

THE RIGHT TO A GOOD NAME: MUSLIM AND XHOSA CHILDREN

BERTIE NEETHLING

Xhosa Department

University of the Western Cape (UWC), South Africa

The right to a good name: Muslim and Xhosa children

Abstract: In Islamic Law, the choice of a good name is a fundamental childhood right. It is hoped that the name will inspire self-respect and, in the years that lie ahead, will give the child something to aspire to. Muslim parents therefore choose lexical items from Arabic that would emphasise a good personality or character feature envisaged for the child.

Although it is not commonly expressed in such terms, it appears as if most Xhosa speaking parents also accept and practise this childhood right. Items with a positive meaning or connotation are selected from the Xhosa lexicon to be used in name formation.

It is argued in this contribution that the Muslim community, comprising most of the so-called “Coloured” grouping, and the Xhosa speaking community of the Western Cape, South Africa, in effect practise the same name-giving conventions when bestowing names on children, although the basic philosophy, on the one hand (Muslim), is inspired by a specific religious affiliation and is also intimately connected with the Arabic language, whereas on the other (Xhosa), it is firmly embedded in the Xhosa culture and language. The examples are from the names of students at the University of the Western Cape.

Keywords: Muslim names, name and identity, onomastics.

Introduction

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) near Cape Town in South Africa started to collaborate with a conglomeration of Flemish Universities in Belgium (VLIR) a few years ago. The first project in the Arts Faculty had the title *Culture, Language and Identity*, and was abbreviated to the comfortable acronym ‘CLIDE’. Participation within an onomastic framework was established through a project with the name ‘*Exploring the link between name and identity: A UWC profile*’. A questionnaire was drawn up consisting of 18 questions, all connected with an aspect of naming. Four senior student assistants disseminated the questionnaire on campus and assisted students in completing them. Many of the questions were open-ended, and hence elicited a great variety of answers. A total of 824 questionnaires were returned. A large number of different language and cultural groups were represented, but in this contribution only students who had Xhosa, Afrikaans or English as a first language, are considered. They form the major cultural and language groupings on the UWC campus. From the Afrikaans and /or English speaking groups, only students who subscribe to the Islam faith, are considered.

Name giving conventions

One of the first things that happen to newcomers born into the human race, is the acquisition of a name bestowed upon them usually by the parents or other family members. In most cases the name issue is discussed and decided upon even before birth. With the sophisticated sonar facilities the gender of the to-be-born can also be determined, and hence name givers can therefore often eliminate one sex when searching for a name.

Different name giving conventions and considerations exist in various culture groups. In some societies the hereditary aspect is considered important, and the names of the parents themselves or the names of the child's grandparents are often used. In more recent times parents have become more 'inventive' by combining elements from both parents' names, or combining the names from the grandparents on both sides in order to satisfy both parties. In such a context the etymology or possible meaning of the name is not considered to be that important. In other cultural groups the hereditary pattern is not followed, and the uniqueness of the name in terms of both sound and 'look' is considered as the most important consideration.

In this contribution the focus is on two different cultural groupings, i.e. the so-called 'Coloured' community in the Western Cape who, from a religious perspective, are of the Islam persuasion thereby being Muslims, and the Xhosa speaking community, a Bantu group also now residing in the Western Cape.

It is argued that both these two seemingly dissimilar cultural groupings, in essence practise a name giving convention that is similar. The name givers in both societies value the importance of a 'good name', and 'good' is then seen as a name that displays a clear positive message in terms of its meaning that should be clear or transparent. Both these name giving traditions are explored and discussed.

