The Etiquette of Husband and Wife Communication According to Imam Ghazali's Perspective

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Abstract

Communication is the fundamental basis and an essential element in human life, focusing on the relationship between people and involving the delivery or exchange of a message from one individual to another, either face-to-face or through mass media. In fact, through this communication, harmony can also be formed and family relationships can be further strengthened. In this regard, this needs to be emphasized by every individual because without good and effective communication principles and methods in the household, various issues will arise such as misunderstandings between husband and wife, arguments, disputes, hostility, and so on. Therefore, this writing aims to analyze the etiquette of communication between husband and wife from the perspective of Imam Ghazali, a well-known Islamic scholar known for his expertise in fields such as Ethics and Sufism. The methodology of this study uses a qualitative approach through literature review, which involves analyzing documents related to Islamic communication and the works of Imam Ghazali. Therefore, the study results found that every good communication should be based on truth, courtesy, sincere intention, and careful use of words when speaking. This study is also expected to contribute and serve as a reference for all segments of society to implement the etiquette of communication between husband and wife according to Imam Ghazali in order to preserve social harmony and educate the soul and morals.



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INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential part of daily life, and no human can live without communication. Through communication, humans can exchange ideas and opinions or share information in the form of writing, symbols, sounds, or speech, which is conveyed either face-to-face or through mass media. Communication skills are very important because the interactions that occur can have an impact on other individuals during the communication process (Ahmad Muati and Zamri, 2016).

In Islam, communication is not just the process of delivering a message, but it also encompasses various aspects such as ethics, manners, and sincere intentions. As stated by Ghani (2001), the purpose of communication in Islam is not just to deliver a message to the communicator and the communicated, but to bring about a change in attitudes and behavior among those

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interacting, leading to mutual welfare and honor. There are several principles of Islamic communication derived from the Quran, which serve as guidance for each family member to achieve deeper, more loving, and understanding relationships.

Naturally, every individual desires a household filled with peace, happiness, and blessings, as reflected in the concept of a family based on Sakinah, Mawaddah, and Rahmah. However, this hope will not be achieved simply by desire alone. To build a Sakinah Mawaddah Warahmah family, one must understand, fulfill the rights, and carry out responsibilities as a husband and wife in the family life. According to al-Ghazali, the formation of a Sakinah family can be achieved through the relationship and interactions between husband and wife.

Each husband and wife should implement good, positive, and effective communication to avoid misunderstandings and emotional tensions, which could negatively impact the well-being of the family institution. According to Hendrati (2010), marriages between one to ten years often face divorce due to a lack of: 1) compatibility between partners, 2) communication skills, and 3) conflict management skills. Therefore, communication skills based on Islamic values are crucial in maintaining marital relationships, making them stronger, closer, and more affectionate, as well as resolving family conflicts wisely.

METHOD

This research uses library methods. Bibliographic methods or document analysis are used to obtain data or information as a basis for the reviewer's studies related to Islamic communication and the works of Imam Ghazali. Reviewers use bibliographic methods to collect study data through books, journals, articles and so on, both in Malay and English. The data obtained were analyzed using lighting methods.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Communication

The word 'communication' actually originates from the Latin word communicare, which means "to make common," or in other words, to establish a shared understanding. Communication is a process of conveying and transferring a message from one individual to another in order to create an understanding of the message being delivered, so that both parties share a common understanding. Therefore, communication is the process of interaction between individuals or between individuals and groups in order to convey information or opinions, ensuring that the parties involved understand the meaning and intent of the message being communicated.

In Arabic, communication is referred to as tawasul and ittisal. Tawasul means the process conducted by both parties to exchange information so that the message delivered is understood or received by both parties involved in the communication. On the other hand, ittisal focuses on the process or situation where the message is conveyed from one party to another, and does not necessarily involve direct feedback (two-way communication).

Additionally, the Arabic term for communication is mukhābara. According to Achmad W. Munawwir and M. Fairuz (2007), mukhābara means to know, inform, notify, tell, or correspond. Hans Wehr also stated that the English equivalent of mukhābara includes terms such as information, communication, and notification.

