

Becoming A Brilliant Star

Family Development

The Family Is The Smallest Unit Of Human Organization; It Is The Foundation For World Unity

1. Compare the nations of the world to the members of a family. A family is a nation in miniature. Simply enlarge the circle of the household, and you have the nation. Enlarge the circle of nations, and you have all humanity. The conditions surrounding the family surround the nation. The happenings in the family are the happenings in the life of the nation. Would it add to the progress and advancement of a family if dissensions should arise among its members, all fighting, pillaging each other, jealous and revengeful of injury, seeking selfish advantage? Nay, this would be the cause of the effacement of progress and advancement. So it is in the great family of nations, for nations are but an aggregate of families. Therefore, as strife and dissension destroy a family and prevent its progress, so nations are destroyed and advancement hindered.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 157

2. The ages of its infancy and childhood are past, never again to return, while the Great Age, the consummation of all ages, which must signalize the coming of age of the entire human race, is yet to come. The convulsions of this transitional and most turbulent period in the annals of humanity are the essential prerequisites, and herald the inevitable approach, of that Age of Ages, “the time of the end,” in which the folly and tumult of strife that has, since the dawn of history, blackened the annals of mankind, will have been finally transmuted into the wisdom and the tranquility of an undisturbed, a universal, and lasting peace, in which the discord and separation of the children of men will have given way to the worldwide reconciliation, and the complete unification of the divers elements that constitute human society.

This will indeed be the fitting climax of that process of integration which, starting with the family, the smallest unit in the scale of human organization, must, after having called successively into being the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, continue to operate until it culminates in the unification of the whole world, the final object and the crowning glory of human evolution on this planet. It is this stage which humanity, willingly or unwillingly, is resistlessly approaching....

Just as the organic evolution of mankind has been slow and gradual, and involved successively the unification of the family, the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, so has the light vouchsafed by the Revelation of God, at various stages in the evolution of religion, and reflected in the successive Dispensations of the past, been slow and progressive. Indeed the measure of Divine Revelation, in every age, has been adapted to, and commensurate with, the degree of social progress achieved in that age by a constantly evolving humanity.

Shoghi Effendi: *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 117

The Family Extends Over Centuries

3. Among the great Prophets was Abraham, Who, being an iconoclast and a Herald of the oneness of God, was banished from His native land. He founded a family upon which the blessing of God descended, and it was owing to this religious basis and ordination that the Abrahamic house progressed and advanced. Through the divine benediction noteworthy and luminous prophets issued from His lineage. There appeared Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, David and Solomon. The Holy Land was conquered by the power of the Covenant of God with Abraham, and the glory of the Solomonic wisdom and sovereignty dawned. All this was due to the religion of God which this blessed lineage established and upheld. It is evident that throughout the history of Abraham and His posterity this was the source of their honor, advancement and civilization. Even today the descendants of His household and lineage are found throughout the world.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 362

All Of Humankind Is A Single Family

4. The mystery of this phenomenon, the cause thereof is this, that mankind has been created from one single origin, has branched off from one family. Thus in reality all mankind represents one family. God has not created any difference. He has created all as one that thus this family might live in perfect happiness and well-being.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 38

Bahá’í Marriage Is The Commitment Of The Two Parties One To The Other

5. Bahá’í 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....

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 118

Bond Between Spouses Should Be Based Upon Harmony And Love

6. The friends of God must so live and conduct themselves, and evince such excellence of character and conduct, as to make others astonished. The love between husband and wife must not be purely physical, nay, rather, it must be spiritual and heavenly. These two souls should be considered as one soul. How difficult it would be to divide a single soul! Nay, great would be the difficulty!

In short, the foundation of the Kingdom of God is based upon harmony and love, oneness, relationship and union, not upon differences, especially between husband and wife....

