we see that in English we try to avoid a word repetition and use synonyms instead in order to make our speech more “intellectual,” “richer.” However, in Hebrew it is not uncommon and even in some instances it is a sought effect to use the same word in a sentence with its different forms and variants or use even different words that sound closely. This is called Hebrew pun or word play. Hebrew puns are very often used in the Hebraic poetry, which is different from the western poetry.

Therefore, we may say that Hebrew is a verb based and action-oriented language. This also means that the Creator’s distinctive Name is a verb and action-oriented word, which will be the subject of this study.

Hebrew alphabet (or *alefbet*) is comprised of consonants only. This simply means that there are no letters for vowels and the appropriate vowels in a Hebrew word depend on various grammar and phonetic rules. Unlike English, for instance, Hebrew language follows strict patterns in which the written consonant (C) letters and supplied vowels (V) look like: the CVCVC pattern in words like *Torah, magen, shalom*, or the VCVC pattern in words like *Elohim, Adonai, erets*, etc. One consonant and one supplied vowel form a syllable.

Since there are no graphic symbols for the vowels in the *alefbet*, they are provided in the text by inserting special characters that look like dots and are supplied for the non-native readers. Without the supplied vowels, a Hebrew word cannot be pronounced unless the reader is a native, or very well trained in Hebrew.

And the opposite is also true: there is no Hebrew word with vowels only for the very simple reason that there are no vowel letters in the *alefbet*. And since there are no vowel characters, such “a word” cannot even be written down and therefore it cannot be of Hebraic origin; it is not a Hebrew word. This is important to understand, too.

However, there are three consonantal letters, which will be used for the purpose of this study, that can realize vowel sounds, or as the linguists call them *semivowels*: *alef*, *vav*, and *yud*.

The letter א *alef* is realized as a glottal stop, [ʔ], in most pronunciations. It should be noted, however, that in the Ashkenazi pronunciation, and occasionally, but much less frequently, also in some Sephardic, and Yemenite pronunciations, it may be silent.

The letter ו *vav* is realized as a [v] but sometimes it is pronounced “oo” transliterated [u] when pointed texts have a dot inside the letter or “oh” transliterated [o] when pointed texts have a dot on top (though sometimes, *vav* with a dot on top is pronounced “vo”). The confusion comes when *vav* is thought to be realized as the semivowel [w] as this letter is pronounced in Arabic. For more on this matter read the article [“Vav” Or “Waw”?](#)

## Hebrew, the language of Creation

In Hebrew the word for *speech*, דִּבּוּר *dibbur* is the same as the word for *thing*, דָּבָר *davar*. So, to create the world Elohim spoke words that materialized in His Creation. How can we be sure that none other than Hebrew was the language preserved for us since day one of the creation?

All names starting with the first one, that of Adam, through Noach and the lineage of Shem until the present day have meanings in Hebrew. But all other names through the sons of Noach, Yaphet and Ham, that appear in the Bible after the rebellion in Babel, simply have no meanings in Hebrew.

The languages such as Arabic, Aramaic, and others are also Semitic. But since there are significant differences between Hebrew and them, we can conclude that Arabic and Aramaic, which originated at the tower of Babel, deviate from Hebrew and, therefore, are corrupted versions of the Hebrew language.

Ironically, Arabic and Aramaic are the languages some linguists take as pure languages in order “to prove” that Hebrew was the corrupted one and had lost letters and sounds, not Arabic and Aramaic. But about this we will study later on.

The letter **י** *yud* is realized by the great majority of the Jewish communities as the palatal semivowel [y]. Some communities have for this realization the variant [i].

## The meaning of the Name of Yehovah

With these rules being set, which will be very helpful from now on in our study, we can turn to the Biblical text and see what we can learn in regard to how to pronounce the Tetragrammaton, YHVH, the Creator’s Name.

When Elohim told Mosheh to go to the children of Israel and tell them that He had sent him, Mosheh asked Elohim what His Name was. And Elohim said to Mosheh,

*‘I am who I am.’ And He said, Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I am’ has sent me to you. (Exo 3:14)*

The key phrases which we will focus on are: *‘I am who I am.’* and *‘I am’*. In Hebrew they are written like this:

אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה

*eh-yeh asher eh-yeh*

אֶהְיֶה

*eh-yeh*

The word in question here is the tri-consonantal verb **היה** *ha-yah* from which the Tetragrammaton is derived, and it literally means *to exist* and commonly translated as *to be*. First person singular will be **אהיה** *I am* or *I exist*, and third person singular, imperfect tense: **יהיה** *He is*, or *He exists*.

And Elohim said further to Mosheh,

*Thus, you are to say to the children of Israel, ‘I am’ Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Avraham, the Elohim of Yitshak, and the Elohim of Ya‘akov, has sent me to you. This is My Name forever, and this is My remembrance to all generations. (Exo 3:15)*

In verse 15, Elohim made the same statement regarding who was sending Mosheh but this time He used another verb to say that He is the Existing One, **הוּוֹה** *ha-vah*, with the same meaning *to exist*. The only difference is that *yud* in *hayah* is replaced with *vav* as in *havah*. Again, His Name means “He exists” but this time spelled with letter *vav*. Third person singular, imperfect tense will be **הוּוֹה** *He exists*. According to the Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Definition *hayah* means to be, become, come to pass, happen, but more literally it means “to breath” hence to exist.

Probably, Mosheh did not ask Elohim what His Name was or “What should I call you?” Rather, he might have asked “Who are you; what are you like; what have you done?” That this might be the case is seen from Elohim’s response that He is eternal, that He is the Elohim of his ancestors. So, Elohim gave Mosheh the meaning of His Name. Thus, Mosheh and we received His Name.

