

יְהוָה – PRONOUNCED AS IT IS WRITTEN? THE TRUE PRONUNCIATION OF YHWH ACCORDING TO KABBALISTS (AND OTHER FOOLS)¹

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While we have numerous sources that explain why the common vowels of YHWH are ‘dummy vowels,’² *Yehovah* has regained its popularity in recent years as the alleged true pronunciation. Yet, the Tetragram with the vowels of *sheva* (ֿ), *cholem* (◌ױ), and *gamets* (◌ׂ) can be found in thousands of Hebrew MSS,³ which begs the question:

If the rabbis wanted to hide the true pronunciation of YHWH, why would they write it down for us in thousands of manuscripts?

If *Yehovah* were the true name, anyone verbalizing a pointed Tanakh would be liable to the death penalty and ‘lose their share in the world to come,’ as per Jewish halacha. Could this be the motive for giving us the ‘correct’ *niqud*⁴ on a golden platter? The intelligent reader will likely hesitate to draw this conclusion.

And what about *Yehovih* which we find in the Hebrew Bible some 300 times, and which is cherished by the Kabbalists (besides *Yehovah* and multiple other names for G-d)? Naturally, if one wants to sell to the public ‘Yehovah’, then one doesn’t show them ‘Yehovih’ – after all, they may become suspicious and start to think.

To determine the correct pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton, we neither need Jewish witchcraft nor eminent scholars from the Vatican; all we need is the Masoretic text and the ability to put two and two together.

Ketiv Qere

Before looking at the Tetragram, we must remember that the *niqud* are not inspired but were added by the Masoretes to capture the *traditional* pronunciation. Very often

¹ This paper was inspired by J. Van Rensburg, יהוה – *A Video Series on the Pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton*, www.hebrewgospels.com/yhwh. All MSS examples and explanations are used courtesy of the lecturer.

² Vowels that do not belong to a certain word, but reflect the pronunciation of another word instead.

³ Additionally, numerous Bible versions have rendered the name as *Jehovah* (or *Yehovah*) since the 1500’s.

⁴ Diacritical signs used to represent vowels (lit. ‘pointing’).

we find words in the Masoretic Text (MT), that are not read as they are written but are replaced with a *traditional* reading. Let's take an example:

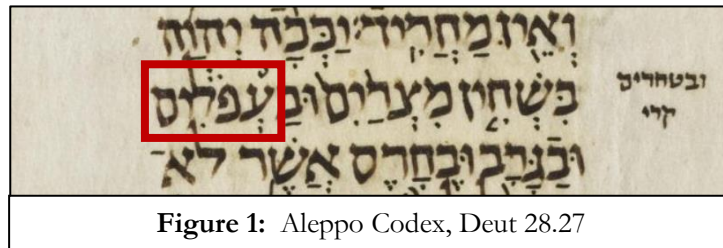


Figure 1: Aleppo Codex, Deut 28.27

The highlighted part shows the *ketiv* ('written'), i.e. that which is written, in this case the word *ophalim* meaning 'hemorrhoids.' Because this word was deemed offensive, it was replaced with the non-offensive term *techorim* ('abscesses'), and the latter was put in the margin.

The margin contains the *qere* ('read'), to wit, the word which was read by tradition instead. The reason there are no niqud in the margin is because these are in the text: the vowel pointings in the body of text have nothing to do with the word *ophalim* ('hemorrhoids'), and pronouncing the latter as pointed in the text results in gibberish. The niqud on the consonants of *ophalim* belong to its substitute *techorim* (טחורים).

Ketiv Qere Perpetuum

In the above case the replacement was put in the margin because the word *ophalim* occurs only a few times in Scripture. However, in other cases the margin is left blank:

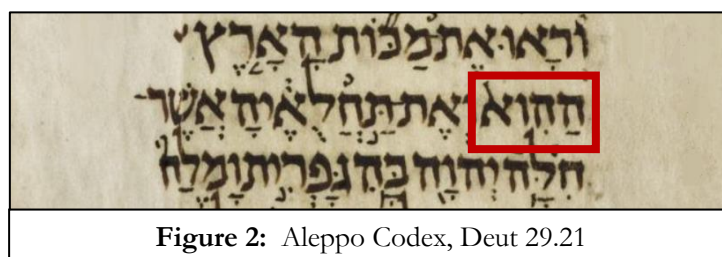


Figure 2: Aleppo Codex, Deut 29.21

The highlighted part shows the word *habu* ('that') which is masculine in gender. Yet this word needs to be feminine since it relates to the preceding feminine noun *aretz* ('land'). Every Hebrew speaker knows that *habu* is wrong, and so the scribe merely inserted a dummy vowel. The little dot beneath the second consonant from the right

does not belong to *habu* but to its feminine counterpart *habi* (הִיָּא). However, there was no need to explain this since everyone automatically read *habi*.⁵

