

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPORT OF IGALA NAMES

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ABSTRACT: *This piece on the Socio-cultural Import of Igala Names is an effort at investigating into the traditional appellations by which members of the major ethnic group of Kogi state, the Igala of central Nigeria are known. While employing the sociological and historical methods of research, our findings show that there is more to their names than mere identifying marks, labels or tags. Igala names are given basically in accordance with spiritual and historico-social circumstances of birth, emotions of parents, etc. Besides, the names are often seen as particularly embodying the destiny of the individual. It is also submitted here that naming ceremonies form an integral part of formal means of initiating a child into the membership of a community. This invariably spells the personhood of such a child. As such, the use of Igala, nay African names are showcased here as inalienable aspect of the culture of the people that could be promoted, owing to its significance.*

KEYWORDS: Socio-Cultural, Import, Igala, Names

INTRODUCTION

To the “Shakespearerean” question “What is in a name?” the African, nay Igala person would answer in the affirmative, “Yes – there is everything in a name!” This was the thousand-and-one rhetorical question William Shakespeare (43-44) puts in the mouth of Juliet, the historical romantic character. She it was who asked Romeo this fundamental question. And as a matter of fact, the response shows that “that which we call a rose by any name will smell sweet” just as it is in the nature of a stone to be solid, it is in the nature of water to be liquid and in the nature of the air to be gaseous. Similarly, it is in the nature of sugar or honey to taste sweet, bitter cola or bitter leaf to taste bitter, a window or door is naturally an opening, etc. Could a name be just a meaningless and artificial contraption among Igala people? This is the problem at issue and the crux of this paper.

Definition of Concepts

Igala is the language spoken by the ethnic group occupying the eastern territory of the confluence of rivers Niger and Benue in Nigeria. Their landmark covers an area of about 13,665 square kilometers. And it is 120 kilometers wide and 160 kilometers long, located approximately between latitude 6° 30" and 8° north and longitudes 6° 30" and 7° 40" east (Egbunu, *Chieftaincy Titles* 49). It is bounded by Enugu state to the east, Anambra state to the south, Benue and Nasarawa states to the north and River Niger/Edo state to the west. The population of Igala is estimated at well over two million in the late 1990s; it is the most populated single ethnic group in Kogi state and it is popularly considered as the melting pot of Nigeria. Due to its being a geographical terminus, it is influenced and at one and the same time impacts on many of its neighbouring ethnic configurations such as the Igbo, Bassa, Idoma, Nupe, Jukun, Igbirra, Hausa, Yoruba, etc.

The term, “Names” refers to word/words by which a person, place or thing is known (*The New Webster’s Dictionary of English Language* 663). *Odu* is the Igala word for name. In like manner, the word “name” is *Oruko* in Yoruba language; *Sunna* in Hausa language, and *Afa* or *Aha* in Ibo language. In Oduyoye’s work on *Yoruba Names*, she tries to draw some link between the Hebrew word for name (*Shem*) and the Arabic word for name, which is *Ism* (61). That is, *Ismuki* refers to males while *Ismuka* refers to females. She draws our attention to the point that both the Hebrew *Shem* and the Arabic *Ism* are cognates with Arabic *Wasama* (which she translates as “to brand, to make”). A name is therefore considered as a *wasm* (a mark or brand) (61). It is in this context, that we could categorically deduce that to be nameless is to be without identity. Strictly speaking, it is conventional to say only non-human beings are marked or branded. We mark things and brand cows but we name people (Oduyoye 61). Every name has a meaning drawn from the language of its origin. Sometimes such meanings are obscured due to the dynamic nature of culture of the people. And names often carry a lot of nuances. Literal meanings of names could be different from their historical, social and cultural connotations. Each name does suggest some “character, quality or goal for which to strive” (Hartzel, Al Palmquist and Francis i).

