



Parents-Children Communication: Islamic Approach

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ABSTRACT

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This study intends to review pertinent literature on embracing Islamic values which are significantly relevant in strengthening parents-children relationship in the modern world. The prominent Qur'anic verses on communication values among humankind in general, parenting roles, parenting skills, child-to-parents mannerism and the rights of children to communicate in a family are covered broadly with the intention to provide a better insight and perspectives on the subject matter. As parenting has never been easy back then and modern-days, this study also aims to give sufficient emphasis on the significance Islamic values have on the Muslim parents in communicating with family members – children in particular. This study concluded that the six primary values of Islamic teaching in family communication: *Qaulan Sadida*, *Qaulan Ma'rufa*, *Qaulan Baligha*, *Qaulan Maysura*, *Qaulan Layyina*, and *Qaulan Karima* would definitely produce a great communication mode, affectionate parents-children relationship, and ultimately develop an excellent youth personality in society. This is also a must-have-skill each Muslim parents acquire towards nurturing strong and beneficial family institution.

KEYWORDS:

Islamic communication, Family relationship, Values

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Family communication is indeed crucial component in creating appropriate mode of interaction in any social institution; this usually refers to any form of interaction between parents-children. In addition to this, family communication is also vital as a problem-solving avenue in seeking the best solutions to issues arising involving family members – husband and wife as well as teenagers of a family. In the time of technological advancement, the roles of parents becoming more challenging as the sophistication of communication devices might intervene the parents-children communication processes.

Looking back, parents approached a stricter one-way communication (parents to children communication), kids were expected to obey decisions parents made, hence resulted well-mannered children not only with parents but also others, self-disciplined kids, almost none interference of devices, and better academic achievements. Speaking on this, there are numerous literatures highlight findings on parents-children interaction and its significance outcomes.

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Family communication is decisive – parents and children are expected to communicate as often through which understanding each other's' needs, expectations and wants can be met, ultimately (Baran, Jerilyn, & Timothy, 1984). Undoubtedly, children are assumed to respect parents as it is one of the ways to minimize in-house conflicts and trigger hatred.

In this sense, Islam offers comprehensive parameter for humans' relations including parents-children interaction through numbers of Islamic moral values and principles such as truthful, good words, honest, and openness. The actions and decisions Muslims make concerning their life lie in the two primary sources of Islamic law: The Holy *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*. The first and foremost guide, al- *Qur'an*, communicates the fundamental principles of Islam and lays the foundation of Islamic behavior. The second, the *Sunnah* or the deeds, utterances, and trait approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h)

There are many teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) signify the valuable great accountability and obligations parents have on nurturing and bringing-up their children with Islamic morality. As Islamic values have long established and practiced across decades not only in terms of

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worshipping Allah (*ibadah*), but also covering the family communication matters. Nurturing children according to the Islamic values in the sophisticated era and environment can somehow be challenging for both; parents assume that the technological devices have reduced the time to communicate with children while children perceive devices offer much of entertainment and avenues to interact with. Thus, this has imposed great limitations on the family communication which was meant to serve the very basic platform to disseminate Islamic values to the next generation (Junaid, 2018).

2.0 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 2.1.1 To define communication from Islamic perspectives
- 2.1.2 To identify Islamic values of family communication
- 2.1.3 To understand the mutual obligations both parents-children carry in family communication

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, this writing adopts Library Research, whereby the researcher collect data through appropriate and sufficient references related to the research theme/concepts, both from journals and previous research. This study frames a qualitative design whereby the related Qur'anic verses were then examined in relation to the discussion of Islamic communication as the core values under study.

