

## **Non-verbal communication in the Holy Qur'an**

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### **Abstract:**

Considering the scope and importance of non-verbal communication in human relationships, the Holy Qur'an has also directed and regulated this type of communication based on divine thought and purpose in many of its verses. Following the verses of the Qur'an, the topic of non-verbal communication can be pursued in four areas: voice tone, facial expression, eye contact, and body language. The tone of voice has the dual function of identifying people's inner goals and maintaining people's social health. The facial expression also indicates concepts such as humility, anger, hypocrisy, chastity, and remorse. The way of looking and eye contact includes effective concepts in human communication such as anger and opposition and sometimes also expresses anxiety and fear. The movements of other body parts (body language) each symbolically indicate certain meanings, attitudes, and moods, and the Holy Qur'an confirms some of these concepts and rejects others. The most important point in the concepts resulting from non-verbal communication is that these concepts are based on the axis of divine teachings. In other words, the concepts emitted by the eyes, tone, facial expression, and body language should be based on monotheism, lordship, and God. In the Holy Qur'an, while inviting the transmission of some concepts in the form of non-verbal behaviors, God forbids some other concepts, and it is not the case that anyone is allowed to convey any concepts with non-verbal language, but rather, one should consider the audience and pay attention to his attitude. A behavior appropriate to him should be emitted. The result of such a thing will be the emergence of multiple relationships with different concepts and orientations in the community of believers

**Keywords:** non-verbal communication, divine orientation, tone context, facial expression context, eye context, body language context

## 1 Introduction

Considering the complex requirements of today's life, the category of communication has a special place among thinkers, and due to the increase in communication ways and the formation of the Global Village, its importance has become more visible and has become the subject of study by many researchers. The importance of communication is such that it can have positive or negative effects on a person's life and change or overturn his path. The necessity of social life, the need for social and human communication, and the extensive level of these interpersonal interactions have caused the emergence of various fields of study in the humanities, of which verbal and non-verbal communication are only a part of those sciences. Despite the great role and importance that language or verbal communication has in the continuation of our individual and social life; however, human communication is not limited to verbal one, a significant part of human communication takes place through non-verbal communication. These form the most important part of interpersonal communication and include a wide range of phenomena such as tone quality, facial expressions, and gestures, body gestures, hand and foot movements, touching others (such as putting a hand on someone's shoulder), standing and sitting position, handshaking, facial signs and different facial expressions, eye contact, body angle, covering style, distance, physical territory and distance of communicators, arrangement of people and objects about each other, etc. The reason behind the importance of non-verbal communication is that non-verbal communication can determine the success or failure of a relationship. Because more than 70% of human communication is non-verbal. The ratio of non-verbal to verbal relationships in the estimation that the researchers obtained is 35% verbal and the remaining 65% is non-verbal. Of course, according to the research of some other researchers, only 7% of the meanings are conveyed to the audience with verbal messages, but 93% of the messages are conveyed non-verbally, of which 38% with phonetic signs and 55% with Facial signs are transmitted. (Farhangi, 2006: 272).

Non-verbal communication is the phonetic and non-phonetic messages that are sent and explained by means other than linguistic means. In general, this type of communication is achieved by establishing communication and conveying the message to the other party with the help of a tool other than words. The knowledge that examines and analyzes the set

of non-verbal messages the way they are sent and how they affect the audience is called the Knowledge of Non-Verbal Communication.

"From the point of view of experts, the communication of non-verbal behaviors in comparison to verbal behaviors indicates our true feelings; because when sending non-verbal messages, we cannot notice all our behaviors and find them out. Usually, we can hear our voice, but we cannot understand the movements of gestures and how to express ourselves; because these and other types of non-verbal behaviors are more important and continuous examples than speaking, besides, they are less important in our self-awareness field. For this reason, this hypothesis has been proposed by some researchers that our non-verbal behavior indicates our true feelings" (Mohsenian Rad, 1369, p. 256).

