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YHWH: The Original Arabic Meaning of the Name

God reveals his name to Moses as “I am,” from the Hebrew root *ה.ו.י*, “being.” The name YHWH, however, originates in Midian, and derives from the Arabic term for “love, desire, or passion.”

Prof. Israel Knohl



Moses before the burning bush, Marc Chagall 1966 (adapted). Museum

Aan De Stroom

In Exodus chapter 6, after Moses complains about how Pharaoh has increased Israel's workload and refused to set them free, God appears to Moses and reiterates his promise to take Israel out of Egypt and bring them to the Promised Land.^[1] As part of this message, God tells Moses that his name is YHWH, even though he never shared this name with the patriarchs, and only appeared to them as El Shaddai:

שְׁמוֹת ה' וַיֹּדְבֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי יְהוָה. ²¹ וְאָרָא אֶל אֲבְרָהָם אֶל יִצְחָק וְאֶל יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שַׁדַּי שְׁמִי יְהוָה לֹא נִדְעָתִי לָהֶם.

Exod 6:2 God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am YHWH. ⁶³ I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but I did not make Myself known to them by My name YHWH.

The text makes it clear that the name YHWH—known in scholarship as the Tetragrammaton (Greek for “four letters”)—is of great significance,

marking a new era in ancient Israelite history, but it offers no explanation for its meaning.

YHWH as Being

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In contrast, God's earlier revelation at the burning bush, in which Moses is introduced to this special name for the first time,^[2] explains or at least hints at its meaning:

שמות ג' וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה אֲנִי בָּא אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַר אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם שְׁלַחְנִי אֲלֵיכֶם וְאָמְרוּ לִי מַה שְּׁמוֹ מַה אָמַר אֱלֹהִים.

Moses said to God, “When I come to the Israelites and ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?”

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ג' וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה אֲהִי אֲשֶׁר אֲהִי. וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲהִי שְׁלַחְנִי אֲלֵיכֶם.

^{3:14} And God said to Moses, “I am what I am.” And He said, “Thus shall you say to the Israelites, ‘Ehyeh (I-Am) sent me to you.’”

When Moses asks God his name, God first answers by saying “I am what I am” and even follows this up with “tell them Ehyeh (I-Am) sent you.” The word *ehyeh* (“I am”) sounds very much like YHWH, and is meant as a play on words, explaining that YHWH’s name means “he will be” or “being.”^[3] Thus, God follows up this implied etymology with the Tetragrammaton:

יט וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה כֹּה תֹאמַר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב שְׁלַחְנִי אֲלֵיכֶם זֶה שְׁמִי לְעֹלָם וְזֶה זְכוּר לְדֹר דָּר.

^{3:15} And God said further to Moses, “Thus shall you speak to the Israelites: ‘YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This shall be My name forever, this My appellation for all eternity.”

Nevertheless, this interpretation does not reflect the original meaning of YHWH. The word “he is” would not be written with a *vav* as its third letter, but with a *yod*, as יהה, just as the word “I am” is אהה. Second, note how awkwardly the verses read, trying to force the meaning *ehyeh* on the word YHWH, by having God first tell Moses to use the name Ehyeh, and then to use the name YHWH, without explaining the switch.^[4] Thus, I would argue that the explanation here is a popular etymology, and we need to look elsewhere for the etymology of this name.

Moses’ Midianite Backstory

The first clue to understanding the name comes from the context of the story of the burning bush in the book of Exodus. After Moses kills an

Egyptian and flees from Pharaoh (2:12-15), he ends up in Midian, where he meets the priest of Midian, Reuel (or Jethro), and marries his daughter, Zipporah (2:15-22). While shepherding his father-in-law's flocks, he sees the burning bush and receives a revelation from God at God's own

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שמות ב'א' וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֶה אֶת צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתֶנּוּ כֹהֵן מִדְיָן וַיִּבְהַק אֶת הָעֵצָאן אַחֵר הַמִּדְבָּר.
וַיֵּבֶא אֶל הָרִאשִׁים חֹרֵב.

is was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, Midian, and he drove the flock into the wilderness, **the mountain of God**, to Horeb.

suggests that God's mountain is not in Israel or in Egypt, but it is in the HOREB wilderness, not far from Midian. Where is Midian and what do we know about it historically?

