

Why the Heavenly Father's name is pronounced, "Yahweh" (updated 03/12/2013)

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IMPORTANT NOTE AND UPDATE - 03/12/2013:

Lately, I have noticed that there are many using the form "Yahuah" or "Yahuwah" based on the fact that the name יהודה "Yahudah/Yehudah" (Judah) contains the same letters as יהוה with the exception of the ד Daleth (D) being added (Hebrew reads from right to left). In other words, Yahweh's name contains יהוה (Yod Heh Waw Heh) and the name of one of the sons of Israel (Judah) is יהודה (Yod Heh Waw Daleth Heh.)

They say that the Heavenly Father's name can be "made simple" by believing that since there is only one letter difference between the two names, we can learn the right pronunciation of the Heavenly Father's name by looking at how Judah's name is pronounced in Hebrew.

But the truth is, we cannot determine the pronunciation of one Hebrew word by looking at how another word is pronounced with similar letters. This is because Hebrew words usually contain missing vowels. The reader has to supply the vowels based on their existing knowledge of the language. Thus, you can have numerous words where there is one consonant difference and yet they are pronounced completely different.

Here are a couple of examples in Hebrew where there is only one letter different than Yahweh's name, yet the pronunciation is different:

1. The verb "Hama" (#1993) is found in Jer. 6:23, 48:36, 50:42 in the qal imperfect 3rd person masculine singular form, and is spelled יהמה but pronounced "Yehemeh." This is only one letter different than יהוה, yet the pronunciation is different.
2. The Hebrew word "Hegeh" (#1897) is found in Job 27:4, Psalm 37:30 and 7 other verses in the qal imperfect 3rd person masculine singular form and is spelled יהגה, yet it is pronounced "Yehgeh." This is only one letter different than יהוה, yet the pronunciation is different.

If we removed vowels from two English words that had similar consonants, no one would argue that we can learn the vowels of one word by knowing the vowels of another. For instance "word," "ward" and "weird" would all have the same consonants (WRD) but different vowel sounds and different meanings.

In fact, there are examples in Hebrew of where two words with different meanings are spelled exactly the same way, yet they are pronounced differently. The word שאול, which is pronounced "Shaul" (King Saul's name) is spelled exactly the same as the word שאול, pronounced "Sheol." "Shaul" means "desired" but "Sheol" means "grave." The vowels and meaning are different, but the word is spelled the same. If שאול (Shaul) is spelled the same as שאול (Sheol), yet has different vowels, why would we believe that יהוה must automatically have the same vowels as יהודה ?

If the "Yahu" in "Yahu-dah" means "praise Yahweh," this would be a compound word with the "Yahu-" referring to Yahueh/Yahweh and the "-dah" coming from another word altogether. Thus, we really can't rely on the "Dah" pronunciation to arrive at the correct pronunciation of the final syllable in יהוה. It is derived from a different source.

The reason why Yahweh's name is upon His people is not because "Yahudah" contains part of Yahweh's name as some claim. All of Yahweh's people (including the other 11 tribes) are called by His name because of the elements seen in the priestly blessing:

Numbers 6:24-27 Yahweh bless you and keep you;

²⁵ Yahweh make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;

²⁶ *Yahweh lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."*

²⁷ *"So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."*

So in conclusion, to base the pronunciation of the Heavenly Father's name on how another name or word is pronounced is not sound reasoning and should be completely disregarded when seeking to understand how יהוה is pronounced.

Yehowah/Yehovah?

It's a surprise to me, but another pronunciation growing in popularity is "Yehowah." This is actually the Hebraic way of saying "Jehovah." The term "Jehovah/Yehowah" came about when the Masorite scribes placed the vowels for Adonai in between the letters of Yahweh's name. This was to show the reader that he was supposed to say "Adonai" instead of uttering the actual pronunciation of His name.

Those who support the "Yehowah" pronunciation often say that the scribes were not trying to hide the name, but were actually correct in their vowel pointing. Their evidence is that the first vowel point in "Yehowah" produces an "Eh" sound and not an "Ah" sound like the first vowel sound in "Ah-donai." But the Masorites had to omit or change the first vowel simply because the first vowel sound in Adonai (Ah) matches the first vowel in "Yahweh." What else were they to do?

Nevertheless, there is a way to be certain that the scribes were actually inserting vowels to cause the reader to say "Adonai" rather than the actual pronunciation of His name.

If you have a strong's concordance, look up word number 3069. Notice that the vowel points underneath Yahweh's name are different than #3068, and produce the pronunciation: Yehowih (Yehowee). Where did this come from?

In the Masoretic text (hebrew scriptures) "Yehowih" is found in over 300 instances. In each instance where "Yehowih" is found, the Hebrew word "Adonai" always precedes it. Thus, it says "Adonai Yehowih."

