

Jews' College Union Society

THE ROMANCE OF JEWISH
NAMES IN THE LIGHT OF
JEWISH HISTORY

A PAPER READ BY

Mr. S. JAPHET

(Chairman of the Council of Jews' College)

on

Monday, March 1st, 1926

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BROADWELL HILL,
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Dear M. Remacle -

When I had the pleasure of meeting you in Paris you told me that you would like to translate Mr. Japhet's paper on "The Romance of Jewish Names" into French.

I told this to my friend and he was delighted that so distinguished a writer should honour him with such an appreciation. He gave me the accompanying copy for you and I am sure would have no objection to you compressing it should you think fit.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

Ethan Allen

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PREFACE

IT gives me very great pleasure to write a few prefatory words to Mr. S. Japhet's paper on such an interesting theme as "The Romance of Jewish Names in the Light of Jewish History."

It is nearly a century since Leopold Zunz, the founder of the New Jewish Learning produced his "Namen der Juden"; and, since that time, various scholars, and especially folklorists, have made valuable additions to our knowledge of Jewish names. As is seen in Mr. Japhet's brief summary of such labours, and his own valuable contributions and suggestions, Jewish names enable us to follow the wanderings of Israel throughout the ages; and, in a sense, to measure the impress of the various cultures upon his home and soul-life.

Mr. Japhet's Paper has an additional significance. Its author is the Chairman of the Jews' College; and this paper, read before the Jews' College Union Society, is an attempt to draw the larger Jewish public into closer touch with the Jewish Theological Seminary of the British Empire, and to increase the number of those who take a deep and abiding interest in the only academic Seat of Higher Jewish Learning in this country.

May his noble and praiseworthy efforts be crowned with success.

J. H. HERTZ,
CHIEF RABBI
(President of Jews' College).

THE ROMANCE OF JEWISH NAMES IN THE LIGHT OF JEWISH HISTORY.

I hope the subject of this paper will be dear to your heart. You will be asked to trace the origin and evolution of names which may appear strange to the Jewish lover of history—of his own history. Your attention will be directed to the fact that, since time immemorial, our co-religionists found pleasure in imitating, outwardly, certain customs of the nations, in whose midst they lived, by adopting their names and thus perpetuating the recollection of their sojourn among these peoples. It will be seen that so-called Jewish names have to a great extent been only resumed in a comparatively later period, but that in earlier days they were overshadowed either by foreign or by fancy names.

You all will find delight in diving into the mysteries of the past. It is as if you were exploring ancient family papers, yellow and faded, as if you were connecting East and West, the present days and the past, and you may think it fascinating and thrilling to lift the veil and throw light on matters previously obscured from your eyes.

Many of our greatest scholars and teachers have dwelt on the chapter of names and made

them a special study. The greatest among these experts, *Zunz*, said : " Names receive the breath of life from language, their significance from history and from culture their charm. Such names contain a secret history ; they are annals expressed in cypher and scientific research holds the key."

As far back as records go great importance has been devoted to names. They were the reflection of the thoughts and ideas of the various nations. Consequently, name giving was associated with a certain solemnity and religious ceremony.

We find the first names in the Bible, and, from the start, it is obvious that certain names were given for special reasons according to accompanying circumstances. Eve called her firstborn Cain, and she said : " I have gotten a man from the Lord." Isaac's name and that of Jacob were also given for special reasons. More pronounced, we find the custom of interpreting the meaning of names in connection with each of the sons of Jacob ; so, too, with Moses and his sons, with Samuel and Samson. One thing strikes us. In most cases it was the mother who named the child, and although Isaac received his name from his father, the mother gave the initiative by her arguments.

Jacob, however, had already the full understanding for tradition. He realised that he was the head of a clan. He prayed in the name of Abraham and Isaac for his offspring and craved that the blessings he had to give might be strength-

ened by those which had come to him from his forefathers.

But we see the greater part of the so-called Jewish names which are at present still so much in use and favour, like those of the Patriarchs and the sons of Jacob and Joseph, disappear from the Bible after the tale of Genesis. Why? We do not know. Was it that already an influence to which our race is especially subject, induced them to adopt the names of the nations in whose midst they lived? Or had they forgotten their past? That is possible! They themselves lived among a people that had become ignorant of the past, and the first chapter of Exodus tells us there was a new King who knew nothing of Joseph! Evidently, with the settlement in Egypt, the children of Israel had for the time being in a way broken with the past. Anyhow, we do not find in the rest of the Pentateuch a single one of the Jewish names of Genesis.

In order to get a comprehensive survey of the history of Jewish names, it would be well to group our material into different periods:

There is first the period of which Genesis tells us.

The second period should go as far as the first Exile.

The third period should comprise the Exile, the return to Palestine, the Greek and Roman periods, until the time of the complete dissolution of Jewish independence after the defeat of Bar Kochbah.

The fourth epoch should extend until the

Crusades. With the first Crusade fearful times arose for the European Jews, when in most countries they had to endure cruel, inhuman afflictions and sufferings which lasted throughout the fifth period until the Mendelssohnian era and the French Revolution brought some kind of respite to their two thousand years of agony.

In the first period we already find a certain political or social organisation in the formation of clans or tribes. We are figuratively speaking, introduced into the new society of mankind. Everyone is presented to us by his proper name, and an explanation is given why such a name was selected. But the naming of children was evidently the private affair of their parents and had nothing to do with any other family or tribal relations, and, accordingly, the names of fathers or grandparents are rarely repeated.

