WHICH IS IT, "LORD" OR "YAHWEH"?

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Many today are struggling with this very question. What other subject could be of more importance than the very name of our Creator? Maybe the following article will solve some of your uncertainties. If one wishes to find information on the term "Yahweh" it is somewhat hard to find. One reason is because in most encyclopedias it is listed under "Jehovah." Also, in later up-to-date encyclopedias the information is rather suppressed. The following is a rather thorough, but not perfect, article on this subject found in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* printed in 1910. We will not use the entire article as toward the end they get mired in the errant criticisms of the 1800's humanists. Otherwise this article brings to light many historical facts on the topic. But like all testimony, it must be scrutinized! (Footnotes have been changed to paragraph notes at the end of each paragraph by the use of superscript numerals inside of brackets [ ]):

JEHOVAH (YAHWEH[1]), in the Bible, the God of Israel. "Jehovah" is a modern mispronunciation of the Hebrew name, resulting from combining the consonants of that name, *Jhvh,* with the vowels of the word *adonay,* "Lord," which the Jews substituted for the proper name in reading the scriptures. In such cases of substitution the vowels of the word which is to be read are written in the Hebrew text with the consonants of the word which is not to be read. The consonants of the word to be substituted are ordinarily written in the margin; but inasmuch as Adonay was regularly read instead of the ineffable name Jhvh, it was deemed unnecessary to note the fact at every occurrence. When Christian scholars began to study the Old Testament in Hebrew, if they were ignorant of this general rule or regarded the substitution as a piece of Jewish superstition, reading what actually stood in the text, they would inevitably pronounce the name Jehovah. It is an unprofitable inquiry who first made this blunder; probably many fell into it independently. The statement still commonly repeated that it originated with Petrus Galatinus (1518) is erroneous; Jehova occurs in manuscripts at least as early as the 14th century. [[1]This form, *Yahweh,* as the correct one, is generally used in the separate articles throughout this work.]

The form Jehovah was used in the 16th century by many authors, both Catholic and Protestant, and in the 17th was zealously defended by Fuller, Gataker, Leusden and others, against the criticisms of such scholars as Drusius, Cappellus and the elder Buxtorf. It appeared in the English Bible in Tyndale's translation of the Pentateuch (1530), and is found in all English Protestant versions of the 16th century except that of Coverdale (1535). In the Authorized Version of 1611 it occurs in Exod. vi. 3; Ps. lxxxiii. 18; Isa. xii. 2; xxvi. 4, beside the compound names Jehovah-jireh, Jehovah-nissi, Jehovah-shalom; elsewhere, in accordance with the usage of the ancient versions, Jhvh

is represented by LORD (distinguished by capitals from the title "Lord," Heb. *adonay*). In the Revised Version of 1885 Jehovah is retained in the places in which it stood in the A.V., and is introduced also in Exod. vi. 2, 6, 7, 8; Ps. lxviii. 20; Isa. xlix, 14; Jer. xvi. 21; Hab. iii: 19. The American committee which cooperated in the revision desired to employ the name Jehovah wherever Jhvh occurs in the original, and editions embodying their preferences are printed accordingly.

Several centuries before the Christian era the name Jhvh had ceased to be commonly used by the Jews. Some of the later writers in the Old Testament employ the appellative Elohim, God, prevailingly or exclusively; a collection of Psalms (Ps. xlii. - lxxxiii.) was revised by an editor who changed the Jhvh of the authors into Elohim (see *e.g.* xlv. 7; xlviii 10; l. 7; li. 14); observe also the frequency of "the Most High," "the God of Heaven," "King of Heaven," in Daniel, and of "Heaven" in First Maccabees. The oldest Greek versions (Septuagint), from the third century B.C., consistently use Κύριος, "Lord," where the Hebrew has Jhvh, corresponding to the substitution of Adonay for Jhvh in reading the original; in books written in Greek in this period (*e.g.* Wisdom, 2 and 3 Maccabees), as in the New Testament, Κύριος takes the place of the name of God. Josephus, who as a priest knew the pronunciation of the name, declares that religion forbids him to divulge it; Philo calls it ineffable, and says that it is lawful for those only whose ears and tongues are purified by wisdom to hear and utter it in a holy place (that is, for priests in the Temple); and in another passage, commenting on Lev. xxiv. 15 seq.: "If any one, I do not say should blaspheme against the Lord of men and gods, but should even dare to utter his name unseasonably, let him expect the penalty of death."[1] [[1]See Josephus, *Ant.* ii. 12, 4; Philo, *Vita Mosis,* iii. 11 (ii. §114, ed. Cohn and Wendland); ib. iii. 27 (ii. §206). The Palestinian authorities more correctly interpreted Lev. xxiv. 15 seq., not of the mere utterance of the name, but of the use of the name of God in blaspheming God.]

