

RELEVANCE OF SELECTED AḤĀDĪTH ON ṢILATU'R-RAḤIM IN ṢAḤĪḤ MUSLIM TO ETHICAL ISSUES AMONG CONTEMPORARY MUSLIM YOUTHS

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Abstract

Upholding kinship ties (*ṣilatu'r-raḥim*) occupies a central position in Islamic legal and ethical thought. There is a noticeable severing of ties (*qaṭī'atu'r-raḥim*) which is weakening bonds among Muslim youths in the contemporary society, influenced by the dynamics of urbanization, individualism, and digital isolation leading to families' estrangement and loss of communal solidarity. This paper aims to examine the relevance of selected *aḥādīth* in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* on *ṣilatu'r-raḥim* to ethical issues among contemporary Muslim youths. Analytical and phenomenological methods are adopted in the research. Analytical method is used to analyse the selected *aḥādīth* on kinship while phenomenological method is applied for presentation of relevance of the study in solving the contemporary problem associated with upholding kinship ties. Findings show that digital isolation and individualism are factors that threaten upholding of kinship ties among Muslims. The paper concludes that *ṣilatu'r-raḥim* is both a theological obligation and a practical framework for social well-being. Therefore, the study recommends that Muslim youths should consciously revive family-centered ethics by employing both traditional and modern means of maintaining ties, resisting individualism, and embodying prophetic models of compassion, patience, and reconciliation.

Keywords: Relevance; *Ṣilatu'r-Raḥim*; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*; Ethical issues; Muslim youths.

Introduction

The concept of *ṣilatu'r-raḥim* (Upholding ties of kinship), occupies a central place in Islamic ethics, jurisprudence, and spirituality. Rooted in the Islamic literary heritages; Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, especially as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, it represents not only a social duty but also a theological imperative, directly connected to the divine attribute of mercy (*raḥmah*). The Qur'ān repeatedly commands believers to maintain kinship ties and the classical exegete, such as *al-Qurṭubī* (1423 A.H) emphasizes that the entire religion agrees that maintaining kinship ties is obligatory and severing them is forbidden.

In the Prophetic *Sunnah*, the obligation of kinship is further elaborated through numerous *aḥādīth*. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* records several traditions that highlight its ethical weight, worldly benefits, and eschatological consequences. These narrations underscore that upholding kinship ensures divine blessings, sustenance, and longevity, whereas severing ties is associated with divine displeasure and exclusion from Paradise. *An-Nawawī* (1970) in his commentary, presents kinship not merely as a reciprocal interaction but as a higher form of *iḥsān* (humanism) that persists even in the face of neglect or hostility from relatives.

The contemporary relevance of these traditions is striking, particularly in light of the social challenges faced by Muslim youths. Rapid urbanization, migration, the rise of individualism, and the dominance of digital interactions have collectively weakened the traditional family structures that once ensured close kinship ties. Increasing estrangement from relatives, neglect of elderly family members, and a diminishing sense of communal responsibility have become pressing realities. Scholars have observed that such fragmentation not only threatens social cohesion but also undermines the ethical framework through which Islamic societies preserve identity and resilience (Al-Ghazālī, 1990).

Against this backdrop, revisiting the Prophetic teachings on kinship provides both theological orientation and practical guidance. This study, therefore, seeks to analyze selected *aḥādīth* concerning kinship, examining their ethical implications for Muslim youths navigating modern challenges. By situating these *aḥādīth* within classical scholarship and connecting them to contemporary realities, the paper aims to demonstrate the enduring value of *ṣilatu'r-raḥim* as a spiritual obligation and as a framework for ethical living in an increasingly fragmented world.

A Brief Biography of Imām Muslim

Among the great scholars of *Ḥadīth*, Imām Muslim bn. al-Ḥajjāj al- Qushayrī an- Naysābūrī (d. 261/875) is one of the foremost *ḥadīth* scholars and a meticulous compiler whose *Ṣaḥīḥ*, together with that of al-Bukhārī, forms the foundation of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, the most authoritative *ḥadīth* collections in Sunnī Islām. The study surveys his biography, scholarly contributions, and the defining features of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, drawing on assessments from classical authorities.