Since human life is inevitable and dependent on communication, therefore, the Holy Qur'an has paid special attention to it, and to regulate human communication and direct it, it has expressed the components and principles regarding verbal and non-verbal communication. It requires a lot of extensive research. This article has been done in this direction and in presenting a small part of this great truth, it has addressed the topic of non-verbal communication from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an and its characteristics, so that it may be opened for other research.

In terms of the research process, this article is based on the conceptual framework consisting of the concepts of "communication", "message", "sender and receiver" and "non-verbal communication" and based on the interpretative method of the topic with a detailed approach to the topic of "non-verbal communication" in the verses of the Qur'an Karim will reflect on it and infer some of its components and Quranic examples.

## 2 Research Background

Author(s)	Title	Method	Results
Zahra Mohaghegian, Azam Parcham	Semiotics of non-verbal communication in the verses of the Holy Quran	Descriptive-analytical	The verses of the Holy Qur'an convey various messages to a person through non-verbal communication such as sound, sight, smell, hearing, etc.
Mohammad Javad Sadeghi Majid,	Investigating the non-verbal communication implications of different	Descriptive-analytical	The Holy Qur'an has not been oblivious to the capacity of non-verbal signs in general and body postures and movements in

Author(s)	Title	Method	Results
Meysham Chitgarha	body states in the Qur'an		particular, and by addressing the non-verbal dimensions of all types of human communication, it has deepened and completed the intended message.
Siddiqa Karami, Seyyed Mohammad Reza Hosseini Nia	Communication in the verbal and non-verbal communication section in the family from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an and hadiths	Descriptive-analytical	Communication in the family has a wide scope and is done in both verbal and non-verbal ways. Constructive verbal communication through kind speech, expression of love, preaching, etc. plays an important role in creating hearts between family members. The channels of non-verbal communication are also very wide, and its various dimensions are explained more in the narrations.
Sohrab Maruti, Yar, Mohammad Ghasemi, Narges Shekharbeigi, Fereshte Darabi	Typology of non-verbal communication components in the Holy Qur'an	Descriptive-analytical	The Holy Quran refers to the importance of external characteristics in social and interpersonal relationships. Also, he has mentioned things such as walking modestly, smiling and being open-minded, respecting the tone of voice and tone of speech, etc. Body language and paying attention to its signs, such as facial expressions and physical condition, etc., encourages us more careful in our actions and behaviors.
Hossein Fa'al Araghi Nejad	Non-verbal communication in Qur'anic stories	Descriptive-analytical	In the use of non-verbal communication, the stories of the Qur'an pay attention to the types of body language, the functions of the language of objects such as gifts and possessions, clothes and jewelry, and the elements of speech such as the tone and quotient of speaking, and in this revelation, they take advantage of this. The way of communicating and linking them with words has added to the greater conveyance of meaning in the dramatic space of his story.

### 3 Concepts

#### 3.1 The concept of communication

Many definitions have been provided for communication, but a definition that is agreed upon by all communication science scholars has not been stated. In his book on communication, Mohsenian Rad considers the lack of attention to this field, along with its youth, as the reason for this. But in a definition, he has defined the concept of communication as follows: "the process of transmitting a message from the sender to the receiver provided that the recipient of the message has a similarity of meaning with the intended meaning of the sender" (Mohsenian Rad, 1990: 57).

In another definition, communication is the technique of transferring information about human thoughts and behaviors from one person to another. In general, each person uses various means to communicate with others and express their needs (Hakim-Ara, 2005: 36).

#### 3.2 The concept of the message

The message can be visualized in two ways:

i: Verbal message (both voice and writing): It is the same as what everyone thinks of it and it can be considered as a conversation that is done face-to-face or on the phone. A message is a letter, e-mail, or text message that is sent, it is news that is broadcast in a newspaper or on TV. There is a one-way crossing sign that is installed at the crossing and other similar examples.

ii: Non-verbal messages: Some things are not in everyone's mind, but they are accepted when explained. These items can also be called messages. Such as the state of resentment that is expressed on a person's face in the form of a frown or hand gestures, especially in excited conversations. (Mohsenian-Rad, 2017: 189)

#### 3.3 The concept of sender

In human communication, the person who sends the message voluntarily or

involuntarily is the sender of the message (Ahi and Suri, 2015: 28).

