



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

**THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING TIES OF KINSHIP**

Maintaining ties of kinship is so important that many verses of the Qur'an as well as words of our prophet Muhammad Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam have emphasised it's significance, and the punishment of those who ignore this duty:

"Would you then, if you were given the authority, do mischief in the land, and sever your ties of kinship? Such are they whom Allah has cursed, so that He has made them deaf and blinded their sight. (47: 22-23)

Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alayhi wa sallam said: "No one who severs the ties of kinship will enter Paradise." Narrated by Muslim

Many authentic and sound Hadiths have been reported through numerous routes of transmission from Allah's Messenger in this regard. Al-Bukhari recorded from Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, that Allah's Messenger said,

(After Allah completed creating the creation, the womb stood up and pulled at the lower garment of the Most Merciful. He said, 'Stop that!' It replied, 'My stand here is the stand of one seeking refuge in you from severance of ties.' Allah said, 'Would it not please you that I join whoever joins you and sever whoever severs you' It replied, 'Yes indeed!' He said, 'You are granted that!') Abu Hurayrah then added, "Read if you wish:

(So would you perhaps, if you turned away, spread corruption on earth, and sever your ties of kinship)"

Then Al-Bukhari recorded it with another wording which states that the Messenger of Allah said,

(Read if you wish: (So would you perhaps, if you turned away, spread corruption on earth, and sever your ties of kinship))

Muslim also recorded it. Imam Ahmad recorded from Abu Bakrah, may Allah be pleased with him, that Allah's Messenger said:

(Whoever likes for his life to be extended, and his provision increased, let him connect his ties of kinship.) Ahmad was alone in recording this narration, but it has a supporting narration in the Sahih.

Imam Ahmad recorded from `Abdullah bin `Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, that Allah's Messenger said,

(Verily, the womb is attached to the Throne. And connecting its ties does not mean dealing evenly (with the kinsfolk), but it rather means that if one's kinsfolk sever the ties, he connects them.) This Hadith was also recorded by Al-Bukhari.

Ahmad also recorded from `Abdullah bin `Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, that Allah's Messenger said,

(The womb will be placed on the Day of Resurrection, curved like a spinning wheel, speaking with an eloquent fluent tongue, calling to severing whoever had severed it, and joining whoever had joined it.)

Imam Ahmad recorded from `Abdullah bin `Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, that Allah's Messenger said,

(The merciful ones will be granted mercy from the Most Merciful. Have mercy on those on earth -- the One above the heavens will then have mercy on you. And Ar-Rahim (the womb) is from Ar-Rahman, so whoever joins it, it joins him; and whoever severs it, it severs him.) Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi both recorded this Hadith and it has been reported with continuous chains of transmission. At-Tirmidhi said, "Hasan Sahih." There are numerous other Hadiths in this regard.

### **What exactly does maintaining ties of kinship mean?**

Maintaining ties of kinship does not mean visiting, helping or serving one's relatives in return for similar deeds on their part. True upholding of family relations is to do so with those kith and kin who sever their bond with us. Thus, it refers to visiting relatives who do not visit us, and being good to those who wrong us. `Abdullaah ibn `Amr ibn Al-'Aas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Prophet Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam said: *"A man who perfectly maintains the ties of kinship is not he who recompenses the good done to him by his relatives; rather, he is the one who is on agreeable terms with those kin who have severed [their] bond with him."* [Al-Bukhari]

In another Hadeeth on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (RA) it was mentioned that a man came to the Prophet SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam and said: "I have relatives whom I maintain ties with, but they cut me off, and I treat them kindly, but they deal badly with me. I am gentle with them, but they are harsh to me." Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam replied: *"If you are as you say, it is as if you are feeding them hot ashes; you will have a supporter from Allah against them, as long as you continue to act the way you are."* [Muslim]

Imaam An-Nawawi said: "Hot ashes are used as a metaphor to demonstrate that such relatives bear as much guilt as the pain and agony experienced by the person who eats these ashes. As for the one who treats such relatives kindly, there is no argument against him; rather, they are the ones who commit a grievous sin by mistreating and harming him."

