

Ethical Communication in the Qur'an: A Thematic Analysis of the Word 'وَلْيَتَأَتَّفَ Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf'

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Received: 14 March | Revised: 15 June | Accepted: 29 June | Available Online: 30 June

ABSTRACT

The Qur'an serves as a comprehensive guide for human conduct, including the ethics of communication. A significant expression within this framework is the word Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf (وَلْيَتَأَتَّفَ), found in Surah Al-Kahf (18:19), which can be translated as "let him be kind" or "let him act with gentleness." This word emphasizes the importance of interacting with others in a manner that is cautious, courteous, and ethically conscious, particularly in sensitive situations. Islamic scholars have interpreted Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf through various dimensions—such as subtlety, empathy, and politeness—while collectively affirming its role in promoting thoughtful and respectful communication. This study aims to analyze the linguistic and ethical significance of Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf in the Qur'anic context and explore how Qur'anic teachings shape principles of communication applicable to modern life. The research addresses two key questions: What is the deeper meaning and contextual significance of Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf in Surah Al-Kahf? And how do Qur'anic teachings, through similar expressions and prophetic examples, guide ethical communication? These questions are explored using a descriptive and thematic analytical method, drawing upon classical and contemporary tafsīr sources. The analysis reveals that Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf encapsulates more than mere kindness; it reflects a multidimensional ethic that encourages discretion, moral sensitivity, and emotional intelligence in speech. The context in Surah Al-Kahf—where cautious and tactful behavior was essential to avoid conflict—underscores the strategic role of gentle communication. Furthermore, the Qur'an consistently pairs communication with values like honesty, humility, and compassion, drawing from prophetic models that stress patience, wisdom, and emotional restraint. The findings suggest that Qur'anic communication is not merely about delivering a message but doing so with an awareness of its ethical and emotional impact. In today's era of polarizing discourse and digital interactions, this Qur'anic guidance provides a timeless framework for fostering dialogue that is respectful, meaningful, and morally anchored.

Keywords: Keywords: Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf, Kahf, Ethical communication, Quranic Guidance, Moral Conduct.

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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Introduction:

The Quran, the Holy Book of Islam, holds great significance in the lives of Muslims. It serves as a guiding tool not only in religious matters but also in various aspects of life. Its pages contain a profound treasure of wisdom, guidance, and spiritual enlightenment for all. As such, it is a vital source of ethical teachings and spiritual instruction.¹

Among the many concepts found within its pages, one that holds particular significance is the word "وليتلطّف" (Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf) a word introduced with distinction and religious importance.

The concept of وليتلطّف appears in the Quran with different meanings and applications. It represents the essence of the Quranic message. Most notably, this word appears in the middle of the Quran, specifically in *Surah Al-Kahf*. According to Tafsir Ibn Kathir, وليتلطّف is interpreted as "let him be careful." This is mentioned in the context where one of the companions of the cave (*Ashab al-Kahf*) is sent to the city to buy food. His companions advised him to be cautious in dealing with people and to conceal his identity as much as possible.²

Abul A'la Maududi interprets the word as "let him be conscious" when interacting with others.³ Similarly, Imam Al-Ghazali, in his commentary, explains it as "let him be courteous," indicating that the individual was advised to behave thoughtfully.⁴ In English, the word has also been rendered as "to be gentle" or "to show kindness." This lesson was not only intended for the Seven Sleepers but also for all readers of the Quran: to embody courtesy and care in conduct. In *Tazkirul Quran*, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan states that when the people of the cave sent one of their own to town, they advised him to handle the situation wisely and with caution.⁵

The word وليتلطّف thus encompasses multiple meanings, such as *be careful, be courteous, be conscious, handle matters wisely, and act with caution*. Elsewhere in the Quran, when Allah (Subhanahu wa Ta'ala) sent Musa (Moses) and his brother Harun (Aaron) to Pharaoh, He instructed them to speak to him gently, so that perhaps he might be receptive to the message. Maududi explains that there are only two effective ways to guide someone to the right path:

1. By convincing them through argument and sincere admonition, or
2. By warning them of the consequences of their misguidance.⁶

Also, in many other places Allah سبحانه و تعالی say speak truthfully⁷, speak with justice⁸, speak

1 Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), P: 7.

2 Safī al-Rahmān Mubārakfūrī and Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir: Abridged*, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2000), Vol: 5, P: 144–145

3 Abul A'la Maududi, *Tafhim al-Qur'an: The Meaning of the Qur'an*, trans. Zafar Ishaq Ansari (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1991), Vol: 4, P: 178.