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p. 391

7. As to thy question concerning the husband and wife, the tie between them and the children given to them by God: Know thou, verily, the husband is one who hath sincerely turned unto God, is awakened by the call of the Beauty of El-Bahá and chanteth the verses of Oneness in the

great assemblies; the wife is a being who wisheth to be overflowing with and seeketh after the attributes of God and His names; and the tie between them is none other than the Word of God. Verily, it [the Word of God] causeth the multitudes to assemble together and the remote ones to be united. Thus the husband and wife are brought into affinity, are united and harmonized, even as though they were one person. Through their mutual union, companionship and love great results are produced in the world, both material and spiritual. The spiritual result is the appearance of divine bounties. The material result is the children who are born in the cradle of the love of God, who are nurtured by the breast of the knowledge of God, who are brought up in the bosom of the gift of God, and who are fostered in the lap of the training of God. Such children are those of whom it was said by Christ, “Verily, they are the children of the Kingdom!”
‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), pp. 390-391

8. Hold thy husband dear and always show forth an amiable temper towards him, no matter how ill-tempered he may be. Even if thy loving-kindness maketh him more bitter, manifest thou more kindliness, more tenderness, be more loving and tolerate his cruel actions and ill-treatment.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p. 394

Legitimate Expression of The Sex Instinct Is Between Lawfully Married Persons

9. Concerning your question whether there are any legitimate forms of expression of the sex instinct outside of marriage; according to the Bahá’í Teachings no sexual act can be considered lawful unless performed between lawfully married persons. Outside of marital life there can be no lawful or healthy use of the sex impulse. The Bahá’í youth should, on the one hand, be taught the lesson of self-control which, when exercised, undoubtedly has a salutary effect on the development of character and of personality in general, and on the other should be advised, nay even encouraged, to contract marriage while still young and in full possession of their physical vigour. Economic factors, no doubt, are often a serious hindrance to early marriage, but in most cases are only an excuse, and as such should not be overstressed.
Shoghi Effendi: *A Chaste and Holy Life*, p. 56

It Is Highly Important To Raise A Family

10. It is highly important for man to raise a family. So long as he is young, because of youthful self-complacency, he does not realize its significance, but this will be a source of regret when he grows old.... In this glorious Cause the life of a married couple should resemble the life of the angels in heaven--a life full of joy and spiritual delight, a life of unity and concord, a friendship both mental and physical. The home should be orderly and well-organized. Their ideas and thoughts should be like the rays of the sun of truth and the radiance of the brilliant stars in the heavens. Even as two birds they should warble melodies upon the branches of the tree of fellowship and harmony. They should always be elated with joy and gladness and be a source of happiness to the hearts of others. They should set an example to their fellow-men, manifest a true and sincere love towards each other and educate their children in such a manner as to blazon the fame and glory of their family.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I, (Family Life), p. 397

11. O ye my two beloved children! The news of your union, as soon as it reached me, imparted infinite joy and gratitude. Praise be to God, those two faithful birds have sought shelter in one nest. I beseech God that He may enable them to raise an honoured family, for 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. For the enlightenment of the world dependeth upon the existence of man. If man did not exist in this world, it would have been like a tree without fruit. My hope is that you both may become even as one tree, and may, through the outpourings of the cloud of loving-kindness, acquire freshness and charm, and may blossom and yield fruit, so that your line may eternally endure.

Upon ye be the Glory of the Most Glorious.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 120

The Family Must Exhibit Unity And Brotherhood

12. Consider the harmful effects of discord and dissension in a family; then reflect upon the favours and blessings which descend upon that family when unity exists among its various members. What incalculable benefits and blessings would descend upon the great human family if unity and brotherhood were established! In this century when the beneficent results of unity and the ill effects of discord are so clearly apparent, the means for the attainment and accomplishment of human fellowship have appeared in the world. His Holiness Baha'u'llah has proclaimed and provided the way by which hostility and dissension may be removed from the human world. He has left no ground or possibility for strife and disagreement. First He has proclaimed the oneness of mankind and specialized religious teachings for existing human conditions.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 230; *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), pp. 396-397

13. 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 tranquillity, 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. And if we widen out the sphere of unity a little to include the inhabitants of a village who seek to be loving and united, who associate with and are kind to one another, what great advances they will be seen to make, how secure and protected they will be. Then let us widen out the sphere a little more, let us take the inhabitants of a city, all of them together: if they establish the strongest bonds of unity among themselves, how far they will progress, even in a brief period and what power they will exert. And if the sphere of unity be still further widened out, that is, if the inhabitants of a whole country develop peaceable hearts, and if with all their hearts and souls they yearn to cooperate with one another and to live in unity, and if they become kind and loving to one another, that country will achieve undying joy and lasting glory. Peace will it have, and plenty, and vast wealth.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 279

