

Maintaining ties with relatives

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Thought-provoking speech of weekly
sunnah-inspiring ijtimia

(For Islamic Brothers)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ
 أَمَا بَعْدُ فَأَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Maintaining ties with relatives

وَعَلَىٰ إِلِكْ وَأَصْحِبِكَ يَا حَبِيبَ اللَّهِ

الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

وَعَلَىٰ إِلِكْ وَأَصْحِبِكَ يَا نُورَ اللَّهِ

الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ

نَوَيْتُ سُنَّتَ الْإِعْتِكَافِ

Translation: "I have made the intention of sunnah *i'tikaf*."

Dear Islamic brothers, whenever you enter a masjid, upon remembering, make the intention of *i'tikaf*, because as long as you stay in the masjid, you will keep getting the reward of *i'tikaf*. Remember, inside a masjid, there is no *shar'i* permission to eat and drink, sleep or have suhoor and iftar, and not even to drink Zamzam water and the water on which *dam* has been made. However, if the intention of *i'tikaf* is made, all these acts will become permissible. One should not make intention to observe *i'tikaf* only to eat, drink or sleep, but rather he should do it for pleasing Allah Almighty.

It is stated in *Fatawa Shaami*: "If someone wants to eat, drink or sleep in a masjid, he should make intention to observe *i'tikaf* and do dhikr of Allah Almighty for some time. Then, whatever he wants, he can do (i.e. now if he wants to eat, drink or sleep, he can do so)."

Excellence of sending *salat* upon the Prophet ﷺ

The final Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

مَا جَلَسَ قَوْمٌ مَجْلِسًا لَمْ يَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِيهِ، وَلَمْ يُصَلُّوا عَلَى نَبِيِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانَ عَلَيْهِمْ تِرَةٌ فَإِنْ شَاءَ عَذَّبَهُمْ وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَفَا لَهُمْ

Translation: No group of people sit in a gathering in which they do not remember Allah Almighty nor send *salat* upon their Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ except that it will be a loss for them (on the Day of Judgement). If Allah Almighty wills, He will punish them, and if Allah Almighty wills, He shall forgive them.¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has stated: **أَفْضَلُ الْعَمَلِ النَّيَّةُ الصَّادِقَةُ**, meaning, a truthful intention is the best action.² O devotees of the Prophet, get into the habit of making good intentions before every action, because a good intention can be the cause of entering Paradise. Before listening to the *bayan*, make good intentions. For example,

- you will listen to the entire *bayan* to gain the knowledge of Islam.
- you will sit in a respectful manner.
- you will refrain from laziness during the *bayan*.
- you will listen to the *bayan* to reform yourself.
- whatever you hear and learn, you will attempt to pass onto others.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Pain caused by a relative

The narration we are about to discuss can be found on page 160 of the renowned book *Call to Righteousness*, written by the Amir of Ahl al-Sunnah, 'Allāmah Abū Bilāl Muhammad Ilyas Attār Qādiri **دَاعِيَتَبَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةِ**:

¹ *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 5, p. 247, ḥadīth 3,391

² *Jāmi' al-Saghīr*, p. 81, ḥadīth 1,284

Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr Siddīq رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ would pay for the expenses of his cousin, *Sayyidunā* Miṣṭaḥ b. Uthāthah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, a Companion from Makkah who was poor and had taken part in the battle of Badr. *Sayyidunā* Miṣṭaḥ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ once inadvertently upset *Sayyidunā* Abū Bakr Siddīq رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. He did so by sitting with people who had laid false accusations on the latter's beloved daughter, *Umm al-Mu'minīn, Sayyidatunā* 'Āishah Siddīqah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا (although he himself did not agree with their views, nor make any of the aforementioned accusations).

Disappointed, *Sayyidunā* Abū Bakr Siddīq رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ vowed not to provide for *Sayyidunā* Miṣṭaḥ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ any longer. The 22nd verse of Surah al-Nūr was then revealed, which is as follows:

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ
وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

And those amongst you who possess excellence and have capacity should not take oath (in not) giving to the relatives, and the needy, and the emigrants in the path of Allah. And they should forgive and overlook. Do you not like that Allah may forgive you? And Allah is Most Forgiving, Ever Merciful.¹

After the Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ recited this verse, *Sayyidunā* Abū Bakr Siddīq رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said: “I desire that Allah forgives me, so I shall never discontinue providing for Miṣṭaḥ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.” He resumed his financial assistance thereafter.²

Dear Islamic brothers, did you notice that *Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Sayyidunā* Abū Bakr Siddīq رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, took an oath to break ties with his cousin *Sayyidunā* Miṣṭaḥ b. Uthāthah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, but when this verse was

¹ [Kanz-ul-Iman (translation of Quran)] (Part 18, Surah Al-Noor, verse 22)

² Khazāin-ul-'Irfān, p. 563

revealed, he excused him for the sake of Allah. Now, we should think to ourselves: if such a thing happened to us, we would stop talking, meeting or even greeting the other person. We even break ties with our relatives on the smallest of issues, do not treat them well, and even stop talking to them.