The development of the second epoch is to be traced chiefly in the holy books, and we now find many names which incorporate that of God. But there appears already an equally strong tendency to adopt the names of plants and animals, and, according to Joseph Jacobs, lists can be formed of about 80 animal and plant names in those days.

The custom of referring to personal qualities or peculiarities already met with in Genesis, for instance, *Laban*, the white one; *Esau or Edom*, the red, has been accentuated; and we hear of *Gideon*, the maimed; of *Barak*, which means lightning; and so on. We hear more often of refer-

ences to the birthplace of a man of prominence, as when Scripture speaks of Eliah Hatisbi, the Tischbite, and of Amos of Tekoa. It is true that some names referring to personal qualifications already appear in Genesis, like Melchizedek, and with reference to the birth place of an individual like Eliezer of Damascus ; but these are isolated cases.

It is only in the third period, beginning with the Exile, that quite a new stage is reached. A slight inclination to adopt foreign names had already existed. But now it became general. At the same time people began to add to their own name that of their father ; the first instance, according to the Jewish Encyclopædia, is in the times of the major prophets.

Time went on. Not a twentieth part of Biblical names survived. The Persian epoch is specially original in finding new names. Such as had never been known before now appear ; some reflecting the sentiments of the period and many referring to the relation between God and His people, *e.g.*, Pedaja, which means hope and consolation in God ; Chasadja the justice of God ; Jushaw Chesed, the return of grace in God ; Hodujah, public thanks for God, and many others ; and Zerubabel, the dispersion into Babel, is also a fine example of the influence of current events.

But still more interesting is the beginning of the corruption of classical Hebrew nomenclature. Aramaic began to supersede Hebrew as the vernacu-

lar. And are not even many of our prayers like Kaddisch, Kol Nidré, Jekum Porkon, Holach Moanjo, and also some of our hymns—"Zemiraus"—written in Aramaic!

And Arabic words also penetrate into our vocabulary.

Many Babylonian and Persian names are familiar to us, *e.g.*, Mordecai and Esther, derived from the heathen god and goddess Merodach and Astarte; and Daniel, which means a Judge in God,—a synonym with Gedalia,—also possessed the name Balthasar. Bartholomew is of good Jewish origin and means Bal Taulmin, or the son of Talmai.

The selection of names grows more and more variegated. On the one hand the influence of Persian, Babylonian, Aramean and Arabic culture continues, and on the other hand comes that of the Greek, under the Seleucides, and of the Egyptian under the Ptolemies. In some instances, Hebrew names were translated into other languages, *e.g.*, Jedidja, Matutja, Natanja, Nataniel, into Theophikus, Theodorus, Theodotus, etc. The name Isidor refers to Isis Doros, a Present of Isis, the Egyptian goddess. Foreign names became more and more ascribed to Jews, so much so, that even Rabbis, Priests and leaders of the community bore them. Rabbinic authorities of Mishna and Talmud had foreign names or gave foreign names to their children.

We find ourselves now on the threshold of the Christian era. Judea has been subjugated and Jerusalem destroyed. The great Diaspora has begun; the Jews are dispersed. They went off in all directions. Not everywhere did their advent prove historically important; east, north and south they remained in humble circumstances.

It was in one part of the world, where their fate and destiny made them play a role of the greatest consequence to themselves as a people, as well as to the nations among whom they lived—the Mediterranean!

Around the waters of that sea, which saw the first navigators of the world, a new Jewish life arose, a life reflecting the strange and marvellous gifts which are the inheritance of the children of Jacob.

Exiled and fugitives from their homes, without leadership, without resources, friendless, persecuted, they nevertheless preserved their traditions, *not* only from the religious point of view, nor was it chiefly the common bond of their own language which kept them together, but it was rather the feeling that their whole past, their descent, their history and their belief predestined them to consider themselves as *one* people, and the hope for a re-establishment in not too far a future kept alive their confidence in God and their proverbial energy on earth.

They settled in Egypt, Greece, the Archipelagos,

Italy, Southern France, Spain and Morocco—the land of the Berbers.

Around the Mediterranean a new Jewish history now started, which in its stages gives a picture of the most wonderful splendour as well as of the saddest downfall and depression which human phantasy can imagine.

From Palestine the Jews went westward. Partly carried away as slaves, partly as escaped fugitives. But from the shores of the Mediterranean went forth that immortal longing for the East whence they had come. And though they changed their names, and adopted foreign languages, while neglecting their own, the call of the East remained from the outset so powerful that, notwithstanding all drawbacks and impediments, their national feeling never entirely died out. On the contrary! That feeling soon revived, the language was revived and kept alive by the study of the Talmud. Even their religious life became more accentuated. Spirituality became a more outstanding factor, and there was hardly a branch of science in which the Mediterranean Jews, especially those of Spain, did not show ascendancy.

This even during periods of the fiercest persecution and misery. And yet, they tried over and over again, at every turn for the better, to adapt themselves to prevailing conditions and surroundings.

The Mediterranean Jews named their children in Greek, Latin and Arabic, Spanish and Provençal, just as their forefathers had taken up oriental names. But all the time they remained aware of their spiritual and ethical mission in the world and carried it out. They did not content themselves with aping their fellow-citizens when they adopted Arabic, Spanish or Latin names; they made all these foreign languages their own; they became translators of ancient Greek and Roman literature; they gave impulse to the study of Philosophy, Astronomy, Medicine and even Architecture. Many were their ups and downs. Only a comparatively small number acquired worldly goods. But their spiritual standard was the highest possible and rose from generation to generation until it culminated in the greatest personality Israel ever had, in a second Moses—*Maimonides*! He, the thinker, endowed with divine grace, lived in a period which was adorned by sages, saints, scholars and poets.

