

Ruling on giving one's name to a foundling whom

one adopts

A person was not blessed with children, so he took a foundling from the orphanage and brought him up, teaching him and treating him well. Out of compassion and an attempt to do the right thing, he gave him his name and registered him as his own son in official documents. What is the ruling on this?

Praise be to Allaah.

According to sharee'ah it is not

permissible for a person who adopts a child to give him his name as if he is his own son

and a member of his tribe, as described in the question, because this involves lying,

falsehood, the mixing of lineages and a threat to people's honour, as well as

distorting the channels of inheritance so that someone who is not entitled may receive an

unfair share whilst depriving the rightful heirs of their due, and causing chaos in the

sphere of relationships between mahram and non-mahram which affect issues of khulwah

(being alone with a member of the opposite sex) and marriage. All of this violates

sanctities and transgresses the bounds of sharee'ah. Hence Allaah forbade saying that

a child belongs to anyone except his father or a slave belongs to anyone except his

master. As Allaah said (interpretation of the meaning):

nor has He made your adopted sons your real sons.

That is but your saying with your mouths. But Allâh says the truth, and He guides to the

(Right) Way. Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers, that is more just

with Allāh. But if you know not their father's (names, call them) your brothers in Faith and Mawâlîkum (your freed slaves). And there is no sin on you concerning that in which you made a mistake, except in regard to what your hearts deliberately intend. And Allāh is Ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. [al-Ahzaab 33:4-5]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

Whoever knowingly claims to belong to anyone other than his father, Paradise will be denied him. (Narrated by Ahmad, al-Bukhaari and

Muslim). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) also said: Whoever claims to be the son of anyone other than his father, or the slave of anyone other than his master, on him will be the curse of Allaah continually until the Day of Resurrection.

The one who is asking this question made a mistake when he tried to do the right thing by giving his name to the child. He cannot leave matters as they are; he has to try to change it and put matters right, because of the texts that state this naming is haraam, as quoted above. As for his feeling compassion for the child, bringing him up and treating him kindly, this is a good action which is encouraged in Islam. May Allaah bless our prophet Muhammad.