

6239 - Naming a boy Abu Bakr

the question

We are expecting our first baby. Al-HamduAllah. My husband is Arab. I am American. If we are given a boy, my husband wishes to name him Abu Bakr. I feel that this is a most beautiful name. However, I am not well versed in Arabic. It has been my understanding that the word Abu refers to "Father Of" for example: Abu Nuh, Father of Nuh. If we are to name our child Abu Bakr, Would this mean that he is the "Father of Bakr?" Did this most wonderful companion of the Prophet (PBUH) go by any other names? I have heard the name Siddiq. Are there others. Is this name appropriate for a child? Please forgive my ignorance. Also, the sound of the name may play some part with me as I am American. This can be overcome however. I only wish to do what is pleasing to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger. Also, I wish to please my husband and not cause him trouble with this.

Detailed answer

The full name of Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq (may Allah be pleased with him) was ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Amr al-Qurashi. His father’s kunyah was Abu Quhaafah.

The kunyah is a nickname which starts with Abu (father of) or Umm (mother of). It usually includes the name of the oldest son. It may also be just a nickname, as in the example given in the question, since Abu Bakr did not have any child whose name was Bakr. The nickname may be given because of something that is unique to that person, such as Abu Hurayrah (lit. father of the kitten). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave him this nickname because he would often carry a cat or kitten with him.

Another example is the nickname Abu Turaab (father of dust) which was the kunyah of ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave him this nickname when he saw him with dust on his back and shoulders.

Therefore there is no reason why you cannot give your child the nickname of Abu Bakr, not as a name.

It is well known that Abu Bakr's real name was 'Abd-Allah. Although it was reported that his name was 'Ateeq, the correct view is that this was one of his attributes ('Ateeq = freed, i.e., from the Fire). (Al-'Istee'aab by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 8/963; al-Isaabah, 4/170-171).

Among his children were: 'Abd-Allah, 'Abd al-Rahmaan, Muhammad, 'Aa'ishah, Asmaa' and Umm kalthoom.

If you were to name your son 'Abd-Allah – because this is the most beloved of names to Allah – and give him the nickname of Abu Bakr because it is Sunnah to give young children such nicknames in order to make them feel grown up and responsible, this would be an ideal solution. May Allah help us and you to do all that is good.