All of us should consider our relatives and which of them we may be upset with. We should also think about those who may be upset with us. We should immediately make efforts for reconciliation, provided there is no prohibition sanctioned by sharia. Even if you have to humble yourself, do so for the pleasure of Allah. You will reach newfound heights of success as a result **إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ**. The Prophet **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ** has said: **مَنْ تَوَاضَعَ لِلَّهِ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ** - "He who is humble for Allah is granted loftiness by Him."¹

In order to make our homes peaceful, strive to always show good conduct and maintain ties with your relatives. Try your absolute best to not break ties with them. Other sins have bad results, but these are limited to the person committing the sin. Cutting ties with relatives has such negative implications, however, that an entire nation can be deprived from the mercy of Allah due to it.

Quranic commandment for maintaining ties with relatives

Allah has commanded us to maintain ties with relatives, orphans and those in need. In verse 38 of Surah al-Rūm, He says:

فَأْتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۗ
ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

¹ *Shu'ab al-Īmān*, vol. 6, p. 276, *ḥadīth* 8,140

Therefore, give the relative his right, and to the needy, and to the traveller; this is better for those who seek the pleasure of Allah, and only their objective has been fulfilled.¹

Correlating to this, Mufti Aḥmad Yār Khān رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ explains:

This verse ordains for all rights of a person's family to be fulfilled. We also learn each relative has their own rights without any exception. This verse also explains how good conduct and charity should not be displayed towards one's family as simply custom or out of tradition. It should be done purely and solely for the sake of Allah. Only then is a person rewarded for good conduct towards his family.

In another verse, Allah has said:

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿٥١﴾

Fear Allah in Whose name you demand (mutual rights) and be mindful of your (blood) relations. Indeed, Allah is observing you at all times.²

Yet again, Mufti Aḥmad Yār Khān رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ provides a graceful explanation of this verse, and says:

The same way in which salāh, fasting, ḥajj, zakāh etc. are necessary for Muslims, it is of similar absolute necessity for them to fulfil the rights of relatives. This is hugely advantageous not only for our life in this world, but also for our death and Hereafter.³

Dear Islamic brothers, Allah has commanded us to show good conduct and be kind to our relatives. Take this example: if the government forbids from doing a certain crime and announces a punishment for

¹ [Kanz-ul-Iman (translation of Quran)] (Part 21, Surah Al-Rūm, verse 38)

² [Kanz-ul-Iman (translation of Quran)] (Part 4, Surah Al-Nisa, verse 1)

³ Tafsīr Na'īmī, vol. 4, p. 456

whomever is found performing it, nobody in their right mind would deliberately go ahead and commit the crime regardless. They will try to avoid it instead. Now let us consider! If we pay this close attention to the rules of a worldly leader, what about the commands of Allah, Who is *Rabb al-'ālamīn* and *Aḥkam al-ḥākimīn*? Everything we receive, be it benefit or harm, occurs according to His will. He harbours complete power over our lives and deaths. How foolish of us to deliberately disobey a Being of such limitless strength, and it is none but He who ordered us to maintain good ties with our relatives.

The importance of this cannot be understated. For example, even if someone takes an oath to not treat his relatives well, he must still exhibit good conduct towards them and undertake expiation (*kaffārah*).

Break the oath!

The father of *Sayyidunā* Abū al-Aḥwas 'Awf b. Mālik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا narrates:

I humbly asked, “O Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ! When I go to my cousin to ask for something, he does not give anything nor treat me kindly. Whenever a need arises for him, however, he comes and asks from me. I have taken an oath to not give him anything nor maintain ties with him. What do you declare for me to do?” The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied, “Do whatever is good, and expiate for your oath.”¹

Dear Islamic brothers, if a person vows to wrongfully harm someone, cut ties with relatives or not fulfil the rights of another, it is sinful for them to carry out such an oath. Expiation must also be paid for it.

¹ *Sunan Nasā'ī*, p. 619, ḥadīth 3,793

Biggest sin

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “By Allah, if anyone of you takes an oath to harm his family, he commits a greater sin according to Allah than that of dissolving his oath and making expiation for it.”¹

The renowned commentator, Mufti Aḥmad Yār Khān رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ once again offers his expert insight:

It is sinful for an individual to carry out an oath which infringes the rights of his relatives. For example, if he vows to not serve his mother or not speak with his parents. It is necessarily binding (*wājib*) for him to break such an oath and fulfil their rights.

