

243207 - Is it acceptable to call one's wife by a shortened name that resembles a man's name?

the question

I have a wife whose name is Malika. We call her Malik for short as we heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to call Aishah by Aish. Can this be authentically attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and is it permissible to call my wife by this name or is it for men only, may Allah reward you?

Summary of answer

Conclusion: there is no reason why you should not address your wife as Maalik or Malik, or whatever is the norm in your language, by way of showing affection and omitting the final sound, or by way of shortening the name, so long as that is acceptable to her and is normal according to your customs.

And Allah knows best.

Detailed answer

Al-Bukhaari (3768) narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said one day: "O 'Aa'ish, here is Jibreel, greeting you with salaam (peace)." I said: And upon him be peace and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) called out to his wife 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) by saying "O 'Aa'ish," omitting the ta' marbootah, which is called tarkheem (apocopation) which means omitting the final sound of the name, by way of showing affection or shortening the name.

Ibn Battaal (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to his saying “O ‘Aa’ish”, this comes under the heading of tarkheem (apocopation), which the Arabs did by way of shortening the name. End quote from Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari by Ibn Battaal (9/350).

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Her saying “and he said, ‘What is the matter with you, O ‘Aa’ish?’” indicates that it is permissible to omit the final sound of names (apocopation), so long as that is not offensive to the one whose name is shortened. End quote from Sharh Muslim by an-Nawawi (7/43).

Addressing one’s wife with a shortened form of her name is permissible, and there is nothing wrong with it, even if the name, after shortening, resembles the form of men’s names. The name ‘Aa’ishah may be shortened to ‘Aa’ish, which is a man’s name, yet despite that it is mentioned in the Sunnah, because the context differentiates between the masculine and feminine usage of the name, so no confusion results from that. Using the form ‘Aa’ish when addressing a woman only occurs in the context of calling by the shortened form of the name, and not in the context of narrating a report and the like, whereas if a man is called ‘Aa’ish, it will appear thus in most contexts, and if anyone wants to shorten a name by omitting the final sound, there is no reason not to do so, and the latter part of the name may be dropped, as is the rule.