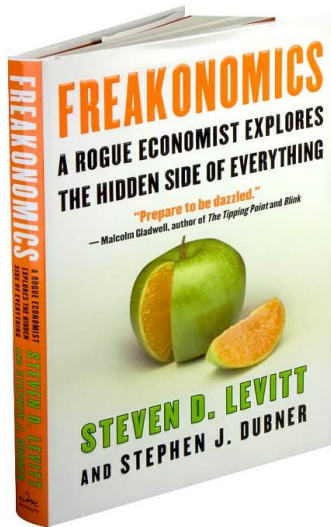

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

- DO YOU LIKE YOUR NAME?
- IF YOU COULD CHOOSE YOUR NAME, WHAT WOULD IT BE?



This study is research conducted by a white and black economist together. Their findings were criticized as being controversial and even racist.

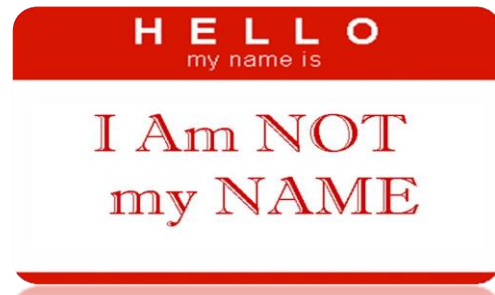
Take a look at the article and see what you think

"The Causes and Consequences of Distinctively Black Names," is a research paper written by a white economist (Steven Levitt, a co-author of this article) and a black economist (Roland G. Fryer Jr., a young Harvard scholar who studies race). The paper acknowledged the social and economic gulf between blacks and whites but paid particular attention to the gulf between black and white culture. Blacks and whites watch different TV shows, for instance; they smoke different cigarettes. **And black parents**

give their children names that are starkly different than white children's.

The names research was based on an extremely large and rich data set: birth-certificate information for every child born in California since 1961. The data covered more than 16 million births. It included standard items like name, gender, race, birth weight, and the parents' marital status, as well as more telling factors: the parents' ZIP code (which indicates socioeconomic status and a neighborhood's racial composition), their means of paying the hospital bill for the birth (again, an economic indicator), and their level of education.

The California data establish just how dissimilarly black and white parents have named their children over the past 25 years or so—a remnant, it seems, of the Black Power movement. The typical baby girl born in a black neighborhood in 1970 was given a name that was twice as common among blacks than whites. By 1980, she received a name that was 20 times more common among blacks. (Boys' names moved in the same direction but less aggressively—likely because parents of all races are less adventurous with boys' names than girls'.) Today, more than 40 percent of the black girls born in California in a given year receive a name that not ONE of the roughly 100,000 baby white girls received that year. Even more remarkably, nearly 30 percent of the black girls are given a name that is unique among every baby, white and black, born that year in California. (There were also 228 babies named



Unique during the 1990s alone, and one each of Uneek, Uneque, and Uneqqee; virtually all of them were black.)

What kind of parent is most likely to give a child such a distinctively black name?

The data offer a clear answer: an unmarried, low-income, undereducated, teenage mother from a black neighborhood who has a distinctively black name herself. Giving a child a super-black name would seem to be a black parent's signal of solidarity with her community—the flip side of the "acting white" phenomenon. White parents, meanwhile, often send as strong a signal in the opposite direction. More than 40 percent of the white babies are given names that are at least four times more common among whites.

How much does your name really matter?

The California names data shows that, **on average, a person with a distinctively black name—whether it is a woman named Imani or a man named DeShawn—does have a worse life outcome than a woman named Molly or a man named Jake.** BUT IT ISN'T THE FAULT OF HIS OR HER NAME. If two black boys, Jake Williams and DeShawn Williams, are born in the same neighborhood and into the same familial and economic circumstances, they would likely have similar life outcomes. But the kind of parents who name their son Jake don't tend to live in the same neighborhoods or share economic circumstances with the kind of parents who name their son DeShawn. And that's why, on average, a boy named Jake will tend to earn more money and get more education than a boy named DeShawn. DeShawn's name is an indicator—but not a cause—of his life path.

