

GOD'S DIVINE NAME

"There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets"

Sources:

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My own studies found in Online:

'All tetragrammatons.pdf':
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https://johanneksenpoika.fi/uutiset_a20/nimitutkielma_19012020/Divine-Name-in-Aleppo-Codex-Study_edition.pdf
'Theophoric_names.pdf':
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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the correct way of pronouncing the name of God and its meaning. Because God's name is in Hebrew, it cannot be viewed critically in other languages, such as Greek or Latin. This is because when translating words and especially names from Hebrew into other languages, many things change, such as the appearance of the name, the alphabet, the pronunciation. For example, Hebrew names consist of the verb body as well as a noun that expresses the doing of something, who does that, and the object of doing. When Hebrew is translated into other languages, such information is lost.

The study also seeks to present some facts about the Hebrew alphabet, its verb system, grammatical rules, and Hebrew Masoretic manuscripts. With such facts can be seen behind many theories and prejudices.

This study is not a complete presentation on the subject. It's just a summary of two years of work, and at most a platform for further research. The study seeks to find out in detail which vowels belong to the name of God and which do not, and what the meaning of the name of God is likely to be and what it is not.

APPEARANCE OF GOD'S NAME

The two best-preserved and most respected Hebrew Masoretic manuscripts are the Leningrad Codex and the Aleppo Codex. Both are handwritten copies of the Hebrew and Aramaic passages of the Bible by the Jewish scribes, the Masorets, which in the present Bible comprise the entire Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi. The names of these Manuscripts are due to their location. The Leningrad Codex is found in St. Petersburg, Russia (formerly Leningrad), and the Aleppo Codex was originally from Aleppo in Syria (now in Jerusalem, Israel). Nowadays, however, there is no need to travel to see these manuscripts, but anyone can get to study them directly online.

The name of God appears in these manuscripts thousands of times. In the Leningrad Codex 6828 times, and in the Aleppo Codex 4559 times. The reason why it appears 2269 times less in the Aleppo Codex is because this manuscript is missing many pages — in fact, even entire books of the Bible.

When the Leningrad Codex contains all the books of the Old Testament, the Codex of Aleppo completely lacks the Book of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Daniel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Haggai.¹

This study highlights some Hebrew words. So it's good to know a couple of basic things about Hebrew. The reading direction is from right to left. Vowels are expressed by various vowel signs, the table below. A lot of vowels are used in Hebrew. Almost every second letter is a vowel. We can thank the Masorets and early Hebrew scribes for making the Bible Hebrew very well preserved. There is no conclusive evidence that the Hebrew way of pronouncing was somehow forgotten. All the words and names, including the name of God, have survived to this day. This is also in line with God's purpose for wanting to preserve the Holy Scriptures. (Romans 15:4)

FORMS OF GOD'S NAME

The name of God is four consonants long. Therefore, it is also called *tetragrammaton* (tetra = four, grammaton = letters). It is most typically found in Hebrew manuscripts in the form יהוה . Sometimes it may have a particle or two, such as ליהוה (*to* Jehovah), wherein a particle of one consonant length ל is attached in front of the name. In Hebrew, particles of one consonant in length cannot occur alone, so they are always attached to the next word — in this case, the name of God — while changing its appearance and length slightly. Other similar cases are, for example ויהוה (*and* Jehovah), ביהוה (*at/in* Jehovah), וביהוה (*but/and in* Jehovah) and so forth. When a particle attaches to a word which first vowel is short e (*sheva*; see Table 1.), this vowel is usually left unmarked. This is the case, for example, with the name (ירושלם) Jerusalem: בירושלם (*in* Jerusalem). But even if that happens, that vowel e (*sheva*) still belongs to that word. The exact situation is with the name of God.²

vowel	long	short	very short	very short / silent
a	qamats gadol ◻ ◡	patah ◻ ◡	hataf patah ◻ ◡	
e	tsere ◻ ◡	segol ◻ ◡	hataf segol ◻ ◡	sheva ◻ ◡
i	hiriq yod ◻ ◡	hiriq ◻ ◡		
o	holam ◻ ◡	qamats qatan ◻ ◡	hataf qamats ◻ ◡	
u	shuruk ◻ ◡	kubuts ◻ ◡		

Hebrew vowels.

¹ In addition, parts of the following books are missing: Deuteronomy (1:1-28:16), 2 Kings (2:19-3:14; 14:21-18:13), Jeremiah (29:10-31:34; 32:2-32:5; 32:9-32:12; 32:15-32:18; 32:22-32:24), Ezekiel (1:13-2:8; 45:8-48:20), Joel (2:10-3:1), Amos (5:19-9:15), Micah (1:1-4:13), Zephaniah (the last seven words from 3:20), Zechariah (1:1-9:16), 2 Chronicles (10:18-12:2), Psalms (14:7-25:2) and Song of Songs (4:1-8:14).

² Table 1: Hebrew vowel signs; The vowels a (*qamats gadol*) and o (*qamats qatan*) have the same sign. In practice, however, the a-vowel *qamats qatan* is always used, only in exceptional cases the o-vowel *qamats qatan*.

VOCALIZATION OF GOD'S NAME

By gathering from the Masoretic text all the passages in which the name of God appears as a tetragrammaton and removing the particles attached to it (vowel e - *sheva* - returns to the first vowel of the Name), a simple table of all vocalizations of tetragrammatons in that manuscript can be made.

The adjacent table shows all tetragrammatons with their vocalizations found in the Leningrad Codex. It is noted that there are 10 different forms in which the vowels and their places vary, but the consonants are the same. In the left column is the transliteration of the Hebrew name. *Transliteration* means translating a word letter by letter. English and many other languages have completely different letters, making it much easier to perceive Hebrew words. The line in square brackets in the transliteration of the name [-] is marked because it should have a vowel according to the Hebrew grammatical rules, but it is not marked in the Masoretic text. It is the case that in Hebrew there cannot be a situation in which the consonants ה 'he' and ו 'vav' are consecutive without a vowel. It is therefore marked as missing. Even if a vowel does not form any sound when pronounced, it is always marked with a vowel sign in the word or name. For example, the 1st person future of the verb 'I am' (אֶהְיֶה) transliterated as 'ehyeh'. The middle e-vowel (*sheva*) behaves silently when it is not at the very beginning of the word, so it is not pronounced, nor even transliterated. So if the name of God were pronounced Hebrew as 'yehvah', it would still be written יהוה. The tetragrammaton does not ever appear in masoretic texts in this way.

Westminster Leningrad Codex [4.20] Different forms of Tetragrammaton			
Jeh[-]vah	יהוה	6469	
Jeh[-]vah	יהוה	1	Le 23:38.
Jeh[-]vah	יהוה	1	Zec 6:12.
Jehovah	יהוה	50	
Jeh[-]vih	יהוה	270	
Jeh[-]vih	יהוה	2	Ge 15:2, 8.
Jeh[-]vih	יהוה	1	Hab 3:19.
Jehovih	יהוה	1	Jg 16:28.
Jehovih	יהוה	32	
Jah[-]vah	יהוה	1	Ps 144:15.
Total:		6828	

GOD'S NAME IN THEOPHORIC NAMES

On the other hand, whenever there is a middle vowel in a tetragrammaton, it is always an o-vowel (*holam*). The same can be seen from theophoric names.³ In them, the name of God, the tetragrammaton, appears in abbreviated form as either a prefix or a suffix. When a name appears as a prefix, it is an abbreviation of the beginning of a tetragrammaton יו (yo) or יהו (yeho).

For example, the name Jonathan, hebr. יהונתן (*yehonatan*), consists of two parts. The beginning is the abbreviated form of the name of God יהו (yeho; vowels *sheva*, *holam*), and the rest is the verb 'give' נתן (*natan*). On the other hand, Jonathan can also occur in the form יונתן (*yonatan*), where the beginning is only יו (yo; vowel *holam*) and the rest is the verb 'give' נתן (*natan*). Therefore, the name Jonathan means '*Jehovah gives*'.

While the name of God is in the suffix, it is an abbreviation for the rest of the tetragrammaton יה (yah) or יהו (yahu). For example, the name Netanyah, hebr. נתניהו (*netanyahu*), also consists of two parts. The first part is now the verb 'give' נתן (*netan*), and the rest is an abbreviated form of the name of God יהו (yahu; vowels *qamats*, *shuruk*). There is another form of this name as well, נתניה (*netanyah*), where the initial part is still the verb 'give' נתן (*netan*), and the rest is an abbreviated form of the name of God יה (yah; vowel *qamats*). This name also means '*Jehovah gives*'. Especially in

³ *Theophoric* means a name referring to God. Greek θεόφορος, *theophoros*, lit. 'carry God inside'. Such theophoric names, which include the name of God, are found in the Bible at least 194.

names, the vowels of a verb can change slightly depending on whether it is accompanied by a prefix or a suffix. It may seem special, but this is how the names are formed in Hebrew.

