

Book Notice

A Treasury of Favorite Muslim Names. By Ahmed Abdul Hakeem. Pearl Publications. 6351 W. Montrose, Suite 342, Chicago, IL 60634-1563. 1997. Pp. xv-224.

The heart of this book is the 2000 or so Muslim names (nearly twice as many for boys as for girls), arranged in their: English form, transliteration, meaning, and Arabic form. Helpful footnotes are included.

There is a great deal more to the book than a mere dictionary listing of names, however. Hakeem has intended this book to provide information about names and naming especially for Muslims living in non-Muslim (primarily English-speaking) countries, whose direct contacts with Islamic society may not be immediate and who are in need of guidance in identifying and choosing appropriate Muslim names for their children. Thus Hakeem includes nearly one hundred pages of introductory material dealing with birth customs and infant naming as well as discussion of such things as objectionable (prohibited, unpleasant, faddish, offensive) names, naming styles, the grammar of names and the transliteration of Arabic names into English. There are also a number of guidelines for choosing names.

This book does not provide new information or new interpretations of names or naming practices but it does contain a wealth of information about naming in an Islamic cultural context presented in a clear, understandable and relevant fashion. One concern running through these pages is that Muslims outside predominantly Muslim countries may be having difficulty maintaining proper Muslim naming practices and are often giving less than fully Muslim names to their children. Thus the guidance offered by Hakeem.

A great deal of care has gone into the preparation and publication of this book. I was struck by the near absence of typographical errors, although those which occur cluster in the bibliography. I counted four in four pages and a spell-checker would have picked up three of these.

This book is not intended for Muslim scholars nor for those with an extensive knowledge of Muslim names; it is recommended for anyone wanting a quick overview of Muslim names in their social and linguistic context.

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