#### **Other verses from the Qur'an -**

- Allah Almighty says in Holy Quran: *"O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawwa (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allah through Whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely, Allah is Ever an All-Watcher over you"* (Quran, 4:1). From this verse, we can say that we should not sever ties of kinship because Allah Almighty does not like those who do so.
- In another verse of Noble Quran Allah (SWT) says: *"Let not those among you who are endued with grace and amplitude of means resolve by oath against helping their kinsmen, those in want and those who migrated in the path of Allah. Let them forgive and overlook. Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? Indeed Allah is oft-Forgiving, most Merciful."* (Quran, 24:22)
- One must maintain ties of kinship and treat one's family with kindness, even if that family does not treat you with kindness. Allah Almighty says in Holy Quran: *"Surely all believers are brothers. So make peace between brothers and fear Allah that mercy may be shown to you."* (Quran 49: 10)

#### **From the hadeeths -**

We can learn about keeping ties of kinship from the life of our beloved Prophet (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam). We have various Hadiths on upholding ties of kinship some of them are mentioned below:

## STEPS2ALLAH

- “Allah, the Exalted, says: I am the Most Merciful, I created Ar-Rahim and I cut out a name for it from my name, so whoever keeps good ties with it, I will keep good ties with him, and whoever cuts it off, I will cut him and finish him off.” (Abu Dawud)
- *“There is no sin that Allah more readily inflicts the punishment for in this life, in addition to what Allah keeps as punishment for the sinner in the Hereafter, than the sin of transgression and cutting off relations with relatives.”* (At-Tirmidhi)
- *“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should maintain good relation with his kindred.”* (Al-Bukhari)
- Keeping ties of kinship is a sign of faith. Abu Hurayrah (RA) narrated that the Prophet (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) said: *“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be hospitable to his guest, and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should maintain his kinship ties; and whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should speak well or remain silent.”*(Al-Bukhari)
- It is a cause for increased blessings in one’s provisions and age. Anas (RA) narrated that the Prophet (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) said: *“Whoever loves to be granted ample provisions and a long life, should maintain good ties with his or her relatives.”*(Al-Bukhari).
- *“A Muslim is not allowed to abandon another Muslim brother for more than three days”* (Sahih Bukhari)
- In another Hadith Holy Prophet (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) said: *“Never hate each other, never be jealous of each other; never think ill of each other, never boycott each other, always remain brothers unto one another, Oh servants of Allah.”* (Sahih Bukhari)
- Duas to be fulfilled. *“A person’s dua will still be answered as long as his dua does not involve sin or breaking ties of kinship and so long as he does not become impatient”* (Muslim)
- In another Hadith Holy Prophet (SallAllahu alayhi wa sallam) said: *“Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind”* (Muslim)

### **Who is this “kinship” in Islamic terms?**

Relatives are of two types: mahrams and non-mahrams. The guideline on mahram relatives is: each two persons who, if one were male and the other female, it would not be permissible for them to get married, such as fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, grandfathers and grandmothers no matter how far the line of ascent reaches, children and grandchildren no matter how far the line of descent reaches, paternal uncles and aunts, and maternal uncles and aunts.

“... and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband’s fathers, or their sons, or their husband’s sons, or their brothers or their brother’s sons, or their sister’s sons...” [al-Noor 24:31].

With regard to the children of paternal uncles and aunts and maternal uncles and aunts, they are not mahram relatives, because it is permissible to marry them.

Non-mahram relatives are all other relatives, such as the son of your paternal aunt, the daughter of your paternal aunt, the son of your maternal aunt, the daughter of your maternal aunt, and so on.

Some fuqaha’ are of the view that the relatives with whom ties of kinship must be upheld are the mahram relatives only. As for non-mahram relatives, it is mustahabb to uphold ties with them but it is not obligatory. This is the view of the Hanafis and is the lesser-known view of the Maalikis; it is also the view of Abu’l-Khattaab among the Hanbalis. Their evidence is that if it is obligatory to uphold ties of kinship with all relatives, it would be obligatory to uphold ties of kinship with all of the children of Adam, and that is impossible, so it is essential to set guidelines on the relationship which makes it obligatory to uphold and honour ties of kinship and makes it forbidden to cut those ties, and that is the mahram relatives.

They also quoted as evidence the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): “One should not be married to a woman and her paternal aunt, or a woman and her maternal aunt, at the same time.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim (1408). Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said: al-Tabaraani added to the hadeeth of Ibn ‘Abbaas: “If you do that, you have severed your ties of kinship.” This was classed as saheeh by Ibn Hibbaan. And Abu Dawood narrated in *al-Maraaseel* a report from ‘Eesa ibn Talhah that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade being married to a woman and any of her relatives at the same time, for fear of severing ties of kinship. End quote from *al-Diraayah fi Takhreej Ahaadeeth al-Hidaayah* (2/56).