In general, in all theophoric names, the rule applies that when the name of God appears as a prefix, it is in the form 'Yo' or 'Yeho'. And when the name of God appears as a suffix, it is in form 'yah' or 'yahu'. Theophoric names also support the conclusion that the middle vowel of a tetragrammaton never becomes anything other than an o-vowel (*holam*).

Exceptions to theophoric names are Jehu יהוּ (yehu') and Judah יהוּדָה (yehudah). These are the same thing as above, but because of the Hebrew pronunciation they are spelled differently. The name Jehu consists of two parts, the first part יְ (ye; vowel *tsere*) and the rest הוּא (hu'), means 'he' (masculine pronoun). The beginning would normally have been an abbreviated form of the name of God יהו (yeho), but it has been changed to be better pronounced because of the form יהוהוּא (yehohu') does not work when pronouncing Hebrew because it contains the sound of 'hohu'. The name Jehu means 'He [is] Jehovah'. Hebrew does not have the word 'is' at all, so it is enclosed in square brackets.

The name Judah is about a similar situation. The first part of the name Judah is יְ (ye), which would normally be an abbreviation for the beginning of a tetragrammaton יהו (yeho), and the rest is the verb 'thank, praise' הוּדָה (hudah). Even in this situation, the name would be formed יהוהוּדָה (yehohudah), which would include the sound of 'hohu' as above, which simply does not fit the Hebrew-speaking mouth at all. Therefore, this name has also been changed to יהוּדָה (yehudah).

Other theophoric names that can be pronounced in the usual way are e.g. Ahaziah אַחַזְיָהוּ ('achazyahu; means 'Jehovah takes hold'), Elijah אֵלִיָּהוּ ('eliyah; means 'My God [is] Jehovah'), Jesus or Joshua יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (yehoshua; means 'Jehovah saves') and Joseph יוֹסֵף (yosef; means 'Jehovah has added').

IS JEHOVAH A HYBRID FORM?

Many Bible dictionaries state that the form of God's name, Jehovah, is a *hybrid* form. This means that it would have been formed by adding vowels to the tetragrammaton either from the word *adonay* (Lord), *elohim* (God), or some other similar expression. Therefore, there are good reasons to examine this claim in depth.

Everything is really based on the fact that for one reason or another, the Jews began to avoid pronouncing the name of God. It is therefore suspected that they may have been influenced by some superstitious notions, or an overinterpretation of the 3rd commandment of the law of Moses. Whatever the reason, they began to avoid pronouncing the name of God. Therefore, they began to look for other expressions such as 'Lord' or 'God' whenever they saw God's name in the Hebrew text, and in this way they avoided pronouncing the tetragrammaton out loud. This tradition still continues among Jews today. An alternative term widely used today in addition to these two is 'Hashem' hebr. הַשֵּׁם, which simply means 'That Name'.

Are vowels of the word *adonay* in the name of Jehovah? Word *adonay*, hebr. אֲדֹנָי has vowels *hataf patah*, *holam*, and *qamats*. When this matter is examined from Masoretic manuscripts, these tables

Aleppo Codex			
Different forms of Tetragrammaton			
Jeh[-]vah	יהוה	4275	
Jehovah	יהוה	9	1Sa 15:1; 25:28; 2Sa 24:10; Isa 30:1; Eze 3:12; 28:22 x 2; Job 12:9; Pr 16:9.
Jehovah	יהוה	2	De 33:7; Isa 13:4.
Jeh[-]vih	יהוה	3	Eze 20:30; 25:3; 37:21.
Jehovih	יהוה	268	Jos 7:7; Jg 6:22; 16:28 ...
Jehovih	יהוה	1	Eze 16:23.
Jehovih	יהוה	1	Zep 1:7.
Total:		4559	

immediately show that there is not a single tetragrammaton containing the vowels of the word *adonay*. The first vowel of the word *adonay* is *hataf patah*, while the first vowel of the tetragrammaton is *sheva*. Also by comparing different manuscripts, one can notice the deviations made by masorets in the vocalization of tetragrammatons. Such is, for example, the tetragrammaton in the Leningrad Codex in Psalm 144:15: יהוה *yahvah*; vowels *hataf patah* and *qamats*. In the Aleppo Codex, Psalm 144:15 contains a tetragrammaton יהוה *yehvah*; vowels *sheva* and *qamats*. Indeed, it seems that this only case in the Leningrad Codex is simply a mistake made by a masoret.

Instead, in the word *elohim*, hebr. אֱלֹהִים has vowels *hataf segol*, *holam* and *hiriq*. The tables again show that there are some few exceptions, where the first vowel of the tetragrammaton is the same as the first vowel of the word *elohim*, *hataf segol*. Again, comparing the masoretic texts with each other, the following can be stated (first vowel with parentheses):

	Leningrad Codex	Aleppo Codex
Jg 16:28	יהוה (<i>hataf segol</i>)	יהוה (<i>sheva</i>)
Zep 1:7	יהוה (<i>sheva</i>)	יהוה (<i>hataf segol</i>)

The exceptions in Judges 16:28 and Zephaniah 1:7 in the first vowels of the tetragrammatons cancel each other out. Thus, it can also be concluded that these exceptions are mistakes made by scribes among thousands of tetragrammatons. By contrast, the two exceptions in the Leningrad Codex of Genesis 15:2, 8 cannot be compared to the Aleppo Codex nor to the Cairo Codex, because they lack the book of Genesis entirely. But comparing these two passages to the Washington Pentateuch, for example, or any other similar manuscript, the following can be said:

	Leningrad Codex	Washington Pentateuch (picture below)
Ge 15:2	יהוה (<i>hataf segol</i>)	יהוה (<i>sheva</i>)
Ge 15:8	יהוה (<i>hataf segol</i>)	יהוה (<i>sheva</i>)

So a comparison of the tetragrammatons in Genesis 15:2, 8 also reveals these two cases as a mistake made by the scribe.

And how can these similar errors be explained? One way is to look at it from the scribe's perspective.

Jews used to avoid pronouncing the name of God. They used other expressions here, such as *adonay* (Lord) and *elohim* (God).

For most of all the thousands of tetragrammatons, they started it with the right vowel (*sheva*), but sometimes they made a mistake. This mistake most likely occurred when they thought, or even pronounced aloud that different expression when copying text. That's how the wrong vowel got into it: Indeed, in the Leningrad Codex, the tetragrammaton of Psalm 144:15 contains the first vowel of the *adonay*, *hataf patah*. This is the only case where it appears in manuscripts. And according to the Hebrew grammar rule, this vowel (*hataf patah*) cannot come under the consonant *yod* → יְ.



Washington Pentateuch. Picture 014v.



This view is also supported by the fact that the first vowel of the tetragrammaton in Genesis 15:2, 8, Judges 16:28 of the Leningrad Codex, and Zephaniah 1:7 of the Aleppo Codex is the same as the first vowel of the word *elohim*, *hataf segol*. These four cases are connected by the fact that in all these verses the tetragrammaton occurs in the context of the expression 'Lord Jehovah'. Why is this noteworthy? Because it was in such situations that the Jews exceptionally used the expression 'adonay elohim', (Lord God). Since the expression already started with the word *adonay*, they would not have repeated it right after the tetragrammaton, because otherwise it would have sounded really silly 'adonay adonay', (Lord Lord). And because they used the other term *elohim* (God) instead of tetragrammaton in these situations, it sometimes happened that the first vowel of the word *elohim*, *hataf segol*, was accidentally marked as the first vowel of the tetragrammaton.

Cases where such an expression is found in the text, such as אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה 'adonay yehovih', (Lord Jehovah), where the tetragrammaton is next to the word *adonay*, can be found 306 times in the Leningrad Codex. There are 273 such cases in the Aleppo Codex. As a sign of this exceptional case, the scribes also changed the last vowel of the tetragrammaton (normally *qamats*) to match the last vowel of the word *elohim* (*hiriq*). Therefore, in these cases, they marked the last vowel of the tetragrammaton exceptionally as the i-vowel. This is supported by the fact that this last i-vowel is not marked in the tetragrammaton in any situation other than in connection with this expression (*adonay* + tetragrammaton), 'Lord Jehovah'. All Masoretic manuscripts operate in the same way.