14. 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. This is, likewise, true of a city. If those who dwell within it manifest a spirit of accord and fellowship, it will progress steadily and human conditions become brighter, whereas through enmity and strife it will be degraded and its inhabitants scattered. In the same way, the people of a nation develop and advance toward civilization and enlightenment through love and accord and are disintegrated by war and strife. Finally, this is true of humanity itself in the aggregate. When love is realized and the ideal spiritual bonds unite the hearts of men, the whole human race will be uplifted, the world will continually grow more spiritual and radiant and the happiness and tranquillity of mankind be immeasurably increased. Warfare and strife will be uprooted, disagreement and dissension pass away and universal peace unite the nations and peoples of the world. All mankind will dwell together as one family, blend as the waves of one sea, shine as stars of one firmament and appear as fruits of the same tree. This is the happiness and felicity of humankind. This is the illumination of man, the eternal glory and everlasting life; this is the divine bestowal. I desire this station for you, and I pray God that the people of America may achieve this great end in order that the virtue of this democracy may be ensured and their names be glorified eternally. May the confirmations of God uphold them in all things and their memories become revered throughout the East and the West. May they become the servants of the Most High God, near and dear to Him in the oneness of the heavenly Kingdom.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 144-145

The Basis For Bonds Among Family Members Should Be The Love Of God

15. When you love a member of your family or a compatriot, let it be with a ray of the Infinite Love! Let it be in God, and for God! Wherever you find the attributes of God love that person, whether he be of your family or of another. Shed the light of a boundless love on every human being whom you meet, whether of your country, your race, your political party, or of any other nation, colour or shade of political opinion. Heaven will support you while you work in this in-gathering of the scattered peoples of the world beneath the shadow of the almighty tent of unity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 38

Make The Collective Life Of The Family A Spiritual Reality

16. “...If the believer is the only one of his family who has embraced the Faith, it is his duty to endeavour to lead as many other family members as possible to the light of divine guidance. As soon as a Baha’i family unit emerges, the members should feel responsible for making the collective life of the family a spiritual reality, animated by divine love and inspired by the ennobling principles of the Faith. To achieve this purpose, the reading of the Sacred Writings and prayers should ideally become a daily family activity. As far as the teaching work is concerned, just as individuals are called upon to adopt teaching goals, the family itself could adopt its own goals. In this way the friends could make of their families strong healthy units, bright candles for the diffusion of the light of the Kingdom, and powerful centres to attract the heavenly confirmations.”

Universal House of Justice: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 225

The Home Should Be A Place Of Peace, Joy And Laughter

17. My home is the home of peace. My home is the home of joy and delight. My home is the home of laughter and exultation. Whosoever enters through the portals of this home, must go out with gladsome heart. This is the home of light; whosoever enters here must become illumined....

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p. 397

The Family Must Be Educated According To The Rules Of Sanctity

18. 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.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 168

The Home Should Be A Centre For The Diffusion Of The Light Of Divine Guidance

19. I beseech God to graciously make of thy home a centre for the diffusion of the light of divine guidance, for the dissemination of the Words of God and for enkindling at all times the fire of love in the hearts of His faithful servants and maidservants. Know thou of a certainty that every house wherein the anthem of praise is raised to the Realm of Glory in celebration of the Name of God is indeed a heavenly home, and one of the gardens of delight in the Paradise of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p. 392

Children Must Be Educated

20. We prescribe unto all men that which will lead to the exaltation of the Word of God amongst His servants, and likewise, to the advancement of the world of being and the uplift of souls. To this end, the greatest means is education of the child. To this must each and all hold fast. We have verily laid this charge upon you in manifold Tablets as well as in My Most Holy Book. Well is it with him who deferreth thereto.

We ask of God that He will assist each and every one to obey this inescapable command that hath appeared and been caused to descend through the Pen of the Ancient of Days.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Bahá’í Education), p.246

21. Child education is a matter of the utmost importance. The infant, while yet a suckling, must receive Bahá’í training, and the loving spirit of Christ and Bahá’u’lláh must be breathed into him, that he may be reared in accord with the verities of the Gospel and the Most Holy Book.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Bahá’í Education), pp. 266-267

22. There are many things which will, if neglected, be wasted, and come to nothing. How often in this world do we see a child who has lost his parents and who, unless attention be devoted to his education and training, can produce no fruit. And better off dead than alive is he who produceth no fruit.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Bahá'í Education), pp. 247-248

Education Of Girl Children Is Most Important

23. The question of training the children and looking after the orphans is extremely important, but most important of all is the education of girl children, for these girls will one day be mothers, and the mother is the first teacher of the child. In whatever way she reareth the child, so will the child become, and the results of that first training will remain with the individual throughout his entire life, and it would be most difficult to alter them. And how can a mother, herself ignorant and untrained, educate her child? It is therefore clear that the education of girls is of far greater consequence than that of boys. This fact is extremely important, and the matter must be seen to with the greatest energy and dedication.

