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EFFECTIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF THE
HOLY QURAN

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ABSTRACT

Language, one of the great blessings God has bestowed upon man, is an exclusively human property. Language is a system of symbols and meanings used for the effective communication. The Holy Quran, the great miracle of the Prophet of Islam and the book of human life, has provided valuable principles on effective verbal communication skills. One part of the Quranic teachings pertains to human communication, especially spoken skills and conversation rituals. In this paper we are trying to review some of the important communication skills such as Courtesy and Respect, Eloquence and Rhetoric Gentleness in speech, Simplicity of Speech, Moderation in speech and Euphemism provided by the Holy Quran.

Key words: Communication; Principles; Quran; speech; courtesy; effective; language

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INTRODUCTION

Language is human –specific in being a means of communication .Thanks to the language human is able to exchange knowledge, beliefs, opinion, feelings,etc. God Almighty in the Holy Quran, following the creation of man, has spoken of the gift of speech and said: The All-merciful has taught the Koran, He created man and He has taught him the Explanation.(Al-Rahman,1-4)

Allah ,the Great, in the chapter of Al-Balad (the Land)verses 7and 8,after mentioning meaningful oaths and referring to suffering life of human, notes some of the most important blessings that He has bestowed upon him. One of them is the gift of language: Have We not appointed to him two eyes, and a tongue, and two lips.

As we learn from these verses, it was God who taught us to speak and granted us the natural ability to use words to express our feelings and thoughts.

The Quran, the direct word of Allah, is the greatest miracle of the last Prophet, Mohammad (pbuh), and the most qualified guide for human till the end of history. The divine teachings of the Quran relate to all aspects of life: personal, social, religious, moral, ethical, political, etc., and how to regulate these matters in society. One part of the Quranic teachings pertains to human communication, especially spoken skills and conversation rituals. One of the issues in the field of customs of speaking is how to make verbal relations effective and how to address people in personal and public settings. The Holy Quran, in many of its verses has put forth principles and etiquette of speaking. In this article, we'll categorize and explain some of these principles. In our translation of the verses concerned [1] [2] .

1. Courtesy and Respect

According to the Holy Quran, a communication is safe and sound that takes place based on personality reverence, self-esteem and mutual respect in human relationships. Obviously, when the addresser speaks with ugly words, not only it does not affect the addressee but it also damages the communication. Attention to the verses of the Holy Quran indicates that God, the Almighty, fully observes courtesy in speech with the prophets, angels, believers, and common people and even with the in fields and polytheists. It also commands the believers to politely speak with people and ignore using offensive and discourteous language (even against the unbelievers and idiots). The Quran, which has been called the fairest discourse (Al-Zumar,23), gives guidelines to people to express fair words in speaking. In the chapter of Al- Baqara, verse 83, God mentions the covenants He has taken from the children of Israel and says: "and speak well to men."

Respecting others in speech is the most important criteria for good speech in the Qur'an. Allah, the Lord of all being, says to the holy prophet (SAW) to tell His servants to pay attention to their words during discussion with pagans and say a word that is the best. "And say to my servants that they say words that are kindlier. For surely Satan provokes strife between them."(Al-Isra, 53). Sometimes believers became angry and insulted the idol of the pagans, but God has explicitly forbidden them from uttering vain and indecent words and says: " Abuse not those to whom they pray, apart from God, or they will abuse God in revenge without knowledge."(Al-Anam, 108).

