



Principle Of Human Communication: Islamic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Possessing different forms and heterogeneous characteristics, the arena of human communication is vast and versatile. Islam, on the other hand, identified as one of the major religions across the world, provides extensive guidelines to be pursued in intrapersonal, interpersonal, small group, public and all relevant forms of human communication. In this article, an attempt has been done to focus the principle of human communication in the light of Islamic perspective.

KEYWORDS: Quran, Hadith, Allah, Prophet and Interpersonal communication.

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly there is no way but to treat communication as an important basic part of human life. As human being is quite different and unique than any other animals or beings, similarly human communication also takes special forms in comparison to the characteristics of communication used by other living beings. Human nature is very mysterious and so is human communication. "Communication is one of those everyday activities that is intertwined with all of human life so completely that we sometimes overlook its pervasiveness, importance, and complexity."¹

Different forms of human communication are influenced and directed by prevailing principles based on individual and societal belief, values, rituals, norms, culture and etc. which are practiced in existing societies.

'Islam' which is mostly known as religion although it recognizes itself as a complete code of life; it provides special guideline in the arena of human communication.

In this article this attempt has been taken to point out the specific principle of human communication in the light of 'Islam'.

There are different forms of human communication: intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, small group communication and public communication. Pinpointing these areas of human communication Joseph A. Devito said,

"Through interpersonal communication you talk with, learn about, and judge yourself. You persuade yourself of this or that, reason about possible decisions to make and rehearse messages that you plan to send to others. Through interpersonal communication you interact with others, learn about them and yourself and reveal yourself to others. Whether with new acquaintances, old friends, lovers, or family members, it is through interpersonal communication that you establish, maintain,



sometimes destroy, and sometimes repair personal relationships. Interpersonal communication also occurs during interviews—in, for example, applying for a job, gathering information, and counselling.

Through small group communication you interact with others in groups.

---Through public communication, others inform and persuade you.”²

Islam, as a complete code of life, provides specific guidelines in all these areas of human communication. Therefore, the guidelines of Islam should be treated as Islamic principle since principle is defined as guideline. “A principle is a guideline that enables you to interpret an event, make judgments about what is happening and then decide how to act in the situation. A principle has three parts: (1) it identifies a situation or event ; (2) it includes a set of norms or values ; and (3) it asserts a connection between a range of actions and possible consequences.”³

According to this definition, Islam specifically presents principles on ideal form of communication as two fundamental sources of ‘Islamic Shariah’

(Islamic rules and regulations) : Quran and Hadith clearly depict the ideal

characteristics of human communication. With a view to establishing peace,

equality and brotherhood in this world and for the satisfaction of almighty Allah, Islam renders principles in human communication.

Allah says,

“ This is a proclamation to humanity, and guidance,

and advice for the righteous.”⁴

This holy book Quran guides us the whole way of life including the forms of communication in our daily practical lives. Islam gives much importance on effective communication. Different basic practices in Islam are closely connected with communication. For example, Belief (Iman) is the most basic component of ‘Islam’. According to Islam , ‘Iman’ (belief) means to believe or accept this statement that there is none but Allah only should be worshipped and Hazrat Muhammad (sm) is his prophet . According to academic aspect of communication, believing this statement is intrapersonal communication. On the basis of this belief, when a person performs different rituals/activities of Islam he or she uses different forms of communication. Suppose, when a person preaches (Dawat) Islam to others, he may use any form of communication like interpersonal communication, group communication , public communication and even mass communication. When a man says prayers (salat), he actually maintains communication with Allah because saying prayer (namaz) means to stand before almighty Allah. Islam is deeply interconnected with communication .With a basic function to communicate, Allah created man. In fact, in comparison to any other animals in the world, mankind got special and unique communication ability from almighty Allah. In the holy Quran, Allah says,

“And taught him clear expression” ⁵

According to Islamic spirit, for the betterment of mankind, Allah assigns thousands of prophets to communicate with people with His sacred guidelines. In the light of Islamic concept, Allah himself is a communicator Who conveys His text ‘Quran’ through His messenger prophet



Muhammad (sm). Again, we see Prophet Muhammad (sm) communicates with different sections of people to preach 'Islam'. Prophet Muhammad (sm) used both written and oral form of communication. He attracts everyone with his unique pleasant behavior and outstanding personality. Despite the despicable propaganda by his enemy, people who came and saw the prophet became convinced with his true speech blended with wonderful manner and etiquette. Not only that, just listening to his Quran recitation or just seeing him many men embraced 'Islam'. Here if we analyze, what prophet (sm) did is the part of communication. That means, prophet(sm) set an example of effective and ideal form of communication by which we can learn how to successfully motivate or convince a person.