The phrase “Socio-cultural” simply refers to that which pertains to the sum total of the way of life of a people. This relates not only to their religious beliefs and practices, but their customs, norms, leadership institutions, etc. (Egbunu, *Igala Traditional Values* 27-32). In this context, the focus of our work is the rationale or significance of names on the entire life of the people. As it were, for every society in a particular environment, names are given to people in different ways and for a dozen of reasons. Throughout the Bible times, there existed innumerable instances where God changed names of individuals due to some desire to forge something better out of their lives. And in the English tradition or culture, for instance, every Mr. Smith was close to the smithing family; every Mr. Mason came from the family of builders; and Mr. Carpenter was concerned with the carpentry trade. But today, a Mr. Mason may be a fisherman or a lawyer; a Mr. Fisher may be a smith, and a Mr. Fowler may not necessarily have hunted for games in life (Oduyoye, *Yoruba Names* 67). Among the Igala, however, exists a strong belief that a name is not just a tag, label or identification mark. “It is believed that a person’s name affects his behavior and that it has some psychological effects on his/her behavior” (Okwoli, *A Compendium of Igala Names* XV). Whether one understands how this happens or not, the responsibility of choosing a meaningful name for one’s child or grandchild ought not to be taken lightly. This majorly forms part of the reasons for the profuse celebration of birth and naming ceremonies among the Igala. From the traditional and historical perspective, names hold much importance among the Igala.

The Trado-Historical Significance of Names

The rhetorical question often asked by sages, “what is in a name?” (Shakespeare 43-44) remains very central to any discourse on names and its significance. This is because “by virtue of their rich religious, anthropological and social content, African names are part and parcel of those elements in African culture which make African personhood unique” (Ehusani 121). To Africans generally, conferring a name on a person is not only meant to identify the person but it also connotes the personality and destiny of the person. Ajayi corroborates this view when he stated that African names are “pregnant with deep meanings that have social significance, and their collective study in a particular society expresses a worldview of the people” (12).

In Igala cultural thought pattern, names (*odu*) are more than mere tags or nomenclatures, articles of recognition and identification. Names are very significant in a person's life. One's name is likened to a person's spiritual good or evil-garment that he/she unconsciously wears. As it is often said, "*oduch'ajamuone*" (a person's name is like the bit and bridle used in controlling a horse). This is because names are not given to people arbitrarily. Most often than not, in the Igala traditional setting, names were given to children during traditional naming ceremonies. And it was done with utmost care so as to reflect the historical import or epoch, social relevance or tie, spiritual significance or ancestral link, and even the moral motivation or boost involved in the various circumstances associated with the birth of the individual in question. The birth of a child in the Igala traditional society is greeted with great joy (*uyolile*). This is so because in most cases children are considered great treasures (*omachoko*) from above.

After the birth of a child at *ogwe* (the place of delivery) and the baby is brought into the living room, the father of the child goes around to the relatives (on both the maternal and paternal sides) to announce the coming of a new baby and the *ojilekumagba* (the favourreceived). The degree of joy that greets this occasion depends on whether that child was the first child in the family or long awaited due to delay in pregnancy. The in-laws (*Am'ana*) on the wife's side have to be well informed and then other relatives and neighbours so that they do not pick offence for hearing it from outsiders.

The naming ceremony of the child takes place on the *Egwelę* (fourteenth) day after the birth of the child. Prior to the *ęgwelę* ceremony, the child and the mother would not be allowed to come to public places (*Ododa*), especially market places (*aja*) or *AnukwuIbogijo* (the abode of the elders) because she is considered to be in *elifo* (impure) and weak. Other women who come to keep her company, either the biological mother of the woman, aunt or other concerned more elderly relatives, do the cooking, fetching of water, fetching of firewood and washing of clothes on her behalf. She is never allowed to go to the *anukwu* (the abode of elders) at this stage, for any reason whatsoever.

On the day of the *ęgwelę*, the members of the extended family (*abo olopu*) gather from all over the villages and hamlets at the *atakpa* (the family hut). The *Abifa* (diviner) who consults the oracles is then contacted to disclose the mind of the ancestors in respect of the appropriate name to be given to the child. The diviner could be there in person or must have been contacted earlier before the disclosure of the name at this gathering. In most cases, the parents of the child usually suggest the names, bearing in mind the circumstances surrounding the birth of the child. The diviner then picks any of such names that appeals to the ancestors. In this manner, the diviner is supposed to reveal to them which among their deceased relatives or ancestors re-incarnated. According to Okwoli (40), The Igala believe in re-incarnation. ... They believe that children are ancestors reborn on earth. When a new child is born, it is through divination that people know who has been re-incarnated. Once the ancestor who was reborn is identified, that particular ancestor becomes the spiritual godfather or godmother (*ojo*) of the new child.