One exception can also be found here, namely that in the Aleppo Codex there is an expression in Ezekiel 28:22 אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה 'adonay yehovah', where *qamats* has slipped from the scribes as the last vowel of the tetragrammaton, which really belongs to it.

Three other differences in the notation of tetragrammatons in the Leningrad Codex can be found in Leviticus 23:38 *yod* ם, Zechariah 6:12 *he* ה, and Habakkuk 3:19 *he* ה. In fact, these are not even vowel marks, but so-called *dagesh* dots⁴. They are part of a notation system⁵ developed by scribes, of which vowel marks are only a small part. Comparing these cases with other Masoretic texts, it is observed that they, too, are only extra notations of scribes.

The fact that the last vowel of a tetragrammaton should indeed be *qamats* is spoken of by an abbreviation taken from the end of the tetragrammaton, which is a so-called *poetic form*, *Yah* יה or יהי. It occurs both alone, but also in the context of the verb 'praise'; 'halelu-yah' הללו-יה (praise Yah). In the Leningrad Codex, this abbreviated form of the name of God occurs a total of 50 times⁶, and in Aleppo Codex a total of 47 times. Also a suffix in theophoric names *-yah* יה or *-yahu* יהי is an abbreviation for the rest of the tetragrammaton.

The claim that Jehovah is a hybrid form is based on the assumption that scribes would have replaced the correct vowels of the tetragrammaton with vowels of the word *adonay*; *hataf patah*, *holam* ja *qamats*. And as below a consonant *yod* ם there cannot be a vowel *hataf patah* for Hebrew grammatical reasons, they would instead have marked the vowel *sheva* in it. In this way, it could have been formed יהיה 'yehovah'. There is no support for this argument other than that the Jews used substitute expressions when reading the tetragrammaton. It cannot be proved that this has actually happened.

But what can be proved is that the theophoric names and the tetragrammaton abbreviations they contain indicate that the name of God should have vowels *sheva*, *holam* and *qamats*. No one has ever

⁴ The *dagesh* dot inside the consonant refers to its pronunciation, giving it more weight and sometimes doubling it.

⁵ The character system developed by Jewish scribes, *nikkud*, includes vowel characters, consonant refinement characters, and so-called *cantillation* marks. These cantillation marks can also be used to indicate e.g. accent, pitch, pause, and other technical factors, such as the middle of a sentence, a reference to a margin to account for an alternative reading of a word, to combine expressions (cf. dash). The whole system was designed to record the original Hebrew reading style and even the dialect they considered to be closest to the correct one.

⁶ One only case with an abbreviation *Yah* יה occurs without a *dagesh* point, is in Song of Songs 8:6: שִׁלְהֵוִיָּהּ *shalhevetyah*. It has been interpreted to mean 'Flame of Yah', but it can also mean 'strong flame' or 'powerful flame'.

claimed that the scribes changed the vowels of these names as well. That would be very difficult because there are a total of nearly 5,000 theophoric names in the Bible. Moreover, there is no indication that the Jews could not pronounce these other names. Changing the vowels to these other names would have affected the structure of the theophoric name and might have distorted or lost its meaning. So there are good reasons to believe that they have remained intact.

If the theophoric names remained intact, it proves that the vowels of the tetragrammaton have also remained intact. The only vowel the scribes touched on was the middle one, *holam*, which they removed from most of the tetragrammatons. As can be seen from the Masoretic manuscripts, a few times they accidentally slipped the middle vowel into tetragrammaton. These "three vowels correctly" cases can be found 11 times in the Aleppo Codex and 50 times in the Leningrad Codex. This is quite logical because, first of all, they were also humans; they also made mistakes. Second, these errors were not, in fact, errors, but they accidentally slipped the right vowel into place. They did not slip or write any other vowels as the middle vowel. Every time it was an o-vowel, *holam*. If this vowel had been wrong and the vowels came from the word *adonay*, there would have been no reason not to mark it thousands of times, creating a completely anti-grammatical form יהוהֹ *yehvah*.

So there are no vowels of the word *adonay* in the tetragrammaton. But are there then the vowels of the word *elohim*? As proven above, the middle vowel is missing from most tetragrammatons, as in the case of *adonay*. In addition to this, the few exceptions where the first vowel of the tetragrammaton has been indeed the same as in the word *elohim* (*hataf segol*), they are revealed to be the mistakes of scribes by comparing manuscripts with one another. The last vowel *hiriq* occurs only in situations where it required to read the expression '*adonay* [tetragrammaton]' → '*adonay elohim*'. In these cases, the scribes did indeed change the last vowel of the tetragrammaton to an i-vowel. But as theophoric names, as well as the abbreviated poetic form prove, the last vowel of a tetragrammaton is to be *qamats*, not *hiriq*. For this reason, it can be said that the vowels of the tetragrammaton do not come from the word *elohim* either.

IS YAHWEH THE RIGHT FORM?

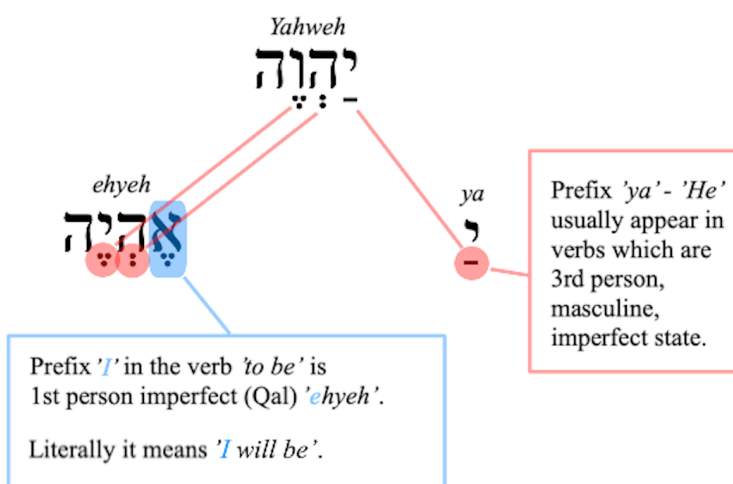
Hebrew scholar Wilhelm Gesenius⁷ redefined the vocalization of the tetragrammaton. His suggestions for the correct vowels of God's Name were יהוהֹ a-e-e, (*patah*, *sheva* and *segol*). This vocalization is based on a form validated by modern scholars, *Yahweh*, and the vocal of its middle, *sheva*, remains silent because of the rules of Hebrew grammar. What biblical evidence did Gesenius have to end up in this form?

There is no clear answer anywhere. But it is good to understand what three factors might have guided him to this conclusion. First, he understood from Exodus 3:14 that the name of God includes the verb '*to be*' in one way or another. Second, the meaning of the name is believed to include an idea that can be deduced from this verb '*to be*' that God revealed to Moses himself. According to this idea, this verb would include causing something because it would describe the active person of God as Creator, Liberator, Protector, Teacher, etc. quite well. Therefore, this verb has been interpreted to assume that it is in a causative form (expressing the cause of something). The problem with this assumption, however, is that there is no causative form for this verb in Hebrew, as will be shown at the end of this study. Because Gesenius also knew this, he could not find vowels in the causative of the verb. Instead, the only thing he found was the vowel commonly found in causative forms in the Hebrew verb system. When looking at 3rd-person singular imperfect verbs that been conjugated to causative form, their prefix '*he*' almost always includes the vowel *patah* → הֵ .

⁷ Wilhelm Gesenius (February 3, 1786 - October 23, 1842) was a German Orientalist and a Lutheran Bible critic. At the age of 24, he became a professor of theology.

Third, Gesenius could be guided by evidence found in older sources than masoretic texts in which the name of God is vocalized Iao , $\text{Ia}\beta\epsilon$ or $\text{Iaou}\epsilon$ (in appearance quite close to the form of Yahweh). The problem here, however, is that these sources are Greek texts to which attempts have been made to translate the Hebrew name. As previously explained, the Jews did not mark the tetragrammaton in a pronounced form in Hebrew manuscripts; they lacked the middle vowel. In addition, as a target language, Greek is completely different in phonetics (pronunciation), linguistics (language characteristics) and alphabet than Hebrew. This means that sounds can vary a lot, and not even similar consonants can always be found. Furthermore, the Greek translations could not include the meaning of the name, but the name was translated as a mere "name tag". It was enough for the translators that the name was roughly that way. Against this background, it is very difficult to go on to interpret from the Greek translation what the vowels and sounds of the original Hebrew might have been.