His lineage has been a subject of scholarly discussion. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and Ibn Aṣ-Ṣalāḥ affirmed his affiliation with the Arab tribe of Qushayr (Al- Khalaf, 1998), while Ibn Bāṭish (1983) suggested that his great-grandfather had been a *mawlā* of Banū Qushayr.. Imām an-Nawawī (1970) consistently upheld that Muslim was Qushayrī by lineage and Naysābūrī by origin, and adh-Dhahabī (1996) emphasized that even if an ancestor had been a *mawlā*, it would not detract from his scholarly stature.

Various dates are given for his birth in Naysābūr, ranging from 201 to 206 AH, though the most widely accepted date is 206 AH/821 CE. (Al- Khalaf, 1998) Raised in a scholarly environment, he memorized the Qur'ān early and began attending *ḥadīth* circles around age twelve. (Adh- Dhahabī, 1998) His early teachers included Yaḥyā bn. Yaḥyā at-Tamīmī (d. 226 AH), and Ishāq bn. Rāhwayh (d. 238 AH).

Imām Muslim traveled extensively in pursuit of knowledge, studying across Khurāsān, 'Irāq, Egypt, Syria, and the Hījāz. (Ibn Khallikān, 1969) His notable teachers included ' Abdullāh bn. Maslamah al-Qan'abī (d. 221 AH), Abū Maṣ'ab Az- Zuhri (d. 242 AH) and Aḥmad bn. Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH). Adh-Dhahabī (1998) observed that these journeys enabled him to access the strongest chains of transmission. Known for humility, asceticism, and generosity, he supported himself through trade and property while dedicating his life to teaching and writing. He passed away on Sunday night, 25 Rajab 261 AH (May 6, 875 CE) and was buried the following day in Naysābūr. (An- Nawawī, 1440 AH) His *Ṣaḥīḥ* became a primary reference for the study of authentic *ḥadīth*.

An Overview of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*

Muslim's magnum opus is his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, originally titled *al-Musnadu's-Ṣaḥīḥ*. Reports indicate that he began compiling it around 235 AH and continued to refine it until close to his death in 261 AH. (Salmān, 1994) Two primary motives behind the compilation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* were the need to preserve authentic traditions and a request of his student, Aḥmad bn. Salamah for a concise and dependable collection free from weak narrations. (Al- Baghdādī, 2004).

The *Ṣaḥīḥ* is organized into fifty-four books (*kutub*), covering topics from faith and purification to transactions, ethics, and eschatology. Unlike Imāmu'l-Bukhārī, Imām Muslim did not include chapter headings; these were later added by commentators such as an-Nawawī. (Ṭawālibah, 1998) The number of narrations according to Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ (1984) was estimated to be 4,000 without repetition and 12,000 with repetition. An-Nawawī (1440 AH) similarly noted that the variation results from differences in method of counting. The rank of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* among the canonical books of Sunnah has long been discussed and classified as second among the Six canonical books of *Ḥadīth* after *Ṣaḥīḥu'l- Bukhārī*.

In summary, Imām Muslim bn. al-Ḥajjāj was not only a master of ḥadīth transmission but also a model of intellectual integrity, piety, and humility. His *Ṣaḥīḥ* represents one of the most authentic and carefully structured collections of prophetic traditions, second only to that of *Ṣaḥīḥu'l- Bukhārī*. Together, the two works form the bedrock of *Sunnī ḥadīth* literature and continue to guide scholars and laypersons alike in understanding the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Selected *Aḥādīth* in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* on Upholding Ties of Kinship

Concept of *Ṣilatu'r- Raḥim* is one of the Fifty-two sections under which Imām Muslim gave a vivid assertion with authentic reports on the need to uphold the ties of kinship among members of family. There are several *Aḥādīth* related to *Ṣilatu'r-Raḥim*, of which four were selected for this study.

Qutaybah bn Sa'īd bn. Jamīl bn. Ṭarīf bn. 'Adillāh Ath-thaqafi, and Muḥammad bn. 'Abbād said “Ḥātim- he is the son of Ismā'īl, said unto us: on the authority of Mu'āwiyah and he is the son of Muzarrid mawlā of banī Hāshim and 'Ammī Abul-Ḥubāb, Sa'īd bn. Yasār said unto me on the authority of Abū Hurayrah reported that Allah's Messenger said: 'Verily Allāh created the creation and when He had finished, Ar- Raḥm (the womb; ties of relationship, kinship) came forward and said: This is the station of one who seeks refuge with You from severance (of ties)” Allāh said: “Yes, would it please you if I maintain ties those who maintain you, and cut off those who cut you off? It said: Of course.” Allāh said: “Then, that is for you”. Then the Messenger of Allāh said: Recite if you wish: “So would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allāh has cursed, so He deafened them and blinded their vision. Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?” (Muslim, 2006: 2554)