Often enough, the names such as *Iyemi* (my mother), *Atayi* (my father), *Omaye* (my brother or sister) are given as pet names to such children even when they are publicly called other names by other people in the society. A female relative can re-incarnate in a boy-child and a male relative can appear in a girl-child. It could also happen that direct names of such

deceased (re-incarnated) relatives are given to the children in question. For example, Ọmachi, Achegbulu, Acheneje, Ochonia, Atebije, Achimugu, Atuluku, Ajine, Adigo, Ebuwe, Akubo, Ọmali, Etimabo, Akagwu, Igbogo, Atuma, etc in order to keep the good memory of the departed even when the full meaning of such names remain elusive to the mind of the immediate parents of the child. However, such ancestors are considered their “ojo” (personal gods) or guardian spirits who control the destiny of such a child. In some other cases, trade/status names could also be given to such children, e.g. *Atadoga* (for a reincarnate of a chief greeted *Doga*); *Atajachi* (for a reincarnate of a chief greeted *Jachi*); *Atanu* (for a reincarnate of a chief greeted *Anu*); *Atabo* (for a reincarnate of a chief greeted *Abo*); *Ata-ebije* (for a reincarnate of a chief or blacksmith greeted *Ebije*); *Atawodi* (for a reincarnate of a chief greeted *Wodi*) (Okwoli, *Compendium of Names* 2).

As a sign of sharing in the joy of the family, the relatives from both the mother side and the father side present gifts such as food, drinks and other materials to the family. Such items may include cola-nut, money, clothes, yams, beans, maize, oil, etc. By way of this naming ceremony, the child is joyfully and formally welcomed into the community and becomes a *bonafide* member. Prior to this time, he remains a nobody until this ceremony is performed. But with this ceremony, he becomes socially defined as a person.

In this light, proverbs and concepts with different layers of meanings are employed. Family or socio-economic situations, physical or spiritual conditions, traditional salutations and titles, heroic feats, market days, days of the week or seasons are taken into cognizance. Names are also given by indices of even a wish or an emotional expression and sometimes to also immortalize a loved one. In this case, through people’s names, their family or clan roots could be traced. It is an important vehicle of cultural identity. In other words, such names link them to their past or future. It is strongly believed that bad fortune or good fortune lies within names. They can make or mar a person’s whole life and destiny. It is believed that names have the propensity of spelling a person’s fame or framing his/her “hell” in this life and even to some extent, the hereafter. Name creates some space for the bearer, binds the fellow with not only the living members of the community but even the ancestors and the yet-to-be-born members of the community. What Ifesieh observed in relation to the Igbo is also true of the Igala people, “Naming rites are public recognition and social acceptance of the child” (175). Without name therefore, the child is not yet considered a person. Conversely too “to preserve a man’s name is seen as keeping the person alive” (Mbiti, *Religion and Philosophy* 162). As it is often stressed among typical Africans, “to be known by name is to be dependent, linked with the one who utters it and to know all of a man’s name is to have a special claim upon him”. This would also be an aid to grasping the history of such a people because an indigenous African name “defines the bearer, tells some story about the family of the bearer, carries the parents’ aspiration for the future of the bearer and points to the values of the society into which the bearer is born” (Ehusani 124). This is so crucial to the extent that “from the list of names in a family, it should be possible to reconstruct something about the history, the aspirations, the fears, the hopes and vicissitudes of the family” (Ubahakwe 100). In a sense, it is true to assert that in a typical Igala traditional mindset, people are known by their roots and not necessarily by their fruits. Tremendous power lies in a name. Its relevance is so immeasurable and its significance so unquantifiable that its effects could be inherently profound in the life of any human person. In Igala tradition, a person’s name is equivalent to the person him/herself. Through contagious and homeopathic magic, for instance, whatever is done with the person’s name is considered done to the person. It is owing to this power

inherent in a name that Nyamiti underscores this point in relation to the Africans: “exorcisms, sorcery, possession, oaths and the like are effected through the proper handling of names” (43).

Usually, personal names are given to the baby, since personal names are very important and parents are very careful to make good choice of names (Okwoli, *Introduction to Igala Traditional Religion* 52). According to Mbiti (*Introduction to African Religions* 84-90) the choice of such names could reflect any or some of the following: time, background, religious feelings, reincarnation, infant mortality rate, etc. Among the Igala people such names are manifold.