The way in which they understood this hadeeth to prove their point was explained by some of the Maaliki scholars (may Allaah have mercy on him). Al-Quraafi said: The eighth issue regarding the obligation of upholding ties of kinship: Shaykh al-Tartooshi said: one of the scholars said: rather upholding ties of kinship is obligatory if the relatives are mahrams, which refers to each two persons who, if one were male and the other female, it would not be permissible for them to get married, such as fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, grandfathers and grandmothers no matter how far the line of ascent reaches, children and grandchildren no matter how far the line of descent reaches, paternal uncles and aunts, and maternal uncles and aunts. As for the children of these, upholding ties of kinship between them is not obligatory, because it is permissible for them to get married. The soundness of this view is indicated by the fact that it is haraam to be married to two sisters, or to a woman and her paternal aunt or to a woman and her maternal aunt at the

same time, because that leads to severing the ties of kinship, and avoiding something haraam is obligatory, and honouring them and not harming them is obligatory. But is it permissible to be married to two female paternal cousins or two female maternal cousins at the same time, even if they are jealous of one another and sever ties with one another, and that is because upholding ties of kinship between them is not obligatory. End quote from *al-Farooq* (1/147).

The second opinion concerning this issue is that it is obligatory to uphold ties of kinship with all of them, with no distinction between mahrams and non-mahrams. This is one view of the Hanafis and is the well known view of the Maaliks. It was also stated by Ahmad, and it is what may be understood from the general terms in which the Shaafa'is discussed this issue, because none of them singled out the mahram relatives in this regard. *Al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah* (3/83).

See also: *Ghadha' al-Albaab* by al-Safaareeni (1/354) and *Bareeqah Mahmoudiyyah* (4/153).

There are other opinions concerning this matter. It says in *Subul al-Salaam* (2/628): It should be noted that the scholars differed concerning the definition of the relatives with whom it is obligatory to uphold ties of kinship. It was said that it is relatives with whom marriage is haraam, such that if one of them were male marriage to the other would be forbidden. Based on that, it does not include the children of paternal or maternal uncles and aunts. Those who hold this view quote as evidence the fact that it is haraam to be married to a woman and her paternal aunt or maternal aunt at the same time, because that leads to severing of ties of kinship.

And it was said that it is those who are connected by inheritance which is indicated by the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), "then the next closest and the next closest."

And it was said that it refers to those who are related to one another regardless of whether they are connected by inheritance or not.

Moreover, upholding of ties of kinship, as al-Qaadi 'Iyaad said, is of varying degrees, some of which are higher than others. At the very least, it is not forsaking one another, and upholding ties by speaking, even if it only saying salaam. That varies according to possibility and need. It may be obligatory or mustahabb. If a person upholds ties to some extent, even if it is not to the fullest extent, he cannot be called a breaker of ties of kinship, and if he fails to do what he is able to do and should do, then he cannot be called an upholder of ties of kinship.

Al-Qurtubi said: The degrees of relationship which must be upheld are general and specific. The general relationship is that which is based on religion, which must be upheld by means of mutual love, sincerity, fairness and fulfilment of rights both obligatory and mustahabb.

In addition to that, the specific relationship also involves spending on relatives, checking on them and overlooking their mistakes. End quote.

Your mother is the closest relative to you and the one more deserving of your kind treatment, and then your father. Abu Hurairah (radiyallaahu-anhu) reported that a man said: O Messenger of Allaah! Who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship? The Prophet (sallal-laahu-alayhi-wasallam) said: Your mother. The man said, 'Then who?' The Prophet said: Then your mother. The man further asked, 'Then who?' The Prophet said: Then your mother. The man asked again, 'Then who?' The Prophet said: Then your father. [Hadeeth reported by Muslim]

After your mother and father, those who are closest to you are your children, blood brothers and sisters, uncles (or aunts) and cousins. And whenever a person is closer to you as a relative, he (or she) is entitled to more rights from you. Keeping the ties of kinship should be established in accordance with one's ability, so if your relatives live with you in the same country or close by, it is obligatory to visit them, honour them, show them kindness and assist them if they are in need.

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#### WHY IS IT DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN TIES OF KINSHIP?

