

Pronunciation Guide to Sephiroth, Letters and Divine Names used on the Tree of Life, with some additions for the Lesser Pentagram Ritual.

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There are two common methods for pronouncing Hebrew, the Ashkenazic or German style and the Sephardic or Spanish style. The suggestions given below are for Sephardic pronunciation. Sephardic is closer to ancient Hebrew than is Ashkenazic.

THE MOST COMMON NAMES OF THE SEPHIROTH:

First Sephira: KETER, KThR, meaning "Crown. Ke-ter --- e as in met. Accent first syllable.

Second Sephira: CHOKMAH, ChKMH, meaning "Wisdom". Chok-Ma --- ch is a cough-like sound. o like in born. a like in father. Accent last syllable.

Third Sephira: BINAH, BYNH, meaning "Understanding" Bi-Na --- i like in police. a like in father. Accent last syllable.

The Latent Sephira: DA'AT, Da'aTh, meaning "Knowledge". Da-at --- a double "a" sound like that in bard. These two "a" sounds are separated by a "glottal stop", a sudden interruption of breath by very brief closing of the epiglottis. This unique sound is not used in English speech, but is sometimes used in German and in many other languages. When the Letter Ayin occurs in the middle of words, it almost always requires this effect. Accent the first syllable.

Fourth Sephira: CHESED, ChSD, meaning "Mercy". Che-sed --- Ch is a cough-like sound. Both e's are like in met. Accent first syllable.

Fifth Sephira: GEBURAH, GBVRH, meaning "Severity". Ge-boo-Ra --- e as the first in believe. oo as in moon. a as in father. Accent last syllable.

Sixth Sephira: TIPHERET, ThPARTh, meaning "Beauty". Tip-E-ret --- i like in bit. Both e's like in met. Accent mid syllable.

Seventh Sephira: NETZACH, NTzCh, meaning "Victory through Endurance". Ne-tzach --- e as in met. a as in bard. ch like ck in "ICK!" (This ch sound is not in standard English). Accent the first syllable.

Eighth Sephira: HOD, HVD, meaning "Glory". Hod --- o like in bore.

Ninth Sephira: YESOD, YSVD, meaning "foundation". Ye-Sod --- e like the first e in believe. o like in bore. The last syllable should be louder.

Tenth Sephira: MALKUT, MLKVTh, meaning "Kingdom". Mal-Koot --- a as in bard. oo as in moon. Last syllable accent.

THE NAMES OF THE HEBREW LETTERS:

ALEPH, ALP, meaning "Ox". A-lef --- A like in father. e like in met. Accent the first syllable.

BET, BYTh, meaning "Dwelling". Be-Yt --- e like in bet. Y like in yes. Accent last syllable.

GIMEL, GML, meaning "Camel". Gi-mel --- i like in bit. e like in met. Accent first syllable.

DALET, DLTh, meaning "Door". Da-let --- a like in father. e like in met. Accent first syllable.

HEH, HA, meaning "Air Hole". He --- e like in bet. Note: There are several other Hebrew spellings for this letter, but they all have the same pronunciation. Unusual ways- to spell the letters of Tetragrammaton are employed in Qabalah to obtain Gematria for the numbers of the four Qabalistic worlds. That subject is beyond the present topic, but can be taken up later if there is interest.

VAU, VV, meaning "Nail". Vav --- Just like English "Wow" except use an a like in father in place of the "o"

ZAIN, ZYN, meaning "Sword". Za-yin --- a like in bard. i like in bit. Accent the first syllable.

CHET, ChYTh, meaning "Fence". Chet --- Ch is a cough-like sound. e is like e in bet.

TET, TYTh, meaning "Serpent". Tet --- e like in bet.

YOD, YVD, meaning "Hand". Yad --- a like in father. Alternately: Yod --- o like in bore.

KOPH, KP, meaning "Closed Hand". Kaf --- a like in father.

LAMED, LMD, meaning "Ox Goad". La-med --- a like in father. e like in met. Accent the first syllable.

MEM, MM or MYM, meaning "Water". Mem or Meym --- e like in bet.

NUN, NVN, meaning "Fish". Noon --- just like the English "Noon".

SAMEKH, SMK, meaning "Prop". Sa-mekh --- a like in bard. e like in met. Accent the first syllable.