Through the life-style of prophet Muhammad (sm) Islam presents universalistic approach of interpersonal communication which is free from any prejudice based on religion, culture, nationality, race or color. Hazrat Muhammad (sm) said to fulfill the rights of neighbors irrespective of their identity as religion, race or color.

Prophet(sm) said,

"Gabriel continued to recommend me about treating the neighbors kindly and politely so much so that I thought he would order me to make them as my heirs."6

In the light of Islam, justice should be ensured in interpersonal communication and social relation.

"God commands justice, and goodness, and generosity towards relatives. And He forbids immorality, and justice, and oppression. He advises you, so that you take heed."7

Prophet (sm) always instructs his followers to furnish the best behavior to all. He himself set a unique example of politeness, polished behavior and outstanding patience in interpersonal communication.

He said,

"He is not one of us who does not have mercy upon our young, nor knows the honor of our elders"8

Islam absolutely prohibits any sort of rough and rude behavior even in the case of argumentation.

Allah says,

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice, and debate with them in the most dignified manner. Your Lord is aware of those who stray from His path, and He is aware of those who are guided."9

Prophet (sm) and his followers set a unparalleled examples of truthfulness in their regular interpersonal communication as Islam forbids telling lie or concealing the truth or assisting falsehood or fraudulent activities.

Allah says,

"Shall I inform you, upon whom devils descend? They descend up on every sinful liar."10

Prophet(sm) established an ideal society where all of his followers maintained excellent form of interpersonal communication and led their social lives with the outstanding practice of honesty and truth and thus they set a wonderful horizon of heavenly peace and prosperity.

Our prophet(sm) has given high importance to written form of communication. 'Quran' is the best example of written form of communication



and this text was recorded and preserved when it was revealed under the directives of prophet (sm) . Now Quran is the amazing miracle of written communication that prevails without any sort of distortion although it is the revealed text that appeared 1400 years ago.

According to the instruction of Hazrat Muhammad (sm), when Quran was revealed, it was recorded and preserved on bones, animal skins, date palms, tablets and leaves. Prophet(sm) used the medium of written communication by sending letters to invite many kings to Islam.

So analyzing the communication practice of prophet (sm), we find that he applied all communication forms which were available at his time. Therefore, it is an evidence for Islamic approach of human communication that it is legal for anyone to use any form of communication for noble purpose. In this perspective, modern scholars in Islam opine that latest tools of communication like television, radio, ICT technology are legal in Islam if they are applied for noble deeds. Since Prophet Muhammad (sm) applied all forms of communication available in his time, we also can use all latest tools of communication in a proper way for the honest and noble purpose.

Great philosopher Aristotle pointed out three basic components of communication: speaker, speech and audience .11

Islam says us what should be the characteristics of speaker, what is an ideal form of message and how messages should be disseminated to different receivers. That means, we find that Islam provides instruction in respect of fundamental elements of

communication. Quran informs us what should be the best speech. Allah says in the Quran,

“And who is better in speech than someone calls to God, acts with integrity, and says, ‘ I am of those who submit’.”¹²

Islam prohibits telling lie, distortion of information, delivering defamatory speech and etc. That means, Islam instructs to maintain honesty in communication.

Prophet (sm) confirmed, “Whoever does not give up false statements (i.e. telling lies), and evil deeds, and speaking bad words to others, Allah is not in need of his(fasting) leaving his food and drinks. ¹³

From this hadith, we understand how much importance has been given on the right use of communication. Islam set an wonderful example of oral communication : ‘Adhan’ which invites all to come to ‘Salat’(Prayer) in an outstanding way by inspiring all to a sacred activity. Prophet Muhammad (sm) said about the duty of a communicator,

“Who believes in Allah and the Last day should talk what is good or keep quiet.”¹⁴

Through this hadith our prophet (sm) set a principle as to how a communicator should perform. Quran and hadith also prohibit some misuses of communication like negative assumption and backbiting.

Quran orders,

“O, you believe! Avoid most suspicion – some suspicion is sinful. And do not spy on one another, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?...”¹⁵



Islam also guides to verify messages delivered from receivers. When there is a message from untrusted or wrongdoers, Islam suggests not to be confused with such information and such messages should be properly verified.

Allah tells in the Quran:

“O you who believe! If a troublemaker brings you any news, investigate, lest you harm people out of ignorance, and you become regretful for what you have done.”¹⁶

If we follow this guideline of holy Quran we can protect our society from spreading wrong information.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it is clear that holy Quran and hadith provide the necessary guideline to pursue an ideal form of human communication. It is Islam that opens affluent arena in all forms of human communication through the life-style of Hazrat Muhammad (sm) and his honorable associates. Cherishing Islamic spirit we can enrich our interpersonal communication and social relation as well.

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