Communication, in general, can occur both verbally and non-verbally. Verbal communication refers to speech produced by humans using articulatory organs or speech organs. This communication also involves language sounds such as face-to-face conversations, phone calls, radio, television, and other media channels. On the other hand, non-verbal communication refers to body language (kinesics), dressing style (appearance), and paralinguistics, such as tone of voice during

speech. For example, from kinesics, if someone shakes their head, we understand that it means denial, while a head nod means agreement. Therefore, regardless of the form and characteristics of communication, its nature is informative, meaning it has meaning, is informative, and is understood.

In conclusion, communication is the process conducted by one individual to another, either individually or in groups, to convey a message in the form of general or specific information using a particular medium, in verbal symbols (words) or non-verbal forms (written, visual, body language, etc.).

Principles and Methods of Communication in Islam

Islam strongly encourages its followers to engage in conversation, speak, communicate, and interact with others using high manners and etiquette, considering this as part of the requirements of Sharia. The importance of effective communication in Islam has been recognized by Awang Sariyan (2009), who explains that language serves as a tool for the intellect to manipulate knowledge, aimed at building and developing the concept of self as Allah's vicegerent on earth, entrusted with managing various aspects of life. Therefore, communication is essential in human life as it allows individuals to explore their self-concept.

The principles and methods of communication from an Islamic perspective aim to create effective communication according to Islamic teachings. The Quran and Hadith are the primary sources for explaining these principles and methods of communication.

According to Saodah, Narimah, and Mohd Yusof (2005), Islam has established several communication principles that should be followed by preachers or leaders, such as speaking gently, using good words, applying wisdom and good advice, speaking the truth, engaging in respectful dialogue, keeping promises, and considering the views and thoughts of others. These communication principles were also used by Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions in effectively delivering the message of Islam. It is clear that these principles are crucial and should be instilled and practiced by every individual and society in general.

Here are the methods of Islamic communication according to the Quran.

1. Qaulan Ma'rufan

Qaulan Ma'rufan is an Arabic term meaning speech that is kind and wise. It refers to pure, respectful words that do not hurt others' feelings (Mafri Amir, 1999). Good communication fosters peaceful coexistence and mutual well-being. Allah SWT commands in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 83:

"And speak to people good [words]."

(Ibn Kathir, 1997) explains that this verse encourages speaking kindly and gently, especially in a diverse society, including with non-Muslims. Similarly, Surah Al-Isra', Ayat 53, advises:

"And tell My servants to say that which is best."

This highlights the importance of polite and gentle communication, avoiding harsh words that can damage relationships. According to al-Nasafi (1997), words should reflect respect and

not tarnish anyone's image. Qaulan Ma'rufan promotes social harmony and mutual respect, contributing to positive interactions.

2. Qaulan Layyinan

Qaulan Layyinan refers to soft or gentle words, originally used to describe movement and later applied to speech. It means sweet or soft words aimed at persuading and reassuring others that what is being said is true and rational, without belittling others' views. As mentioned in Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 53:

"And tell My servants to say that which is best. Indeed, Satan is the one who causes division among them."

This verse emphasizes the importance of gentle communication to build harmonious relationships, avoid conflicts, and demonstrate maturity in dialogue. By applying Qaulan Layyinan, one can foster a peaceful and respectful environment in everyday interactions.

3. Qaulan Sadidan

Qaulan Sadidan refers to speaking the truth, being honest, straightforward, and avoiding lies or deception. According to Nurdin (2014), speaking honestly helps build trust and strong relationships. As stated in Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 70:

"O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice."

This verse highlights the importance of Qaulan Sadidan in fostering trust and respect among individuals, and in preventing misunderstandings and conflicts caused by incorrect information.

4. Qaulan Kariman

Qaulan Kariman refers to noble speech, which emphasizes using polite, respectful, and kind language. In Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 23, Allah commands:

"And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them 'uff,' and do not repel them, but speak to them a noble word."

This verse highlights the importance of using respectful language to create harmonious relationships, foster mutual respect, and maintain good ethics in communication.

5. Qaulan Balighan

Qaulan Balighan refers to using language that is clear, effective, and appropriate for the listener's understanding. The term "baligh" means reaching the target or goal, and in communication, it signifies clear, direct, and precise speech. As mentioned in Surah Al-Hadid, Ayat 25:

"Indeed, We have sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and We sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that people may uphold justice."

This principle emphasizes the importance of clear and straightforward communication, using simple language that the listener can easily understand. It encourages avoiding complex or ambiguous expressions, ensuring the message is easily comprehended.