Throughout the songs of Jewish bards in Spain there rings the ardent desire, the deep yearning for the Holy Land, and Maimonides himself could not resist the call of the East. He lived, worked and eventually died in Egypt; he wanted to be near to Zion, which the Psalmist called Michlal Jaufi: the Perfection of Beauty.

But do not let us forget our subject. It would be a fallacy to believe that, in their new surroundings, the Jews had abandoned their original

names. Although they tried hard to assimilate with the inhabitants of the countries where they lived, they felt the pressure of barbarous brutality on the part of the Gentiles, and they began to draw narrower the circle in which they lived and to return more to the customs of their forefathers.

The Hebrew language could not sprout forth fresh shoots, but certain words were borrowed from it which were used as names, *e.g.*, Emunah (Faith), Chajim (Life), Chasdai (Grace), Jomtob (Festival), Mebasser (Harbinger), Nissim (Wonder), Sossaun (Joy), Simcho (Gladness), Zemach (Branch), and even Moschiach (Messiah).

It is noteworthy that also from this same period dates an inclination, especially in Europe, to return once more to Biblical names and even to those which had never been in vogue before. Those of animals were favoured, and also of plants: Arje (Lion), Deborah (Bee), Hadassa (Myrtle), Zeeb (Wolf), Simri (Camel), Hulda (Weasel), Jonah (Dove), Caleb (Dog), Zippora (Bird), Rachel (Lamb). Likewise, names of precious stones, minerals and metals were used: Gold, Silver, Diamond, Ruby, Sapphire, Stone (in German Stein, in Russian Kamenka), Pearl, which latter is the Hebrew word Margolis.

In a Verona record of 1450 we find the name Gimmi as that of the daughter of the chief Rabbi. This means Gemma or Jewel.

The Jews in Moslem countries, on the other hand, continued to use Arabic names. In the

German-speaking countries they were inclined to accept the ways of the Southern Jews, fully acknowledging their general superiority.

In those days there were three centres of Jewish intellect: The Rhenish schools, the schools of Provence and the Spanish places of learning. The French and Spanish centres were of course in constant intercourse, partly on account of their spiritual interests and geographical proximity, partly, however, because persecution and temporary expulsion drove them together to their mutual support. The time came when the Jews felt their homelessness more than ever before. Yes, life among the various races made them recognise what freedom was, and just that was denied to them. Exposed to suffering and shame, degraded, disgraced and impoverished, they constantly had to seek new abodes. Jerusalem was their idol, but, alas, not within their reach. With rare understanding, Byron wrote in his Hebrew Melodies the words:

Oh, weep for those that weep on Babel's stream
 Their shrines are desolate, their land a dream.
 Weep for the harp of Juda's broken shell,
 Mourn! Where their God has dwelt the Godless
 dwell.

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet,
 And when shall Zion's songs again sound sweet
 And Juda's melody once more rejoice
 The hearts that leaped before its heavenly voice.

Tribe of the wandering feet and weary breast,
How can you flee away and be at rest,
The wild dove has its nest, the fox its cave,
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave.

We approach now the epoch which followed the brightest and most brilliant time in Jewish spiritual life.

Maimonides was dead. With his death it almost seemed as if the stars of Israel had darkened. His successors began to quarrel. Three distinct groups were in existence in Spain and South of France: the believers in Maimonides, the ultra-orthodox party and the Cabbalists. They fought each other furiously, and interest in higher aims and ideals almost became extinct. The masses lost belief in leadership, and those who were wealthy and influential did not care much about Jewish affairs.

The Rhenish Jewry and that of Lorraine also showed signs of decay. The persecution of the Crusaders had wiped out hundreds of smaller communities and dislodged families, who had lived for generations in their abode, mercilessly from their homes. It seems that in those times all the Jews were constantly on the move, and it is from that time that these Jewish wanderers are named after places from which they had come. Is not *this* the moment when our interest in family names receives quite a fresh impetus? And if in this period of the Middle Ages the Jews began habitually to take place-names by way of surnames, they re-

tained their scared names, Schem Kaudesh, by which they were called to the Law, etc.

And now, for the sake of a better understanding of the origin of some names, we must mention a most essential point. When adopting local names, did they always adopt the correct ones, and, when they did, have those names—the names of cities and towns—remained as they were in those times? Has not mis-pronunciation, bad spelling, accent and jargon done much towards corruption, and has not fancy completed the confusion? Do we not, even to-day, find names in existence referring to places which have long ceased to be inhabited? On the other hand, we find names referring to localities which centuries ago acquired quite new names. We find Jewish names in the records of the secular authorities, names, the origin of which is quite unintelligible to us. Sometimes it may have occurred that a name sounded so utterly strange to a Christian registrar that this good man simply put down something similar, and afterwards the Jews were forced to adhere to what had been recorded.

Nor must it be overlooked that it was a habit of our co-religionists to give names of their own to towns or cities, which have and always had their well-known name and place in history.

Let us pick out from the most important Jewish seats a few names to illustrate the difficulties which present themselves to the student of old Jewish nomenclature.

