

Cutting Through the Confusion from the 'Show-Me' State

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[The Name Explained Webinar Series](#)

Introduction

“...love truth and peace” ([Zechariah 8:19](#))

“You shall love Yehovah your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” (Deuteronomy 6:5)

“...you shall love your neighbor as yourself...” (Leviticus 19:18)

“If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.” (Psalms 44:20-21 [Hebrew 21-22])

Question #1—When did the ban on pronouncing the Name begin?

Second Temple Period: [Samaritans \(Josephus, Antiquities 12:261 \[12.5.5\]\)](#) and [Essenes \(1QS 6:27–7:2\)](#) ban speaking the Name.

“These have no portion in the World to Come...Abba Saul [c. 150 C.E.] said, ‘Also, one who pronounces the name according to its letter.’” —*Mishnah*, Sanhedrin 10:1.

In c. 135 C.E. Rabbi Hanina Ben Teradion was executed by the Romans because “he used to speak the name the way it is written.” —*Babylonian Talmud*, Avodah Zarah 17b-18a.



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“Rabbah Bar Bar Channah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan [Bar Nafcha], ‘Sages transmit the four-letter name to their disciples, once in a seven-year period.’ Others say concerning it, ‘Twice in a seven-year period.’”—*Babylonian Talmud*, Kiddushin 71a [Rabbi Yochanan, 180-280 C.E.; Rabbah Bar Bar Channah, c. 250 C.E.]¹

“The name is only revealed one time every Shemithah cycle...after the destruction of the Temple, they hid the Divine Name...[‘This is my name forever’—Exodus 3:15] There is also a secret here received by tradition in the vowels of ‘this is my name Le’olam לְעוֹלָם’, for they are the vowels of the great name [Yehovah יְהוָה]...Thus far *the words of the man who revealed the secret to me.*” — [Menachem HaTziyoni, fourteenth century.](#)

Question #2—When were the vowels added to the Hebrew Bible?

Traditional Jewish sources debate about when vowels were first written down:

- Adam (c. 4000 B.C.E.)
- Moses (c. 1450 B.C.E.)
- Ezra (c. 450 B.C.E.)
- Masoretes (c. 600 C.E.)—first suggested by Rabbi Eliyahu Bachur, 1538.

Academic view: Vowels are Second Temple Period or older, but not written down until around 600 C.E.

“The so-called standard Tiberian system of vocalization signs was...to function as a written notation representing a tradition of reading that had been transmitted orally over many generations since the Second Temple Period.”—Professor Geoffrey Khan, University of Cambridge.²

“To non-specialists the idea of an oral tradition accurately transmitting linguistic information over a millennium or more is hard to envisage. Hebrew scholars have had to adjust their critical acumen to this idea, however, *because so many facts support it* [italics added]. Not only Tiberian Hebrew, but other traditions as well...appear to link up with genuine varieties of the language from a period when it was still spoken.”—Jan Joosten, University of Oxford.³

¹ אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר ר' יוחנן שם בן ארבע אותיות חכמים מוסרין אותו לתלמידיהן פעם אחת בשבוע ואמרי לה פעמים בשבוע

² “The Karaites and the Hebrew Bible,” <http://orion.mscc.huji.ac.il/symposiums/15th/papers/Khan.pdf>.

³ Jan Joosten, “The Tiberian Vocalization and the Hebrew of the Second Temple Period,” in *Hebrew of the Late Second Temple Period*, Tigchelaar and Van Hecke, eds. (Brill, 2015), 36, https://www.academia.edu/36240698/The_Tiberian_Vocalization_and_the_Hebrew_of_the_Second_Temple_Period.



Question #3—Why are there multiple spellings of the Name in the Aleppo Codex and the Leningrad Codex?

It is not random or arbitrary.

YHVH vs YHVH Adonai / Adonai YHVH

Aleppo Codex:

- Yeh?vah - c. 4000 times
- Yehovah - 6 times (plus one next to Adonai)
- Yeh?vih - c. 2 times
- Yehovih - c. 291 times

Question #4—Were the different vocalizations of the Name in the Masoretic text intended to *hide* the true pronunciation?

