

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](https://paypal.me/robbradshaw)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

mê, modern Arab. *mô* (doubtless very ancient as the early etymology of מֵאָה proves), Arab. *mâ^un* or *mâh^un*, with the pl. based on *h* as radical, *miyâh^un* or *'amwâh^un*. We have thus for variants of the basal monosyllable, *mau*, *mai*, *mâh*, *mâ'*. The first two would be the elder forms, with subsequent weakening into *h* and finally'. And so in the cases in the papyri which Mr. Driver cites in proof of his contention for a mere graphic *h*, רִיחֵשׁ, רִיחֵשׁ, בְּנֵהוּ, I have come to consider the *h* as an actual aspiration separating the two vowels, for which ' might also have been used. (Cf. the early Biblical Latin Israel for Israel.) Their occurrence is too late for the postulation of the very antique graphic *h*.²

Accordingly, because of this parity of *h* with ' (an inorganic phenomenon which is found in other languages) I am accustomed to call it the *hemza-h*.

University of Pennsylvania

JAMES A. MONTGOMERY

On the Use of the Word Jehovah in Translating the Old Testament

Conclusions based on forty years experience in the Hebrew
classroom

In the Authorized version of the Old Testament the English word Lord is used to represent two quite different words in the Hebrew. For the one word it is printed Lord, and for the other LORD or GOD. The explanation is given that the latter printing indicates that it stands for the Hebrew word designating the covenant God of Israel, and is a proper name. The proper assimilation of this fact rarely occurs. In all cases the words carry the idea, Master, Ruler. Neither of them after four centuries of use has acquired the connotations that are desired.

In order to secure the proper idea in the mind of the student the custom was adopted in the early years of teaching to require him to give the rendering Yahweh when the Hebrew IHWH occurred. Gradually it came to be felt that this method

² There may also be noticed in this connection the occasional expression in Akkadian of intervocalic ' by *h*; e. g. A-bi-*h*i-el = אֲבִי־הִי־עֵל; s. Bauer, *op. cit.* 63.

savored of pedantry rather than scholarship. And plainly the desired result was not secured. Not only was it a literary barbarism, but it was a word empty of meaning which needed generations of use before it could be filled with the proper meaning. Its use was abandoned.

Classroom needs demanded some word. The only hopeful candidate was the word Jehovah. The following considerations led to its adoption.

Unquestionably it is an erroneous form. Other forms equally erroneous are unchallenged. Isaiah and Jeremiah, to name no others, would, if correctly printed, be as much barbarisms as Yahweh. The difference between them and Jehovah is that there was once a famous controversy and the facts about the word Jehovah were made public knowledge. Isaiah and Jeremiah received no such publicity.

Jehovah misrepresents Yahweh no more than Jeremiah misrepresents Yirmeyahu. The settled connotations of Isaiah and Jeremiah forbid questioning their right. Usage has given them the connotations proper for designating the personalities which these words represent.

Much the same thing is true of Jehovah. It is not a barbarism. It has already many of the connotations needed for the proper name of the covenant God of Israel. There is no other word which can faintly compare with it. For four centuries it has been gathering these connotations.

In the sixteenth century Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars alike began to use this word freely. At the outset they believed that the Hebrew points were correctly used. The word thus launched into literature was not wholly relinquished when the facts became known. For one reason, it filled a felt need. The literature of devotion appropriated it more and more as time went on. Few collections of hymns are without the one beginning:

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah.

Almost as many have that beginning:

Before Jehovah's awful throne.

In half a dozen hymn books used by three different denominations the following first lines are found:

Call Jehovah thy salvation.
 Jehovah God the Father.
 Jehovah! thy gracious power.
 Jehovah reigns, he dwells in light.
 Jehovah reigns, his throne is high.
 Jehovah reigns, let all the earth rejoice.
 Jehovah speaks, let Israel.
 Praise ye Jehovah!
 Praise ye Jehovah's name!
 Sing to the great Jehovah's praise.
 Sing to the Lord Jehovah's name.
 Thank and praise Jehovah's name.
 The Lord Jehovah reigns. And royal.
 The Lord Jehovah reigns. His throne.

These occurrences give only first lines, but the use is not confined to first lines. These suffice to show the fact of usage and the meaning which usage gives. They show it to be a personal name with associations of reverence and trust and affection such as befit the name of the covenant God of Israel. These are the qualities upon which the Psalmists of Israel love to dwell. In fact the use of this word in our devotional literature especially adapts it for use in the Psalter, and also in the prophets.

No other word approaches this name in the fulness of associations required. The use of any other word falls so far short of the proper ideas that it is a serious blemish in a translation.

The result of the use in the classroom was satisfactory. The habit received strong support from the publication of the American Revision. During the twenty-five years since the publication of this revision its use in family worship has steadily increased the conviction that this is the one word to secure to the general reader of the Old Testament the conception which its adoption was designed to secure. In Psalms and Prophets alike it is helpful beyond expression. The words of the Revisers in their preface are fully justified:

"The change first recommended in the Appendix (of the English Revision of 1885)—that which substitutes 'Jehovah' for 'LORD' and 'GOD'—is one which will be unwelcome to many, because of the frequency and familiarity of the terms displaced. But the American Revisers, after a careful consideration, were brought to the unanimous conviction that a Jewish superstition, which regarded the Divine name

as too sacred to be uttered, ought no longer to dominate the English or any other version of the Old Testament, as it fortunately does not in the numerous versions made by modern missionaries. This Memorial Name, explained in Ex. 3 14, 15, and emphasized as such over and over in the original text of the Old Testament, designates God as the personal God, as the covenant God, the God of revelation, the Deliverer, the Friend of his people;—not merely the abstract 'Eternal' One of many French translations, but the ever living Helper of those who are in trouble. This personal name, with its wealth of sacred associations, it now restored to its place in the sacred text to which it has an unquestionable claim."

It is well to record the fact that the American Revisers were not pioneers in using the word. The earlier translators themselves apparently felt that in some instances its use was imperative. It is said to have appeared in the Pentateuch translated by Tyndale (1530). The Geneva Bible (1560) and Bishop's Bible (1568) used it in Ex. 6 3 and Psa. 83 18. A. V. (1611) followed these bibles and added it in Is. 12 2; 26 4. The 1885 Revision added to these four Ex. 6 6, 7, 8; Psa. 68 20; Isa. 49 14; Jer. 16 21 and Hab. 3 19. The compounds Jehovah Jireh, Gen. 22 14; Jehovah Nissi, Ex. 17 15, and Jehovah Shalom, Jud. 6 24 are given in the Geneva Bible and in the versions of 1611 and 1885, though not in the Bishop's Bible.

In some of these passages, as Jer. 16 21, a personal name is fairly demanded: "And they shall know that my name is Jehovah." Others where no change was made call as loudly as Isa. 42 8: "I am the LORD: that is my name." The virtue of the American Revisers was that they missed no passage of this sort nor any other where the Hebrew IHWH occurred.

Bangor, Maine

FRANCIS B. DENIO

Society for Old Testament Study

An exceedingly interesting meeting of the British "Society for Old Testament Study" is to be held at Oxford University this year from Sept. 27th to 30th. Papers will be read by British and Continental scholars of renown. To this meeting American scholars who expect to be abroad are cordially invited. Inquiries should be directed to the Rev. Professor T. H. Robinson, D. D., Lynwood, Llanishen, Cardiff, Wales.