From the viewpoint of the Quran, a speech is wrathful when we associate it with courtesy. Even if the word itself is valuable, but when the speaker expresses it in an improper manner, that word will be worthless and ineffective. When Prophet Abraham (AS) in a meaningful dialogue with his uncle, Azar, faces his insulation, and hears his threat, he respects him and graciously begins his speech with greeting and goodwill. He said: Peace be upon thee! I will ask my Lord to forgive thee; surely He is ever gracious to me.(Maryam, 47)

Abraham's humble reaction against Azar demonstrates that courtesy is the most important factor in verbal communication. Greeting or goodwill, which is the message of health, safety, reconciliation, friendship and love, is the sign of courtesy. Islam, a religion of peace, love and friendship, has always invited his followers to observe courtesy in dealing with each other. The Holy Quran says: Therein they shall hear no idle talk, no cause of sin, only the saying "Peace, Peace".(Al-waaqia,26). On the other hand, Quran advises Muslims to give people a better or at least an equal answer when people greet them. "And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a fairer than it, or return it; surely God keeps a watchful count over everything. " (An-Nisa,86)

Elsewhere, in describing Ebad-al-Rahman (The servants of the Gracious) the Qur'an says: The servants of the Gracious who walk on the earth in humility and if the ignorant speak to them, they say, " eace."(Al-Forqan,25:63). The Holy Quran in a number of verses has expressed the etiquette of entering a home. The first etiquette of entering others' home or even meeting with others is greeting and respect. Allah, the Almighty, commands us to respect people's properties and not to be transgressor's .In verses 27 and 28 of Surah Al-Noor He says: O believers do not enter houses other than your houses until you ask leave and salute the people thereof; that is better for you; haply you will remember. And if you find anyone therein, enter it not until leave is given to you. And if you are told, "Return", return; that is purer for you; and God knows the things you do (Arberry ,1955).

Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him and his pure family, the final Messenger from God, was morally at the top of all humans and was a perfect man. He was rich in all the good attributes and was clean from all evil traits. Although in this brief we cannot describe the great manner of the holy Prophet, we refer to just one of them .The Prophet embodied in moral minds and ethics noted in Islam and the Qur'an. He was so well-tempered that Allah praised him as someone with a high nature and ethics and said: Surely thou art upon a mighty morality.(Al-Qalam,4). There cannot be a higher praise to a servant than what God has said about the Prophet Muhammad. Allah summed up the moral beauty of the prophet in a very short term, and has praised him as the owner of the great nature, character and moral. The Prophet's complete attention to the holy Qur'an, has made his glorious manner worthy of respect and the perfect one as

well. The life of the Prophet (SWW) is the best model and the greatest moral example for mankind and in the Quran about his being a model, says: You have had a good example in God's Messenger (to follow).(Al-Ahzab,21).

Greeting, handshaking, hugging, and soothing are signs of courtesy and goodness of human behavior. One of the admirable behaviors of the Holy Prophet (SWW) was in salutation [3]. The great prophet of Islam saluted all even children and slaves and was always the first in salutation when dealing with others (Tabatabai Seyyed Mohammad, Traditions of the Prophet, Translated by Latif Rashidi). Good ethics and good behavior of the Prophet can be considered as the most important factors in his popularity and eloquence among Muslims. To God Almighty, the faithful servant is very dear and respectable and does not allow people to insult or mock each other. Therefore, in verse 11 of Sura Al-hujraat says: "O believers let not any people scoff at another people who may be better than they; neither let women scoff at women who may be better than themselves. And find fault with one another, neither revile one another by nicknames. An evil name is ungodliness after belief. And whoso repents not, those- they are the evildoers." (Al-hujraat,11)

1. a. Talking with parents: The Holy Quran gives parents authority and high position. The Book commands children to be obedient to parents and to show respect and kindness to them. In verses 23 and 24 of surah Isra offers very important commandments to the children to observe their parents' dignity and speak generously with them. "Thy Lord has decreed you shall not serve any but Him, and to be good to parents, whether one or both of them attains old age with thee; say not to them "Fie" neither chide them, but speak unto them words respectful, and lower to them the wing of humbleness out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them, as they raised me up when I was little". (Isra, 23 – 24)

Let's review some of the important instructions given in these verses, the ones that children have to obey when talking with their parents:

I) Avoid using words of disrespect, i.e., words that are against courtesy and respect, such as saying "Fie" that shows the anger of the child: say not "Fie" unto them .

