

# RESPECTING PARENTS AND STRENGTHENING KINSHIP TIES



## INTRODUCTION

Family is a fundamental foundation of society that plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's emotional, moral, and social development. A stable and supportive family environment contributes not only to personal well-being but also to social harmony. In Islam, it is strongly emphasised that respecting parents and maintaining kinship ties are essential values that form the basis of responsibility, compassion, and mutual care within the family.

The importance of respecting and honouring parents is clearly affirmed in the Qur'an, where Allah commands believers to worship Him alone and to show kindness to their parents, particularly in their old age. This command highlights that respect for parents is not merely a social expectation but also a religious obligation that reflects obedience to Allah. Islamic teachings also emphasise the preservation of family bonds as essential for moral stability and social continuity.

Despite this, contemporary families face increasing challenges that make the practice of these values more difficult. Rapid social changes, technological advancement, and economic pressures have significantly altered family dynamics. Issues such as rising divorce rates, excessive gadget usage, financial difficulties, and strained relationships following the death of parents have weakened communication and emotional closeness among family members. These challenges often lead to the neglect of parental rights and the breakdown of kinship ties.

Considering these challenges, it is important to re-examine Islamic teachings on respecting parents and strengthening kinship ties within the context of modern society. Islam offers a comprehensive framework through the Qur'an, Sunnah, and classical Islamic scholarship to guide family relationships with wisdom and balance. These teachings are closely connected to the objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah, particularly Hifz al-Nafs, which focuses on the preservation of family and lineage. By revisiting these principles, this study highlights the continuing relevance of Islamic guidance in strengthening family relationships and fostering a more caring and responsible family and society.

## QUR'ANIC GUIDANCE ON FILIAL PIETY

Islam places paramount importance on respecting parents as a core duty of children. Allah SWT commands this obligation in the Qur'an and Hadith, emphasizing the need to maintain respect and dignity towards parents and to strengthen kinship ties. For example, the character education contained in Surah Al-Isra' highlights filial piety towards parents. This attitude is demonstrated through the habit of speaking softly, as conveyed by Allah SWT in Surah Al-Isra', Ayat 23:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَيْهِمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا آفٌ وَلَا تُنْهَرُهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

Meaning: And do good to your parents. If one or both reach old age under your care, never say harsh words or show irritation, such as uttering 'ah'. Do not shout at them but speak to them in a gentle and respectful manner.

According to Tafsir Jalalain, this verse instructs us to always do good to our parents. It means we must be devoted, respectful, and caring, especially as parents grow older and may become more emotionally sensitive and physically weak. The verse reminds children to practice patience and compassion towards their parents, even when caring for them feels burdensome. Importantly, Children must avoid disobedience even the slightest sign of disrespect such as saying “uff” is forbidden.

Sheikh al-Maraghi explained that Allah SWT has enjoined responsibility towards parents with great seriousness, elevating it by placing it alongside the command to uphold Tawhid and worship Him. This divine injunction is perfected by the obligation to treat both parents with kindness and goodness.

In Islamic teachings, children are entrusted with two essential responsibilities towards their parents:

1. Honouring them during their lifetime: by treating them kindly, speaking softly, never raising one’s voice, and avoiding any sign of disrespect. Children are also responsible for supporting their parents financially and materially.
2. Upholding their rights after they pass away: by fulfilling obligations to Allah on their behalf such as fasting, hajj, settling any debts they may have left, and continuously praying for their forgiveness and mercy. Maintaining ties with their friends and relatives is also important, as it strengthens kinship and brings blessings in life and sustenance. As Rasulullah SAW says:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُبَسِّطَ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ، وَيُنْسَأَ لَهُ فِي أَثَرِهِ رَجْمَهُ، فَلْيَصِلْ

Meaning: Whoever wishes to have his sustenance expanded and his life prolonged should maintain the ties of kinship [Riwayat al-Bukhari (5986)]

In essence, parents are among the greatest gifts from Allah SWT to the children. It is therefore essential to strengthen kinship ties and respect towards them in recognition of their sacrifices

## FAMILY CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

### 1. PARENTAL DIVORCE

Divorce is a global phenomenon that occurs in the institution of marriage all over the world. There is an increase in divorce statistics every year in most countries in the world. The reality of the family in Malaysia shows a trend of increasing divorce every year.

