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# AXIOLOGICAL REORIENTATION IN ISLAMIC ANTHROPONYMY: SEMANTIC PATTERNS OF RENAMING IN UZBEK RELIGIOUS SOURCES

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**Abstract:** The article examines the lexical-semantic and axiological mechanisms underlying the renaming of individuals in the Islamic anthroponymic tradition as reflected in Uzbek religious and historical sources. The study focuses on anthroponymic material represented in Alikhontura Soghuniy's Tarikhi Muhammadiy and Nosiruddin Rabghuzi's Qissasi Rabghuzi. Particular attention is paid to cases in which names carrying negative, conflict-related, socially undesirable, or pre-Islamic semantic associations were replaced by names expressing positive ethical, spiritual, and social values. The research employs lexical-semantic, etymological, contextual, and linguocultural methods. The analysis demonstrates that renaming should not be interpreted merely as a formal substitution of one proper name for another. It constitutes a process of semantic and axiological reorientation in which the evaluative content of an anthroponym is deliberately transformed. Examples such as Harb → Salom, Osiyya → Jamila, Qolil → Kasir, Hazn → Sahl, and Jamra → Salima reveal recurrent semantic movements from conflict to peace, disobedience to positive personal evaluation, deficiency to abundance, sorrow to ease, and destructive imagery to well-being. The findings show that personal names in Islamic anthroponymy function simultaneously as nominative, evaluative, pragmatic, and linguocultural units. Renaming therefore represents a linguistic mechanism through which social identity, ethical norms, and religious values become interconnected.

**Keywords:** anthroponymy, religious anthroponym, personal name, renaming, lexical semantics, axiology, linguoculture, Islamic naming tradition.

## Introduction

Personal names constitute one of the most culturally sensitive layers of a language. Although their primary function is to identify an individual, their linguistic role is not restricted to reference alone. A personal name may preserve information concerning historical memory, religious affiliation, social expectations, family traditions, ethnic identity, and collective systems of values. For this reason, anthroponyms should be approached not only as units of onomastics but also as linguistic signs located at the intersection of language, society, culture, and value.

The relationship between proper names and social-cultural context has been discussed from different perspectives in general onomastics. Superanskaya (1986) emphasizes the special status of proper names within the lexical system, whereas Nikonov (1974) associates the development and functioning of personal names with social processes. In Uzbek linguistics, Begmatov (2013) systematizes the main categories and linguistic characteristics of Uzbek anthroponymy. Within the Islamic naming tradition, Schimmel (1990) and Ahmed (1999) demonstrate that the semantic structure of Muslim personal names frequently reflects religious concepts, moral aspirations, and culturally meaningful qualities.

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However, one aspect requires further linguistic interpretation: the deliberate replacement of an existing name with another name whose semantic and evaluative content differs from the former one. In such cases, nomination becomes a dynamic phenomenon. The linguistic sign does not simply identify the same referent under a new form; it reorganizes the evaluative representation of that individual.

The Uzbek religious-historical tradition provides valuable material for studying this phenomenon. In particular, Tarikhi Muhammadiy by Alikhontura Soghuniy records numerous anthroponymic units related to the Prophet Muhammad, his Companions, and the early Islamic community. Qissasi Rabghuzi represents an earlier layer of Turkic religious narrative and illustrates the historical integration of Qur'anic and Islamic names into the Turkic linguistic and cultural environment. Taken together, these sources allow religious anthroponyms to be examined as elements of both Islamic naming culture and the Uzbek linguistic tradition.

The purpose of this article is to identify the semantic models underlying anthroponymic renaming and to explain their axiological and linguocultural functions. The central argument is that renaming in the studied material represents a form of axiological reorientation: the replacement of a negatively, incompatibly, or inadequately evaluated name by a nomination that corresponds more closely to the ethical and religious value system of the community.

2. Literature Review

The linguistic study of personal names has developed from structural description toward increasingly interdisciplinary interpretations. Sapir's approach to language and culture demonstrated that lexical units acquire meaning within a broader cultural environment. Later onomastic studies treated personal names as socially conditioned signs whose form and function change in accordance with historical and cultural developments.

Superanskaya (1986) distinguishes proper names from common lexical units on the basis of their special nominative status. Nevertheless, a proper name is not necessarily semantically empty. In many naming traditions, its lexical basis remains transparent and continues to activate particular associations. This feature is especially important in religious anthroponymy, where the lexical meaning of a name may be directly connected with concepts such as faith, servitude to God, patience, beauty, truthfulness, generosity, peace, or righteousness.

