Name Shows Ancestral Heritage
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During my fourteen-year's stay in the United States, I have observed the American intelligentsia experiencing difficulty in pronouncing Indian names and often distorting them. For example, they call Vivek as Vick, Harish as Harry, Santosh as Sandy, Suguna as Sue, Ajay as Jay. This dysophonia has misled some members of the community to adopt American names for their newborn. This practice is gaining momentum; if it is not corrected at this initial stage, it is likely to prove suicidal to our ancestral culture and annihilate Hindu traditions. The end result will be a third generation of Indians bearing American names with no links to their ancestry and motherland.

According to Hindu sanskriti, the child is given a name starting with the Devanagari alphabet assigned to a particular asterism (nakshatra) of the Zodiac which the moon is in at the time of birth.

Name is a structure of vibrating sound energy as ingrained in a particular alphabet or pattern. The whole phenomenal world consists of vibrations. The soul, body and name - this trio constitutes a person. The three components needs to be in harmony. According to our heritage, Nam Sanskar - naming the child is a dynamic discipline and needs special attention by parents. A name is impregnated with some sort of aura characterizing a person. A name derived from the birth nakshatra is charged with the harmonic vibrations as correlating to the moon which represents the psyche in a person. The zodiacal sign of the moon at birth constitutes one's Janam Rashi. This principle is applied when looking into the matrimonial compatibility of the boy and the girl by matching their respective janam nakshatra. Today, we are bypassing this great science, labelling it as superstitious, and no wonder marriages are without domestic harmony and are full of frustration. What is more important is the ancestral heritage which forms one's gotra or caste that determines the last name. The first and the middle name

constitute the basic name which should reflect our cultural background, and bear identity to a holy name, as attributes of something divine and sacred. Unlike the old stereotyped polysyllabic names, the emphasis should be that we may have easy-to-pronounce short, simple, close to monosyllabic names liken Anu, Anik, Arun, Isha, Pawan, Gaurav, Gauri, Hans, Usha, Ved, etc. A suffix can be added, if desired to signify paternal linkage. Any distinctive name of ancient lore will be a constant reminder to the child to assume ennobling qualities inherent in that name and will be reminiscent of the past ancestral heritage.

Diverse cultural identities integrated into the American mainstream are much like the different flowers wreathed in a bouquet which lend beauty to it. The different pattern of names, as we find in this country, are indeed a byproduct of the different ethnic groups inhabiting this land. There is no logic to superimpose one culture over another and substitute American names for our Vedic names, which will annihilate both our origin and ancestry. We have adopted this country as our new homeland, we need to live in a cooperative spirit and honor each other's name and identity, however much varied it may be. It is imperative for the community to preserve heritage by giving names of Vedic lore to our descendants irrespective of the country of our adoption. Jai Bharat, Jai America.

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