In this regard, it is not sinful to dissolve such an oath. Carrying it out and implementing it would incur sin for the doer. Fulfilling these oaths is a grave sin in essence, and to not fulfil them is an act of reward. This is despite the fact the name of Allah was not given its due esteem by dissolving an oath taken upon His name. Due to this shortcoming in showing respect to the name of Allah, expiation becomes necessary. Not breaking this oath at all would lead to steep sin.²

Definition of صَلَّةٌ رَحْمِيَّةٌ - good conduct with relatives

Dear Islamic brothers, let us now focus on the term صَلَّةٌ رَحْمِيَّةٌ. The word صَلَّةٌ (*ṣilah*) is defined as: اِيْصَالُ نَوْعٍ مِّنْ اَنْوَاعِ الْاِحْسَانِ - all forms of kindness and favour.³ The word رِحْمٌ (*riḥm*) denotes family ties and relationship.⁴

¹ *Saḥīḥ Bukhāri*, p. 281, vol. 4, ḥadīth 6,625

² *Mirāt al-Manājīh*, p. 198, vol. 5

³ *Al-Zawājir*, vol. 2, p. 156

⁴ *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 1, p. 1,479

The book *Bahār-i-Sharīʿat* defines **صِلَّةٌ رَحِمٍ** (*ṣilah-i-riḥm*) as establishing ties between family members and treating them well.¹

The author of this book, ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Amjad ‘Alī A’ẓamī **رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ**, also writes:

As unanimously agreed upon by the entire *ummah*, creating and maintaining ties of kinship is necessary (*wājib*). Severing relations with relatives is a sin. The command to exhibit good conduct with one’s family has been issued unconditionally in ḥadīth.

The words **ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى** (those of close proximity: relatives and family) were also unconditionally stated in the Quran. As there are varying levels of kinship, there is also variance in regard to the level of good conduct shown. This all depends on the family member’s status. Parents hold the greatest status in this matter. Second are relatives with whom one may never marry due to having genealogical ties with them. After them is the status of all other relatives.

According to this, a person can show good conduct to his family in various ways. For example, giving gifts, helping them when they require, giving them *salām*, meeting them, spending time in their company, speaking with them, and being gracious towards them.

If a person is in a foreign country, he should send letters to his relatives and continue to remain in touch with them. In this way, estrangement will not occur between them. If possible, he should ensure to return to his country so that ties with his

¹ *Bahār-i-Sharīʿat*, vol. 3, p. 558

relatives remain solid. This will also increase affection and love amongst them.¹

(In contemporary times, very little communication takes place with letters. One can stay in contact via phone or the internet etc., because the purpose is to maintain a good and strong relationship with each other, regardless of how that is done.)

Strengthen relationships with relatives

Dear Islamic brothers, besides being courteous to your relatives, try your wholehearted best to maintain these good ties with them. Come to their aid when they need you, attend when they call you somewhere, support them in their joys and sorrows, and invite them to permissible functions and occasions. All of these good things, and every other way you may exhibit good conduct with them, are considered maintaining good relationship with relatives.

We now come to an **extremely** important point. Good conduct towards one's relatives does not mean you should only behave well with those who behave well with you. This is actually reciprocation of treatment, such as sending a gift to a relative who has sent you a one, or going to the house of one who comes to yours. In actual fact, good treatment means establishing ties with the one who cuts off ties with you. By extension, this also means to care about the relative who ignores and stays away from you.²

Reality of maintaining ties

The Prophet ﷺ said: "The one joining ties with relatives is not he who does so in exchange for good conduct shown to him; rather

¹ *Bahār-i-Sharī'at*, vol. 3, p. 558

² *Radd al-Muhtār*, vol. 9, p. 678

it is the one who joins ties when they are severed.”¹ It is stated in another ḥadīth:

Do not become of those who say, “If people are good towards us, we will be good to them too, and if they oppress us, we will also oppress them in return.” Rather, make it your habit to be good to others when they show good conduct towards you, and if people oppress you, still avoid oppressing them!”²

صَلُّوا عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Dear Islamic brothers, from both the two blessed ḥadīth we have just heard, we learn the true meaning of good conduct with one’s family and what it means to maintain ties with them. If a relative deprives us of anything, we should still give to them. If they oppress us, we should still forgive them. Sometimes relatives cut ties with us, even over the smallest of issues. Years pass without speaking to them. It is now down to us to take the first step, approach them, discuss things, reconcile and seek their forgiveness.

These deeds will indeed be very difficult for our *nafs*, and Satan will try to stop us reconciling with each other. He will try to pollute our minds with various Satanic whispers, for example:

- Why should we go to their house? They never come to ours.
- Why should we accept their invitation? They turned ours down before.
- These people don’t want to attend our functions and get-togethers; why should we go to any of theirs?

¹ Bukhāri, *Kitāb al-Adab*, vol. 4, p. 98, ḥadīth 5,991,

² Tirmidhī, vol. 3, p. 405, ḥadīth 2,014

- Why do we have to make the first move?
- How low do we have to stoop to please them?

Many Satanic whispers of this kind may enter a person's mind, but remember, this is the time you are tested. Will you listen to your *nafs* and destroy your Hereafter? Or will you control it, act upon the pristine commands of Allah and His beloved Prophet ﷺ, and make your Hereafter successful? Be brave and muster your courage! Oppose Satan, and with the intention of attaining the reward of maintaining good relationships with relatives, make firm intention to reconcile with relatives who may be displeased or upset.