Likewise, Ḥadīth reported by Anas bn Mālik is crucial to this study:

Anas bn. Mālik reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: He who likes that his sustenance should be expanded and his life (span) lengthened should uphold the tie of kinship.” (Muslim, 2006: 2557)

Also, another Ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah:

It was narrated from Abū Hurayrah that a man said: “O Messenger of Allāh, I have relatives with whom I try, to have close relationship, but they sever (this relation). I treat them well, but they ill-treated me. I am patient and kind towards them, but they are harsh towards me.” Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) said: “If you are as you say, then it is as if you are putting hot ashes in their mouths, and there would always remain with you on behalf of Allāh (an Angel to support you) who would keep you dominant over them so long as you adhere to this (path of righteousness).” (Muslim, 2006: 2558)

And lastly, Ḥadīth of Jubayr bn. Muṭ'im:

It was narrated from Jubayr bn. Muṭ'im on the authority of his father that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: “The severer would not enter Paradise”. Ibn Abī 'Umar said that Sufyān (explained it as): 'One who severs the tie of kinship (qāṭi'u raḥim) would not enter Paradise” (Muslim, 2006: 2556 (b))

Conceptual Study of Ṣilatu'r-Raḥim (Upholding Ties of Kinship)

Classical scholars have articulated numerous definitions and classifications of ar-raḥim (the womb or kinship ties), underscoring its linguistic, legal, and moral dimensions. Though expressions vary, the foundational concept remains consistent: kinship refers to the ties of blood and lineage, whether or not they entail maḥram (permanent marriage prohibition) status. Al-Qurṭubī (1423 AH) clarifies that ar- raḥim encompasses all relatives connected by blood ties, whether or not the relationship entails maḥram status. According to Ash- Shawkānī (1433 AH) there is unanimous agreement on this among both jurists and linguists. In summary, the term ar- raḥim in legal terminology comprehensively refers to all blood relatives, regardless of maḥram status or inheritance eligibility. (An- Nughaymishī, 1433 AH)

Classical scholars have also provided precise definitions of (ṣilatu'r -raḥim) maintaining kinship ties. Ibn al-Athīr (1979) describes it as benevolence toward blood relatives or those by marriage, demonstrating compassion and attending to their needs regardless of proximity or behavior; severing ties is its opposite, whereas kindness restores the natural bonds of kinship.

The Qur'ān and Sunnah unequivocally establish the obligation of maintaining kinship ties (ṣilatu'r-raḥim). Among the evidences for this are the words of Allāh, the Almighty:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيْرًا وَّنِسَاءً وَاَتَقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُوْنَ بِهِ وَاَلْرٰحِمَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلٰیكُمْ رَقِيْبًا

O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allāh, through whom you ask one another, and (respect) the wombs. Indeed, Allāh is ever, over you, an Observer. (An-Nisā': 1)

With regard to this verse, Al-Qurṭubī (1423 AH) establishes: “*The entire religion agrees that maintaining kinship ties is obligatory and severing them is forbidden.*” Al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād (1998), in his commentary of ḥadīth no: 2554 of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, explains that:

The 'ar- raḥim, womb' mentioned in the ḥadīth is not a physical body capable of speech or action. Rather, it is a metaphor representing the concept of kinship and lineage through which people are connected via their ancestors. The attachment of the 'womb' to the Throne is a figurative expression used in the Arabic language to magnify the significance of these ties and to highlight the grave sin of severing them. This usage accords with the rhetorical conventions of the Arabs in using personification to express moral realities.

According to Al-Qurṭubī (1417 AH), the term 'womb' (raḥim) in this context refers broadly to all familial relationships, from direct ancestors, no matter how far removed, to descendants, no matter how distant, as well as paternal and maternal uncles and aunts, siblings, and their progeny. In another narration from ‘Āishah (may Allāh be pleased with her), the Prophet ﷺ said:

الرَّحِمُ مُعَلَّقَةٌ بِالْعَرْشِ تَقُولُ مَنْ وَصَلَنِيَّ وَصَلَهُ اللّٰهُ وَمَنْ قَطَعَنِيَّ قَطَعَهُ اللّٰهُ