God sayeth in the Qur'án that they shall not be equals, those who have knowledge and those who have it not.¹ Ignorance is thus utterly to be blamed, whether in male or female; indeed, in the female its harm is greater. I hope, therefore, that the friends will make strenuous efforts to educate their children, sons and daughters alike. This is verily the truth, and outside the truth there is manifestly naught save perdition.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Bahá'í Education), p. 286

24. This gathering must be completely spiritual. That is, the discussions must be confined to marshalling clear and conclusive proofs that the Sun of Truth hath indeed arisen. And further, those present should concern themselves with every means of training the girl children; with teaching the various branches of knowledge, good behaviour, a proper way of life, the cultivation of a good character, chastity and constancy, perseverance, strength, determination, firmness of purpose; with household management, the education of children, and whatever especially applieth to the needs of girls--to the end that these girls, reared in the stronghold of all perfections, and with the protection of a goodly character, will, when they themselves become mothers, bring up their children from earliest infancy to have a good character and conduct themselves well.

Let them also study whatever will nurture the health of the body and its physical soundness, and how to guard their children from disease.

When matters are thus well arranged, every child will become a peerless plant in the gardens of the Abhá Paradise.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 123-124

Parents Must Rear Their Children To Be Staunch In Faith

25. It is the bounden duty of parents to rear their children to be staunch in faith, the reason being that a child who removeth himself from the religion of God will not act in such a way as to win the good pleasure of his parents and his Lord. For every praiseworthy deed is born out of the

¹ Qur'an 39:12.

light of religion, and lacking this supreme bestowal the child will not turn away from any evil, nor will he draw nigh unto any good.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Bahá'í Education), p.248;
(Women), p. 372

26. When the infidels, so unjustly, decided to put him to death, they sent and fetched his mother, that perchance she might admonish him, and induce him to recant his faith, and follow in the footsteps of them that have repudiated the truth of God, the Lord of all worlds.

No sooner did she behold the face of her son, than she spoke to him such words as caused the hearts of the lovers of God, and beyond them those of the Concourse on high, to cry out and be sore pained with grief. Truly, thy Lord knoweth what My tongue speaketh. He Himself beareth witness to My words.

And when addressing him she said: "My son, mine own son! Fail not to offer up thyself in the path of thy Lord. Beware that thou betray not thy faith in Him before Whose face have bowed down in adoration all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth. Go thou straight on, O my son, and persevere in the path of the Lord, thy God. Haste thee to attain the presence of Him Who is the Well-Beloved of all worlds."

On her be My blessings, and My mercy, and My praise, and My glory. I Myself shall atone for the loss of her son--a son who now dwelleth within the tabernacle of My majesty and glory, and whose face beameth with a light that envelopeth with its radiance the Maids of Heaven in their celestial chambers, and beyond them the inmates of My Paradise, and the denizens of the Cities of Holiness. Were any eye to gaze on his face, he would exclaim: "Lo, this is no other than a noble angel!"

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 135-136

Parents Must Instill The Love Of God In Their Children's Hearts

27. I give you my advice, and it is this: Train these children with divine exhortations. From their childhood instill in their hearts the love of God so they may manifest in their lives the fear of God and have confidence in the bestowals of God. Teach them to free themselves from human imperfections and to acquire the divine perfections latent in the heart of man. The life of man is useful if he attains the perfections of man. If he becomes the center of the imperfections of the world of humanity, death is better than life, and nonexistence better than existence. Therefore, make ye an effort in order that these children may be rightly trained and educated and that each one of them may attain perfection in the world of humanity. Know ye the value of these children, for they are all my children.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 53-54

Children Must Be Taught The Oneness Of God And The Laws Of God

28. That which is of paramount importance for the children, that which must precede all else, is to teach them the oneness of God and the laws of God. For lacking this, the fear of God cannot be inculcated, and lacking the fear of God an infinity of odious and abominable actions will spring up, and sentiments will be uttered that transgress all bounds...