6. Qaulan Maysuran

Qaulan Maysuran refers to using simple, clear, and pleasant language in communication, whether verbal or written, so that the listener easily understands the message. As stated in Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 28:

"And if you turn away from them, seeking mercy from your Lord which you expect, then speak to them a word that is easy."

This principle emphasizes speaking in a way that is pleasing and easy for others to understand without causing confusion or requiring further explanation.

7. Qaulan Adziman

Qaulan Adziman refers to harsh and significant words, often associated with lies, hatred, or malicious statements. It is used to describe words that are deeply offensive and harmful to both the speaker and the listener. As stated in Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 40:

"Do you claim that your Lord has chosen for you sons and taken from the angels females? Indeed, you utter a monstrous word."

This concept highlights the importance of avoiding speech filled with hostility, lies, or malice, as it damages relationships and creates division.

Communication Between Husband and Wife

Effective and positive communication is essential for married couples. Effective communication ensures that messages are properly conveyed and understood, while positive communication, filled with appreciation, affection, and interest, strengthens the marital bond. Studies by Ledermann et al. (2010) and Suleyman (2014) show that effective and positive communication helps reduce daily stress in relationships.

Conflicts in marriage are inevitable, but having conflict resolution skills is part of effective communication that helps minimize negative impacts. Communication is key in maintaining a strong family relationship, and couples must know how to communicate properly. An example of marital communication is in Surah At-Tahrim (3-4):

"When the Prophet confided to one of his wives a matter, and when she disclosed it, Allah informed him of it. He made known part of it and ignored part. And when he informed her of it, she said, 'Who told you this?' He said, 'The All-Knowing, the All-Aware informed me."

This verse shows the importance of good communication, especially when resolving issues and choosing the right words to avoid hurting feelings. Poor communication, such as using harsh words or being unwilling to discuss matters, leads to misunderstandings and hampers effective communication, as also noted by Fadillah (2016).

Biography and Works of Imam Ghazali

Imam Al-Ghazali, full name Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad Al-Ghazali Ath-Thusi Al-Naysaburi, was born in 450H (1058 CE) in Ghazalah, a small city near Tus in Khurasan. His name is derived from his birthplace. He was known by several titles, including Hujjatul-Islam, Siraj al-Mujtahidin, Alimul Ulama, Waritsul Anbiya', and Zain al-Abidin. He mastered many disciplines, including Sufism, Theology, Hadith, Quran, Logic, and Fiqh, and followed the Ash'ari school in Kalam and the Shafi'i school in Fiqh.

Imam Ghazali was born into a devout, modest family. His father, a poor but righteous man, earned a living by weaving clothes from wool and selling them. His father passed away when Ghazali and his brother were young, leaving them with some money and a will to continue their education under the guidance of a close friend. This friend taught them to read and write until the money ran out, after which he advised Ghazali and his brother to pursue further studies in Tusi.

In 469H, Ghazali moved to Jurjan to study under Abu Nasr Al-Ismaili, and later married before returning to Tusi. He studied Sufism under the renowned Yusuf Annasaj. In 471H, he went to the Nizamiyyah School in Nishapur to study under Imam Haramain (Abu Al-Maa'li Diyaauddin al-Juwaini). Ghazali studied various fields, including jurisprudence and philosophy, and began writing numerous books. His work Al-Mankhul was highly praised by his teacher.

Imam Ghazali left a rich legacy with nearly 100 written works, and perhaps more. He passed away on Monday, 14th Jamadilakhir 505H (1111 CE) in Tus, where he was buried near the tomb of the famous poet Al-Firdausi.

Works of Imam Ghazali

Imam Ghazali's greatest work is Ihya 'Ulum al-Din, which he compiled after extensive travels to places like Syria, Jerusalem, Hijaz, and Baghdad. His notable works include:

- 1. Philosophy and Theology: Maqasid Al-Falasifah, Tafahut Al-Falasifah, Al-Maarif al-'Aqliyah, Ilmjam awam, Al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad, and more.
- 2. Religious Knowledge: Ihya 'Ulum al-Din, Al-Munqidz min al-dhalal, Minhaj al-abidin, Ayyuha al-walad, Misykat anwar, Al-Qistas al-Mustaqim, etc.
- 3. Ethics and Sufism: Mizan al-Amal, Kitab Al-Arba'in, Mishkat al-anwar, Al-Adab fi al-din, Al-Risalah al-laduniyah, Risalat al-Thayr, among others.
- 4. Politics and Governance: Al-Mustazhiri, Sirr al-'Alamin, Nasihat al-muluk, Suluk al-sulthanah, etc.