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Midian and the Qurayyah Culture of North Arabia

Assuming the area described by Ptolemy as Midiana is the same area as biblical Midian, an assumption that can be supported by the biblical connection between Midian and Ishmael (see below), we can know quite a bit about its material culture in the Late Bronze and early Iron Ages (13th –12th cent. B.C.E.).

A group of semi-nomads, who produced a very distinct, colorful and attractive, decorated pottery with images of ostriches or other birds, lived a little northeast of the area Ptolemy calls Midian, in an area known as the Oasis of Qurayyah. This pottery style is known in scholarship as Qurayyah Painted Ware (QPW).

The Qurayyah people were also experts in metallurgy, specifically the smelting of copper and the production of bronze. The area of Qurayyah itself has no copper veins, but such veins are found further south in the Arabian Peninsula, and the copper ore was sent north to Qurayyah for smelting because the people of Qurayyah (Midianites) were experts in metal work.^[5]

Evidence of this culture's fingerprints is also found in other areas of copper smelting in this period, specifically the sites of Faynan and Timna in the southern Levant (in modern day Jordan and Israel respectively).^[6] Uzi Avner, an archaeologist working at the Dead-Sea and Arava Science Center, has argued that the Midianites were brought in as specialists or contractors, working with the local nomadic (Shasu) tribes or with Egyptians, who had a presence in this area during this period, producing pure copper from ore for their customers (or employers).^[7]

An Arabian Tribe

The Midianites were a Proto-Arabian tribe;^[8] their home base was in Arabia and they are related to Ishmaelites. The book of Judges states this explicitly in the story of Gideon, who makes the following request of the Israelites after defeating the Midianites:

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שופטים ח'בד וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים גִּדְעוּן אֶשְׂאֵלָה מִכֶּם שְׂאֵלָה וְהָנֹה לִי אִישׁ נָגַם שְׂלִלֹ כִּי נָגַם
וְהָב לָהֶם כִּי יִשְׁמְעֵאלִים הֵם. ח'בד וַיֹּאמְרוּ נָתַן נָתַן וְיִפְרְשׁוּ אֶת הַשְּׂמָלָה וַיִּשְׁלִיכוּ
אִישׁ נָגַם שְׂלִלֹ.

Gideon said to them, “I have a request to make of you give me the earring he received as booty.”
olden earrings, **for they were Ishmaelites.**)^{8:25}
they replied. And they spread out a cloth, and
everyone threw onto it the earring he had received as booty.

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ח'בד וַיְהִי מִשְׁקַל נָגַם הַזֶּהָב אֲשֶׁר שָׂאֵל אֵלָּה וְשִׁבְעֵה מֵאוֹת וְהָב לָבַד מִן הַשְּׂהָרִים
וְהַנְּטָפוֹת וּבְגָדֵי הָאֶרְגָּמָן שֶׁעַל מַלְכֵי מִדְיָן וּלְבָבַד מִן הַעֲנָקוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּצֹאֲרֵי נְמִלָּהֶם. ח'בד
וַיַּעַשׂ אוֹתוֹ גִּדְעוּן לְאֶפֶד... ח'בד

^{8:26} The weight of the golden earrings that he had requested came to 1700 shekels of gold; this was in addition to the crescents and the pendants and the purple robes worn by the kings of Midian and in addition to the collars on the necks of **their camels.** ^{8:27} Gideon made an ephod of this gold...

We see evidence of the connection between Midianites and Ishmaelites as well when it comes to names. For instance, Moses' father-in-law Jethro or Jether (Exod 4:17) has the same name as David's brother-in-law (husband of David's sister Abigail), Jether the Ishmaelite (1 Chron 2:17).

The Spice Trade

During the Iron Age and afterwards, the Midianites, as an Arabian tribe, were part of the spice trade. They would travel from Arabia and pass through Israel on their way to the Mediterranean coast and/or Egypt. This is reflected in the biblical story of Joseph, which describes Midianite and Ishmaelite traders heading to Egypt with spices and slaves:

בראשית ל'בד ...וַיֵּשְׂאוּ עֵינֵיהֶם וַיֵּרְאוּ וְהִנֵּה אֲרֻחַת יִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים בָּאָה מִגִּלְעָד וּנְמִלָּהֶם
נִשְׂאִים נִבְאָת וְצֹרִי וְלֵט הוֹלְכִים לְהוֹרִיד מִצְרָיִם... ח'בד וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֲנָשִׁים מִדְיָנִים סָחָרִים
וּמִשְׁכּוֹ וַיַּעֲלֵוּ אֶת יוֹסֵף מִן הַבּוֹר וַיִּמְכְּרוּ אֶת יוֹסֵף לְיִשְׁמַעְאֵלִים בְּעֶשְׂרִים כֶּסֶף וַיְבִיאוּ אֶת
יוֹסֵף מִצְרָיִם.