Why should Elohim give another word for His Name, unless He wants to reveal something to us? So, the question is; How to pronounce His Name **הוּוֹה**?

There is a great deal of speculation as to how to utter the Tetragrammaton, the Name of The Everlasting One. Ironically, all these speculations as to how to pronounce the Tetragrammaton have non-Jewish origin, as their authors are not Jewish.

They all embrace Arabic, Aramaic, and even Greek and Roman, as we see later in this study, but not Hebrew. And these speculations brought forth the transliterations such as: Yahweh, Yahuah, Yahueh, Yahwè, Jahweh, Jahwè, Jahve, etc., as Yahweh being most often used in the Hebrew Roots Movement.

However, can we know with certainty how to utter the Tetragrammaton in our prayers and worship?

## **To mention or to hide the Name Yehovah?**

“If the rabbis say the pronunciation of the Name is lost, this is conspiracy. If the gentiles say the same, this is ignorance. If the gentiles say that the rabbis say that the pronunciation is lost, the rabbis have succeeded in hiding the Name.”  
Navah

Let us recall again what Elohim commanded Mosheh in Exo 3:15:

*This is My Name forever, and this is My remembrance to all generations.*



This translation does not do justice to the Hebrew text because the Hebrew word *zichri* does not mean *my remembrance*, but *my mention*. Or, the text literally says in Hebrew,

*This is My Name forever, and this is My mention (zichri) to all generations.*

This translation best reflects the Hebraic culture since the Hebrews remember something by mentioning it. Bear in mind that Hebrew is an action-oriented language.

The KJV translation of *zichri* as “my memorial” is preposterous; the Living and Everlasting Creator of the universe by no means could have “memorial.”

The Hebrew word *olam*, translated here as *forever* literally means “universe” and since the universe is endless, hence the idea of *forever*. *Olam* can be spelled as **עלם** or **עולם**, with or without *vav*.

The shortened form of *olam* is used in the verse above but has the same meaning. Spelled this way, the word may also be read as *alam* with the meaning to conceal, to hide. And since the universe is endless, it is like beyond our vision of time and space, or in other words, it is hidden from us.

And this is how the Jewish commentator Rashi gives a quite different meaning of Exo 3:15 reading **עלם** as *alam*. He says:

Heb. **לְעֵלָם** [It is spelled] without a *vav*, meaning conceal it [God’s name] **תְּהַעֲלִימְהוּ** [so] that it should not be read as it is written. — [from Pes. 50a] Since the “*vav*” of “*olam*” is missing, we are to understand it as **לְעֵלָם**, to conceal, meaning that the pronunciation of the way God’s name is written (**יְהוָה**) is to be concealed. — [from Pes. 50a.]

Thus, the Rabbis read this verse, as follows:

*This is My Name to **HIDE IT**, and this is My remembrance to all generations.’*

In other words, the Sages say, Elohim told Mosheh how to pronounce it, but then He immediately told him to hide it, and the command to hide the Name is to be remembered for all generations to come. This interpretation of the Sages contradicts the plain meaning of the verse that the Name is to be mentioned and if it is to be mentioned (uttered) by definition it cannot be concealed.

And we see in the Scripture that the Tetragrammaton was written more than 6,000 times. The Name was pronounced even until the first century AD when its utterance ceased. The Sages and later the Rabbis hid the Name from utterance in order to eliminate even the slightest possibility that His Name could be profaned by a Jew.

However, the present author believes that the real reason for hiding the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton is something else.

The Sages simply did not want gentiles to know the true utterance of the Name lest they profane it. Their intent was not to obliterate the Tetragrammaton, but to hide it; to hide it not from their own, because every Jew knows its true utterance and no observant Jew would ever profane it, but to hide it from the heathens. And we see that they have quite succeeded. Today many of the gentiles either are disinterested in the correct pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton, or they go by other foreign names, as we will see below.

For instance, in the Greek translation of Tanak the Septuagint, the oldest Greek version of Tanak translated from the Hebrew by Jewish scholars at the request of Ptolemy II, the Tetragrammaton had been substituted with *kurios* with the obvious intent to protect the Set-apart Name from profaning. So, the substitution with a foreign noun in a translation was the first means of protection. They did the same with other translation where they substituted the Tetragrammaton with words such as lord, *adonai*, etc.

What other ways did they use to hide the Name in the Hebrew Scripture? The only thing they needed to do is to take out only one of the vowel points in the Tetragrammaton to render it unpronounceable. In some instances, they have added intentionally vowel points in the Tetragrammaton other than the true ones to make the Jewish reader read “Adonai” or “Elohim” instead of the real Name.

As already said before, the present author believes that thus they have hidden the real utterance of the Tetragrammaton from the gentiles’ ears. Thus, many non-Jewish scholars have been misled by the Sages’ tricks and have come up with various “names” which could not be even Hebrew words and some of them cannot be even written down in Hebrew.

However, the Sages have preserved the true pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton in fifty instances throughout the Tanak. And some of these instances are Exo 13:3, Exo 13:9, Exo 13:12, Exo 13:15, Exo 14:1, Exo 14:8, to name a few. To completely obliterate the true pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton by the Sages, it is the same as to completely obliterate His Name. They knew that would be a sin for them and that is why they found the way to preserve it.

## **How to pronounce the Tetragrammaton?**

So, what is His Name’s true pronunciation?