### **3.4 The concept of receiver**

A person may intentionally place himself in the place of receiving a message or unintentionally be the subject of receiving a message, in both cases this person is considered the recipient of the message (Ahi and Suri, 2015: 28).

### **3.5 Non-verbal communication**

Non-verbal communication consists of phonetic and non-phonetic messages that are sent and explained by means other than linguistic means (Farhangi, 1996: 22), so the range of communication is more than the exchange of words communication can be done without any words. It is like the communication of two or more people together, which is carefully observed in this type of interaction that the non-verbal communication between them is ongoing all the time, while the verbal communication only takes place sometimes (Mohsenian Rad, 1990: 246).

## **4 Methodology**

The research method in this article is the method of thematic interpretation based on the detailed approach to understanding the verses of the Holy Qur'an. The most important feature of this approach is that it does not include the structure of the sura and the relationship between its verses in discovering the meanings and concepts of the Qur'an, and examines each word, verse, part of the verse, or verse independently of the overall context of the sura; Therefore, the unit of reference in this method is a single verse or a part of it, multiple verses, narrative interpretation or independent narrations and relying on the literary and linguistic features of words (Ahmadi Ashtiani, 2022: 4). Based on this, Qur'anic verses and phrases related to the topic of non-verbal communication will be considered and the titles and components of non-verbal communication that the Holy Quran indicates will be deduced.

## 5 Non-verbal communication in the Holy Qur'an

In the Holy Qur'an, communication (both verbal and non-verbal) is not limited to the type of human-to-human, but the scope of communication includes the relationship between God and all beings, God and angels, God and men, men and angels, men and animals, animals and men, God with the devil and the devil with humans, and for each of these very important and complicated matters have been stated. Also, the time and place of some of these connections go back to other worlds, i.e. heaven, hell, and doomsday.

Since paying attention to the components of communication and its correct application is one of the important factors in creating good and effective communication, the religion of Islam has always pointed out subtle points in establishing communication.

Perhaps the main point of the Qur'anic implications in the matter of communication is that human relations (whether human to human or God and other beings of the world) must be based on God and monotheism, and the servants are obliged to involve God's thoughts and presuppositions in their communications. That's why, their eyes, tone, facial expression, and body language should emit certain concepts and be centered on monotheism and divine lordship. The circuit of communication should be based on faith in God and His teachings. In other words, divine teachings direct human communication and value the type of concepts resulting from communication and address people based on it, and while calling for the observance of certain concepts in the form of non-verbal behaviors, from some It forbids other concepts, and it is not like that everyone is allowed to convey any concept with non-verbal language, but a suitable behavior should be emitted by considering the audience and paying attention to his attitude.

The manifestation of this statement in the Holy Qur'an can be seen in verse 29 of Surah Fath. "Muhammad, the Messenger of God, and those who are with him, are fierce against the infidels, the most merciful among them, bow down in prostration"; According to this verse, God Almighty demands his servants to direct their behaviors based on faith and the axis of the messenger of God and his companions. Therefore, the result of such a thing will be many relations and concepts of communication in the community of believers (Motasharrein), one of these areas is non-verbal communication.

The Holy Qur'an has mentioned this non-verbal communication in some cases. As he says in the face of helpless but restrained people: "For the poor who are confined in the way of God, they are not able to strike in the land, as they are ignorant of the rich." They are known by their faces, and they do not question people with blankets, and we spend from

good things, for God is All-Knowing" (Al-Baqarah: 273) The meaning of the expression "Yahsabuhum al-Jahilo Aghniyya" is that people who are not aware of the real condition of poor people among believers think that they are rich due to the severity of chastity that can be seen in their behavior. Because even though they are poor, they don't pretend to be poor and they hide the signs of poverty as much as they can so that people are not aware of their condition unless the color of their skin becomes yellow due to extreme poverty and their clothes are old so the people get to know them through these signs (Tabatabaei, 1996: vol. 2, 613). Therefore, one of the components of non-verbal communication is the characteristics of people's faces. Amir al-Mominin says about the role of the face and facial expression in a relationship: "There is nothing visible to anyone except the appearance in the flats of the tongue and the surfaces of the face." (Nahj al-Balagha, Hikmat 26)

By induction in the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the manifestation of non-verbal communication can be followed in four areas: voice and tone, facial expression, eye contact, and body language.

