135 - Can You Name Your Child after an Angel?

the question

By Allah's mercy, many Muslims are entering Islam in America. Many Muslims change their names after accepting Islam. Some change their names to names of angels like Jibril or Mikail, etc. According to the 'aqidah of Ahl-us-Sunnah, angels are neither male nor female. If one says they are male, this is bid`ah and if one says they are female, this is kufr.

So, I would like to know in light of all of this, what is the proper status of changing one's name to the name of an angel. Is it haram, makruh, mubah, etc.? Please help me with this answer for I have been asking and I have yet to receive a response. May Allah reward you for your answer! What advice would you give someone who has changed his or her name to the name of an angel?

Summary of answer

It is preferable not to use the names of the angels, and that we follow the rightly-guided forefathers in the naming of our children and in the naming of those who accept Islam among the non-believers.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Ibn al-Qayyim said in his book "Tuhfat al-Mawdud fi Ahkam al-Mawlud" in the second chapter under "What is preferred among the names and what is considered reprehensible among them" said:

“... and among them are the names of the angels such as Jibrail and Mikail and Israfil, it is makruh to name human beings with these names. Ash'had said: Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy upon him) was asked regarding naming someone the name Jibril; he abhorred it and it didn't please him;

al-Qai `Iyad said: "... and others allowed it." Abdul-Razzak said in al-Jami' via Ma`mar: "I said to Hammad ibn Abi Sulayman what would you say regarding a man whose name is Jibril or Mikail, and he responded, 'There is no objection.' (la bas bi-hi)"

Regarding the hadith: "la tusammow bi-asma al-malaikah" ("don't name yourselves with the names of the angels "), al-Bukhari has said that the validity of its chain of narration is questionable. This means that the hadith would not be considered sahih." ("Tuhfat al-Mawdud, p. 83)

In al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyya most of the scholars have ruled that using the names of the angels like Jibril and Mikail is not makruh (disagreeable or reprehensible). Imam Malik, on the other hand, has ruled that it is makruh." (Al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyya, al-Kuwait, Vol 11:334)

Some have stated that the meaning of Jibril is Abdullah and likewise Mikail. See Tafsir Ibn Kathir under verses numbers 97-98 in Surat al-Baqarah.

Thus, based on what has been presented, it is preferable not to use the names of the angels, and that we follow the rightly-guided forefathers in the naming of our children and in the naming of those who accept Islam among the non-believers. The most preferred names, no doubt, are 'Abdullah and 'Abdul-Rahman as has been related in the sound hadith.

And Allah knows best.