This is how the Name is preserved by the sages in those fifty instances:

יהוה

## YEHOVAH

Jewish Sages say that the four letters Y-H-V-H, the Tetragrammaton, represent, “*Hayah Hoveh Yihyeh* – He was, He is, He will be.” Or He who existed, He who exists, and He who will exist, hence the idea that the Creator is the Everlasting One:

Ha-YaH, “He was”      הָיָה

Ho-VeH, “He is”      הוּוֹה

YiH-YieH, He will be”      יִהְיֶה

It is important to notice that letter ה *hey* is pronounceable inside the word, but the final one is silent. A final *hey* usually is silent unless it has a special character in it like הֿ to indicate that it is to be pronounced.

The combine pronunciation of these three verbs with the Creator’s true Name *Yehovah* creates a beautiful Hebrew poetry (the stress in the Name Yehovah is on the last syllable).

And the meanings of these Hebrew words, the Everlasting One, and the meaning of His Name Yehovah, He exists, gives the idea that the Creator of the universe is timeless.

Midrash Rabbah further says,

God said to Moses: You want to know My name? I am called by My deeds. I might be called *E-l Sha-dai*, or *Tzevakot*, or *Elokim*, or *HaVaYaH*. When I judge My creatures, I am called *Elokim*. When I wage war on the wicked, I am called *Tzevaot*. When I tolerate the sins of man, I am called *E-l Sha-dai*. When I have compassion on My world, I am called *Ha-Va-Ya-H...*”

This utterance of the Tetragrammaton, הַיְוָה, Yehovah, is in agreement with all Hebrew grammar and phonetic rules. This is how the Name Yehovah, bless be His Name, has been preserved by the Sages.

However, is there any evidence in the Hebrew Scripture preserved by Yehovah Himself for us to know how to utter His Name?

### **The Hebraic poetry as evidence of the correct utterance of *Yehovah***

One of the strongest pieces of evidence of the correct pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton הַיְוָה? Yehovah can be found in the Hebraic poetry. We need to know that unlike the western poetry



which heavily relies on rhyming at the end of verses, the Hebraic poetry uses a different type of rhymes called Hebrew puns.

This type of poetry can be best seen in Psa 122:6 which says in English:

*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. (Psa 122:6 KJV)*

But, in Hebrew it is written:

שָׁלוֹם יִשְׂרָאֵל  
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם יִשְׂרָאֵל  
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם יִשְׂרָאֵל  
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם יִשְׂרָאֵל

And pronounced:

*sha-alu sha-lom ye 'ru-sha-layim ish-layu o 'ha-vaych*

With the exception of one word all other words sound like the word של, *shal*, “to draw out” from which שאל, *sha'al*, “to ask, to pray” derives, and from which a close synonym of *shalam*, “to make complete” derives, too. And when the verse is read in Hebrew, the utterance *shal* is predominant and gives the specific Hebraic cantillation of the language.

Hence, we may say that when Hebraic poetry is used in connection with the Name, it comes to hint us of the correct pronunciation.

Now, let us find how the Tetragrammaton is used the Hebraic poetry in Eze 1:3. We read in Hebrew:

הָיָה דְבַר יְהוָה  
הָיָה דְבַר יְהוָה  
הָיָה דְבַר יְהוָה

*hay-oh hay-ah da-var Yehovah*

*There was surely the word of YHVH*

This wording seems unnecessary; it could have been said *and it came to pass* which in Hebrew is יָבֵן and is a common expression of the same idea. But in Eze 1:3 the rhyming of two forms of the Hebrew verb *hay-ah* הִיָּה, *hay-oh hay-ah*, with *Yehovah* is very Hebraic and forms a beautiful pun.

This rhyming would not work with the so-called “*yahweh*” or any other utterance, but only with the true one, *Yehovah*.

Another evidence is found in Exo 9:3, where a similar rhyming appears:

יְדִיָּה הָיָה  
יְדִיָּה הָיָה

*yad Yehovah hoy-ah*

*The hand of YHVH is*

Again, this wording and rhyming seem unnecessary, but it is used for a purpose. It is obvious that the Creator has rhymed the verb *hay-ah* with His Name Yehovah. The word *hoy-ah* (feminine form) in Exo 9:3 rhymes with the masculine form of *ha-vah*, יהוה.

But probably the most compelling evidence in Hebraic poetry can be found in the following verses of Isaiah and Revelation:

*I am the First and I am the Last, besides Me there is no Elohim.* (Isa 44:6)

*Favor to you and peace from Him **who is and who was and who is coming**,* (Rev 1:4)

*I am the ‘Aleph’ and the ‘Tav’, Beginning and End,” says **Yehovah who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*** (Rev 1:8)

יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה וְהָיָה וְיָבֹוא

*Yehovah ah-sheer ha-yah v'ho-veh v'ya-vo*

*Yehovah who exists, and existed, and shall come*

It is Yehovah Elohim who speaks of Himself through the Messiah to Yochanan the Apostle (see Rev 1:1). We cannot find a better Hebrew word play than this example.

## **The Name Yehovah as found in Hebrew names**

But the most numerous hints found in the Scripture are in the Hebrew names that contain the three letters of the Creator's name Yehovah: יהוה.

The Hebrew grammar and phonetic rules dictate that when a name begins with these three letters they are pronounced *yeho-*, however, when they are at the end of the name, they are pronounced *-yahu*. Such names are: *Yeho-shua*, that is Joshua, Yehonathan, Yehoyada, Yehoshaphat, Yehoram, Yehonadav, Yeho'achaz, Yeho'ash, Yehozavad, Yehoyakim, Yehoyachin, Yehotsadak, Yehoyada, Yehoyariv, Yehochanan; *Yesha-yahu*, that is Isaiah, *Yirme-yahu*, that is Jeremiah, *Eliyahu*, that is Elijah, Benayahu, Adoniyahu, Azaryahu, Yoshiyahu, Achiyahu, Ovadyahu, Achazyahu, Athalyahu, Amatsyahu, Remalyahu, Uzziyahu, Chizkiyahu, Yoshiyahu, Atsalyahu, Tsidkiyahu, Gedalyahu, Zecharyahu, Berechyahu, Benayahu, Shemaryahu, Yishshiyahu, Mattithyahu, that is Matthew. Sadly, all of these names have been lost in the English translation of the Bible and thus the Name of Elohim, Yehovah, has been lost for the gentiles, too.