4.0 ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION

The foundation of the *ummah* or Muslim society is built through the family institution. The requirements and obligations for being part of the *ummah* including communal prayer, fasting, charity, pilgrimage and others to create a common identity that sets Muslim apart from other non-believers. It is necessary for Muslim parents to learn and practice the techniques of effective Islamic parenting. In order to be effective in raising the children according to the Islamic teachings, the understanding about the law of Allah is very essential. It is suggested that these skills should be incorporated into the innermost of individual's consciousness until they become a natural part of individual's unique style of interpersonal communication and interaction between parents and their children (Izzah Nur Aida Zur Raffar, Salasiah Hanin Hamjah, Ahmad Dzaky, Nang Naemah, 2018)

There are several verses in the *Holy Qur'an* as well as in the *Hadith* emphasized on the parents' responsibilities for the care and upbringing of their children. For example: *O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from the fire whose fuel is people and stones...* (Al-Tahrem 66:6). This command of Allah is again re-emphasized by Sa'eed bin el-,Aas, who was the Apostle of Allah said: "No father gave a better gift to his children than good manners and good character." (Ibn Majah). Azizi Yahaya, Shahrin Hashim, and

Mohd Anuar, (2003) assert that the approach any parents employ with their children will be imitated by them as part of inter-personal communication skills. It is worth to mention that the environment where the children are brought up is definitely significant to have influence on their later years' behaviours. Islam is a religion that inculcates strong faith by practicing religious teaching and eventually nurture encouraging moral conducts. This is well-affiliated with the mission of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) to bring into existence a perfect human behaviour as epitomized by him in his lifetime (*al-Qalam*: 4) to be exemplified by other human being (*al-'Ahzāb*: 21).

Sidek and Jamiah (2016) suggest that it is essential for parents to establish positive moral conduct to be then exemplified by their children – children will model their parents' actions and decisions and this is important for them to set good examples for respective family members. Al-Ghazali wrote in his book: God says: Those who are patience will be given rewards without measure. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) once said that *'The most perfect believer in faith is one who is the best of them in good conduct'*. This message of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) signify important values Muslims must possess and practice as good conducts complete half of the religions and reflects high quality of God-fearing men (piety or *taqwa*)

Family communication in Islam does not highlight only on individualistic sphere, but also societal realms. The essence of Islamic communication also lies in the concept that place every communicator aware of the existence of Allah as the sole creator of the world and aware of social function of communication at large by embedding both *Holy Qur'an* and *Hadith* of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) tradition as primary sources. In this context, Islam provides great emphasis on the importance of possessing good mannerism (*akhlaq*), which is indeed crucial in communication; this element is not being given crucial attention among western communication scholars (Mowlana, 2007).

In the *Holy Qur'an*, the creation of human being has specific purpose as stated in the following verse; *O Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).*

(Al-Hujurat 49: 13)

Again, this verse of Holy Qur'an proofs that Islam provides guideline for humans to interact with one another. Interpersonal communication is established to develop relationship for specific purposes between human beings (Haris & Kumar, 2018). Communication among family

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members is a dimension of interpersonal communication and seen as a key to understand family relationship. Family communication is the primary source of education for children. Parents and children are supposedly communicating to each other frequently (Zolten & Long, 2006). Another communication principles presented by him is brought love for humankind to the forefront.

Amal Khalil (2016) asserts that general communication values taught in Islam are: a) mutual respect and honor, b) spread the love saying, c) justice, fairness and balance, d) equation and equality behavior, e) sticking to virtue, f) freedom, g) tolerant and tolerance, h) helping each other, and i) keeping promises. However, as the discussion is looking into a deeper and closer context, that is family communication, the values and principles of communication are expanded as a family is the most crucial social institution that produces a healthy and balanced society member. Having said this, communication among family members – parents and children must be constant and continuous, honest and transparent, befriend to each other, develop emotional bond and support each other at times of ease and hardship.

5.0 THE HOLY QUR'AN GUIDANCE ON FAMILY COMMUNICATION

The Holy Qur'an narrates constant theme on how Prophets who were concerned pertaining to the guidance of their children. In the Holy Qur'an (14:40), Prophet Ibrahim asked "My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and [many] from my descendants. Our Lord, and accept my supplication". He asks that Allah hears and accepts his prayer to make him and his children among those who never neglect performing the prayers and then broadens the scope of prayer by asking forgiveness of himself, his parents, and the entire human being (Jalaludin, 2012). Hence, the Holy Qur'an shown to us that it is the responsibility of parents first, to make prayer and to ask guidance from Allah and to teach and instil the values of Islam in their children.