The above mistake occurs hundreds of times in the MT, and the rabbis never wrote into the margin, “Read *habi* instead!” – it was evident.

If we literally pronounced what is written in the text, we would end up with the intriguing terms *habiu* or *habiv*, both of which only exist in cuckoo land.

There are numerous examples of ‘Ketiv Qere’ and ‘Ketiv Qere Perpetuum’, but these two will suffice to convey the concept and its underlying rule:

Whenever a word is read differently from the way it is written, the vowel pointings of the substitute are placed on the letters in the body of text (and thus become ‘dummy vowels’).

Was the Word יְהוָה (‘Yehovah’) Read Differently than it was Written?

If by tradition the name *YHWH* was freely spoken, then the Masoretes would have recorded its true vowels for us. If, however, the name was replaced with a traditional euphemism, that is, with a different word which was read in place of *YHWH*, then we are going to find the vowels of the replacement in the text – we would find vowel points on *YHWH* that don’t belong to it.

If we asked an observant Jew to read out a verse containing *YHWH*, he would read *Adonai*⁶ in place of it and thus solves the question whether the former was read differently from the way it was written. Let’s consider some more evidence:

He that names the name of the Lord (יְהוָה), let him die the death: let all the congregation of Israel stone him with stones; whether he be a stranger [a Gentile] or a native, let him die for naming the name of the Lord. (Lev 24.16, LXX | Brenton)

While ‘he that names’ (*nokev* נֹכֵחַ) should be rendered ‘he that blasphemes,’ the tendentious Greek version illustrates that already in the 3rd century BCE people were forbidden to speak the name of G-d. How could a rabbi read out a verse containing *YHWH* if he wasn’t allowed to pronounce it?

If any man has uttered the Most Venerable Name even though frivolously, or as a result of shock or for any other reason whatever, while reading the Book or blessing, he shall be dismissed and shall return to the Council of the Community no more.⁷ (1QS vi 27–vii 2)

⁵ Deut 29.21 in the Aleppo Codex has certain notes in the margin that are not related to the example; I have removed them from the image to avoid confusion.

⁶ Lit. ‘My Lords.’

⁷ Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London, 2012), 107.

This quote from a 2nd-century Hebrew scroll tells us the same: G-d's name had been banned. And yet, the Jews were reproducing and reading Hebrew MSS – how?⁸

