

The Discipline of Socializing According to The Islamic Faith and The Current Gender Dysphoria Crisis

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Abstract

This paper discusses on issues related to communication, socializing boundaries between men and women, and gender confusion. Symptoms of inappropriate behavior and habits to the normal human life have become a common thing today. This has become worrisome towards the lifestyle of future generations. Each individual should live one's life according to the Shariah, not breaking any boundaries, and not blaming any laws and rules in Islam. The Islamic principles should be practiced with a clear understanding of its teachings and doctrines. The purpose of this paper is to explain professional ethics and communication according to Islamic teachings especially those that involve men and women in the same line of work. This paper also discusses the factors that affect gender confusion and the negative effects. The research method includes literature review, interview, documentation, and detailed study to collect the related data. The results clearly highlight the Shariah propositions regarding socializing between men and women who are not blood-related. This study is hoped to be able to show Muslims as the best people in all areas of life affairs, and should be highlighted to improve people's lives who believe in Islam.

Keywords: Courteous, Ethic, Communication, Socializing, Confusion

Introduction

Humans need to connect with one another. This interaction require communication, chatting, discussing, and so on. Nowadays, we mainly use technological advances to ease and speed our business matter. Muslims are encouraged to know each other well to promote love among people. We can learn from each other, and complete one another. In life, communication is a must. According to Al-Auza'l, Muslims talk less and work more and munafiks talk more and work less. We must be mindful of what we say and just stay silent if we have nothing better to say (Mohamad, 1996). We need to share kindness, be polite, to

give advice, and to debate well. Islam encourages us to communicate well according to situation.

Conveying Allah's knowledge is good. It must be conveyed to others as taught by Allah and His Messenger to us. Islam encourages us to communicate to give benefit to us and anyone listening. Thus, we depend on our wisdom to filter our words. One's attitude can be valued through his/her speech. Those who like to downgrade others show their true dark selves. Good speech needs practice according to the al-Quran and Sunnah. Every aspect of life has its own guideline including communication. People need communication, either verbally, which is through spoken and written interaction, or non-verbal, which is without words or using signs like facial expression, eye contact, and body language.

Verbal communication behaviour in Islam is shown in a few verses in the al-Quran which includes using true words (Qaulan Sadidan). For example, in Surah al-Ahzab :70, Allah said, which means

".....and (always) say a word directed to the Right."

Not only that, we should also use effective words (Qaulan Balighan). For example, in Surah al-Nisa':63, Allah said, which means:

".....and speak to them a word to reach their very souls."

Use comforting words (Qaulan Masyuran). For example, in Surah al-Isra':28, Allah said, which means

".....yet speak to them a word of easy kindness."

We are also encouraged to use polite words (Qaulan Layyinan). For example, in Surah Taha: 24-28, Allah said, which means

".....And remove the impediment from my speech. So they may understand what I say"

Using respectful words (Qaulan Kariman) is also a must. For example, in Surah al-Isra: 23, which means

".....say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor."

Use nice words (Qaulan Ma'rufan). For example, in Surah al-Ahzab: 32, which means: *".....but speak a speech (that is) just."*

Interruption in Communication (Verbal & Non-Verbal)

Communication is interrupted through matter like not understanding the spoken language or the use of bombastic words. For this, we have to communicate according to our interlocutors' age, and knowledge level. Problems could also arise when there is no eye contact. We should also avoid talking in low voice, talking too fast, too loud, or stuttering. The tendency to interrupt in others' conversation can cause disruption and seem a bit inappropriate. For non-verbal, one's hand writing could appear unclear and difficult to be read. Not only, in a conversation, one party might appear not serious or not focused with the message to be conveyed.

Other factors include appearance which does not look confident and pleasant, as well as mouth and body odor. This is caused by not paying attention to one's own appearance and not hygienic. Not only that, lacking in the knowledge of using ICT like sending short messages, surfing the internet, logging in to e-mails, sending faxes, and using the social media can cause messages to not be conveyed effectively.

Sometimes, talking with inappropriate facial expressions like frowning can also be unpleasant. This can cause others to feel uncomfortable around us. This can disrupt a good communication. We as Muslims can make the Prophet Muhammad as our role model by communicating in a wise way either towards fellow Muslims or not.

Boundary between Muslim Males & Females

Islam encourages us to get to know each other with all different backgrounds. The more one socializes, the better the relationship. However, Islam has put forth guidelines so socializing especially between men and women are not crossed. Islam looks at this matter seriously so its people can take care of what can and what cannot be done while socializing.

Socializing without limit might cause problems as what can be seen in the West. Allah completes humans with specific stimuli. Women need men and vice versa to complete their lives. Some guidelines in socializing are

- a) Maintain politeness and restrictions in every affair. Every Muslim must cover their own aurat and maintain their modesty.

All Muslims must restrain from doing evil deeds either to themselves or towards others. We must do this through the way we dress, socialize, and talk. Men's aurat is from belly button until knee, while women's aurat is the whole body except face and palms. Clothes must be loose and not see-through, and should be clean and neat. We are not encouraged to wear clothes with certain inappropriate symbols or symbols of other religions.