AYIN, a'aYN, meaning "Eye". A-yin --- A like in bard, but with a glottal stop, not normal to English, from an interruption of breath. Y like in yes. i like in bit. Accent the first syllable.

PEH, PH or PA, meaning "Mouth". Pe --- e as in met. Alternatively: e as in bet.

TZADDI, TzDY, meaning "Fish Hook". Tsa-De --- a like in father. e like in bet. The last syllable is louder.

QOF, QVP, meaning "Back of the Head". Qof --- o like in bore.

RESH, RYSh, meaning "Head". Resh --- e like in bet. sh like in wish.

SHIN, ShYN, meaning "Tooth". Shin --- Sh like in wish. i like in police. Alternatively: Sin --- S like in sin. i like in police.

TAW, ThV, last letter, meaning "Cross". Tav --- a as in father. v like "w" in English.

THE DIVINE NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH THE SEPHIROTH

EHEIEH, AHYH, meaning "I AM". E-he-ye --- First E like in met. Second e like the first e in believe. Third e like in met. Accent the first syllable.

YAH, YH, meaning "HE/SHE IS" Yah --- a like in father. Alternatively: Ye-Voh --- e like in met. o like in born. V and accent unchanged.

YAHWEH ELOHIM, YHVH ALHYM, meaning "HE/SHE MANIFESTS AS GODS & GODDESS". Ye-Veh --- Both e's like in met. V like w in wind. --- meaning "He is." Alternatively: Ye-Voh --- e like in met. o like in born. V and accent unchanged. --- meaning "She is." Elo-Him --- E as in met but shorter. o as in bore. i as in police. Accent last syllable in both words. Note: Pronunciation of Tetragrammaton with Elohim traditionally uses the vowel points of Elohim. Otherwise, the vowel points of Adonai are used.

EL, AL, meaning "HE IS GREAT" El --- E as in met.

ELOHIM GIBOR, ALHYM GBVR, meaning "THE MALE AND FEMALE DEITIES ARE MIGHTY" "For Elohim, see above note." Gib-Bor --- i like in bit. o like in bore. Accent on last syllable.

JEHOVAH ELOH Va-DA'AT, YHVH ALVH V-Da'aTh, "HE/SHE IS DEITY & KNOWLEDGE" Ye-ho-Vah --- e like first in believe. o like in bore. a like in father. --- meaning "He is". Alternative: Ye-ho-Voh --- pronounced the same, except the second o is like in bore. Both alternatives have the V like an English "Wah" sound. Both that the accent on the third syllable. Elo-Ha --- E like in met but shorter. o like in bore. a like in bard. Accent last syllable. Ve-Da-at --- e like first e in believe. Both a's like in bard, but see the note above on "Da'at" for the necessary glottal stop. Middle syllable accented. Note: When the vowel points of Adonai are used to pronounce the Tetragrammaton, it comes out "Jehovah" instead of "Yahweh".

JEHOVAH TZABAOT, YHVH TzBAVTh, meaning "HE/SHE IS SPLENDOR" Ye-Ho-Vah or Ye-Ho-Voh, "He is" or "She is", respectively. See "Jehovah", just above. Tse-Ba-Ot --- e like first in believe. a like in father. o like in bore. Accent third syllable.

ELOHIM TZABAOT, ALHYM TzBAVTh, "MALE AND FEMALE DEITIES ARE SPLENDOR" See above for pronunciation: "Elohim" and "Tzabaot."

SHADDAI EL CHAI, ShDY AL ChY, meaning "ALMIGHTY GOD LIVES FOREVER" Sad-Day --- First a like in father. Second a like in bard. Accent last syllable. El --- E is in met. Chay --- Ch is a coughing sound. a as in bard.

ADONAI MELEKH HA-ARETZ, ADNY MLK HA-RTz, meaning "LORD KING OF THE EARTH" Ado-Nay --- A as in bard but shorter. o as in bore. Last a as in father. Accent second syllable. Me-lek --- Both e's like in met. Accent first syllable. Ha-A-rets --- Both a's like in father. e like in met. Accent first syllable. Note: These three names are commonly used either separately or in combination.

HEBREW WORDS USED IN THE LESSER BANISHING RITUAL OF THE PENTAGRAM.