4 Muhammad al-Ghazzālī, *Tafsīr Sūrat al-Kahf*, commentary on Qur'an 18:19 ("وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ"), *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Riyadh: Imam Ghazali Institute, 2021), P: 347.

5 Wahiduddin Khan, *Tazkirul Quran*, (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2009), Vol: 1, P: 433

6 Maududi, *Tafhim al-Qur'an*, Vol: 3, P: 148.

7 Surah Al Imran:17

8 Surah Al Ahzab:70

moderately¹, positively², beautifully³, gently⁴, deeply⁵, graciously⁶, softly⁷, effectively⁸, humbly⁹, bravely¹⁰, and speak without a lie¹¹ in the verses of Holy Quran.

The purpose of this research is to explore and analyze the ethical teachings related to communication as conveyed through the word "وليتلطف" (*Wa-l-yatalattaf*) in the Holy Quran.

Methodology

This research is descriptive in nature and follows a thematic study approach. Several verses from the Holy Quran have been collected relevant to the topic in order to facilitate a better understanding. Descriptive research has been applied extensively and is grounded in both classical and contemporary literature. This approach helps to clarify and establish a standard understanding of the key aspects under consideration.

The researcher has made every effort to ensure that this work is informative and valuable. However, ultimate perfection belongs only to Allah. No human effort is without flaws, and there is always room for improvement and refinement. It is hoped that future research in this field will continue to explore areas that may have been left untouched or only briefly examined in this study. Any shortcomings in this work are due to the researcher's limited knowledge, while any value or significance it may hold is entirely due to the mercy and blessings of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.

The data for this research has been gathered from both internet and library sources. A significant portion of the material has been taken from books of Tafsir, encompassing both classical and contemporary works. The Quranic translation used in this study is from "My Islam" by Abul A'la Maududi. The Tafsir sources consulted include *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, *Tafsir l-Maududi*, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Ma'ariful Quran*, *Tafheem-ul-Quran*, *Tafsir al-Manar*, *Tafsir al-Kashshaaf*, *The Holy Quran (various translators)*, *Tadabbur-i-Qur'an* and *Tafsir Fi Zilal al-Quran*. Books of Hadith have also been referenced, particularly *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim* and *Jami'at-Tirmidhi*. Furthermore, several other relevant books were consulted, including *Perfect Character in the Modern World*, *The Muslim Way of Speaking*, *Dialogue in Islam*, *Kindness and Gentleness*, *Islamic Manners and Morals* and *Manners in Islam*.

Both printed and online sources were utilized. Articles and materials from the internet also contributed to the data set. In addition, the *Quranic Dictionary* was consulted to deepen the understanding of specific words and to ensure accurate interpretation of key concepts.

This study explores the significance behind the concept of "وليتلطف" (*Wa-l-yatalattaf*), How is this concept explained in the Quran? And how are other similar words and expressions used throughout the Quran?

Literature Review:

The article "Communications skills according to Islamic teachings and student's life skills" demonstrate that according to Islamic teachings human is social creature and have relationship with others. In order to have good relations with others, one must possess the qualities of forgiving, selfless and humble and abstain from being selfish, cause harm and humiliating

1 Surah al Isra:110

2 Surah al Baqarah:83

3 Surah al Isra:53

4 Surah al Isra:28

5 Surah al Nisa :63

6 Surah al Isra:23

7 Surah al Taha:44

8 Surah al Ahzab:32

9 Surah al Mu'minun:3

10 Surah al Taha: 27

11 Surah al Jinn:5

others. The Holy Quran guides its followers about the principles of effective communication and avoid offensive speech.¹

The article “*Quranic communication skills in the light of Tafseer Tabari*” explains that effective communication is significant in making life better by preventing clashes. In contrast, poor communication assist doubtfulness and misunderstandings. Islam provide guidance on all facets of life including communication as well. Prophet’s ﷺ life presents a practical example of effective communication. Islam acknowledge communication as ultimate component that has impact on information sharing, perceptions, and social interactions.²

According to Al-Isfahani, وليتلطّف embodies the principle of engaging with others in a manner that is both gentle and effective, aligning with the broader ethical teachings of the Qur'an that advocate for empathy, patience, and subtlety in human interactions.³