The three letters יהו appear in the beginning of the Name Yehovah, therefore, they must be pronounced as in all other Hebrew names beginning with the prefix yeho- are pronounced. The phonetic rules are unchanged.

However, to ignore such a long list of Hebrew names in which the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton has been preserved for us and to seek foreign and even impossible “names” and to present them as academic findings is a matter of ignorance.

Let us examine some of the names listed above and see what more we can learn from them. The name ישעיהו (*yasha-yahu*), Isaiah, also written in the short form ישעיה (*Yasha-yah*), is formed by two words, ישע (*yasha*) and יהו (*yahu*) or יה (*yah*). Both יהו and יה are derivatives of the Tetragrammaton, Yehovah.

ישע (*ya-shah*) is a verb meaning to “save” but more literally to “cry out” for deliverance. This specific conjugation of the verb with יהוה means *Yehovah saves*. This is the exact meaning of the name Yehoshua but written in a different form: יהושוע, *Yehoshua*. This is the name of Mosheh’s disciple commonly known as Joshua as in Jos 1:1, but in postexilic period known with its short form: Yeshua as seen in Neh 8:17. This is also the name of Yehovah’s Messiah *Yeshua* [Mat 1:21].

The name יוחנן (*Yochanan*), English nickname John, is a compound name of two words, יו (*yo*) and חנן (*chanan*). חנן (*chanan*) is a verb meaning to protect and comes from the parent root חן (*chen*) to provide protection. The word יו (*yo*) is another form of the name יהוה Yehovah. Or combined the name Yochanan means *Yehovah protects*.

Another interesting name is יהודה *Yehudah*, that is Judah. Compare this spelling with יהוה *Yehovah*. The Tetragrammaton יהוה is contained in the name of the fourth son of Ya’akov because Gen 29:35 says so:

*And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Now I praise יהוה.” So, she called his name Yehudah.*

Therefore, *Yehudah* means: יהוה be praised, or as Keil & Delitzsch’s Commentary puts it: “The one for whom Yehovah is praised.”

The fact of *Yehudah*’s name containing the Tetragrammaton יהוה, is acknowledged not only by Keil & Delitzsch, but by other scholars of the Hebrew Scriptures, such as Procksch, Lewy, Albright, Millard, and Zorell.

## **The Names of the Creator Yehovah and Yah**

Now, the Creator has revealed to us also His other Name which has the first two letters of the Tetragrammaton. Notice how it is spelled in Hebrew:

*I called on **Yah** (יָהּ) in distress; **Yah** (יָהּ) answered me in a broad place. (Psa 118:5)*

A common error is to pronounce it as *Ya* where the final letter *hey* is silent, but it should be pronounced as *Yah* where *hey* is pronounced, as the dot in it indicates so. The same phonetic rule applies for the phrase *Halleluyah*, Praise *Yah* where the final *hey* is pronounceable.

Another common error among non-Jewish is to mechanically transfer the vowels from *Yah* to the Tetragrammaton.

For instance, they say that because many Hebrew names ending with *-yahu* or *-ya* (see above) have the three-letter **יהו**, the Tetragrammaton must be pronounced as *yahu-*. Hence, they come up with “variations” such as *Yahweh*, *Yahuah*, *Yahueh*, *Yahwè*, *Jahweh*, *Jahwè*, *Jave*.

This does not agree with any grammatical and phonetic rules in Hebrew, not to mention that they dismiss the Hebrew names starting with *yeho-*. Notice that although *yud* and *hey* are common for both Names, **יָהּ** and **יְהוָה** they have different vowels and therefore pronounced differently: *Yah* and *Yehovah*.

Now, can we apply a vowel set from the Name *Yah* or the suffix *-yahu* to **יהו**? And can we insert any vowels in the Tetragrammaton YHVH? Let us consider the following example.

The word *Yeshurun* is YHVH’s intimate name for Israel and appears only four times in Tanak: Isa 44:2, Deu 32:15, Deu 33:5, and Deu 33:26. Notice that the first three letters of the word **ישראל** for *Israel* are identical with the first three letters in **ישרון** for *Yeshurun* (*yud*, *shin*, and *resh*) although these names sound differently. (An Ephramite would pronounce *Yeshurun* as *Yesurun*.)

We should have already noticed that what is the name *Yeshurun* to Israel, the same is the Name *Yah* to *Yehovah*. Vowels of one do not go mechanically to the other just because *Yeshurun* is the poetical name of Israel as *Yah* is the poetical Name of *Yehovah*.

In other words, as the name of the nation cannot be *Yesurul* but *Israel*, so the Name of the Creator cannot possibly be “*yahuah*.”

So far, we studied how to pronounce the true Name of *Yehovah*. In the next part of this article, we will study what is not His Name and how foreign words for Hebrew language like “*yahweh*” have entered the worship service of the Creator.