Etiquette of Communication between Husband and Wife According to Imam Ghazali

Communication is key to a happy relationship between husband and wife. Lack of interaction can lead to misunderstandings and strain the relationship (Mariani Md Nor, 2018). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) exemplified this by always giving attention to his wife when she spoke, responding thoughtfully to resolve issues. Imam Ghazali, in Majmuah Rasail Al-Imam Al-Ghazali, emphasized the importance of gentle speech, showing love, and forgiving each other's mistakes. He advised wives to avoid arguing and remain silent while their husbands speak. These etiquettes foster respect, understanding, and harmony in the relationship.

1. Improving Interactions

A good family relationship is based on husn al-muasyarah (good companionship) or almu'asyarah bil ma'ruf (pleasant interaction). Key elements of good interaction include communication, conflict resolution, and managing household responsibilities with virtues such as honesty, patience, and humility. As stated in Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 35:

"And the men and women who are truthful, and the men and women who are patient, and the men and women who are humble..." (Quran 33:35)

Imam Ghazali emphasizes that spouses should improve their relationship through gentle speech, showing love, and forgiving each other's mistakes. Wives should avoid arguments and remain silent when their husbands speak.

2. Playfulness

One of the key aspects of communication between husband and wife is engaging in playful interactions (not leaving each other in silence for too long). In addition to being patient, a husband should regularly engage in lighthearted moments with his wife. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) often joked with his wives, even sometimes joining in their activities. It is reported that he raced with Aisha and said, "This is the reward for your victory yesterday."

A hadith from Nasaie and Tirmidhi narrated by Abu Hurairah states, "The best of believers are those with the best character towards their wives." While humor is allowed, it should be done in moderation, maintaining respect and modesty within the relationship.

3. Leading with Gentle Firmness

A husband is encouraged to be gentle and playful with his wife, but should never go beyond boundaries that may harm his character or authority. It is essential that neither partner pushes the other to do something forbidden in Islam. As the head of the family, a husband must be firm, especially when his wife violates the boundaries of Islamic principles or social decorum.

A husband's responsibility is to lead, guide, and teach his wife what is right according to the religion. Allah says in Surah An-Nisa, verse 34: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women." Therefore, a husband's role requires balancing gentleness with firmness, ensuring wisdom in addressing his wife's behavior while maintaining respect and authority.

4. Resolving Husband-Wife Disputes

Conflicts between husband and wife are inevitable and can sometimes lead to a fractured relationship. If both parties or just one are unable to resolve the issue, it's advised to appoint a mediator to help reconcile.

Umar ibn al-Khattab once sent a mediator to resolve a conflict between a couple, but when the mediator returned without success, Umar rebuked him and reminded him of Allah's guidance in Surah An-Nisa, 4:35, which encourages appointing a fair mediator from both families if reconciliation is desired.

This teaches that rushing into divorce should not be the first solution. Instead, conflicts should be resolved patiently, with the help of a mediator, and with a genuine effort to reconcile.

5. Avoiding Lying and Breaking Promises

Lying and breaking promises are against Allah's commands and often used to cover up mistakes. This behavior can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, eroding trust and honesty between husband and wife, as well as within the family. It is essential to avoid these actions to maintain a healthy and trustworthy relationship.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, communication is not just a process of conveying information between individuals, but it is also closely related to ethics, sincere intentions, manners, and character. Therefore, effective and positive communication skills are crucial in marital life, especially when dealing with various conflicts and problems. Couples must always renew their communication methods to keep their relationship from becoming stagnant. As explained in the book Majmu'ah Rasail al-Imam Al-Ghazali, the manners for husband and wife include constantly improving their relationship through gentle and firm speech, forgiving each other's mistakes, not bringing up past wrongs, avoiding arguments, making promises for good things, and for wives, staying silent when their husband speaks. These practices play a vital role in maintaining a strong, close, and harmonious marital relationship. In closing, the researcher hopes that this study can shed light on the importance of communication skills in marriage and help address and reduce issues, particularly misunderstandings between spouses.

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