The article “*communication skills in Islamic perspective*” describes that man is dependent on others for survival of life. Similarly, the state also depends on other states for fulfilling their basic requirements. In the present era by means of technology communication become possible to far areas. Communication is the only approach to interact. Effective communication lessens the probabilities of disputes and makes the environment peaceful while ineffective communication results in disagreements and conflicts. Islamic traditions on effective communication have capability to make situations peaceful and nonaggressive.⁴

The article “*speech act and politeness strategy of Rasulullah Muhammad ﷺ on the book of hadith bukhari*” informs Prophetic ﷺ way of speaking towards people of different groups. While having talk with people of different suggestions, the speech must be according to the situation and viewpoint of the communication so that the purpose is attained.⁵

The article “*communication from Islamic perspective and its application in selected organization*” elaborate that Islam is a communication-based religion. In Individual’s life, communication is essential as it becomes a source of information, exchange viewpoints and makes people more socialize. Religion gives us complete guidance for effective communication before its significance been proved in present era.⁶

The article “*effective verbal communication skills based on teachings of Holy Quran*” describes that according to Holy Quran moral and social standard for effective conversation are courtesy, respect, gentleness in speech, eloquence, and simplicity of speech. In consideration of these skills man easily accomplish his aim in discussion and efficiently

1. Rubino, et al. “Communication Skills According to Islamic Teachings and Students’ Life Skills.” *Theological Studies/Teologiese Studies*, Vol: 79, Issue: 2, (July 12, 2023). P: 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.8623>.

2 Hasan, Muhammad Mumtaz Ul, Dr. Zafar Iqbal Shah, Ms. Samina Batool, Dr. Muhammad Sarwar, Dr. Mohsin Abbasi, and Dr. Hafiz Moazzam. “Quranic Communication Skills in the Light of Tafseer Tabari.” *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, Vol: 6, Issue: 7, (2022): P: 2416–2422. <https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/11780>

3 Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur’an*, Vol: 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah, 2006), P: 512.

4 Niaz, Muhammad, and Fazle Omer. “Communication Skills in Islamic Perspective.” *Al-Idah*, Vol: 33, Issue: 2, (December 2016): P: 1–15. <https://www.al-idah.pk/index.php/al-idah/article/download/112/105/>.

5 Alhamidi, et al. “Speech Act and Politeness Strategy of Rasulullah Muhammad SAW on the Book of Hadith Bukhari.” *English Language and Literature International Conference (ELLiC) Proceedings* 3 (2019). P:334-342 <https://jurnal.unimus.ac.id/index.php/ELLIC/article/view/4723>

6 Ezzuddin, Ezzat. “Communication from Islamic Perspective and Its Application in Selected Organization.” *Academia.edu*, October 19, 2020. P: 4-42. https://www.academia.edu/44327628/communication_from_islamic_perspective_and_its_application_in_selected_organization.

suggest his point.¹

The article “*ethical pattern of communication in the framework of Quran Islamic perspective*” focuses on principles and ethics of communication that are based on Quran. Islam indicate morality in speech and behavior while Quran mention *qaulan sadida*, *Qaulam Baligha*, *Qaulan Marufa*, *Qaulan Karima*, and *Qaulam Maysura* as principles of communication. These moral codes help to develop connection with God and human beings.²

The article “*politeness in the Holy Quran: A sociolinguistic and pragmatic perspective*” mentioned that numerous politeness strategies implemented regarding God-man communication, man-man communication, and reveal of various divine ethical messages in the Holy Quran. These strategies were revealed through different mediums of communication including the direct method of address, storytelling, and exemplifying.³

The article “*the manner of speaking in Islam*” clarifies that Islamic teachings provide some manners of speaking with God, with Prophets, with parents, with teachers, and others. In accordance with Islamic viewpoint, it can be examined into the aspects of content and the form.⁴

The article “*silence and speech etiquette a contribution to the study of Islamic ethics*” describes that in Islamic culture, silence is seen in different ways based on various Arabic words used in the Quran. Al- Tabari and Al- Razi explain that silence has both negative and positive aspects. On one hand it’s about avoiding sinful behaviour and finding peace while on other side it’s about being open to listening, especially to the teachings of the Quran which helps in understanding religion. It’s seen as a way to avoid harmful gossip and unnecessary talk. Silence isn’t just about staying quiet; it’s about showing respect to God and others in Islamic community.⁵