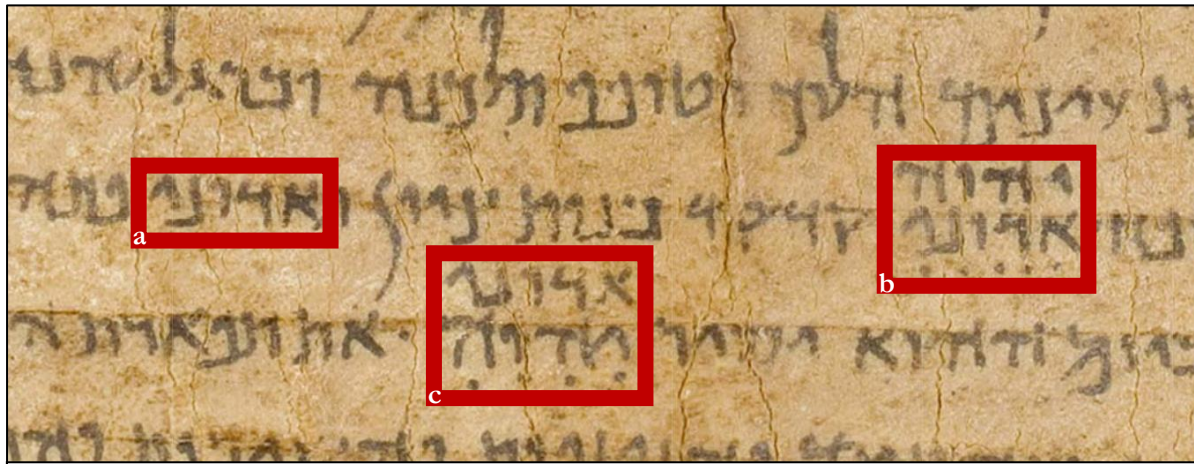


Figure 3: Great Isaiah Scroll, Isaiah 3.17–18

In the Great Isaiah Scroll, copied around 100 BCE, we can see that a scribe wrote by mistake *Adonai* instead of *YHWH* while transcribing the MS (a). Moreover, we see that someone changed *Adonai* to *YHWH* (b), although in this case *Adonai* is correct as per Majority Text. Lastly, we see a valid correction of *YHWH* into *Adonai* (c).

Even if we argued that the MT is wrong, these emendations (whether warranted or not) clearly show that the Jews had substituted *Adonai* ('Lord') for *YHWH*.

"There is a certain word of four letters which is not pronounced by them [the Jewish people], which also was written on the gold breastplate of the high priest; but it is read as Adonai, not as it is really written in the four letters..." (Origen, *Commentary on Psalms* 2.2)

If already in those days the traditional reading of יהוה was *Adonai*, then we know that it was pointed likewise centuries later: with the niqud of 'Adonai.'

"The pointing of the Tetragrammaton is according to the pointing of the name of Adanut [Adonai] – sheva, cholem, kamets." (Maharam of Lublin)⁹

We are looking at a case of *Ketiv Qere Perpetuum*, to wit, no explanation was needed. If the scribes refrained from putting three hundred times 'Read *habi*' into the margin, they surely wouldn't put 6,500 times 'Read *adonai*' and 300 times 'Read *elohim*' in it.

⁸ While we find in the Dead Sea Scrolls different substitutes for *YHWH*, 'Adonai' is the most common.

⁹ "שו"ת מהר"ם מלובלין סימן פג"א", 187, Online Responsa Project, Bar-Ilan University. www.responsa.co.il.

Was the Word יהוה ('Yehovih') Read Differently than it was Written?

In the Tanakh we sometimes find another written form of YHWH which is *Yehovih*. This word is not some inflection, but the result of substituting *Elohim* for YHWH.¹⁰ Whenever we see 'Lord G-d' in our Bibles, the Hebrew has 'Adonai YHWH,' and whenever we see 'G-d the Lord', the Hebrew has 'YHWH Adonai.'

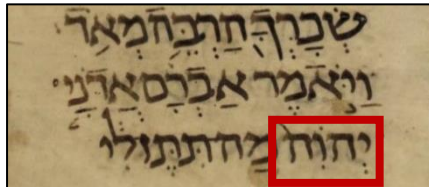


Figure 4: Sassoon 507, Gen 15.2

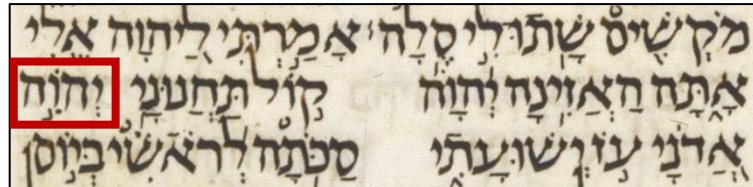


Figure 5: Leningrad Codex, Ps 140.8

If we read the 'ketiv' in these images (i.e. that which is written), then the highlighted words read *Yehovih*. So, why does it not say *Yehovah*?

Firstly, the Kabbalistic rabbis – who embrace myth, magic, occultism, etc. and whose teachings are rooted in pagan Babylonian Mysticism, i.e. Satanism – view both names as sacred. Although *hovah* means destruction, the verbalization of *Yehovah* promises 'power and wisdom,' and speaking the name *Yehovih* brings 'righteousness.'

Secondly, the reason for the above is simple. In the left image, YHWH is preceded by *Adonai* while in the right image it is followed by *Adonai*. If the rabbi applied the usual replacement, he would end up saying *Adonai, Adonai* (and emphasize 'Lord', which is not the import). To circumvent the problem the sages decided that in such cases YHWH is to be pointed and pronounced as *Elohim*, resulting in '*Adonai, Elohim*' or '*Elohim Adonai*' respectively.