This logic is like the following: We don't know who built the pyramids; it could be ancient aliens. The one explanation that we know is NOT true is that the pyramids were built by the ancient Egyptians themselves. How do we know this? Every college text book on ancient Egypt says the pyramids were built by the ancient Egyptians. Not a single college text book says the pyramids were built by extraterrestrial astronauts. Whoever built the pyramids, we know it was NOT the ancient Egyptians, because the college textbooks would never allow you to know the truth. Boom! It was aliens!

In fact, most Masoretic scribes did prevent people from (accidentally?) pronouncing the Name by leaving out one of the vowels—the Cholam—in most places that the Name appears.

If all the Masoretic manuscripts just copied from the Aleppo or Leningrad codices, then why don't they all have the full vowels in the exact same places as the Aleppo and Leningrad? Instead, the insertion of the Cholam in most manuscripts is in seemingly random places.

Even if you wanted to ignore the information in more than 1,200 Bible manuscripts, [sixteen rabbis say the name is Yehovah](#).

About 20 percent of the manuscripts have the Name with full vowels all over the place, and there was apparently no attempt by these scribes to hide the pronunciation.



Question #5: Are the vowels in the Name an example of Qere/Ketiv?

This is the standard position of modern Hebrew linguists and the opinion of some Jewish sources.

Logical fallacy: Appeal to authority.

Example: Until the 1980s, all serious doctors knew ulcers were caused by stomach acid and stress. In 1982, Dr. Barry Marshall and Dr. Robin Warren proved ulcers are caused by the *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria and won the Nobel Prize for this in 2005. In 1958, Dr. John Lykoudis in Greece had discovered that ulcers could be treated with antibiotics. However, journals refused to publish his findings; he was shunned by the medical community, and fined 4,000 Greek drachmas by the government for treating ulcers with antibiotics!

16 rabbis say the vowels of the name are Sheva-Cholam-Kamatz = Yehovah.

Qere Perpetuum—[Open Door Series, Episode 13](#).

Real Qere-Ketiv—[Anu-Anachnu example from Aleppo Codex Jeremiah 42:6](#).

Genuine Qere-Ketiv has the exact vowels in the body of the text, even when the vowels are impossible.

[Newly discovered manuscripts](#) in which YHVH has the actual vowels of Adonai.

“It seems to me, that the vowels with which it is vocalized in most places [יְהוָה] are the original vowels...this was also the intention of the Masters of the Vowels in that they vocalized the Yod with Sheva [יְהוָה]. Had they intended to give the vowels of Adonai [יְהוָה], why did they not vocalize the Yod with Chataf-Patach [יְהוָה]...Therefore, I say that it’s true they intended for the Name to be read Adonai [יְהוָה], but preserved with this its original vowels [יְהוָה], which were known to them by received tradition.”—Rabbi Samuel David Luzzatto, Commentary on Genesis 2:4, 1834.

“This is not a Qere-Ketiv at all, and Sheva, Cholam, Kamatz are not at all the vowels of Adonai. Rather, they specifically belong to the Unique Name alone, and there is not a single vowel here that comes from, or remains from, as a memorial to the title Adonai, or even hints at it. With these vowels, the priests in the Temple used to call on the Unique Name according to the way it is written...”—Rabbi Jacob Bachrach, *Ishtadlut Im Shadal* (Warsaw, 1896), 127.



Question #6: How could the scribes have accidentally put in the full vowels? Didn't they cut out the Name when there was a mistake in the text?

This sort of objection is based on an expectation of what the scribes would do. I have evidence and facts of what the scribes actually did.

Errors of a certain type (Adonai in place of YHVH and vice versa) may have been cut out in Torah scrolls without vowels. However, in manuscripts with vowels, they marked errors in the Name with various methods such as dots, as I explain in my Support Team Study "[The Mistake That Got It Right](#)." Technically, there would be no reason to remove a *mistake* that was not an *error*. An indisputable example of this is Ezekiel 28:22 in the Aleppo Codex, where the scribe wrote Adonai Yehovah instead of the expected Adonai Yehovih (read as Adonai Elohim by tradition). Everyone agrees in this instance that Yehovah is a "mistake" in this context, because by tradition the Name was read Elohim here. No one cut out the Name or corrected it, because it was a mistake that was correct! In about 20 percent of the manuscripts, the Name is written with full vowels in most instances, so in these manuscripts writing the full vowels was clearly intentional. For example, the tenth century [Damascus Crown](#).