Gen 37:25 ...Looking up, they (=Joseph's brothers) saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, their camels bearing gum, balm, and ladanum to be taken to Egypt....^{37:28} When Midianite traders passed by, they pulled Joseph up out of the pit. They sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who brought Joseph to Egypt.^[9]

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In this story, the traders had first headed north, perhaps to trade with the [unclear] were moving south through the Jezreel valley to the Via [unclear] ld take them into Egypt. Although the story is set in the [unclear] m B.C.E., anachronistic features such as camels show [unclear] in the first millennium B.C.E.

[unclear] action between these eastern Arabian tribes and the spice route is reflected in the name the Bible (Gen 25:1-2) gives their eponymous mother, Qeturah (קטורה), a name related to the Hebrew word for incense, qetoret (קטורת).

In short, the Midianites were an Arabian tribe involved in metallurgy and the spice trade, whose base was in the northeast of the Arabian Peninsula, but whose reach of settlement was much wider, with pockets living in the southwest Sinai Peninsula, the southern Transjordan, and the Aravah (the desert area of the southeastern Negev), probably because of the copper veins there.

The Shaswe-Land YHWA

Based on Egyptian records dating to the 14th century B.C.E., we know that the Midianites were not the only ethnic groups living in these areas.^[10] In the geographical list in Amunhotep III's Soleb Nubian temple, the people of the Aravah and the southern Transjordan are called Shaswe (or Shasu), a generic term meaning something like “nomadic tribes.”

The word *shaswe*, šśw ()^[11] is written after the Egyptian determinative for “land” t' (), showing that the Egyptian text is describing different geographical areas inhabited by various *shaswe*. One area listed is called Nomad-land Seir, which is identical with the Mount Seir region in Edom. The following name in the list, and thus nearby or contiguous with Seir, was Nomad-land Yehwa, yhw/(w) ().^[12] The pronunciation of this name is uncertain, since like Hebrew, hieroglyphics do not include vowels, but the term seems to be related to the name of the Israelite deity, YHWH, whose precise ancient pronunciation is also unknown.

A Deity and a Land

In the list, Yehwa is the name of a land. Just as one nomadic group lived in a land called Seir, another lived in a land called Yehwa. But in antiquity, a name could sometimes be both a toponym and a theonym. The name Assyria (Aššur) illustrates this clearly: it is both the name of Assyria's chief

deity and of their ancient capital city. Eventually, it also became the name of their empire. Another example would be the Greek goddess of wisdom, Athena, who began as the patron goddess of Athens.^[13]

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YHWH Comes from the Edomite South
Biblical evidence suggests that YHWH comes from the southeast, either from the hills of Edom or even further south in Midian or beyond. This is in three very ancient biblical poems:

Deut 33:2)

יְהוָה מִסֵּיַר בָּא וְיָרַח מִשְׁעִיר לְמוֹ הוֹפִיעַ מִהָר פָּאֵרן וְאַתָּה מִרִּבְבוֹת קָדִי

came from Sinai; He shone upon them from Seir; He appeared from Mount Paran, and approached from Ribebosh-

Song of Deborah (Judg 5:4)

יְהוָה בְּצֵאתוֹךְ מִשְׁעִיר בְּצַעֲדְךָ מִשְׁדֵּה אֲדוֹם אֶרֶץ רַעֲשָׁה...

YHWH, when You came forth from Seir, advanced from the country of Edom, the earth trembled...

Song of Habakkuk (Hab 3:3)

אֵלֹהִים מִתִּמְנָן יָבוֹא וְקָדוֹשׁ מִהָר פָּאֵרן סֵלָה...

God is coming from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran.
Selah....

Each of these poems opens with the image of YHWH coming from his home in the south. In fact, Habakkuk's song (v. 7) even goes on to describe how the tents of the Midianites (יִרְעִית אֶרֶץ מִדְיָן) shake as YHWH stomps on the ground near them on his way to his people.