If sheva – cholem – qamets were the genuine vowels of YHWH, then there would be no issue. We could use the same vowels and read *Adonai Yehovah* and *Yehovah Adonai* (and tolerate the Jews saying *Adonai, Adonai*). But the scribes who knew that both *Yehovah* and *Yehovih* are gibberish names and that the pointings reflect *Adonai*, didn't want to repeat the latter and were thus forced to find another word; they were forced to use the pointing of another substitute than *Adonai*, and they decided for *Elohim* (אלוהים). This tradition existed already in the 2nd century BCE, as we can see in the Isaiah Scroll:

¹⁰ To explain this change, N. Gordon willingly admits that *Yehovih* takes the vowels of *Elohim*, yet argues that *Yehovah* doesn't take the vowels of *Adonai* because the first vowel differs (as does the one of *Elohim*). 'The Mistake that Got it Right,' part 1, www.nehemiaswall.com/nehemia-gordon-name-god.

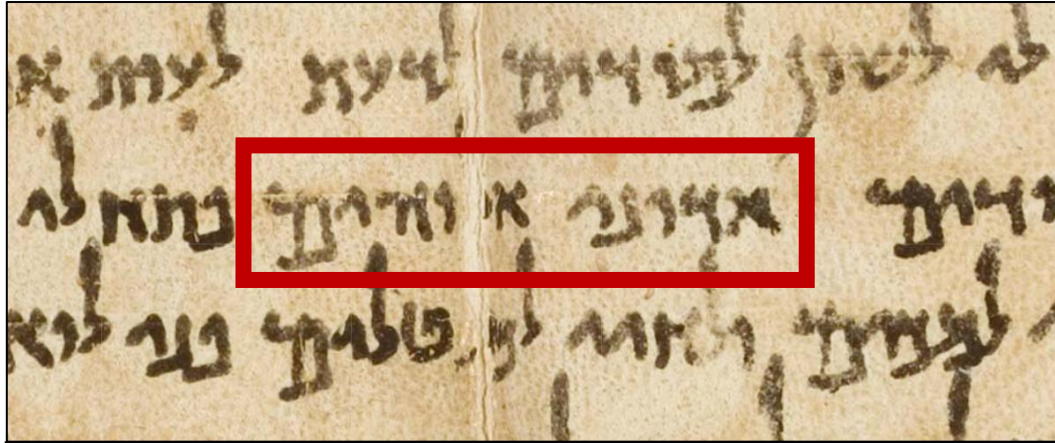


Figure 6: Great Isaiah Scroll, Isaiah 50.5

In the Majority Text, Isaiah 50.5 begins with *Adonai YHWH* (יהוה אֲדֹנָי ‘Lord G-d’). But the highlighted part has *Adonai Elohim* instead. Put another way, while copying the MS, the scribe accidentally wrote *Elohim* although the scroll in front of him said *YHWH*.

During transcription a scribe would literally read hundreds or even thousands of times G-d’s name, and occasionally he would simply slip up and not only think and say ‘Adonai’ when writing יהוה, but default to putting down *Adonai* (or *Elohim* if יהוה stood next to אֲדֹנָי [‘Adonai’]).¹¹

The name *YHWH* is mostly pointed with the vowels of *Adonai* – sheva, cholem, qamets. But at times the vowel under the waw is a chireq, and then it is written with the vowels of *Elohim*. As it is pointed, so we read it.¹²

If יהוה (‘Yehovah’) has the vowels of Adonai, and יהוה (‘Yehovih’) the vowels of Elohim, why do they slightly differ?

In Hebrew grammar an alef (א) never takes a *simple sheva* (ְ), but always a *compound sheva* (ֶֿ), while a yod (י) – as in יהוה – never takes a *compound sheva* (ֶֿ), but always a *simple sheva* (ְ); that is the reason in a nutshell. Here is an example:

אֲדֹנָי → אֲדֹנִי
a – don a – don – ai

¹¹ The Masoretes did not invent these replacements, but recorded the traditional reading of the Tanakh.

¹² Isaiah HaLevi Horovitz, *Shenei Luchot HaBerit: Torah Shebikhtav*, Chukat, Torah Ohr 23, www.sefaria.org.

