



*Enriching Marriage
and Family Life*

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SECTION 1: *Loyalty and Commitment*

...marriage is the commitment of the two parties one to the other, and their mutual attachment of mind and heart. Each must, however, exercise the utmost care to become thoroughly acquainted with the character of the other, that the binding covenant between them may be a tie that will endure forever. Their purpose must be this: to become loving companions and comrades and at one with each other for time and eternity....

The true marriage... is this, that husband and wife should be united both physically and spiritually, that they may ever improve the spiritual life of each other, and may enjoy everlasting unity.... 1

The bond that unites hearts most perfectly is loyalty. True lovers once united must show forth the utmost faithfulness one to another...

1. What is mutual attachment of mind and heart?

2. What is the purpose of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the character of one's potential spouse?

3. What is loyalty?

4. How do a husband and wife show faithfulness to each other?

5. What is the bond that unites hearts most perfectly?

6. True/False

a. Commitment means we give up when things become difficult. T F

b. Marriage is a covenant. T F

c. The purpose of married couple is to become loving companions in this world. T F

d. True marriage is for the couple to be both physically and spiritually united. T F

- e. To become acquainted with another's character is to know their good points. T F
- f. Husband and wife should improve each other's material life. T F

SECTION 2: *Consultation and Unity*

Settle all things, both great and small, by consultation. Without prior consultation, take no important step in your own personal affairs. Concern yourselves with one another. Help along one another's projects and plans... 2

No welfare and no well-being can be attained except through consultation. 3

Allow no trace of jealousy to creep between you, for jealousy, like unto poison, vitiates the very essence of love. Let not the ephemeral incidents and accidents of this changeful life cause a rift between you. When differences present themselves, take counsel together in secret, lest others magnify a speck into a mountain.

7. In what things should we consult?

8. How should we speak to each other when we are angry?

9. What does jealousy do to love?

10. Give some examples of the ephemeral incidents and accidents of life.

11. What should a husband and wife do when differences arise between them?

12. How can others magnify a speck into a mountain?

A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spirit, it clotheth the words with meaning, it is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding... 4

For the tongue is a smouldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endure a century. 5

Harbour not in your hearts any grievance, but rather explain its nature to each other with such frankness and understanding that it will disappear, leaving no remembrance. Choose fellowship and amity and turn away from jealousy and hypocrisy.

13. What effect does a kindly tongue have?

14. What should a husband or wife do if he or she is upset with the other?

15. How can we express ourselves in such a manner that grievances will disappear leaving no remembrance?

16. What is hypocrisy?

17. True/False:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. The effect of words doesn't last very long | T | F |
| b. It is acceptable to speak sharply to your spouse | T | F |
| c. We should not tell our spouse something that will sadden them. | T | F |
| d. Minor things don't require consultation | T | F |
| e. The effects of words last a century | T | F |

SECTION 3: *Nobility and Loftiness*

Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself? 6

Your thoughts must be lofty, your ideals luminous, your minds spiritual, so that your souls may become a dawning-place for the Sun of Reality. Let your hearts be like unto two pure mirrors reflecting the stars of the heaven of love and beauty. Together make mention of noble aspirations and heavenly concepts. Let there be no secrets one from another.

18. If we have been created noble, how do we abase ourselves?

19. Give some examples of lofty thoughts and luminous ideals.

20. Should a husband and wife have secrets from each other?

21. How do we purify our hearts to reflect love and beauty?

22. Which of the following are noble aspirations and heavenly concepts?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. Raising children | Y | N |
| b. Making a lot of money | Y | N |
| c. Serving humanity through our work | Y | N |
| d. Assisting others to walk a path of service | Y | N |
| e. "Finding ourselves" | Y | N |

23. Rank the items in #21 in order of importance

SECTION 4: *Hospitality*

Make your home a haven of rest and peace. Be hospitable, and let the doors of your house be open to the faces of friends and strangers. Welcome every guest with radiant grace and let each feel that it is his own home.

My home is the home of peace. My home is the home of joy and delight. My home is the home of laughter and exaltation. Whoever enters through the portals of this home, must go out with gladsome heart. This is the home of light; whoever enters here must become illumined. 7

24. How does a couple make their home a haven of rest and peace?

25. How do you make a person feel that your home is their home?

SECTION 5: *Love and Harmony*

Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship... 8

That two people should live their lives in love and harmony is of far greater importance than that they should be consumed with passion for each other. The one is a great rock of strength on which to lean in time of need; the other is a purely temporary thing which may at any time die out. 9

26. What is a great rock of strength upon which a couple may lean in time of need?

27. What is a purely temporary thing which may die out at any time?

No mortal can conceive the union and harmony which God has designed for man and wife. Nourish continually the tree of your union with love and affection, so that it will remain ever green and verdant throughout all seasons and bring forth luscious fruits for the healing of the nations.