Before we do so, we must point out one thing. The inclination to adopt the names of various countries and nations was in olden times by no means based on a wish to escape the attention of the Gentiles, so that these at least should not at once recognise who was a Jew. No, it was *not* objected to in those days when Jews took on Provençal, Italian, Castilian, Arabian and French names, or kept on their own. Even proselytes did not change their names, and the Church did not interfere. It was not till 1313, after the Council of Zamora, that the designation of Jews by Spanish names was opposed, and the Queen Maria de Molina, a scheming woman, forbade the Jews in Catalonia to call themselves by these "high-sounding" Spanish names. That was quite a novelty. But it was at once copied by other potentates, and, afterwards, the Jews, with a certain sense of shame, went back to what since then was called the Jewish name, until, in later centuries, the so-called enlightened Jews, being ashamed of them, changed their names into Christian ones.

Still the Jews lived among the Gentiles. What they called in Italy, "Ghetto"; in Spain, "Juderia"; and in Germany, "Judengasse" was not yet legally in existence.

Most fascinating to read are the long lists of Provençal, South French and Spanish names, the more so, as so many of them have survived until o-day. The records of the Spanish and Portu-

guese Syngagoue here in London, in Amsterdam, Paris and Overseas furnish ample proof of this.

In Italy there still exist many of the old families, among them the Luzattos, the Lattes, and the Finzis, etc. The Lattes were great men of science. They came from the South of France and were already prominent in 1300. One, Bonet de Lattes, discovered the means for measuring the distance of the stars. Reuchlin, with whom he was in correspondence, mentioned in one of his books that Bonet means Massel Tow. By the way, Finzi, a name which sounds so typically Italian, is derived from Epineuse, in France. The bearers of that name did their own share of spelling when settling down!

Now, just a few examples of how the Jews formed their own names, regardless of the designation which was given in Geography to the various towns or countries after which they called themselves.

In Egypt there lives a family, Harari. On my travels I have met Harari Pasha, a very distinguished Jewish gentleman, and I inquired in his family about the origin of the name of Harari. I was told that they most likely originated from Spain or South of France; they had lived for centuries in Egypt. Well, I found out for myself, when I happened to read the history of the city of Montpellier. Montpellier, like Avignon, Beziers, Narbonne, Nimes, Carcassone, and Marseilles was

a very old seat of the Jews, dating, in fact, back to Roman times. Montpellier is a corruption of the Latin "Mons Puellarum," but the Jews called it plainly "Ir Har," the Town of the Mountain, and gave to a number of great scholars and poets simply the family name, Harari. The Hararis were so many that they invented a synonym, and some of them who came from Montpellier were called "Harami," derived from the Hebrew word Raumoh—the high—and also referring to the mountains.

Another example of how the Jews found their own words may be this: A great man, Crescas d'Orange, was called in later years Isaac d'Ezobi. He originated from the town of Orange. Now, Orange means in Hebrew Esauw (our hyssop), and in manuscripts we find references to Ir Hoesauw and Erez Hoesauw. The one is the city, the other the principality of Orange. Esauw was soon corrupted into Ezob. Crescas's descendants, however, are only known under the name Ezobi.

You have all heard of the French province of Languedoc. This province, long before it was French, was a flourishing beautiful district where wine, olives and roses grew. The language was not French, it was Provençal. When the French conquered the dukedom, they were puzzled by the language ruling there. They henceforth called the whole district Langue d'Oc—the Old Language—for "oc" is the Provençal word for "old." The Jews followed suit. In their documents they

speak of Mimkaumaus Loschon Auch : the Places of the Old Tongue. Well, this is the literal translation of Languedoc. of Oc 2

One more : A small town called Montolival, which means the Mount of Olives, was translated into Hebrew as Har Hasesim ; they evidently thought of Jerusalem.

There is a place, L'Escalette, rising in terraces up to the hills, where there lived one of the great Jewish poets—Samuel Sascaleta. He adopted the name *Sulami*, under which he is known in literature, deriving it from the Hebrew word Sulam—the ladder or steps. We see Escaletta here translated fairly correctly.

May I mention something else. We find in Walter Scott's delightful novel "Ivanhoe," a name mentioned as a Jewish name—Kirjath-Jeorim. The passage reads as follows : "In the town of Leicester all men know the rich jew Kirjath Jeorim of Lombardy." Well, this was never a personal name, and Zunz says : "The genius of the writer may be pardoned for the use of his phantasy in electing this name as one of a person." In point of fact it is this : the old Jews of the Provence used the name Kirjath Jeorim, the Town of the Woods, instead of Nimes. Nimes also was in antiquity under Roman rule and was called Nemus (the Wood). This word the Jews translated into Hebrew, perhaps in memory of the town mentioned in the book of Joshua, and hence the name Kirjath Jeorim.

So we saw Montpellier, Nimes and Orange, Languedoc, Montolival and Escaletta disappear from the list of names and replaced by Hebrew synonyms. Does it need more proof that the Jews in those times had their own vocabulary ?

Similar are conditions in Spain and Italy. In England we do not find much of wider interest. Most likely most of the records were lost at the time of the expulsion. Yet there was intercourse between English Jews and those of Spain and the Provence. We meet a certain Jacob of London, and one of the name of Jacob Menachem of Nottingham, whilst French scholars also visited England. So did Ibn Esra. We find also, before the expulsion, an English Jew visiting—just as nowadays—the Fair at Cologne, well received by his co-religionists.

Many French Jews called themselves after the big city of Orleans. But Orleans had in marriage, and divorce papers, and in other official documents not less than 22 different modes of spelling. (Avignon had 16, Marseilles even 27, Bamberg 22, and Frankfurt 18.)

A savant of the name of Sikli wrote religious hymns, "Piutim," in the middle of the XIVth Century, and so did another of the same name who lived round about 1460. They are supposed to have originated from Sicily.