ATEH, AThH, meaning "THINE" or "UNTO THEE" At-Ta --- First a like in bard. Second a like in father. Accent second syllable.

MALKUT, --- see above under Sephiroth.

Ve-GEBURAH, --- see above under Sephiroth and next entry for prefix.

Ve-GEDULAH, V-GDVLH, meaning "AND THE GREATNESS" Ve-ge-doo-La --- e's both like the first in believe. oo as in moon. a as in father. Accent last syllable. Note: This is an alternate name for Chesed, the fourth Sephira. Also, the Hebrew letter Vau is equivalent to the English conjunction "and" when used at the front of a word.

Le-OLAHM, L-a'aVLM, meaning "FOR ETERNITY" or "FOR ALL THAT EXISTS" Le-a'a-o-La-m --- e as first in believe. The "a'a" signifies a very light glottal stop; omit if too difficult. o as in bore. a as in father. The "La" is accented, but the sound should drop back to normal by the time you reach "m".

AMEN, AMN, meaning an assertion of strong conviction. Am-En --- a as in father. E as in bet. Accent last syllable. Note: This word is used intact in English, but does not have quite the same religious connotations in Hebrew. There is no actual English equivalent outside profanity and slang.

JEHOVAH, ADONAI, EHEIEH --- see above under Divine Names.

AGLA, AGLA, no direct meaning. This is a Noteriqon or mystical abbreviation of: AThH GBVR L-a'aVLM ADNY, Ateh Gibor Le-Olahm Adonai. That in turn means: "Thou art mighty forever O'Lord". Pronunciation is also cryptic, but using the initials of the component words and their attendant vowel points, we get: A-gi-le-A --- a as in bard. i as in bit. e as the first one in believe. A as in bard. The last syllable should take the accent, but even sylliblation is undecided.

RAPHAEL, RPAL, meaning "GOD HEALS" Re-Fa-El --- e as first one in believe. a as in father. e as in bet. Accent the last two syllables.

GABRIEL, GBRYAL, meaning "GOD IS MIGHTY" Gab-Ri-El --- a as in bard. i as in police. E as in bet. Accent the last two syllables.

MICHAEL, MYKAL, meaning "LIKENESS OF GOD" Mi-Ka-El --- i as in police. K like a light clearing of the throat. a as in father. E as in bet. Accent the last two syllables.

URIEL, ARIEL, AVRYAL, meaning "LIGHT OF GOD", or loosely, "Lucifer" oo-Ri-El --- (The initial Aleph is silent --- no "a" sound here) oo as in moon. i as in police. e as in bet. Accent the last two syllables.

By now, the reader has had a chance to try these pronunciations, and is just possibly a bit discouraged. Actually, once a start has been made at book-taught pronunciation of Hebrew, the worst is over. Now, but not when you made your first attempt, there are a few simple tricks to getting the sounds put together right. First, do each syllable separately, as though they were distinct words. Second, try the accent by making the unaccented syllable words more quiet and the accent syllable word louder. Finally, build fluency by saying the entire word as a smooth sound instead of distinct syllables. Pick an English word to get the feel of this final stage. Take an English Dictionary, and practice putting words you already use together by the pronunciation guide just after the first listing of the word in the dictionary. You will find yourself making the same natural errors in accent and fluency with these common words that you are making with Hebrew. The "feel" of the clumsiness of the pronunciation is the same for English as it is for Hebrew. Likewise the "feel" of a well pronounced word is the same. Example: Take the English word: "Success". A good dictionary will write: "(s*k-ses')"... "*" will be an upsidedown "e". The front of the dictionary will explain the sounds made by things like the upsidedown "e" symbol and the other sound symbols. The apostrophe (') symbol comes just after the accented syllable (I have used an underline here instead). Pretend that you have never used the word before and try it. If it comes out: Suck-ces, you will be able to hear yourself enough to see how to make the word sound more correct. Work on the Hebrew until it "hears" like English to you. There is one more trick to this that is a bit harder, but which works for some people. If you are not sure of several minor differences in pronunciation for a given word, simply try to say them all at the same instant. The resulting stress produces an odd twisting in the mouth and can more closely duplicate natural speech sounds than any purely academic methods can possibly manage. ---- O'h yes, CROWLEY is pronounced Crow-lee, not Craughli!

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