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INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF HUMAN ANIMAL COMMUNICATION

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Khalid Ahmed Hassan AHMED ¹

Abstract:

This study aims at reviewing a bulk of related studies, and some verses from the Holly Qur'an in order to discover some mysteries of human animal communication. We believe that the majority of the previous studies concern themselves with human attempts to teach human speech to animals. There are a lot of mysteries that surround human animal communication. Furthermore, there are some intersections between human and animals' ways of interaction. We believe that human speech is one of the most amazing human properties; at the same time, we believe that animals have very advanced ways of communication. However, humans and animals have the access to be involved in interaction and communications with each other and with other species of animals. Our mere observations could maintain this hypothesis of joined human animal communications. This study is an attempt to establish a theoretical framework on which humans and animals can interact and communicate jointly among themselves and other types of animals as well.

To process the study some of the related studies will be outlined, discussed and analyzed, and then they will be correlated with the findings of the selected Holly Qur'an verses. Out of these studies some assumptions will be outlined in order to be treated through the discussion, results and recommendations for further studies..

Key words: Animals' Communication, Intersections, Creative, Mysteries, Human Communication, Interaction, Amazing Properties, Some Verses, Teaching Human Speech.

Introduction

In spite of the uniqueness of human speech over the other creatures' ways of communication, there is still some kind of intervention and ties between humans and the

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¹ Dr. , Omdurman Islamic University, Sudan, khalidsoon@hotmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1115-1114>

other creatures on this very specific area of communication. On one hand, and from our mere observations and experience, we feel that there are mysterious communications and connections that happen between human beings and animals. On the other hand, and from the previous attempts, surveys and research, there are attempts to teach human language to animals. However, in this present study the interest will be directed to the intersections between human beings and animals' ways of communication; we believe that they both have the access to understand each other rather than just produce instances of each other communicative signals.

We believe that all creatures are divinely endowed with means and ways of communication for the sake of earning living on one side, and for worship on the other. Therefore, at the beginning of this presentation, the first part will be devoted to the religious aspects of animal communication and the verses from the Holy Qur'an that mention this aspect of animals communication. Then the related literature will be cited to emphasize the religious part.

Animal communication is creative as long as it conveys messages as accurate and precise as possible without any violation or alteration across time and place. However, human beings language creativity is perceived as an ongoing process that is not limited by time and space to the extent that the same message can be interpreted differently at different times and places in spite of the superficial similarity of the message or code by which it is conveyed. This phenomenon is known as human language creativity out of which several features of language can be perceived in terms of the interpretation of the relationship between the surface and deep structures mainly in terms of grammatical ambiguity and synonymous sentences. However, we always have doubts about whether or not we get the intended actual message in a given human communicative act.

In spite of the great differences between human and animal ways of communication, there is a mysterious interaction that takes place between humans and animals. A lot of studies and research projects attempt to reveal this mystery either in terms of the experiments done to teach animals human languages, or in terms of studying animals presence in human literature social attitudes and animals as sources of pessimism or optimism, or studies of animals' creative means of communication. However, studies on the intersections between humans and animals communication are not given similar weight and interest by researchers, and this is the focal point in this study.

The Importance of the Study

This present study is extremely important as it focuses on the intersectional connections and communications between humans and animals. These intersections are generally observed phenomena when communication between human beings and animals is observed. We can easily detect that there is a great comprehension and understanding between human beings and animals mainly in cases of close contacts between human beings and their pets. This kind of the mutual understanding between people and animals is mainly concerned with the comprehension of the mutual messages between people and animals rather than production of messages because all the attempts for teaching animals a human language have attained a very limited success that has not exceeded a limited number of lexical items across an extended period of time.

The study is also important as it is a qualitative holistic approach that tackles both religious and pure linguistic survey to establish some understanding of the mysteries that surround human animal communication.

The Islamic religious value of this study helps in reflecting positive views about the scientific perspectives of Islam as an intermediate religion that addresses a lot of humanity values in today's world.

Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature; and to that end some of the essential related verses along with their interpretations will be analyzed and studied to confirm the hypotheses raised

in this study. The areas that will be of importance in this discussion will be: all creatures are endowed with means of worship and hence means of communication and also ways of communication between humans and animals. The review of literature will start with the human attempts to teach animals human languages. The religious side of animals' communication will be correlated and emphasized by the research and studies done on human and animal communications.