Various motives may have concurred to bring about the suppression of the name. An instinctive feeling that a proper name for God implicitly recognizes the existence of other gods may have had some influence; reverence and the fear lest the holy name should be profaned among the heathen were potent reasons; but probably the most cogent motive was the desire to prevent the abuse of the name in magic. If so, the secrecy had the opposite effect; the name of the god of the Jews was one of the great names in magic, heathen as well as Jewish, and miraculous efficacy was attributed to the mere utterance of it.

In the liturgy of the Temple the name was pronounced in the priestly benediction (Num. vi. 27) after the regular daily sacrifice (in the synagogues a substitute – probably Adonay – was employed);[1] on the Day of Atonement the High Priest uttered the name ten times in his prayers and benediction. In the last generations before the fall of Jerusalem, however, it was pronounced in a low tone so that the sounds were lost in the chant of the priests.[2] [[1]... *Siphrê,* Num. §§ 39, 43; *M. Sotah,* iii. 7; *Sotah,* 38a. The tradition that the utterance of the name in the daily benedictions ceased with the death of Simeon the Just, two centuries or more before the Christian era, perhaps arose from a misunderstanding of *Menahoth,* 109b; in any case it cannot stand against the testimony of older and more authoritative texts. [2]*Yoma,* 39b; *Jer. Yoma,* iii. 7; *Kiddushin,* 71a.]

After the destruction of the Temple (A.D. 70) the liturgical use of the name ceased, but the tradition was perpetuated in the schools of the rabbis.[1] It was certainly known in Babylonia in the latter part of the 4th century,[2] and not improbably much later. Nor was the knowledge confined to these pious circles; the name continued to be employed by healers, exorcists and magicians, and has been preserved in many places in magical papyri. The vehemence with which the utterance of the name is denounced in the Mishna – "He who pronounces the Name with its own letters has no part in the world to come!"[3] suggests that this misuse of the name was not uncommon among Jews. [[1]R. Johanan (second half of the 3rd century), *Kiddushin,* 71a. [2]Kiddushin, *l.c.* = *Pesahim,* 50a. [3]*M. Sanhedrin,* x. 1; Abba Saul, end of 2nd century.]

The Samaritans, who otherwise shared the scruples of the Jews about the utterance of the name, seem to have used it in judicial oaths to the scandal of the rabbis.[1] [[1]Jer. *Sanhedrin,* x. 1; R. Mana, 4th century.]

The early Christian scholars, who inquired what was the true name of the God of the Old Testament, had therefore no great difficulty in getting the information they sought. Clement of Alexandria (d. *c.* 212) says that it was pronounced Ιαουε.[1] Epiphanius (d. 404), who was born in Palestine and spent a considerable part of his life there, gives Ιαβε (one cod. Ιαυε).[2] Theodoret (d. *c.* 457),[3] born in Antioch, writes that the Samaritans pronounced the name Ιαβε (in another passage, Ιαβαι), the Jews Αϊα.[4] The latter is probably not Jhvh but *Ehyeh* (Exod. iii. 14), which the Jews counted among the names of God; there is no reason whatever to imagine that the Samaritans pronounced the name Jhvh differently from the Jews. This direct testimony is supplemented by that of the magical texts, in which Ιαβε ζεβυθ (Jahveh Sebaoth), as well as Ιαβα, occurs frequently.[5] In an Ethiopic list of magical names of Jesus, purporting to have been taught by him to his disciples, *Yawe* is found.[6] Finally, there is evidence from more than one source that the modern Samaritan priests pronounce the name *Yahweh* or *Yahwa*.[7] [[1]*Strom.* v. 6. Variants: Ια ουε, Ια ουαι; cod. L. Ιαου. [2]*Panarion,* Haer. 40, 5; cf. Lagarde, *Psalter juxta Hebraeos,* 154. [3]Quaest. 15 *in Exod.; Fab. haeret. compend.* v. 3, *sub fin.* [4]Αϊα occurs also in the great magical papyrus of Paris, 1. 3020 (Wessely, *Denkschrift. Wien. Akad.*, Phil. Hist. Kl. XXXVI. p. 120), and in the Leiden Papyrus, xvii. 31. [5]See Deissmann, *Bibelstudien,* 13 sqq. [6]See Driver, *Studia Biblica,* I. 20. [7]See Montgomery, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, xxv. (1906), 49-51.]

