The ‘Why’ & ‘How’ of Pronouncing our Father’s Name

Summary

Hebrew and English letters don’t map onto each other cleanly — so how should we actually say the Creator’s Name out loud? This short, technical piece cuts through spelling debates to focus on the one thing that actually matters: the sound.

- Why Hebrew-to-English transliteration is inherently imprecise, and why the goal should be sound, not spelling.
- The case for “Yahweh” (pronounced roughly “hyahhwehh”) as the closest reproduction of the Father’s Name.
- The parallel case for “Yah’shua” as the closest reproduction of the Messiah’s Name.

The full article begins on the next page.

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Regarding pronunciation, a difficulty lies in the fact that neither written Hebrew letters or Hebrew words are directly translatable into written English letters or words. Compounding this issue of course, is the fact that not every Hebrew speaker agrees with the precise pronunciation of all Hebrew words and/or letters *(nor do English speakers agree on English)*.

There are innumerable versions of the Creator's name in English, all alleging to be "the correct" spelling, yet all offering different origins and justifications for their opinion. To determine the correct pronunciation or enunciation of any of these English versions is not relevant to any valid purpose that we can imagine.

There is only one Hebrew version of our Creator's name that is written in the original Hebrew language of the original Hebrew Bible, or Hebrew Torah. Any and all attempts to conduct a "literal" translation of the Hebrew letters used in this original writing of our Father's name, into English letters is utterly pointless.

Thus when a Hebrew, speaking the Hebrew language, attempts to advise "what" letters or words he is speaking, we can only utilize a best possible English equivalent for a translation. Notwithstanding, if we "hear" the word spoken in Hebrew, then we can "pronounce" that word identically, whether or not our native tongue is Hebrew or English (or any other language for that matter). For example, the English name "Sam" can be pronounced virtually identically by people of a great many languages, yet they may indeed, all write it differently.

Therefore we could justify any number of spellings for our Father's name in "English", based upon it's supposed "*proper" pronunciation, or "sound" when spoken by a Hebrew speaker, simply by adjusting our own definitions of the English letter/word sound combinations. However, if we accept the most commonly spoken Hebrew sound of our Father's name, and if we accept the most common "*proper" definitions of the sounds of English letter combinations, we are left with an English spelling for our Father's name as, "Yahweh", pronounced to sound as, "hyahhwehh". This "sound" is well established and accepted as the sound spoken when uttering the Father's name in the ancient form of Hebrew, as well as in most modern forms of the Hebrew language.

Taking this to the next step of identifying an acceptable spelling of our Messiah's name, we must again look at the original Hebrew sounds, the original Hebrew texts, as well as the most logical English language equivalent to accomplish the proper "sound", while maintaining the integrity of the name itself.

Exhaustive research indicates that the best possible English equivalent to the proper Hebrew sound would be to spell His name in English as "Yah'shua", and pronounce it as "hyahhshooahh".

To summarize, there is a comparative degree of importance relative to the various aspects of spelling, as opposed to speaking, the names of our Father and of His Son. We can only agree with the Hebrew speaking authorities insofar as the proper "sounds" are concerned, thus we can only agree to an impersonal transliteration of these "sounds" into English letters, that in the highest instance of usage, would result in readers interpreting the English letters so utilized, to "sound" exactly like the original Hebrew does *(when spoken).*

Many organizations have devised arguments to support an English spelling of our Father's name *(and in many cases, the Messiah's name)* that in the highest instance of usage, results in English readers interpreting their selected letters as sounding different than the historical Hebrew "sound". One can only conclude that these organizations are either ignorant of the significance of the proper Hebrew sound*(s)*, or that they have some undisclosed agenda associated with their choice of English letters.

*****See “The Canadian Style” ISBN #:1-55002-276-8 for more detail.

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