Question #7: Have you ever found the vocalization "Yahweh" in any traditional Jewish source?

We have checked thousands of Hebrew Bible manuscripts and have never seen the vocalization "Yahweh." I searched a database of more than 100,000 traditional Jewish books and found no trace of any Jew who ever thought it was Yahweh.

Question #8: What did Josephus mean when he wrote in Greek that there were "four vowels" engraved on the golden crown of the High Priest?

"A miter 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."—Josephus, *War* 5:235 (5.5.7) [Whiston translation].

"His head was covered by a tiara of fine linen, wreathed with blue, encircling which was another crown of gold, whereon were embossed the sacred letters, to wit, four vowels."—Josephus, *War* 5:235 (5.5.7) [Thackeray translation].

Twelve-letter name of God vs. four-letter name of God (*Babylonian Talmud*, Kidushin 71a.).

Josephus is talking about how the Name was *written*, not how it was *pronounced*. In Hebrew, the letters Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh are *matres lectionis*, sometimes used to mark vowels. In the Tetragrammaton, only the final letter functions as a *mater lectionis*, but all four could be called "vowels."



The Greek equivalents of the Hebrew letters Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh are Iota-Epsilon-Upsilon-Epsilon $\iota\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon$, which are four vowels. Josephus is explaining to his Greek audience that the name is written with four Hebrew letters that are the equivalent of four Greek vowels. If you wanted to pronounce these four vowels in the Greek of Josephus's day, you would get *Yeh-veh*, not *Yahweh*. This is pronounced with two vowels, not four, even in Greek!

In Hebrew, a vowel must be preceded by a consonant, so four vowels in a row without consonants is impossible in authentic Hebrew.⁴

Question #9: What are the sources for the pronunciation "Yahweh"?

Gesenius's Hebrew Grammar, Brown-Driver-Briggs, and other modern sources. No traditional Jewish Hebrew sources have this pronunciation.

Ancient sources that scholars back-translate into Hebrew to produce Yahweh include Clement of Alexandria from the year 200 C.E. and Theodoret of Cyrus from the fifth century. However, there is only one manuscript of Clement's *Stromata* and it is from the eleventh century, not the year 200. And it has IAOU (*Ya-oo*), not Yahweh. Theodoret is speaking about a Samaritan pronunciation. I discuss this in more detail in my Support Team Study "[Have You Been Praying to Jupiter?](#)"

Greek sources have the Name written in more than thirty different ways with many pronunciations. Focusing on those consistent with Yahweh is cherry-picking and arbitrary.

Question #10: How do you answer the issue of the inseparable preposition?

*La-Adonai → La-[A]donai (silent Aleph)

Expected form: *LiYhovah

Actual form in Aleppo Codex: La-[Y]hovah (Read: Ladonai)

"While it is true that there are forms the vocalization of which defies explanation, we should not surmise that any form which looks bizarre in its vocalization is necessarily corrupt...Many of these forms are genuine and reflect ancient...features of Hebrew..."—Professor Shelomo Morag, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.⁵

"...the Masters of the Vowels used to read it Adonai, for we have seen...that they vocalized the attached particles Vav, Kaf, Lamed, Bet with Patach and not Chiriq...Therefore, I say that it's true they intended for the Name to be read Adonai [אָדוֹנָי], but preserved with this its original vowels [אֲדוֹנָי], which were known to them by received tradition."—Samuel David Luzzatto, Commentary on Genesis 2:4.

⁴ The exception is furtive Patach at the end of a word, which has an implied Aleph (e.g. *Mashiach*).

⁵ Shelomo Morag, "On the Historical Validity of the Vocalization of the Hebrew Bible," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94, no. 3 (Jul.-Sep. 1974): 307, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/600065>.