### 5.1 Tone

Tone of speech is considered one of the important and common signs of non-verbal communication, which is always accompanied by human speech and behavior. The tone is the general mood of the conversation that can affect the outcome and its conditions. For this reason, controlling the tone is necessary to achieve desirable results; because the tone determines the direction of the speech more than any other factor. From the point of view of the Qur'an, the function of tone in non-verbal communication can be used in two positions:

First place: the function of tone in identifying people's inner goals

In Surah Muhammad (pbuh), God says about the hypocrites: "If We want, We will show them to you, and you will recognize them by their faces or the way they speak, and God is aware of your deeds" (Muhammad, 30). According to the late Allameh Tabatabai, the meaning of the verse is that "you will soon recognize them by the way they speak because their speech is sarcastic and offensive" (Tabatabayi, 1996, vol. 18, p. 365). Therefore, it can be concluded that from the point of view of paying attention to the tone of speech in understanding and discovering the meaning of a communication, it has an effective and vital role that the speaker should pay attention to.

Second place: the function of tone in maintaining the social health of people

In verse 32 of Surah (Ahzab), God says to the Prophet's women a well-known saying; "O women of the Prophet, you are not like other women, if you fear God. So don't speak



softly so that the man who has a disease in his heart will be greedy. And say Ma'rouf." According to the contents of the verse, attention and precision in how to speak and pay attention to the tone of speech is one of the ways that sick people do not covet society's members, especially women.

## 5.2 facial expression

Facial expressions are the language that express many concepts in human interactions, which may sometimes appear voluntarily and sometimes involuntarily. According to Qur'anic anthropology, a person's mood and mental state are visible above all in the color of his face and facial expressions. From the perspective of the Qur'anic vision, just as the confusion, turbidity, and darkness of the conscience of the deniers of the unseen world and those who are deprived and useless of faith and spiritual experiences are visible in their faces; In the same way, the inner purity of the people of meaning is found and visible in their faces, and the effects of faith and the signs of God's service are visible in the faces of the believers: "The appearance of them in their faces is in the result of worship" (Fath, 29).

In the expression of the Holy Qur'an, facial expressions indicate concepts such as humility, anger, hypocrisy, chastity, modesty, remorse, and regret, all of which are used in non-verbal language and from facial expressions, which sometimes speak directly. It is also more effective.

### A) Humility

The Holy Qur'an mentions this concept in many contexts such as the relationship between the Prophet and the believers, the relationship between the children and their parents, the state of worship of the believers, and the way the believers walk. It is stated in verse 215 of Surah Al-Shaara': "And lower your wings (be humble) towards those who follow you from the believers; A wing of humility descends before every believer who follows you. The Qur'an also declares the quality of non-verbal interaction with parents based on (lowering the wing): " Bow down before them out of kindness and say: O my Lord, have mercy on them just as they raised me when I was a child" (Isra', 24).

The concept of humility in the devotional state of the believers and the relationship with God is also manifested in some verses of the Qur'an, and one of the characteristics of the devotional relationship of the believers with God is humility: And they fall on their faces

and weep, and their humility increases" (Isra', 109). Allameh Tabatabai considers the meaning of Kharur (falling on) to be prostration and humility, and the fact that he added it to cry again in the sentence is for this reason to convey the meaning of humility; because kharur is expressing humiliation with body parts and humility is expressing humiliation with the heart (Tabatabayi, 1996, vol. 13, p. 308).

#### *B) Expression of anger*

When one was informed in Jaheliya that God Almighty has given you a daughter, according to the text of the Qur'an, sorrow, and sadness occupied the entire space of their face, as the Qur'an says: "And when one of them is given the news of a daughter, he will turn black and angry." (Nahl, 58 and Zokhrof, 17). Restraining the anger that is accompanied by turning blue and getting angry is also a form of non-verbal communication. The Qur'an's description of the effect of this state is far more effective than a state where a person expresses his anger with his tongue.