The link between name and identity

One question in the questionnaire pertinently asked whether respondents see their names as a reflection of their identity. This was one of the main objectives of the study as is also reflected in the project title. In the light of what went before, the outcomes were probably predictable: most respondents indeed identified their names (or some of them) as strong indicators of identity. This ties in with tendencies worldwide where an individual's name is often seen as one of the most stable elements of any person's identity. Identity is an elusive concept and not a fixed construct: it is forever changing and adapting, and it is probably true to say that most individuals develop a multiplicity of identities through their lifespan (see Wassermann & Jacobs 2003, 15–28). A particular facet of this identity will come to the fore in certain contexts, whereas other facets at that time will be 'hidden' or latent. Most individuals operate in more than one and often widely differentiating contexts, necessitating adaptations to their identities in order to function optimally in a given context. Certain cultural aspects linked to naming are foregrounded in some contexts, particularly when interacting with others belonging to the same culture. In a multilingual and multicultural context like that of South Africa, and narrowing it further down, like that on the campus of UWC, it is to be expected that a multiplicity of identities linked to one person might emerge. This is, *inter alia*, confirmed by the huge prevalence of additional or

nicknames, where every nickname is traditionally used by certain people only and hence in particular contexts.

But even given this scenario, an individual, wherever s/he finds her/himself, cannot discard her / his name(s) and it remains fairly stable. Thus whenever an individual considers doing something unlawful, one often finds that an alias is adopted, thereby trying to hide the true identity. An interesting view on this aspect was found in a letter to the Afrikaans daily, *Die Burger*, in the Western Cape. An Afrikaans speaking correspondent (WL van der Merwe), writing from Austria, had this to say (in Afrikaans) about one's identity: '... hulle (= filosowe) is dit eens dat jy nie jou identiteit kan verkoop of verruil nie. Dit is soos jou eie naam, wat jy nie self kon kies nie, maar wat jy tot in die hof sal verdedig as iemand dit skend. Jy kan later ander identiteite aanneem, maar jy kan nie jou eerste, oorspronklike identiteit ontken nie. As jy dit ontken, draai jy jou rug op 'n persoonlike geskiedenis. Jy word 'n banneling na binne' (*Die Burger*, 6 May, 2005).

[They (= philosophers) agree that you cannot sell or exchange your identity. It is like your own name that you could not choose yourself, but that you will defend in court should somebody dishonour it. You may assume other identities later, but you cannot negate your first, original identity. Should you do that, you turn your back upon a personal history. You become an exile inwardly] (Translation: BN).

Religious affiliation and Naming

Another question asked in the questionnaire was whether religious affiliation played a role in the respondent's name. In the Muslim community nearly without exception meaningful Arabic names are chosen. One respondent, answering to the question whether religious affiliation played a role in her carrying the name(s) she has, said the following: 'Yes, well, I am a Muslim and in my religion we have the obligation to be given a Muslim name.' This view may well apply to all the Muslim students. The Muslim students seemingly take pride in identifying strongly with their names. This was more prominent among those who suggested that English was their first language compared to the Afrikaans speaking ones.

It seems to be clear that the Xhosa community also takes religious affiliation in consideration when giving names. There are practically no statistics available regarding the particular religious affiliation of the Xhosa people. A large percentage of Xhosa people was converted to Christianity since the introduction of this faith by the early missionaries at the beginning of the 18th century, and many call themselves 'Christian', and this may vary, ranging from the 'traditional' Protestant churches, such as Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Pentecostal churches, but then also Roman Catholicism. There are also 'traditional' indigenous African belief rituals featuring the forefathers, and between the Christian and the 'traditional' way, there are also the so-called 'independent African churches', somewhat mystical and even secret in the mixing of ceremony and conviction. There are no statistics regarding all these 'religious' connections. It might be fair to say that they do play a role in name giving among the Xhosa, but it does not appear to be as prominent as amongst the Muslims.

Muslim names

According to Islamic Law children have clearly articulated rights. One of these fundamental childhood rights, is the choice of a good name. The aspirations of the parents

for the child are embodied in the name, and will also cultivate self-respect. According to Roff (2007: 389–90) Islamic names have ordinarily five distinct onomastic elements:

1. the *ism* that represents a given or personal name;
2. the *nasab* that signifies ‘son / daughter of’, i.e. the name of the father;
3. the *kunya*, an alternative personal name often a tekonymous form, i.e. name of an individual’s first born son;
4. the *laqab*, a characterising epithet or nickname; and
5. the *nisba*, a relational name referring to either lineage, origin, place of learning or occupation.