The tie of kinship is suspended to the Throne and says: “Whoever maintains ties with me, Allāh will maintain ties with him; whoever severs me, Allāh will sever him”. (Muslim, 2006: 2555)

Waṣala in this narration refers to acts of mercy, kindness, and generosity, while Allāh's connection to His servants is expressed through His mercy, blessing, and providence. (Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, 1998) He further clarifies that there is scholarly consensus that maintaining kinship ties is an obligatory duty in general, and severing them constitutes a major. The aḥādīth on this topic consistently affirm this obligation, though the levels of maintaining ties may vary. At the very least, it involves cordial speech and basic forms of communication, such as returning greetings. Depending on one's capacity and the circumstances of the relatives, some forms of connection may be obligatory while others are recommended. (An- Nughaymishī, 1433 AH) Ibn Abī Jamrah detailed the practical forms of maintaining kinship ties: offering financial support, assisting in times of need, protecting from harm and slander, and preventing injustices against one's relatives. However, he stipulated that these ties are ideally maintained with righteous kin. If the relatives are sinful or non-Muslim, one must first attempt to admonish them, advising them to return to the truth. Even if estrangement persists, maintaining ties through prayer for their guidance remains a religious duty. (Al- 'Uthmānī, 1426 AH)

The ḥadīth that states: “Whoever desires that his provision be expanded and his lifespan prolonged, let him uphold the ties of kinship” Scholars have explained that the expansion of provision (*rizq*) here refers to either literal increase in wealth or to the blessing (*barakah*) placed within it. As for the extension of lifespan, scholars addressed the apparent tension with the established doctrine that life spans are fixed in Allah's eternal knowledge. They offered several reconciliations:

1. The extension refers to the blessing in one's life, such as success in acts of obedience and protection from calamities.
2. It pertains to what is recorded in the Preserved Tablet (al-Lawḥu'l- Maḥfūẓ) as conditioned upon one's deeds, so that maintaining kinship results in the appearance of increased lifespan.
3. Some held that it is metaphorical, referring to the enduring legacy and good reputation one leaves behind, as if his memory continues to live. (An- Nawawī, 1970)

These interpretations reconcile the prophetic traditions with theological doctrines concerning divine decree. Al- Imām Mūsā bn Aḥmad Al- Ḥajjāwī Al- Ḥambalī (2007) states:

وكن واصل الأرحام حتى لكاشح ** توفر في رزق وعمر وتسعد.

And be one who maintains kinship ties, even to the point of estrangement; Your provision will be increased, your lifespan prolonged, and you will attain happiness.

Another significant narration addresses the ethical dilemma of dealing with relatives who wrongfully sever ties. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said: “If you are as you say, then it is as if you are feeding them hot ashes. And there will continue to be with you from Allāh a supporter against them as long as you remain upon that.” This ḥadīth emphasizes that persistent kindness towards those who sever ties does not harm the righteous person but increases the burden of sin upon the wrongdoer. The metaphor of “feeding them hot ashes” signifies the shame and inner turmoil experienced by those who persist in cruelty despite receiving kindness. Their sin is likened to the pain of consuming something harmful, while the one who maintains patience is supported by Allāh. (An- Nawawī, 1970)

Severing kinship ties (*qaṭī'atu'r- raḥim*) in Islamic ethics and law stands in direct opposition to *ṣilatu'r- raḥim* (maintaining kinship ties). It is understood as the deliberate abandonment and neglect of one's blood relatives through estrangement. This neglect may manifest in various forms, such as withholding visits when one is capable, abstaining from sharing in their moments of joy, failing to offer consolation during times of grief, and prioritizing others over them in acts of kindness

and generosity, particularly in situations where one's kin have a greater right. (An- Nughaymishī, 1433 AH) Almighty Allāh explicitly warns against severing ties of kinship and identifies it as a cause for divine curse and estrangement from divine mercy. Allāh the Almighty states:

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ

So, would you perhaps, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your (ties of) relationship? Those [who do so] are the ones that Allāh has cursed, so He deafened them and blinded their vision. (Muhammad: 22)

This verse has been interpreted by scholars, such as 'Alī bn al-Ḥusayn, who advised his son never to keep company with one who severs kinship ties, for such individuals are cursed in the Book of Allāh in multiple instances. (Ismā'īl, 1996) In addition to the aforementioned verse, similar warnings appear in Sūratu'r- Ra'd (Q13:25), which states:

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

But those who break the covenant of Allāh after contracting it and sever that which Allāh has ordered to be joined and spread corruption on earth - for them is the curse, and they will have the worst abode.