The parents must exert every effort to rear their offspring to be religious, for should the children not attain this greatest of adornments, they will not obey their parents, which in a

certain sense means that they will not obey God. Indeed, such children will show no consideration to anyone, and will do exactly as they please.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Bahá'í Education), p. 248; (Family Life), p. 385

29. As to the children: We have directed that in the beginning they should be trained in the observances and laws of religion; and thereafter, in such branches of knowledge as are of benefit, and in commercial pursuits that are distinguished for integrity, and in deeds that will further the victory of God's Cause or will attract some outcome which will draw the believer closer to his Lord.

We beg of God to assist the children of His loved ones and adorn them with wisdom, good conduct, integrity and righteousness.

He, verily, is the Forgiving, the Clement.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Bahá'í Education), pp. 250-251

Parents And Children Should Consult On Important Matters

30. Regarding thy question about consultation of a father with his son, or a son with his father, in matters of trade and commerce, consultation is one of the fundamental elements of the foundation of the Law of God. Such consultation is assuredly acceptable, whether between father and son, or with others. There is nothing better than this. Man must consult in all things for this will lead him to the depths of each problem and enable him to find the right solution.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p. 393

Parents Must Counsel Their Children Over A Long Period

31. Ye should consider the question of goodly character as of the first importance. It is incumbent upon every father and mother to counsel their children over a long period, and guide them unto those things which lead to everlasting honour.

Encourage ye the school children, from their earliest years, to deliver speeches of high quality, so that in their leisure time they will engage in giving cogent and effective talks, expressing themselves with clarity and eloquence.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 134

Mothers Are The First Educators Of The Child

32. As to the education of children, exert every effort to further this; it is of the utmost importance. So too, the education of girls in all the rules of righteous conduct, that they may grow up with a good character and high standards of behaviour. For mothers are the first educators of the child, and every child at the beginning of life is like a fresh and tender branch in his parents' hands. His father and mother can train him in any way they choose.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Bahá'í Education), p. 284

33. O SON OF BOUNTY!

Out of the wastes of nothingness, with the clay of My command I made thee to appear, and have ordained for thy training every atom in existence and the essence of all created things. Thus, ere

thou didst issue from thy mother's womb, I destined for thee two founts of gleaming milk, eyes to watch over thee, and hearts to love thee. Out of My loving-kindness, 'neath the shade of My mercy I nurtured thee, and guarded thee by the essence of My grace and favor. And My purpose in all this was that thou mightest attain My everlasting dominion and become worthy of My invisible bestowals. And yet heedless thou didst remain, and when fully grown, thou didst neglect all My bounties and occupied thyself with thine idle imaginings, in such wise that thou didst become wholly forgetful, and, turning away from the portals of the Friend didst abide within the courts of My enemy.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words*, Persian #29

34. Exert yourselves, that haply ye may be enabled to acquire such virtues as shall honour and distinguish you amongst all women. Of a surety, there is no greater pride and glory for a woman than to be a handmaid in God's Court of Grandeur; and the qualities that shall merit her this station are an alert and wakeful heart; a firm conviction of the unity of God, the Peerless; a heartfelt love for all His maidservants; spotless purity and chastity; obedience to and consideration for her husband; attention to the education and nurturing of her children; composure, calmness, dignity and self-possession; diligence in praising God, and worshipping Him both night and day; constancy and firmness in His holy Covenant; and the utmost ardour, enthusiasm, and attachment to His Cause....

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p. 393

35. O handmaids of the Lord! The spiritual assemblage that ye established in that illumined city is most propitious. Ye have made great strides; ye have surpassed the others, have arisen to serve the Holy Threshold, and have won heavenly bestowals. Now with all spiritual zeal must ye gather in that enlightened assemblage and recite the Holy Writings and engage in remembering the Lord. Set ye forth His arguments and proofs. Work ye for the guidance of the women in that land, teach the young girls and the children, so that the mothers may educate their little ones from their earliest days, thoroughly train them, rear them to have a goodly character and good morals, guide them to all the virtues of humankind, prevent the development of any behaviour that would be worthy of blame, and foster them in the embrace of Bahá'í education. Thus shall these tender infants be nurtured at the breast of the knowledge of God and His love. Thus shall they grow and flourish, and be taught righteousness and the dignity of humankind, resolution and the will to strive and to endure. Thus shall they learn perseverance in all things, the will to advance, high mindedness and high resolve, chastity and purity of life. Thus shall they be enabled to carry to a successful conclusion whatsoever they undertake.