The article “*the Islamic perspective of interpersonal communication*” reveals that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ communicates to his people using two modes: oral and written. Since Islamic instructions are comprehensively universal, it has been visualized differently in non-Muslim world. The fundamentals of communication composed by Holy Quran and Sunnah of Prophet ﷺ are morality, tolerance, forgiveness, freedom, and equality irrespective of race, color, and religion.⁶

The article “*Islamic communication ethics: a general principle*” explains that Holy Quran and hadith manifest primary suggestions regarding communication ethics during the conversation and also to refrain from vulgarity in order to not to hurt others. Communication

1 Farzaneh, Mehri, and Mostafa Movahed. “Effective Verbal Communication Skills Based on the Teachings of the Holy Quran.” *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies* Vol: 4, Issue: 2, (April–June 2017). <http://www.ijelr.in/4.2.17/157-163%20MEHRI%20FARZANEH.pdf>.

2 Masri, Dedi. “Ethical Patterns of Communication in the Framework of the Quran Islamic Perspective.” *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI) Journal* Vol: 5, Issue no: 1, (February 2022), P: 452–460. <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v5i1.3627>.

3 Al-Khatib, Mahmoud A. “Politeness in the Holy Quran: A Sociolinguistic and Pragmatic Perspective.” *Intercultural Pragmatics*, Vol: 9, Issue: 4, (2012), P: 479–509. <http://doi.org/10.1515/ip-2012-0027>

4 Bedashti, Ali. “The Manner of Speaking in Islam.” Translated by Muhammad Rassafi. *Journal of Spiritual Quest*, Vol: 1, Issue: 2, (Summer and Autumn 2011), P: 15–32. <http://www.islamic-laws.com/pdf/SQ2,%20manners%20speaking.pdf>

5 Zilio-Grandi, Ida. “Silence and Speech Etiquette: A Contribution to the Study of Islamic Ethics.” *Annali di Ca’ Foscari. Serie orientale* 52 (June 2016), P: 7–30. <https://doi.org/10.14277/2385-3042/AnnOr-52-16-1>.

6 Khalil, Amal. “The Islamic Perspective of Interpersonal Communication.” *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, Vol: 4, Issue: 2, (December 2016), P: 22–37. <https://doi.org/10.15640/jisc.v4n2a3>.

becomes effective if its message is clear and concise.¹

The book “*Islamic Manners*” describes manners of conversation. Selecting suitable topics for conversation by being brief, as Prophet’s ﷺ talk was clear and concise. Talk in a suitable tone ensure that voice is low, and tone is audible. Let others express their ideas as well by developing art of listening. Swearing by Allah تعالى و سبحانه for authentication of explanation is a substandard practice needs to be abandoned. Don’t hurry in answering a question, it leads to enhance respect and gives rise to interest.²

The book “*Muslim Way of Speaking*” demonstrates about the morals and ethics, a person should abide with, while having conversation with others. People may utilize the power of speech given by Allah تعالى و سبحانه in the way, they want, whether good or bad. Words are recorded before Allah تعالى و سبحانه and will be placed before them one by one which they even not remember when and where they spoke. Moreover, remind them about the day of Judgement for that they should be careful in their talk as they will be answerable for everything, they speak or do.³

The book “*Muslim’s character*” illustrates that Speech is gift of Allah تعالى و سبحانه to humans and to use it wisely is of great concern. Islam emphasizes the significance of style and language of speech, because it reveals person’s intellect and moral character. Individuals can get reward from Allah تعالى و سبحانه in encouraging goodness, and justice through speech. As speech reflects one’s intellectual and moral nature and following to the etiquettes of speech contributes to maintain courtesy in society.⁴

Concept of وليتلاطف in the light of Tafseer:

Meanings of وليتلاطف:

The phrase وليتلاطف an Arabic word, that emphasizes the importance of selecting the right words for the right situation, has been traditionally associated with the Quran and Islamic Teachings. This word has been used in the verses of Holy Quran in different Quranic contexts.

1. Literal Meaning of وليتلاطف:

The word وليتلاطف has trilateral root lām ṭā fā (ل ط ف) that comes eight times in the Quran, in two forms

- 1) Once as a form ليتلاطف
- 2) Seven times as the لَطِيف

An Arabic word may have a range of meanings depending on the context. The meaning of

1 Nizdom, Faqih, and Alfianandra Wafiq. “Islamic Communication Ethics: A General Principles.” In Proceedings of the International Conference on Religion, Science and Education, Vol: 1 (2022), P: 743–750. Universitas Darussalam Gontor. <https://sunankalijaga.org/prosiding/index.php/icrse/article/view/863>.