But let's go back to Hebrew. Gesenius certainly knew that the phrase in Exodus 3:14 contains twice the verb 'to be': $\text{אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה}$ *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, literally 'I will be who I will be'. When this verb 'to be', אֶהְיֶה *ehyeh*, combined with the prefix obtained from the causative form $\text{יָ$ *ya*, these vowels form a tetragrammaton יְהוָה *yah[e]weh* (pronounced as 'Yahveh'). Due to this interpretation, the name Yahweh is defined to mean 'He causes to be / become'.



Empirical evidence also tells about the youth of the form Yahweh. Since this form was not invented until the 19th century, it cannot be found in any church buildings, for example. Whenever a tetragrammaton appears in churches, it is in the form of Jehovah (יְהוָה or יְהוִה), but never Yahweh (יְהוָה). Instead, in modern Finnish Bible translations⁸ we see Yahweh, but never Jehovah.⁹ Much older translations, such as those from 1685 and 1776, mention 'Jehovah' either in a footnote or in an index.

According to this definition, a meaning can be formed for Tetragrammaton: 'He causes to be / become'.

This empirical observation fits well with the time span of how the name Yahweh began to be used in the Bible translations in the 20th century. This is influenced by Wilhelm Gesenius's work in the 19th century to re-vocalize the tetragrammaton, as well as scholars acceptance of this interpretation. But although in this form יְהוָה *Yahweh* has been used in modern Bible translations, it is still not displayed in the church buildings themselves, as was the case with the name Jehovah יְהוָה before.

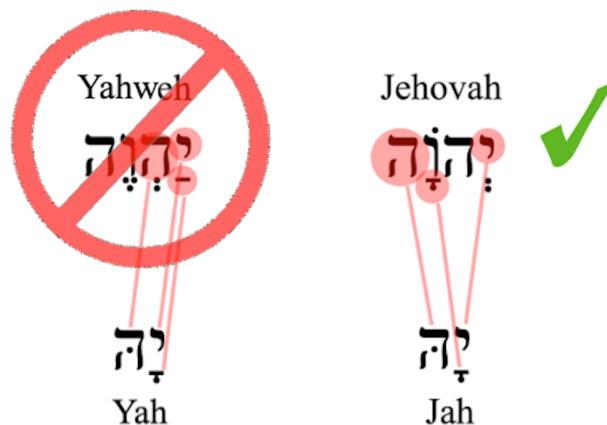


Cathedral in Helsinki, Finland

⁸ Finnish translation (1933/1938), footnotes in Exodus 3:14 and 6:3: *Jahve*. Finnish translation (1992), footnote in Exodus 3:14, and in the text itself (Exodus 3:15; 6:2, 3; 15:3; 33:19; 34:5; Isa. 42:8): *Jahve*.

⁹ Many English and Spanish Bibles contain the Name of God in the form of *Jehovah*.

However, the most crushing evidence against the name Yahweh is given by the Hebrew Masoretic manuscripts. When searching for its vowels *patah*, *sheva* and *segol*, one comes across a surprising fact. These vowels of the Yahweh form are not found in tetragrammatons, nor in theophoric names, or even in the poetic form of the name. In other words, nothing in the Masoretic manuscripts suggests, even indirectly, that these are the correct vowels of God's name. (See tables of all the different forms of tetragrammatons in the Leningrad and Aleppo Codices.)



A much-used excuse is that *Yah* had the correct vowel remained in the abbreviated poetic form, and that Gesenius would then have recorded it in the form of *Yahweh*. This is not the case. The problem is once again related to the Hebrew vowel system. The vowel used in the form *Yah* is *qamats*, but the vowel used in the name *Yahweh* is *patah*. It's a completely different vowel! Furthermore, the name *Yahweh* does not follow the Hebrew grammar, because *Yah* is formed *from the rest* of the tetragrammaton, not the beginning. The first part comes from the beginning of the word and the rest comes from the end of the word. This is how Hebrew works. For this reason, the abbreviation, suffix *yah* used in theophoric names also always appears *at the end* of the name, never at the beginning. When looking at the situation from a purely Hebrew perspective, the opposite is happening: Instead of proving the correctness of the form *Yahweh*, the abbreviation *Yah* proves that the form *Jehovah* is grammatically completely correct.

IS GOD'S NAME THE CASE OF QERE-KETIV?

A couple of technical details about masoretic manuscripts. First, when a small circle appears above the word in the main text (see image below), it is the so-called *masora marker*, of which there are thousands. These refer to the margin next to that word in which the scribes made entries. When there is an entry in the margin ק (letter *qaf*) or קרי (letters *qaf, resh, yod*), it means a word *קרי qere*, in other words 'read [the word of the main text in this way:]'. Then usually above this קרי notation is a word written in consonants alone. This instructs the reader *to read an alternate word* from the margin instead of the original word in the main text. This masora marker may not be found everywhere. But in the margin, there is always an entry on the same line, either קרי *qere* or כת *ketiv*, if it is just such a case of *qere-ketiv*.

If there is an entry in the margin כת (letters *kaf, tav*), it means *כתב ketiv* 'written'. Below this *ketiv* notation is a word written in consonants alone. This means that now an alternative reading method has been used directly in the main text. The main text then already contains the pre-vocalized word *qere*, but the margin has the original reading style. It may sound tricky, but the main thing is to understand that *qere* always refers to a changed way of reading, and *ketiv* always refers to the original way of reading. In addition, there are often masora markers in the main text to refer to details in the margin other than these *qere* or *ketiv* cases.

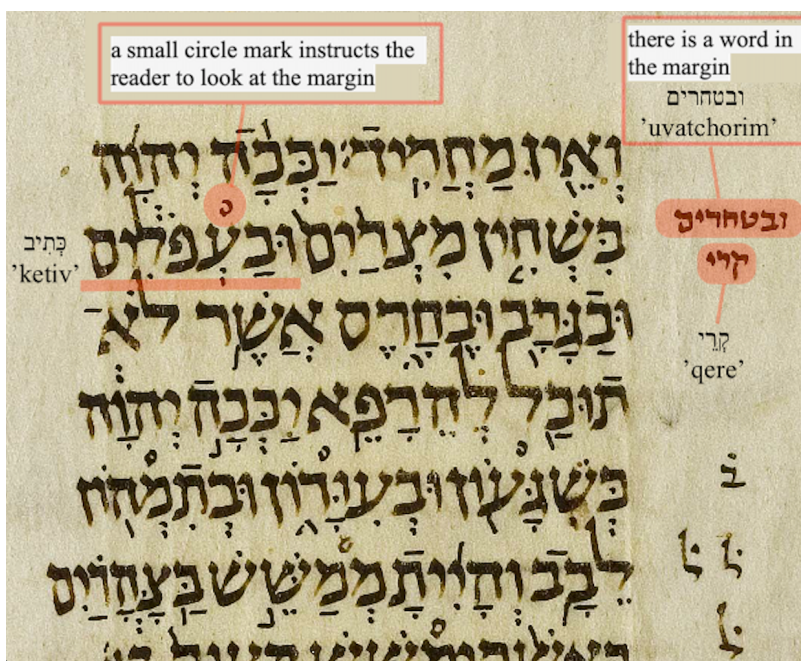
Why all this system? The Masorets were very careful in preserving how the text was read in the synagogue. They wanted to carefully preserve the original reading of the text and not alter or distort the writings. They had access to many other manuscripts, which they compared with each other. They did not do this to mislead or confuse us. Very few properly understand the purpose of this system. Therefore, even many scholars who are familiar with the subject merely repeat that terms *qere* means

'what is read' and *ketiv* 'what is written', but do not explain it in more depth. For the sake of repetition: The notations *qere* and *ketiv* are used for the same purpose: The scribes wanted to point out the different ways of reading words.

Sometimes a different way of noting is also confusing when the manuscripts have been translated into text versions. The translators have acted in such a way that they have pre-formed the reading method to which this system refers. When there were only consonants in the margin, they have added vowels to it from the word in the main text. The Westminster text version of the Leningrad Codex has marked these cases with asterisks: *[*ketiv*] and **[*qere*]. The same thing can be found in the Hebrew interlinear translation (biblehub.com), which uses this Westminster text version of the Leningrad Codex. Therefore, the Hebrew interlinear translation of biblehub.com is marked with [*ketiv*-word] in square brackets and (*qere*-word) with ordinary parentheses.

