

Speech and Silence Manners

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Abstract

The etiquette is one of the Islamic teachings. The speech manner is very important. The speaking in Islam can be investigated from two aspects: content and form of speech. The first roots in knowledge, insight, and ideas of speaker and the latter roots in his/her decorum. The Islamic speaking manners include how to talk to God, religious leaders (especially the Prophet and the Ahlul-Bayt), parents, teachers, and public.

Keywords: Speech, Manners, Speech Manners, Literary Texts.

Introduction:

The tongue and ability to speak is one of the great gifts of God to mankind. The speaking allows people to simply and easily communicate and transfer their knowledge and emotions. Some believe that human being thinks by speaking. Although it is inner, it is a form of speech.

The individual's speech reflects his/her personality. The polite people never pollute their speech with bad words, even in worst conditions:

آدمی مخفی است در زیب زبانی
ایمن زبانی، پرده است درگاه دهان
چون که به بادی، پرده را در هم کشید
سرّ صحن خانه شد بر ما پدید

The most important speech manners include:

1. Moderation in speech

The moderation is good in every deed, but it is more desirable in speech. The moderation in speech causes the speaker will not be confused, his/her speech mistakes will be reduced, and the listener will not be tired from talking of speaker.

On moderation, Imam Ali states that: (The prolix causes the wise will be confused. It makes tired the patient people. So, do not speak more or less. Be moderate) (Ghurar al-Hekam and Durar al-Kalim Amedi; vol. 2, p. 341).

2. Thoughtful speech

The thoughtful and wise speaking is other speech manner. In other words, the words should be investigated prior to beginning of speech to avoid from possible errors and mistakes:

لِلْعَاقِلِ فِي كُلِّ كَلِمَةٍ نُبْلٌ

The wise individuals have specific shrewdness in every speech
(Ghurar al-Hekam and Durar al-Kalim Amedi; vol. 2, p. 341)

3. Timely speech

Imam Ali preciously states that: لِكُلِّ مَقَامٍ مَقَالٌ (Each sentence should not be said in any situation) (Ghurar al-Hekam and Durar al-Kalim Amedi; vol. 2, p. 347).

According to this statement and Islamic tradition, every word and every point should be said timely. Many words and sentences should not be said in any situation.

The advice texts emphasize that even when the statement does not have certain profit and is only said to create happiness and joy, the time and place of speech should be assessed and then the statement to be said (Pahlavi texts - Āzarbād, paragraph 57).

4. Speech understandability

The understandability of speech is other speech manner. The speaker should talk understandably to listener.

It is better that speaker uses poetry, tales, and proverbs for better understanding of listener. In fact, the speaking should be in such a way that (before the words will be heard, their meaning will reach the listener's heart) (Ghurar al-Hekam and Durar al-Kalim Amedi; vol. 2, p. 347).

5. Attractiveness of speech

For more impact on audience, the speaker should offer his speech in an attractive form. The attractive speaking may create credibility and personality for speaker. On the contrary, if the speaker is knowledgeable and is not able to communicate well his/her knowledge to others, his/her audience will get bored.

6. Softness of speech

The softness of speech is one of the speech manners in Islamic religious teachings and plays a role in training of individuals. Even the most rebellious individuals should be treated softly. If the speech will be harsh, loud, or raspy, it is rudeness, hurts listener's ear, and will distract the listener.

7. Usefulness of speech

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: *قُولُوا خَيْرًا تُغْنِمُوا* (Say a good (word) to derive benefit) (Ghurur al-Hekam and Durar al-Kalim Amedi; vol. 2, p. 343).

Also, Imam Ali said: *خَيْرُ الْقَوْلِ مَا نَفَعَ* (Goodness of speech is in its usefulness).

According to religious teachings, the speech should benefit the speaker or listener. The nonsense and unworthy speaking which do not have any benefit in this world and the hereafter should be avoided. In fact, if the speaker's words are not useful, it is better to avoid from saying them to not take others' time and get in trouble.

