

1692 - Names whose use is forbidden

the question

Are there any names which it is forbidden to use? If so, what are they?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Yes, there are names which we are forbidden to use, examples of which are as follows:

It is forbidden to use any name which belongs only to Allaah, such as al-Khaaliq (the Creator) and al-Quddoos (the Most Holy), or names which do not befit any except Allaah, such as Malik al-Mulook (King of Kings). This is the consensus of the fuqaha.

Ibn al-Qayyim said that names which belong only to Allaah include: al-Ahad (the One), al-Samad (the Eternal), al-Khaaliq (the Creator), al-Razzaaq (the Provider), al-Jabbaar (the Compeller), al-Mutakabbir (the Majestic), al-Awwal (the First), al-Aakhir (the Last), al-Baatin (the Hidden) and Allaam al-Ghuyoob (the Knower of the Unseen). (Tuhfat al-Mawdood, p. 98).

The evidence that it is forbidden to call anyone by a name which belongs only to Allaah, such as Malik al-Mulook (king of kings), may be seen for example in the hadeeth narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him); in the version narrated by al-Bukhaari, he said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: The most despised name with Allaah on the Day of Resurrection will be a man called Malik al-Mulook. According to Muslim, he said, The man who will most deserving of Allaahs anger and most evil on the Day of Resurrection will be a man who was called Malik al-Amlaak. There is no King except

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Allaah.

As regards using names that may be used of Allaah or of others, it is permissible to use these names, such as Ali (High), Rasheed (Guide) and Badee (Innovator or Originator).

Ibn Aabideen said: It seems to be the case that they are permitted, even if the definite article al is used. Al-Hasafi said: What (these names) mean concerning us (human beings) is different from their meanings concerning Allaah, may He be exalted.

It is forbidden to use names which befit no one except the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), such as Sayyid Walad Adam (master of the sons of Adam), Sayyid al-Naas (master of mankind), Sayyid al-Kull (master of all), because these names, as the Hanbalis said, befit no one except him, (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

It is forbidden to use any name which implies enslavement to anything besides Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, such as Abd al-Uzza (slave of al-Uzza a pagan goddess), Abd al-Kabah (slave of the Kabah), Abd al-Daar (slave of the House), Abd Ali (slave of Ali), Abd al-Husayn (slave of Husayn), etc.

It was stated in Haashiyat Ibn Aabideen that one should not be called Abd foolaan (slave of so-and-so).

It says in Kashshaaf al-Qinaa: They (the scholars) agreed that every name which implies enslavement to anything other than Allaah is forbidden, such as Abd al-Uzza, Abd Amr, Abd Ali, Abd al-Kabah, and any other similar names, such as Abd al-Nabi (slave of the Prophet), Abd al-Husayn, Abd al-Maseeh (slave of the Messiah). (Haashiyat Ibn Aabideen, 5/268; Mughni al-Muhtaaj, 4/295; Tuhfat al-Muhtaaj, 10/373; Kashshaaf al-Qinaa, 3/27; Tuhfat al-Mawdood, p. 90).

The evidence that it is forbidden to use any name which implies enslavement to anything other than Allaah may be seen in the report of Ibn Abi Shaybah from Yazeed ibn al-Miqdaam ibn

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Shurayh, from his father, from his grandfather Haani ibn Yazeed, may Allaah be pleased with him, who said: A delegation came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and he heard them calling someone Abd al-Hajar (slave of the stone). He asked him, What is your name? and he said, Abd al-Hajar. He said, No, you are Abd-Allaah (the slave of Allaah). (Al-Mawsooah al-Fiqhiyyah, 11/335).

Using the names of idols that are worshipped instead of Allaah.

Using foreign names, such as Turkish, Persian, Berber, etc. names, that have no origin in the Arabic language.

It is forbidden to use the names of devils (shayaateen), such as Khanzab, al-Walhaan, al-Awar and al-Ajda. It was reported that the Sunnah is to change names such as these.

Names that are makrooh (disliked) may be categorized as follows:

It is makrooh to use names that have bad or distasteful meanings, or which sound odd, which would cause others to mock a person or would cause him embarrassment, in addition to being contrary to the guidance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who taught us to choose good names.

It is makrooh to use names whose meanings are too soft and provocative or sexy, which is a widespread problem in the naming of girls.

It is makrooh to deliberately name someone after promiscuous actors and singers who star in worthless entertainment shows.

One of the signs of empty-headedness and lack of pride in one's faith is the fact that after a show starring immoral women, people will compete with one another in naming their newborns after these women. Anyone who checks the names registered at the time of one of these shows will see

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that this is a fact. And our complaining is to Allaah.

It is makrooh to use names that convey any sense of sin and disobedience to Allaah.

It is makrooh to use foreign names that belong only to the kuffaar.

The proud Muslim who is content with his religion will avoid this and not come anywhere near it. The temptation to use these names is very strong in our time, and a Muslim might pick up any name from Europe and America. This is the worst type of sin and a sign of humiliation and defeat. If this imitation of the kuffaar and using their names is merely the matter of whims and stupidity, it is nevertheless a major sin; if it is done because one actually believes these names are better than Muslim names, then this is a devastating blow to the foundation of faith. In either case, the person who has done this must hasten to repent, and changing the name is a condition of repentance.

It is makrooh to use the names of Pharaohs or other tyrants.

It is makrooh to use names that have any undesirable meaning.

It is makrooh to name people after animals that are known for their bad qualities. When the Arabs called their children by such names, it was because of good qualities that they noticed in them, and this was the desired meaning. So when they used the name Kalb (dog), it was because of the dogs alertness and ability to work hard; when they used the name Himaar (donkey), it was because of the donkeys patience and forbearance, and so on. This refutes the false arguments of the Shu'ooبيyyah against the Arabs, as was explained by Ibn Durayd, Ibn Faaris, and others.

It is makrooh to use any name which is composed of any word added to such words as al-Deen (the Religion) or Islam, such as Noor al-Deen/Nuruddin (Light of the Religion), Diya al-Deen/Ziauddin (Brightness of the Religion), Sayf al-Islam (Sword of Islam), Noor al-Islam (Light of Islam), etc. This is because of the great status attached to these words, al-Deen and Islam. Adding words to them to form names is an exaggeration which borders on lying, which is why some

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scholars said that this is haraam, and the majority say that it is makrooh, because it gives an incorrect impression which should not be given. The way this practice started was that these were titles which were added to peoples names, then people started to use them as names.

Names of this sort may be forbidden for two reasons. In a name such as Shihaab al-Deen, for example, the word Shihaab means a flame, which comes from fire, then this is added to the word al-Deen (which is inappropriate). This can lead to the use of strange names, as in Indonesia, where people use names such as Dhahab al-Deen (gold of the Religion) and Maas al-Deen (diamond of the Religion)!

Imaam al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him), use to dislike being called by his nickname Muhiy al-Deen, and Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) used to dislike being called by his nickname Taqiy al-Deen, and he said, But my family gave me this nickname, so I am known by it.

Names which include the word al-Rasool (the Messenger) are also makrooh.

Some of the scholars regarded using the names of angels (peace be upon them) as makrooh. Giving angels names to women is clearly haraam, because it implies imitation of the mushrikeen, who thought that the angels were the daughters of Allaah. Exalted be He above what they say!

Some of the scholars thought that it was makrooh to give people the names of Soorahs of the Quraan, such as Ta-Ha, Yaa-Seen, Ha-Meem. (The popular notion that Ya-Seen and Ta-Ha are names of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is not correct).