

יהוה

Meaning

- Yahweh - God's personal name

It is not a generic term for “god”, but rather the word יהוה (YHWH) is the name by which God uniquely identifies himself in the Old Testament.

First appearing in [Genesis 2:4](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 2:4

Hebrew אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם בַּיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם ESV These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. NIV This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens- αὐτὴ ἡ βίβλος γενέσθω οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὅτε ἦ ἡμέρα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν..., it occurs over 6,000 times in the Old Testament.

Frequently translated into English as “LORD” (all capital letters).

Pronunciation

In ancient Israel, the name was considered too sacred to pronounce aloud. When reading Scripture, Jews would often substitute אֲדֹנָי (Adonai, “Lord”) instead.

The Masoretes (medieval Jewish scribes) added the vowel points of “Adonai” to “YHWH” leading to the hybrid form “Jehovah.”

Most English Bibles today translate it as “LORD” (all in capitals) to distinguish it from “Adonai” (Lord).

Meaning and Etymology

The name is related to the Hebrew verb הָיָה (hayah, “to be”), suggesting meanings such as:

- “I am who I am” ([Exodus 3:14](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigExodus 3:14

Hebrew וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה אֲנִי אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲהִיָּה שְׁלַחְנִי אֲלֵיכֶם ESV God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” NIV God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’

καὶ ὁ θεὸς πρὸς ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν καὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ὢν ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς...)

- “He is”
- “He causes to be”

This conveys that God is self-existent, eternal, and unchanging. He is the One who depends on nothing else for existence and brings all things into being.

grammatical roles and syntactic relationships (for example, as subject, object, or in construct with another noun).

Basic Grammatical Function

Grammatical Function	Description	Example Reference	Hebrew Text
Subject	YHWH is the subject performing the action	Exodus 20:7 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigExodus 20:7 Hebrew לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוֹן כִּי לֹא יִנָּקֶה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה בְּלֹא הַצִּיל לְעַבְדְּךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִכָּף כָּל אֹיְבָיו וּמִכָּד שְׂאוֹל ESV “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. NIV “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. οὐλήμψητὸδνομακυρίουτοῦθεοῡσουεπίματαίωσούγαρμήκαθαρίηγκύριοςτὸνλαμβάνοντατὸδνομααὐτοῦἐπιματαίω... – “YHWH will not hold him guiltless...”	יהוה
Object	YHWH is the object receiving the action	Psalms 18:1 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalms 18:1 Hebrew לְמִנְחָה לַעֲבֹד יְהוָה לְדָוִד אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר לַיהוָה אֶת דְּבָרֵי הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת בְּיוֹם הַצִּיל יְהוָה אוֹתוֹ מִכָּף כָּל אֹיְבָיו וּמִכָּד שְׂאוֹל ESV TO THE CHOIRMASTER. A PSALM OF DAVID, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD, WHO ADDRESSED THE WORDS OF THIS SONG TO THE LORD ON THE DAY WHEN THE LORD RESCUED HIM FROM THE HAND OF ALL HIS ENEMIES, AND FROM THE HAND OF SAUL. HE SAID: I love you, O LORD, my strength. εἰς τὸτέλος τῶ παιδικυρίου τῷ ᾄδα ἅλλη σεν τῷ κυρίῳ τοῦ ἐλ... – "I love You, O YHWH, my strength."	יהוה
Predicate / Apposition	Used in statements identifying or describing God	Exodus 15:3 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigExodus 15:3 Hebrew יְהוָה איש מלחמה יהוה שמו ESV The LORD is a man of war; the LORD is his name. NIV The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name. NLT The LORD is a warrior; Yahweh is his name! LXX κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους κύριος ὄνομα αὐτοῦ KJV The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. – “YHWH is a warrior.”	יהוה
Vocative (address)	Used when addressing God directly	Psalms 8:1 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalms 8:1 Hebrew עַל הַגִּיתִּיחָ עַל מִנְחָתְךָ יְהוָה מְקוֹר לְדָוִד ESV TO THE CHOIRMASTER: ACCORDING TO THE GITTITH. A PSALM OF DAVID. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. NIV O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. εἰς τὸτέλος ὑπέρ τῶν ἠλγνῶν ψαλμοὺς τῷ κύριῳ ἐδόξασεν ὁ κύριος ὃς ἡμῶν ὤσαν μαστὸν τὸν δόξα σου ἐν πάση τῇ γῆ ὅτι ἐπὶ ῥηθι σου ὑπεράνω τῶν οὐρανῶν... – “O YHWH, our Lord, how majestic is Your name...”	יהוה

Construct or Possessive Relationships

While YHWH itself does not take a construct ending, it appears in construct phrases, especially “YHWH of .”