II) Avoid using words that annoy them, such as yelling or a coarse talk: and do not scold them.

III) Avoid using indecent words. Children are required honoring their parents and speaking decently and respectfully to them; speaking unto them words respectful.

IV) Avoid using arrogant words and remarks. It is obligatory for children to speak humbly to their parents: and lower to them the wing of humbleness out of mercy.

Kindness to parents and respecting them are so vital that God after expressing the necessity of worshipping one God has always noted the respect and reverence for parents. Serve God, and associate naught with Him. Be kind to parents. (An-Nisa, 36). The holy Quran inverse 83 of Sura Baqara, has referred to kindness to parents as God's covenant with Israel and says: when We took compact with the Children of Israel: "You shall not serve any save God; and to be good to parents. (Al-Baqara, 83). In these verses, as well as inverse 23 of Sura Al-Isra when God commands people to worship Him alone, immediately orders kindness and goodness to parents, which indicates the importance of kindness and respect to parents in the presence of God. If God as a Creator and Lord should be worshiped, parents as indicators of the grace and blessings of God to man, must be respected and loved. On the other hand, respect to parents is not dedicated to Muslim parents, but anyone who is a parent of children must be respected because these verses speak of the "parents" without any requirement to faith and Islam.

2. Eloquence and Rhetoric

The Holy Quran is a divine miracle, which is still alive after centuries, and with its brilliant truth is appearing in full beauty. The Quran is the most eloquent discourse because by keeping and observing literary notes, it has expressed the facts, which are useful for guidance and human maturity, in the most beautiful words. Hence, the Merciful God has called it "the best Hadith" -the most beautiful word. In verse 23 of Surah Zumar (Companies) says: "God has sent down the fairest discourse as a Book, con similar in its oft-repeated".

An obvious witness to the miracle of the eloquence and fluency of this great divine book, which is evident in every one of its chapters, is that during the past 1400 years, no one has been able to bring even one chapter

like that in the Holy Qur'an .And if ye are in doubt concerning that We have sent down on Our servants, then bring a Sura like it, and call your witnesses, apart from God, if ye are truthful(Al-Baqara,23).

Or do they say ;"He has forged it"?. Say: "Then bring you tensor as the like of it, forged; and call upon whom you are able, apart from God, if you speak truly."(Hud,13).Say: "if men and jinn banded together to produce the like of this Koran, they would never produce its like ,not though they backed one another." (Al-Isra, 88).In these verses, Allah in a few senses has asked people (If they doubt in the divinity of the Quran) bring something equal to the Qur'an.

The Qur'an, the direct word of Allah, has the gift of eloquence of speech .Eloquence means the clarity, beauty and fluency of, speech. An eloquent word is that whose letters have phonetic harmony ,its application in the intended meaning is not unfamiliar, and its inflectional structure is in accordance with the spelling rules of the desired language[4] .Rhetoric means being expressive, obvious, distinct, and accurate in presenting what the speaker is concerned .Eloquence and rhetoric require that in expressing the intended purpose, the speaker should be able to make benefit of beautiful, simple, fluent, and plain words and terms. And say to them penetrating words about themselves (An-Nisa,63).

In the Holy Quran, very valuable points for the guidance of the mankind have been expressed in several stories. One of these stories is the story of Moses and Aaron(peace be upon them).The Quran has narrated the story of Moses and Aaron(s) in several different chapters, including Sura Taha, verses 9 to 101,Sura Al-Qasas, verses 3 to 43,as well as in many other chapters. This story contains material related to leadership, team work, and communication skills. Whenever the call of Moses has been expressed, along with it, the call of Aaron has also been considered, and both together were sent to Pharaoh, Haman ,Korah and children of Israel. The Qur'an draws our attention to an important reason for that Moses asked the Almighty God to put Aaron his companion and partner in the divine mission.