- ❖ WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY?
- ❖ LOOK AT THE SOURCE BELOW- WOULD IT SUPPORT OR CONTRADICT THE FREAKONOMICS ARTICLE?

FINDING YOUR DESTINY

Talmud Bavli Berachot 7b	תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות ז עמוד ב
<p>Ruth. What is the meaning of Ruth? — R. Yochanan said: Because she was privileged to be the ancestress of David, who saturated [<i>Ravah</i>] the Holy One, blessed be He, with songs and hymns.</p> <p>How do we know that one's name determines [one's destiny]? R. Eleazar said: 'Go and see the works of the Lord, Who has put destruction (<i>shamos</i>) upon the earth.' Do not read <i>shamos</i> ['destruction'], but <i>shemos</i> ['names']. {Thus, the name of a person reflects their purpose and essence of their soul}</p>	<p>רות - מאי רות? אמר רבי יוחנן: שזכתה ויצא ממנה דוד שריוהו להקדוש ברוך הוא בשירות ותשבחות. מנא לן דשמה גרים? - אמר רבי אליעזר דאמר קרא: (תהלים מו) לכו חזו מפעלות ה' אשר שם שמות בארץ, אל תקרי שמות אלא שמות.</p>

Genesis 21	בראשית כא
<p>3. And Abraham named his son who had been born to him, whom Sarah had borne to him, Isaac.</p> <p>6. And Sarah said, "God has made joy for me; whoever hears will rejoice over me."</p>	<p>ג. וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם אֶת שְׁם בְּנוֹ הַנּוֹלָד לוֹ אִשָּׁר לֵדָה לוֹ שָׂרָה יִצְחָק :</p> <p>ו. וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרָה צָחֵק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹהִים כָּל הַשְּׂמֵעַ יִצְחָק לִי :</p>

Exodus 2:10	שמות ב:י
<p>The child grew up, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became like her son. She named him Moses, and she said, "For I drew him from the water."</p>	<p>וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד וַתְּבִאֵהוּ לְבַת פַּרְעֹה וַיְהִי לָהּ לְבֵן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן הַמַּיִם מָשִׁיתֵהוּ :</p>

❖ DO YOU HAVE A HEBREW NAME?

❖ DO YOU KNOW ITS MEANING?

CHOOSING NAMES

Midrash Tanchuma - Ha'azinu 7
<p>One should always be careful to choose for his child a name that denotes righteousness, for at times the name itself can be an influence for good or an influence for bad.</p>

Rabbi Isaac Luria (The Ari z"l)
<p>"When a person is born and his father and mother give him his name...the Holy One puts into their mouth the particular name required for that soul."</p>

- ❖ WHAT COMES FIRST, A PERSON'S NAME OR THEIR DESTINY?
- ❖ ARE THE TWO SOURCES ABOVE THE SAME? IF NOT, HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT?
- ❖ CAN BOTH APPROACHES COEXIST? HOW, OR WHY NOT?



THAT'S NOT MY NAME

Talmud Bavli – Rosh Hashana 16b	תלמוד בבלי מסכת ראש השנה טז עמוד ב
Four things can annul a bad decree of man and they are: charity, supplication (prayer), change of name and change of action.	ארבעה דברים מקרעין גזר דינו של אדם, אלו הן: צדקה, צעקה, שינוי השם, ושינוי מעשה.

- ❖ FROM WHAT WE'VE ENCOUNTERED SO FAR, WHY WOULD CHANGING A NAME HELP A PERSON?
- ❖ HOW DOES A PERSON CHANGE THEIR NAME?