## What His Name cannot be

## The influence of the Roman mythology

In the Roman mythology, the king of the pagan gods, Jupiter, was one of the children of Saturn, and in Classical Latin is spelled like this: *Iove*. This pagan god was the equivalent to the Greek Zeus. Jupiter, or Iuppiter, is a compound word of two other Roman words *Iove* or genitive form *Iovis* with the word *pater*, meaning father, and essentially meant “*father Iove*.” In English *Iove* is spelled *Jove* and according to Latin grammar, *Iove*, is the ablative case of *Iuppiter*, or *Jupiter*, as it is anglicized. Here is the place to say that the modern Latin spoken in the Catholic Church today is not the Classical Latin spoke in the Roman empire back then.

First thing we need to know is that technically Latin has no letter *J*. This letter was introduced in the 13th century or thereabouts to differentiate between the vowel *I* and the consonant *I* in Latin. The consonantal *I* is like the English *Y* and the vowel *I* is like the English *E*. Until this last century, most printed Latin texts used the *J* to indicate different sounds. Today the *J*s are usually replaced with the more classical *I*.

For instance, when Geneva Bible was written in 1587, there was not *j*-sound in existence in English and in the world, and all *U*-sounds in the texts below were written with letter *V* and all *V*-sounds: with letter *U*. Notice how the Tetragrammaton Yehovah had been transliterated into Old English. Compare:

*And I appeared vnto Abraha, to Izhak, & to Iaakob by the Name of Almightye God: but by **my Name Iehouah** was I not knowen vnto the. (Exo 6:3)*

*The Lord is a man of warre, his **Name is Iehouah**. (Exo 15:3)*

*And Moses builte an altar and called the name of it, **Iehouah-nissi** (Exo 17:15)*

*These three times in the yeere shall all thy men children appeare before the Lord **Iehouah**. (Exo 23:17)*

*Thrise in a yere shal all your men children appeare before the Lorde **Iehouah** God of Israel. (Exo 34:23)*

*Then Gideon made an altar there vnto the Lord, and called it, **Iehouah-shalom**: vnto this day it is in Ophrah, of the father of the Ezrites. (Jdg 6:24)*

*That they may knowe that thou, which art called **Iehouah**, art alone, euen the Most High ouer all the earth. (Psa 83:18)*

The 1587 Geneva Bible was the base of the 1611 KJV Bible which has the same spelling. This old spelling came into English from Latin as the Romans conquered Western Europe and Britannia in particular and spread their Latin alphabet.

It is interesting to know that the j-sound was not in circulation in the world as of 17th century when the KJV Bible was authorized and came as a corruption of the languages sometime afterwards. Even today a few languages like Greek and German do not have this sound and of course the language of Creation, Hebrew.

Notice in the verses above, how the u-letter was used to realize the v-sound as in the Name Yehovah; and the v-letter was used to realize the u-sound, which realization most likely came from Latin.

Notice also, that the j-letter was used very sparingly in Old English only to serve as a semivowel in some Hebrew names, as seen in the verse below.

*And Abraham called the name of that place, **Iehouah-ijreh**. (Gen 22:14)*

Also, Latin does not have the letter *W* either. In names such as Julius, the *J* is pronounced like the consonant *Y*. This is also interchangeable with the letter *I*, so the Roman Emperor Julius becomes *Iulius*, “Yule-ee-us” but written in Latin as IVLIVS. *I* before a vowel is a consonant and *V* is uttered like the English *W*.

Consider also how v-letter realizes the u-sound in the Hebrew word *Yehudah* spelled out in Latin coins below: *IVDEA* or Judea in English.



A Roman coin bearing the inscription “IVDEA CAPTA” (Judea captured) and portraying a woman sitting on the floor under a palm tree and a legionnaire resting on a spear while a Jewish slave is captive at his feet. The Roman Emperor Vespasian (on the coin) wanted to make widely known to his people that it was he who conquered Judea. Rome printed the coins until the year 81 CE.





And more Roman coins showing how Jupiter, Iove, was spelled in Classical Latin along with the image of the Roman idol.



In the Catholic Church, the first edition of the official Vatican *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio, editio typica*, published in 1979, used the

traditional word *Dominus* when rendering the Tetragrammaton in the overwhelming majority of places where it appears; it also used the form *Iahveh* or *Iahweh* for rendering the Tetragrammaton in three known places: Exodus 3:15, Exodus 15:3, Exodus 17:15. In the second edition of the *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio, editio typica altera*, published in 1986, however, these few occurrences of the form *Iahveh* were replaced with *Dominus*.

Now, let us summarize the following facts about Latin grammar: the Classical Latin has neither the English *J* nor *V* sound. Latin *J* is pronounced as the English *Y*, and the Latin *V* is pronounced as the English *W*. There is no silent *E* in Latin, as in English, and all letters in Latin are pronounceable, unlike English. If a Latin word ends with an *E*, it is pronounced as a short “eh” sound.

And now the moment comes. If we have to pronounce *Iove* (Jupiter) as the ancient Romans had done it, *Iove* would be pronounced very nearly, if not exactly as *Yoweh*. Does that sound familiar?

## The Samaritan connection

But how and when did the name of the Roman pagan god Jupiter or Yoweh Father enter English language? Let us consider the history.

But first, who are the Samaritans?

When the king of Babylon exiled the Jews from their land, he also brought other people in their stead who later would become known as the Samaritans. When the Samaritans settled, they became overwhelmed by wild beasts of the land and asked the king to send priests of the previous people who lived in that land to teach them how to appease the gods of that land. The king sent Levites who taught them of the God of the Jews and this is how the Samaritans learned to some extent the Torah. Thus, over the centuries they practiced their own Torah and Ten Commandments and did religious rites similar to the Torah Temple service. Today erroneously the Samaritans are considered by some scholars half Jews, but they are not Jews at all.