Scores of names were created by using the initials of the respective names, what we call

Rosche Teboth, like Rashi, Rambam, etc., and we shall presently refer to this again.

We have seen how even Spanish, Portuguese and French names lost their distinct original expression when the bearers of these names were driven from one country to another. The pronunciation of new languages tended to corrupt the familiar words. As long as only Mediterranean countries were concerned it was not so bad, because the newcomer was in most cases met and sometimes welcomed by co-religionists and was able to acquire quickly some knowledge of Italian and Turkish. Much worse, however, was it in the case of the German Jews. Driven from West to more North-Eastern countries they were at the mercy of the multitudes who were not so cultured as the southern peoples of Europe. The new surroundings depressed them. True, the Ghetto of the East was a voluntary one, but it dragged them down; they neglected themselves in appearance, in manners and in language.

The beauty of form which bestows loveliness to each and every language became lost. The linguistic element, the great value of which had before been so highly recognised, disappeared completely, and that medley of tongues which still to-day is the idiom of the Jews in the densely-populated districts of Poland, Galicia and Roumania, sprang into existence as a language of its own—Yiddish.

The years dragged on; centuries elapsed and

even when in places and at times persecution and bondage were not so hard, yet the weight of isolation was heavy on the shoulders of our ancestors. They were almost cut off from the outer world. The messages which penetrated into the narrow streets of a mediæval Ghetto were mostly messages of terror. The sound of joy had ceased. No song of spring thrilled the hearts of the living. Art and science were unknown. The degrading sense of utter dependence, almost of defencelessness, bore heavily on their souls, and passing fugitives told time after time, ever and again the story of humiliation, the tale of the homeless, of the thousands who perished on the road.

The Jewish soul was thus full of the impressions which the great English poet reproduced with so much feeling in the verses :

But we must wander witheringly,
 In other lands to die ;
 And where our fathers' ashes be,
 Our own may never lie ;
 Our Temple hath not left a stone,
 And Mockery sits on Salem's throne.

Of Turkish, Arabic, Karaite, and of Indian names, I say nothing. That would be a study for itself and the task defies my knowledge.

One remark, however, about Spanish and Portuguese Jews. The multitude of Spanish names dates from the custom established by the

Marannos to adopt the names of their godfathers, and besides that they translated Jewish names partly into Arabic, partly into Spanish : Eleazar-Mansur, Mazliach-Maimon, Wolf-Lopez, Cohen-Quixano.

But let us say something about the names which were prevalent in the German-speaking countries, including Austria and Greater Poland. Previous to the Crusades there were but few Jews in Poland, and their lot was a comparatively good one ; so that, after the persecution of the Crusades, thousands of Jews emigrated to Bohemia, Poland and Galicia. These retained their names, and that is the reason why still at the present day we find so many German names in those countries. Yet many remained in their old communities, because some cities were spared, among them Frankfurt a/M. Here, as in Augsburg, Vienna, Prague, etc., we have the testimony of the cemeteries with their original Jewish inscriptions. They are the best witnesses of the internationalism of the Jews. On the tombstones of the Frankfurt cemetery erected previous to the year 1400, we can read on 75 stones, 5 names of Greek extraction, 6 of Latin, and 17 German, whilst 42 have Hebrew names. It is pathetic to notice that some have the epithet *Kodausch*, or holy. It was used of those who died as martyrs.

Up to the Mendelssohnian epoch the Jews changed their names *ad libitum*. Mendelssohn himself was, in his earlier days, called Moses

Dessau, and it was nothing unusual for brothers to have different family names.

But at last came the time when the various Governments regulated all that by legal measures. The Emperor of Austria, Joseph II., took the lead : minor countries followed. Napoleon I., in 1807, made it imperative for all the Jews under his jurisdiction to take up regular family names. This measure included the whole of Western Germany. Prussia followed in 1812, and since that time there have been no further changes in the system of creating new names.

Now I will mention a number of Jewish names modernised into such as are still in vogue :—

From *Abraham* we came to Bramson, Aberle, Braham ; from *Akiba* to Kiefe, Kaufmann ; from Kaufmann to Saucher, Schacher or Sacher.

Alexander became Sander,[#] Saunders, Sender, Sendermann.

Asher was turned into Auscher, Ascher, Aschert, Anselm, Amschel and Henschel.

As the patriarch Jacob compared his son Judah to a lion, the name of Judah became synonymous with Arie, the lion. The name became corrupted into Lyons, Loeb, Leibusch, Lewenz, Laib, Lebus, Loewensohn, Loewenstein ; and, in Hebrew, from Aria we derive Benari and Benario.

Astruc, although a name used only by Jews, is not a Hebrew word ; it is a combination of Latin and Provençal—"astor" and "uc," and

The name Sander is also used by those who came from Xanten on the Rhine

means the happy one, a boy born under a lucky star, and was emphasised by the addition of Bon as Bonastruc. It corresponds with the modern name, Felix.

Aschkenazy, people who came from Aschkenass or Germany; in Italy they were called Tedesco. But in very early days Germany was called Gomar.

Abigdor takes its origin from Abi Gedor. This name is for the first time mentioned in Chronicles iv., 18, and the Talmud gives it to Moses, saying it meant the father of expansion and guard. From Abi Gedor the name was turned into Abigdor, Avigdor, Victor, Figdor.

Beyfus, one of the most interesting names owing to its affinity with the following: Bief, Feibusch, Faudel, Feidel, Feitler, Feist. They all are in Greek: Phoebus, the god of the sun, the light-giver, and Phoebus itself is only the translation of the old Hebrew word, "Uri."