#### *C) Hypocrisy*

The manifestation of this concept is a kind of double and hypocritical attitude in people who hide an opinion in their hearts, but pretend to be the opposite. In the description of the hypocrites, the Holy Qur'an has beautifully depicted this behavior: "The hypocrites deceive Allah and He deceives them. These are the people who stand for prayer in a state of boredom and laziness, have no interest in prayer, and only pretend to believe and practice religion to trick and deceive the believers and to be close to them. And the real prayers are few" (Nisa, 142). Therefore, laziness and laziness in worship behavior a non-verbal signs of the hypocrisy of its people.

#### *D) Chastity and prudence*

Some speechless behaviors show a person's chastity prudence and strong character. In the course of the story of Prophet Moses (pbuh), in the introduction and description of the behavior and the way of acting of Shoeib's daughters, it says: "One of those girls who was walking with prudence came to him and said: My father is calling you to pay you for the water you gave us (to the sheep) and when (Moses) came to him and the story He repeated (himself) to him, (Shoeib) said: Don't be afraid, you have been freed from the group of

oppressors" (Qasas, 25).

The wise God has mentioned the word "prudency(Haya)" to make the greatness of that state clear, and the meaning of the fact that her walking was on base of "pudency" means that chastity and decency were found in the way she walked (Tabatabayi, 1996, vol. 16, p. 35). In Surah Noor, God demands prudence from women in a non-verbal way: "Do not tread and stamp their foot on the ground so that what they are wearing from their jewelry be exposed" (Noor, 31).

According to some other verses, sometimes shame and humiliation appear in people because of something unpleasant. As God says in the description of the ignorant thinking of some Arabs: "He hides himself from his people because of the bad news they gave him (a girl is born from him)" (Nahl, 59). This means that when one of the Arabs got the news of having a daughter, he would show his shame by hiding himself.

#### *E) Repentance and remorse*

Almighty God says: "And on the Day of Judgment out of remorse when the oppressor will bite his finger, he will say, I wish I took the path with the Messenger" (Furqan, 27). As in the culture of human communication, biting the finger is a sign of expressing regret, and we use this non-verbal concept in our common interactions.

### **5.3 Eye contact**

While dealing with a police officer who is standing at a crossroads and wants to warn us about a mistake, if he doesn't say a word and just looks at us, we can have an impression of this look. Now suppose this policeman starts talking to us with dark glasses. What interpretation can we have in the face of this movement? Do we not describe this situation as a bad situation for ourselves? In this case, we would rather wish him to take off his glasses to get an understanding of his perception of us. Therefore, eye contact and eye expressions are telling things that can be said to be easier to interpret than other signs. Our traditions have also mentioned the importance of this non-verbal communication method:

Hazrat Ali (pbup) said: "Look first at the woman, but don't follow her with another look and avoid sedition" (Ibn Babouye, 1983: vol. 2. page 632). Therefore, due to the meaningfulness of the looking, the causes of sedition appear.

He also said: "The eye is the guide of the heart; the eye is the leader and watcher of

the heart" (Tamimi Amadi, 1410 AH: 31) Therefore, eye contact also affects human tendencies.

According to the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the way of looking and eye contact contains effective concepts in human communication. Sometimes looking shows anger and opposition; As the Almighty God says: "And when the danger comes, you see them, like someone who has been swallowed by death, their eyes turn in their sockets [and] they look at you" (Ahzab, 19). Sometimes the gaze expresses the anxiety and fear of the other party; As God, the Exalted said: " But when a clear Surah was revealed and the battle was mentioned in it, you see those who have a disease in their hearts, they look at you like someone who has fallen into a state of unconsciousness of death" (Muhammad: 20). Also, according to some traditions, the type of look conveys the concept of love and affection. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) says: that looking at parents with love and affection is worshiping (Majlesi, 1382, vol. 71, p. 73).

