

7180 - How to Name a Child in Islam

the question

I want to give my son a name. What are the Islamic guidelines on this?

Summary of answer

This is how to name a child in Islam:

- 1- Avoid names that imply enslavement to or worship of anything other than Allah.
- 2- Avoid names of Allah which are befitting only for Him.
- 3- It is makruh (disliked) to use names which have off-putting meanings.
- 4- The best names are 'Abd-Allah and 'Abd al-Rahman.

Detailed answer

Table Of Contents

- [Importance of giving names in Islam](#)
- [How to name a child in Islam](#)
- [Disliked names in Islam](#)
- [Categories of good names](#)
- [Points to consider when naming a child in Islam](#)

Importance of giving names in Islam

No doubt the matter of [giving names](#) is one of the most important issues in people's lives. A person's name is a title which says something about him, and is essential for communicating with him.

It is an adornment and symbol for the person, by which he is called in this world and in the Hereafter. It is indicative of the religion to which he belongs, and makes him feel that he is one

of the followers of that religion. It gives an impression of him to other people, and in their view it is like a garment – if it is too long or too short, it does not look right.

How to name a child in Islam

The basic principle concerning names is that they are permissible, but there are some matters [which are prohibited according to the Shari`ah](#) and should be avoided when choosing names.

These include the following:

- Enslavement to or worship of anything other than Allah, including prophets and angels. It is not permissible to be enslaved to or to worship anyone or anything other than Allah at all. Among the names which express enslavement to or worship of anything other than Allah are ‘Abd al-Rasul (“slave of the Messenger”), ‘Abd al-Nabi (“slave of the Prophet”) and ‘Abd al-Amier (slave of the prince) and other names which imply worship of or submission to anything other than Allah. The person who has a name like this must change it. The great Sahabi ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) said: My name was ‘Abd ‘Amr – or according to one report, ‘Abd al-Ka’bah – and when I became Muslim, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) called me ‘Abd al-Rahman. (Narrated by al-Hakim, 3/306. Al-Dhahabi agreed with him)
- [Names of Allah which are befitting only for Him](#) , may He be glorified, such as al-Khaliq (the Creator), al-Raziq (the Provider), al-Rabb (the Lord), al-Rahman (the Most Merciful), etc., which are names that befit only Allah; names which describe attributes which are true only of Allah, such as Malik al-Muluk (King of kings), al-Qahir (the Subduer), etc. It is haram to call people by these names, and they must be changed. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): “Do you know of any who is similar to Him?” [Maryam 19:65].
- Names that belong exclusively to the disbelievers and are not used by anyone else, such as ‘Abd al-Masih (“slave of the Messiah”), Butrous (Peter), Jurjus (George), and other names which denote religions of disbelief.
- Names of idols and false gods which are worshipped instead of Allah, such as naming someone after a devil and so on.

It is not permissible to call people after the names referred to above; indeed, doing so is haram and anyone who has such a name is obliged to change it.

Disliked names in Islam

- It is makruh (disliked) to use names which have off-putting meanings, either because the meaning is ugly or because it will provoke others to make fun of the person. Such names also go against the teaching of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), who commanded us to give beautiful names. Examples of such (objectionable) names include Harb (“war”), Rashash (sprinkles or drizzle), and Hiyam – which is the name of a disease suffered by camels – and other names which have ugly or unpleasant meanings.
- It is makruh to use names which have alluring or provocative meanings. This happens a lot when it comes to naming girls, where some names are given which have sexual or provocative meanings.
- It is makruh to deliberately name someone after immoral people such as singers and actors/actresses, etc. If they have good names, it is permissible to use those names, but it must be because of the meaning of the name and not because of the desire to imitate those people.
- It is makruh to give names which have meanings that refer to sin, such as Sariq (“thief”) or Zalim (“wrongdoer”); or to give the names of Pharaohs or sinners, such as Fir’awn (Pharaoh), Haman (the name of Pharaoh’s minister) and Qarun.
- It is makruh to use the names of animals which are well-known for their undesirable characteristics, such as al-Himar (donkey), al-Kalb (dog), al-Qird (monkey), etc.
- It is makruh to use any name which is added to the words “al-Din” or “al-Islam” (i.e., names which appear in idafah – genitive construction – with these words), such as Nur al-Din (“light of the religion”), Shams al-Din (“sun of the religion”), Nur al-Islam (“light of Islam”), Shams al-Islam (“sun of Islam”), etc., because these names give a person more than he deserves. The scholars of the Salaf disliked being given nicknames of this sort. Imam al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) disliked his nickname of Muhiy al-Din (“reviver of the religion”); Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) also disliked