"And my brother Harun (Aaron) he is more eloquent in speech than me so send him with me as a helper to confirm me. Verily! I fear that they will belie me." (Al-Qasas, 34).This honorable verse shows that eloquence of speech is a feature that affects the audience and does not allow them to raise doubt about its content so that they will accept the message properly .The Holy Quran is excellent and accurate in the application of novel tips and in elegance of speech. In the Quran a plenty of metaphor, simile and allusions can be seen. Although in all cases, conventional practices in Arab literature have been observed, in each case, elegance and amazing accuracy has been employed .Now by studying these verses, we will explain important hints about the eloquence and rhetoric of the Quran.

2. a. Simile: Rhetoricians have agreed upon that Qur'anic similes are the most graceful analogies that I can be found in the Arab discourse [5], [6], [7], [8], [9] .

"Ibn al-Athir," an Arab scholar and historian, gives an example of verse 10 of Surah Naba' therein darkness of the night has been likened to a covering such as a garment: "And we appointed night for a garment."(Naba, 10)

In the words of Ibn al-Athir, darkness hides people from the eyes of others. At night, a person can hide himself from the eyes of the enemies and find a way to escape .Ibnal-Athir says:"It is of analogies whose similar one does not exist elsewhere, except the Quran. Because analogizing the pervasive darkness of the night to the garment of the body is among subtleties to which the Quran has been adorned and its equivalent can not be found in other Arab words (neither prose norrhyme). Also verse187of Surah Baqarah that has described couples as a vestment for each other, is the most elegant simile .As a garment is an adornment for the human, covers his imperfections and protects him against cold and heat, the couple also adorns one another lives and are covers for their own undesirable traits."

2. b. Metaphor: Eloquence and clarity of speech are very admirable issues because if we offer an important and valuable message in an unappealing appearance, and neglect its valuable content, we have reduced the value of that message. So Allah sent down his speech, the Qur'an, in the best and most beautiful form of the rhetoric and eloquence. This feature is evident in every chapter of the Quran.In semantics a speech is eloquent due to the fact that it is free from syntactic, semantics, phonetic, and stylistic deficiencies. Semantically, its lexical items (words) should be easy to understand; phonetically, they should be easy to pronounce, and

stylistically, their occurrence in the context should be cohesively and coherently acceptable and be protected from any kind of complexity [10].

3. Gentleness in Speech

Another effective spoken communication skill presented in the Qur'an is kindness and gentleness of speech. When Muslims talk to each other, their words should be filled with affection, passion and gentleness. Gentle speech influences the hearts of people and may cause them to change their minds and behavior, whereas aggressive or hurtful words will make things worse and lessen the influence of speech. When the Lord of the universe sends Moses and Aaron, peace be upon them, to Pharaoh to invite him, He commands them to speak gently with him. Allah says: "Go to Pharaoh, for he has waxed insolent; yet speak gently to him, that haply he may be mindful, or perchance fear. (Taha, 43-44).

Elsewhere in the Holy Quran God speaks of a covenant He has taken from the children of Israel to worship none but Allah; treat their parents and orphans with kindness, and to speak fair to the people. (Baqara 2:83) The Glorious Quran also praises the Prophet's manner in speech because he was gentle, smiling and soft with his people, and with strangers. His sweetness was a gift from Allah: "So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely [upon Him]." (Quran, Aal-Imran, 3:159). These verses show that God wants our speech to be fair and gentle because it creates calm in the audience and gives him the opportunity to understand the message of speech. Offensive talk, on the contrary, causes people to get away from around us.

4. Simplicity of Speech

Good speech should be simple, fluent, and easy to understand for everyone. The Qur'an is not a riddle and does not have any complexity. Allah the Almighty confirms this fact, and in several chapters of the Quran addresses the holy prophet (SAW) and says that He has made the Qur'an easy for people to remember and understand.

