

Good Speech

Quran elaborated very detailed topics in a few short words.
Many deaths in the community. 30 yr old. Old quran teacher.
Many will be remembered in the world by the legacy they leave.

One such topic is the manner of speech.

We will start with beautiful ayahs from Surah Ibrahim

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ۚ تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ۗ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۚ ۚ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ۚ ۚ يَتَّبِعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ ۚ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ ۚ

24. Do you not see how Allah presents a parable? A good word is like a good tree—its root is firm, and its branches are in the sky.

25. It yields its fruits every season by the will of its Lord. Allah presents the parables to the people, so that they may reflect.

A good tree has several characteristics: growing, bearing fruits abundantly, casting shadows and sustaining itself, and bearing fruits under all kinds of circumstances.

A good person is never stagnant and the signs of his faith constantly reveal themselves in his speech and his acts. His faith is continuous and not seasonal, and he always calls

Examples of the Qur'anic term /tayyibah/ are Monotheism, faith, correct and sound ideas.

The "Pure Word" is so fruitful that every person (or community) who bases his system of life on it, gets benefit from it every moment for it helps to produce **clearness in thought, balance in temperament, strength in character, purity in morals, firmness in conduct, righteousness in talk, straightforwardness in conversation, good temperament in social behavior, nobility in culture, justice and equity in economy, honesty in politics, nobility in war, sincerity in peace; confidence in promises and pledges.** In short, it is the elixir that changes everything into gold if one makes the proper use of it.

"...the roots of which are fixed..."

It affects all the deeds and words as well as the thinking of man.

One can enjoy the fruits of faith at any time, anywhere, and in all of one's ups and downs.

The verse says:

"...and its branches are in heaven,"

The tree of good speech has got fixed roots. No threats, or conspiracies, no instigators and blame as well as the despots can uproot or eradicate it.

Covey: The eighth habit is "Find your voice and inspire others to find theirs."



26. And the parable of a bad word is that of a bad tree—it is uprooted from the ground; it has no stability.

27. Allah gives firmness to those who believe, with the firm word, in this life, and in the Hereafter. And Allah leads the wicked astray. Allah does whatever He wills.

"Evil word" is the opposite of "Pure Word" It may be applied to everything that is unreal and wrong but here it stands for any **false creed that one might adopt as a basis of one's system of life, irrespective of whether it be atheism or heresy or disbelief or shirk or idol-worship or any other "ism" that has not been brought by a Messenger.**

And "evil word" (false creed) has no stability because it is against the Law of nature.

Therefore, everything in the universe opposes it and refutes it, as if the earth hates it and is ready to spit out its seeds every time they are sown in it, and if some seed succeeds in growing an evil tree, heaven suppresses down its branches.

In fact, false creed could never have been allowed to develop, if man had not been given the freedom of choice and respite for work for the sake of his trial.

That is why when some foolish people exert to establish a system of life on it, it is allowed to grow to a certain extent, but it produces nothing but harmful results as long as it lasts. And no sooner does it encounter with adverse circumstances than it is thoroughly uprooted from the earth.

The Arabic word /'ijti a/ mostly signifies uprooting and eradication. **The words, ideas and deviant individuals have neither got any roots, nor do they possess any fruits, flowers, beauty, perfume, perseverance, shade, and development.** On the contrary, they are just thorns in the eyes of others.

It is interesting to note that the Qur'an speaks in detail about 'the good tree' while, when talking about 'the evil tree', it describes it in one short sentence and passes by it.

The distinction between the "Pure Word" and the "evil word" is so apparent that anyone who makes a critical study of the **religious, moral, intellectual and cultural history of the world** can perceive it easily. For the "Pure Word" has always been the one and the same during the whole history of mankind and has never been uprooted.

On the contrary, there have been innumerable "evil words" but each and every one has been so uprooted that there remains hardly anything of it except its name in the pages of history.

Some of these had proved to be so absurd that if these are mentioned today one wonders how one could have followed such nonsensical things. Communism, Mu'tazila, etc.

There has been another noteworthy difference between the two "words". Whenever and wherever the "Pure Word" has been adopted by an individual or a community, its blessings had not been confined to that individual and community but had benefited all around them. On the contrary, whenever and wherever an evil word has been adopted by an individual or a community, its evils had spread chaos and disorder all around them.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the parable of the "Pure Word" and the "evil word" explains the same theme that had been explained by the similitudes of the mound of ashes that is blown away by the "wind" of the stormy day (v. 18) and of the "foam of flood", and the "scum of the melted metals." (XIII: 17)

Allah provides stability for the believers, in this worldly life, because of their belief, so that they do not deviate and be misled from the path of the truth, making them staunch proponents lest they shall deviate from the right path in their worldly affairs which will also result in Hereafter.