In society, the family fulfils basic functions, namely for the development of children, socialization, emotional support and social status. The family is the centre of emotional life, a place where children will receive support or certainty. If a divorce occurs in the family, children will lose emotional support and love because the parents no longer live together.

Children from families that experience divorce will experience various emotions and feelings due to the absence of parents as the main leaders in ensuring that the functions of a family run well. Among the emotions that are often associated with children when their parents' divorce are feelings of sadness, depression, anger and hatred. This situation can unconsciously disrupt the relationship between children and parents, especially in a family situation that is no longer a single family.

This contemporary challenge will continue because divorce causes children to be physically and emotionally separated. Children will lose one of their parents and lose the figure of that person, causing the feeling of love to decrease day by day.

This situation makes the application of birr al-walidayn more challenging, because it demands respect, love and obedience that are difficult to express when family relationships are in a state of strain.

### 2. EXCESSIVE GADGET USAGE

Gadgets are devices or instruments that have more sophisticated practical purposes and functions than previously created technology. Gadgets are usually used by adults for communication and information but are currently widely used by young children.

However, continuous and excessive use of gadgets will have a bad effect on children's behaviour patterns in their daily lives. Children who tend to continuously use gadgets will be very dependent on them and make gadgets a daily activity that must be done. It cannot be denied that nowadays, children play gadgets more often than they learn and interact with those around them, especially their parents.

Children's addiction to gadgets is becoming more widespread because too much time is spent using gadgets in a day, affecting academic performance. Among the effects is that children will rebel if parents do not give them gadgets. When parents give them gadgets, only then will children continue to play quietly and be absorbed in their own world.

This is indeed a challenge because the excessive gadget usage by the children will reduce face-to-face interaction and quality time with family. Time at home that should be spent spending time with parents is now stolen by excessive use of gadgets. This situation will cause communication to become strained and will subsequently weaken family bonds and make it difficult to form values of respect and love among family members.

### 3. FINANCIAL PROBLEMS AND FAMILY ECONOMICS

Money is very important in the daily lives of individuals and families because it allows them to meet basic needs. To help strengthen the economic position of a family, money is needed to fulfil most of the goals or dreams of life. However, financial resources are limited while there are various financial goals that need to be achieved by individuals and families.

When families face economic problems, parents may find it difficult to provide children with basic needs such as food, clothing or education that is on par with more affluent families. This situation can cause children to feel deprived or different from their peers, causing frustration and a feeling of not being understood. In the contemporary era, children are often exposed to social media and advertisements that influence their lifestyle needs. However, parents who face financial problems or have enough money but only to meet their needs and are unable to meet these needs may feel guilty, while the child may feel dissatisfied. This will to some extents have an effect that causes emotional conflict in the family.

### 4. RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN AFTER PARENTAL DEATH

After the death of a parent, many families face challenges in maintaining family relationships. The loss of a parent not only has an emotional impact on children but also creates uncertainty in the wider family structure.

A previous study examined the preference of a child who lost both parents within six months of each other when she was 16 and subsequently went to live with a family friend. By doing so, the child was able to stay in familiar surroundings. This sense of continuity was particularly important to her, as it provided a sense of stability and normality in an otherwise chaotic life world, allowing her to escape the enormity of such profound disruption temporarily. Her relationship with her sister was also highly significant, as it was regarded as the only source of continuity she could rely on.

In contemporary times, one of the main causes of family separation is conflict over inheritance. When the division of property is not carried out clearly or fairly, siblings and other family members can easily fall into misunderstandings, arguments, and dissatisfaction. In addition, family relationships will become strained due to a lack of effort to maintain closeness. Without consistent communication and concern for other family members, physical and emotional distance will widen, making previously close relationships difficult to maintain. This separation affects the appreciation of family values and responsibilities towards the extended family. Children and other family members may find it difficult to practice love and respect even though they share blood ties. This in turn will have the effect of weakening family bonds.

## PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY FAMILY CHALLENGES

To address contemporary family challenges, practical and strategic measures grounded in the objectives of Shariah (maqāṣid al-sharī'ah) can help ensure family stability, harmony, and the holistic well-being of all members.

### 1. CREATING A SUPPORTIVE AND VALUES-DRIVEN HOME ENVIRONMENT (HIFZ AL-NAFS & HIFZ AL-NASL)

Families should prioritize creating a home that serves as a safe and nurturing sanctuary for all members. For the elderly, this includes ensuring physical comfort and safety, while providing emotional support that fosters a sense of security and belonging. Simultaneously, parents and adult children should model ethical behavior, empathy, and moral responsibility to younger generations. Such a value-driven environment facilitates the transmission of positive legacy and cultural heritage, cultivating responsible and ethical individuals who continue the family's spiritual and moral legacy.

### 2. STRUCTURED FAMILY LEARNING AND FAITH PRACTICE (HIFZ AL-DIN & HIFZ AL-AQL)

To strengthen spiritual and intellectual connections between generations, households are encouraged to establish structured "learning circles" or family education sessions. These sessions provide opportunities for joint religious learning, mutual supplications, and discussions in a distraction-free setting. This practice deepens faith (*al-Din*) and promotes intellectual growth (*al-Aql*), making the home a space where values, ethics, and knowledge are actively taught, learned, and practiced.

### 3. EQUITABLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCE SHARING (HIFZ AL-MAL & HIFZ AL-NASL)

Families should adopt transparent and cooperative financial practices that ensure the welfare of all members. This includes managing household expenses collectively, safeguarding parents' basic needs such as food, healthcare, and housing, and maintaining the family's wealth and assets responsibly. Ethical financial planning promotes long-term economic security, prevents conflicts, and strengthens kinship ties, ensuring a resilient family structure that benefits current and future generations.

### 4. PROMOTING PARTNERSHIP AND MUTUAL COOPERATION

Couples and family members are encouraged to uphold the principles of partnership, complementarity, and mutual support in fulfilling domestic, educational, and economic responsibilities. Open dialogue and consultation allow households to distribute roles according to ability, circumstances, and fairness, while observing mercy and justice, as Allah SWT commands: "And live with them in kindness" (*an-Nisa': 19*). Following the Prophetic model of humility, compassion, and active participation in family life further strengthens cooperation, reduces burdens, and nurtures harmony within the household.

## CONCLUSION

Respecting parents and maintaining kinship ties are core values in Islam that are essential for creating strong families and a healthy society. These values are clearly showed in Qur'an and Sunnah that caring for parents is not only a social duty, but also a religious obligation. Strong family relationships help to create emotional stability, mutual respect and moral responsibility among family members.

However, modern challenges such as divorce, excessive gadget use, financial problems and family conflicts after the death of parents have made it harder to practise these values. These issues often weaken communication and reduce closeness between parents and children which can lead to neglect of parental rights and strained family ties.

Despite these challenges, the objectives of *Maqasid al-Shariah* provide a relevant and practical framework for addressing the lack of family values. The principles of *Maqasid al-Shariah* emphasise the importance of protecting family relationships, ensuring emotional and physical well-being and fostering moral responsibility among family members. By practising *birr al-walidayn* (kindness to parents), families can strengthen kinship ties even within the complexities of contemporary life. In this way, respecting parents and preserving kinship ties not only fulfils Islamic teachings, but also helps to build caring families and a harmonious society.

Drawing on insights from the *Qur'an and Hadith*, this study highlights that Islam strongly emphasises filial piety and the preservation of family bonds. Neglecting parental rights has serious consequences in this world and the Hereafter. Families can strengthen responsibility, love, and relationships by following these principles, fulfilling the objectives of *Hifz al-Nasl*, and ensuring healthy and harmonious family ties.

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