Not all Muslims necessarily have all five names, and it also varies from region to region. There is, however, a common perception that ‘...unless you had a good and properly constructed and understood Islamic name you were not a good Muslim’ (Roff 2007: 387). Haron (1999: 23) quotes from *Muslim Names* by al-Faruqi, who echoes these sentiments: ‘...your name is not only a convention ... (i)t is also a *definiens* of you ... though it may do so only partially... it certainly tells the outside world that you are a Muslim; and this is the most significant aspect of your whole being.’ Often when individuals convert to Islam, the conversion is characterised by a name change. Two well known examples are the erstwhile boxing champion Cassius Clay who became Muhammed Ali and the singer-songwriter Cat Stevens who became Yusuf Islam.

Because of the importance of the Arabic language in Islam, the majority of the world’s Muslims use Arabic names, the so-called *ism* (no.1 above), i.e. the personal name. Meaningful lexical items such as nouns and adjectives from Arabic, are then also employed as names. Many Arab countries have now adopted a Westernized way of naming, and this may require transliteration. One name may be transliterated in several ways, as various websites (see those listed among the references) on Muslim naming suggest. These names would invariably signify good qualities. One website dealing with baby naming in a Muslim community, describes the nature of the naming in somewhat awkward English: ‘[The] Islamic philosophy of naming is that a child must have a good name, significant of good augury, congenial to human nature[,] sweet, serene, noble, indicative of submission to the Almighty, avoiding names suggestive of ferociousness or sanguinity. The name should not smack of dirtiness, incivility, abuse or debasement’ (<http://muslimbabynames.net/Naming-a-child.asp>).

The name choices are then transliterated from Arabic (see Haron 1999: 22–25 for a discussion on the problems around the transliteration of Arabic names).

The following alphabetical list emerged from the questionnaires (‘m’ indicates ‘male’ names and ‘f’ those of ‘female’ ones):

- Aadil* (m) ‘just right’
- Aadilah* (f) ‘joy’
- Afroz* (m) ‘illumination’
- Aminah* (f) ‘honesty, trustworthy’
- Ashraf* (m) ‘most honourable’
- Aslam* (m) ‘handsome, faithful, charming’
- Aziza* (f) ‘dear/exalted, powerful’
- Bashil* (m) ‘good news bearer’

Bushra (m) 'glad tidings, good news'
Dawood (m) 'kindness'
Fagmeeda (f) 'wise, understanding'
Faheemah (f) 'understanding'
Faika (f) 'excellent, superior'
Goolam (m) 'blessed'
Hadija (f) 'fragrant flower'
Hashmet (m) 'decency, dignity'
Ibtieshaam (f) 'smiling person'
Khadeejah (f) 'prophet's wife's name'
Malika (f) 'queen'
Mehbaeb (f) 'the beloved'
Miersab (f) 'tolerant, understanding'
Mierzaan (m) 'scale of justice'
Muammar (m) 'leader'
Naadira (f) 'rare, precious, choice'
Nafeesa (f) 'precious, valuable'
Naghma (f) 'melody, song'
Najuwa (f) 'heart to heart talk'
Nariman (f) 'flower in heaven'
Nazli (f) 'optimistic, full of hope'
Nufeesah (f) 'refine, pure, exquisite, precious'
Praneeta (f) 'led forward / promoted' (> Hindu calendar)
Rashid (m) 'happiness'
Rashieda (f) 'consciousness'
Rugshana (f) 'intelligence'
Sahndya (f) 'evening prayer'
Salaama (f) 'peaceful'
Sameega (f) 'jovial, companion'
Shahieda (f) 'martyr, witness'
Shameema (f) 'fragrance'
Shazia (f) 'bold, confident'
Tabassum (m) 'smile, cheerful and charming'
Tashreeq (m) 'enlightened one'
Waheeda (f) 'unique'
Yafah (f) 'beautiful'
Yasmeen (f) 'jasmine flower'
Zainap (f) 'fragrance of tree/daughter of prophet'
Zaitunisa (f) 'olive'
Zeenat (f) 'beautiful decoration'
Zulfa (f) 'universal spiritual closeness'