Construct Phrase	Meaning	Example Reference	Hebrew Text
YHWH Elohim	“LORD God” — combining God’s personal and general titles	Genesis 2:4 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 2:4 Hebrew אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם ביום עשות יהוה אלהים ארץ ושמים ESV These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. NIV This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens- αὐτῇ ἡβλός γενέσθω οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὅτε ἡμέρα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν...	יהוה אלהים
YHWH Tsevaoth	“LORD of hosts” — the God of angelic armies	1 Samuel 1:3 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_big1 Samuel 1:3 Hebrew ועלה האיש האיש ההוא מעירו מימים ימימה להשתחות ולזבח ליהוה צבאות בשלה ושם בני עלי הפני ופנחס כהנים ESV Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. NIV καὶ ἀνέβαινον εὐθρόσωπος ἐξ ἡμερῶν εἰς ἡμέρας ἐκ πόλεως αὐτοῦ ἐξ ἡπροσκυνεῖν καὶ θύειν τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ εἰς καὶ ἐκεῖ...	יהוה צבאות
YHWH Shalom	“The LORD is peace”	Judges 6:24 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigJudges 6:24 Hebrew ויבן שם גideon מזבח ליהוה ויקרא לו יהוה שלום עד היום הזה עודנו בעפרת אבי העזרי ESV Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites. NIV So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites. καὶ ὡκοδόμησεν ἐκεῖ θυσιαστήριον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἐκάλεσεν...	יהוה שלום
YHWH Yireh	“The LORD will provide”	Genesis 22:14 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 22:14 Hebrew ויקרא אברהם שם המקום ההוא יהוה יראה אשר יאמר היום ברה יהוה יראה ESV So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” NIV So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ δόγμα τοῦ τόπου ἐκεῖνον κύριος εἰδεν ἵνα σήμερον ἐν τῷ ὄρει κύριος ὥφθη...	יהוה יראה

Prepositional Phrases with יְהוָה

Meaning	Prepositional Phrase	Example Reference	Hebrew Text
to / for YHWH	לַיהוָה	Exodus 28:36 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigExodus 28:36 Hebrew קָדַשׁ לַיהוָה חֲתָם וּפְתִיחָתָּ עָלָיו וּפְתַחְתָּ עָלָיו וּפְתַחְתָּ עָלָיו וּפְתַחְתָּ עָלָיו ESV “You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, 'Holy to the LORD.' NIV “Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal:HOLY TO THE LORD. NLT καὶ τοὺς εἰς καθαρόν καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ σφραγῖδος κυρίου	לַיהוָה
from YHWH	מִיהוָה	Genesis 19:24 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 19:24 Hebrew וַיֹּהֲרֵם ה' מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם ESV Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. NIV Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah-from the LORD out of the heavens. NLT καὶ κύριος ἔβρεξεν ἐπὶ καὶ εἶον καὶ πῦρ παρὰ κυρίου ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ...	מִיהוָה
in / by YHWH	בַּיהוָה	Psalm 64:10 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigPsalm 64:10 Hebrew וַיִּרְאוּ כָל אֲדָם וַיִּגְדּוּ עַל אֱלֹהִים וּמַעֲשָׂהוּ הַשְׁכִּילוּ ESV Let the righteous one rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart exult! NIV Let the righteous rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him; let all the upright in heart praise him! εὐφρανθήσεται δίκαιος ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἐλπίζει παύσθαι καὶ εὐφρανθήσονται πάντες οἱ ἐθνεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ...	בַּיהוָה
with YHWH (object marker + name)	אֶת־יְהוָה	Deuteronomy 6:13 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigDeuteronomy 6:13 Hebrew וּבְשֵׁמוֹ תִשָּׁבַע ESV It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. NIV Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. NLT You must fear the LORD your God and serve him. When you take an oath, you must use only his name. κύριον τὸν θεόν σου φοβηθήσῃ καὶ αὐτῷ λατρεύσεις καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν κολληθήσῃ καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ...	אֶת־יְהוָה
upon / against YHWH (context determines nuance)	עַל־יְהוָה	Numbers 21:7 plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigNumbers 21:7 Hebrew וַיָּבֹא הָעָם אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִנֵּנוּ כִּי דִבְרָנוּ בַּיהוָה וְנָבָד הִתְפַּלֵּל אֵל יְהוָה וְיִסָּר מֵעַלֵּינוּ אֶת הַנָּחָשׁ וַיִּתְּפֹלֵל מֹשֶׁה ESV And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. καὶ παραγενόμενος ὁ λαὸς πρὸς ἔλεγον δὲ τῇ μάρτομεν ὅτι κατελάθησαμεν κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ κατὰ σοῦ ἔξα...	עַל־יְהוָה