8. Put into practice the speech

According to religious teachings, the speaker should put into practice his/her speech and avoid from what will not practice. In Islamic tradition, the actualization of speaking gives value to speaker's speech. In this regard, Imam Ali states:

المرء يوزنُ بقوله و يقوَّمُ بفعله فقل ما ترجَّحَ زنته، و افعل ما تجلَّ قيمته

Man is measured by his words and valued by his deeds. So, tell what add weight and do what its cost and price is expensive.

The speaker should act more than what he says to adorn his/her speech.

9. Rightness of speech

If people have the right to speak willingly or unwillingly based on their assumptions, there will emerge conflicts and deviations in individual and social life. The false and unknowledgeable statements which are based on foolish thoughts and analyses have adverse consequences.

10. Goodness of speech

Islamic teachings dictate that people have good speech and avoid from speaking unduly. In fact, good speech is for good and polite people and rude and inappropriate speech is for despicable and impolite people. If an individual accustoms to good speaking, he/she always wins and avoids from blame of others.

11. Confidentiality

In hearing and telling, the people should be confidential. They should share their secrets with trusted people. One of the malevolent people's traits is that they do not keep the secret. Then, people should not share their secrets with them.

12. Consult with wise and trusted people

All these three must be considered advisor and partner: Good thought, good speech, and good deeds (Minavi Khord, Question 38, paragraph 36).

Saeb says:

نصیح از بیهوده گویی آبروی خویش برد بوی خون آید از افغان، مرغ بی هنگام را

In Marzban Name, Anushiravan sees an old man ninety years old who plants walnut tree. Anushiravan wonders because ten to twenty years should wait until the tree fertilize. Then, he asked the old man: why you plant this tree while you would not use it. In the past, the trees were planted and we ate their fruits and now we plant and the people will eat in future, he answered. Anushiravan much liked these words and immediately gave him one hundred dinars.

Saadi provides proper techniques for speech manners which are acceptable in society. For example, he emphasizes more on timely speaking:

زبان در دهان ای خردمند چیست ؟ کلید در گنج صاحب هنر
چو در بسته باشد چه داند کسی که گوهر فروش است یا پبله ور

The Prophet (pbuh) said: Most human mistakes arise from tongue. The simplest things are silence and good behavior.

All anecdotes in Marzban Name are social, behavioral, and characteristic symbols and their significant examples may be found in people's lives.

The emphasis on importance, value, and effects of silence in traditions of religious leaders protects the human against prolix.

Everything in this world has pest. The pests of tongue are verbosity, nosiness, controversy, antagonism, swearing and cursing, cursing, humor, teasing, gossiping, hypocrisy, and etc.

1. Gossiping:

ويل لكل همزة لمزة: God states:

Woe to every slanderer, defamer.

Telltale is anyone who reveals others' secrets either by words or gestures.

سديگر سخن چین و دو رویه مرد بکوشد بر انگیزد از آب گرد
سخن چین و دو روی و بیکار مرد دل هوشیاران کند پر ز درد
مکن با سخن چین و دو روی دراز که نیکت به زشتی برد پاک باز

2. Rant:

God warns the man about the behavior which does not has any interest for him/her. In Holy Qur'an, man is forbidden to rant. He states that rant is deterrent to perfection and avoidance of rant is a sign of human dignity:

«إِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا تَبْتَغِيَ الْجَاهِلِينَ».

When they hear idle talk they turn aside from it and say: We shall have our deeds and you shall have your deeds; peace be on you, we do not desire the ignorant.

When good speech guides, the idle talk may mislead.

God states:

«وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ...».

But there are, among men, those who purchase idle tales, without knowledge (or meaning), to mislead (men) from the Path of Allah.

3. Cursing and swearing:

Imam Ali (AS) said:

The believer is he who do not offend anyone with profanity statements.

Conclusion:

Certainly, among all speech manners, the rightness and wisdom are in upper position. The speech manner is very important. The speaking in Islam can be investigated from two aspects: content and form of speech. The first roots in knowledge, insight, and ideas of speaker and the latter roots in his/her decorum. The Islamic speaking manners include how to talk to God, religious leaders (especially the Prophet and the Ahlul-Bayt), parents, teachers, and public.

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