- A) Now we have made the Koran easy for Remembrance (Al-Qamar, 54:17).
- B) Now we have made it easy by thy tongue that thou mayest bear good tidings thereby to the god-fearing, and warn a people stubborn (Maryam, 19:97).
- C) Now We have made it easy by thy tongue, that haply they may remember (Al-Dokhan, 44:58).

We can understand from these verses that the goal of any speech or verbal communication is mutual understanding. The ease of speech is a leading factor that can give the audience an opportunity to understand the message of speech. Complex and difficult talk never provides the possibility of mutual understanding, rather, it causes the audience not to properly hear, ponder and understand the speech. Therefore, the Quran commands all Muslims to utter words that are easy to understand, and avoid difficult and incomprehensible words.

5. Moderation in Speech

Lowering the tone of one's voice is one of the best and most beautiful manners of speech and is a sign of politeness. The Holy Quran, in three cases, has invited Muslims to observe this great and valuable character. In one case as one of Luqman's advices to his son, which is a general advice, it instructs Muslims to be moderate and humble in how they walk and to lower their voice (Luqman, 31:19).

The other two verses of the Quran in line with courtesy and moderation in speech have been proposed in the chapter of al- Hujurat, where the Prophet's companions were highly recommended not to raise their voice above that of the holy Prophet. O you who acknowledge, do not raise your voices above the voice of the prophet, nor shall you speak loudly at him as you would speak loudly to each other, lest your works become nullified while you do not perceive. Surely, those who lower their voices in the presence of the messenger of God, they are the ones whose hearts have been tested by God for righteousness. They have deserved forgiveness and a great recompense." (al- Hujurat, 49: 2&3). These verses show that we should observe moderation in speech in the presence all people especially the Prophet, Imams and Saints, *and do not speak* to them in a loud *boisterous* voice.

6. Euphemism

There is always a feeling of discomfort at mentioning harmful and embarrassing words to which society is often sensitive [11]. Therefore, language has its own ways of avoiding such taboos. The process of substitution where the offensive or unacceptable words are substituted by more appropriate ones has come to be known as 'euphemism [12] [13]. For example, "join the majority" is a euphemism that describes the death of a person. The Glorious Qur'an abounds in euphemistic expressions (fine phrases) on harsh and distasteful themes and topics. Euphemized Quranic expressions fall in topics such as; sexual intercourse, genitals, woman, excretory functions, sicknesses, divorce and death [14]. The verses below review some euphemistic expressions in the Holy Quran:

- I. The Holy Quran use the words al-rafath(Al-baqara, 2:187); taqrabuhonna(Al-baqara, 2:222); fa'too(Al-baqara, 2:223) ; laamastom (An-nisa, 4:43); le yaskono elayha falamma taqshaha (Al-araf, 7:189) to refer euphemistically to the sexual relations[15]. It can be noticed that Edip translates these expressions euphemistically as *approach* , *approach* , *approach* , *contact* , and *attain tranquility...covered* respectively.
- II. In the chapter of Al-mumenoon ,verse 5 ,the Quran uses the word "farj"and "orah" to refer to women privy parts [13]
- III. In the Glorious Qur'an , the excretory process is expressed by using the word "al-qaaez" which literally means the defecation only, but in the chapter of An-nisa,verse 43 and the chapter of Al-maeda verse 6, the word "al-qaaez" refers to all excretory processes -*urinary, fecal, or gas* [15] -

Conclusion

To achieve a good and effective verbal communication, in addition to having the right beliefs, it is also necessary to learn techniques and skills of effective verbal communication. Understanding the principles of communication and the discovery of effective communication skills improve successful human relations, friendship stability, family stability and social consent. This paper presented some useful insights into the successful and influential manners of effective verbal communication based on the verses of the Glorious Quran. Moral and social criteria for "good talk" according to the Holy Quran are courtesy and respect, gentleness in speech, eloquence, euphemism, and simplicity of speech. In the light of these skills man is able to reach his purposes in conversation with his fellow and convey his message to others easily and effectively.

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