On the part of the verses that will be outlined in this study three domains will be the focal core of discussion as follows: first the endowment of creatures with means of communication, second animals ways of worship and of communication between humans and animals.

The related research projects will be outlined with their discussions, comments and results in order to establish the essence of the correlation that can be established between the religious and the nonreligious aspects of this present study.

Procedures

As it has been stated within the related studies this present research paper seeks to establish a correlation between the religious aspects of human animal communication, and that of research findings on the same area. At the beginning of the discussion some of the selected related verses in the Holy Qur'an will be discussed supported by the interpretations of two famous interpreters of the Holy Qur'an Ibn Kathier and Altabarie. These verses will cover three central domains: the endowment of all creatures with means and ways of communication, all creatures' ways of worshiping Allah and finally the interaction between humans and animals.

After the discussion of the verses, the related studies will be discussed and correlated with the findings of the verses discussed in this present study in order to set up the grounds for the discussion, findings, conclusions and recommendations for further future studies.

The theoretical frame work and some related studies

No one denies that all the living creatures, as far as communication is concerned, have their creative advanced ways of communication that may overrun human communication in certain aspects of their communication such as the reliability of the sent message. That is to say, human communication is creative in that the same message which is delivered at a certain period of time may come to imply variety of things at different periods of time and different contexts. Animals' messages are creative in terms of their communicative powers, but they are static over time and contexts because they are inborn and instinctively processed and developed. This concept of animals' inborn and instinctively developed system of communication has been expressed by Lyons (1979: 416) in his comparison between human and animal communication when he said that human beings might sometimes in their communication utter sets of utterances that are readymade for certain communicative acts.

Human communication is maintained through social interactions among social groups who represent in major cases linguistically heterogeneous members who may either descend from different geographical or social backgrounds, or they may reflect on the other hand some kind of homogeneous strata due to their belonging to more or less the same geographical or social backgrounds. However, in human communication differences may vanish for the sake of a successful human communication as it has been stated by Bynon (1979: 3) when she said that the differences within the community do not prevent communication. On the part of the other creatures' communication, it is expected that communication among the same species of creatures is identical because it is something that is inborn. The sent communicative messages are expected to be identical across time and space. According to Yule (2006: 11) the system of communication is 'fixed' with reference to any involved communicative act among those creatures communication.

For Steinberg and Sciarini (2006: 104) who tackle the issue of human language and animals' communication by tracing some famous experiments in which scientists tried to teach human languages to other creatures such as apes, birds, dolphins, etc. The overall outcomes of these attempts and experiments could be that in spite of the well-established

environment for picking a human language these animals managed only to be competent in responding to human instructions, they were not able to develop human speech competence and fluency. This animals' failure to develop a human speech is not surprising as human language is a kind of sophisticated human privilege capability to which other creatures do not have properties or access. In another study Hedeager (2003: 10) believes that these attempts to teach human languages to animals have failed due to the fact that animals have been exposed to models of human languages at stages of growth to which these animals lack the capacities to pick up these languages in the normal processes through which sound human children acquire mainly their native languages; in other words those animals may have the brain structure to pick up a language system, but they may not be able to pick grammatical systems of these languages in the same level of the other language components. Moreover, divinely any creature is endowed with its own ways of communication that could be a specialized privilege for that creature above the other creatures, and it has its own techniques and structure that distinguish it from the other ways of interactions among the other creatures including human beings themselves. Some verses of the Holly Qur'an, as will be mentioned below, support this assumption that any creature has its own ways of communication and interaction among its species.

