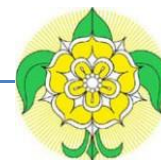


The Good Name



The meaning and importance of a good name.

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Francis Bacon wrote that he left his name and memory to future ages and his own country after some time has passed: -

I have held up a light in the obscurity of Philosophy, which will be seen centuries after I am dead... For my memory I leave it to men's charitable speeches, to foreign nations and the next ages, and to my own country after some time has elapsed.¹

For my name and memory I leave to men's charitable speeches, and to foreign nations and the next ages.²

A good name was important to him.

A good name is like a precious ointment; it filleth all around about, and will not easily away; for the odours of ointments are more durable than those of flowers.³

This brings to mind Juliet's remark in *Hamlet*: "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet."⁴

In one sense—and one sense only—Juliet is right, for a rose is a rose whatever name we choose to call it. But this both side-steps why we give a name to someone or something in the first place, whilst also referring to other possibilities. We give a name as near as possible to suit, or describe, who or what we are naming. In other words, it is a recognition and summary description of what we know about that thing or person, or a name that we feel suits that person or have been inspired to give that person (e.g. as a new-born babe). It is a means of identification—and some names are better than others for the purpose. Moreover, as human beings we tend to be influenced by and manifest whatever our name is and means.

In scriptural terms, the Divine Name is synonymous with the Word of God. The Name is a description; the Word is the creative expression of what is named. In Kabbalah and Judaism there are seven Holy Names⁵ and 72 lesser names for what is called, simply, 'God' in most English language Christian bibles.

The word 'God', however, is an appropriate choice for a summary name, for it is equated with the word 'Good'. When Light, the first and full manifestation of God, was seen by God, what was seen was Good (i.e. God).

"And God said, 'Let there be light': and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good."⁶

This Light is what is called Eros in the Orphic/Greek tradition and language, which means 'Love'. Eros ('Love'), the primordial god, is also Phanes ('Light'), Logos ('Word') and Protogenos ('First-born'). Hence Jesus Christ's teaching, and also that of St John and others, that God is love.

Then, as pointed out by Francis Bacon, God's nature is goodness, and this goodness is love in action, which he says is referred to by the biblical passage: "the work that God worketh from the beginning to the end".⁷ Bacon further refers to this goodness or love in action as being the summary law of being and nature.⁸ In other words, God is Love, both in being and in action.

A good name, therefore, is a god name—a truly suitable name that describes in the best possible way both the person and the nature or activity of that person in terms of the divinity that, potentially, could be and often is manifested by that person to some degree or other.

Bacon likens a good name to a precious ointment. An ointment is made from an oil, such as rose oil. The process for infused oils is to pick the flower when in bloom, separate and dry the open petals, crush them, then infuse them in an appropriate oil. The process for essential oils is to extract the volatile oils from the petals by means of steam distillation. Bacon probably refers to essential oils, a term coined by the sixteenth-century alchemist Paracelsus as, to him, the essential oil was the most concentrated form of the individual characteristics of the plant—its essence (or quintessence, in terms of the alchemical elements).

As in the symbolism of harvesting grapes and making wine, the process of making rose oil or ointment represents the process of initiation that a person has to go through before he/she can truly manifest the meaning of the god- or good-name. Both symbols (wine and rose oil) were used in the Dionysian-Orphic mysteries, the rose in particular being an attribute of Eros as well as an anagram of the word Eros.

This traditional symbol of love (the rose) is still used today, but it is the oil or ointment that we have to strive to become; then we will give off an odour or perfume in our auras that is especially lovely, enjoyable, healing and uplifting. The usefulness of an ointment is usually as a balm for soothing and healing; that of the perfume or odour of the ointment is in delighting, attracting, uplifting, stirring emotions and, sometimes, cleansing and expanding the mind.

As Bacon further mentions, ointment is used in the anointing of kings and bishops, as a symbol of the spiritual anointing (with light) performed by God. The idea of the anointing was derived from the mystery schools and symbolised the initiate having reached that high point of initiation known as illumination and thereby becoming an adept or master. Bacon saw such anointing as being associated with a "fraternity in learning and illumination": -

And surely as nature createth brotherhood in families, and arts mechanical contract brotherhoods in commonalties, and the anointment of God superinduceth a brotherhood in kings and bishops: so in like manner there cannot but be a fraternity in learning and illumination, relating to that paternity which is attributed to God, who is called the Father of illuminations or lights.⁹

Bacon's own names and titles—namely, Sir Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam of Verulam, Viscount St Alban—relate specifically to the Dionysian-Orphic Mysteries, as also to the Christian, Freemasonic and Rosicrucian Mysteries. His names are good names, for he lived what they mean in a full initiatory way.¹⁰

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Endnotes ►

Endnotes

¹ Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, Bk II.

² Francis Bacon, Last will, December 19, 1625.

³ Francis Bacon, *Essays*, 'Of Praise'.

⁴ Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 2:2.

⁵ YHWH (The Tetragrammaton), El, Eloah, Elohim, Shaddai, Ehyeh, and Tzevaot.

⁶ Genesis 3:4.

⁷ Ecclesiastes 3:10. "He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end." (KJV)

⁸ Francis Bacon, *On Principles and Origins according to the fables of Cupid and Coelum*.

⁹ Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, Book II.

¹⁰ FBRT essay: 'The Mystery of Francis Bacon's Name' by Peter Dawkins (FBRT website: www.fbrt.org.uk)