

## Sila Al-Rahim: Being Close Despite the Distance

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
 ﴿وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
 وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ  
 بِالْجُنُبِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ  
 مُخْتَلًا فَخُورًا﴾ (٣٦)  
 سورة النساء، ٣٦/٤

عن أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله ﷺ قال:  
 " مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُبَسِّطَ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ، وَيُنْسَأَ لَهُ فِي آثَرِهِ، فَلْيَصِلْ  
 رَحِمَهُ "  
 البخاري، الأدب، ١٢

### Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Today, people have more opportunities to connect with one another than at any other time in history. With the press of a button, we can speak to people on the other side of the world. We send photos, share messages and communicate through video calls. Yet despite all this connection, there is another reality growing within us: people are becoming more distant from one another. Homes are getting bigger, but the tables we gather around are becoming smaller. The number of followers is increasing, but true friendships are decreasing. People living among crowds carry the burden of loneliness on their shoulders. Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an: **"Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and show kindness to parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, near neighbours and distant neighbours."**<sup>1</sup> This verse teaches us that servitude to Allah is not only about our relationship with Him, but also a sense of responsibility that includes our relationships with others. Because strong communities are built upon strong bonds.

### Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Today, many people do not know the situation or wellbeing of their own relatives. Siblings living in the same city may go months without seeing one another. Parents wait eagerly for their children to visit. Many elderly people are simply waiting for a phone call or someone to come and see them. Modern life has given us ways to save time, yet through different distractions and commitments, it has taken away the time we should be giving to our loved ones. Our Prophet (saw) said: *"Whoever wishes for their sustenance to be increased and their life to be blessed should maintain the ties of kinship."*<sup>2</sup> The Messenger of Allah did not view family ties merely as a social responsibility, but as a means of attaining blessings.

### Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Maintaining family ties is not simply a visit made from one Eid to another or from one holiday to the next. It is asking about someone's wellbeing. It is touching someone's heart. It is knocking on the door of someone in need. Sometimes it is a phone call, sometimes a dua and sometimes a sincere visit. These actions, which may seem small, strengthen the bonds of the heart that are close to breaking. Islamic scholars have explained Sila Al-Rahim as maintaining relationships with relatives, respecting their rights and showing kindness towards them. As the holiday season approaches, the longing to reconnect with our loved ones has begun to fill our hearts. However, our responsibility is to turn our holidays into opportunities for returning to our roots and our travels into a means of strengthening family ties. Let us observe the boundaries of what is permissible. A Muslim remains conscious of their responsibility towards Allah at every moment and in every environment and acts accordingly. When beginning our journey, let us make the intention of maintaining family ties so that our travel becomes an act of worship. Let us give charity before setting out on our journey. A small amount of charity can prevent many hardships. Let us follow the road rules while travelling and avoid being impatient.

### Dear Jama'ah!

Let us not forget that strong families build strong communities and strong communities build a strong Ummah. Let us share in one another's happiness and be concerned with one another's struggles. Let us not allow disagreements and hurt feelings to grow between us and our loved ones. Let us not hesitate to take the first step, because sometimes a single greeting can end years of distance and resentment. Our Prophet (saw) said: *"The true maintainer of family ties is the one who continues the relationship with relatives who have cut ties with them."*<sup>3</sup>

O Allah! Bring our hearts closer together. Grant us the ability to properly fulfil our responsibilities towards our parents, relatives and neighbours. Remove the resentment between us. Increase our love and affection for one another. Make us among Your servants who protect family ties, bring comfort to hearts and live and preserve the spirit of brotherhood. Ameen.

<sup>1</sup> Surah An-Nisa, 4:36

<sup>2</sup> Buhârî, Edeb, 12

<sup>3</sup> Buhârî, Edeb, 15