Whilst mentioning the blessed ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ, *Sayyidunā* Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ once said: "Whoever breaks ties of kinship should leave this gathering of ours." Listening to this, a young man stood up and went to see his aunt. He had a dispute with her, lasting for many years until that point. When the young man had settled issues with his aunt, the latter said, "Go, and find out the reason behind this (in other words, what was the wisdom behind *Sayyidunā* Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ making this announcement?)."

The young man returned to the great Companion and inquired as to the why he had said for anyone who breaks familial ties to leave his gathering. *Sayyidunā* Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ explained: "I heard from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, 'The mercy of Allah does not descend upon a nation which contains someone who cuts ties of kinship (family).'"¹

Virtues of maintaining ties with relatives

Let us now have the honour of listening to 3 ḥadīth of the final Prophet ﷺ, which discuss the great excellence of maintaining good conduct with one's family.

¹ *Al-zawājir 'an iqtirāf al-kabāir, vol. 2, p.153*

1. Whoever seeks to be granted more sustenance and have his lifespan extended should maintain good ties with his family.¹
2. Establishing ties brings love in one's household, blessings in wealth and longevity.²
3. Allah undoubtedly keeps the world flourishing due to one group of people. He increases wealth due to them and has never looked at them with dislike since creating them. It was asked, 'O Messenger of Allah **صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ**! Why so?' It was thus explained in reply: 'Due to them establishing ties with their relatives.'³

Ten virtues of maintaining a good relationship with relatives

The renowned jurist, *Sayyidunā* Abū al-Layth Samarqandi **رَحِمَهُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ** mentions ten positives that come about if one maintains good conduct with their relatives.

1. Allah Almighty is pleased.
2. People become happy and content.
3. Angels also become glad.
4. Doing this earns one praise from Muslims.
5. Satan becomes saddened.
6. Lifespan increases.
7. Blessings are attained in one's sustenance (*rizq*).
8. Deceased Muslims from a person's lineage are delighted by this.

¹ *Saḥīḥ Bukhārī*, vol. 4, p. 97, ḥadīth 5,985

² *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 3, p. 394, ḥadīth 1,986

³ *Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 12, p. 67, raqm 12,556

9. Mutual love increases.
10. A person's reward increases even after death as others make *du'ā* in his favour.¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Evil suspicion is a cause of severing ties with relatives

Dear Islamic brothers, without a shadow of doubt, maintaining good conduct with one's family and establishing ties with them brings about profuse blessings. It earns a person esteem, honour, success in the Hereafter, the pleasure of Allah, increase in sustenance, lengthening of lifespan, and other priceless blessings. Whoever breaks ties of kinship displeases Allah, ruins his hereafter, and also suffers greatly even in worldly affairs.

Many a time, we do not have positive opinions of our family. Instead, we allow suspicion and ill-opinion to take over, leading to family ties being broken left, right and centre. Sadly, this trend of instantly thinking bad of someone, suspecting them, or having ill-opinions is rampant. Over the smallest doubt or suspicion, we end up breaking ties with our own family.

Let us say we invited a family member to a function we have arranged. Something came up, and this family member was left unable to attend. We normally proceed to criticise, lambast and defame him, even resorting to backbiting in this process. We tell ourselves, "As he rejected our invitation, we will never attend anything he invites us to."

¹ *Tanbīh al-Ghafīlīn*, p. 37

Stemming from this unfounded bad opinion, a gap develops between family members. This gap, fuelled by misgivings and unnecessary hatred, becomes wider as time goes on. Eventually, two members of the same family go years without even speaking to one another.

This can all be avoided if we develop the power of positive thinking. Instead of instantly hating someone, there are a host of ways you can remain positive and think well of them instead. For example, if you invite a member of your family and they could not come, you can think:

- Maybe he is unwell.
- Maybe he forgot.
- Perhaps something unavoidably important came up.
- It is possible something happened that is hard for him to talk about, and he does not want to share it with us.

There are many more positive ways we can approach this situation instead of resorting to baseless misgivings. Whether or not they tell us why they could not make it, we should always, always, always maintain good opinion and not fall prey to doubts or suspicion. By doing so, we hope to earn reward and pave our way to Paradise.

Excellence of having good opinions

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

حُسْنُ الظَّنِّ مِنَ حُسْنِ الْعِبَادَةِ - 'Harbouring good opinions is (an act of) fine worship.'¹

¹ Sunan Abū Dawūd, vol. 4, p. 387, ḥadīth 4,993

Mufti Aḥmad Yār Khān رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ elaborates on the meaning of this ḥadīth: ‘Possessing good opinions of Muslims, as well as not thinking ill of them, are considered fine and commendable acts of worship.’¹

Even if you have a relative who does not meet you deliberately or otherwise, does not invite you to see them or has openly displayed bad conduct, remain big-hearted, do not be discouraged, and maintain ties with them.