These names, mostly then from Arabic, but occasionally also from Indian languages fit in well with the common category often found in other African cultures i.e. expectations

or aspirations that the parents have for their children. The meanings as supplied by the respondents have been accepted on face value based on the assumption that the name bearers would know the meaning given the fact that they are 'unusual' in form, intimately linked to the Islam religion and mostly Arabic. The names carry very positive connotations and one may assume that these respondents identify strongly with their names. It is clear that religious affiliation plays an important role in these names. What was mildly surprising, were the few respondents who clearly had an Arabic/Muslim name and indicated it as such but could not (or perhaps did not want to) supply the meaning of the name, eg. *Yasmiena*, *Fachiel*, *Nazeem*, *Shiefaah*, *Widaat*, *Shaheed* and *Moeneba*. It is more or less impossible that a negative connotation would be attached to these names. One should also add that *Yasmiena* is simply a variant of *Yasmeen* (in the list), and so is *Shaheed* for *Shahieda* (also in the list). It is also noticeable that all these name carriers have only one given name. That is understandable because of the specific meaning, usually suggesting a particular and positive characteristic. A second name might complement that, but may also have interfered.

Positive responses from Muslim students in emphasising the link between name and identity:

Waheeda: 'To a huge extent because I do believe myself to be unique' ('unique')

Miersab: 'My name reflects who I am as an individual' ('tolerant, understanding')

Nafeesa: 'I try to live up to my name' ('precious, valuable')

Bushra: 'My name is unique and so am I' ('glad tidings, good news')

Najuwa: 'It is the start of who I am. All my characteristics are attachments to my name' ('heart to heart talk')

Nufeesah: 'I live up to my name. It reflects the type of person I am, my identity, personality' ('refine, pure, exquisite, precious')

Ashraf: 'To the extent that I try to live up to the meaning of my name' ('most honourable')

Tabassum: 'My name reflects my identity because I am always smiling and happy' ('smile, cheerful, charming')

Mierzaan: 'Completely, I do tend to be judgemental, critical, analytical but fair as justice should be' ('scale of justice')

Aadilah: 'To a great degree, because the meaning of my name is the exact person that I am, like being joyful, optimistic, friendly, etc' ('joy')

Yafah: 'My name represents my individuality and how unique I am' ('beautiful')

It is clear that the respondents value their names greatly, and the meaningfulness stressing a positive characteristic or feature has a strong influence on identity perception (see Brennen 2000: 144). It is noteworthy that a number stress the fact that they try to 'live up to their name'. This resonates with the situation in Xhosa society should a name bearer live up to the sentiments or aspirations expressed in a name.

The only dissenting voice from the questionnaires comes from Tashreeq ('the enlightened one'): 'I don't see my name as a reflection of identity. I was named at birth before I had an identity'.

Xhosa names

The Xhosa speaking community in South Africa is the second largest language and cultural grouping, comprising about 10 million people. Xhosa is one of the official languages of South Africa, and is one of the 9 Bantu languages that alongside Afrikaans and English form the 11 official languages. At UWC the Xhosa speakers number wise form a significant group at the university that has ranged roughly between 40–60% over the last decade.

One of the questions in the questionnaire was: Do you consider yourself as belonging to a particular cultural or ethnic grouping? Language is a distinct and important feature of culture, and this was already established right at the beginning when respondents were asked to indicate their first / home language. The responses regarding the cultural or ethnic grouping then by and large corresponded with the language preference, and this was not surprising.