Islamic teachings also emphasize that punishment for severing kinship ties is hastened in this world, in addition to the punishment awaiting in the Hereafter. Abū Bakr (may Allāh be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet of Allāh said: *"There is no sin more deserving that Allāh hasten its punishment in this world, in addition to what is stored for it in the Hereafter, than oppression and severing kinship ties"*. (Dāwūd, 1434 AH: 4902) This is confirmed by observation: those who sever family ties often lead lives marked by anxiety, instability, a lack of blessings in their provisions, and frequent alienation within their communities.

In addition, the Prophet narrated, as reported by Abū Hurayrah, that when Allāh created creation, the womb (ar-raḥim) stood and pleaded for protection from severance. Allāh said: *"Would it not please you that I maintain ties with those who maintain you and cut off those who cut you off?"*. (Muslim, 2006: 2554) When the womb consented, Allāh granted this protection. This profound narration demonstrates the severe consequences awaiting those whom Allāh severs from His mercy, for if Allāh severs a person, none can restore their connection.

Among the gravest consequences of severing kinship ties is deprivation from Paradise. The Prophet declared unequivocally: *"No severer of kinship ties shall enter Paradise"* (narrated by Muslim ḥadīth no. 2556). This prohibition has been interpreted by scholars such as an-Nawawī, who explained that the ḥadīth applies either to one who deems severing ties lawful, thereby rendering him a disbeliever destined for Hell eternally, or to the sinful believer whose entrance to Paradise will be delayed as a form of divine retribution. Such a person will not enter Paradise among the foremost but will suffer delay according to Allāh's will. (An- Nawawī, 1970)

Furthermore, the deeds of those who sever kinship ties are not accepted by Allāh. Abū Hurayrah reported that the Prophet said: *"The deeds of the children of Ādam are presented to Allāh on Thursday nights before Friday, and the deeds of one who severs kinship ties are not accepted"*. (Ibn Ḥambal, 1437 AH: 10521) This ḥadīth underscores the spiritual gravity of such a sin and the extent to which it undermines one's relationship with Allāh.

Throughout Islamic tradition, pious scholars have consistently warned against the dangers of severing kinship ties. Yūnus bn. 'Ubayd remarked that: *"people hoped to attain Paradise through righteousness towards kin while fearing Hellfire through disobedience to them"*. (Aṣ- Ṣan'ānī, 1437 AH) Ibn Hajar (2012) mentioned that Aṭ-Ṭibī said: *"Allāh preserves the legacy of those who uphold kinship ties, while the legacy of those who sever them quickly fades"*. A profound lesson in this regard is drawn from the commentary of Ibn Kathīr on the verse:

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولَى الْقُرْبَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ.

And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allāh, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allāh should forgive you? And Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful. (An- Nūr: 22)

Ibn Kathīr (1427 AH) narrates that this verse was revealed concerning Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣiddīq who had vowed to withhold aid from Miṣṭah bn. Uthātha after his slander of 'Ā'ishah. Upon the exoneration of 'Ā'ishah and the purification of the believers' hearts, Allāh instructed Abū Bakr to resume his kindness toward his relative. Recognizing the reciprocal nature of forgiveness, Abū Bakr revoked his previous oath and declared he would never again withhold support from Miṣṭah, thus exemplifying the spirit of reconciliation and mercy encouraged by Islām.

Problems associated with *Ṣilatu'r-Raḥim* among the Contemporary Youths

Urbanization is the transition from rural to urban life, bringing social problems such as severing of kinship ties, inadequate housing, poor sanitation, family break-ups, and loss of social support networks. It weakens family ties through migration, nuclear family structures, individualism, single-parent households, and geographical separation. (Nomanul Haq, 2004)

Digital Isolation, driven by technological addiction, aids the severing of family ties by creating fragile relationships and decreasing the quality of interaction among extended family. "Absent presence" or "technoference" (Raḥmān et al., 2024), produces superficial closeness where individuals are physically together but emotionally disconnected. Reduced communication quality, distractions from digital devices, overreliance on digital communication, network failure, technological underuse, and compulsive social media use weaken kinship bonds and raise the risk of family breakups. Emotional problems grow when children use phones in the presence of family heads, disrespecting social authority and eroding family bonds. (Nomanul Haq, 2004)

Relevance of the *Aḥādīth* to Ethical Issues among Contemporary Muslim Youths

Ṣilatu'r-raḥim remains a theological, jurisprudential, and ethical obligation for contemporary Muslim youth facing globalization, urbanization, fragmented families, and digital dominance, all of which weaken traditional kinship bonds. Islam's emphasis on maintaining kinship provides guidance for social cohesion, preserving values, and sustaining identity. Upholding these ties requires deliberate compassion, support, and loyalty, using modern communication when distance from studies, migration, or work limits physical visits.