Sayyidunā Ubayy b. Ka’b رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that the final Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ once elegantly said:

Whoever desires for a palace to be built for him (in Paradise) and his rank to be raised should forgive the one who oppresses him, give to the one who deprives him, and establish ties with the one who severs them.²

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Dear Islamic brothers, sometimes, family members cut ties with one another over the smallest of issues. If any of our relatives says something mistakenly, or does something that hurts our feelings, we tend to forget about our own shortcomings entirely. We instead fall prey to the tricks of the *nafs* and Satan. Over small things, we sever ties completely and stop speaking with one another, almost launching a complete boycott of the other person. Even if they were to apologise, our stubbornness does not allow us to forgive them and move on. If somebody tries to advise us against this, we silence them immediately.

This is the complete opposite of what we should be doing. Our beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ has forbidden us to have hatred and jealousy for

¹ *Mirāt al-Manājīh*, vol. 6, p. 621

² *Al-Mustadrak li al-Ḥākim*, vol. 3, p. 12, ḥadīth 3,215

each other. He also forbade us to dissolve ties with our family members and stopped us from rejecting other's apologies.

Become brothers of one another

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

Do not turn your backs on one another, nor hate one another, nor harbour jealousy, nor break ties. O servants of Allah! Become brothers of one another. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He does not oppress, deprive or dishonour him.¹

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

وَمَنْ اعْتَدَرَ إِلَىٰ أَخِيهِ الْمُسْلِمِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ بَكَعَهُ عَنْهُ فَلَمْ يَقْبَلْ عُدْرَةَ لَمْ يَرِدْ عَلَى الْحَوْضِ - "Whoever is apologised to by his Muslim brother but does not accept his apology shall not be allowed to visit my reservoir (*hawḍ al-kawthar*)."²

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Living under the same roof, yet upset with one another

Dear Islamic brothers, think carefully! We have been ordained to show good conduct, love and maintain ties with each and every Muslim. If this is the case, we should show even more of this good conduct to those who share the same blood as us. Be it father, mother, brothers, sisters, uncles, nephews, or any other familial tie, we should strive to exhibit excellent character and conduct with them.

¹ *Muslim*, p. 1386, ḥadīth 2,564

² *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, vol. 4, p. 376, ḥadīth 6,295

Essentially, our parents are most deserving of our efforts in this regard. They protected us, raised us, gave us education, taught us about the world, showed us how to distinguish between good and bad, and put themselves in difficulty to keep us at ease. After them come our siblings. They are our lifelong companions, and they unconditionally support us no matter what.

With great regret, what do we see nowadays? Parents consider their children a nuisance. Children turn their face from their parents. Respect and love between brother and sister is few and far between; instead we find rudeness, disputes, displeasure and a lack of respect for one another.

Even despite living under the same roof, blood brothers and sisters do not speak to one other, sometimes over the most trivial of things. If they live at a distance, they go months or even years without wanting to see each other.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Encouragement to act upon Pious Deed number 61

Dear Islamic brothers, in order to become a pious Muslim, be regular in performing salah, and to gain the passion to maintain ties, always remain associated with the Islamic environment of Dawat-e-Islami.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ Religious and character-centric training is provided, with the main role in this being played by the 72 Pious Deeds booklet, gifted to us by the Amīr of Ahl al-Sunnah دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةِ.

By virtue of acting upon these pious deeds, many sinful individuals have begun traversing the right path and are now engaged in rectifying others too. From amongst the good deeds we are prescribed to perform in this booklet, pious deed number 61 is:

Have you visited a sick or distressed person this week by going to his home or the hospital and enquired after his health or comforted him; or in the event of a relative's demise, have you paid condolences in accordance with the Sunnah?

If we act upon this, we shall find ways to maintain ties with our family members and earn the immense reward that accompanies this. Try your absolute best to make a habit of filling in this Pious Deeds booklet; you shall develop steadfastness in performing good deeds.

Those who sever relations with you, join ties with them!

Bihisht ki Kunjiyān is an Urdu book republished by Maktaba-tul-Madinah, the publishing wing of Dawat-e-Islami. It was originally written by the ḥadīth expert, 'Abd al-Muṣṭafā A'ẓami رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, and is testament to the author's expertise and vast knowledge. In this, he also discusses the issue of estrangement and dissolving of ties between family members:

In contemporary times, siblings exclaim, 'From today, I am not your brother, and you are not my sister', over the most minute of issues. Also, occurring between blood brothers and people masse, this is known as severing ties of kinship. This is *harām*, and an action which can lead one to Hell. Each Muslim should consistently keep this in mind and never go about breaking said ties. He must always endeavour to maintain them.

Some individuals say, 'We shall keep ties with relatives who do so with us and cut ties with those who don't.' This wholly conflicts and contrasts with what Islam is.

