

BRIDGING GENERATIONS, NURTURING LOVE



INTRODUCTION

Intergenerational family relationships are an important cornerstone for a society that ought to be balanced and in harmony with itself. They symbolize care about each other, a sense of accountability for each other's well-being, and emotional support for one another that strengthens the family institution itself over time. Islam gives immense importance to the continuity of close family relationships and to passing on religious and moral values. This article describes the role of maintaining intergenerational relationships between all family members to meet some of the contemporary challenges.

WHY FAMILY BONDS MATTER

Family is a cornerstone of Islamic society and maintaining strong intergenerational connections is highly valued. Two fundamental principles in Islam which is *rahmah* (kindness and compassion) and *silaturrahim* (maintaining family ties) are essential in fostering harmonious relationships and preserving familial bonds. These values not only promote respect and love within families but also serve as guidance for Muslims to establish healthy relationships with both their elders and younger generations.

The Quran provides clear guidance on the treatment of parents and elders. A significant example of this is found in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 132, where Allah mentions about the legacy passed down by Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and Prophet Ya'qub (AS) to their children. The verse:

{وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ}

"And this was the legacy that Ibrahim left to his sons and to Ya'qub, saying, 'O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you the [true] religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims."

This verse highlights the importance of passing down not only religious teachings but also family values. Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and Prophet Ya'qub (AS) imparted their wisdom and faith to their children, encouraging them to maintain their connection to their roots and uphold the values of Islam. This example serves as a reminder of the responsibility of older generations to guide and support the younger generation, ensuring that wisdom, faith, and respect continue to flow through families.

The Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) further emphasizes the importance of family relationships. One of the well-known sayings of the Prophet is:

"عن ابن عباس عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "خيركم خيركم لأهله وأنا خيركم لأهلي"

"The best of you are those who are the best to their families" (Tirmidhi) [1].

This Hadith emphasises that the way a person treats their family is a true reflection of their character. The Prophet (PBUH) demonstrated the highest standards of kindness, patience, and respect toward his own family. His example serves as a model for Muslims, showing that the strength of familial bonds is essential for creating unity and mutual understanding across generations.

In Islam, maintaining strong family connections across generations is both important and required. Family members have clear rights and duties such as showing respect, caring for one another and providing. Neglecting these responsibilities or severing ties is considered prohibited in Islamic law. These duties are part of the legal and moral framework that ensures guidance and values are passed from parents and elders to the younger generation. By fulfilling these responsibilities, families remain united, harmony and the obligations set by Islamic teachings are upheld by bridging generations and nurturing lasting love and respect.

WHEN GENERATION STOP TALKING

One major challenge in today's society is the communication gap between older and younger family members. A communication gap always creates a situation where people don't talk as much as they need to, and they don't share their information. Each generation grows up in a different environment and faces different experiences. Older generations, or grandparents, often value face-to-face communication, patience, and traditional ways and patterns of expressing respect, while the younger generation is most comfortable with fast, digital communication. Because of these differences, messages are sometimes misunderstood, and feelings are not clearly expressed. In many families, young people may feel that elderly people do not understand their struggles, opinions, or modern way of thinking. In the meantime, older family members may feel ignored or disrespected when the younger generation does not communicate openly with them. Without proper and good communication, small issues can turn into bigger conflicts, although they live in the same house. This gap can slowly weaken the bond between generations and make it difficult to build a family based on Islamic values like *sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah*.

BUSY LIVES, QUIET HOMES

Another important challenge is busy modern lifestyle. Nowadays, many people are occupied with work, studies, especially overseas, and personal responsibilities. Long working hours, academic pressure, and daily stress leave limited time for family interaction and gathering. As a result, families spend less quality time together. When family members are always busy, opportunities for meaningful conversations become rare. Simple activities such as eating together, sharing daily experiences, or listening to each other are often missed. Younger people should be wise in managing their time to ensure that the elderly do not feel neglected or think that they are no longer needed. In more serious cases, these feelings may cause elderly parents to feel hurt and try to escape by leaving the house and walking around without any purpose [3]. During such situations, many unwanted incidents may happen. The elderly may be robbed, kidnapped, or involved in accidents. This shows how a busy lifestyle can slowly break the connection between generations. Bridging generations and nurturing love means making time for each other, listening, and showing care. Even small actions, like calling parents, sharing stories, or spending a meal together, help strengthen family bonds and show love across generations.

DIFFERENT VALUES, SAME FAMILY

Furthermore, differences in values and lifestyles between generations also pose challenges. Studies have found that the way young and old people speak is sometimes different, with young people preferring to talk openly while older people are more reserved or use indirect communication, and this difference can make it difficult for them to understand each other [6]. Older people usually emphasize manners, respect for elders and uphold traditions, while younger people are more open to modern lifestyles such as dressing casually, speaking frankly and using slang. Studies have also shown that when families maintain good and open communication, it can help strengthen the relationship between parents and children and build closeness and mutual respect [7]. For example, teenagers can learn to understand family traditions while older people can also accept children's modern lifestyles [8]. So, with this event, love and appreciation between generations can be maintained despite differences in values and lifestyles.

SMALL STEPS THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

To bridge the generational gap effectively, families must strengthen respectful and open communication. Clear and polite communication allows individuals from different age groups to express their views and feelings without fear of judgment. When family members listen with understanding and respond thoughtfully, misunderstandings caused by generational differences can be reduced. Over time, this practice helps to build deeper mutual trust, encourages emotional connection, and promotes stronger, healthier, and more harmonious relationships within the family [9]. Another important solution is to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each generation within the family. Older members provide guidance and life experience, adults act as caregivers and role models, while younger members learn values and develop positive attitudes. A clear understanding of these roles helps prevent conflict and promotes balance, cooperation, and stability in family relationships.

Managing the influence of technology responsibly is also essential in modern family life. Although technology offers many benefits, excessive use may weaken face-to-face interaction and emotional connection between family members. Families should encourage balanced technology use so that digital tools support communication and learning without replacing meaningful personal interaction.

Preserving moral and religious values through continuous learning further helps reduce the generational gap. Regular discussions, shared activities, and consistent practice of ethical teachings strengthen character and guide behaviour across generations. This process is especially important in shaping positive values among younger family members.

Finally, promoting kindness and care in daily family interactions strengthens emotional bonds between generations. Simple actions such as spending time together, offering help, and expressing appreciation foster mutual respect and emotional security. A caring family environment plays a vital role in maintaining harmony and long-term family unity.

CONCLUSION

This paper highlights the need to strengthen intergenerational relationships in modern society. Busy lifestyles, communication gaps, the influence of technology and differences in values have weakened connections between generations. This article shows that these challenges can be addressed through respectful communication, responsible use of technology and the preservation of moral and religious values. By practicing compassion and strengthening silaturrahim in daily life, emotional bonds between generations can be nurtured. Ultimately, love grounded in these values plays a vital role in connecting generations and creating a harmonious environment.

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