1. Shaytan
2. Hasad
3. Culture
4. Constant back biting and evilness of the tongue
5. Love of the dunya
6. Lack of knowledge on the Deen
7. Lack of patience

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#### HOW TO MAINTAIN TIES OF KINSHIP

##### 1. Seek knowledge

- On patience
- Read the Qur'an and hadiths, and attend circles of knowledge
- *"The word 'Ar-Rahm' (womb) derives its name from Ar-Rahman (i.e., one of the names of Allah) and Allah said: 'I will keep good relation with the one who will keep good relation with you, (womb i.e. Kith and Kin) and sever the relation with him who will sever the relation with you, (womb, i.e. Kith and Kin)" [Bukhari].*
- On how to protect from shaytan
- On how to maintain intention
- On focussing on akhirah and less dunya

- On controlling the tongue

## **2. Find out who your relatives are**

This is an obvious first-step, but many people skip it out of embarrassment of admitting that they don't know all their relatives. Have a sit-down with your parents and ask them about their brothers/sisters/uncles/aunts, etc. Draw a family tree and keep a digital copy on your computer or on paper.

## **3. Find out their contact details**

Whether it's a phone number, an e-mail address, Facebook profile, MSN messenger, Skype or Twitter ID! (trust me, you'll be surprised!) Find out all your relatives' contact details and update your address book accordingly. You'll probably find it easier to get this information through your parents but you can also try with cousins, uncles and aunts.

## **4. Get in touch**

If your relatives are using any of the online social tools, get in touch with them online with a simple salam. I'm sure they'll be pleasantly surprised to hear from you (who does not like to meet someone online they actually relate to?!). If a good old phone call is the only way to get in touch with them and if you don't know them very well, rather than making a cold phone call, start breaking the ice by sending them regular text messages to their mobile phones ending with your name and perhaps a "son of so and so" or "daughter of so and so" so they can recognize you. After a while, give them a call (either with your parents around to ease the introduction) or on your own and inquire about your 'text messages' ;). There are lots of other ways of 'breaking the ice' this is just an example.

## **5. Interview the gran-grans**



It may be a moving interview about his life story and one that our entire family cherishes. There's so much wisdom, experience, lessons that can be learnt from our elders. Just sit with them, ask them some questions and press record. No need to make it formal, just sit and listen.

#### **6. Visit/invite for meals**

If your relatives are in the same city, you should invite each other to meals. If parents aren't keen because of issues between relatives, try to do it amongst the 'youngsters' or the 'cousins'. Then at the meals you can discuss various ways to resolve family feuds and stay in touch with the family.

#### **7. Set up internet/video chat**

Next time you visit 'back home', the family village, or your grandparents house, take with you one of the latest electronic notebooks with a front facing video camera and Skype (they are relatively cheap and pretty robust). Find out how you can set up internet (ideally wireless) for your family there and teach them the simple steps of making Skype calls/video calls. Once they figure it out, forget long distance calls, Skype would be the next thing in the village!

#### **8. Spend charity/zakat on them**

Unfortunately, these days a lot of Muslims have forgotten about spending charity/zakat on their poor relatives and family members. I'm not sure if it's embarrassment or 'fear' that the relative may start 'relying' on us for their well-being or is it our laziness and over reliance on international charity organisations to deliver our Zakat and Sadaqah. Whatever it is, we have no excuse. Especially when we have clear instructions from Allah (glorified and exalted be He) that our charities/Zakat should be for our relatives as well as the poor and needy in other parts of the world. In fact, scholars emphasize that we should prioritize our charities/socket so it goes to those closest to us first then to the wider Muslim community. There are ways of doing this practically,

including giving your sadaqah to the poor relative through another member of the family who's more senior, or you could sponsor one of your poor relatives' BIG expenses, e.g. their child's education or a medical operation, etc.

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**9. Be the focal point for your family**

If you implement some of the advice above, you'll soon be THE focal point for family ties/meetings for your family. Happily take this responsibility and try to arrange various activities for your family, e.g. arranging family trips, draw family tree day, family fundraising for an Islamic project, e.g. mosque/orphanage, etc.

**10. Resolve old issues once and for all**

Once things start 'warming up' between relatives and you can see an opportunity to resolve old issues, try to resolve them formally, ideally through a senior member.

**LASTLY, DO BE CAREFUL**

Be careful on getting too close on relatives who are NOT your mahram. There are boundaries which must NOT be breached, and therefore shaking hands, kissing on the cheeks are all NOT permissible in Islam.

May Allah Grant us ease and patience to maintain our ties of kinship with our loved ones and Reward us for our efforts and perseverance.