2 Abdul-Fattah Abu Ghuddah, *Islamic Manners*, trans. Khalid Baig (Chicago: Starlatch Press, 2003), P: 38.

3 Yahya, Harun. *The Muslim Way of Speaking*. Istanbul: Global Publishing, 2004, P: 54–57. https://www.muslim-library.com/dl/books/English_the_muslim_way_of_speaking.pdf

4 Ghazālī, Muḥammad, and Mufti A. H. Usmani. *Muslim Character: An American-English Translation of Muhammad al-Ghazali’s Khuluq al-Muslim*. Library of Islam, 2004, P: 54–61. <https://archive.org/details/muslims-character-by-muhammad-al-ghazali>.

أَطِيف used as “Allah سبحانه و تعالی is Subtle”.

2. Linguistic Meaning:

Arabic language is always fascinating for being so rich in its meanings. It is a great fact that it has a lot of words to explain one Arabic word.

وليتلطف is right in the middle of the Quran with an amazing advice for all. It means:

- To be thin, delicate, refined, to do something with proper planning, to know the compilation of all affairs
- To be polite, gentle, courteous, kind

And the meaning of the word وليتلطف used in surah Al Kahf is, let him be polite, let him behave with great care, let him behave with caution, let him be courteous.

3. وليتلطف - Be polite and cautious:

▪ Be Cautious:

Be cautious in all matters: During exams, while driving at workplace while fulfilling any assigned responsibility, when dealing with people.

▪ Be gentle:

Be gentle with everyone: whether parents, children, siblings, students, teachers, guards, service providers, maids, drivers, strangers, boss, and colleagues.

The Holy Quran teaches us to:

Speak Truthfully:

Speaking the truth is the principal feature concerning by Islam. Allah سبحانه و تعالی directs all the believers to speak the truth in all matters in spite of the circumstances. Within Islam Muslims get reward for uttering the truth. Sometimes, it is difficult to stick to truth through analysis regarding the right path of life. People are more subjective to get about the beneficial substances regardless of whether they are based on truth or lies.¹

Allah سبحانه و تعالی said:

﴿وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾²

“Confound not the Truth with falsehood nor conceal it knowingly.”³

The above-mentioned ayah of the Quran reveals the incident of the Prophet ﷺ span when Jews were superior in intellect than Arabs. Their fame spread beyond the borders. Therefore, probably the Arabs were mentally depressed because of them. The community of Madina was greatly influenced by Jews. They had generated an impression of themselves as they were more literate, purified, and the most prominent religious class.

▪ Reward of Truth according to Quran:

Allah سبحانه و تعالی said about the reward for speaking the truth in Quran:

“Allah سبحانه و تعالی would then declare: "Today, the truthful shall profit the truthful." There are gardens with rivers flowing beneath them. They will remain

1 Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* [The Revival of the Religious Sciences], Vol: 3, trans. Nabih Amin Faris (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, 1993), P: 65–70.

2 Surah Al-Baqarah:42

3 Ibid

there indefinitely. Both Allah سبحانه و تعالى and they are quite delighted with each other. That is, in fact, the great victory."¹

The Almighty commands Muslims that Allah تعالى سبحانه و تعالى is with those who speak the truth on every occasion to others.

﴿لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ الصَّادِقِينَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنْ شَاءَ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾²

“This is all done so that Allah might reward the sincere for being truthful and either punish the hypocrites or, if He so desires, accept their repentance for their actions. Indeed, Allah is the Most Forgiving and Compassionate.”

Utterance of truth provides a route right to heaven. A Muslim cannot have both the abilities of dishonest and proclaims that he is a strong believer and has a strong faith in Islam. Justice and equality are the main characteristics that help to obtain Allah's favour and respectively attain prosperity and satisfaction and contentment not only in this world but also in the hereafter. It is also evident from the Holy Quran that on the Day of Judgement the truthful would be respected and guarded from hardships and miseries. There is no doubt that truthfulness leads to righteousness. It is a comprehensive concept that covers all the categories of goodness and righteous deeds. Immorality is primarily a conduct that turns away from the truth and immoral person is the specific person who is deviated from the way of guidance. Consequently, righteousness and immorality are absolutely in opposition to each other.