The Greek Antiochus IV Epiphanes was on the throne of the Seleucid Empire from 175 to 163 BC. His policy was to Hellenize his entire kingdom in which the Jews and the Samaritans lived. According to the Apocrypha in the Book of Maccabees (1Ma 1:41-50) he profaned the altar of the

true Elohim, Elohim of Avraham, Yitschak, and Ya'akov, and mandated death to anyone in Judea who kept the Law, the Sabbath, the circumcision, and refused to worship him as a god. He also put a ban on proclaiming the Set-apart Name of Elohim of Israel Yehovah. This ban is recorded in ancient Jewish sources:

*“The Greeks made decrees to eradicate Israel, ordering them to deny the kingdom of heaven, to declare that they have no portion with the God of Israel, and not to mention the name of God on their lips.”* Scholion on Megilat Ta’anit, 3rd of Tishrei.

The universal peril upon the Judeans led the Samaritans to repudiate all connection with them, and to appease the Greeks they named their temple on Mount Gerizim by the name of Jupiter, or Iove Pater, Yoweh Father, as we learn from 2Ma 6:1-2:

*And not long after this the king sent forth an old man of Athens to compel the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers, and not to live after the laws of God and also to pollute the sanctuary in Jerusalem, and to call it by the name of **Jupiter Olympius**, and to call the sanctuary in Gerizim by the name of **Jupiter the Protector of strangers**, even as they were that lived in the place.*

Notice, that Antiochus named the Temple in Jerusalem after the Greco-Roman god *Jupiter Olympius* and the Samaritan temple in Gerizim: *Jupiter the Protector of strangers*. The Samaritan temple in Gerizim was probably named so, because the Samaritans were considered strangers in the land of the Jews.

Notice also that Josephus in Antiquities of the Jews, Book 12, Chapter 5:5 quotes that the Samaritans did not have a name for their temple and therefore they did not have a name for the god they worshiped either. The reason for their nameless god was that when some of the Levites taught them about the God of the Land, they never revealed to them the Name of the Living Elohim, Yehovah. That would have been unlawful for them to do so. But when the Samaritans saw the sufferings of the Jews, and to appease the conquerors they quickly named it after the name of the god of the new masters: Jupiter, Iuppiter, Iove Pater, or Yoweh Father:

*When the Samaritans saw the Jews under these sufferings, they no longer confessed that they were of their kindred, nor that the temple on Mount Gerizzim belonged to Almighty God. This was according to their nature, as we have already shown. And they now said that they were a colony of Medes and Persians; and indeed, they were a colony of theirs. So, they sent ambassadors to Antiochus, and an epistle, whose contents are these: “To king Antiochus the god, Epiphanes, a memorial from the Sidonians, who live at Shechem. Our forefathers, upon certain frequent plagues, and as following a certain ancient superstition, had a custom of observing that day which by the Jews is called the Sabbath. And when they had erected a temple at the mountain called **Gerrizzim**, though without a name, they offered upon it the*

*proper sacrifices. Now, upon the just treatment of these wicked Jews, those that manage their affairs, supposing that we were of kin to them, and practiced as they do, make us liable to the same accusations, although we be originally Sidonians, as is evident from the public records. We therefore beseech thee, **our benefactor and Savior**, to give order to Apollonius, the governor of this part of the country, and to Nicanor, the procurator of thy affairs, to give us no disturbance, nor to lay to our charge what the Jews are accused for, since we are aliens from their nation, and from their customs; but let **our temple, which at present hath no name at all be named the Temple of Jupiter Hellenius.***

Now, go back to 2 Maccabees and Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews and replace *Jupiter Olympius* and *Jupiter Hellenius* with *Yoweh* and you will get *Yoweh Olympius* and *Yoweh Hellenius*, or *Yoweh the Olympian* and *Yoweh the Greek*, respectively. *Olympia* is a plain in Greece in the northwestern Peloponnese and also, according to the Greek mythology, the chief sanctuary of Zeus, that is the same idol Yohweh for the Romans, and the site of the original Olympian Games. The Olympian Games were nothing but a Zeus worship where the athletes from many nations competed naked to glorify the human body and in honor of the Greek gods, Zeus being the chief of them. Again, Yohweh is the Roman counterpart of Zeus in the Roman mythology.

Shortly afterwards, the Greek king sent Gerontes the Athenian to force the Jews of Israel to violate their ancestral customs and live no longer by the laws of God; and to profane the Temple in Jerusalem and dedicate it to Jupiter Olympius, and the one on Mount Gerizim to Jupiter, Protector of Strangers, as the inhabitants of the latter place had requested (2Ma 6:1-2). This Samaritan temple at Mount Gerizim was destroyed by Yohanan Hyrcanus, Maccabean leader, in about 128 BC, having existed about 200 years. Only a few stone remnants of it exist today.

The temple of Gerizim was rebuilt by the Samaritans after the Jewish revolt led by Bar Kochba against the Romans in 135 CE when the Judeans were exiled to the four corners of the empire. After the defeat, the Romans made sacked the old city Jerusalem and turned it into Aelia Capitolina, a Roman city where Jews could not live. A temple was built to Jupiter, Yoweh, in Jerusalem.

*At Jerusalem Hadrian founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground, naming it Aelia Capitolina, and on the site of the temple of the god he raised **a new temple to Jupiter**. This brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration, for the Jews deemed it intolerable that foreign races should be settled in their city and foreign religious rites planted there. – Cassius Dio, Roman History, 69.12.*

Therefore, with this being said, we see that the name of the pagan Roman deity Yoweh became a name of the nameless god the Samaritans worshiped. And according to Moore, George Foot (1911). 311 "Jehovah" in Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 15, 11th ed, the Samaritan priests

have preserved a liturgical pronunciation “Yahwe” or “Yahwa” to the present day, that is 1911. Here we should say that it is not uncommon for a borrowed word to change its pronunciation and spelling in other language.

