75556 - Ruling on calling a child ‘Abd al-Muttalib

the question

Recently I was blessed with the birth of a son, and I chose the name ‘Abd al-Muttalib, but some people said that this name is not permissible in Islam.

Please advise me, may Allaah reward you.

Detailed answer

The scholars are unanimously agreed that it is haraam to use any name that suggests being a slave to anyone or anything other than Allaah, such as ‘Abd al-Maseeh (slave of the Messiah) or ‘Abd al-Ka’bah (slave of the Ka’bah) and so on. They did not differ concerning that, except with regard to the name ‘Abd al-Muttalib.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhaab (may Allaah have mercy on him) narrated that Ibn Hazm said: They are unanimously agreed that it is haraam to use any name that suggests being a slave to anyone or anything other than Allaah, such as ‘Abd ‘Amr (slave of ‘Amr) or ‘Abd al-Ka’bah (slave of the Ka’bah) and so on, except ‘Abd al-Muttalib.

The phrase “except ‘Abd al-Muttalib” suggests that this is an exception to the consensus on prohibition, as there is a difference of opinion concerning this. Some scholars say that it is permissible to use the name ‘Abd al-Muttalib, and they quoted as evidence the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “I am the Prophet and no lie, I am the son of ‘Abd al-Muttalib.”

This shows that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used this name and approved of it, which indicates that it is permissible.

Other scholars are of the view that it is haraam to use the name ‘Abd al-Muttalib, because it suggests being a slave of someone other than Allaah. Their response to the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), “I am the son of ‘Abd al-Muttalib” is that this does

not mean that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) approved of this name, rather he was simply stating that the grandfather of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was called ‘Abd al-Muttalib, regardless of whether this name is permissible or not.

Ibn al-Qayyim said in Tuhfat al-Mawlood (p. 79): As for his saying “I am the son of ‘Abd al-Muttalib”, this is not intended to approve the use of this name, rather he was simply mentioning the name by which that person was known, and using a name so that it may be known who is being spoken about is not haraam, and the exemption of the name of ‘Abd al-Muttalib, as mentioned by Abu Muhammad ibn Hazm, has no basis, as the Sahaabah also called the tribes of Banu ‘Abd Shams and Banu ‘Abd al-Daar by their names, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not denounce them for that. The issue of informing is broader than the issue of giving a name, so things are permissible in the former case that are not permissible in the case of giving a name. End quote.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said: The correct view is that it is haraam to use the name ‘Abd al-Muttalib, and it is not permissible for anyone to name his son ‘Abd al-Muttalib. As for the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), “I am the son of ‘Abd al-Muttalib,” this comes under the heading of informing, not giving a name. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) stated that he had a grandfather whose name was ‘Abd al-Muttalib, but there is no report to suggest that he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) named anyone ‘Abd al-Muttalib or that he gave permission to any of his companions to do so, or that he approved of naming anyone ‘Abd al-Muttalib. The discussion is about the ruling, not merely informing. There is a difference between informing and giving a name or approving. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “O Banu Abd Manaaf”, but it is not permissible to give anyone the name of ‘Abd Manaaf.

The scholars said: The one who describes or speaks of kufr is not a kaafir. The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) spoke of something that had happened and was over and done with. The correct view is that it is not permissible to be a slave of anyone or anything other than Allaah at all, whether that is by calling a person ‘Abd al-Muttalib or anything else. Based on

that, describing oneself as a slave of anything other than Allaah is shirk. End quote from al-Qawl al-Mufeed (3/64).

Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd said in Mu'jam al-Manaahi al-Lafziyyah (p. 383): The correct view with regard to the name 'Abd al-Muttalib is that it is not allowed. End quote.

Based on this, the questioner has to change this name to a good name such as 'Abd-Allaah or 'Abd al-Rahmaan.

And Allaah knows best.