Xhosa speaking students overwhelmingly indicated that they belong to and feel part of the Xhosa identity. Another aim with the project, was to see if existing naming conventions are still confirmed by the data, or whether one could detect shifts. The other fairly well known characteristic of first names among the (black) African communities, is the so-called lexical transparency of these names, i.e. they are 'meaningful', and carry lexical meaning. Common lexical items, often nouns, verbs, and adjectives, are selected to function as names. It stands to reason that lexical items with a fairly positive connotation or meaning are popular in this regard, endowing the name carrier with a feature he or she is proud to carry or to be associated with. This is strongly manifested in the questionnaires. In a work on Xhosa naming, *Naming among the Xhosa of South Africa* (Neethling 2005), 7 categories were identified that served as the motivation for choosing and bestowing a name in Xhosa society. Based on the examples of naming in other African communities, a comparative study is very likely to confirm these categories in other African cultural contexts. These 7 categories are:

1. Names that embody an expectation from or aspiration for the newborn;
2. Names thanking God / ancestors;
3. Names reflecting the composition or extension of the family;
4. Names referring to events or circumstances occurring just prior, during, or immediately after the birth;
5. Names depicting survival or consolation (after the death of another/earlier child);
6. Names commemorating people or events;
7. Derogatory / Negative names

Categories 1, 2, 3, and 6 (sometimes also 4) are generally considered to carry very positive connotations. This is by and large confirmed by the data. Respondents were asked to give the meanings of their first names, and the Xhosa language speakers happily obliged, most of them seemingly content with the names they were given.

The following is a fairly random sample from the questionnaires from Xhosa speakers in the four most positive categories:

(1) Expectations / Aspirations

Kanyisa 'giving light to the future'
Ntomboxolo 'girl of peace'
Thembisile 'the one that showed promise, the confident one'
Thembeke 'the reliable one'
Qukeza 'to be diligent'
Nomonde 'the patient one'
Mthobeli 'the obedient one'
Thanduxolo 'the lover of peace'
Sunduza 'push, i.e. trouble out of the way'
Vuyiseka 'one to be made happy'
Noluthando 'it is love'
Daluxolo 'create peace'
Sonwabile 'we are happy'
Nyameka 'be earnest, attentive, caring'
Phumelele 'one who is successful'
Avuyile 'they are happy'
Fezidinga 'fulfil the promise'
Nolufefe 'it is grace'
Ncediswa 'the helpful one'
Sinovuya 'we are happy'
Vuyani 'be happy'
Xolani 'forgive'
Zola 'be quiet'
Siphokazi 'a big gift'
Nomvuyo 'one who is happy'
Melikhaya 'support of the home'

(2) Gratitude to God / ancestors

Camagu 'thank you'
Simcelile 'we asked for her'
Nkosinathi 'the Lord is with us'
Nkosiphendule 'the Lord has answered'
Siyabulela 'we thank/we are grateful'
Nomthandazo 'a prayer'
Unathi 'He is with us'
Bonginkosi 'praise the Lord'

(3) Composition / Extension of family

Luyanda 'it (= family) is growing'
Mziwandile 'the house has expanded'
Ntombifuthi 'another girl again'
Sandile 'we have increased'
Mzwandile 'the house (= family) has expanded'

Mzwamadoda 'a house of men'
Ntombifikile 'a girl has arrived'
Ntombizodwa 'only girls'
Ongezwa 'one (girl) who was added'
Lwandile 'it (= family) has expanded'
Ntombizanele 'the girls are enough'
Andiswa 'the girls have been increased'

(4) *Commemorative names*
Lovedalia 'Lovedale'
Nelson 'Mandela'
Sabata 'Sabbath'
Nomahlubi 'a Hlubi(clan) girl'
Mabhelandile 'the Bhele clan has increased'
JongamaBhele 'look after the Bhele clan'
Skoma 'a clan name'

It is often not easy in assigning a name to a particular category. Much overlapping occurs. One can, however, say that naming amongst the Xhosa group represents an overwhelmingly positive image in terms of the selected names. The meaningfulness of these names, carrying a positive message, probably adds to the image of 'self' and hence self-esteem. The name, whenever pronounced or seen, situates the bearer squarely within a particular cultural context which is likely to have an affirmative effect on issues of identity, i.e. supports notions of self-esteem and cultural pride.