For example, in Deuteronomy 28:27 there is a case (pictured below) where the main text contains the *ketiv* word וּבְעַפְלִים *uva'folim* (underlined in red). Above it is a masora marker that instructs the reader to look at the margin. The *qere*-word can be found in the margin וּבְטַחְרִים. When the vowels of the *ketiv*-word are combined with the *qere*-word, the word is formed וּבְטַחְרִים *uvatchorim*, which means *hemorrhoids*. This word appears in the Leningrad Codex a total of six times¹⁰. Four times the margin is marked *qere*, and twice *ketiv*. (1Sa 6:11, 17) Thus, when the margin is marked *ketiv*, the *qere*-word appears in the main text, but the original *ketiv*-word appears in the margin.

Some argue that because the name of God was pronounced differently than it was written, it is the so-called *qere-ketiv*-case. The argument is based on the desire to hold on to the view that the tetragrammaton contains the vowels of the word *adonay*. But this is not the case. If the tetragrammaton were a case of *qere-ketiv*, the scribes would certainly have marked it somehow, either in a small circle, or in the margin of '*qere*' or '*ketiv*'. The tetragrammaton appears in the text thousands of times. None of these have any notation of any kind, no masora circle, and no marginal notation to suggest a changed way of reading.



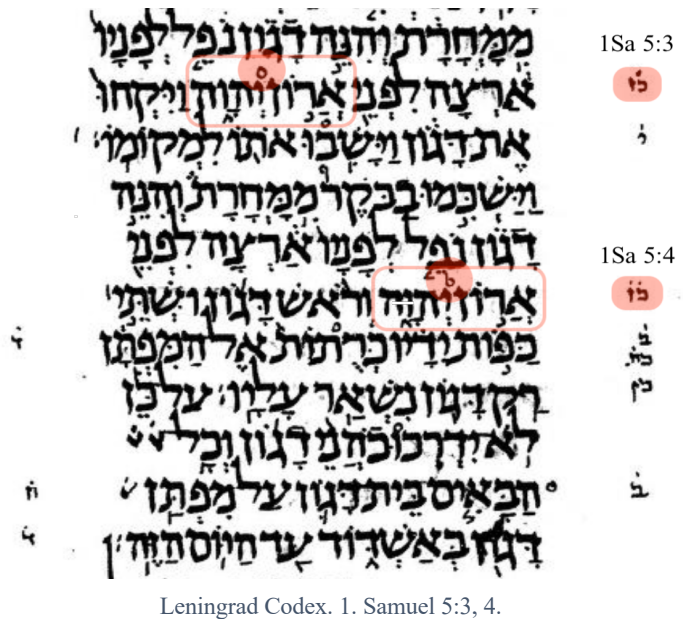
Aleppo Codex: Deuteronomy 28:27

Secondly, in the words *qere* and *ketiv* **only the consonants change**, but the vowels always remain the same. Thus, if a different way of pronouncing had been recorded from a tetragrammaton by this system, it would be due solely to the change of its consonants. The vowels in the main text always remain the same. An examination of this system only reveals that the scribes put the correct vowels in all the words in the main text. The tetragrammaton is no exception in this regard. It already has the right vowels!

¹⁰ The other five passages are found in 1 Samuel 5:6, 9, 12 and 6:11, 17.

Sometimes, however, there are cases where there is a masora marker above them, between the tetragrammaton and another word. This is the case, for example, when there is a *dash* between them, i.e. *maqaf*. A good example can be found in Leningrad Codex, 1 Samuel 5:3, 4. These verses contain the expression ארון יהוה *aron yehovah* ('the Ark [of the covenant] of Jehovah'). This expression occurs dozens of times, and sometimes these words are combined with the *maqaf*-line, for example done in 1Sa 6:1: ארון-יהוה *aron-yehovah*. But even in these cases, the masora marker is not related to the pronunciation of a tetragrammaton, but is intended to combine the two words together to form an expression.

So when this is the case, some do admit that the Name of God is not a case of *qere-ketiv*. But they still claim that since no entry can be found in the margin, it is a case of *qere perpetuum*¹¹. The only problem is that this argument is not true either.



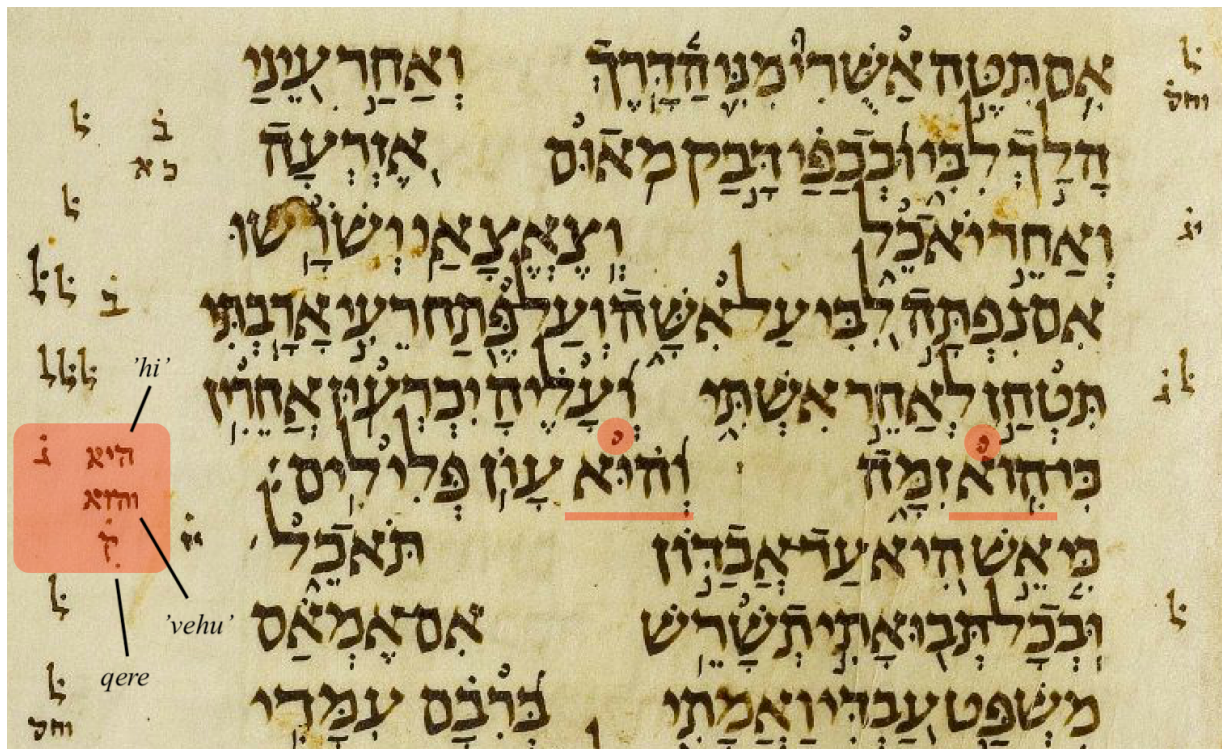
Leningrad Codex. 1. Samuel 5:3, 4.

¹¹ *Qere perpetuum* is defined as permanent, *perpetual qere*.

IS GOD'S NAME THE CASE OF QERE PERPETUUM?

At this point, the situation begins to turn desperate for those who trying to prove their claims that tetragrammaton has vowels of *adonay*. It is true that *qere perpetuum* is such a well-known case that the scribes did not mark it in the margin every time because of its prevalence. But sometimes they still marked it to the margin, and also with the masora marker.

As an example of the case of *qere perpetuum*, the personal pronoun *היא* *hi*, i.e. '*she*' (feminine), has often been used. This personal pronoun is marked both masora marker and in the margin '*qere*' in the main text in the Leningrad Codex a total of 5 times.¹² In the Aleppo Codex, the same case is found in 1 Kings 17:15; Isaiah 30:33 and Job 31:11. The *qere perpetuum* marked in these sections is not differ from the *qere-ketiv* cases. (see image below)



Aleppo Codex. Job 31:11 masora markers points out *qere perpetuum* cases, which are marked in the margin just like ordinary *qere-ketiv* cases.