In another narration, the Holy Qur'an records the communication Prophet Ibrahim had with his son, Prophet Ismail while building the Holy Mosque of *Ka'abah* in Mecca and had consulted him pertaining to the slaughtering as commanded by Allah in his dream. In addition to this, the Holy Qur'an does emphasized how the other Prophets - Nuh, Luqman, Jacob, and Dawud, peace be upon them, all communicated directly to their children. It is important to note that the main responsibility of parents is to communicate with their children, not necessarily to give orders or to instruct.

In fact, Islam stipulated the Bill of rights for both Muslim children, and their parents. The Muslim children bills of right are as the followings: Muslim children have the right to learn

and practice Islam even if one of their parents is a non-Muslim or non-practicing Muslim, they have a right to be treated as a person, in an environment that is conducive to their growth and maturity and to become useful citizens, they have a right to receive love, open in communication and expression, care, discipline, and protection from their parents, they have a right to receive education, and financial protection for the future (Azizah, 2009). On the other hand, the Muslim parent Bills of rights are as followings: Parents have a right to receive love, respect and affection from their children as mentioned in the Quran, parents have a right to educate and discipline their children as mentioned in the Quran and shown by the example of Prophet Muhammad [PBUH], parents have a right to know more about their children, and monitor other influences affecting them, parents have a right to say no to unusual financial and other demands of children. Finally, Allah says in a verse of the Holy Qur'an: "Your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, do not say to them any word of contempt, nor repulse them, but address them in terms of honor, and out of kindness lower to them your wings of submission, and say, 'My Lord, have mercy on them as they cared for me in my childhood'" (17:23-24).

6.0 DISCUSSION ON ISLAMIC VALUES IN FAMILY COMMUNICATION

The Holy Qur'an has described primarily six communication values for communicating with others, particularly within a family.

1. *Qaulan Sadida* - In the Holy Qur'an 4:9, Allah says "And let those [executors and guardians] fear [injustice] as if they [themselves] had left weak offspring behind and feared for them. So let them fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice". In another narration, Allah says "O you who believe! Be God conscious and speak upright words" (33:70). The concept of *qaulan sadidan* requires the communicator to speak out of honesty, truthful, no element of intentional lying, and must strive for open communication. In the Holy Quran, this concept has been mentioned twice. First, Allah orders the human to deliver the *qaulan sadidan* while communicating with the children, orphans and other groups of unfortunate, and this can be extended to others too. Second, Allah commands the practice of *qaulan sadidan* after piety (n.a., 2012). Definitely, parents must ensure their words are true, never intent to lie to the children as if they discover their parents cheating, the trust may damage. Also, the parents must encourage an open communication, discussion and expression of thoughts and feelings at home so every members of the family know that they are entitled and hold the basic of human right – communication.

2. *Qaulan Ma'rufa* - In the Holy Qur'an 4:5, Allah says that "And do not give the weak-minded your property, which Allah has made a means of sustenance for you, but provide for them with it and clothe them and speak to them words of appropriate kindness". *Ma'rufa*, it means kind, well, and received by values prevailing in society (Shihab, 2007). A good speech is speech that is accepted as something good in view of the senders and the recipients of message. In other words, this concept also implies a good, polite, well-structured according to the law of logic. To make this concept more effective in communication, the practice covers wide range enough to any form of communication that promote benefits, good intentions, and the responsibility to bestow enjoyment or welfare on others (Khafidah, et al. 2020). This includes forgiving the wrong-doings and maintaining good attitudes and morals. In another narration, Allah says "And there is no sin on you if you make a hint of betrothal or conceal it in yourself, Allah knows that you will remember them, but do not make a promise (of contract) with them in secret except that you speak an honorable saying. And do not be determined on the marriage bond until the term prescribed is fulfilled. And know that Allah knows what is in your minds, so fear Him. And know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing" (2: 235). The parents play very significant role to educate children to use good and meaningful words while interacting with others, not only with their parents; use good words and avoid bad words will develop positive personality of the children and eventually will teach them how to be a responsible person through their own words and actions.