his nickname of Taqiy al-Din (“piety of the religion”), and he used to say, “But my family gave me this nickname and it became well-known.”

- It is makruh to add any word to the name of Allah except the word ‘Abd (slave), as in ‘Abd-Allah (‘Abdullah). Examples of this include Hasab-Allah, Rahmat-Allah (the mercy of Allah), etc. It is similarly makruh to add words to the word al-Rasul (the Messenger).
- It is makruh to use the names of angels, or to call people after the names of surahs in the Quran, such as Ta-Ha, Ya-Sin, etc. These names are al-Huruf al-Muqatta’ah (letters which appear at the beginning of some surahs; their meaning is known only to Allah – Translator), they are not names of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). See Tuhfat al-Mawdud by Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him), p 109.

These names are makruh, and it is makruh to give them to anyone. But if a person has been given such a name by his family, and he is grown up and it is difficult for him to change it, he does not have to do so.

Categories of good names

There are four categories of good names:

- The first (best) category is the names ‘Abd-Allah and ‘Abd al-Rahman. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The most beloved of names to Allah are ‘Abd-Allah and ‘Abd al-Rahman.” (Narrated by Muslim in his Sahih, 1398).
- The second category is all the names which express enslavement to and worship of Allah, such as ‘Abd al-Aziz, ‘Abd al-Rahim, ‘Abd al-Malik, ‘Abd al-Ilah, ‘Abd al-Salam, etc.
- The third category is the names of Prophets and Messengers – may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them. Undoubtedly the best and greatest of them is our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); the name Ahmad is also one of his names. Next come the names of the “messengers of strong will” [cf. Al-Ahqaf 46:35], namely Ibrahim, Musa, ‘Isa and Nuh (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them), then the rest of the prophets - may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon them.
- The fourth category is the names of righteous slaves of Allah, above all the Companions of our noble Prophet. It is mustahabb to use their names, following their example and hoping

to reach a higher status.

- The fifth category is any other good name which has a proper and pleasant meaning.

Points to consider when naming a child in Islam

It is good to pay attention to a number of matters when giving names to our children, including the following:

1. Recognizing the fact that this name will stay with the person for his entire lifetime, and it could cause some embarrassment or problems for him which in turn could make him feel badly towards his father, mother or whoever gave him this name.
2. When looking at names in order to choose one, we should look at it from a number of angles. We should look at the name itself, and also think of how it will sound when this person is a child, a youth, an adult, an old man and a father, and how it will suit his father to be called “Abu” (Father of) So and So, and how it will suit his son to be called Son and so son of So and So, etc.
3. Choosing the name is the right of the father, because he is the one after whom the child will be named (son of, or daughter of...). But it is mustahabb for the father to involve the mother in the decision and to ask for her opinion as to whether she thinks the name is good, so that she will feel happy.
4. The child must be named after his father even if the father is deceased or divorced, etc., even if he does not take care of the child or see him at all. It is utterly haram to name a child after anyone other than his father, except in one case, which is when the child is born as the result of adultery (Allah forbid). In this case the child should be named after his mother and it is not permissible to name him after his father.

For more, please see these answers: [96677](#) , [145607](#) , [5434](#) and [110494](#) .

And Allah knows best.