

הקשר היהודי שלך

Your Jewish Connection

Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee

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What's in Your Name?

We all have a name. As Jews, we have a secular name and a Hebrew name. Names originally had some connection to a person's birth circumstances. For a long time, it was sufficient to have one name. Eventually a Jewish person was recognized by their given name and their father's name. By the time Jews were exiled and returned to Israel, local names (Hebrew names translated into the local spoken language) were coming into use. (For more details, see [Wikipedia here](#).) The form we use for names today (a secular name plus a Hebrew name) is approximately 200 years old.

The Jewish community has customs for the naming of children. [My Jewish Learning](#) has a description of current customs. [Kveller](#) and [Reclaiming Judaism](#) also give insight into naming. And [Chabad](#) has many resources for learning about naming.

Today there are many choices for names. Here are some Internet sources to check for Hebrew baby names:



- [Cute Baby Names](#)
- [Jewish Baby Naming Tool](#)
- [Behind the Name](#)
- [Belly Ballot](#)

If you're wondering about the origin of your surname, start at [Wikipedia's Jewish surnames](#) article. Additional information is at [Jewish Family Names](#) and [Jewish Names and Genealogies](#). For specific geographical lists, look at these sites:

- [Irish Jewish Family History Database](#)
- [Finding Jewish Roots in Sicily](#)
- [Jewish Genealogy in Sicily](#)
- [SephardicGen](#)
- [Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture](#)
- [Names and Naming \(Eastern European\)](#)
- [Jewish Names Personal \(Sephardic and Ashkenazic\)](#)
- [The origins and meanings of Ashkenazic last names \(Jewish Journal\)](#)



There are many genealogy sites where you can find more information on surnames and the origins of surnames. Do a Google search on genealogy and Jewish, and you'll have many sources to use.

So, go ahead. Find out what's in your name!

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