“The vowels of the Unique Name remain with it according to its own pronunciation, whereas the letters...before it...which are not holy like its own letters and vowels, are vocalized and accentuated according to the pronunciation of the title [Adonai].”—Rabbi Jacob Bachrach, *Ishtadlut Im Shadal* (Warsaw, 1896), 132.⁶

Expectation: Chirik in Lamed and no vowel in the Yod (= Silent Aleph in La-[A]donai).

As they say in the Twelve Steps: “An expectation is a premeditated resentment.”

Deuteronomy 32:6, Leningrad Codex:

הַלְיָהוּהָ תִגְמְלוּ-זֹאת עִם נֶבֶל וְלֹא תִכְּמוּ הַלְוֹא-הוּא אֲבִיךָ קִנְיָךְ הוּא עֲשֶׂיךָ וְיִכְנְנֶךָ:

B-52 Bomber (150+)—Alternative dialect of Hebrew vocalization (LaYehovah, CaYehovah, etc.)

- Evr. II B 52, c. 1050
- Evr. II B 33, eleventh century
- Evr. II B 35, eleventh century
- Evr. II B 43, eleventh century
- Evr. II B 90, eleventh century
- Jerusalem, The National Library of Israel, Ms. Heb. 24°1192, eleventh-twelfth centuries
- London, British Library, Or 1467, eleventh-twelfth centuries

Question #11: Are there prefixes other than *Yeho-* that represent the Name? Is the *yod*, by itself, representative of the Name?

Theophoric name: Divine name + verb, noun, or adjective.

Yeho- is often truncated to *Yo-*, as in Yehonatan (YHVH gives), which becomes Yonatan.

There are about 19 names with the full prefix *Yeho-* and some 23 names with the truncated prefix *Yo-*.

There are two types of exceptions:

Type 1: *Ye-* with Tsere (Dissimilation)

Yehoshua → *Yoshua → Yeshua

*Yehohu → *Yohu → Yehu

Type 2: *Ye-* with Sheva

*Yeho-Odeh (I will thank Yehovah) → Yehudah → [Yuda (Post-Tanakh Hebrew)]

*Yeho-Yuchal (Yehovah is able) → Yehuchal → Yuchal

⁶ נקודות השם המיוחד נשארו עמו כמשפטו, ורק האותיות והתיבות שלפניו ושלאחריו שאינן קדושות כאותיותיו ונקודותיהן, הן הן תנקדנה ותטעמנה כמשפט הכנוי. מהדורת 1896, פרק קל"ח, עמ' 132



Other Yod prefixes indicate “he will,” the standard future (imperfect) prefix from the EYTaN letters (Aleph-Yod-Nun-Tav).

- Yimla יִמְלֵא (he will fill) 1 Kings 22:8
- Yiftach יִפְתַּח (he will open) Judges 11:1
- Yavin יִבִּין (he will understand) Joshua 11:1—Canaanite king of Hazor!
- Yalon יִלֹּן (he will sleep the night) 1 Chronicles 4:17
- Ya’abetz יַעֲבֹץ (he will be sad) 1 Chronicles 4:9
- Yechizkiyahu יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ (Yehovah will strengthen) 2 Kings 20:10
- Yeshayahu יֵשַׁעְיָהוּ (Yehovah will save) Isaiah 1:1
- Yirmiyahu יִרְמְיָהוּ (Yehovah will raise up) Jeremiah 1:1

Question #12: Now that your team has found more than 1,200 manuscripts from different traditions with the same spelling of Yehovah, what other evidence do you have?

- Cambridge University Library, T-S A2.27 - 924-926 C.E.
- 16 rabbis say it is Yehovah
- 1) Tiberian Pointing; 2) Babylonian Pointing; 3) Hybrid Tiberian-Land-of-Israel Pointing
- Ben Naphtali and Ben Asher
- Rabbanite and Karaite manuscripts
- Hebrew Poem of Kalir from the sixth century—YHVH has Kamatz
- The Great I AM Revealed: Proof of Pronunciation from Dead Sea Scrolls, Samaritan Pentateuch, New Testament, LXX, Targum