28. List three things a couple can do to nourish continually their union:

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

SECTION 6: *Children and Family Life*

If love and agreement are manifest in a single family, that family will advance, become illumined and spiritual; but if enmity and hatred exist within it, destruction and dispersion are inevitable. 10

Be like two sweet-singing birds perched upon the highest branches of the tree of life, filling the air with songs of love and rapture. Lay the foundation of your affection in the very center of your spiritual being, at the very heart of your consciousness, and let it not be shaken by adverse winds.

29. What causes a family to advance?

30. What are some adverse winds that can shake a marriage?

31. How can a couple lay the foundation of their affection at the heart of their consciousness?

... the importance of marriage lieth in the bringing up of a richly blessed family, so that with entire gladness they may, even as candles, illuminate the world. 11

And, when God gives you sweet and lovely children, consecrate yourselves to their instruction and guidance, so that they may become imperishable flowers of the divine rose-garden, nightingales of the ideal paradise, servants of the world of humanity, and the fruit of the tree of your life.

32. Where does the importance of marriage lie?

33. What illumines the world?

According to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the family, being a human unit, must be educated according to the rules of sanctity. All the virtues must be taught the family. The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered, and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed. The rights of the son, the father, the mother—none of them must be transgressed, none of them must be arbitrary. Just as the son has certain obligations to his father, the father, likewise, has certain obligations to his son. The mother, the sister and other members of the household have their certain prerogatives. All these rights and prerogatives must be conserved, yet the unity of the family must be sustained. The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor of all. 12

Note ye how easily, where unity existeth in a given family, the affairs of that family are conducted; what progress the members of that family make, how they prosper in the world. Their concerns are in order, they enjoy comfort and tranquility, they are secure, their position is assured, they come to be envied by all. Such a family but addeth to its stature and its lasting honour, as day succeedeth day. 13

34. What are the rules of sanctity?

35. How is the unity of the family sustained?

36. Which virtues must be taught the family?

37. What type of instruction and guidance should we give to our children?

38. What does it mean to be a servant of the world of humanity?

39. Which of the following are rights and obligations of family members:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| a. Parents have an obligation to educate their children | T | F |
| b. The husband has an obligation to support his wife | T | F |
| c. Children have an obligation to obey their parents | T | F |
| d. The wife has a right to dominate her husband. | T | F |
| e. Children have the right to do whatever they want | T | F |
| f. Husband and wife have an obligation to consult with each other in all things | T | F |

40. Meditation:

Live in such harmony that others may take your lives for an example and may say one to another: Look how they live like two doves in one nest, in perfect love, affinity and union. It is as though God had kneaded the very essence of their beings for the love of one another.

References

1. Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha*, p.118.
2. Baha'u'llah, quoted in *Consultation: A Compilation*, p. 3
3. Abdu'l-Baha, *Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha*, Vol. I, p. 158
4. Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CXXXII p. 289
5. Baha'u'llah, *The Hidden Words*, No. 13, p 6-7
6. Abdu'l-Baha, *Star of the West*, Vol. XX, No. 2, p. 52
7. Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha*, p. 120
8. Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, p. 288
9. Shoghi Effendi, from a letter dated January 20, 1943, in *Baha'i Marriage and Family Life*, p 13
10. Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal peace*, p. 144-145
11. Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha*, p. 120
12. Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 168
13. Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha*, p. 279

Questions for Married Couples

1. What do you want your relationship to look like in 10 years?
2. In what way do you complement each other in your service?
3. What aspect of your relationship are you happiest about?
4. What have been your happiest moments in your relationship?
5. What do you want to do as a couple that you are not currently doing?
6. What do you feel you need to work on most as a couple?
7. What do you want to do for your next anniversary?
8. What do you want to accomplish as a couple in the next 5 years?
9. List your favorite anniversaries and what was special about them?
10. Name 3 things that your partner has done for you that you enjoyed?
11. What has been your highlight in your time together?
12. What would you like your spouse to do for you regularly?
13. What virtues/qualities define your relationship?
14. What qualities were you first attracted to in your partner?
15. How has your relationship enabled you to grow (spirituality)?
16. What was the kindest thing that your partner has ever done for you?
17. What is the most precious gift your partner has given you?
18. How do you like to receive love? (For example, does it mean more to you to receive a gift, a kiss or loving words or time with your spouse).
19. When and how did you first realize that you were falling in love with your partner?
20. When you have an argument with your partner, what do you need from him/her in order to feel close again?
21. What has been the great challenge in your relationship? What steps do you need in order to overcome this challenge?
22. What are the strengths in your relationship?
23. What are three things in your relationship that you would like to do differently in the future?
24. Are you comfortable speaking directly and openly about your needs and feelings or do you prefer to be indirect and subtle hoping your partner will understand?
25. What 3 qualities in your partner do you most admire?
26. List 3 things that you like doing together for fun as a couple.



