

## Chapter 24: Naming the Child

One of the prime responsibilities of the parents is the selection of a name for the new-born child. They should not treat this important thing as a triviality. Individuals and families are recognized with their names. If the name is affable the person will be well received by the people. Persons with unpleasant sounding names will not get good attention from others and sometimes even they might ridicule them. The persons who are given improper names will be victims of inferiority complex. Therefore Islam requires the parents to exercise care in selecting good names for their children.

The Holy Prophet has said:

“It is the responsibility of every father to choose a good name for his child.”<sup>1</sup>

“The children have three rights over their fathers. The first is that they are given good names. Secondly, they are provided good education; and lastly, they help them to select good spouses.”<sup>2</sup>

Imam Musa al-Kadhim said:

‘The first good that a father does to his child is that he selects a worthy name for him.’<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand the name of a person has a lot of social significance too. It is his name, which gets recognition to a person that he belongs to a respectable family. If the parents have high regard for a well-known poet, they may name their child after him. If the parents are fond of high learning they may select the name of a reputed scholar.

The highly religious parents name their children after the prophets, the Imams and other religious personalities. If the parents desire their children to struggle in the cause of the faith, they name them after Muhammad, ‘Ali, Hasan, Husayn, Abul Fadhl, Abbas, Hamza, Jaffar, Abu Dharr, Ammar, Saeed etc.

If the parents are enamored of any sport they like to name their children after renowned players of that sport. Similarly if the parents appreciate the art of any musician, they may prefer to name their child after that person.

When the nature of the parents is tyrannical, they take pride in naming the child after historical personalities like Alexander, Changes, Timor etc. It is noticed that while naming the child the parents generally associate themselves with certain groups and people of the past this will have a definite impact on the nature and thinking of the child when he grows up.

The Holy Prophet has said:

“Keep good names, because on the Day of Judgment you will be called by these names only. It will be proclaimed, ‘so-and-so son of so-and-so Rise and get associated with your light, So-and-so, son of so-and-so Arise that there is no light for you that can guide you!’”<sup>4</sup>

One person said to Imam Ja’far as-Sadiq, “We name our children after your name and the names of your revered ancestors. Is this beneficial for us. ”The Imam replies, “Yes By Allah’s faith anything else than love for the pious and hate towards the profane!”

For the propagation of their beliefs people derive benefit from every opportunity to project the names of the important personalities. They go to the extent of naming the towns, streets and other landmarks after important personalities. A responsible and devoted muslim too takes every opportunity to perpetuate the names of the great personalities of Islam and one of such acts is to name his children after them.

Yes Hasan, Husayn, Abul Fadhl, ‘Ali Akbar, Hur, Qasim, Hamza, Ja’far, Abu Dharr, Ammar are amongst the names which enliven the spirit to remember the valiant acts of the great persons and encourage the coming generations to groom themselves on those models. When a person is named after the Holy Prophets like Ibrahim, Musa, Isa or Muhammad he is bound to have a feeling that he must try to be as righteous a person as he can. When a person is named after the friends and devotees of the Holy ahl al bait like Abu Dharr, Maithum and Ammar he will realise the significance of the deeds of those great men. An intelligent Muslim will not give the names of tyrants and enemies of Islam to his children.

Imam Baqir says:

”Beware of the Satan When he hears that someone is called as Muhammad and ‘Ali, he melts in such a way as the lead melts and when he hears that someone is named after one of our enemies he is overwhelmed with happiness.”<sup>5</sup>

The Prophet of Islam said:

“Whoever gets four sons, and he has not named even one after me has been cruel on me.”<sup>6</sup>

Imam Muhammad Baqir said:

“The peerless names are the names of the Prophets.”

The Holy Prophet attached so much importance to names that if he did not like the name of any

companion or a place, he would immediately change the name. He changed the name of Abd al Shams to Abd al Wahab. He named Abd al Uzza ( the slave of Uzza the idol) to Abd Allah. Abd al Haris (the tiger) to Abd ar Rahman and Abd al Ka'aba to Abd Allah.

- [1.](#) Wasail al-shiah, v2, p. 618
- [2.](#) Wasail al-shiah, v104, p. 92
- [3.](#) Wasail al-shiah, v15, p. 122
- [4.](#) Wasail al-shiah, v15, p. 123
- [5.](#) Wasail al-shiah, v15, p. 127
- [6.](#) Ibid.

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