Schimmel (1990) shows that Islamic personal names form a complex cultural system in which theological principles, historical memory, and social practices intersect. Ahmed (1999), in his lexicographical description of Muslim names, likewise demonstrates the importance of lexical meaning for understanding naming traditions. Accordingly, Muslim anthroponyms can perform not only an identifying function but also an explicitly evaluative one.

For Uzbek anthroponymy, Begmatov (2013) regards the personal name as the central category of the anthroponymic system, while nicknames, pseudonyms, and other secondary nominations perform additional identifying and characterizing functions. This approach provides a basis for considering the personal name as both a nominative and a socially meaningful linguistic unit.

The available scholarship, however, generally describes the origin, structure, classification, or meanings of names. The semantic relationship between an abandoned name and its replacement has received less attention as an independent linguistic process. Such a relationship can be particularly revealing because it makes the community's evaluative opposition explicit: the old and new forms create a semantic contrast through which the preferred cultural value becomes linguistically visible.

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The material for the study was selected from religious anthroponyms represented in Alikhontura Soghuniy's Tarikhi Muhammadiy and Nosiruddin Rabghuzi's Qissasi Rabghuzi, with additional reference to classical Islamic sources used in the underlying research corpus.

The analysis was carried out at four interconnected levels. Lexical-semantic analysis was used to determine the dictionary meanings and evaluative components of the anthroponyms. Etymological analysis was applied where the historical lexical origin of a name was relevant to its interpretation. Contextual analysis made it possible to relate an anthroponym to the narrative circumstances in which it was used. Finally, a linguocultural approach was employed to interpret renaming in relation to ethical norms, religious concepts, and patterns of social evaluation.

Rather than considering each name independently, the study compares an original anthroponym with the form that replaces it. This makes it possible to establish the semantic vector of renaming, that is, the direction in which evaluative meaning changes.

## Results and Discussion

### Renaming as semantic transformation

The material demonstrates that anthroponymic replacement is not arbitrary. A recurring relationship can be observed between the semantics of the original name and those of the replacement. In many cases, the new anthroponym neutralizes or reverses an undesirable semantic component contained in the former nomination.

The following model illustrates the principal transformations:

| Initial anthroponym | Basic semantic association | New anthroponym | New semantic association | Semantic vector |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Harb | war, conflict | Salom | peace, security | conflict → peace |
| Osiyya | disobedient, rebellious | Jamila | beautiful, pleasant | negative evaluation → positive evaluation |
| Qolil | little, scarce | Kasir | numerous, abundant | deficiency → abundance |
| Hazn | sorrow, hardship | Sahl | ease, mildness | difficulty/sorrow → ease |
| Jamra | burning coal, fire | Salima | safe, sound, unharmed | destructive image → well-being |

These pairs demonstrate that a change of name can simultaneously modify lexical meaning and evaluative orientation. The transformation therefore occurs not merely at the level of form but within the semantic structure of nomination.

The contrast between Harb and Salom is particularly illustrative. The lexical meaning of Harb is connected with "war" or "conflict", whereas Salom activates the semantic field of peace, safety, and harmonious relations. The change therefore represents more than antonymic substitution. It expresses a movement from a conflict-oriented concept toward a socially constructive value.

A comparable pattern is observable in the pair Hazn → Sahl. Hazn conveys the notion of sorrow or distress, while Sahl is semantically associated with ease and mildness. The replacement changes the emotional-evaluative orientation of the name. The significance of Sahl in the textual corpus is also supported by its repeated occurrence among the names of the Companions. In Tarikhi Muhammadiy, for instance, Sahl ibn Hanif is mentioned among prominent members of the Medinan community,

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while a number of individuals containing Sahl in their anthroponymic structures are recorded in the context of the Battle of Badr.

The pair Jamra → Salima demonstrates another form of semantic opposition. The lexical image underlying Jamra is associated with burning coal or fire. Salima, in contrast, derives from a semantic field involving safety, soundness, and freedom from harm. Consequently, the renaming process changes not only the lexical content of the personal name but also the conceptual image attached to the person.

The case of Osiyya → Jamila represents an especially important axiological transformation. The Arabic lexical base of Osiyya expresses disobedience or resistance, which places the name within a negative ethical frame in the relevant religious context. Jamila, on the other hand, literally denotes beauty and may additionally evoke positive interpersonal qualities.