Positive responses from Xhosa speakers in emphasising the link between name and identity:

Many respondents outline their best qualities here suggesting that they indeed make a connection between name and identity.

Unathi: 'These names are part of my identity because they have meanings- ('He is with us')

Luyanda: 'It is a reflection of my identity, to (sic) large extent because we are six in my family ('it=family is growing')

Skoma: 'Skoma is my clanname' (clanname)

Lwandile: 'Unique, my names define who I am' ('it=family has increased')

Ongezwa: 'People have an idea of who you are because it is reflected in your name' ('one who was added')

Sunduzo: 'When I'm faced with difficulties sometimes, I need to push, not despair to reflect on (sic) my name ('to push')

Vuyiseka: 'My name brings joy, whenever I'm around people they feel happy ('one to be made happy')

Noluthando / Mumsy: 'In a way that they both Noluthando and Mumsy [nickname] are African names, in as much as they tell so very much about the personality that I have, because I have so much love for people' ('it is love')

Daluxolo / Sinovuya: 'My names partly reflect my identity because I always want to see people happy when I am round (sic) and I always strive for peace' ('create peace', 'we are happy')

Vuyani: 'These names define my character, I'm an extrovert, dancer, performer much the same as a musician' ('be happy')

Nolufefe: 'I do see my name as a reflection of my identity because I'm humane, I love helping people (that is why I'm doing social work) and I do not like seeing people hurt, all these things are associated with 'Grace' ('grace').

Fezidinga: 'To such an extent that, since I have gone through testings, I will triumph one day by fulfilling what my parents have ordered me to do ('Fulfil the promise')

Xolani: 'My name is what I do to other people, it also explains who I am ('forgive')

Andiswa: 'They describe who I am and my personality' ('the girls have been increased')

Zola / Gift / Siphokazi: 'I see my name playing a big role in my identity because if I had no name, my identity wouldn't be clear. The fact that I have a name it means I can be identified by name first before anyone could identify me with other things. 'Name first'. ('be quiet', gift, 'big gift')

Bonginkosi / Victor: 'My names and I are one thing like a pen and ink. My name is me and I'm my names, I'm following their meanings' ('praise the Lord', one who is victorious)

Ntombizanele: 'My names have significant meanings which I value. They are the guidelines of the person that I am.' ('girls are enough')

Avuyile: 'My names truly describe my personality and I live up to their meanings. They also show the kindness of my family at large' ('they are happy')

Nomvuyo / Thelma: 'To a large extent because they sort of pave the rest of your life' ('one who is happy', Thelma)

Patrick / Phumelele: 'With the hardship of life itself I have always come up tops. I also don't know how but it happened. Therefore these names mean a lot to me.' (Patrick, 'the successful one')

Nwabisa / Bernice: 'My names fit my personality. I am special, unique & there's no one like me. I have my names with many people, but my identity & personality are mine only. It is who I am in the world' ('one who gives joy (to family)', Bernice)

Nwabisa / Patience / Phumeza: 'My names have followed me, or I have followed them. They are so much like me' ('one who gives joy (to family)', Patience, 'the successful achiever')

Melikhaya / Theophyllis: 'Names can identify what you are, where you come from, and what you'll be in future' ('support of the home', Theophyllus)

Thando: 'I have a lot of love so my name is a true reflection of who I am' ('love')