Wardhaugh (2006: 272) discusses an important manner that could be detected from the ways that people who grow up some pets try to develop a specialized linguistic behavior to name or to address their pets. This assumption is supported by the observed practices that any community or nation has its own ways of talking or addressing their animals. Therefore, animals may not respond positively to the forms of address which are not familiar to them, that is to say for example if animals such as horses or donkeys which can move or stop by a certain expression in one place may not do so in another context where there are other different expressions. Out of this specialized linguistic behavior one can develop some kind of understanding or some kind of social judgment about those people. In other words we can say that naming pets or addressing them is a great indicator that there are some communicative ties between humans and animals in spite of the inherent differences between the specialized media of communicative behavior or interaction between human and nonhuman ways of communication. Denham and Lobeck (2010: 4-5) support this assumption by mentioning Charles Hockett's features that distinguish human language from the other ways of communications among the other creatures. These characteristics of human language can be outlined as follows: first what is called 'semanticity' which implies that any linguistic term is associated with a specified meaning(s), 'arbitrariness' which is about the lack of a direct connotation between a language signal and its form to the extent that we have a multitude of human languages that could be classified into different language families, 'discreteness' which is about the smaller phonological or morphological language units that could be repeated in variety of ways to imply variety of linguistic terms, 'displacement' indicates that language users have the capability to talk about things or actions that may either be not present at the time of speech or they may either be related to far a way past actions, 'productivity' which implies human beings' abilities to always inventing or creating things that have never been heard before, and finally what is called 'duality of patterning' which is about the rich system of creating new terms and lexicons out of language roots and affixes. These discussed features could best give human language its uniqueness over the other creatures' systems of communication and interaction. In short human language is creative in terms of its unexpectedness while other creatures' ways of communication are fixed inborn always expected processes for transmitting essential communicative knowledge for essential living requirements such as feeding, warning for danger, mating, etc.

In a survey of animal communication Dash and Bhattacharyya raised some pre – questions to direct their study; these questions range from enquiries about whether animals communicate within themselves and with the other types of animals or not, on one hand, and on the other the questions were directed to the possibility of animal human joined communication and whether animal or human communication can be taught to the two involved sides. They first stated that there is a specialized unique system of communication between the same species of animals, and between a certain species of animals and the other animals. This kind of communication is generally in the form of cries and notes and

certain movements and dances to respond to the animals' essential communicative needs such as feeding, mating or warnings for danger and the other similar communicative functions. However, with regard to human and animal communication a mutual comprehension is expected to happen mainly in cases of close direct contact between animals and their owners (pet animals) at home. Human language is a unique system of communication that is surrounded with more sophisticated and complex mechanisms to which animals do not have access, some of these have been mentioned above.

For Hindley (1984:76) the bond between human beings is an essential ongoing process across history. In her study Hindley (ibid) went on mentioning variety of studies that support her assumptions that animals have great influences on human beings' therapies or affection. That is to say animals play greater roles in helping people overcome their psychological disorders or loneliness or even in cases of autism. She said that due to the psychological comfort that people find in their contact and communication with animals, in extreme cases, favor to live with animals rather than with similar human beings. Hindley's remarks can be proved by the variety of cases that we hear about some people who may leave their legacies to their animals rather than to their relatives. Animals also help people physiologically mainly in terms of high blood pressure which is lowered in cases of talking to animals. Animals also are used experimentally as lab animals to try on newly discovered vaccines or drugs. And above all animals may lend hands, through specialized training, to help people with special needs such as completely blind people.

In another study Grötsch (2012: 1147) starts her discussion of animal human communication or contact by referring to the heritage of literature that we have in literature texts where a lot of instances of human animal interaction through languages are found. Then Grötsch (ibid) defined communication among human beings as a social interaction that people require to satisfy their living needs and to confirm social bonds that enable them to benefit from each other and survive. She then said that a similar contact is expected to be found between similar species of animals, and between humans and animals for more or less attaining the same living requirements and social solidarity.

Animals are also perceived of, in many cultures of the world, as indicators of weather forecasting and of warning in cases of climatic disasters. According to Castillo and Ladio (2017) people's accumulative culture and knowledge as a result of their contacts with their animals and plants develop a mysterious knowledge that is acquired from these creatures as indicators of climatic changes according to which they adapt their living conditions. That is to say animals and plants possess some kind of sensitivity to climatic changes by which they give signs to people according to which people who have contact with them may react positively to these signs to take precautions or preparations that may help them to avoid possible dangers or loss. Kirschvink (2000: 312) has undergone a study that confirms animals and other creatures' capabilities of detecting climatic changes. The study was comprehensive in terms of the scientific changes that may happen to let these animals react to give signals of warnings in cases of climatic disasters. The early warning will of course save people a lot of difficulties and hardships.