#### 5.4 Body language

In addition to "face and facial expression", the way of movements of other body parts also symbolically indicate certain meanings, attitudes, and moods and cause the formation of different perceptions of us by others. That's why, in religious verses and narrations (Revayat), along with speech and verbal behaviors, much emphasis and orders have been placed on the type of action and the manner of non-verbal behaviors. Shaking hands and hugging is one of the forms of body language that is correctly mentioned in the narration. The handshaking of the believer is better than the handshaking of the angels (Kilini, 1407: vol. 2, p. 183). States such as happy face and reassurance and calmness in walking, calmness in talking, and eating with calmness are behaviors that all convey meaning and communication messages and they are mentioned in Religious sources. Amir al-Mu'minin Ali bin Abi Talib (pbuh) addressed the Hammam and said: "Happiness is in his face and sadness is in his heart" (Kilini, 1407: vol. 2, p. 226). Also, the chapters on the attributes of a believer in our Ravayat books mention the external and internal attributes of a believer.

The Holy Qur'an says the way people walk carries a message. As God Almighty says about the characteristics of believers: "The servants of the Merciful God are those who walk humbly on earth. And when the ignorant address them, they speak gently" (Furqan, 63). Some commentators have expressed the meaning of "humbly (Hon)" as humiliation or friendship and tolerance (Ragheb Esfahani, 1416 AH, p. 848), in which case the meaning of the verse will be that the believers do not act with arrogance while walking.

## 6 Conclusion

Since the bulk of human communication is non-verbal communication, it can determine the success or failure of a relationship. The importance of the topic prompts us to examine the topic of non-verbal communication, methods, components, and transitional concepts from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an. In terms of subject and approach, this research is in line with the works that have been written in this field, and they have explored the viewpoint of Islam and the holy book of the Qur'an in the subject of communication and message, and in fact, they have taken an interdisciplinary approach in this field. The difference is that the focus and attention of this research are on providing a conceptual framework and model of non-verbal communication, based on the four components of "tone of voice, facial expressions, eye contact, and body language". While other researchers may have only focused on the position and importance of this issue among religious teachings or stated the importance of one component over another, without looking at providing a conceptual framework and model in the field of this issue.

By induction in the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the topic of non-verbal communication can be followed in four areas: voice and tone, facial expression, eye contact, and body language.

The tone of voice has the dual function of identifying people's inner goals and maintaining people's social health.

Facial expressions also indicate concepts such as humility, anger, hypocrisy, chastity and prudence, remorse, and regret, all of which are based on non-verbal communication and are used based on the indications of facial expressions, which sometimes also refer to speaking directly. It is more effective.

According to the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the way of looking and eye contact contains effective concepts in human communication. In the verses of the Qur'an, sometimes eye contact shows anger and opposition, and sometimes it shows anxiety and fear.

In addition to "face and facial expression", the way the movements of other body parts (body language) symbolically indicate certain meanings, attitudes, and moods and cause the formation of different perceptions us. For example, the Holy Qur'an introduces the way people walk as having a special message. The meaning of the verses of the Holy Qur'an on

the existence of such concepts in the form of non-verbal communication of people is a sign of their importance in the relationship between humans and their fellow humans and God and is based on a divine purpose. The main point of the Qur'anic implications in the matter of communication is that human relations (whether human to human or God and other beings of the world) must be based on God and monotheism, and the servants are obliged to include divine thoughts and presuppositions in their communications. For this reason, their eyes, tone, facial expression, and body language should emit certain concepts and be centered on monotheism and divine lordship. In the Holy Qur'an, while calling for the observance of some concepts in the form of non-verbal behaviors, God forbids some other concepts and it is not the case that everyone is allowed to convey any concept with non-verbal language, but one should consider the audience and pay attention to his attitude. A behavior appropriate to him should be emitted. Therefore, the result of such a thing will be the emergence of multiple relationships with different concepts and orientations in the community of believers. The scope of the subject of non-verbal communication and its connection with religious and Qur'anic teachings requires a lot of research in this field. In this regard, it is suggested that to develop the knowledge of this topic and to expand the discourse of Qur'an-based human sciences, research should be conducted in the field of theories, concepts, patterns, and methods of communication based on Qur'anic and religious teachings.

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