In an age of individualism, *ṣilatu'r-raḥim* counters neglect of family by reminding youth of duties to parents, grandparents, siblings, and extended relatives. It calls for financial help, supporting the elderly, reconciling estranged relatives, and honoring lineage. Contemporary problems like ideological rifts, inheritance disputes, and technological distractions show the ongoing relevance of these teachings, offering both spiritual reward and practical resilience for families.

Islamic jurisprudence frames kinship as essential to personal wellbeing and communal stability. Yet severing ties has become widespread among youth due to materialism and neglect. Some offer no financial help, visits, or good conduct; months or years pass without warmth, gifts, or support, and some even harm their relatives with words or actions. Others fail to share in moments of joy or grief and withhold charity from needy kin, preferring outsiders. (Al-Ḥamīd, 2025)

Some maintain ties only when relatives reach out first, but true kinship, as the Prophet taught, is maintaining ties even when relatives sever them. (Al- Bukhārī, 1442 AH: 5991) Another problem is neglecting to invite or guide one's own relatives despite inviting distant people. Some families coldly reject their own scholars or preachers despite their public acceptance, weakening their resolve. Others stir division, sow disputes, and incite relatives against one another, fracturing family unity. (Al- Ḥamīd, 2025)

Conclusion

The prophetic traditions on *ṣilatu'r-raḥim* remain timeless ethical imperatives for contemporary Muslim youth, serving as spiritual anchors in a globalized world where kinship is weakened by migration, materialism, and digital distractions. *Islām* presents kinship as a divinely mandated obligation essential for human dignity, family stability, and communal resilience. The selected *aḥādīth* ground family relations in divine command and welfare, linking the *raḥim* to *al-Raḥmān* (Muslim, 2006: 2554) and making its preservation a sacred duty whose neglect is a grave sin.

Ethically, the *aḥādīth* teach that true kinship exceeds reciprocity and requires proactive reconciliation, care, patience, forgiveness, and resilience even when relatives neglect or sever ties. Classical scholars like an-Nawawī (1970) highlight its worldly and spiritual benefits. These teachings remain vital amid contemporary challenges such as urban migration, mobility, digital isolation, and individualism, which weaken bonds, harm communication, and erode solidarity. Prophetic guidance restores balance through compassion, responsibility, and mutual support, protecting both families and communities.

The consequences of neglect are severe, including deprivation of divine mercy, hastened worldly punishment, and exclusion from Paradise. Overall, *ṣilatu'r-raḥim* stands as a comprehensive spiritual, moral, and social ethic indispensable for Muslim youth facing modern complexities, offering a divinely sanctioned path to divine pleasure, human flourishing, and communal strength.

Recommendations

The study found that kinship is divinely protected, its maintenance linked to Allāh's mercy and blessings, and its neglect tied to divine curse and deprivation. True kinship requires maintaining ties even when relatives neglect or reject one's efforts. These *aḥādīth* promise expansion of sustenance, protection from calamities, and social cohesion, confirming both temporal and spiritual rewards. For Muslim youths, *ṣilatu'r-raḥim* counters modern individualism and fragmentation by reinforcing compassion, loyalty, and communal identity. Severing ties leads to hastened punishment, loss of blessings, alienation, and exclusion from divine mercy. Thus, the paper recommends: (i) Islamic institutions and youth programs should teach *aḥādīth* on kinship with spiritual and social emphasis. (ii) Youths should use digital platforms to maintain ties while prioritizing physical visits and direct support. (iii) Parents, elders, and community leaders should model kinship through shared meals, gatherings, and intergenerational dialogue. (iv) Youths should follow the prophetic model of patience and reconciliation, seeking mediation rather than reciprocating neglect. (v) Muslim communities should build support systems such as financial aid, counseling, and welfare structures that prioritize relatives so no family member is abandoned.

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