▪ Truth brings Peace:

Speaking the truth is not an easy task. Many people face difficulty in it. Those who abstain from telling the truth are considered terrified and go through abuse and distress produce their mental wellbeing interrupted. Being a Muslim, it is obligatory to tell the truth.

Moderation:

Moderation is one of the characteristics of high value that is promoted in Islam. Moderation considers the place in the middle of extremes of excessiveness and deficiency. So, it is regarded as the pillar of entire moral values. While having conversations with people, one must not be excessively undisciplined and roared. Allah سبحانه و تعالى ordered the righteous companions to speak in a low voice when communicating to Prophet ﷺ otherwise it will remove all their good deeds. Allah سبحانه و تعالى says.

﴿وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ ۚ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ﴾³

“Reduce the volume of your voice and take a gradual step. There is no doubt that the donkey's braying is the most repulsive sound of all”

The above-mentioned verse of the Quran doesn't indicate that person can only talk in low voice, and they are not allowed to upraise their voices when needed. Mentioning the braying of donkey means that a few voices and tones in communication are somewhere forbidden with certain types of loud and low voice, aggressive and gentle tone are the requirements in some situations. Likewise, there is variation in tone according to situation. The tone to honour someone is obviously change from the tone of condemnation. It is unacceptable for someone

1 Surah al-Ma'idah:119

2 Surah al-Ahzab:24

3 Surah al-Luqman: 19

to create voice like donkey's braying with the intention to bully others.¹

Speak Positively:

Positive words motivate people towards goodness; hence one should speak positive and refrain from negativity. Almighty Allah سبحانه و تعالى said

﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ﴾²

“And (remember) when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel, (saying): Worship none but Allah (Alone) and be dutiful and good to parents, and to kindred, and to orphans and Al-Masakin (the poor), and speak good to people [i.e. enjoin righteousness and forbid evil, and say the truth about Muhammad Peace be upon him], and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat. Then you slid back, except a few of you, while you are backsliders.”

It means that to speak positive words to parents, relatives, orphans and Masakin and to adopt merciful behaviour with them is order of Allah.

Speak Gently:

Gentleness is contrary to the cruel and harshness. The word gentleness is mentioned in the Noble Quran in the following verse:

﴿فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾³

“The fact that you treated them with kindness was due to Allah's benevolence. If you had been harsh and heartless, they would have undoubtedly dispersed from you. Thus, forgive them, ask them to forgive you, and seek their advice on important issues. And once you have decided on a course of action, believe Allah; He definitely loves people who trust Him.”⁴

Allah سبحانه و تعالى said:

﴿وَإِنَّمَا تُعْرَضُونَ عَنْهُمْ أَبِغَاءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ رَبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُلْ لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُورًا﴾⁵

“And when you have to turn away from them—that is, from the poor, your family, the needy, and the traveler—in order to seek God's mercy, which you hope to obtain, then talk to them with kindness.”

Speak Graciously:

Allah سبحانه و تعالى said

﴿وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۚ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغُنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا﴾⁶

1 Maudūdī, *Tafhīm al-Qur`ān*, Vol: 6, P: 412.

2 Surah Al-Baqarah:83

3 Surah Al Imran: 159

4 Ibid.

5 Surah Al Isra:28.

6 Surah Al Isra:23

"Your Lord has commanded you to: (i) worship no one else except Him; (ii) treat your parents well; and if one or both of them grow old alongside you, do not reprimand them or even say "fie," but rather speak to them with dignity."

In this verse Allah تعالى و سبحانه gives instructions to believers to be fair with other people especially with your parents. Even it is not allowed to utter the slightest word "Uff" that harms your parent. Allah تعالى و سبحانه has ordered us to use soft words and positive expressions¹.

Speak Softly:

In the Holy Quran Allah تعالى و سبحانه stated:

﴿فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى﴾²

"And calmly converse with him; perhaps he will pay attention or become afraid (Allah)"

This verse illustrates that to guide a person to the righteous way; there exist two means; one is to satisfy him by justification while the second is to inform the person about the outcomes of depart.³

Our Beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ always spoke in a soft tone and that's why His words had inspired everyone that listened to Him.

Islamic teachings encourage Communication in gentle and soft way. The listener also tries hard to pay full attention to the speaker, that communicates in a polite tone and friendly way.

