

Taking Hebrew Names Notes

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Name changes in the History

Change of name was not an unusual occurrence in Biblical times, if one may judge by the instances occurring among the Patriarchs, and it seems to have been not altogether unknown in later times. Thus, [Moses Benveniste](#) mentions a certain Obadiah who wandered from Germany to [Turkey](#) in 1654 and changed his name to Moses because the former name was unusual.^[21] (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_name#_note-18)

Surnames

[Jews](#) have historically used [Hebrew patronymic](#) names. In the Jewish patronymic system the first name is followed by either *ben-* or *bat-* ("son of" and "daughter of," respectively), and then the father's name. (*Bar-*, "son of" in [Aramaic](#), is also seen). Permanent family surnames exist today but only gained popularity among [Sephardic Jews](#) in [Iberia](#) and elsewhere as early as the 10th or 11th century and did not spread widely to the [Ashkenazic Jews](#) of [Germany](#) or [Eastern Europe](#) until much later. While Jews now have permanent surnames for everyday life, the patronymic form is still used in religious life. It is used in [synagogue](#) and in documents in [Jewish law](#) such as the [ketubah](#) (marriage contract). Many Sephardic Jews used the Arabic *ibn* instead of *bat* or *ben* when it was the norm. The Spanish family [Ibn Ezra](#) is one example.

Many [immigrants](#) to [modern Israel](#) change their names to Hebrew names, to erase remnants of *galuti* (exiled) life still surviving in family names from other languages. It was especially among in Ashkenazic Jews, because most of their names were taken later and some were imposed by the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires.

A popular form to create a new family name using Jewish patronymics sometimes related to poetic Zionist themes, such as *ben Ami* ("son of my people"), or *ben Artzi* ("son of my country"), and sometimes related to the Israeli landscape, such as *bar Ilan* ("son of the trees"). Others have create Hebrew names based on [phonetic](#) similarity with their original family name: *Golda Meyersohn* became [Golda Meir](#). Another famous person who used a false patronymic was the first [Israeli Prime Minister](#), [David Ben-Gurion](#), whose original family name was Grün but adopted the name "Ben-Gurion" ("son of the [lion](#) cub"), not "Ben-Avigdor" (his father's name).

As has been seen, surnames were not unknown among the Jews of the Middle Ages, and as Jews began to mingle more with their fellow citizens, the practice of using or adopting civic surnames in addition to the "sacred" name, used only in religious connections, grew commensurately. Of course, among the [Sephardim](#) this practice was common almost from the time of the [exile from Spain](#), and probably became still more common as a result of the example of the [Marranos](#), who on adopting [Christianity](#) accepted in most cases the family names of their godfathers. Among the [Ashkenazim](#), whose isolation

from their fellow citizens was more complete, the use of surnames became at all general only in the eighteenth century.

In the [Austrian Empire](#) an order was issued in 1787 which compelled the Jews to adopt surnames, though their choice of given names was restricted mainly to Biblical ones.^[13] Commissions of officers were appointed to register all the Jewish inhabitants under such names. If a Jew refused to select a name the commission was empowered to force one upon him. This led to a wholesale creation of artificial surnames, of which Jewish nomenclature bears the traces to the present day.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_name#_note-18)

Hebrew Names changes by Yehovah

Bereshit/Genesis 17:5, 15

5 And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations.

15 And Elohim said to Abraham, “As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah.

Bereshit/Genesis 32:29

29 Said he, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed.”

Bereshit/Genesis 35:10

10 Elohim said to him, “You whose name is Jacob, You shall be called Jacob no more, But Israel shall be your name.” Thus He named him Israel.

Name Changes by Human Rulers/Authorities

Bereshit/Genesis 41:45

44 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh; yet without you, no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” **45** Pharaoh then gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him for a wife Asenath daughter of Poti-phaera, priest of On. Thus Joseph emerged in charge of the land of Egypt.

Bereshit/Genesis 35:18

18 But as she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. Thus Rachel died. She was buried on the road to Ephrath—now Bethlehem.

Here notice that Rachel names the boy but Yisrael over-rides that as head of the Family.

Shofetim/Judges 6:28-32

28 Early the next morning, the townspeople found that the altar of Baal had been torn down and the sacred post beside it had been cut down, and that the second bull had been offered on the newly built altar. **29** They said to one another, “Who did this thing?” Upon inquiry and investigation, they were told, “Gideon son of Joash did this thing!” **30** The townspeople said to Joash, “Bring out your son, for he must die: he has torn down the altar of Baal and cut down the sacred post beside it!” **31** But Joash said to all who had risen against him, “Do you have to contend for Baal? Do you have to vindicate him? Whoever fights his battles shall be dead by morning! If he is a god, let him fight his own battles, since it is his altar that has been torn down!” **32** That day they named him Jerubbaal, meaning “Let Baal contend with him, since he tore down his altar.”

We know this was not a nickname because it is used later in Judges. This was his renaming.

Judges 6:32

Judges 7:1

Judges 8:29

Judges 9:1

Judges 9:2

Judges 9:5

Judges 9:16

Judges 9:19

Judges 9:24

Judges 9:28

Judges 9:57

Dani’el/ Daniel 1:7

7 The chief officer gave them new names; he named Daniel Belteshazzar, Hananiah Shadrach, Mishaël Meshach, and Azariah Abed-nego.

And again Daniel and his friends were renamed not just given nicknames. These are like Joseph’s name in that the ruling authority changed it.

Daniel 1:7

Daniel 2:26

Daniel 4:8

Daniel 4:9

Daniel 4:18

Daniel 4:19

Daniel 5:12

Daniel 10:1

So we see that not Just Yehovah can change a name but human authority can also.

Name change by an individual

Ruth 1:20

20 “Do not call me Naomi,” she replied. “Call me Mara, for Shaddai has made my lot very bitter. **21** I went away full, and Yehovah has brought me back empty. How can you call me Naomi, when Yehovah has dealt harshly with me, when Shaddai has brought misfortune upon me!”

I am sure there is more but these are all I could find this week.

Hebrew name at conversion

Why take a Hebrew name at conversion?

Converting to being one with the tribes of Yisrael and one with Yehovah is more than just changing your religion. If all you had to do is state a statement of beliefs and join like other religions then that would be less than what is done here. When taking on the name Yisrael (people of Yisrael) and Elohim you attach yourself to a tribe. You become a part of that tribe. You are essentially adopted like one who was born into the tribe. So when you convert you are taking on a new identity. The name change is therefore a part of the adoption process. If you adopt a child many times you can legally change the name at the adoption. This is similar to what I see here.

So this is both a tradition and a legality for the state of Israel today.

How do I figure an adoption?

Shemot/Exodus 12:48

48 If a stranger who dwells with you would offer the passover to Yehovah, all his males must be circumcised; then he shall be admitted to offer it; he shall then be as a citizen of the country. But no uncircumcised person may eat of it.

Isaiah 56:3

3 Let not the foreigner say, Who has attached himself to Yehovah, “Yehovah will keep me apart from His people”; And let not the eunuch say, “I am a withered tree.”

Attaching oneself is being made part of the family.

At conversion you take on the name of Avraham or Sarah as your father or mother.

Yochanan ben Avraham Avinu

Leah bat Sarah imenu

At conversion you become their children.