God's Mountain

This conception fits with what the story of Moses and the burning bush, where Moses goes to the Mountain of God while tending the flocks of his Midianite father-in-law. Moses is wandering in Midianite territory, though not in Arabia but in the vicinity of modern-day Petra, biblical Kadesh (Reqem in Aramaic), where we have evidence of a Qurrayah-culture group living not far from Edom.

An Arabic Name

If YHWH's origins are in the Nomad-land of Yehwa among the Midianites, then the meaning of the name should be from the Arabic language family rather than the Hebrew language family. This further calls into question the etymology in Exodus 3 of the Tetragrammaton from הוּא, "to be," since,

unlike Hebrew and Aramaic, Proto-Arabic does not have the root ה.נ.ה for the word “to be.”^[15]

The Jealous God

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In 1956, Shelomo Dov Goitein (1900-1985), a scholar of both Jewish and Arabic studies,^[16] suggested that the name derives from the Arabic root *h.w.y* (حوى), and the word *hawaya* (حويا), which means “love, affection,”^[17] He connected this suggestion with the passage in Exodus 20:3-5 of laws known by scholars as the Ritual Decalogue. One verse forbids Israel to worship other gods, reads:

שמות לד-ד כי לא תשתחווה לאל אחר כי יהוה קנא שמו אל קנא הוא.

Exod 34:14

For you must not worship any other god, because

YHWH, whose name is Impassioned, is an impassioned God.

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Goitein suggests that “YHWH whose name is Impassioned” refers to the deity’s personal name YHWH, which means “the Impassioned One,” and that this name derives from that (proto)Arabic term for passion. This reflects the idea that YHWH’s bond with his worshipers is one of passionate love, and YHWH is upset if the worshipers “cheat” by worshipping other gods.

In other words, the worshippers’ relationship with YHWH must be exclusive. Moreover, according to Goitein, this exclusivity demanded by YHWH goes back to his appearance as a god among nomadic, Arabian tribes.

Monolatry

Scholars call such exclusive worship of one god “monolatry.” While monotheism claims that no other gods exist, monolatry assumes loyalty and exclusive connection to one god, while allowing for the existence of other deities. In fact, many biblical passages that we read nowadays as monotheistic are really monolatrous. A classic example is in the Decalogue itself:

דברים ה-ז-ט לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני... ה'ט לא תשתחווה להם ולא תעבדם
כי אני יהוה אלהיך אל קנא....

Deut 5:7 You shall have no other gods besides Me... 5:9 You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I YHWH your God am an impassioned God....

The text does not say that no other gods exist, only that they should not be worshipped in addition to YHWH, because YHWH is an impassioned God who would naturally become jealous and agitated at such behavior. YHWH’s relationship with his followers is like that of a husband to a wife; he loves his worshipers but is dangerously jealous of any “worshipping around.” As the book of Proverbs states about husbands:

משלי ה'לד כי קנאה חמת גבר ולא יחמול ביום נקם.

Prov 6:34 The fury of the husband will be passionate; He will show no pity on his day of vengeance.

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YHWH is just such an impassioned husband to his espoused people and Chumash is vengeful if his people are disloyal.



Iconoclasm

ing exclusive, YHWH worship was aniconic, i.e., it did not the deity. This is evident from the absence of human elites settlements of the 12th -11th centuries (Iron Age I, (god of the judges).^[18] In addition, the followers of YHWH

were apparently iconoclastic, and they would destroy images of other

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gods. We can see this in the Israelite conquest of Hazor in the late 13th century, where we find that the conquerors systematically destroyed all the cultic statues and images.^[19]

Iconoclasm also characterized the Qurayyah culture (Midianites), as seen from the excavations at Timna. The Egyptians built a small temple to the goddess Hathor in Timna, which was excavated by Tel Aviv University and University of London archaeologist, Beno Rothenberg (1914–2012). At the same time, the Midianites had their own worship place there, characterized by a collection of pillars (מַצֵּבָה) in a tent. (Because of the extreme aridity of the area, pieces of the tent survived and were discovered by the excavators.)

Unlike the Egyptian Hathor Temple, the Midianite worship area had no images, whether painted or carved, reflecting their aniconism. When the Egyptians left this area, the Midianites took control of the entire area including the Hathor Temple. In so doing, they made the area religiously acceptable by erasing Hathor's face from the rock paintings, and reused these rocks in their own area as another pillar. Rothenberg's argument of was reconfirmed by the recent excavation by Uzi Avner.^[20] This iconoclasm is also reflected in another related group, the Kenites (see appendix).