3. *Qaulan Baligha* – In the Holy Qur'an (4:63), Allah says "those men, -(Allah) knows what is in their hearts; so keep clear of them, but admonish them, and speak to them a word to reach their very souls". *Qaulan baligha* is interpreted as a fluent and effective speech or the right, where the meaning is clear, bright, and reveals exactly what the sender of message wants (Siti Rohimah, Fitriah, & Sri Lestari, 2020). The concept of *qaulan baligha* also means the word conveyed by adjusting the abilities of the communicator with the one communicated (ibid); for instance, in a situation whereby parents are giving advices to their children, the parents must have the ability to use the language that suits the level of intelligence and maturity of such children for the messages to be understood in a more effective and understandable manner. Similarly, as a husband is giving advice or consulting his wife, he must also use the language that she can understand, remember his words and touch her soul.

4. *Qaulan Maysura* – In the Holy Qur'an (17:28), Allah says "But if you must turn them down 'because you lack the means to give'—while hoping to receive your Lord's bounty—then 'at least' give them a kind word". *Qaulan maysura* means an easy word. This concept in communication make others or recipient of messages feel easy, and comfortable as the

communicator utter their words with soft tone of voice, gentle, and carry some substance of optimism in the words. Suud, F. M., et al. 2019 assert that along the communication process, the words are not only pleasant to ears but also easy to understand and encourage people to put some positive hopes for the messages shared. It is also important to apply this concept while communicating with others so that we will not make anyone feel offended, but at the same time able to attract others attention and gain empathy towards us. As the parents and children are interacting with one another, they must ensure each other's' understanding of the messages and recognize that different age of children would require different style of communication language.

5. *Qaulan Layyina* – In the Holy Qur'an (20:44), Allah says "Speak to him gently, so perhaps he may be mindful 'of Me' or fearful 'of My punishment'". This communication value could touch the hearts of message recipients and encourage people to accept religious preaching with open hearts by using an appropriate soft tone of voice and good choice of words. In a family institution, this concept of communication is very important not only when the parents are giving advice to their children, but also is important to be applied in most of the times as children would feel loved, appreciated and this would ultimately develop trust and affection among them (Khaidir, et., al., 2020). suggest that the children will learn how to express their emotions in rationale way and manage their feelings better. Ultimately, the children will grow up as a person who are not only intelligent in communicating with others, but are excellent in managing stress, anger, and other discomfort feelings (Khan, Arshad, & Khan, 2018).

6. *Qaulan Karima* - (QS Al-Isra: 23)¹² *Qaulan karima* means noble word. A noble word is a word which gives respect and honor to the person who we talk to. "Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age In Thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor". (QS. Al-Isra: 23) In this case, to say "ah" to parents is prohibited by religion, moreover say the words or treated them more harshly than that – any word that has bad taste, disgusting, and harsh sound, but to use words that are delivered with respect, not offending, and glorifying. Communicate in noble language to all family and relatives, and it is very appropriate for parents or parents-in-law, or to other people who have entered old age (Islami, 2017). This concept is important particularly when communicating with parents, elderly or respectable people.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Islam emphasizes on the important roles every parent play in nurturing the good values among their children since childhood. This context of study focuses on the core communication values as outlined in the Holy Qur'an to be

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embraced and practiced not only by the parents but also children. Islam is a complete, relevant religion and teaching across the time dimension, place, and generations, hence these communication principles are forever applicable for family communication. Family communication following the six primary values of Islamic teaching: *Qaulan Sadida*, *Qaulan Ma'rufah*, *Qaulan Baligha*, *Qaulan Maysura*, *Qaulan Layyina*, and *Qaulan Karima* would definitely produce a great communication mode, affectionate parents-children relationship, and ultimately develop an excellent youth personality. This study suggests that an ultimate outcome of Islamic family communication would reduce the risk and issues that contribute to social crisis namely alcohol and drug abuse, vandalism, and other unintended injuries. Through the six highlighted Islamic values of communication, it is obvious that the parents-children relationship should be based on an open communication, using appropriate pleasant words, well-adjusted emotion while interacting with one another, use meaningful words so it could touch each other's soul and use plain or simpler words for each other's understanding so the communication would be more effective and relationship strengthens.

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