Again, how did a name of a Roman pagan god enter English language and even worse became a name for worship?

## How some altered the truth to invent “Yahweh”

Wilhelm Gesenius, (1786–1842), German orientalist, Biblical critic, theologian and Hebraist, is usually cited as the scholarly authority behind pronouncing the Creator’s Name as *Yahweh*.

However, this is not true. In the excerpt below from his [Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon](#) he clearly states that the main source for this pronunciation is of a Samaritan origin, not Hebraic. He also states that pronouncing the name as *Yehovah* “more satisfactorily explains” Hebrew names that begin with *Yeho-* and *Yo-* and that the true Name is to be pronounced as it is written explicitly by the Sages in the Tanak:

Clem. Al. Strom. v. p. 562. Others, as Reland (decad. exercitatt. de vera pronunciatione nominis Jehova, Traj. ad Rh. 1707, 8.), following the Samaritans, suppose that יהוה was anciently the true pronunciation, and they have an additional ground for the opinion in the abbreviated forms יהי and יהי. Also those who consider that יהוה was the actual pronunciation (Michaëlis in Supplem. p. 524), are not altogether without ground on which to defend their opinion. In this way can the abbreviated syllables יהי and יהי, with which many proper names begin, be more satisfactorily explained. [This last argument goes a long way to prove the vowels יהוה to be the true ones.]

Wilhelm Gesenius continues to say the Creator’s proper Name is *Yehovah* (notice the vowels in the Tetragrammaton which he calls “proper name”).

As to the usage of the word, the same supreme God, and the θεὸς ἐπιχώριος [God was in an especial sense the God of the Israelites, but no idea must be admitted for a moment which would even seem to localize the God whose name is *Jehovah of Hosts*] tutelar God of the Hebrews, is called in the Old Testament by his proper name יהוה, and by the appellative יהוה יהוה



There is another punctuation of the Tetragrammaton יהוה, which usually is incorrectly transliterated into English as “yahweh”, but should have been transliterated as “yahve”, since it was based in large part on various Greek transcriptions, such as  $\alpha\beta\epsilon$ , dating from the first centuries CE which in turn is based on the Samaritan pronunciation  $\text{I}\alpha\beta\epsilon$ .

So, ironically, the Greek gave the Samaritans the Roman “Yohweh”; the Samaritan changed it to “Yahweh” and gave it back to the Romans who in their turn gave it to the peoples they conquered.

Today, many scholars erroneously accept this pronunciation “Yahweh” which is based solely on Greco-Roman-Samaritan transcriptions and totally ignore the basic Hebrew grammar and phonetic rules and traditions of the Sages.

Therefore, we may ask the question: “Is it accidental that the Samaritans’ “Yahweh” sounds like the Roman Yohweh? Again, no, it is not. It is very common for a word to change when it goes from one language to another. And this is exactly what happened to the Roman Yohweh, Jupiter: it was changed by the Samaritans to Yahweh and returned back to Rome as the alleged god of the Hebrews.

## Misunderstanding Josephus

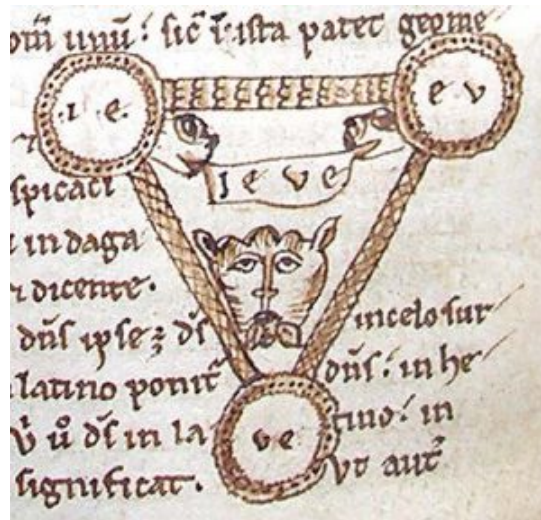
Another “source” very often quoted by proponent of the “Yahweh” pronunciation is Josephus, despite the fact that Josephus never used this word in his writings. In his Wars of the Jews, Book 5, Chapter 5:7, he describes the attire of the High Priest and more particularly the gold plate on the priest’s forehead which has the Tetragrammaton engraved. And Josephus says that it consists of four vowels:

*A mitre also of fine linen encompassed his head, which was tied by a blue ribbon, about which there was another golden crown, in which was engraved the sacred name [of God]: it consists of **four vowels**.*

A difficulty occurs somewhat in Greek when transcribing Hebrew words because of Greek’s lack of a letters for consonant *yud* and for *vav*, forcing the Hebrew consonants *yud* and *vav* to be transcribed into Greek as vowels. Also, the final *hey* caused difficulty for Greeks and was liable to be omitted. In order to transliterate the Hebrew letter *vav*, the archaic Greek letter *digamma* was used, called *waw* or *wau*, which originally stood for the sound *w*. For this solely reason, Josephus was forced to use four vowels to transcribe the Tetragrammaton. Thence, the misunderstanding that the Tetragrammaton in Hebrew is pronounced as four vowels.



Transcription of the Name as ΙΑΩ in the 1st-century BCE Septuagint manuscript 4Q120.



Early 12th-century Tetragrammaton-Trinity diagram, rendering the Name as “JEVE” or “IEVE”

Josephus’ intent was not to tell the Romans and Greeks how to pronounce the Name of his God but simply to give a description of the High Priest’s attire. He did his best to describe what was written on his forehead and he used the closest equivalents in Greek for the Tetragrammaton. Josephus would have never ever given the true pronunciation of the Name to the pagan Romans whom he served as a Jewish historian. He knew that if he had given them the Name, they would have profaned it and that would have been a sin to him.