Authentic Tradition about YHWH, Midian, and Moses

The tradition about Moses' marriage to a Midianite woman has the mark of authenticity: Why would the Israelites invent a story about their primary religious leader's marriage to a non-Israelite woman?

More problematically, Moses not only finds his wife among the Midianites, but finds his God there as well. As I have argued in other contexts, such as my, "[Hovav the Midianite: Why Was the End of the Story Cut?](#)" (*TheTorah*, 2016)," the biblical texts try to soften or even hide this, but the full force of the Moses-in-Midian tradition is one that explains the emergence of the

Midianite/proto-Arabian god YHWH—a passionate deity expecting exclusive love—as Israel’s god.

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Aniconic Kenites: Another Midianite-like Yahwistic Tribe

of evidence for Midianite aniconism comes from the relationship between Midianites and Kenites is unclear, but sometimes conflates the two, since Moses’ father-in-law sometimes described as having been one, and sometimes the other.^[21]

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Moses 1:16, we are told that the Kenites settled in the Arad Valley, and scholars have long suggested that the city of Horvat Uza is biblical Kina, since the stream in its vicinity is called Wadi-el-Keni, i.e., the Kenite Stream. Excavations of the Iron II (monarchic period) city there show that whereas the neighboring (Israelite!) towns had small carvings of people, Horvat Uza had none. Nadav Na’aman, a historian of the biblical period from Tel Aviv University, suggested that this was because the Kenites were especially connected to their ancient, aniconic tradition.^[22]

Similarly, one Kenite figure from a later period, Jehonadab ben Rechab (1 Chron 2:55),^[23] is described as having joined Jehu’s anti-Baal movement (2 Kgs 10:15-16). In Jeremiah we hear that this group—the Rechabites, a Kenite subclan—lived a nomadic tent-dwelling life, without building houses or planting fields, and eschewed wine consumption. This lifestyle is reminiscent of what we see in later times with yet another Arabic tribe, the Nabateans, who were also aniconic.^[24]

Even if the exact relationship between Midianites, Kenites, and Rechabites remains hazy—except that the latter two small groups became part of Israel and the former large group did not—all of these groups were part of an aniconic, YHWH worshipping tradition, which was adopted and reshaped by the Israelites in an early period.

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Footnotes

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1. This article is based on ch.8 of my, *אֵלֶּיךָ עָלָה הַתּוֹרָה* [How the Bible Was Born] (Israel: Kinneret, Zmora-bitan, Dvir, 2018).

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2. Source critically, the revelation of God's name in ch. 3 was part of the E or Elohist source, whereas the revelation in chapter 6 is, in my view, from the Holiness School's redaction of the Pentateuch. See Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School*, trans. Jackie Feldman and Peretz Rodman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007; repr. of, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 17 [n24]; trans. of, *מקדש הדממה: עיתן ברנבאי היצירה הכהנית שבחומרה* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992). Other scholars, however, believe it to be from the Priestly text (see discussion in, David Frankel, "The Priestly Moses," *TheTorah*

Editor's note: For how these two texts played an important role in the of source criticism, see Zev Farber, "Documentary Hypothesis: The YHWH's Name Continues to Enlighten," *TheTorah* (2014).

: For more on how this meaning was understood over time, see and, "YHWH: The God that Is vs. the God that Becomes," *TheTorah*

Editor's note: For a claim that this gloss is actually a redactional supplement, added after the E and J sources were combined, see, Zev Farber, "How Does God Answer the Question: 'What Is Your Name?'" *TheTorah* (2017).

