

Talk about names;

I do think that names, especially in families mean something!

First, just to get it out of the way- about my name. All family members, following the lead of those who knew me when I was a little kid, refer to me to this day as Jackie, the familiar, affectionate diminutive of Jack. When my father started to "get religion" in the late 1930's, I was summarily notified that my name was no longer Jackie. I was now Jacob Hirsch, named for Dad's maternal grandfather, Yaakov Hirsch Cohn/Catz. It was OK with Dad if I didn't have that whole sobriquet, especially the "non-American" Hirsch. Harold would be my English middle name. And it was as Jacob Harold Bloom that I entered Ramaz, though most often listed as Jacob H. Bloom. All teachers from then through the end of high school referred and where still around. refer to me as Jacob. In high school after having seen the play "Harvey" about an invisible rabbit, I took Harvey as my middle name and so affected for a while Jacob Harvey Bloom or even a bit more pretentiously, J. Harvey Bloom. On my high school diploma I am Jacob Harvey Bloom. My summers were spent at Camp Massad, where though officially I was Yaakov, I became for reasons I do not grasp, Jake. This filtered back to high school. So Jake I was informally, to all who knew me right through my Seminary years. Try as I might, I could not change it. When I showed up at Columbia in the fall of 1950, I was determined to introduce myself as Jack (probably with the Harvey). That lasted a couple of days until Gerry Kaufman, who knew me from Massad and Ramaz, came into the dorm hall and yelled out, "Jake, How are ya"? That ended that. And so it was Jake to friends, Jacob to Seminary professors, and Jack to no one until I got to Fairfield, Connecticut. There, though my first checkbook reads Jacob H., I decided to go with Jack H-with no period after the H I joke with folks when I correct my middle name on a document-that I never had a period in my life! Upon Dad's death in October 1961, rummaging through a whole bunch of documents, as one will do at times like that, I came across two birth certificates. One from Christ Hospital, Jersey City, New Jersey, where I who was one day to be a rabbi was born and the other from the County of Hudson, New Jersey. They proclaimed my name to be Jack H (without a period). My father repenting his action had drawn a line through that given name and penned in Jacob Hirsch. Somehow I had stumbled back to Jack H- my given name, sort of like Harry S Truman. When Columbia, collecting data for inscribing my Ph.D., decreed that no initials were allowed, I filled in the space with "Aitch". They responded with an ordinary H. However all that may be, I know immediately from what era a friendship dates and what the relationship is, by whether I'm called Jackie, Jake, Jacob, or Jack. This may sound all too trivial, but in some ways it is a metaphor for my religious quest. If the name is one's identity, searching for who I really am religiously has been beset by obstacles often parading as blessings.

So much for history; Recently a cousin of mine, Nina Talmor-Segal, a relative through the late great Ephraim Catz, the first Jew in Emek Hefer, and founder of Kiryat Bialik, north of Haifa. He and Sabinia after whom the farm was named were the first settlers in what is today Kiryat Bialik. /Sabinia. Their home in which I slept back in 1953 on a visit, and where my brother Sol was married, is currently a community center. Their home was the rebuilt one, when the Arabs came during the "disturbances" of 1929 and destroyed much of Sabinia farm, including trees and the house. Ephraim and Sabinia were saved by dint of the fact that they were staying "in town"(Haifa) at the time. That house on the French Carmel in Haifa, was where they stayed every other Shabbat. Today. the community center of Kiryat Bialik is located in Beit Catz-the home of the Catz family. (for those who care).

Nina was visiting Romania. and included a visit to a Jewish cemetery in Bucharest. She came across the tombstone of my grandmother's brother, Yaakov Hirsch Cohn. I was blown

away by one word on the tombstone. There below the name Yaakov Hirsch Cohn is the word Haham.

N.B.Haham was and still is used in many Sephardic Jewish communities as an appellation identical to the way English speakers use Rabbi.

What's in a name?

In some strange way-my being a rabbi may have been predestined.

I think my father when naming me, channeled Yaakov Tzvi Catz to me.

Attached is a photo of the gravestone of Yaakov Hirsch Catz Cohen Tzedek also abbreviated as Cohn –in English Cohen

*marți
3 noapți
Jahrgesit 2. Fainuz*



Jalnicii : Soție, fii, fiice, gineri, noră, cumnați și cumnate, nepoți și nepoate, precum și întreaga familie au nemărginita durere a anunța pierderea prea Iubitului lor.

Iancov Hersch Cohn *-Calt*

HAHAM

încetat din viață după o scurtă și grea suferință
în etate de 73 ani

și vă roagă să bine-voiți a asista la ceremonia funebră care va avea loc Joi 29 Iunie st. n. ora 10 a. m. precis.

Cortegiul funebru va porni dela locuința decedatului din Fundătura Făurar No. 3 la Cimitirul Israelit din Soseaua Filantropiei.

București, Iunie 1922.

Rugați-vă pentru dânsul !