There is no reason to impugn the soundness of this substantially consentient testimony to the pronunciation Yahweh or Jahveh, coming as it does through several independent channels. It is confirmed by grammatical considerations. The name Jhvh enters into the composition of many proper names of persons in the Old Testament, either as the initial element, in the form Jeho- or Jo- (as in Jehoram, Joram), or as the final element, in the form *-jahu* or *-jah* (as in Adonijahu, Adonijah). These various forms are perfectly regular if the divine name was Yahweh, and, taken altogether, they cannot be explained on any other hypothesis. Recent scholars, accordingly, with but few exceptions, are agreed that the ancient pronunciation of the name was Yahweh (the first *h* sounded at the end of the syllable).

Genebrardus seems to have been the first to suggest the pronunciation *Iahue,*[1] but it was not until the 19th century that it became generally accepted. [[1]*Chronographia,* Paris, 1567 (ed. Paris, 1600, p. 79 seq.).]

Jahveh or Yahweh is apparently an example of a common type of Hebrew proper names which have the form of the 3rd pers. sing. of the verb. *e.g.* Jabneh (name of a city), Jabin, Jamlek, Jiptah (Jephthah), &c. Most of these really are verbs, the suppressed or implicit subject being *'el,* "*numen,* god," or the name of a god; cf. Jabneh and Jabne-el, Jiptah and Jiptah-el.

The ancient explanations of the name proceed from Exod. iii. 14, 15, where "Yahweh[1] hath sent me" in *v.* 15 corresponds to "Ehyeh hath sent me" in *v.* 14, thus seeming to connect the name Yahweh with the Hebrew verb *hayah,* "to become, to be." The Palestinian interpreters found in this the promise that God would be with his people (cf. *v.* 12) in future oppressions as he was in the present distress, or the assertion of his eternity, or eternal constancy; the Alexandrian translation Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν ... Ὁ ὤν ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς understands it in the more metaphysical sense of God's absolute being. Both interpretations, "He (who) is (always the same)," and "He (who) is (absolutely, the truly existent)," import into the name all that they profess to find in it; the one, the religious faith in God's unchanging fidelity to his people, the other, a philosophical conception of absolute being which is foreign both to the meaning of the Hebrew verb and to the force of the tense employed. Modern scholars have sometimes found in the name the expression of the aseity[2] of God; sometimes of his reality, in contrast to the imaginary gods of the heathen. Another explanation, which appears first in Jewish authors of the middle ages and has found wide acceptance in recent times, derives the name from the causative of the verb; He (who) causes things to be, gives them being; or calls events into existence, brings them to pass; with many individual modifications of interpretation – creator, lifegiver, fulfiller of promises. A serious objection to this theory in every form is that the verb *hayah,* "to be," has no causative stem in Hebrew; to express the ideas which these scholars find in the name Yahweh the language employs altogether different verbs. [[1]This transcription will be used henceforth. [2]*A-se-itas,* a scholastic Latin expression for the quality of existing by oneself.]

This assumption that Yahweh is derived from the verb "to be," as seems to be implied in Exod. iii. 14 seq., is not, however, free from difficulty. "To be" in the Hebrew of the Old Testament is not *hawah,* as the derivation would require, but *hayah;* and we are thus driven to the further assumption that *hawah* belongs to an earlier stage of the language, or to some older speech of the forefathers of the Israelites. This hypothesis is not intrinsically improbable – and in Aramaic, a language closely related to Hebrew, "to be" actually is *hawa* – but it should be noted that in adopting it we admit that, using the name Hebrew in the historical sense, Yahweh is not a Hebrew name. And, inasmuch as nowhere in the Old Testament, outside of Exod. iii., is there the slightest indication that the Israelites connected the name of their God with the idea of "being" in any sense, it may fairly be questioned whether, if the author of Exod. iii. 14 seq., intended to give an etymological interpretation of the name Yahweh,[1] his etymology is any better than many other paronomastic explanations of proper names in the Old Testament, or than, say, the connexion of the name Ἀπόλλων with ἀπολούων, ἀπολύων in Plato's *Cratylus*, or the popular derivation from ἀπόλλυμι. [[1]The critical difficulties of these verses need not be discussed here. See W. R. Arnold, "The Divine Name in Exodus iii. 14," *Journal of Biblical Literature,* XXIV. (1905), 107-165.]