Speak Humbly:

Humbleness is amongst the honourable quality that believers must possess. Allah تعالى و سبحانه says:

﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا﴾⁴

"Those who walk humbly on earth and say, "Peace to you," when ignorant people act insolently against them, are the (real) slaves of the Merciful."

Humility is the salient element in the communication of believers. Humbleness is the indication that an individual is giving due respect to him. Allah تعالى و سبحانه said

﴿تِلْكَ الْأَرْضُ الَّتِي نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾⁵

"Regarding the Abode of the Hereafter, we will only provide it to people who don't desire to cause trouble or pursue fame on earth. The best outcome will be for those who fear God."

Allah تعالى و سبحانه advised that hereafter and its everlasting favors are arranged in advance for His humble faithful followers who avoid hurting others and abstain themselves from treating

1 Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, trans. Feras Hamza (Amman, Jordan: Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2007), P: 321, https://www.qalamlib.com/book_files/pdf/en/afsir-al-jalalain-Eng-PDF.pdf.

2 Surah Taha:44

3. Abul A'la Maududi, *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*, trans. Zafar Ishaq Ansari (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 2006), Vol: 5, p. 67.

4 Surah Furqan:63

5 Surah Al Qasas:83

others angrily.

He further said in Quran:

﴿وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ﴾¹

“Additionally, you should not walk insolently on the land or turn your face away from mankind with pride. The truth is that Allah does not enjoy every haughty boaster.”

In another place Allah سبحانه و تعالى says:

﴿وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّكَ لَن تَخْرِقَ الْأَرْضَ وَلَن تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُولًا﴾²

“Strolling around the countryside in a haughty manner is not appropriate. Undoubtedly, you are unable to split the earth in two and ascend to the heights of the mountains.”

Speak Bravely:

The story of Musa’s visit to the castle of Pharaon is mentioned in the Quran. Before his visit He prayed to Allah سبحانه و تعالى and said:

﴿وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِي﴾³

“And remove my tongue's knot.”

Ibn Kathir has mentioned that the verse indicates the incident of Hazrat Musa’s lisp. This happened as a result of a coal that He had placed in his mouth in his childhood. When the responsibility of preaching Islam to Pharaon was given to him, He asked from Allah سبحانه و تعالى to eliminate his stammering so that his mission be effectively completed.

The kind of Language Quran Prohibits:

- **Avoid using unethical language and cursing:**

Allah سبحانه و تعالى does not like the person who behaves badly or the one who curses all the time.

- **Refrain from Backbiting:**

Backbiting is to speak unethically about a person behind his back which if he listens, he does not like it. it is not permissible.

Quran says.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِاللِّقَابِ بِنَسِ الْأَسْمَاءِ الْفُسُوقِ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾⁴

“O you who have faith! Don't let one group make fun of another group because it might be the case that they are superior to the former; don't let some ladies make fun of other women because it might be the case that they are superior to the former; and don't call each other names or disparage one another. How terrible is it to disparage a brother once he has faith? For example, calling a

1 Surah Luqman:18

2 Surah Al Isra:37

3 Surah Taha:27

4 Surah Hujurat:11

Muslim brother who is a devout follower "o sinner," "o wicked," etc. And those who do not turn from their sins are in fact Zalimun (wrongdoers, etc.)".

To backbite a person means to eat the flesh when he is dead. Surely, no one likes to eat the flesh of his dead brother.

Allah says;

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ﴾¹

"O you who believe! Avoid much suspicions, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it (so hate backbiting) ..."

Certainly, one will receive punishment from Allah تعالى و سبحانه for committing the sin of backbite, and Allah تعالى و سبحانه accept the repentance of those who ask for it.

Moreover, people shall abstain from spreading rumors that lead to dispute between mankind. Prophet ﷺ said

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَتَاتٌ²

"A backbiter will not enter Paradise."

It means that the one who backbites will not enter Heaven.

▪ Avoid difficult words and make speech simple and clear:

It is not beneficial to use complex words in a situation where no one understands it, furthermore, avoid harsh words that cause defamation to another person.

Jabir bin 'Abdullah reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

إن من أحبكم إلي، وأقربكم مني مجلساً يوم القيامة، أحاسنكم أخلاقاً، وإن أبغضكم إلي وأبعدكم مني يوم القيامة، الثرثارون، والمتشدقون، والمنفهبون³

"Those of you who behave the best will be the ones I love and am closest to on the Day of Resurrection, while the most hated and distant from me will be those who talk a lot, are pretentious, and use rhetoric the most."

