204257 - Can One Name a Child with a Word From the Quran?

the question

Some people name their child Laysa [meaning “it is not”] on the grounds that any word in the Quran may be a name for a child so long as it does not have a bad meaning. What is your opinion on that?

Summary of answer

The Prophet did not urge us to choose names just because they are mentioned in the Quran. There are many names mentioned in the Quran that the Muslim is not allowed to give to his children such as Fir`awn (Pharaoh), Haman and Qarun.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

How to name a child in Islam

What is prescribed when naming children is to choose a good name, paying attention to both a good sound and good meaning. So rough-sounding words should not be used, even if the meaning is good, and good-sounding words should not be used if the meaning is not good.

It is prohibited to regard anything as good on the basis of mere outward appearance, without paying attention to the reality of the thing.

Muslim (2564) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Allah does not look at your (outward) forms and your wealth, rather He looks at your hearts and your deeds.”

Forbidden names in Islam

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade some names that appear to be good, because the way in which they are used in some sentences and phrases may be bad.

Muslim (2137) narrated from Samurah ibn Jundub (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger forbade us to call our boys Rabah (gain), Yasar (wealth), Nujayh (successful) or Aflah (prosperous).

Why is that? The Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) explained the reason for that prohibition, as he said: “For you will say, Is he there? And if he is not, you will say, No.” In other words, you will ask about him, saying: Is Rabah (profit) or Aflah (prosperous) with you? And if he is not there, then the one who answers will say no. From this negative response, it will be as if he is saying that there is no prosperity or gain with him, which is a negative meaning that people would not like to hear, even though the speaker does not intend this negative meaning.

Naming a child with a word from the Quran

This Hadith also indicates that not every word that is mentioned in the Quran is good as a name. The word Aflaha is mentioned in the Quran, where Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): { Certainly will the believers have succeeded [Aflaha]} [Al-Mu’minon 23:1], but despite that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade using it as a name.

Moreover, if we refer to the practice of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and his companions, then look at the books of the scholars and the practice of the Muslims generation after generation, we will not find anyone who chose names in this manner.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) urged us to choose good names, such as ‘Abdullah and `Abd Ar-Rahman, and he did not urge us to choose names just because they are mentioned in the Quran. How many names are mentioned in the Quran that the Muslim is not allowed to give to his children, such as Fir`awn (Pharaoh), Haman and Qarun.

Similarly, we do not see any of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) who did that, even though they loved and venerated the Quran more than we do.

Aditionally, we do not find any of the scholars recommending choosing names in this manner, and Muslims do not do that. Rather, most of the names of the Muslims – as is seen in the books of history and biography – tend to be names like ‘Abdullah, ‘Abd ar-Rahman, ‘Abd ar-Rahim, Muhammad, Ahmad, and so on.

So what is appropriate is to tell people not to do this, and to explain to them that this is not a good thing to do.

When choosing names for his children, the father should limit it to what the scholars have mentioned in their books on the etiquette of naming children, and based on what is mentioned in the Sunnah of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

For more details, please see the following answers: 88734 , 21359 , 135 , and 35705 .

And Allah knows best.