Samples of Value-laden Igala Names

Among Igala people, examples of names which relate to time are: *Ajibili*(morning), *Ogbulu*(afternoon), *Qmadene*(evening), *Utofo*(after death of father); and some in relation to the day of birth e.g. market days (*Eke*, *Ede*, *Afor*, *Ukwọ* and *Anyaja or Iyidaja* –being in the market on its day in general) or days of the week (*Aladi* - Sunday, *Italatu*– Tuesday, *Ilaluba/Adaluba* – Wednesday, *Alami* – Thursday, *Ajuma* - Friday); there exist names relating to feelings of the parents (*Uyo*- Joy, *Edebo* – happiness, etc.); the child’s background (*Egbunu* – coiled placenta, *Ogwu* or *Ejima* – twins, etc.); their religious feelings (*Ojone*– God’s own, *Eleqjo* - God’s gift, *Ojochide*– God’s guidance, *Utenwojos* surrendered unto God, *Idanwojo*- in praise of God, etc.) as indicated in our earlier works (Egbunu, *Igala Worldview* 58-59); reincarnation (*Atayi* – Father, *Iyei* – Mother, *Qmaye* – brother/sister, *Qmakoji/Emakojior Akoji* replacement, *Atanukwu/Atodo*– father of the compound, *Atojoko* – the village father, *Omehi/Omehima*– aunt, *Qmenyi* – uncle, *Adama* – their father, *Enegbani* – master, *Baba* – father, *Okeq*– master, *Okwo*– grand-dad/mum, *Qmada/Qmata*– daddy’s child, *Ayema*– their mum, *Ora*– dad, *Qmora*– daddy’s child, *Apeh* – Daddy, *Atuma*– their dad, etc); infant mortality or abiku (*Onalo*– He might depart tomorrow, *Akubo* - remainder after death, *Adukwu* – one who stops death, *Egwuye* – found or recovered from the dead, *Egwuje*– the dead agreed, *Egwuche* – the deed of the dead, *Abichihi*– born unto loss, *Ukwubile*– death destroys the world, *Egwabailo* the dead are frightful, *Atulukwu*– one who puts an end to seed of death in the lineage and *Inalimi* – just on casual visit (Egbunu, *Igala Worldview* 59). Other names with connotations include: *Ojoru*– guest on transit, *Egwemi*– the living-dead are here, *Alelo* – the one who left is here again, *Alale*– just passing, *Abilo*– borrowed, *Ogwọ/Enogwo* – deceiver, *Ukwuteno*– death has left this one, *Ikani*– this one may survive, *Abimaje* – in the habit of giving birth but not surviving, *Ukwede* – dying again, *Enemakwu* - if one is not dead you can’t bury, *Iyanda*– wrestled out of death’s hands, *Ugbeda* – seed of the family, *Ikokwu* – he refused to die, *Ikola* – we are tired, *Makedono*– not to be trusted, *Oluoba* – sunset, *Anumone* – for the yonder, *Anene* – property of the soil, etc.) or even names of apical ancestors, parents, grandparents or relatives whose memory they wish to keep lingering (e.g. *Ayegba*, *Idoko*, *Ochonia*, *Apeh*, *Atagwuba*, *Idachaba*, etc.) or even names signifying beauty (e.g. *Alifia* – beautiful, *Iganya* – eleganza, *Ododo*- flower, *Ajanigo/Adigo*– spectacle, *Unyoba* – overflowing gracefulness/goodness, *Ojamalia* – gold, *Ajifa* – silver, *Unyokpo* – charming beauty, *Ojali* – real and pure, *Okebechi* – velvet, *Igeluwe* - colourful, *Ejamaka* – golden fish, etc.); philosophical coinages (*Qpaluwa* – the lineage continues, *Qmachoko* – the child is farm indeed, *Acheneje* – can only cheat individuals, *Qkpanachi* – one marking a particular era, *Idakwo* – separate from others) (Egbunu, *Igala Worldview* 59). Igala names and proverbs dovetail in such a manner that often enough, proverbs are shortened into names in which case, when such names are mentioned, the meanings are readily known to many

people. There could also be other considerations such as power names or titles of valour, victory, industry, success, etc. in which case, even titles relating to names of plants or animals are given to some people (e.g. *Idu* – Lion, *Ojidu* – Lion's head, *Iduguma*– Lion sees; *Idumajogwu*– warring Lion, *Eje* – Leopard, *Ejeba* – Leopard's boast, *Odumu* – a type of Chimpanzee, *Ugbono* – Eagle, *Okpe* – Cuckoo, *Ube* – Hedge-hog; *Ago* – Mahogany, *Qda* – Indian rubber-tree, *Uloko* – Iroko, *Abo* – Antiaris, *Aya* – Siris tree, *Udu* – Aubrevilia, *Odogwu* – Cabbage tree, *Igo* – Wild Asparagus, *Okwutechi* – Aerial yam, *Agba* – African Balsam). It is also worthy of note that some names are given, basically due to what the oracles dictate, especially as it relates to reincarnation in which case those ancestors whose names are given to the children are considered as the guardian spirits (*ojokidowa*) (Egbunu, *Igala Worldview* 59). Examples of other more philosophical names include:

Umaji – *umaji ma kpetogbaoko/kigwodaba*(he who knows the way leads the way); *Ajala-ajalajebeki ma jiliwn*(no matter how the harmattan fire burns the grass, its roots remain intact); *Umona* – *enginumaum'onan*(no one knows tomorrow); *Achegbulu* – *ki ma bi ache menemenene*(aggressive approach can never achieve what patient tolerance does); *Okanyigolo-Okekwu*, *Achika* (hard nut to crack); *Ikagbo/Agbonika*– *ikagbo ma dadu no* (whom the cap fits); *Ogwumada* – *ogwu ma danokwochekolika* (you don't drop your sword or weapon till the war is ended); *Ukwela* (death is cheated); *Ukwanya*(death is defeated); *Qmanya* – *achokpoule n* (like father like son); *Olubo* – *ilecholubogibegbe da n* (the world is like a mirage); *Ocholi* – *achibunujakujakinagbada*(catalyst); *Uwawo* – *uwawuoch'olojiikwo*(morning shows the day); *Ileanwa*(man proposes but God disposes); *Enemako* – *ki ma kolawn*(whom the world rejected does not reject himself); *Imabe* – *imabenemenekia yon* (experience is the best teacher); *Ononojo* – *onojoamokpaubiokon* (the stranger cannot know the secrets of the backyard); *Ukwumonu*(death is no respecter of personages); *Anyegwu* – *onachewnileakonyegwun*(nothing is forever); *Opaluwa* – *opualowa i* (the lineage continues); *Achimugwu* – *ache mogwukijenwogwuanawo* (increase comes through stringent efforts); *Alewo/Alika* – *alewokiam'ikpaojekiteiatawn le* (travelling is part of education); *Agbaneg* – *agbaneki ma gb'ohimini*(no matter how much of an expert you are in sweeping, you can not sweep off a river); *Igbamatigbi* – *ma mewnkidefuigbi*(when a calabash is broken, its contents are known); *Ayegba* – *aye egbaomemelachayeogecha* (a stitch in time saves nine); *Ayefu* – *aye takpaefuwelenyo* (if you stop thinking you are lost); *Umame* – *ateneala n* (knowledge is far better than ignorance); *Akebe* – *akebemewnagwebelo* (a helper is better than a destroyer); *Enemakwu* – *onemakwunejuade* (when there is life there is hope); *Agobie* (look before you leap); *Agbaji* – *ki ma gb'ohimini*(no matter how you empty a spring/stream, you can't attempt emptying a river); *Edogbanya* – *edogboanyanyokoogwu* (it takes courage to go to war); *Etonu* – *etionuchegwela* (the king has many ears); *Ocheme*(learning is better than ignorance). Igala people also make abundant use of theophoric names.

The wisdom embedded in the above names or wise-sayings is applicable in a thousand-and-one ways to the life of the people. This implies that the interpretation given to each name is often done in view of the social, historical or religious context. Due to the notoriety of Igala people, nay Africans for religiosity (Mbiti, *Religions and Philosophy* 2) they give theophoric names which are most times given in acknowledging the role of God in the different circumstances of human life. There are a variety of other names which are theophoric in nature. This has been dealt with extensively in our earlier work on *The Names of and Attributes of God in Igala* (Egbunu, 5-6). In the work, we noted that *Ojo-ninmi*, refers to God