Meaning is that those people will be near to the Prophet ﷺ on the Day of Judgement who treat other people well and talk to them in a very ethical manner but, on the other hand, the Prophet ﷺ hate those people most and they will be at distant from Him, who speak worthlessly and without any purpose and also included those who become source to defame other people and those who show-off at the time of communication.

Discussion and Analysis:

The concept of 'وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ' (Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf) holds a central place in the Quranic teachings on communication. It is derived from the Arabic root word "وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ", which denotes gentleness

1 Surah Hujurat:12

2 Tirmidhī, Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā, *Jāmi' at-Tirmidhī*, "Chapters on Righteousness and Maintaining Good Relations with Relatives," Hadith no 2026, trans. Abu Khaliyl (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007), Vol: 3, P: 443,

3 Ibid, Hadith no. 2018.

and kindness, this word underscores the importance of compassionate and respectful dialogue. The Quran's emphasis on this principle reflects a broader vision of social harmony and ethical interaction, both of which are essential to the Islamic way of life.

The significance of **وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ** lies in its ability to encapsulate the ideal manner of interpersonal communication. It is not about the tone of speech only but represents a comprehensive moral stance toward others. By encouraging believers to be gentle and mindful in their communication, this concept serves to reduce conflict and promote a more empathetic, unified society. It aligns seamlessly with the Quran's ethical framework, which emphasizes that all actions including speech should reflect divine attributes such as mercy, kindness, and justice.

This principal functions as a means of conflict resolution and facilitates constructive dialogue. By guiding believers to communicate kindly, it helps prevent misunderstandings and reduce potential disputes. This is particularly vital in diverse societies, where differences in opinion and background can often lead to tension. The Quranic call to **وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ** ensures that communication remains a tool for connection, rather than a source of division. Although the word **وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ** is not explicitly repeated in every context, its essence is conveyed through numerous Quranic verses that advocate for respectful and gentle interaction. For example, Allah commands: "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction and argue with them in a way that is best."¹ This verse mirrors the principles of **وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ** by promoting thoughtful and compassionate dialogue.

Similarly, Quran cautions against mockery and disrespect: "O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them."² This verse emphasizes the necessity of respectful interaction, which reinforces the core values of **وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ**.

Also, Allah instructs Prophet Musa (Moses) to speak gently to Pharaoh: "Speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah]."³ This verse highlights the power and necessity of kind speech, even when addressing an adversary, showcasing the profound implications of **وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ**.

In addition to this word, the Quran introduces other phrases that promote similar values. For instance, "**حُسْنُ الْكَلَامِ**" (good speech) is referred: "And tell My servants to say that which is best."⁴ This verse reinforces the command to speak in the most respectful and kind manner, echoing the ethos of **وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ**.

In summary, the concept of **وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ**, along with its supporting teachings in the Quran, reflects a profound commitment to ethical communication in Islam. By following these principles, believers ensure that their speech remains respectful, kind, and aligned with the Quran's moral vision for human interaction.

Conclusion:

The Holy Quran, revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ over 23 years, is a divine book rich in meaning and guidance. It emphasizes the importance of respectful human interaction and communication. The Quran outlines ethical guidelines for speech, encouraging believers to speak with politeness, humility, gentleness, and truthfulness. A key word, "**وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ**" (*Wa-l-yatalaṭṭaf*) means to speak cautiously and kindly appears near the center of the Quran, symbolizing its central message.

Prophets, including Muhammad ﷺ and Musa (Moses), were commanded to communicate with wisdom and softness, setting examples for others to follow. The Quran also warns against

1 Surah al Nahl 125

2 Surah al Hujurat:11

3 Surah al Ta-Ha :44

4 Surah al Isra:53

unethical speech, such as idle talk, rudeness, cursing, and especially backbiting, which is considered a grave sin. Overall, the Quran promotes thoughtful, respectful, and ethical communication as a core principle of Islamic life.

Recommendations:

1. Islamic educational institutions, including schools, madaris, and universities, can integrate Qur'anic communication ethics into their curricula.
2. Islamic media platforms should run awareness campaigns that promote positive communication inspired by Qur'anic teachings.
3. Imams and khateebis should be trained to deliver their messages with wisdom, moderation, and kindness.

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