



Dawood ... Salmaa ... Mu'aaz ... - Each and every name is as unique as the individual bearing the name. But how are children named? Or rather, more importantly, how should a child be named?

Naming a child is normally a 'once in a lifetime' occurrence and is thus shown great importance. The matter is often debated and discussed for months on end before the child has even entered the world. While it is not necessary to spend months deliberating different names, what is necessary is that we give the child a good name, as he or she will bear this name for life, and also because the name of the child has an effect on the child. Hence, Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) instructed the Ummah to give their children good names, and he (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) would himself change the name of a person who had been given an unsuitable name.

The grandfather of Sa'eed bin Musayyab (rahimahullah) went to Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). On enquiry, he informed Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) that his name was 'Huzn' (which means grief). Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said to him, "You are Sahl" (Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) wished to change his name to Sahl which means 'ease'). However, his grandfather did not wish to change his name. Sa'eed bin Musayyab (rahimahullah) mentioned, "The effect of that grief (in the name of my grandfather) remained in us thereafter." (Saheeh Bukhaari #6190)

Some of the names recommended by Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) are: 'Abdullah and 'Abdur Rahman, together with the names of all the Ambiyaa ('alaihimus salaam) (Sunan Abi Dawood #4950). As a general guideline, one should try to keep the names of pious people, such as the Ambiyaa ('alaihimus salaam) and the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu 'anhum), as it is hoped that the piety and good qualities of these individuals will rub off onto the child.

As parents, we wish the best of this world and the next for our beloved children. We should thus make it our priority to give them good, suitable names, instead of looking for 'new' names

or names that resemble those of pop stars, sports icons or other 'celebrities' who are disbelievers. We should ask ourselves, "Do we want the sublime qualities of Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) to shine in our child, or do we want the filthy habits of these disbelievers to corrupt our child?" Often, in the quest to keep a "fashionable" name instead of an 'old fashioned' name, we keep names that have foolish, unsuitable meanings or no meaning at all.

When the child will bear this name and be influenced by it for life, it is only fair that we keep his or her interests at heart by choosing a good name.