When we change the word *adon* ('Lord') to *adonai* ('My Lord'), then the accent shifts and the first syllable becomes shorter: the qamets (֫) becomes a *compound sheva* (ֿ֫). However, if a word starts with a yod (י), then it is different:

יָתוֹם → יְתוּמִים
 ya – tom ye – tom – im

When we form the plural of *yatom* ('orphan'), we get *y^etomim* ('orphans'), not *yatomim*. As above, the accent shifts from the 2nd to the 3rd syllable causing the first vowel to shorten. And yet, the qamets (֫) does not change into *compound sheva* (ֿ֫), but into a *simple sheva* (ֿ).

As to the pointing of *YHWH* we may simplify as follows: the starting point is the word *adon* whose qamets (֫) becomes a *compound sheva* (ֿ֫) beneath the alef of *Adonai*, but a *simple sheva* (ֿ) beneath the yod of *YHWH*.¹³

What we find in the MT is exactly what we would expect to find if someone has placed the vowels of *Adonai* on *YHWH*, and the same principle applies to *Elohim*.¹⁴ The forms of 'Yahovah' (יְהוָה) and 'Yehovih' (יְהוִה) with a compound sheva on the yod are grammatically incorrect.

If יְהוָה ('Yehovah') reflects the vowels of Adonai, how can we determine the true vowels of G-d's name?

To answer this question satisfactory lies beyond the scope of this paper, the purpose of which was to show that 'Yehovah' is not the name of G-d. Yet, we will briefly outline the way of proceeding.¹⁵

The niqud on *YHWH* don't help at all since they have nothing to do with G-d's name; they are merely the result of traditional replacements.

Ergo, we need to focus on the contractions of *YHWH*. These contractions were never replaced nor corrupted, and we can be sure that their vowels are authentic.

Of the contracted forms which are *Yab*, *Yahu*, *Yebo*, *Yo*, and *Yei* (or *Ye*), the one most suitable for revealing G-d's name is *Yahu*.¹⁶ To find the true pronunciation of the Tetragram, we only need to ascertain what the form 'Yahu' looked like before it got contracted.

¹³ If the Tetragram started with an alef (אֵהוה), we would see the exact vowels of *Adonai*.

¹⁴ The compound sheva beneath the alef of *Elohim* becomes a simple sheva beneath the yod of *YHWH*.

¹⁵ For a detailed exposition see J. Van Rensburg, *The True Pronunciation of the Creator's Name Based on the Masoretic Text*, video, 2:07, 2021, www.hebrewgospels.com/yhwh.

¹⁶ The forms 'Yah' and 'Yebo' are further contractions of 'Yahu' and thus not relevant for our pursuit.

In sum, we examine the behavior of *Yahu* and similar forms in the MT, regard interchange patterns of vowels and consonants, and exclude false pronunciations by considering the root of *YHWH*¹⁷ – this approach leads us to the Creator’s name.¹⁸

A Final Note

The erroneous notion of *Yehovah* being the divine name has been disseminated since the Dark Ages, and advertising it as a new discovery seems at best misplaced.¹⁹ Both papal and rabbinic idolatries such as Trinitarianism or Kabbalah reach back to the mystery religions of Bavel, and it doesn’t surprise that a gibberish name is primarily pushed by Rome. At the same time, *Yehovah*’s revival appears symptomatic of man’s unprecedented depravity which will fortunately soon be concluded by the Parousia.

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¹⁷ The three-letter root determines the vowel pattern of a word. The root of the name יהוה (‘he is’) is *hayah* (היה ‘to be’), similar to the root word of Eve’s name חוה (*chavah* ‘life giver’) which is *chayah* (חיה ‘to live’); the change of the yod into a waw changes the verb into a name.

¹⁸ As per Hebrew grammar, the personal name of G-d is *Yah-weh* (יהוה). The first *he* (ה) is a guttural and is pronounced (*Yah*). The stress is on the second syllable whereby the waw (ו) sounds like our **w**; *weh* sounds a bit like *when* without the *n*. None of the other popular forms such as *Yehovah*, *Yehovih*, *Yahuah*, etc. are grammatically possible.

¹⁹ For instance, N. Gordon’s book title *Shattering the Conspiracy of Silence* (Atascosa, TX, 2012).