A root *hawah* is represented in Hebrew by the nouns *howah* (Ezek., Isa. xlvii. 11) and *hawwah* (Ps., Prov., Job) "disaster, calamity, ruin."[1] The primary meaning is

probably "sink down, fall," in which sense – common in Arabic – the verb appears in Job xxxvii. 6 (of snow falling to earth). A Catholic commentator of the 16th century, Hieronymus ab Oleastro, seems to have been the first to connect the name "Jehova" with *howah* interpreting it *contritio, sive pernicies* (destruction of the Egyptians and Canaanites); Daumer, adopting the same etymology, took it in a more general sense: Yahweh, as well as Shaddai, meant "Destroyer," and fitly expressed the nature of the terrible god whom he identified with Moloch. [[1]Cf. Also *hawwah,* "desire," Mic. vii. 3; Prov. x. 3.]

The derivation of Yahweh from *hawah* is formally unimpeachable, and is adopted by many recent scholars, who proceed, however, from the primary sense of the root rather than from the specific meaning of the nouns. The name is accordingly interpreted, He (who) falls (baetyl, βαίτυλος, meteorite); or causes (rain or lightning) to fall (storm god); or casts down (his foes, by his thunderbolts). It is obvious that if the derivation be correct, the significance of the name, which in itself denotes only "He falls" or "He fells," must be learned, if at all, from early Israelitish conceptions of the nature of Yahweh rather than from etymology.

A more fundamental question is whether the name Yahweh originated among the Israelites or was adopted by them from some other people and speech. The biblical author of the history of the sacred institutions (P) expressly declares that the name Yahweh was unknown to the patriarchs (Exod. vi. 3), and the much older Israelite historian (E) records the first revelation of the name to Moses (Exod. iii. 13-15), apparently following a tradition according to which the Israelites had not been worshippers of Yahweh before the time of Moses, or, as he conceived it, had not worshipped the god of their fathers under that name. The revelation of the name to Moses was made at a mountain sacred to Yahweh (the mountain of God) far to the south of Palestine, in a region where the forefathers of the Israelites had never roamed, and in the territory of other tribes; and long after the settlement in Canaan this region continued to be regarded as the abode of Yahweh (Judg. v. 4; Deut. xxxiii. 2 sqq.; I Kings xix. 8 sqq. &c.). Moses is closely connected with the tribes in the vicinity of the holy mountain; according to one account, he married a daughter of the priest of Midian (Exod. ii. I6 sqq.; iii. I); to this mountain he led the Israelites after their deliverance from Egypt; there his father-in-law met him, and extolling Yahweh as "greater than all the gods," offered (in his capacity as priest of the place?) sacrifices, at which the chief men of the Israelites were his guests; there the religion of Yahweh was revealed through Moses, and the Israelites pledged themselves to serve God according to its prescriptions. It appears, therefore, that in the tradition followed by the Israelite historian the tribes within whose pasture lands the mountain of God stood were worshippers of Yahweh before the time of Moses; and the surmise that the name Yahweh belongs to their speech, rather than to that of Israel, has considerable probability. One of these tribes was Midian, in whose land the mountain of God lay. The Kenites also, with whom another tradition connects Moses, seem to have been worshippers of Yahweh. It is probable that Yahweh was at one time worshipped by various tribes south of Palestine, and that several places in that wide territory (Horeb, Sinai, Kadesh, &c.) were sacred to him; the oldest and most famous of these, the mountain of God, seems to have lain in Arabia, east of the Red Sea. From some of these peoples and at one of these holy places, a group of Israelite tribes adopted the religion of Yahweh, the God who, by the

hand of Moses, had delivered them from Egypt.[1] [[1]The divergent Judaean tradition, according to which the forefathers had worshipped Yahweh from time immemorial, may indicate that Judah and the kindred clans had in fact been worshippers of Yahweh before the time of Moses.] ...