Bacher is a very respected name in Jewish science; it means Bochor, the youth, pupil, or student.

Beerbohm-Tree, later Sir Herbert Tree, came or originated from Birnbaum, in Poland.

Bass was a synagogue official, who, together with the so-called singer, conducted service in the houses of worship.

Bondi means Jontow, Jantov, Jandorf.

Baruch became Lob, Selig or Seligman; and, in Latin, *Benedict*, also Bendit, Bennet and Benoist.

Bernays, the name of a most distinguished

Jewish family of scholars, means really Bar-Neuss, an inhabitant of Neuss, because they came from the town Neuss on the Rhine.

Budge sounds quite English ; in fact, the name is a corruption of the name of the house "Zum Buntten Schuh"—"the coloured shoe"—consequently it became Butschu, and at last Budge.

Basella came from Bale.

Brodksy. There are two branches, one from Brod and one from Borzecho, in Italy, mentioned already in 1300. Both names have the same spelling in Hebrew ברצק.

Bloch, Block, Blogg or Bolog and Black. This is one of the most interesting Jewish names, chiefly used by those who lived in Alsace Lorraine, and spread from there all over France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and even further. Now what do you suppose Bloch means ? It means nothing else than Pollack. Indifferent spelling is the cause of this corrupted name. בלך or פלך was translated into Bloch. The French consonants "ch" are often written in Hebrew ק. Corruption is always due to the actions of the uneducated. But the uneducated have their own way of thinking when they create their words. Perhaps the following reminiscence will interest you. When I was a boy we had a Jewish servant girl who claimed to have come from French-Poland, and asked where that was, answered : "Yes, I know, you call it Alsace-Lorraine, but we call it French-Poland." The reason was simply this. When

Stanislaus Pomiatowsky became Prince of Lorraine, with his residence in Nancy, hosts of poor Jews followed him and settled in the southern part of his realm. Those whom we would call Pollack wrote their name first in Jewish letters and gradually adopted the name Bloch.

Alsace Lorraine itself is said to be a corruption of the words : Alis saras, the country of aliens or foreigners.

May I include a non-Jewish designation, that of *Beadle*. Formerly they wrote this word "*Bedle*," as we can read in Disraeli's works. *Bedle* means *Pedell*, a Latin word, *i.e.*, a servant on foot ; and, in German, it became corrupted into *Buettel*.

Brandes, *Georges Brandes*, the prolific Danish writer, is a Jew ; he derives his name from *Brandeis*, in Bohemia.

Ballin means the bath-keeper. *Loew and of*

Bensew means the son of *Wolf*.

Ber and *Berner* came from *Bern*, in Switzerland ; this name is already mentioned in 1312 as that of a Swiss Jew.

Numerous are the old names of French Jews in connection with the word "*bon*," or good.

Bonfis, *Bonfil*, *Bonafas*, *Bonatoya*, *Bonastine*, *Bondio* (good God), *Bonajodas*, *Bongosas*, *Bongoron*, *Bonida*, *Bonısac*, *Bonjudas*, *Bonjue*, *Bonjuha* and *Bonjuif*, *Bonsenior*, *Bonson*.

In Amsterdam, at the Rembrandt exhibition, I saw recently one of Rembrandt's best pictures,

Bembrew and

that of a Spanish medical man—Dr. Bueno-Well, that means plainly Goodman.

Chaim became *Hayum*, Heimann and Heine-mann, Heine, and, in times when the Jews favoured Latin names, the Chajims called themselves Vif, Vivius, Vivacus; in French, Vivier; and in English, Vivian. When someone was dangerously ill, the Jews used to change his name, hoping that the Malach Hamaves, the Angel of Death, would thus lose track of him. It was pure superstition, but the new name was generally Chajim or Joseph, Jechiel or Rafael.

Of the *Cohns* we need not speak, the variations are legion. Only one example of extravagance I should like to report. A London lady, according to the Gazette, changed her name of Cohen into Christie. You see, she did not do things by halves.

Charlotte seems a harmless name, at the same time it is used for a sweet dish. They call it Charlotte Russe. But, believe me, this is nothing else than our beloved Schalit, the pet dish of the Jews, and refers to Schalit, the prince, because it is regarded as a princely dish.

And now, again, a real family name.

Cremieux. I mention it because of the importance and fame of one of its bearers, the French Jewish Minister. and founder of the Alliance Israelite Universelle. The Cremieux lived already 600 years ago in a place of the same name, situated in the Dauphiné, and, as the principal consonants were כרמי, they adopted the name Carmi, which

is mentioned in Numbers xxvi., 5-6. Those who emigrated to Italy are still called Carmi; the French line of the family kept up Cremieux.

Daub became Bear, Dove, Daus.

David has also many variations. Tewele and Teblée are the best known. Some, riding especially high horses, called themselves Dagobert.

The name of *Dreyfus* is very well known; and so are Treves, Drewes, Trefousse, Dreher and Trier. They all must trace their names back to the old city of Trier, which is called in French Treves, and which is spelt in Hebrew Treibusch, hence Dreyfus.

Dieulosal, a name often met with in the Middle Ages, is the French translation of Ezriel.

Eisick, or Isac, became in the XIVth Century the name of many German Jews, so far known as Ischack. It is supposed that this pronunciation was introduced by English fugitives. Later, it became Eisemann. Izchack became Zack and Zach. The consonants Kaff and Chaw and Kuf were constantly being confused; we have already noticed that in Block and Bloch. A diminutive of Isaac and Izchak, respectively, was Chakin, which was turned into Chaikin, Hakin, and, in France, into Haquin and Hacquinet; in Germany Isac was translated as Lachmann.