So, where does all this confusion and debate around the vowels of the tetragrammaton came from? This whole chase, as well as these explanations of *qere-ketiv* and *qere perpetuum*, seems to be based on the desire to find desperate support for the view that *Jehovah* has taken vowels from elsewhere. However, an objective examination does not support this conclusion. And it further shows that the vowels in the form of *Yahweh* come from elsewhere. All the evidence gathered shows that the correct vowels of the tetragrammaton can be found in the Hebrew manuscripts. These are *sheva*, *holam* and *qamats*: **JEHOVAH**.

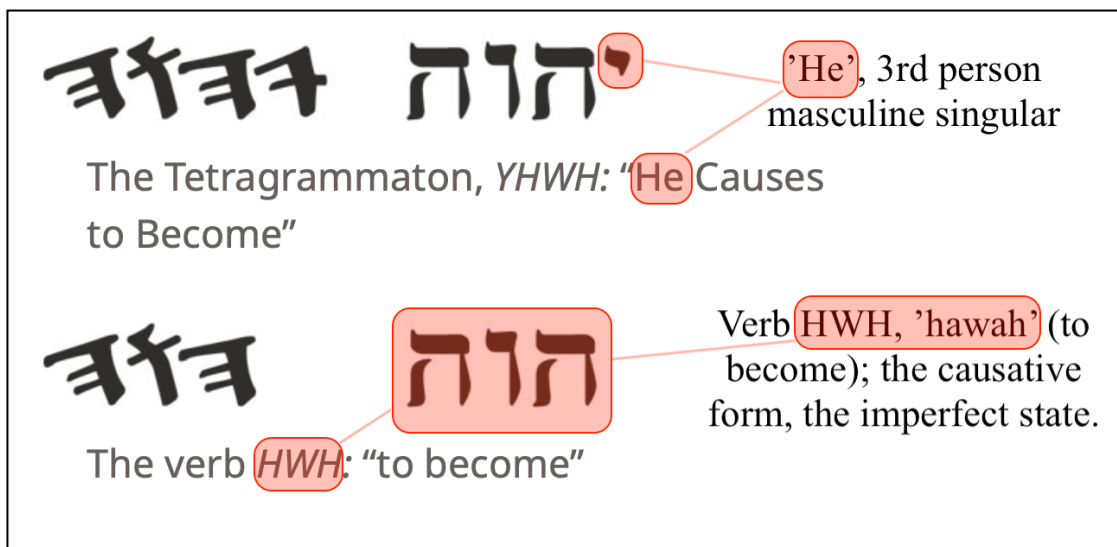
¹² This case of *qere perpetuum* occurs in Deuteronomy 13:16; 1 Kings 17:15; Isaiah 30:33; Job 31:11 and Ezra 4:9.

MEANING OF GOD'S NAME

Only when the correct vowels of the tetragrammaton have been figured out, we can begin to speculate on the meaning of God's Name. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*¹³ mentions about the God's Name: "The pronunciation of *yhwh* as Yahweh is a scholarly guess." So, if the form Yahweh is in fact merely a guess of scholars, what kind of guess *the meaning of that name* might be?

Perhaps one of the most common alternatives considered to be the meaning of both forms, *Jehovah* and *Yahweh*, is: '*He causes to be / become*'. The figure (below) shows, by slightly the same logic that Wilhelm Gesenius probably inferred as the meaning of the name of God (the vowels of the Yahweh). He took a vowel from 3rd person masculine verb prefix that was conjugated to a causative. And the rest of the vowels he took from the verb '*to be*', which is in 1st person singular imperfective state (explained earlier in the figure on page 8.)

Here is some similarity: The meaning of the name is constructed from the masculine personal pronoun '*he*' of the 3rd person, and the causative form of the verb '*to become*'. The word used in Hebrew verb tables is usually *imperfect*, but it refers to the future state of the verb.



The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, 2013 version, Appendix A4, p. 1735.
Insight on the Scriptures, Vol. 2, p. 5. (Published: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.)

The whole idea of this meaning is thus to interpret the tetragrammaton as *a direct form of a Hebrew verb consisting of a prefix (personal pronoun) plus a verb body*. This type of verb form can only be found in the imperfective, i.e. future state. However, the problem is related to the HWH-verb form presented above, and thus to this whole interpretation of the meaning of the name of God. Therefore, it is necessary to study it in more depth.

¹³ 1992 edition, Vol 6, p. 1011, Doubleday Publishing Group, Yale University Press.

HEBREW VERB SYSTEM

In Hebrew, verb conjugations differs a lot with many other languages. They can be conjugated in a total of *seven different ways*, called *stems*. They are two basic stems; *pa'al* (active) and *niph'al* (passive), two intensive stems; *pi'el* (active) and *pu'al* (passive), two causative stems; *hiph'il* (active) and *hoph'al* (passive), and one reflexive stem; *hithpa'el* (neither active nor passive). In addition, verbs can be prefixed with a personal pronoun (me, you, he .. etc). And in addition to these, the verbs can be in the past tense (perfect), present tense or future tense (imperfect). All of these things can be presented as a verb tables, which can be seen in textbooks, for example. You should not be frightened at them because those tables help to clarify the meaning of God's name.

As an example in such tables (pages 15, 16), the verb '*kill*' has often been used because it can be conjugated into *all seven different stems*. The upper table shows the past tense (perfect). Verbs of past tense and current tense have no prefixes for personal pronouns. Prefixes can only occur in the future (imperfect). The causative stems are *hiph'il* (active) and *hoph'al* (passive).

It is noteworthy how the verbs are conjugated. After the basic form, the making (in the verbs) becomes more intense. The object of making changes in the passive. The *causative stem* – that interests us in this context – is again similar to the basic stem, but it also involves causing an act.

The leftmost column has abbreviations. Explanation for those is: c = common, s = singular, p = plural, m = masculine, f = feminine. The line marked **in red** is the masculine form '*he*' of the 3rd person singular, which is thus looked at more closely. In particular, this form (3ms) is associated with the meaning of God's name, '*He causes to become*'.

Perfect
qatal
קטל

	<i>Pa'al (Qal)</i>		<i>Niph'al</i>		<i>Pi'el</i>		<i>Pu'al</i>		<i>Hiph'il</i>		<i>Hoph'al</i>	<i>Hithpa'el</i>
	Simple		Intensive		Causative		Causative		Causative		Reflexive	
	active	passive	active	passive	active	passive	active	passive	active	passive		
1cs	קטלתי qatalti I killed	בקטלתי niqaltti I was killed	קטלתי qittalti I slaughtered	קטלתי quttalti I was slaughtered	הקטלתי hiqalti I caused to kill	הקטלתי hoqalti I was caused to kill	התקטלתי hitqattalti I killed myself					
2ms	קטלת qatalta you killed	בקטלת niqalta you were killed	קטלת qittalta you slaughtered	קטלת quttalta you were slaughtered	הקטלת hiqalta you caused to kill	הקטלת hoqalta you were caused to kill	התקטלת hitqattalta you killed yourself					
2fs	קטלת qatalt you killed	בקטלת niqalt you were killed	קטלת qittalt you slaughtered	קטלת quttalt you were slaughtered	הקטלת hiqalt you caused to kill	הקטלת hoqalt you were caused to kill	התקטלת hitqattalt you killed yourself					
3ms	קטל qatal he killed	בקטל niqtal he was killed	קטל qittel he slaughtered	קטל quttal he was slaughtered	הקטיל hiqtil he caused to kill	הקטל hoqtal he was caused to kill	התקטל hitqattél he killed himself					
3fs	קטלה qatlah she killed	בקטלה niqtelah she was killed	קטלה qittelah she slaughtered	קטלה quttelah she was slaughtered	הקטילה hiqtilah she caused to kill	הקטלה hoqtelah she was caused to kill	התקטלה hitqattelah she killed herself					
1cp	קטלנו qatalnu we killed	בקטלנו niqaltenu we were killed	קטלנו qitalnu we slaughtered	קטלנו quttalnu we were slaughtered	הקטלנו hiqalnu we caused to kill	הקטלנו hoqalnu we were caused to kill	התקטלנו hitqattalnu we killed ourselves					
2mp	קטלתם qataltem you killed	בקטלתם niqaltem you were killed	קטלתם qitaltem you slaughtered	קטלתם quttaltem you were slaughtered	הקטלתם hiqaltem you caused to kill	הקטלתם hoqaltem you were caused to kill	התקטלתם hitqattaltem you killed yourselves					
2fp	קטלתן qatalten you killed	בקטלתן niqalten you were killed	קטלתן qitalten you slaughtered	קטלתן quttalten you were slaughtered	הקטלתן hiqalten you caused to kill	הקטלתן hoqalten you were caused to kill	התקטלתן hitqattalten you killed yourselves					
3cp	קטלו qatlu they killed	בקטלו niqtelu they were killed	קטלו qittelu they slaughtered	קטלו quttelu they were slaughtered	הקטילו hiqtilu they caused to kill	הקטלו hoqtelu they were caused to kill	התקטלו hitqattelu they killed themselves					