TYPES OF NAMES

Midrash Tanchuma – Parshat Vayakeil 1	מדרש תנחומא (ורשא) פרשת ויקהל סימן א
Every time a person increases their good deeds, they earn themselves a new name. There are three names by which a person is called: one which their parents call them, one which people call them, and one which they earn for themselves. The last is the best one of all.	כל זמן שאדם מרבה במצות הוא קונה שם טוב לעצמו, את מוצא שלשה שמות נקראו לו לאדם, אחד מה שקוראים לו אביו ואמו, ואחד מה שקוראין לו בני אדם ואחד מה שקונה הוא לעצמו, טוב מכולן מה שקונה הוא לעצמו.

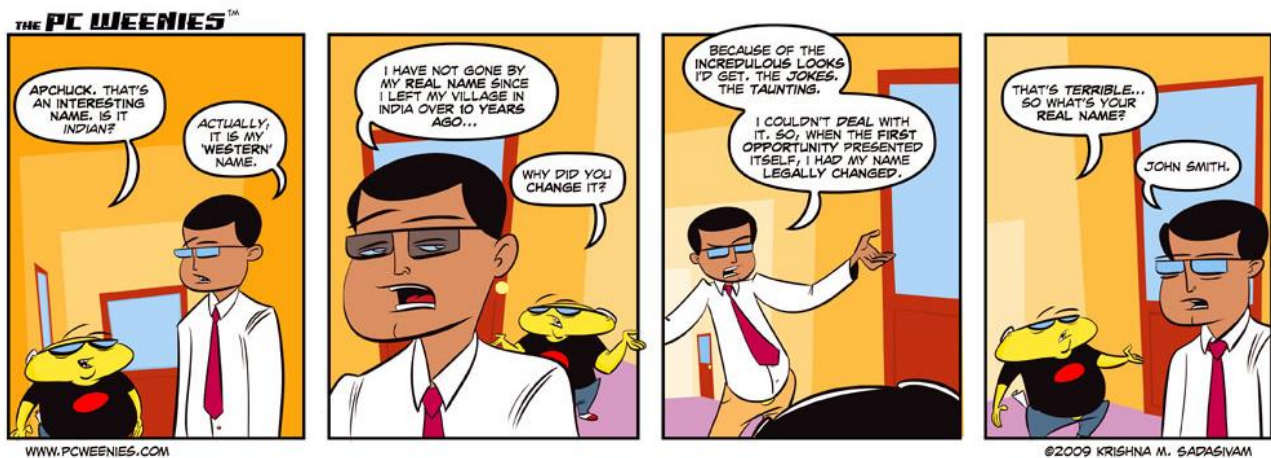


- ❖ HOW DO YOU EARN YOUR NAME? WHAT MAKES THAT NAME THE BEST OF ALL? WHEN MIGHT IT NOT BE THE BEST NAME OF ALL?
- ❖ USING THE CONCEPT "NAME" IN THE BROADEST SENSE; TO REFLECT A PERSON'S IDENTITY WHAT ARE YOUR THREE NAMES? WHICH NAMES WOULD YOU WANT? WHAT MIGHT YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN'S NAMES TO BE?

IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

Bamidbar Rabbah 20:22	במדבר רבה כ:כב
<p>In the merit of four acts of restraint were the Jews redeemed from Egypt - they did not change their names; they did not change their language; they did not disclose each other's secrets; and they did not break barriers of morality.</p>	<p>בזכות כמה דברים נגאלו ישראל ממצרים, שנו רבו תינו בזכות ד' דברים נגאלו ישראל ממצרים, שלא שינו את שמותן, שלא שינו את לשונם, ולא גילו מס טורין שלהם, ולא נפרצו בעריות</p>

❖ WHY DID YOU THINK THE FACT THAT THE JEWS DIDN'T CHANGE THEIR NAMES WAS SO MERITORIOUS?



CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- ❖ Your name has meaning and can reveal your essence and purpose in life.
- ❖ Choosing a name is an important job because it has the potential to impact a person's destiny.
- ❖ One of the keys to Jewish continuity while in Egypt was maintaining Jewish names. Our Jewish names are a connection to our Jewish heritage.
- ❖ Having said that, the most important "name" a person has - is the name they build for themselves, and this is done through positive action.