The social heritage in different countries of the world has also led some kind of linkage between animals and good or bad fortunes or optimism and pessimism which may vary or be in contrast in different areas. That is to say what is perceived of as an indicator of a good luck in a certain part of the world may be the reverse in another part such as the owl which is regarded as a source of pessimism in some oriental cultures while it is a sign of wisdom and optimism in some western cultures. For example in a study of folklore Modi (1929: 42) said that: the tradition of linking between animals and good or bad luck is mainly associated with birds due to their availability and direct contact with people everywhere. Moreover, most of the words that indicate a good luck or bad luck in English or Sanskrit may be words connected with birds for example the word "auspices" which implies good 'omens' comes from 'avis' which is a name of a bird, and which descends from an ancient Roman tradition that takes omen from birds. The same is also true in Sanskrit the classical Indian language which is the source of the branch of the Indo-European family of languages where 'the Sanskrit word for omen is Shakun' which is also a bird. In the Holly Qur'an as,

for example in Sorat 'Yasien' the word 'Tattayrnna' which implies a bad omen also comes from this practice of using birds to symbolize either a good or bad omen. Still also in another study by Marcot (2007: 5) who had a survey in Africa and North America about the implications of good or bad luck to be taken from an owl. In Africa he said that owls cause bad omens or a forthcoming death only to males rather than females, and the bad omen is only connected with the sounds of male owls rather than females. In other words there is a distinction between males and females in both human beings and owls. While in North America mainly among people around 'Arizona' the people there said that the sound of an owl is an indicator of an ill health or fortune of a relative for that the people try to let the owl go away to stop hearing its sound and avoid that bad omen consequences.

Discussion, Results, Conclusion and Recommendations

The discussion will begin with some verses from the Holly Qur'an as we believe that these verses bear witness to two things; first as people are endowed with language as a means for worship and interactions among themselves, all the other creatures have more or less the same medium for worship and interaction. Second, there is some kind of mutual understanding between human beings and the other creatures, which in the case of these verses a special kind, or a privilege that is given to the prophets above the common ordinary people, it can also be taken as evidence that any human being can have this access to understand and be understood by these creatures if by chance he/she has the chance to be in contact with such animals. The discussion and the interpretation will then be followed by the correlation that can be established between the meanings to be taken from the verses and the other research findings obtained from the related literature for the sake of outlining the findings, suggestions and recommendations for further future studies.

The verses and their interpretations

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

النور الصافات الملك

والله عليم بما تفعلون والطير ضفت كل قد علم صلاته وتسبيحه

(النور) (41)

ألم تر أن الله يسيح له من في السموات والأرض والطير ضفت كل قد علم صلاته وتسبيحه والله عليم بما يفعلون(41)

Have you not seen that (all) who are in the heavens and the earth glorify Allah alone, and the (too in the air around) with wings outspread (do celebrate His praise)? Each one knows his own mode of prayer and praise (before the presence of Allah). And Allah is well aware of the deeds they accomplish.

النمل(16)،(17)،(18)،(19)

وورث سليمان داوود وقال يا أيها الناس علمنا منطق الطير واوتينا من كل شيء ان هذا لهو الفضل المبين(16) وحشر لسليمان جنوده من الجن والانس والطير فهم يوزعون(17) حتى اذا أتو على واد النمل قالت نملة يا أيها النمل ادخلوا مساكنكم لا يحطمنكم سليمان وجنوده وهم لا يشعرون(18) فتبسم ضاحكا من قولها وقال رب أوزعني أن أشكر نعمتك التي أنعمت علي وعلى والدي وأن أعمل صالحا ترضه و أدخلني برحمتك في عبادك الصالحين(19)

And Sulayman (Solomon) succeeded Dawud (David) and said: 'O people, we have been taught the speech of birds (as well) and we have been granted everything. No doubt, this is the most obvious Grace (of Allah).'(16) And armies for Sulayman (Solomon) were collected from amongst (all species of) the jinn, human beings and birds. So they were held on (in his service) for discipline and training.(17) Until when these (troops) reached an open field of ants, one ant said: 'O ants, enter your dwellings, lest Sulayman (Solomon) and his troops crush you whilst they remain just unaware.'(18) So he (Sulayman [Solomon]) smiled, feeling amused at the ant's words, and submitted: 'O Lord keep me by your bestowal firm on it that I remain ever – thankful for Your favour You have conferred on me and on my parents, and I do such pious deeds as You are pleased with, and admit me by Your mercy amongst Your pious slaves enjoying exceptional nearness to You.'(19)

فصلت آية (21)

وقالوا لجلودهم لم شهدتم علينا قالوا انطقنا الله الذي أنطق كل شيء وهو خلقكم أول مرة واليه ترجعون (21)

Then they will say to their skins: 'Why did you bear witness against us?' They will say: 'Allah, who gives speech to everything, has enabled us to speak. And he is the one who created you the first time, and you will be returned to him alone.'