The important linguistic feature is that the replacement does not simply negate the earlier meaning. The new name establishes an alternative positive characterization. Thus, renaming may be described as a two-stage semantic process: deactivation of an undesirable evaluation followed by activation of a preferred value.

A similar mechanism can be identified in Qolil → Kasir. Here the contrast is based on quantity: "little/scarce" is replaced by "much/abundant". The opposition indicates a preference for a semantically affirmative form. Although the two names are related through lexical antonymy, the cultural significance of the change lies in the positive connotations of abundance, increase, and prosperity.

These examples indicate that the evaluative meaning of an anthroponym should be treated as an important component of its semantic structure. A name may retain its nominative function regardless of lexical meaning, yet within a religious and cultural environment the lexical base of the name can influence how the nomination is interpreted.

The findings permit religious renaming to be interpreted in axiological terms. Axiology concerns the organization and linguistic expression of values. In the analyzed anthroponymic system, names can encode oppositions such as positive/negative, desirable/undesirable, harmonious/conflictual, or morally appropriate/inappropriate.

This evaluative dimension also gives personal names a pragmatic function. The replacement of an undesirable nomination publicly establishes another form as socially and ethically preferred. The act of naming therefore participates in the construction of interpersonal identity.

This does not mean that a personal name mechanically determines an individual's character. Such a deterministic interpretation would go beyond linguistic evidence. Rather, the data demonstrate that naming practices can symbolically associate an individual with a particular value. The cultural expectation attached to a name is therefore more relevant than any assumed direct psychological effect.

From this perspective, religious anthroponyms combine at least four functions. They identify the individual; convey lexical-semantic content; encode social or ethical evaluation; and preserve elements of cultural memory. These functions explain why personal names occupy a significant position in religious discourse.

Historical continuity and the Uzbek linguistic environment

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The anthroponymic material in Qissasi Rabghuzi demonstrates that Islamic names became deeply embedded in the written Turkic tradition. Names of prophets and other sacred personalities entered Turkic texts through Qur'anic, Biblical, Arabic, and wider Semitic traditions, frequently undergoing phonetic adaptation. Forms such as Adam → Odam and Abram/Ibrom → Ibrohim illustrate how inherited religious names could be integrated into another linguistic system without losing their sacred-cultural associations.

This historical process is relevant to the interpretation of renaming because it confirms that religious anthroponyms are dynamic signs. They may undergo phonetic adaptation, semantic reinterpretation, functional specialization, or evaluative modification while preserving continuity with earlier cultural traditions.

In Tarikhi Muhammadiy, anthroponyms function within an Uzbek narrative context while referring to early Islamic historical figures. Thus, the work acts as a linguistic bridge between Arabic-Islamic naming culture and Uzbek cultural consciousness. The semantic values attached to the names—truthfulness, peace, beauty, ease, loyalty, generosity, faith, and moral integrity—are transmitted through this textual tradition and become part of the interpretive environment of Uzbek readers.

## Conclusion

The analysis of religious anthroponyms in Uzbek religious-historical sources shows that the replacement of personal names can be interpreted as a systematic process of semantic and axiological reorientation. The studied examples demonstrate recurrent movements from negatively evaluated or culturally inappropriate meanings toward positive ethical, spiritual, and socially desirable concepts.

The pairs Harb → Salom, Osiyya → Jamila, Qolil → Kasir, Hazn → Sahl, and Jamra → Salima reveal several models of transformation: conflict is replaced by peace, disobedience by positive personal evaluation, scarcity by abundance, sorrow by ease, and potentially destructive imagery by the concept of safety and well-being.

These observations support the conclusion that religious anthroponyms cannot be adequately described as simple labels. Their lexical bases preserve evaluative meanings, while their use within religious discourse gives them pragmatic and linguocultural functions. Renaming becomes a means of harmonizing personal nomination with the value system accepted by the community.

From a broader linguistic perspective, the phenomenon demonstrates the interaction between nomination and evaluation. A proper name simultaneously identifies an individual and may encode society's preferred interpretation of that individual. Consequently, the study of religious anthroponyms contributes not only to Uzbek onomastics but also to lexical semantics, pragmatics, linguoculturology, historical linguistics, and the study of value in language.

Further research may expand the corpus and compare semantic renaming patterns across Turkic languages, historical periods, and different religious textual traditions. Such comparison would make it possible to determine which axiological models are universal within Islamic naming culture and which developed under the influence of particular linguistic and national traditions.

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