Elijah or Elias. The name of our prophet, of the wonderful figure Elijahu Hanowi, who is alleged to have ascended to Heaven. We know that his name means: the Eternal is my God;

but Voltaire, the cynic, who, in his etymological studies occupied himself very much with Jewish names, denies the existence of Elijah altogether. He maintains that Elijah is only a legendary figure in our history, and he says: Elias comes from the Egyptian Helios, the god of the Sun. Hence, as he expresses himself, the legend of his ascension to Heaven in a chariot and horses all of fire, and the hoped for return to earth. Like the sun, he disappeared only to return in more radiant glory. From Elias comes also Ellisson—the son of Elias.

That *Frederick* is Salomon is known.

Gaon as a French name still exists, in Hebrew, Goan, the great master.

Goudchaux is also the name of well-known French people; it is derived from the German Gottschau: "May the Almighty look upon him."

Gentz and *Gins* come from Guntzburg.

Guttentag is often interpreted as Jomtob, but more correctly it is to be placed as the name of a Bohemian town.

Gershon also saw many transfigurations. Gerson in Germany and Gers in France are still used. In ancient times it became Kirson, Krisson, Kissing and Crescat.

Harifi, or Charifi, is deduced from Charif, a keen thinker.

Halpern, Halper, Halperin, come mostly from the Swabian town of Heilbronn.

Jeidels, or, in Bohemian, *Jeiteles*, means *Guettel*, "the little good one."

Koppel is the abbreviation of *Jacob*.

Kaskel that of *Jecheskel*, *Ezekiel*.

Karo, *Kra*, *Koref*, and, in Holland *Korjn*. They all come from *Kaurah*, the reader of the *Synagogue*.

Koschereck. In New York I saw a large warehouse with a board up—*Koschereck Brothers*. They originated from Poland, where their family had a Jewish restaurant. It was a corner house, the *Kosher Corner* or *Kosher Eck*.

In Jerusalem there is a school called "*Lemle School*," and it derives its title from its founder "*Laemmle*," which means little lamb.

Linel comes from the French town *Lunel*.

Lorie, *Lurie*, *Luria* all belong to a very famous family, dating back to the XIVth Century; their forefathers lived on the banks of the *Loire*; from there they went to Italy; and from there to Russia. Instead of giving the name of an unknown small French village, they said they came from the *Loire*. Gradually their name was corrupted, as we have seen. A similar case is that of the name *Mosler*. The *Moslers* came from the small communities on the banks of the river *Moselle*.

Lewine. This is an apparently Jewish name. But just here, in England and Wales, respectively, we find it in Christian families, and I ascertained that it has its origin in *Leofwine*, a soldier of fortune, who was a retainer of William the Con-

queror, and came over to this country with the new king.

Lenglen, the divine Suzanne, should be called Miss Lang, as the progenitors of the family were named when there were still Jews in Alsace.

Manus comes from Emanuel.

Meschullam means : the one who brings peace.

Manasse became *inter alia* Monash. You know the Australian General, and it is quite interesting to see that Disraeli, in "Tancred," associates the name Menasse with that of another General, maintaining that the Napoleonic Marshal Massena was a Jew, and that his correct name *was* Menasse.

Morpurgo comes from Marburg in Styria.

Of the scores of people who once bore the name of *Moses*, we shall only mention one bold man, who remembered that Moses received his name from the Egyptian Princess, saying, "min hamajim mischisuhu," "I drew him out of the water." So he called himself, "de la Mar."

Munk, the great scholar, derived his name from the place Munkasz.

Melchior, also a prominent family in Denmark. Their name means Malchi Aur. It essentially was a Gentile name, but its origin is evidently to be found in the words מלך אור — it seems that the name went from the Hebrew into Christendom and returned to Jewry afterwards.

Magdiel was the Jewish name for Rome.

Nutt corresponds with the name Nussbaum.

Porges means Prague.

Nathan became *Nathusius* and later *Nelson*.

Peierchen, the mother of *Heinrich Heine*, derived her name from the Jewish word *Peiro*, the fruit.

Rappaport, also an old family of many Jewish scholars, was formerly *Rap di Porta*. In Italian, *Rapa* means *raufe*, the surgeon, and one of them, a medical man, lived and died in 1596, at *Verona*.

The name *Raufe* itself has been transformed into *Rueff* and *Rofee*.

Rafrem means *Reb Ephraim*.

Seckel and *Sichel* means *Isaac*.

Salomon become *Schlome*, *Sahlmann*, *Salkind*, *Zahlmann*.

Sée, who, as a French general, had a pure Jewish name, which would mean in English, *lamb*; and *Schauer*, which sounds so Aryan, means nothing else than *ox* or *bull*.

Steinschneider is *Chaussemstecher* or engraver, a profession favoured by Jews.

Schappiro, *Schappira*, *Shappiru*, just like

Spiro or *Spir*, all come from the city of *Speyer* on the *Rhine*.

Sieskind, a sweet child, is a very old name. The most famous bearer of it was *Sieskind*, of *Trimberg*, a writer of worldly love songs, who lived about 1250.

Sofer, or, in French, *Sauphar*, is a scribe of the law.

Skolny, or more precisely *Skolnik*, is a beadle.

Simcha is a name for Jews and Jewesses alike, and needs no explanation. Sossaun, however, most likely became Sassoon.