- b) Avoid frequent eye contact or looking intently among opposite sex as it might be driven by evil thoughts and nafs.

Eyes are the window to the soul and could lead to fitnah and *zina*. A protected sight is when looking at the opposite sex without specific intention or admiring one's beauty for too much.

Allah S.W.T said in Surah An-Nur; 30-31, which means

30. *"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And Allah is well acquainted with all that they do "*

31. *"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! Turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss."*

(Surah An-Nur: 30-31)

- c) The voice should not be too loud, impolite, or not too soft and appealing, most importantly, be respectful to one another.

While socializing, we are advised to speak softly among ladies, but among two opposite genders, we have to be polite and strict, and restrain from using alluring voices. We should also talk about beneficial matters only, like those that will bring benefit to ourselves, the religion, to the people, and the nation. We must speak the truth and never lie, and encouraged to wish others peace and to receive welcomingly among those with the same religion. For those with different religions, we can greet them accordingly, and be friendly, as well as be open-minded when discussing about certain matters. We are also recommended to keep secrets and not spread rumors, and keep our promises. Make sure we care about our spoken content with clear intention and not going overboard when conveying the intended messages.

- d) Talk about important matters only like in meetings, for business matters, and assignments. Avoid talking about other people, chatting away, cracking jokes uncontrollably, holding hands, and patting each other intentionally among the opposite genders.

The Prophet said, which means

“Do not talk much other than zikrullah because too much talking will harden the hearts & indeed those who are the most distant from Allah are the hard-hearted”.

(Riwayat Tarmidzi)

- e) Avoid staying together in a space with the opposite gender. If needed, bring along another same-sex friend and interact in public, not in a secluded place, which may arouse slander.

Men and women should only interact if there is a need to do so, and must be chaperoned. In Islam, interaction between two opposite genders is not encouraged, unless if totally needed. We can try to come up with some other way to avoid such intercourse for the sake of the religion.

The Prophet said, which means

“Do not talk much other than zikrullah because too much talking will harden the hearts & indeed those who are the most distant from Allah are the hard-hearted”. (Riwayat Tarmidzi)

The Prophet said

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Hereafter, then never let him alone with a woman who is not his mahram because the third is the devil.” (Riwayat Ahmad)

- f) Get married when fully ready.

The Prophet said, which means:

“Many people who go to hell are caused by two cavities: mouth & genitals.” (Riwayat Ahmad Ibnu Hanbal)

In Islam, if a matter is considered haram, there should be no other way of making it possible or halal, no matter what (Abdullah 1996).

Gender Confusion Issue

Allah has created human both male and female with different characteristics. Gender difference can be seen physically and through one's personality. It is an obligatory in Islam for every person to not change whatever Allah has given them.

Any action that does not abide by Allah's rules is haram and if done, it becomes a sin. Gender confusion has been spreading among Muslim teenagers and this issue has become a

social problem in Malaysia. Some terms for this problem are *bohjan*, *bohsia*, *tomboy*, *lelaki lembut*, *maknyah*, and transgender. Questions arise as to why this happens.

The factors that might influence this confusion is not having a strong grip regarding Islam in daily lives and refusal to learn about it. Parents play an important role in educating their children at home. Aside education, parents are also responsible in providing their children a comfortable life, and to guide them into differentiating the bad and the good in Islam.

Environmental influence and friends, as well as uncontrolled negative socializing are some of the factors that might cause teenagers to have such confusion. Not only that, they are also easily influenced by celebrities either locally or internationally, and worse, having inferiority complex about themselves. They might also be affected by how the society views them which make them take everything in negatively.

Sometimes, teenagers are afraid of being left out if they do not follow the current 'trend', or maybe it is just their own inner selves. However, humans should never dwell in their own feelings but to choose what's best for them. This unhealthy 'trend' should be eradicated to protect Islam's image. The Prophet said from Riwayat Ibnu Abbas that Allah despise women who look like men and men who look like women. Allah also despise those who change His creation intentionally. The concept of 'halalan toyyiba' is vital in protecting one's physical and spiritual health.

By crossing the lines of changing one's appearance is a sin and Allah will punish them either in the world or in the hereafter. One's life will be degraded and isolated from the others for committing such sin. If not curbed, the society will face more social problems and this could lead to out-of-wedlock sex, raping, and others. For transgender, Allah will not grant them wealth in life, and not feeling at peace. They could also easily get HIV and AIDS. Not only that, the nation could fall from being civilized and be threatened.

Things that Allah asks us to do bring benefit (the medicine) while those that He forbid are the poison. Protecting one's aurat and be aware of the kind of interaction we are making mean that Allah has meant something for His worshippers. We should learn from the events that happened before us like what has happened to Prophet Lut's people who disobeyed Him. They were homosexuals and Allah has punished them for their sins as they did not listen to Prophet Lut's warnings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, if we limit our social boundaries, and not change a thing about ourselves, we could be more at peace and grateful, and we can also avoid evil deeds. We could also create a harmonious relationship within the society without having to commit sins. If people realize their roles in the society, life would become so much better and Allah will definitely look upon us with mercy and forgive all our sins. The nation can also become a set example for other Muslim countries.

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