Let the mothers consider that whatever concerneth the education of children is of the first importance. Let them put forth every effort in this regard, for when the bough is green and tender it will grow in whatever way ye train it. Therefore is it incumbent upon the mothers to rear their little ones even as a gardener tendeth his young plants. Let them strive by day and by night to establish within their children faith and certitude, the fear of God, the love of the Beloved of the worlds, and all good qualities and traits. Whensoever a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart; and if the slightest undesirable trait should manifest itself, let her counsel the child and punish him, and use means based on reason, even a slight verbal chastisement should this be necessary. It is not, however, permissible to strike a child, or vilify him, for the child's character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse.

Fathers Are Enjoined The Instruction Of Children

36. The seventh Ishraq

The Pen of Glory counselleth everyone regarding the instruction and education of children. Behold that which the Will of God hath revealed upon Our arrival in the Prison City and recorded in the Most Holy Book.² Unto every father hath been enjoined the instruction of his son and daughter in the art of reading and writing and in all that hath been laid down in the Holy Tablet. He that putteth away that which is commanded unto him, the Trustees are then to take from him that which is required for their instruction, if he be wealthy, and if not the matter devolveth upon the House of Justice. Verily, have We made it a shelter for the poor and needy. He that bringeth up his son or the son of another, it is as though he hath brought up a son of Mine; upon him rest My Glory, My Loving-Kindness, My Mercy, that have compassed the world.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 128

37. O ye who have peace of soul! Among the divine Texts as set forth in the Most Holy Book and also in other Tablets is this: it is incumbent upon the father and mother to train their children both in good conduct and the study of books; study, that is, to the degree required, so that no child, whether girl or boy, will remain illiterate. Should the father fail in his duty he must be compelled to discharge his responsibility, and should he be unable to comply, let the House of Justice take over the education of the children; in no case is a child to be left without an education. This is one of the stringent and inescapable commandments to neglect which would draw down the wrathful indignation of Almighty God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 127-128

38. The father must always endeavour to educate his son and to acquaint him with the heavenly teachings. He must give him advice and exhort him at all times, teach him praiseworthy conduct and character, enable him to receive training at school and to be instructed in such arts and sciences as are deemed useful and necessary. In brief, let him instil into his mind the virtues and perfections of the world of humanity. Above all he should continually call to his mind the remembrance of God so that his throbbing veins and arteries may pulsate with the love of God. The son, on the other hand, must show forth the utmost obedience towards his father, and should conduct himself as a humble and a lowly servant. Day and night he should seek diligently to ensure the comfort and welfare of his loving father and to secure his good pleasure. He must forgo his own rest and enjoyment and constantly strive to bring gladness to the hearts of his father and mother, that thereby he may attain the good pleasure of the Almighty and be graciously aided by the hosts of the unseen.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), pp. 393-394

² Kitáb-i-Áqdas.

Their Are Innate Differences Among Children

39. The Manifestations of God are likewise in agreement with the view that education exerteth the strongest possible influence on humankind. They affirm, however, that differences in the level of intelligence are innate; and this fact is obvious, and not worth debating. For we see that children of the same age, the same country, the same race, indeed of the same family, and trained by the same individual, still are different as to the degree of their comprehension and intelligence. One will make rapid progress, one will receive instruction only gradually, one will remain at the lowest stage of all. For no matter how much you may polish a shell, it will not turn into a gleaming pearl, nor can you change a dull pebble into a gem whose pure rays will light the world. Never, through training and cultivation, will the colocynth and the bitter tree³ change into the Tree of Blessedness.⁴ That is to say, education cannot alter the inner essence of a man, but it doth exert tremendous influence, and with this power it can bring forth from the individual whatever perfections and capacities are deposited within him. A grain of wheat, when cultivated by the farmer, will yield a whole harvest, and a seed, through the gardener's care, will grow into a great tree. Thanks to a teacher's loving efforts, the children of the primary school may reach the highest levels of achievement; indeed, his benefactions may lift some child of small account to an exalted throne. Thus is it clearly demonstrated that by their essential nature, minds vary as to their capacity, while education also playeth a great role and exerteth a powerful effect on their development.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 131-132