Sutro is an Aramaic word and means, in Hebrew, Hakoton, the small one. In their modesty, our Rabbis used to add to their names the word Hakoton.

And you know the name *Seasongood*. When I heard it for the first time I thought it had been adopted by some Jewish dealer, one who sold various goods at various seasons. Oh, no, it is only naturalised, of German origin, and means "suess und gut," sweet and good.

A parallel to Koschereck is Schrameck, the name of the recent French Minister of the Interior. The ancestor of the family was a tailor in a corner shop, and with scissors as an emblem. Scissors is Scheerè, so they were called Scherameck, to-day Schrameck.

The *Sasportas*, a name familiar to London Jewry, came from La Porto, in the Balearic Islands. Sas is the Spanish feminine article.

The German Jewry once sent a deputation to Spain to Charles V. On their return these delegates were called Spanier, which name still exists.

Sprinz means Esperanza.

Teutsch or *Deutsch* does not at all mean a "German"; it means Deutz, the old town opposite Cologne.

Whether *Toledo*, one of the most ancient towns connected with Jewish history, is a Jewish name

and means Tauldaus, is a question which belongs to the problems which only find their origin in legends.

Wasserzug is a name which became quite popular in England and America. It was originally a nickname for one who drew the water for the baking of the matzos, an honorary function, performed to this very day by pious and physically strong members of the community.

Wallach, one would imagine, like so many similar names in all European languages, would refer to those who came from Wallachia. That is not so. It is the finest example of corruption, and it originates from *Falk*, a very old family name in Continental Jewry. And then came the wicked spelling; F in Hebrew פ was wrongly written ן. Similar is the case with Frankfurt, Fulda, Forchheim, Fuerth, Fritzlar, Schweinfurt, Flandern and also France, where F was written as ן. The last consonant K was turned into CH, just as we see has happened in the case of Bloch and Zach.

So instead of Falk, we soon had Walch, and from that to Wallach was not very far. The Wallichs, however, seem to come from the Welsh country; their direct forefathers immigrated from Italy.

Wessely, the contemporary of Mendelssohn, although born in Hamburg, originated from the little Rhenish town of Wesel.

The *Yellinecks* came from Yellin, in Styria.

The *Zarfatis* and also *Zarifis* were so called because they were fugitives from Zarfes, which is France.

Zunz, which name I have mentioned several times, is corrupted from Zonsheim, where the family lived.

Ziman, also frequently met with in England and the Colonies, does not mean Simon; the name comes from the Saxon hamlet of *Ziman*, whose Jewish inhabitants followed Augustus the Strong on his way to Poland on his election as King.

Legion are the nicknames and still larger is the list of names of abbreviated words, when the initials were put together; we call that *Rosche Tevos*. As far as they belong to literary men, they are known. Many which are still used partly require an explanation:—

Bardac : Ben reb Dovid Cohen.,

Barnay : Ben reb Nothon Arje,

Barneth : Ben reb Nothon,

Baron : Ben Aron or Aronsohn,

Barrasch : Ben reb Schimon,

Brill or *Brull* : Beb ren Izchock Levi,

Bassevi : Son of Hirsch or Hart,

Bash : Son of Simon,

and those to whom *Bash* did not seem clear enough called themselves *Bashwitz*.

More interesting are some *Roshe Tevos* of localities where *Jeschiwaus* were established and used as family names:—

Pasch also *Pascheles*, which means *Fraustadt*. פ"ש

Asch, which means Eisenstadt. א"ש

Lasch is Lippstadt. ל"ש

Nast, which means Neustadt. נסט

Sack means Serah Kaudesch, a society spread over most of the Rhenish towns, which called themselves the posterity of the holy ones; and *Sacks* means a member of that union coming from Speyer.

Katz, Kohen Zedeck (a righteous priest).

Schatz, Schliach Zibbor (minister).

Goetz, Ger Zedeck (proselyte).

And so on, but I will not weary you, otherwise I could continue for a long while.

So we see, the names of our people form the connecting link between nations and their subjects, between an old and a new world, between West and East, and between the present days and the past.

How is it that the past exercises such an indescribable charm upon us? Because we cannot help feeling the deepest sympathy and affection for those who have for thousands of years been partly cut off from the blessings of civilisation, and our soul admires ever and again their greatness and their attainments.

But not all of us are under the spell of genuine admiration for the endurance of our race, and to many of the present generation Jewish names may mean very little. To them it is quite the same, whether a boy is called Maurus, Mauricio, Maurice or Moritz. They refuse to recognise the

Katz is not always an abbreviation of ק"צ
but also from קאטש, the butcher

importance of tradition in this respect. For them it might be said, the historical past does not exist any more, it has sunk into oblivion.

And yet it has not! Our past and our history remain as they have always been, the sacred inheritance of our people. Even in times when our forefathers despaired of the future, even then they cherished the past, of which they seemed to remember only the best points, deliberately ignoring the evil. From the depths of our hearts we have always prayed and still do so to-day—as if never anything had happened—Chadesh Jomenu Kekedem—“Oh, renew our days as in the past.”

As in the past! Does “kekedem” really mean nothing but “as in the past”? Should it not at the same time be an allusion to the word “Kedem,” the East! Yes, we must not forget the East, that glorious East, whence we came. The East where our history started, the East where our ancestors lived, the East where the Temple stood, the East where Paradise was situated, the radiant East, from where the sun rises day by day, and whence has emanated everything that is great and noble in Mankind. And if in the East is our past, then this past is to be compared with a shell containing a priceless pearl: Jewish history interwoven with the Romance of Jewish Names.

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