One permissible scenario exists in which ties can be broken with relatives, and that is to sever ties in matters of sharia. For example, if a relative becomes an apostate or misguided, it becomes necessarily binding (*wājib*) to sever ties with them, no

matter how closely related they are. The same applies if a relative stubbornly commits major sins and does not abstain from them despite being told otherwise. Severing ties would again become requisite. To bear ties with such person and even aid them in sinning connotes participation in their major sins. This is categorically impermissible.¹

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

Keeping good ties with family has become a burden for some

Dear Islamic brothers, fulfilling the rights of relatives, keeping ties with them, and treating them well are means of earning great prosperity. We can derive truly complete benefit from this, however, if we enact these virtuous deeds from the bottom of our hearts, sincerely and earnestly.

Regretfully, family relationships have become insincere. It seems people only maintain ties because they feel compelled. Some may even appear very sociable outwardly, but their hearts are filled with hatred for other Muslims. Others fall victim to their *nafs* and the traps of Satan, completely cutting ties with their family for personal reasons or sometimes no reason at all.

The very same unfortunate people go on to spend money carelessly upon their friends, without second thought, whilst the rights of their parents, siblings, children and family are left unfulfilled.

Whether it be weddings, gatherings, events held to commemorate sacred days or personalities, or even gatherings of dhikr and *n'at*, some people have the habit of only inviting relatives who invite them to their respective events. There are times when personal gain comes into play;

¹ *Bihisht ki Kunjiyan*, p. 197

by inviting them, they seek to extract some form of use out of them, and their intentions are not sincere.

Any relative who may not be of use to them is then totally discarded. Leave aside inviting them anywhere, such family members are subjected to complete rejection, never being spoken to or considered in family affairs. Similarly, relatives eligible for receiving zakāh are ignored year after year. The level of hostility that then builds up is immense. If someone were to pass away, this hostility even stops their own family from taking part in their funeral proceedings. Imagine someone passing away and their own family not being prepared to pray for them!

In short, the traditional love, sincerity and well-wishing that existed between family members seems to have disappeared today, that too by our own doing. In such sensitive times, maintaining ties with one's family is being considered a burden.

Let us now have the honour of listening to some ḥadīth of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, which discuss cutting ties with family and not helping them in their time of need. We hope these beautiful statements will bring true fear of Allah into our hearts, and after hearing them, make firm intention to have nothing but good conduct with your family.

- O *ummah* of Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ)! I vow by He who sent me with the truth; Allah does not accept the charity of a person whose family remain in need of his benevolence, but he spends on others instead. I vow by He Who has power over my soul, Allah will not cast a gaze of mercy upon such a person on the Day of Judgement.¹
- If a person is approached by his close relative, and they ask him for that which has been bestowed upon him by Allah to an amount greater than his need, but the person remains miserly; Allah will

¹ *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, vol. 3 p. 297, ḥadīth 4,652

place a large snake from Hell with a flickering tongue around his neck as a necklace.¹

- A sin whose punishment is given swiftly in this world and its torment reserved for the hereafter is not graver than rebellion and severing ties with relatives.²

Punishment for severing ties

As narrated by *Sayyidunā* Abū al-Layth Samarqandi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ in *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn*, *Sayyidunā* Yahyā b. Sulaym رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ explains the following profound story:

A pious person from Khorasan once lived in Makkah, and people would give him their belongings for safekeeping. A certain individual left ten thousand gold coins in his possession and went on a journey. When this individual returned, he found the pious Khorasani man had passed away.

The individual approached the man's family and asked about the gold coins he had left. They were completely unaware of any such thing. The individual then consulted with the scholars of Makkah, who said: 'We expect the Khorasani man to be destined for Paradise. Let a third or half of the night pass, go to the well of Zamzam, call his name and ask of your gold coins.'

The individual did so for three nights but received no reply. He eventually returned to the scholars and informed them of this. 'إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ', they exclaimed, 'We fear he may not be destined for Paradise after all. Go to Yemen; you will find a valley

¹ *Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, vol. 4, p. 167, ḥadīth 5,593

² *Tirmidhī*, ḥadīth 2519, vol. 4, p. 229

named Burhūt, which contains a well. Call into it in the same way you have done before.’

He did so and received a reply upon the very first call. The deceased Khorasani man said, ‘I have buried your belongings at so-and-so place in my home. I did not keep it with my family members. Go to my son and dig the ground at where I have said. You will find it there.’ The individual did so, finding his gold coins.

(Whilst at the well in Yemen, the individual asked the Khorasani man) ‘You were a very pious person. How did you find yourself here?’ He replied, ‘Some of my relatives used to live in Khorasan. I had broken my ties with them and died in this state. I was brought here as punishment from Allah.’¹

Dear Islamic brothers, look how terrible it is to cut ties with your relatives! The reward of many virtuous deeds is lost, and a person who does so may be deprived of Allah’s mercy in the hereafter. On the Day of Judgement, Allah will not have mercy on those who do not do good to their relatives. A fearsomely large snake from Hell will be set upon the neck of someone who does not fulfil the needs of his family whilst he was capable of doing so. It shall wrap itself around his neck like a necklace. Whoever cuts ties with his family is even punished in this world and in the hereafter.