Children Must Show Respect For One's Parents And Their Rights

40. If thou wouldst show kindness and consideration to thy parents so that they may feel generally pleased, this would also please Me, for parents must be highly respected and it is essential that they should feel contented, provided they deter thee not from gaining access to the Threshold of the Almighty, nor keep thee back from walking in the way of the Kingdom. Indeed it behoveth them to encourage and spur thee on in this direction.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p. 392

41. The fruits of the tree of existence are trustworthiness, loyalty, truthfulness and purity. After the recognition of the oneness of the Lord, exalted be He, the most important of all duties is to have due regard for the rights of one's parents. This matter hath been mentioned in all the Books of God.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p.385

42. O God, my God! I implore Thee by the blood of Thy true lovers who were so enraptured by Thy sweet utterance that they hastened unto the Pinnacle of Glory, the site of the most glorious martyrdom, and I beseech Thee by the mysteries which lie enshrined in Thy knowledge and by the pearls that are treasured in the ocean of Thy bounty to grant forgiveness unto me and unto

³ cf. Qur'an 37:60 (The Tree of Zaqqum).

⁴ cf. Qur'an 24:35.

my father and my mother. Of those who show forth mercy, Thou art in truth the Most Merciful. No God is there but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Bountiful.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 24-25

43. Beware lest ye commit that which would sadden the hearts of your fathers and mothers. Follow ye the path of Truth which indeed is a straight path. Should anyone give you a choice between the opportunity to render a service to Me and a service to them, choose ye to serve them, and let such service be a path leading you to Me. This is My exhortation and command unto thee. Observe therefore that which thy Lord, the Mighty, the Gracious, hath prescribed unto thee.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p. 387

44. In the Tablet to Aba Badí, this holy verse hath been revealed: “Verily, We have enjoined on every son to serve his father.” Such is the decree which We have set forth in the Book.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Áqdas: Questions and Answers*, p. 138

Consideration Of Family Is Sign Of Development

45. Every imperfect soul is self-centred and thinketh only of his own good. But as his thoughts expand a little he will begin to think of the welfare and comfort of his family. If his ideas still more widen, his concern will be the felicity of his fellow citizens; and if still they widen, he will be thinking of the glory of his land and of his race. But when ideas and views reach the utmost degree of expansion and attain the stage of perfection, then will he be interested in the exaltation of humankind. He will then be the well-wisher of all men and the seeker of the weal and prosperity of all lands. This is indicative of perfection.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 69

Wealth Should Be Expended On Self, Family And Poor

46. The beginning of magnanimity is when man expendeth his wealth on himself, on his family and on the poor among his brethren in his Faith.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 156

Pray For Parents And Ask Forgiveness For Them

47. O Lord! In this Most Great Dispensation Thou dost accept the intercession of children in behalf of their parents. This is one of the special infinite bestowals of this Dispensation. Therefore, O Thou kind Lord, accept the request of this Thy servant at the threshold of Thy singleness and submerge his father in the ocean of Thy grace, because this son hath arisen to render Thee service and is exerting effort at all times in the pathway of Thy love. Verily, Thou art the Giver, the Forgiver and the Kind!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Family Life), p. 392

48. Thou seest, O Lord, our suppliant hands lifted up towards the heaven of Thy favor and bounty. Grant that they may be filled with the treasures of Thy munificence and bountiful favor. Forgive us, and our fathers, and our mothers, and fulfil whatsoever we have desired from the

ocean of Thy grace and Divine generosity. Accept, O Beloved of our hearts, all our works in Thy path. Thou art, verily, the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Incomparable, the One, the Forgiving, the Gracious.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings*, pp. 301-302

49. Bless them, O my God, and ascribe unto them such glory as hath shone forth above the horizon of Thy will, and hath shed its splendors from the kingdom of Thine utterance. Immerse them, O my Lord, beneath the ocean of Thy mercy, and illumine them with the dawning light of Thy Revelation. Forgive, then, O my God, their fathers and their mothers, by Thy favor, and Thy bounty, and Thy tender mercies. Send, then, upon them from the right hand of Thy most exalted Paradise the fragrance of the robe of Thine all-glorious Beauty. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou, verily, art the Governor, the Ordainer, the All-Bountiful, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 287-288

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Bahá'u'lláh: *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 287-288

Source: Huitt, W. (2005). *Becoming a Brilliant Star: Family development*. Valdosta, GA.
Available online: <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/religion/bahai/brilstar/10family.pdf>