## Make no mention of the names of pagan gods

In conclusion, let us make it very simple. All languages are spoken first and written second. Suppose that when Mosheh heard for the first time the Name of the Creator he had heard, as some believe, “yahweh.” Then he had to transliterated in the Torah what he had heard, and it should have been written something like this, following the phonetics of his language:



*yah-weh*



The problem with this “spelling” is that it is not a spelling at all; this “spelling” does not exist and cannot exist because there were no such graphic symbols in his time to describe vowel sounds.

Again, Hebrew *alefbet* has only consonants and no vowel letters. Everything is written in consonant letters only. The vowel sounds are always assumed, and the words are pronounced phonetically per the tradition from ancient times.

The invention of the vowel points is relatively recent and serves the purpose of teaching how to read the Hebrew text of the Scripture; they are not part of the Hebrew alphabet. From this we can conclude that *yahweh* is not a Hebrew word, it is unpronounceable, and cannot even be written down in Hebrew characters since it has only vowels. It is a foreign and strange word for Hebrew language and culture.

Sadly to say, today there are some who are fundamentally wrong on how Hebrew language works. They have little or no knowledge of Hebrew, but they are very vocal in their “teachings.” Most of them are Gentiles who “teach” the Hebrews how to speak Hebrew. It is as if to say that Arabs teach British how to speak the language of Shakespeare.

This is a classic example of ignorance and arrogance working together in a overbearing pride evidenced by a superior manner toward inferiors. The postulate of these “teachers” is that “If it comes from the Jews, it must be wrong.” This is part of the boasting spoken of in Romans 11: the wild branches boast against the natural ones. Humility and repentance are required, but not found.

Some even say that we cannot know with certainty how to pronounce the Creator’s name. They say it was lost in antiquities and impossible to know it. To believe that is to disbelieve what Yehovah is saying from the Scripture:

*... My Name shall be declared in all the earth. (Exo 9:16)*

*Therefore, My people shall know My Name, ... (Isa 52:6)*

*And those who know Your Name trust in You, ... (Psa 9:10)*

*I set him on high, because he has known My Name. (Psa 91:14)*

And also,

*And in all that I have said to you take heed. And make no mention of the name of other gods, let it not be heard from your mouth. (Exo 23:13)*

Exo 23:13 does not prohibit us from uttering the names of pagan idols otherwise we would not be able to read the Bible out loud since the Scripture does speak of them and the Torah is required to

be read aloud once every Sabbatical year. Yeshua himself said to “render to Caesar...” and Caesars were worshiped as pagan gods.

So, what does this command require from us. The word used in Exodus 23:13 is *zachar*, is the verbal form of the word used in Exo 3:15 which we already studied, and it means to *remember in thought or mention through speech as one remembers someone or something through mentioning*. Also, *zachar* means *to act or speak on behalf of another*. Therefore, this command prohibits us from speaking on behalf of pagan gods as if they had any authority and power over us.

It is interesting also to notice how the Sages render the phrase *from your mouth* in Sanhedrin 63b. They say,

*you shall not enter a partnership with a gentile, so that he would swear to you by his pagan deity. The result [if he does swear] will be that you will indirectly cause it [the deity] to be mentioned through yourself [i.e., through a claim you made against him]. I.e., the occasion may arise that the gentile partner is required to swear something to his Jewish partner, and he will swear by his deity.*

We may also add that when we speak a prayer to the true Sovereign of the universe but evoke a name of pagan god (Yahweh) instead of His name Yehovah, whether inadvertently or not, we may indirectly call on Yehovah through, or speak on behalf of, the pagan god. This is something we need to consider very seriously.

***you do not inquire about their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? And let me do so too.’*** (Deu 12:30)

With all this being said, one thing is for sure: “Yahweh” is not just an incorrect pronunciation of the Creator’s Name; nor is it another “nickname”, as the Almighty One has no nicknames, but this is a name of pagan deity that has no place in our worship of Yehovah the Sovereign.

Sadly, sadly, many today pray to the Creator by calling upon the name of Jupiter, Yohweh, Yahweh, which is a pagan god, and this god does not really exist; it is an idol. It is a blasphemy to use it, let alone to pray to Yehovah in that pagan name.

The Creator Yehovah requires us to worship Him in truth and when He is telling us *make no mention of the name of other gods, let it not be heard from your mouth*, as if He is warning, “Do not pray in the name of other gods and do not say you are doing it for Me!”

This teaching is intended to give information. How one will pray to the Creator is a matter of a personal choice and it is between him and Elohim, but Yehovah deserves to be praised in truth.

This article is a part of series of articles dedicated to the Name of YHVH. For the rest of the articles, please, visit [The Name of YHVH](#).

The continuation is in [the next article](#).

*Knowledge known to only a few will die out. If you feel blessed by these teachings of **Time of Reckoning Ministry**, help spread the word!*

*May we merit seeing the coming of our Mashiach speedily in our days!*

## Navah

This page contains sacred literature and the Name of the Creator. Please, do not deface, or discard, or use the Name in a casual manner.

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  - Bible Study (83)
  - Hebrew Study (52)
  - Oneness of the Creator (15)
  - Prophecy Insight (46)
  - Sanctity of life (12)
  - The Appointed Times of YHVH (33)
  - The Bible Codes (9)
  - The Exiles (16)
  - The Exodus (21)
  - The Messiah (56)
  - The Name of YHVH (14)
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