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Dawat-e-Islami’s Amity Department

Dear Islamic brothers, whether quarrelling takes place between family members or other Islamic brothers, it is so destructive that a person becomes a source of admonition for others by doing it. The Islamic

¹ *Tanbīh al-Ghafīlīn*, p. 72

environment of Dawat-e-Islami, even in these difficult circumstances, is continually making effort to keep people united and distanced from disputes.

One clear example of this is Dawat-e-Islami's Amity Department. This works in the field of reconciliation, bringing back Islamic brothers who were previously involved with Dawat-e-Islami but currently are not.

At a time and place of their choosing, they are approached in person and invited to sunnah-inspired gatherings or Madani Muzakaras. They are further invited to participate in collective i'tikāf, join Madani courses (rectification of deeds course, blessings of salāh course, etc.) travel in Madani qafilahs, have Madani study circles arranged in their homes, and attend Madrasa-tul-Madinah for adults. This Department also strives to be there for them whatever the occasion and also gives them amulets (*tawizāt-i-'Attāriyyah*) if required.

Dear Islamic brothers, we commonly tend to fall out more with relatives we spend time with. For example, as brother and sister spend a large amount of time in close proximity, they may be at greater risk of having their ties become strained or have problems arise.

إِنْ شَاءَ اللهُ The door of disagreements, estrangement and problems of this kind can be closed if we closely observe the rules of sharia. Also, we must strive to exhibit nothing but good character to one another; this includes communicating clearly, courteous speech and pleasant demeanour.

In this regard, let us now go on to discuss what rights are held by younger siblings over their elder counterparts, and vice-versa. May Allah grant us the ability to act in accordance with them. اٰوِيْنُ

Rights of younger siblings upon their elder siblings

This is a non-exhaustive list of all rights possessed by younger siblings over their elder counterparts.

1. For younger siblings to be brought up by their elder siblings if their parents pass away. The elders must also facilitate their upbringing and education.
2. Younger siblings are to have their day-to-day necessities taken care of by the elders, and the latter must support them in difficult times. As much as possible, elder siblings must fulfil their needs and encourage them.
3. Younger siblings are entitled to be treated affectionately, even when their parents are still alive.
4. Backbiting, tale-telling, suspicion and jealousy are all *ḥarām* against an ordinary Muslim, and these are even more impermissible against younger siblings.
5. If out of human nature a younger sibling makes a mistake, he or she is to be forgiven by the elder brothers/sisters. They must always be treated with gentleness.

Rights of elder siblings upon their younger siblings

Similarly, the following are certain rights of elder siblings upon their younger siblings:

1. Elder siblings must be given their deserved and befitting respect.
2. If parents are not present, the elder siblings must be given the same precedence as the former. If not this, they are at least to be considered guardians or head of affairs.
3. Younger siblings should try to act upon the permissible commands issued by their elder siblings as much as possible.

4. A younger sibling who has made a mistake should approach them first and ask for forgiveness.
5. Younger brothers or sisters should try to not hurt the feelings of their elder brothers or sisters.

Dear Islamic brothers, if we also try to act upon these Madani pearls of knowledge, any problems that arise between siblings and the widening gap of estrangement that rears its head as a result will not come about at all **إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ**.

Sometimes, two close relatives fall out. Despite going to great lengths, they do not manage to reconcile with one another. The longer this goes on, the more other family relatives around them can fall victim to problems. Just because of two people, the entire family can be negatively affected.

Imagine these two relatives; how would a person going about dealing with them both simultaneously resolve their matter in a fashion with which both parties are pleased? This is indeed a complicated, worrying matter. Regarding this, let us seek guidance from *Fatāwa Razawiyyah*, a compilation of Imam Aḥmad Razā Khān's Islamic verdicts and edicts in book form.

A reply full of wisdom

In this, the great imam was asked a particular question, the summary of which is as follows:

What do the esteemed scholars of Islam declare in regard to this issue: Zayd has an uncle and sister with whom he harbours good relations, but a bitter quarrel has arisen between them (uncle and sister). Zayd's sister says, 'If you stay on good terms with your uncle, I will not speak to you anymore.' As it happens,

Zayd's wedding is very near and his sister also says, 'If you invite that uncle to your wedding, I will not attend.'

In this case, there is a fear of hurting the uncle's feelings by not inviting him, but if he is invited, the sister will be upset. What should Zayd do in this scenario? Should he listen to his sister and not invite his uncle, or disregard her demands?

The imam replied by saying:

Zayd's sister and uncle are close relatives with whom ties must be maintained. It is impermissible to dissolve ties with either.

He should try to appease his sister however possible. He may even secretly invite his uncle to the wedding, yet say to her, 'I want to make you happy whichever way possible. I will not invite our uncle or involve him in my wedding. All I will say is this; if he comes of his own accord, then do not be upset with me. He is like a father to us. If a stranger were to show up without invitation (at a gathering of any kind), it would still be considered bad manners to throw them out. If that's the case for a stranger, then what about someone who is like a father to us?'