6. The related group Kenites (see appendix) counts the founder of metallurgy among its ancestors (Gen 4:22).
7. Editor's note: For more on Timna, see Erez Ben-Yosef and Aaron Greener, "Edom's Copper Mines in Timna: Their Significance in the 10th Century," *TheTorah* (2018).
8. Uzi Avner, "Egyptian Timna – Reconsidered," in *Understanding the Wilderness*, ed. J. M. Tabes (Louvain 2014), 103–162.
9. The term "Arab" here may be anachronistic, as the first time we see this term used is in 8th century Assyrian documents. The point is that the Midianites are from the same area as the Arabian tribes and were likely part of this Arab or proto-Arab group.
10. Editor's note: For a source critical explanation for why both Midianites and Ishmaelites appear in this story as the ones who bring Joseph to Egypt, see, Ben Sandler, "Encountering the Documentary Hypothesis in the Joseph Story," *TheTorah* (2014).
11. I discuss some of this briefly in my piece on Hovav, in the context of why the Torah cuts off the end of the story in Numbers 10. See my, "Hovav the Midianite: Why Was the End of the Story Cut?" *TheTorah* (2016).
12. The final w is a phonetic complement, i.e., it is not pronounced but is written to clarify the pronunciation of the previous biliteral sign (i.e., a sign that represents two consonants), which is why it is transcribed with only one w. The first vowel "a" is a common rendering for the vowel preceding an aleph; the final vowel "e" is just a convention of Egyptologists; hieroglyphics were written without vowels and we do not know how the end of the word was pronounced.
13. Editor's note: The second "w" is problematic. Unlike in the word *shaswe*, it cannot be a phonetic complement since phonetic complements are paired to the second consonant of a biliteral sign, or to both consonants, but not to just the first. In theory it could be another consonant yielding Yehwaw. It could also be a redundant consonant (as sometimes occurs in toponyms) or an attempt by the scribe to mimic a vowel sound from a foreign language, such as the diphthong *au*. An attractive possibility, suggested by the Egyptologist Elmar Edel (1914–1997), is that the "w" quail chick (𐤎) is a scribal error, and what should have been written is the "aleph" vulture (𐤀), which is how the word is spelled in Ramses II's Amara West inscription, which also references Nomad-land Yehwa. If so, then the final consonant is just a phonetic complement, and the proper transcription would be *yhw*. See discussion in, Faried Adrom and Matthias Müller, "The

Tetragrammaton in Egyptian Sources – Facts and Fiction,” in *The Origins of Yahwism*, ed. Jürgen van Oorschot and Markus Witte, BZAW 484 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 93–114 [98, n36].

14. Her fuller name, Pallas Athena, originally meaning “Pallas of Athens.” See, Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 139.

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15. Editor’s note: See discussion of this identification in David Ben-Gad HaCohen, **Chumash** “Locating Beer-lahai-roi,” *TheTorah* (2014); idem, “Solving the Problem of Kadesh in the Wilderness of Paran,” *TheTorah* (2015).



does have such a root (in addition to the one we will discuss it with the meaning “to drop, fall, or tumble” not “to be.”

st-known for his 6-volume work, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* university of California Press, 1967–1993). Before teaching at the ersity in Jerusalem and then at Princeton, he wrote on the Bible and was even in charge of Bible education in mandatory Palestine.

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18. Shelomo Dov Goitein, “YHWH the Passionate: The Monotheistic Meaning and Origin of the Name YHWH,” *Vetus Testamentum* 6.1 (1956): 1–9.
19. See my, “The Rise, Decline and Renewal of Biblical Religion,” *OBO* 283 (2017): 167–180.
20. Amnon Ben-Tor, “The Sad Fate of Statues of Hazor,” in *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*, ed. Seymour Gitin, George E. Wright, and J.P. Desel, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 3–16. For more on this conquest, see Amnon Ben Tor, “The Fall of Canaanite Hazor: The “Who” and “When” Questions,” in *Mediterranean Peoples in Transition: Thirteenth to Early Tenth Centuries BCE, in Honor of Professor Trude Dothan*, ed. Seymour Gitin, Amihai Mazar, and Ephraim Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1998), 456–467; *ibid.*, “Who Destroyed Canaanite Hazor?” *BAR* 39.4 (2013): 27–36.
21. Avner, “Egyptian Timna – Reconsidered.”
22. Editor’s note: For one discussion of this, see Zev Farber, “Moses’ Father-in-Law: Kenite or Midianite?” *TheTorah* (2015).
23. Nadav Na’aman, “The Kenite Hypotheses in Light of the Excavations at Horvat Uzza,” in *Not Only History: Proceedings of the Conference in Honor of Mario Liverani* ed. Gilda Bartolini and Maria G. Briga (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 171–182.
24. For a discussion of this verse, and how it connects Jehonadab ben Rechab to the Kenites, see, Shemaryahu Talmon, “המה הקנים הבאים מחמה אבי בית רכב,” [These are the Kenites who Come from the Father of the House of Rechab], *Eretz Israel* 5 (5719): 111–113.
25. See discussion in, Joseph Patrich, *The Formation of Nabatean Art: Prohibition of a Graven Image* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1997).



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