(1) الصفات

والصفات صفا (1)

Ranged in close ranks (1)

(الملك) (19) أولم يروا إلى الطير فوقهم صفات ويقبضن ما يمسكهن إلا الرحمن انه بكل شئ بصير(19)

Have they not seen the birds above them spreading out their wings and (sometimes) folding them? Nothing can hold them (from falling) except (the law made by) the Most Kind (Lord). Surely, he sees everything best.

ص(18)،(19)،(36)

انا سخرنا الجبال معه يسبحن بالعشي و الاشراق(18)

والطير محشورة كل له أبواب (19) فسخرنا له الريح تجري بأمره رخاء حيث أصاب(36)

Indeed We put mountains under his command which (joining him) used to glorify me evening and morning(18) And the birds as well that used to flock (in his presence); each would turn towards him (seeking to obey his commands)(19) ... Then We caused the wind to obey him. It used to blow gently under his command wherever would desire (it) to go(36)

The first, and the most important point to be taken from these verses, is that all the creatures, without exceptions, have been endowed with communicative methods or speech in order to be able to worship Allah in all their behavior and status. Therefore, creatures as well as human beings have been created for a noble deed that they should devote themselves to Allah's worship as a central goal in their lives' span on earth. The second thing to be taken from these verses, especially in the verses from 'Sorat Al - Naml (Ants), that the prophet Solomon (Sulayman), peace be upon him, was given the miracle of knowing the speech of animals such as ants and birds, and he was also empowered by all the forces of nature to support him in his missionary objectives and teachings. His knowledge of the animals' speech is a competent perfect knowledge that enabled him to understand and be understood by these creatures. These animals were also divinely inspired to deal with the prophet Solomon, peace be upon him, because when he heard that ant addressing the rest of the ants warning them about the danger of being crushed by the prophet's army, he laughed to show that he understood the message. Some interpreters also said that the prophet Solomon, peace be upon him, said that he heard an ant requesting Allah in a supplication to pour down rain to save them from being prevented water, and due to that request from an ant all the creatures have been blessed by the rain.

It is also clear from the above verses that all the creatures have their specialized ways of worshipping Allah on one hand, and on the other all the creatures have been submitted by Allah to help the Prophet Solomon doing his message as required and in the right way. Although, the verses were assigned for the miracle only for the Prophet Solomon, peace be upon him, they can be generalized to indicate that: first all the creatures are divinely endowed with privileges of speech or ways of communication in order to perform their worship and to fulfill all the required living needs. Second, animals and human beings can get into interactions among themselves with mutual understanding among each other. Third, the animals have their own languages which are used skillfully to fulfill their needs, and this opposes the concept that some people used to have, before the Prophet Solomon and at his period, that animals used to speak just like human beings' speech. Animals' languages or speech are specialized forms of communication which were and are still up to now in their present forms and structure capable of attaining these creatures communicative needs. However, we falsely perceive animals' language as something inborn and primitive depending only on our own human language as the measurement that we label it with. However, animals' languages are sophisticated well established systems of

communication that play more or less the same role that is played by a human language. Not only this kind of comparison is confined to animals' language, but also we apply the same measurement when we compare our own language with the other languages because we may feel that, if we don't have an approach or knowledge with other languages, the other communities languages are inferior or lower than the status of our own language. That is to say we may have a feeling of superiority over the other languages, and if we try to imitate how people speak in the other languages we may just repeat some limited phones of these languages, or there may be some blind spots within these languages that we do not comprehend or notice.

