

Kindness to Relatives and Maintaining Family Ties

(Translated)

Kindness to relatives is among the noblest deeds and greatest acts of worship, because a relative has both the right of Islam and the right of kinship. For this reason, the Noble Quran places great emphasis on this right and regards kindness to one's relatives as one of the deeds that draw a person closer to Allah. Allah (swt) says, ﴿وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ﴾ **“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and show kindness to parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbour, the distant neighbour, the companion by your side, and the traveller.”** [TMQ Surah An-Nisaa' 36]. Allah (swt) also says, ﴿وَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَلَا تَبْذِرْ تَبَذُّرًا﴾ **“Give the relative his due, as well as the needy and the traveller, and do not squander wastefully.”** [TMQ Surah Al-Isra'a :26]. This verse clearly commands Muslims to fulfil the rights of their relatives by treating them kindly, helping them, checking on their circumstances, and attending to their needs according to one's ability.

The Prophet (saw) encouraged maintaining family ties and made it a sign of faith, linking it directly to belief. He (saw) said, «مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُصِلْ رَحِمَهُ» **“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him maintain his ties of kinship,”** as narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim. Maintaining family ties does not mean merely returning kindness with kindness, in a reciprocal manner. Its true meaning becomes evident when there is estrangement or separation. The Messenger of Allah (saw) said, «ليس الواصل» **“The one who truly maintains ties of kinship is not the one who merely reciprocates, but the one who maintains ties when his relatives sever them.”** (Narrated by al-Bukhari).

Thus, a believer does not allow a relative's mistreatment to become a reason for severing family ties, nor does he respond to estrangement with further estrangement. Instead, he seeks reconciliation, initiates greetings, overlooks minor mistakes, and hopes for the reward that lies with Allah. The Prophet (saw) also promised increased provision and a longer-lasting legacy for the one who maintains family ties. He (saw) said, «مَنْ أَحَبَّ» **“Whoever would like his provision to be increased and his life to be extended, let him maintain his ties of kinship.”** (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

Mistakes, misunderstandings, and painful situations may occur among relatives. Nevertheless, the believer is commanded to pardon and overlook, and not to allow a passing mistake to become the cause of lasting conflict or prolonged estrangement. Allah (swt) says, ﴿وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا﴾ **“Let not those favor and abundance among you swear not to give to their relatives, the needy, and those who emigrated in the cause of Allah. Let them pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?”** [TMQ Surah An-Nur: 22]. This verse guides the Muslim to respond to wrongdoing with forgiveness and reminds him that whoever desires Allah's forgiveness should forgive His servants. Allah (swt) also says, ﴿وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ﴾ **“Good and evil are not equal. Repel evil with what is better,**

and then the one between whom and you there was enmity will become as though he were a devoted friend.” [TMQ Surah Fusillat: 34].

One aspect of kindness to relatives is to interpret their words in the best possible way, avoid searching for their faults, refrain from reproaching them for their mistakes, and not spread their shortcomings among people. If a relative needs advice, it should be offered gently and privately, away from humiliation or public disgrace. The Prophet (saw) said, «مَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ» **“Whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults in this world and the Hereafter.”** (Narrated by al-Bukhari).

Another form of kindness to relatives is restraining anger during moments of anger and dispute. One of the things most needed when dealing with relatives is self-control, because a relative may see from another relative what others do not see, and a dispute with a family member may be more painful and longer-lasting. For this reason, the Prophet (saw) said, «لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ بِالصُّرْعَةِ، إِنَّمَا الشَّدِيدُ الَّذِي يَمْلِكُ نَفْسَهُ عِنْدَ الْغَضَبِ» **“The strong man is not the one who can overpower others; rather, the strong man is the one who controls himself when angry.”** (Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim).

True strength does not lie in raising one’s voice, defeating an opponent, or responding to an insult with another insult. Instead, it lies in restraining anger, maintaining good manners, and delaying one’s response until tempers have cooled. It is wise to avoid arguing while angry, choose kind words, and remember that maintaining family ties is more important than winning an argument or asserting oneself in a passing situation. Among the forms of kindness to relatives are checking on those in need, helping the poor, assisting the sick, standing beside anyone facing hardship, and offering financial or emotional support according to one’s ability.