as the author of life (with *Ojonyi/Ojochona* as variations). Such names remind parents of the sustaining power of God. This is not unrelated to *Ojochogwu* which means God is medicine or remedy to all ailments, whether spiritual, physical, emotional or moral. He possesses the power to decide when to give life or take it. That explains why the Igala name *Ojotule* shows how God is mightier than all, no matter what status or might. He is able to accomplish all that he decides to do on behalf of the underprivileged (*Ojo anache*). He offers credible and appropriate answers to our predicaments (*Ojogbene*); he is at one and the same time God who leads the way (*Ojo anonęle*); God of truth (*Ojo enęogęcha*); God the giver of gifts (*Ojo kinele*) who also sees the inside (*Ojogęfu*); God who knows everything (*Ojoma/ Ojonomia*), and so forth. Other nuances and instances abound whereby such attributes of God are imputed on human circumstances surrounding. It is also noteworthy at this juncture that some of the names are gender-specific while certain names could be given neutrally (male or female) some are meant specifically for either females or males. Aside Igala or African names, names are generally given for specific purposes.

Experimenting With Names in General

It is necessary to note in passing that, aside names that are theophoric in nature, those influenced by the indigenous Religion, infant mortality, the socio-economic circumstances of birth, philosophy, heroic feats, social status and sentiments or emotions there are yet others that were influenced by the incursion of the colonial masters or Christian/Islamic Religious affiliations and neighbouring linguistic groups. However, these latter are not so much our point of focus in this paper. We may also need to underline the historical fact that with the advent of Islam and Christianity, it became more fashionable in the land to take on names with some religious connotations in relation to such faiths. Those names were particularly rooted not only in Portuguese, French, Jewish, Latin, Spanish, Irish, German languages, but also English and Arabic languages. Inadvertently, such foreign names, though they may be adulterated to fit into the native assent, do not serve in most cases in place of the culturally value-laden names of the people. Times were, when to be christened meant adopting Jewish and Europeanized names. The names were either names of Saints, to whom they modeled their lives after, Patron Saints who interceded for them, or on occasions, certain odd and unknown figures, vague titles or appellations which had little or no relationship whatsoever with their lives. With the benefit of hindsight, there also exist the tradition of taking religious names, such as was prevalent in Christendom at crucial moments of a change in religious status. In the remote past, some change of names were considered a sort of precondition for attaining certain levels of spiritual or social heights. In the Biblical times, for instance, Abram changed to Abraham which depicts fruitfulness, favour, blessing (Gen. 17:1-8); Jacob became Israel which implies the exhibition of God's strength and power (Gen. 32:27); Simon was renamed Peter (*Kephas*) which portrays rock (Matt. 16:13-17); Saul was given Paul which means small but mighty in exploits (Acts 9). In like manner, recent events show how Carol Cardinal Wojtylla went by the name of Pope John II on assumption of the office of the papacy. Similarly, his successor, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger took the name Benedict XVI on assumption of office. And in the current dispensation, Jorge Cardinal Bergoglio took the name Francis I. This boils down to the fact that names are very significant in various circumstances to a people's life. As it were, there is tremendous power in a name. Its relevance is immeasurable and its significance so unquantifiable that its effect could be inherently profound in the life of any human person. This explains why socio-religiously, giving of names to people arbitrarily is considered very detrimental to the life of such individuals. Though, certain individuals may decide to bear power-names from their

adolescent age which depict certain heroic imageries portrayed in animals, trees, shrubs, or other natural objects; it is not in all cases that all that is conventional is acceptable and value-laden. In our context, certain Christians have been given or taken names which are particularly outrageous in meaning when translated from foreign languages. For instance, how could one bear Snake, Coffin, Dragon, Death, Accident, Scorpion, Devil, Satan, etc. except as guy-names or power-names? Here, a kind of caveat is necessary as cultural value-laden names are to be preferred to relatively unfounded and foggy ones. Instances of rather ambiguous and evil-laden historical names abound e.g. Jezebel, Nebuchadnezzar, Herodias, Judas (Iscariot), Goliath, Jabez, and so forth, even in the Bible. To be avoided too are names which are directly or indirectly insulting or derogatory of God and his image in mankind.

CONCLUSION

In this age of inculturation, contextualization or Africanization of our pristine cultural values along with the Gospel values, it behoves us to not only embrace the praise-worthy practice of employing names of heroes/heroines of the Church or Mosque but to also promote the hallowed morally and spiritually pregnant trado-cultural names. This is owing to the fact that such Igala or African names are not just personal identifiers; they are also pointers teleologically to the future potentials and destiny of individuals so named. In them people are reminded of the need for learning the lessons of history. More so, they form the legacies of our ancestors, since embedded in the nuanced meanings of such names are found the veritable vestiges of the people's culture meant for the common good.

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