A Correlation between the Verses and the Findings of the Research

Out of the discussed literature in this present study and the findings obtained from the selected verses the following points can be discussed to get the main findings of this study. As a starting point, and as it is stated in the reviewed literature that human beings have ongoing attempts to teach animals human languages; however, all the attempts to teach animals human languages have not been fruitful to the extent that in a very extended period of time, three or four years of experimentation, only a very limited success has been attained; that is because human languages are specialized human properties and animals' languages are quite different things, and any living creature has its own form of language and communication that is capable of fulfilling at least its essential survival requirements. Moreover, and as we believe as human beings, that other creatures' ways of communication are fixed inborn language properties which are creative in terms of their capacities to attain precisely the required needs of communication. That is to say these ways of communication help these creatures fulfill their primary needs for food, warning for dangers, flocking or grouping together, mating and so on. The experiments to teach human language to animals achieve a little success due to first the differences between the human beings' organs of speech on one hand, and to the differences of the primary living conditions between human beings and animals. Human beings living conditions are more sophisticated and complex due to the nature of human beings as intelligent and more social beings. Human beings' primary goal for which they have been created is to worship Allah, and worship is not only confined to the religious side, it is a more extended human activity in which any human activity should be a kind of worship, and the individual should observe and submit that deed for Allah's sake and satisfaction. A lot of verses in the Holy Qur'an prove that all the faithful human beings should devote themselves and their deeds to Allah's worship and satisfaction.

A second perspective of human animal communication that is proved by varieties of personal human activities and research is that there is a great shared interaction and understanding among them in spite of the differences of the communicative codes. This mutual understanding between human beings is the result of accumulation of experience and survival between human beings and animals. That is to say the more experience and the closer contact that are detected between a human being and an animal the more understanding and the more successful communication are expected to be found between them mainly in the case of the different kinds of pets that people are accustomed to growing up.

A third perspective that is noticed in the communication between human beings and animals is that the kind of language or communication used at a certain place or country is different in a way or another from that discourse used in other places or countries. In other words we can conclude that the communication between human beings and animals is affected by the language or the variety of language that is used in that place. Therefore, differences of languages or varieties of languages will result in differences in the kind of discourse or communication that is used in mutual communications or interactions between people or animals. We can simply say that if we have Arabic or English language varieties we also expect to have similar varieties between human beings and animals; these varieties can also be more complicated and sophisticated than those related to varieties of human animal communication.

A final point to be said about the communication between human beings and animals is that this communication has some influences on the social attitudes and behavior in the

human communities to the extent that some animals and their sounds may constitute sources of information, optimism or pessimism. That is to say it is known through experiments that certain animals' sounds such as dogs' barking, or donkeys' braying or other animals' movements or behavior may be warnings for earthquakes or volcanoes or other natural crises. Moreover, animals or their sounds may be perceived of differently in different countries as indicators of optimism or pessimism such as owls, doves or crows. For example the owl and its sound may indicate a source of pessimism in the oriental culture, while it is a source of optimism in the west. That is to say the reactions to be taken out of animals in the social heritage of communities are also matters of varieties in the same way that human animal communication is.

Summary of the Main Findings

In the light of the literature reviewed and the discussion of the selected verses from the Holy Qur'an the following findings will be a logical conclusion to this study; there are strong evidences to support the following findings:

First: both human beings and animals have been divinely endowed with sophisticated specialized systems of languages and communications that suit their required living needs.

Second: the attempts to teach animals human languages attain little progress due to the differences and the nature of the two communicative systems.

Third: animals have been perceived of as good sources of warning in cases of early alarms about climatic disasters.

Fourth: human animal communication is a useful psychological remedy in cases of people who suffer some psychological disorders or diseases.

Fifth: there are varieties of forms of address or naming animals in cases of joined human animal communication at different social, regional or geographical areas.

Sixth: animals or their sounds constitute in certain social inherited cultures sources of optimism or pessimism (good or bad luck).

Recommendations

In the light of this present study the following recommendations will help this study to be continued in further future studies:

1. Incorporation of more verses from all the Holly Books to detect the religious aspect of human animal communication
2. More intensive survey on human animal communication regional or social varieties.
3. The impact of human animal joined communication in enhancing speech deficiencies.
4. The capability of teaching animal communication systems to younger human children.
5. More comparative studies on similarities and differences between human and animal systems of communication.

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The Holly Qur'an

The Glorious Qur'an

Altabarie Interpretation of the Holly Qur'an

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