The reason for this oddity proves that the scribes were trying to get the reader to say "Adonai" when giving us "Yehowah." If the scribes had actually put "Adonai Yehowah" instead of "Adonai Yehowih" the reader would have had to say "Adonai Adonai" whenever they came across this phrase, a rather awkward situation. Therefore, they put the vowel points for "Elohim" (YeHoWiH) in Yahweh's name whenever "Adonai Yahweh" existed in the text so that the reader would say "Adonai Elohim" rather than "Adonai Adonai."

To me this easily proves that the intent of the vowel points inserted in Yahweh's name was not to supply a correct pronunciation of our Father's name, but rather to get the reader to say "Adonai" or "Elohim" instead. Thus, "Yehowah" (and its companion "Yehowih") are not correct pronunciations of our Father's name, but are actually hybrids that combine the letters of Yahweh's name with the vowel sounds of two other words: Adonai and Elohim.

Some suggest that since there are cases where even the vowel point for "O" from Adonai is missing from the Name, there was a conspiracy to prevent readers from pronouncing the Name as "Yehowah." But Exodus 13:9, Jeremiah 36:8, Ezekiel 44:5 and Nahum 1:3 you will find both Yehowah and Yehwah in the same verse. Also, whenever the vowel points for "Elohim" are used, about 90% of them also lack the "O" sound in the middle. It appears that the Masorites were more careless with the placement of these uninspired vowel points due to the fact that most Jews had practiced the substitutions from their youth, and one or two vowel points from either "Adonai" or "Elohim" would have been sufficient reminder.

[Contact me](#) if you are interested in a point-by-point rebuttal to an article (which was written by an unbeliever) supporting the "Yehowah" pronunciation.

Yahweh

It is important to understand that in Hebrew, the verb form determines how the vowels sound. This is somewhat like English where the verb "Run" changes to "Ran" if past tense is intended, and "Running" if present tense is intended. But in Hebrew, certain letters are added and vowel sounds will change

depending on whether it is 1st, 2nd or 3rd person, or whether it is masculine or feminine, or whether the word is intensive, causative, etc.

Understanding this basic fundamental of the Hebrew language will help us to understand Yahweh's own explanation of His name in Exodus 3:14

Exod. 3:13-14 - Then Moses said to Elohim, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The Elohim of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

¹⁴ *And Elohim said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." (אהיה אשר אהיה 'ehyeh asher ehyeh') And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of el, I AM (אהיה 'ehyeh') has sent me to you."*

Yahweh said to tell the people of Israel that His name is "I AM THAT I AM" or "Ehyeh asher ehyeh." We know that "ehyeh" is the way you pronounce "Hayah" (a verb meaning, "to be") in the first person form. So why then did He tell Moshe to call Him יהוה 'Yahweh' rather than אהיה 'Ehyeh' in the next verse?

Exod. 3:15 - Moreover Elohim said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'Yahweh (יהוה) Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'"

Putting it simplistically, the form "Yahweh" is the 3rd person form of the same Hebrew verb, "Hayah." Yahweh was declaring who He is in saying "I AM" ("ehyeh") in Exodus 3:14, but when we refer to Him we say "HE IS, or He causes to exist" יהוה which is the 3rd person form, causative.

This understanding is supported in verses like:

Ezek. 37:6 - "I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh."

Don't they already know He is Yahweh? What is He saying here?

Well, if we understand that יהוה is the 3rd person causative form of the verb "hayah", the Hebrew reader would understand that once He puts breath in them and they live, they would know that "I am He who causes to exist' (Ani Yahweh)."

All throughout history this has been the ultimate debate. Who is the author of all that exists? There are 73 scriptures where Yahweh makes this statement "you/they shall know that I am Yahweh". He wants us to have the understanding that HE IS, and HE WILL CAUSE YOU TO KNOW THAT HE IS BY WHAT HE DOES. This is how He introduced Himself to Yisrael, for "He who comes to Elohim must believe that HE IS" (Hebrews 11:6).

As far as I know, other proposed pronunciations (Yahuah, Yahuwah, Yehowah, etc) have no meaning at all in the Hebrew language, whereas it seems to me that Yahweh Himself in Exodus 3:14 was trying to attach a genuine meaning to His name. In the vast majority of cases, an "-ah" ending (with ה as the final letter) is actually a feminine ending in Hebrew. The fact that the Masorites were willing to place a vowel point indicating an "ah" sound at the end of יהוה is further evidence that His name would not end in "ah."

Some suggest that since there are some other Hebrew names don't follow Hebrew verb patterns, Yahweh's name shouldn't either. But the fact that "Ehyeh" does follow the correct (1st person) grammatical verb pattern, it would logically follow that יהוה would also contain the correct verb pattern. After all, He was using first person form to clarify the etymology of His name. And of all the proposed pronunciations, the only one that makes any grammatical sense or even carries a meaning at all in the



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