Try to imagine a world without speech where communication comprised of just grunts and groans, not words. Without words we are deprived of Allah's ultimate gift— divine guidance. Allah's guidance has come to us through the language of the Quran and the words of His Prophet (SAW). Keeping this in mind, we can begin to appreciate the blessings attached to our ability to speak.

It is the capacity to speak that allows us to communicate with our Creator through our prayers, supplications, repentance, and constant remembrance of Him. It allows us to recite the Quran, to

communicate with each other, to give good advice, to soothe and comfort those in pain, to urge people to do good and forbid them from doing bad. It is through our ability to speak that we greet each other, thank each other, disseminate knowledge and engage in da'wah activities.

In Surah al-Balad, Allah SWT says

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ (90:8) وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ (90:9)
(90:10) وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

8. Did We not give him two eyes?9. And a tongue, and two lips?10. And We showed him the two ways?

What you say and do. Two things will happen. Allah SWT will ask you on the day of judgement. In Surah Al-Noor:

يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ
(24:24)

24. On the Day when their tongues, and their hands, and their feet will testify against them regarding what they used to do.

Responsible for all actions: say, listen, go, write, and see.

Second thing, if it is good. people will remember you by and benefit from it forever.

Just as one may get inclined to misuse one's eyes to look at something that is undesirable, misuse one's ears to listen to something that is not right, one may also tend to misuse one's tongue to utter something that is blameworthy.

We lie, we criticize, we backbite, we use vulgar language, we exaggerate, we brag and boast, we falsely accuse others, we mimic and we make fun of people. This kind of irresponsible speech sometimes has far-reaching consequences on the lives of others and can cause great harm and pain. Most of the time people remember what was said to them, good or bad.

Just as we'll be held accountable for all our actions, big or small, so too we'll be held accountable for each and every word that comes out of our mouths. There is a stern warning in the Qur'an regarding this,

مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

"Not a single word is uttered by anyone except that there is an observer near him, ready (to record)" (Qaf, 50:18).

Indeed this is a frightening prospect. During the course of the day, we say so many things without realizing how harmful they are. **We pass remarks about people's looks; about people's negative traits. So and so is ugly, fat, stupid, lazy, worthless, and so on. We use abusive language. Worse still are the biting remarks some of us make without knowledge about Islam, about the Qur'an, about the Prophets, and sometimes even about Allah, never stopping to think that it's all being recorded and will be presented to us on the Day of Resurrection.**

We are focusing today on our speech. Alhamdulillah, we have freedom of speech in this country. But we have to be responsible in what we say. Evaluate what impact this will have on other people. Very unlike the leadership of this country today.

There are many Prophetic traditions on the issue of guarding and controlling one's tongue.

The Prophet (SAW) said, "Whosoever gives me a guarantee to safeguard what is between his jaws (meaning the tongue), and what is between his legs (meaning the private parts), I shall guarantee him paradise."

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ -
" مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيَقُلْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَسْكُتْ "

It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him say something good, or else remain silent." (agreed)

عَنْ أَبِي مُوسَى، قَالَ سَأَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
أَيُّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ أَفْضَلُ قَالَ " مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ
وَيَدِهِ "

Abu Musa said:

"The Messenger of Allah (s.a.w) was asked: 'Which of the Muslims is the most virtuous?' He said: 'The one whom the Muslims are safe from his tongue and his hand.'" (agreed)

He also said, "The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hand the Muslims are safe, and the emigrant (*muhajir*) is the one who abandons what Allah has forbidden." On one occasion he also said, "Most of the sins of the children of Adam are on their tongues."

It has been said, "Silence is wisdom, whereas few act according to it."

It has also been said, "Speak only when your words are more beautiful than silence."

One of the hallmarks of righteous behavior is good speech. A person who stays mindful of Allah will want to refrain from sins of the tongue, such as **backbiting, slander, gossip, lying, swearing, cursing and vain talk**. The Qur'an and Hadith warn us against these sins of the tongue.