Zayd should make use of statements such as these and seek to appease both parties. He will attain reward for this. When he says, 'I will not invite him', he should intend the following: 'I will not invite him personally, though I may send somebody else to or send an invitation letter/message'. When he mentions the uncle coming of his own accord, Zayd should intend, 'He may arrive himself on foot (with his own transport), I will not carry him to the ceremony.'

In essence, he should say that which has dual meaning, and these statements are known as *توريه* (*taūriyah*) - they outwardly appear as lies but are truth in reality. A blessed ḥadīth describes

this subject thus: **إِنَّ فِي الْمَعَارِضِ كَيْدُوحَةً عَنِ الْكُذِّبِ** - 'Indeed, indirect speech is a safe way to avoid lies.'¹

Dear Islamic brothers, Imam Aḥmad Razā Khān رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ encouraged the questioner to use taūriyah according to a need sanctioned by sharia. Through this, a person can save himself from lying, but it cannot be performed in every situation, however. A valid excuse or need must be present for this to be implemented. Mufti Muḥammad Amjad 'Alī A'ẓamī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ states:

Taūriyah connotes statements that may appear ostensibly or evidently wrong, but with the speaker affixing another valid meaning to them (the words used possess a multitude of meaning, and the speaker has taken the correct connotation of them, although they appear outwardly wrong).

Doing this without a reason sanctioned by sharia is impermissible. By way of example, someone invites one for a meal, and we reply, 'I have eaten.' The evident meaning of this leads the other to believe we have eaten just now. If the speaker says 'I have eaten' but is speaking of a meal he has had the day before instead, this would be considered a lie. (Taūriyah is impermissible in this situation).²

From this question-and-answer interchange found in *Fatāwa Razawiyyah*, we learn a great deal. It is impermissible to cut ties with a family member at the behest of another without a valid permission sanctioned by sharia. When these kinds of situations take place, it may seem difficult to give everyone fair and equal treatment. Even reputable names have struggled when it comes to these sorts of issues.

¹ *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, vol. 10, p. 336, ḥadīth 20,843, *Fatāwa Razawiyyah*, vol. 24, p. 344

² *Bahār-i-Sharī'at*, vol. 3, p. 518, part 16

Do not lose hope, however. Have courage, focus on the mercy of Allah and keep this ḥadīth in mind, ‘Wisdom is the lost treasure of the true believer.’¹

Yes, try your best to use wisdom, and put together strategies to have both estranged parties reconcile with one another. Also ensure nobody has their rights infringed in this process. If you accept what one party has to say, you might be forced to cut ties with another, which is *ḥarām* and totally impermissible. You must be wise and tactful when having two parties make up with one another.

Remember, sharia does not allow us to act upon an order which leads to us disobeying Allah, as explained to us by the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا طَاعَةَ لِمَخْلُوقٍ فِي مَعْصِيَةِ الْخَالِقِ - ‘There is no obedience to creation if it entails disobedience to the Creator.’²

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Sunnah and etiquette of visiting a graveyard

Dear Islamic brothers, let us now discuss some sunnah and etiquette of visiting a graveyard derived from 163 Madani Pearls, a greatly informative booklet written by the Amīr of Ahl al-Sunnah دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمُ الْعَالِيَةِ. When mentioning the visiting of graves, the final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ once beautifully said: “I would forbid you from visiting graves, but you should now visit them. They certainly decrease fondness for the world and remind of the hereafter.”³

- If one intends to visit the grave of a Muslim (or the shrine of a saint), it is liked (*mustaḥab*) for him to offer two units of voluntary salāh in

¹ *Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī, vol. 4, p. 314, raqm 2,696*

² *Mu’jam al-Kabīr, vol. 18, p. 170, ḥadīth 381*

³ *Ibn Mājah, vol. 2, p. 252, ḥadīth 1,571*

his home beforehand (at a time when offering salāh is not disliked/*makrūh*). In every unit after *Surah al-Fātiḥah*, he should recite *āyat al-Kursi* once and *Surah al-Iklās* three times.

- He should then send the reward of this salāh to the inhabitant of the grave. Allah will create light in said grave and grant the conveyer of reward immense blessings themselves.¹
- Do not indulge in trivial conversation when headed to visit a grave or shrine.²
- Enter a graveyard from the most frequently used pathway where there have never been graves of Muslims before. Do not use new pathways. As mentioned in *Radd al-Muhtār*: “Walking on new pathways (that have been built by levelling the graves of Muslims) is *harām*.³ In fact, even if one suspects that the new pathway may have been built over said graves, it is sinful to walk upon it.”⁴

Announcement:

The remaining sunnah and etiquettes of visiting graves will be mentioned in study circles. Do attend them to find out more!

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

¹ *Fatāwa Hindiyyah*, vol. 5, p. 350)

² *Fatāwa Hindiyyah*, vol. 5, p. 350)

³ *Radd al-Muhtār*, vol. 1, p. 612

⁴ *Durr-i-Mukhtār*, vol. 3, p. 183