The following table (below) shows the verb 'kill' in imperfect state, and that interests us. In the first column is marked all prefixes of personal pronouns (I, you, he ...). Notice that verbs 3ms and 3mp (he, they) have the same prefix *yod*:

	Pa'al (Qal)		Niph'al		Pi'el		Pu'al		Hiph'il		Hoph'al		Hithpa'el
	Simple				Intensive				Causative				
	active	passive	active	passive	active	passive	active	passive	active	passive	active	passive	
Imperfect <i>yiqtol</i>	1cs	אֶקְטֹל eqtol I will kill	אֶקְטָל eqqatel I will be killed	אֶקְטֹל aqattel I will slaughter	אֶקְטָל aqtal I will be slaughtered	אֶקְטִיל aqtil I will cause to kill	אֶקְטָל oqtal I will be caused to kill	אֶתְקַטֵּל etqattel I will kill myself					
	2ms	תִּקְטֹל tiqtol you will kill	תִּקְטָל tiqqatel you will be killed	תִּקְטֹל teqattel you will slaughter	תִּקְטָל tequttal you will be slaughtered	תִּקְטִיל taqtil you will cause to kill	תִּקְטָל toqtal you will be caused to kill	תִּתְקַטֵּל titqattel you will kill yourself					
	2fs	תִּקְטְלִי tiqte li you will kill	תִּקְטָלִי tiqqatli you will be killed	תִּקְטְלִי teqatteli you will slaughter	תִּקְטָלִי tequtteli you will be slaughtered	תִּקְטְלִי taqtili you will cause to kill	תִּקְטָלִי toqteli you will be caused to kill	תִּתְקַטְלִי titqatteli you will kill yourself					
	3ms	יִקְטֹל yiqtol he will kill	יִקְטָל yiqqatel he will be killed	יִקְטֹל yeqattel he will slaughter	יִקְטָל yequttal he will be slaughtered	יִקְטִיל yaqtil he will cause to kill	יִקְטָל yoqtal he will be caused to kill	יִתְקַטֵּל yitqattel he will kill himself					
	3fs	תִּקְטֹל tiqtol she will kill	תִּקְטָל tiqqatel she will be killed	תִּקְטֹל teqattel she will slaughter	תִּקְטָל tequttal she will be slaughtered	תִּקְטִיל taqtil she will cause to kill	תִּקְטָל toqtal she will be caused to kill	תִּתְקַטֵּל titqattel she will kill herself					
	1cp	נִקְטֹל niqtol we will kill	נִקְטָל niqqatel we will be killed	נִקְטֹל neqattel we will slaughter	נִקְטָל nequttal we will be slaughtered	נִקְטִיל naqtil we will cause to kill	נִקְטָל noqtal we will be caused to kill	נִתְקַטֵּל nitqattel we will kill ourselves					
	2mp	תִּקְטֹלוּ tiqtelu you will kill	תִּקְטָלוּ tiqqatlu you will be killed	תִּקְטֹלוּ teqattelu you will slaughter	תִּקְטָלוּ tequttelu you will be slaughtered	תִּקְטִילוּ taqtilu you will cause to kill	תִּקְטָלוּ toqtelu you will be caused to kill	תִּתְקַטֵּלוּ titqattelu you will kill yourselves					
	2fp	תִּקְטֹלְנָה tiqtolnah you will kill	תִּקְטָלְנָה tiqqatalnah you will be killed	תִּקְטֹלְנָה teqattelnah you will slaughter	תִּקְטָלְנָה tequttalnah you will be slaughtered	תִּקְטִילְנָה taqtelnah you will cause to kill	תִּקְטָלְנָה toqtalnah you will be caused to kill	תִּתְקַטֵּלְנָה titqattelnah you will kill yourselves					
	3mp	יִקְטֹלוּ yiqtelu they will kill	יִקְטָלוּ yiqqatlu they will be killed	יִקְטֹלוּ yeqattelu they will slaughter	יִקְטָלוּ yequttelu they will be slaughtered	יִקְטִילוּ yaqtilu they will cause to kill	יִקְטָלוּ yoqtelu they will be caused to kill	יִתְקַטֵּלוּ yitqattelu they will kill themselves					
	3fp	תִּקְטֹלְנָה tiqtolnah they will kill	תִּקְטָלְנָה tiqqatalnah they will be killed	תִּקְטֹלְנָה teqattelnah they will slaughter	תִּקְטָלְנָה tequttalnah they will be slaughtered	תִּקְטִילְנָה taqtelnah they will cause to kill	תִּקְטָלְנָה toqtalnah they will be caused to kill	תִּתְקַטֵּלְנָה titqattelnah they will kill themselves					

The first problem arises when we look at the prefixes of personal pronouns in verbs. These prefixes appear similar in almost all imperfect verbs. On line 3ms (he, masculine) the simple forms begin with 'yi-', the intensive forms with 'ye-', and the causative forms 'ya-' or 'yo-'. From this it is observed why

Wilhelm Gesenius could deduce the prefix of the form of *Yahweh* as 'ya', because only in the causative forms of verbs (*hiph'il*) does the pronoun prefix 'he' appear as such. This would otherwise be correct, except that *Yahweh's* vowels are not found in the Masoretic texts. If, on the other hand, the form of *Jehovah* were correct, then the personal pronoun 'ye-' would be found in the intensive form (*pi'el*), and thus the definition would not be *the imperfect causative* form of the verb.

	<i>pa'al</i>	<i>niph'al</i>	<i>pi'el</i>	<i>pu'al</i>	<i>hiph'il</i>	<i>hoph'al</i>	<i>hithpa'el</i>	Strong's
	Simple active passive		Intensive active passive		Causative active passive		Reflexive	
פקד <i>pakad</i> , to command	יִפְקֹד	יִפְקָד	יִפְקֹד	יִפְקֹד	יִפְקִיד	יִפְקֹד	יִתְפַּקֵּד	6485
קלל <i>qalal</i> , to despise			יִקְלֵל	יִקְלֵל	יִקְלֵל	יִקְלֵל		7043
ראה <i>ra'ah</i> , to see	יִרְאֶה	יִרְאֶה			יִרְאֶה	יִרְאֶה	יִתְרְאֶה	7200
סבב <i>cabab</i> , to turn	יִסְבֹּב	יִסֵּב	יִסְבֹּב	יִסְבֹּב	יִסֵּב	יִסְבֹּב	יִסְתַּוְּבֹב	5437
קטל <i>qatal</i> , to kill	יִקְטֹל	יִקְטֹל	יִקְטֹל	יִקְטֹל	יִקְטִיל	יִקְטֹל	יִתְקַטֵּל	6991
שבר <i>shabar</i> , to break	יִשְׁבֹּר	יִשְׁבֹּר	יִשְׁבֹּר	יִשְׁבֹּר	יִשְׁבִּיר			7665
שמר <i>shamar</i> , to guard	יִשְׁמֹר	יִשְׁמֹר	יִשְׁמֹר	יִשְׁמֹר			יִשְׁתַּמֵּר	8104
פעל <i>pa'al</i> , to make	יִפְעֵל				יִפְעִיל	יִפְעֵל	יִתְפַּעֵל	6466
למד <i>lamad</i> , to learn	יִלְמַד	יִלְמַד	יִלְמַד	יִלְמַד			יִתְלַמַּד	3925
שקק <i>shaqaq</i> , to run	יִשְׁקֹק						יִשְׁתַּוְּקֹק	8264
אכל <i>'akal</i> , to eat	יִאֲכַל	יִאֲכַל	יִאֲכַל	יִאֲכַל	יִאֲכִיל	יִאֲכַל		0398
עמד <i>'amad</i> , to stand	יִעֲמֹד	יִעֲמֹד	יִעֲמֹד		יִעֲמִיד	יִעֲמֹד		5975
יצא <i>yatsa'</i> , to exit	יִצֵּא		יִיֲצֵא	יִיֲצֵא	יִוֲצִיא	יִצֵּא		3318
עזב <i>'azab</i> , to leave	יִעֲזֹב	יִעֲזֹב						5800
שאל <i>sha'al</i> , to ask	יִשְׁאַל	יִשְׁאַל	יִתְשַׁאל	יִתְשַׁאל	יִשְׁאַיל	יִשְׁאַל		2303
גלה <i>galah</i> , to remove	יִגְלֶה	יִגְלֶה	יִגְלֶה	יִגְלֶה	יִגְלֶה	יִגְלֶה	יִתְגַּלֶּה	1540
הוה <i>havah</i> , to form / be			יִהְיֶה	יִהְיֶה			יִתְהַיְיֶה	-
היה <i>hayah</i> , to be	יִהְיֶה							1961
הוה <i>havah</i> , to become								1933
הוה <i>hawah</i> (aram), to come	יִהְיֶה							1934

3rd person, singular, imperfect state verbs. Imperfect Causative does not exist in verbs 'to be' or 'to become'.