Taking time to ask oneself the following questions will help avoid vain speech or idle talk:

- (1) "Will this saying of mine please Allah?"
- (2) "Will this saying of mine bring me closer to Allah?"
- (3) "Does this saying reflect obedience to Allah?"

If one is uncertain, he or she should keep quiet rather than risk saying something which contradicts Islamic belief or behavior. This doesn't mean that a person can't engage in casual conversation. Rather it means that we should guard our speech and choose our words carefully.

The ultimate success for a Muslim is to be admitted into Paradise. Good speech plays a role in earning that reward. Surat al-Mu'minun begins with the words,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ () الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ()
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ

"Successful indeed are the believers; those who are humble in their prayers; Who avoid vain talk" (al-Mu'minun, 23:1-3).

Conversely, sins of the tongue can lead a Muslim to hell. The Prophet (SAW) said: "A man may be so close to paradise such that the distance between him and paradise is one arm's length and he speaks a word and he becomes distant from it further than Sana." (i.e. he goes very far away from paradise).

He also said, "The faith of a servant is not put right until his heart is put right, and his heart is not put right until his tongue is put right."

This shows that the Prophet (SAW) has made the purification of faith conditional on the purification of the heart and the purification of the heart conditional on the purification of the tongue.

Uqbah ibn Amr reported: I said, "O Messenger of Allah, what action will save us?" The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Control your tongue, let your house be sufficient for you, and weep for your sins."

Brothers and sisters! How many of us weep over our sins? It is essential, that **we refrain from sins such as gossip, backbiting, slander, lying and cursing.** By remembering and fearing Allah, we will find it easier to choose our words carefully. May Allah give us the tawfiq for this.

One of the tips of controlling the tongue is to think before speaking. The phrases "think before you speak" and "if you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all" seem to be worn-out clichés—stereotyped expressions, but they are not. They hold a lot of weight in the life of Muslims.

We have become so accustomed to speaking without thinking that words just seem to fly out of our mouths before we know it. Take a few moments before you speak to evaluate whether what you are about to say is beneficial or necessary. When your thoughts wander to saying something unnecessary or possibly hurtful, turn your focus to doing dhikr or simply contemplating, rather than wasting time on unnecessary speech, which is not beneficial and potentially harmful.

Also, hard as it may be, if we do happen to say something that is hurtful to someone, simply apologize. This can have nothing but positive effects. Many of us have trouble apologizing to people and accepting our mistakes; so saying sorry will humble us and will also ensure that we are more careful next time. Secondly, it can help improve our relationship with the other person, because

we are showing that we are aware of their feelings and that we care about them.

The company we keep has also a lot to do with controlling our tongues. If you are going to be with people, surround yourself with good company. It takes two to gossip. Most people who engage in backbiting and slandering will not do it all the time and with all people. In fact, they may have a select group of friends who share this habit. If you find that certain people make it easier for you to engage in this, stay clear of this crowd!

One way to atone for any slandering/lying/backbiting is to identify those persons who you spoke about wrongly. Seek their forgiveness, and if this cannot be done for any reason, then at least mention them well and praise them in the same circles of people in which you had earlier spoken about them negatively.

If we ever evaluate the time spent in talking and how much of it was spent on productive talk vs. unproductive talk, the results can be revealing. While some of us may have the gift of the gab, meaning we can talk well, we should also train ourselves how not to talk. This can help us to reflect on exactly how useful silence is. Indeed the prophetic teachings tell us that we should remain silent, especially if we do not have anything good to say.

Last but not least, we should make it our habit to mention the name of Allah (SAW) in our conversations. Without this there is little protection from falling into the trap of Satan and losing control of our tongues. Every word we say will be held to account.

Let our speech not be the source of regret in the Hereafter. Let us make our tongues moist with the remembrance of Allah (SWT).

My dear brothers and sisters! I admonish you and myself first, **to refrain from vain talks, to stop spreading rumors, to verify any news before jumping to conclusions, to stop all types of backbiting against one another, to speak softly and gently, to increase our knowledge of Islam, to learn and teach, to take the initiative of making da'wah for the love and pleasure of Allah, to keep busy in doing something good to yourselves and to others, and to keep watch over your mistakes and sins.**

May Allah accept our repentance for the irresponsible use of the precious gifts of our tongues, our eyes, our ears, our limbs, and our intellect. May He make us among those from whom others are safe. *Ameen Ya Rabb al-Aalameen.*

أَقُولُ قَوْلِي هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلَكُمْ وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.