Sonwabile: 'I live by my name, I'm always happy and also make those around me happy' ('we are happy')

There were many similar responses. It is quite clear that the majority of Xhosa speakers identify very closely with their meaningful names, and even include their English names (probably without assigning any meaning to them) when assessing all their names. It appears as if names carrying positive connotations are embraced by name carriers and they try to live up to the sentiments expressed in them. In Xhosa it is then often said: *Ulilandele igama lakhe* ('He follows his name'). It also seems to give them confidence and a high

self-esteem, which, from a psychological perspective, is extremely positive. At times given names are culturally significant in a way but do not touch on a particular personality aspect. A name might refer to the position of the child in the family only, but it does appear to be quite happily accepted by the name carriers.

An interesting aspect deals with names such as *Nokuzola* and *Thulani*: respondents claim that they indeed have such personalities (quiet, reserved, not talkative). One may then ask: is this type of personality 'enforced' upon them through naming? This would be difficult to assess and requires further investigation.

There were a few responses where respondents questioned the link between name and identity:

Kanyisa: 'No extent, identity has no relevance (sic) to your name, name is simple (sic) given so that people can call you!' ('giving light to the future').

Nonzame: 'My name has nothing to do with my identity' ('efforts')

Thandiswa: 'Igama lam lichaza ngabazali bam hayi ngam kuba bandinika igama elithandwa ngabo' (My name tells about my parents not me, because they gave me a name they liked' ('one that is loved')

Phumla: 'I don't see my name as a reflection of my identity because I am not a person that likes to relax' ('rest, relax')

For respondents carrying a culturally meaningful first name this is unusual. It conforms more to the situation in Western society where a name is merely seen as a label by which an individual is distinguished from another.

Conclusion

It is argued that both these two seemingly dissimilar cultural groupings who very seldom interact socially, in essence practise a name giving convention that is similar. The name givers in both societies value the importance of a 'good name', and 'good' is then seen as a name that displays a clear positive message in terms of its meaning that should be clear or transparent. In the case of the Xhosa students the lexical transparency contributes strongly to the belief that there is indeed a link between name and identity, and they are proud of it. With the Muslim students it is the same, except that the Arabic name given should be transliterated which then reveals the positive meaning it carries.

The religious affiliation of the Muslim students plays a huge role in this regard and is decisive in the names they carry. With the Xhosa students there might be a religious affiliation connected with some names, but it is not great, and one is not certain of the specific religious connection.

Both cultures, however, subscribe to the same name giving convention: a 'good' name is seen as an advantage, and name givers should bear that in mind¹.

¹ The financial support of the NRF towards this contribution is acknowledged.

References

- Brennen, T. 2000. On the meaning of Personal Names: A View from Cognitive Psychology. *Names* 48.2 (June 2000): 139–146.
- Die Burger 2005. Letter in Afrikaans daily, 6 May.
- Haron, M. 1999. Naming peoples: The formation of the South African Muslim Identity. *Nomina Africana* 13 (1&2): 19–33.
- Neethling, B. 2005. *Naming among the Xhosa of South Africa*. New York: Mellen Press.
- Roff, W.J. 2007. Onomastics, and Taxonomies of Belonging in the Malay Muslim World. *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18(3): 386–405.
- Wassermann, H., and S. Jacobs. 2003. *Shifting Selves: Post-apartheid essays on mass media, culture and identity*. Kwela: Kaapstad

Websites consulted:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_name (accessed May 20, 2010).
- <http://www.zackvision.com/weblog/2004/05whats-in-a-name-2.html> (accessed July 21, 2011).
- <http://www.muslimbabynames.net/Naming-a-child.asp> (accessed July 30, 2011).
- www.trustcentral.org.sg/BirthCustoms/NamingCeremony/tabid/464/Default.aspx (accessed August 2, 2011).
- www.names4muslims.com (accessed August 3, 2011).
- www.urduseek.com (accessed August 3, 2011).