The attempts to connect the name Yahweh with that of an Indo-European deity (Jehovah-Jove, &c.), or to derive it from Egyptian or Chinese, may be passed over. But one theory which has had considerable currency requires notice, namely, that Yahweh, or Yahu, Yaho,[1] is the name of a god worshipped throughout the whole, or a great part, of the area occupied by the Western Semites. In its earlier form this opinion rested chiefly on certain misinterpreted testimonies in Greek authors about a god Ἰάω, and was conclusively refuted by Baudissin; recent adherents of the theory build more largely on the occurrence in various parts of this territory of proper names of persons and places which they explain as compounds of Yahu or Yah.[2] The explanation is in most cases simply an assumption of the point at issue; some of the names have been misread; others are undoubtedly the names of Jews <sic. Israelites>. There remain, however, some cases in which it is highly probable that names of non-Israelites are really compounded with Yahweh. The most conspicuous of these is the king of Hamath who in the inscriptions of Sargon (722-705 B.C.) is called Yaubi'di and Ilubi'di (compare Jehoiakim-Eliakim). Azriyau of Jaudi, also, in inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser (745-728 B.C.), who was formerly supposed to be Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah, is probably a king of the country in northern Syria known to us from the Zenjirli inscriptions as Ja'di. [[1]The form *Yahu,* or *Yaho,* occurs not only in composition, but by itself; see *Aramaic Papyri discovered at Assuan,* B 4, 6, 11; E 14; J 6. This is doubtless the original of Ἰάω, frequently found in Greek authors and in magical texts as the name of the God of the Jews. [2]See a collection and critical estimate of this evidence by Zimmern, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament,* 465 sqq.] ...

CONCLUSION NOTES BY WILLIAM FINCK

One thing the commentators fail to see in attempting to find the meaning of YHVH is the connection between the *LXX's* ἐγώ εἰμί and the usage of that same phrase by Yahshua Christ in describing Himself, for which see Matt. 14:27 (Mark 6:50; John 6:20); Mark 14:62; John 4:26, (John 6:35, 41, 48), (John 8:12), John 8:18, 8:23-24, 8:28, 8:58, (9:9), 10:7-9, 11, 14, 11:25, 13:19, 14:6, (15:1, 5), 18:5, 6, 8; (Rev. 1:8, 17, 2:23, 22:16). Yahshua used this phrase often, and often it must have vexed the 'Jews', who surely must have realized His intention where He used it as a stand-alone phrase, in a manner that directly connects Him with the I AM of the Scriptures (i.e. Isaiah 43, and especially vv. 10-11).

The opinions given concerning the derivation of the word YHVH from the verb *hawah*, matching the Aramaic, are surely correct. It would be arrogant to think that "Hebrew" as the Israelites used it was the original language of their forebears! Surely both Hebrew and Aramaic had an older, common dialect, to which the word YHVH belonged.

It is apparent to me that the name, which is rather more of a designation, of YHVH was surely known to the patriarchs before Abraham's time, and – as your article goes on to discuss – so it was found among the writings of other branches of our

Genesis 10 race. It was only, and surely with His will, lost to the children of Isaac, and revealed anew to Moses and the Israelites of the Exodus. The word Βαίτυλος, which has no evident Greek etymology, very much resembles the Hebrew Beth-el, Βαιτ often being written for "Beth" as is evident in various *LXX* editions.

If one may only "pass over" an attempt to connect Yahweh to the "Indo-European deity" Jove, it is only because one is attempting to uphold the falsehoods of 'Jewish' and Israelite Identity as generally understood. Paul of Tarsus knew better, for which see Romans 1:18 ff. Among the languages of Europe, the "v", "w" and "u" were often interchanged with one another, and in Hebrew, Latin and Greek represented by the same letter. Also the "v" often became a "b" (hence Ιαυε, Ιαβε here). There was no "j" in these languages, the "j" being a recent innovation. It represents an "i" in the early languages. The Latin "v" being a "u", Jove in Latin is Iove, the equivalent of the Greek Ιουε. Josephus, at *Wars* 5:5:7, tells us that the name of YHVH is in Greek spelled with four vowels, and he must have had Ιουε, Ιουη or Ιαυε in mind, any of these being a fair transliteration of Yahweh. Jove is plainly equivalent to Yahweh! It has been discussed (i.e. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Classical World*) that Jupiter is a contraction of the Latin "Jove, pater", and so equivalent of "Yahweh, Father."

It seems to me that the early Christian writers may have gone out of their way in avoiding Ιουε, or even Ιαυε, in a conscious attempt to avoid connecting Yahweh with Ιουε (Jove), and probably for fear of the Romans! This is evident in Clement of Alexandria's Ιαουε, since he must have known of the testimony of Josephus, who distinctly states that the name could be spelled with four vowels (and not five!) [End of William Finck's "conclusion notes."]