The second problem is already more difficult. It is directly related to how verbs conjugate in Hebrew. The verb 'kill' is often used as an example of how a verb conjugates to all seven different stems. But in Hebrew, this is not always the case with verbs.

The table above lists various verbs. The last three are those often suggested as verbs included in God's name. In general, most verbs conjugate in two or more stems, but in fact only a few verbs conjugate *in all these seven stems*. Looking at the last three verbs in the table, it is observed that they do not conjugate except in the basic stem *pa'al* (Qal), and not all can be found even from the imperfect state of 3rd person singular. These verbs HYH (*hayah*, to be) and HWH (*havah*, to become) are so-called *weak verbs* (containing weak consonants), which are characterized by not easily conjugate into many stems. In practice, this means that there is no *intensive*, no *causative* and no *reflexive stems* for those such weak verbs. The verb stem (causative) thus used to justify the meaning of God's name 'He causes to become' is entirely imaginary. It is simply not found in the Hebrew verb system!

WRONG UNDERSTANDINGS ON THE MEANING OF GOD'S NAME

Some interpret Exodus 3:14 as a direct answer to Moses' question about God's name. In their view, Jehovah's words יהוה אֶהְיֶה *ehyeh*, ('*I am*' or '*I will be*') have the only logical meaning for the name of God. Here are a couple of problems.

Firstly, Jehovah told Moses, '*I am*'. When Moses went to Egypt, did he answer the Israelites who asked Jehovah's name, '*I am*.'? Wouldn't Moses have rather answered the Israelites '*He will be*'? In this way, he would have presented the Name in a form that focused *on Jehovah*, not on himself.

Secondly, immediately after Jehovah had informed Moses יהוה אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, ('*I am who I am*' or '*I will be that I will be*'), he said:

And God said to Moses again:

"You shall say this to the sons of Israel:

'*Jehova* (יהוה), the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob – has sent me to you.'

This is My name forever, and this *is My memorial* from generation to generation.

Go, and gather the elders of Israel and say to them:

'*Jehova* (יהוה), the God of your fathers has appeared to me
– the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – saying,

I have surely visited you and *have seen what* is done to you in Egypt.."

(Exodus 3:15, 16)

Of the verb *ehyeh*, Jehovah did not say that *this was his name*. Rather, it was related to the meaning of his name. He emphasized to Moses that *Jehovah* (יהוה) is his name, and by that name he should be remembered from the generation to generation.

For this reason, some have tried to find meaning to this name in other parts of the Bible. One interpretation is to combine the word הוּוּה *hovah*¹⁴ with the prefix יְ, *ye*, '*he*', thus forming the name *Jehovah*. They say the meaning of such a name is '*He [is] a destroyer / perpetrator of destruction*'. The problem with this interpretation is that this word *hovah* is not even a verb, but a feminine noun. And this interpretation does not fit Jehovah's personality at all.

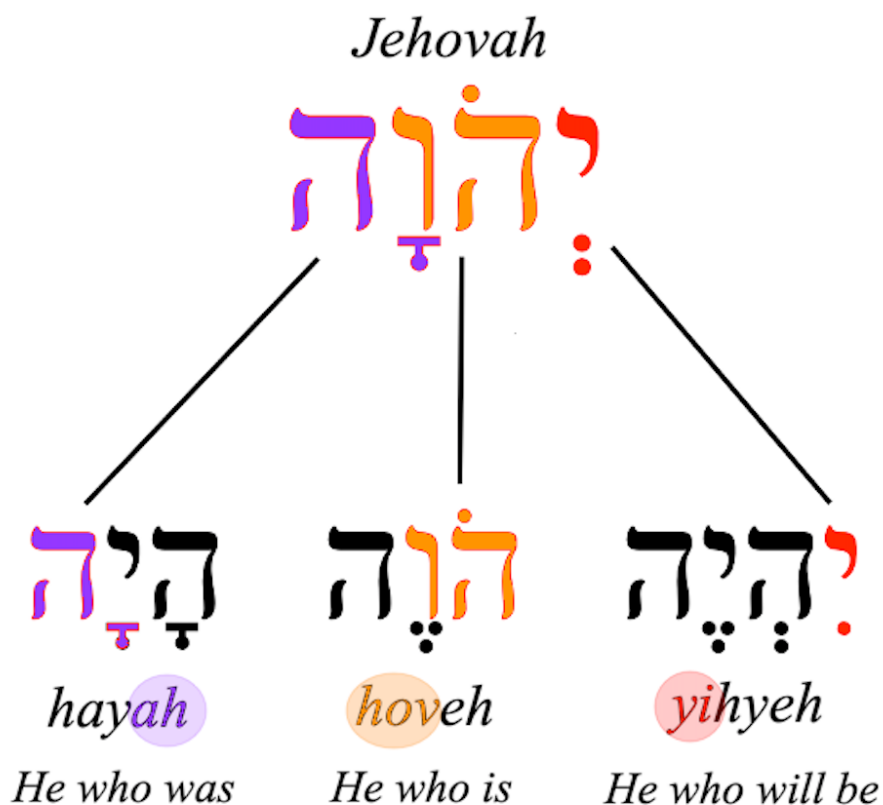
THE JEWISH UNDERSTANDING OF THE MEANING OF GOD'S NAME

It is clear from Jehovah's response to Moses (Exodus 3:14) that it is very likely that the meaning of his name is somehow associated with the verb '*to be*'. The Apostle John refers to this interesting fact, which is recorded only in Revelation 1:4, 8; 4:8; 11:17 and 16:5.

This is a common way of talking about Jehovah among the Jews even today: "*He who is, He who was and He who will be*". The Apostle John, who was himself a Jew, knew this. What is special about this expression, however, is that it is not found anywhere else in the Bible – not even in the Hebrew Scriptures.

¹⁴ Word הוּוּה *hovah* (meaning *destruction, disaster*) appear 3 times Hebrew Scriptures: Isaiah 47:11 and Ezekiel 7:26 two times.

This phrase includes the verb HYH 'to be' (used by Jehovah in Exodus 3:14) a total of three times. The masculine personal pronoun 'he' is also included three times. When these three verbs 'to be' are formed to a acronym¹⁵, it becomes the name of *Jehovah* (Jehovah; picture below).



The first vowel *hiriq* in the word *yihyeh* becomes *sheva* when the acronym is formed. This is a similar phenomena, for example, when theophoric names are formed to; the vowels may change (the intonation changes), especially when it comes to the two-syllable word *yih-yeh*, which has its weight in the latter syllable.

This Jewish phrase '*He who was, He who is, and He who will be*' simply means that Jehovah has always existed, and he will always exist. In other words, He is the King of eternity. Whether this meaning is correct or not, it at least presents the meaning in a way that is based on the Bible and it is in line with the Hebrew grammar.

¹⁵ An *acronym* is a kind of word or name formed from an abbreviation. The USA for example, comes from the words United States of America, and NATO comes from the words North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

CONCLUSION

The correct vowels of the name of God (tetragrammaton) are stored in the Hebrew Masoretic text and can be found there. The correct vowels are e-o-a (*Sheva, Holam, Qamats*). The full name יהוה־הוה transliterated is *jehovah*. On the other hand, the form of the name יהוה (*jahveh*) has no support in the Hebrew Masoretic manuscripts.

As for the meaning of God's name, the view of *the imperfective causative verb* (to be or to come) is contrary to the Hebrew verb system. Instead, the Jewish view of the name being based on three verbs of different time forms would seem to support the idea of '*He who has always been and will always be*', '*The King of Eternity*', or some other similar expression.