

130943 - Ruling on calling people by the names of Allah

the question

What is the ruling on calling people by names of Allah such as Karim, 'Aziz and so on?

Detailed answer

Calling people by the names of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, falls into two categories.

The first category is divided into two types:

The first type is where the name is preceded by the definite article *al/-*. In this case, no one may be called by this name except Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, such as if anyone were to be called *al-'Aziz*, *as-Sayyid*, *al-Hakim*, and so on. No one can be called by these names except Allah, because the definite article *al/-* in this case indicates that what is referred to is the divine name.

The second type is where the name is chosen for its divine meaning, but is not preceded with the definite article *al/-*. In this case, such names should not be used. It is for this reason that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) changed the kunyah of Abu'l-Hakam, because the latter's companions used to refer to him for judgement. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Indeed it is Allah Who is *al-Hakam* [the Judge], and He is the One to judge." Then he gave him a kunyah using the name of his oldest son, *Shurayh* [so he became known as *Abu Shurayh*]. This indicates that if someone is named by one of the names of Allah, intending the meaning of that divine name, this is not allowed, because in that case the name is exactly the same as the name of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. The names of Allah, may He be exalted, are names and attributes, with divine meanings.

The second category is names that are not preceded by the definite article, and the intention is not to refer to the divine meaning. In this case, there is nothing wrong with

these names, such as Hakim (wise). The name of one of the Sahabah was Hakim ibn Hizam, to whom the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Do not sell what you do not possess.” This indicates that if the intention is not to connect it to the meaning of the divine name or attribute, there is nothing wrong with it.

But names such as Jabbar should not be used, even if the intention is not to connect it to the meaning of the divine name or attribute, because the name may have some impact on the person who is so named, so that he may become tyrannical or arrogant or think that he is above other people. Such things may have an impact on a person, so they should be avoided. And Allah knows best. End quote.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him).

Fatawa al-‘Aqidah (p. 37).