The Prophet (saw) said, «الْصَّدَقَةُ عَلَى الْمَسْكِينِ صَدَقَةٌ، وَهِيَ عَلَى ذِي الرَّحِمِ اثْنَتَانِ: صَدَقَةٌ وَصَلَةٌ» **“Charity given to a poor person is charity, but charity given to a relative is two things: charity and maintaining family ties.”** He (saw) also said, «الْمُسْلِمُ أَخُو الْمُسْلِمِ، لَا يَظْلِمُهُ وَلَا يُسْلَمُهُ، وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي حَاجَةِ أَخِيهِ كَانَ اللَّهُ فِي حَاجَتِهِ، وَمَنْ فَرَّجَ عَنْ مُسْلِمٍ كُرْبَةً فَرَّجَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ» **“A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim: he does not wrong him or abandon him. Whoever fulfils the need of his brother, Allah will fulfil his need. Whoever relieves a Muslim of a hardship, Allah will relieve him of one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection. And whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults on the Day of Resurrection,”** as narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim. If this is the virtue of helping Muslims in general, then helping a relative is even more deserving and significant, because it combines relieving hardship, maintaining family ties, and strengthening the bonds of affection among family members.

In contrast, Islam has warned against severing family ties. Allah, the Exalted, says, ﴿فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ * أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ﴾ **“Would you then, if you were given authority, spread corruption throughout the land and sever your ties of kinship? Those are the ones whom Allah has cursed, deafening them and blinding their sight.”** [TMQ Surah Muhammad: 22–23]. Allah also says, ﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُونَ سُوءَ الْحِسَابِ * أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَقُوبَى الدَّارِ﴾ **“And those who maintain the ties that Allah has commanded to be maintained, fear their Lord, and dread the terrible account. Those will have the best outcome.”** [TMQ Surah Ar-Ra’ad: 21–22]. Severing family ties is not limited to refusing to visit someone. It may also take the form of estrangement, turning away, withholding people’s rights, verbal

abuse, spreading their faults, or abandoning a relative when he or she is in need. Maintaining family ties, on the other hand, may be achieved through visiting, calling, asking about one another, giving gifts, offering assistance, speaking kindly, praying for one another, and other good deeds.

It must also be clarified that kindness to relatives does not mean remaining silent in the face of injustice, accepting abuse, or enabling a wrongdoer to continue harming others. Rather, kindness should be practised with wisdom: a person may forgive minor mistakes, conceal faults, offer gentle advice, preserve his rights, and prevent harm through patience, sound judgement, and lawful means. Among the finest ways of dealing with relatives are maintaining ties with those who have cut one off, forgiving those who have caused harm, concealing what one dislikes being publicised, helping those in need, showing mercy and respect to the elderly, treating the young with gentleness, honouring parents and people of virtue, and making Allah's pleasure one's goal rather than seeking personal victory.

Everything mentioned above concerning kindness, forgiveness, concealing faults, and good conduct is not limited to one's closest relatives. It also includes extended relatives and all other family members. Maintaining family ties means showing kindness to relatives in general. Allah (swt) says, ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ﴾ **“Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives.”** [TMQ Surah An-Nahl: 90]. Allah (swt) also says, ﴿وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا رَحِيمًا﴾ **“Fear Allah, in whose Name you appeal to one another, and honour family ties. Surely Allah is ever Watchful over you.”** [TMQ Surah An-Nisaa':1].

Accordingly, all the deeds mentioned above—maintaining contact, showing kindness, fulfilling needs, forgiving, concealing mistakes, overlooking faults, and speaking well—apply to extended relatives and all other family members, whether they live nearby or far away, and whether they have treated us well or fallen short. A Muslim strives to maintain ties with them seeking the pleasure of Allah. In this way, he preserves family unity, fulfils the rights of kinship, and earns the virtue of maintaining family ties and showing kindness to relatives.

In conclusion, maintaining family ties is a great act of obedience, kindness to relatives is part of faith, and forgiving their mistakes is a means of attaining Allah's forgiveness and preserving affection. Every Muslim should strive to be a key to goodness within his family, a unifier of hearts, one who conceals faults, and a source of support in times of hardship. Let him always remember the words of Allah (swt) Who said, ﴿أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ﴾ **“Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?”** [TMQ Surah An-Nur: 22].

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