

The Position of Interpersonal Communication in Strengthening the Family System Based on the Teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.)

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Abstract

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The family, as the most fundamental social institution, faces serious communication challenges in the modern era. A deficiency in communication skills is considered one of the primary factors in the instability and dissolution of this institution. This research aims to elucidate a model of interpersonal communication derived from the words and conduct (Seerah) of Imam Reza (A.S.) and its role in consolidating family relationships. The main research question is: which behavioral components in the Razavi tradition can guide the improvement of interpersonal relationships within the family nucleus? Employing an analytical approach and a library research method, this study scrutinizes narrative and historical sources related to the conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.), aligning them with modern theories of human communication. The findings indicate that the Razavi teachings encompass components such as “creating a safe space for dialogue,” “affectionate behavior,” “respect for personal dignity,” “audience awareness,” “justice in conduct,” and “self-grooming.” These components, which can be analyzed within the conceptual framework of the “Five-Dimensional Communication Model” (comprising openness, empathy, supportiveness, positivism, and equality), demonstrate a remarkable structural congruence with theories such as Habermas’s “Public Sphere.” The conclusion is that the application of this behavioral model can lead to the establishment of tranquility, the enhancement of intimacy, and the reduction of conflicts within the family. It can, therefore, be utilized as an effective strategy for confronting communication crises.



Keywords: Imam Reza (A.S.), Interpersonal Communication, Family Consolidation, Communication Skills.

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1. Introduction

The family, as the most fundamental social institution, faces serious communicative challenges in the contemporary era. Weakness in communication skills is considered a primary factor in the instability and breakdown of this institution, as evidenced by the alarming statistics of divorce, indicating a communicative and emotional crisis in society. The consequences of this breakdown are not limited to family disintegration but also include problems such as the increase in single-parent women (often female-headed households), children of divorce, delinquency, and psychological disorders. In this context, religious teachings and the conduct of the Infallible Imams (Peace Be Upon Them), particularly Imam Reza (A.S.), as guiding models, can provide solutions for overcoming this crisis. Focusing on the “family” as the primary social institution, this research seeks to elucidate the model of interpersonal communication derived from the words and conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.) and examine its role in consolidating family relationships.

2. Research Objectives

The main objective of the research is to identify the guiding behavioral components for improving interpersonal relationships within the family nucleus, based on the Razavi conduct. The secondary objectives are:

To explain a systematic model of interpersonal communication based on the Razavi conduct.

To compare this model with modern theories of human communication.

To provide practical solutions for transforming the family environment into a “safe public sphere” for dialogue.

To transform “tranquility derived from spirituality” into an “active communicative principle” within the family.

3. Methodology

This research was conducted with an analytical approach and a library-based method. Using a descriptive-analytical method and note-taking, narrative and historical sources related to the conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.) (such as ‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā and Biḥār al-Anwār) as well as authoritative texts in communication sciences were examined. The theoretical framework of the research is a combination of fundamental concepts of human communication and modern theories, centered on Habermas’s “Public Sphere Theory” and the “Five-Dimensional Model of Com-

munication” (including Openness, Empathy, Supportiveness, Positiveness, and Equality). These frameworks were used as tools for extracting and analyzing the components of effective communication from the Razavi conduct.

4. Findings

The examination of the Razavi conduct shows that his teachings provide a systematic and practical model for interpersonal communication within the family. The most important extracted components are as follows:

Creating a Safe Space for Dialogue: Imam Reza (A.S.), by avoiding self-opinionation, belittling the other party, and creating an environment free from domination, provided the grounds for rational dialogue based on mutual respect. This perspective is a tangible manifestation of Habermas’s “ideal speech situation” and Goffman’s “interaction order.”

The Five-Dimensional Family-Building Communication Model: The components of Openness, Empathy, Supportiveness, Positiveness, and Equality in the Razavi conduct are understood within the overarching concept of “Good Character” (Ḥusn al-Khulq) and form an integrated network of effective communicative behavior.

Affection and Kindness: Through verbal and non-verbal expressions of love, he strengthened the emotional foundations of the family. Simple affectionate phrases like “I love you” have a lasting impact on strengthening the relationship.

Honoring Dignity: Respecting all individuals, regardless of social status, and avoiding any form of humiliation or insult were prominent characteristics of his conduct. This creates the necessary psychological security for dialogue.

Audience Awareness: Imam (A.S.) adjusted his method of reasoning and expression according to the intellectual, cultural, and emotional level of his audience. This principle is essential for effective interaction with spouses and children in the modern family.

Justice in Behavior: His recommendation to treat others as we wish to be treated is the essence of an ethics-centered communication model that can prevent many forms of mistreatment within the family.

Mutual Adornment: Imam Reza (A.S.) considered adornment not as a lavish act but as an essential “communicative act” and an indication of valuing one’s spouse. This act serves as an antidote to emotional fatigue and neglect resulting from the pressures of modern life.

5. Conclusion

This research demonstrates that the scholarly and practical conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.) provides a rich and systematic source for “communication skills” that remarkably aligns with findings in modern communication sciences. Structuring family relationships based on the components extracted from this conduct (such as creating a safe space, showing affection, honoring dignity, audience awareness, and mutual adornment) can transform the family nucleus from being a “temporary stopover” or a “dreaded prison” back into an “emotional sanctuary.” The Razavi conduct, as a divine and complete “communication theory,” has the capacity to be considered seriously not only as a practical guide for Muslim families but also as a source for formulating theories in the field of interpersonal communication.

Suggestions:

Investigating the conduct of other Infallible Imams (A.S.) in the field of interpersonal communication to formulate a specialized Islamic-Shiite theory.

Conducting field and quantitative studies to measure the impact of operationalizing this model on large statistical samples of families.

Incorporating the principles and communication skills derived from the conduct of the Imams into educational curricula, training workshops, and family counseling.

Explaining and promoting this model in the media and virtual space as a native solution for addressing the communication crises of the Iranian family.

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