Dear brothers and sisters: Last Friday I talked about the rights of neighbours in Islam. In today’s khutbah I will deal with the rights of relatives. Maintaining good ties and being dutiful to relatives is a right of everyone who has a relationship with you, through blood or marriage. The closer they are in relation to you, the more obligated one is in maintaining the relationship. The Prophet [pbuh] said, when he was explaining the importance of relations, ‘Your mother…your mother…your mother, then your father, then the closest, then the closer.’

The Qur’an and the Sunnah encourage us to strengthen ties with relatives and warn us against severing them. The strong bond and harmonious relation between husband and wife, parents and children and the extended family, represents the community and the nation in its nature and structure, in the present and future.

What is the meaning Ar-Rahim [relatives]? Rahim is derived from the word Rahim [i.e. private parts of a woman]; it refers also to relatives the scholars interprets the relationship between the two meanings as closeness of originality [relatives are born from the same place; that is why they are close].

Relatives include those from the father’s and mother’s side, such as uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, grandfather, grandmothers…etc.

The meaning of silat ar-Raham or strengthening the ties with one’s relatives is to treat them kindly and nobly; to say good words to them; to support them in times of need; to forgive their faults; to visit them; and to remove harm from them. This is how to fulfill the rights of kinship.

Mercy and affection are the basis of good relationships and strong family bonds. If these are lost, it will break all bonds, and mischief will spread and people will become worthy of the curse of Allah. Allah says: ‘And those who break the covenant of Allah after its rectification and severed that which Allah has commanded to be joined, the bond of kinship that is, and work mischief in the land on them is the curse, and for them is the unhappy evil home, [i.e. hell]’ [13: 25].

Dear brothers and sisters: The excellence of having good relations and ties with relatives are mentioned in many traditions of the Prophet (pbuh):

1. Kindness to relatives is a sign of Iman [faith]. The Prophet said, ‘Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, should maintain good ties with relatives.’ [Al-Bukhari]

2. Maintaining good relations and ties with kinship blesses the provisions and brings success in life. Allah grants strength and provides support, because of it and fills people’s hearts with honor and respect for he who maintains good relationships.’ The Prophet [pbuh] said: ‘Maintaining good ties with kinship, good manners, and being kind to neighbors brings blessings to the household and increases its life span.’

The Prophet [pbuh] said ‘He who desires that his life be prolonged and he be granted more provisions and to protected from the evil end, then let him fear Allah and maintain good ties with kinship.’ In another narration, he said, ‘He who desires that he be granted more provisions and his life be prolonged should maintain good ties with his kinship.’

He also said ‘Maintaining good ties with kinship brings love between relatives and increases wealth and prolongs life’. The meaning of increased provisions and wealth and prolonged life is that Allah fills provisions and life with Barakah.

By maintaining good ties with kinship, love increases, harmony and the bond between relatives are strengthened and it removes enmity and achieves sympathy between relatives.

3. Strengthening one’s relation with relatives is like strengthening one’s relation with Allah. The Prophet [pbuh] said, ‘Rahim [kinship] is related to the Throne saying, ‘Whoever strengthens ties with kinship strengthens ties with me; and whoever severs ties with kinship severs ties with me.’ [Muslim]

4. Strengthening one’s relations with relatives is a way to paradise. The Prophet [pbuh] said, ‘O people! greet each other by saying as-salam alykum; and feed the poor; strengthening ties with kinship; and offer prayer at night while people are asleep; for if you do that you will peacefully enter paradise.’ [Ahmad and at-Tirmidhi]
So a Muslim needs to know that maintaining good ties with kinship and being kind to relatives can be done in different ways and means, like being cheerful and smiling when meeting them and being soft when treating them, talking to them kindly, approaching them with a bright face, visiting, asking about one another, calling, corresponding, supporting the needy, spending on and exchanging gifts, overlooking and disregarding mistakes, forgiving faults, ignoring shortcomings, being fair and just and asking Allah to make them righteous and successful.

**Dear brothers and sisters:** The most sincere and best person in maintaining ties, is the one who keeps good relations when he is abandoned and takes the initiative and is forgiving when others make mistakes; and is kind to them when they harm and wrong him.

Being kind to those who are kind to you, makes you equal in returning their kindness. But the reality of maintaining good ties and relationship with kinship is as explained by the Prophet [pbuh] when he said, ‘The person who perfectly maintains the ties of kinship is not the one who does it because he get recompensed by his relatives but the one who truly maintains the bond of kinship is the one who persist in doing so, even though others have severed ties with him and abandon him.’

So fear Allah and maintain good ties with kinship and blood relations. Be kind to relatives even if they abandon and neglect you, maintain ties with them even if they sever ties with you, this will result in Allah continuing to bless you and increasing your blessing your life.

A man asked the Prophet [pbuh]: ‘O Messenger of Allah, I have relatives with whom I try to keep the ties of kinship, but they severe relations with me, I treat them kindly but they treat me badly, I am gentle to them but they are rough to me’. He said in reply: ‘If the matter is as you say, it is as if you are feeding them hot ashes?? and you will continue to have a supporter against them from Allah as long as you continue to do so.’

**Dear brothers and sisters:** beware of severing ties with kinship for this is destructive and a reason for being cursed and ‘blindness’ as Allah says: ‘Would you then if you were given the authority do mischief in the land and sever your ties with kinship such are they whom Allah has cursed so that he has made them deaf and blinded their sight.’ [Muhammad: 22-23].

Zaidal Abideen Ibn Ali Ibnul Husain, the grandchild of Al Hussein advised his son saying ‘Don’t accompany the one who severs ties with kinship for I found him to be cursed in the book of Allah in three different places’.

Severing relations with kinship is one of the great sins and its punishment takes place in this life and in the hereafter. The Prophet [pbuh] said: ‘There is not a sin that is worse which Allah hastens the punishment for its committer in this life and what he will have waiting for him in the hereafter for oppression and severing ties with kinship.’ [Abu Dawud]

The Messenger of Allah [Pbuh] said, ‘The deeds of the son of Adam are presented every Thursday night and the deeds for the one who severs tie with kinship are rejected.’ [Al-Bukhari]

It is not kindness and dutifulness to kinship when you help him or support him in the oppression of others. This act is of falsehood and a hated act. It causes enmity and corruption to spread and results in severing ties between kinship. Oppression, transgression and enmity will never be a way leading to the truth nor leading to goodness and justice.

**Dear brothers and sisters:** Fear Allah and know that the right of relatives is to maintain good ties with them, be kind to them, overlook and ignore their mistakes and accept their excuses and apologies.

Finally we ask Allah to guide us all.