



Children are also taught to recognise the value of the male and female factors in the balance of life. This needs to be illustrated in the relationship of the parents to one another.

Children are encouraged to associate with people of all races and religions and learn to appreciate the different cultures and the contributions different people have to make. They should learn to respect the ideas of others and to have open minds.

The children are taught to regard themselves as citizens of the world.

Above all parents try to show their children what is right and how to behave by the example of their own lives.

"A real son is such a one as hath branched from the spiritual part of man."

#### Rights and Duties

Each member of the family has certain rights which must be respected by the other members of the family, and each has certain duties to the others.

"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: "...it is the duty of parents to perfectly and thoroughly train their children", so it is the duty of children to respect their parents:

"Say, O My people! Show honour to your parents...Beware lest ye commit that which would sadden the hearts of your fathers and mothers."

As they grow older, children should begin to appreciate the time and trouble which has been spent on them. One way in which they can repay that love and care is by remembering their parents in their prayers:

"It is seemly that the servant should, after each prayer, supplicate God to bestow mercy and forgiveness upon his parents."

#### Resolving Problems

Saying prayers together as a family each day will help to build and maintain the unity of the family on a spiritual basis.

When a problem does occur or a decision needs to be made, members of the family should pray about it, individually and together, so that a solution may be found.

The members of the family should also consult together in order to solve their problems or make their decisions. This includes young children who should be taught from an early age the value of consultation.

"Family consultation, employing full and frank discussion, and animated by awareness of the need for moderation and balance, can be the panacea for domestic conflict."

#### Unity

Where a whole family are Bahá'ís they will share a common aim and set of values and it should be easier to maintain unity in the home. But where there are differences of religion this should not be allowed to cause disunity in the family.

If we look carefully at the scriptures of each religion, we will find that the

essence of their teachings is the same. The followers of each religion wish to serve God and humanity, so really they should have a common aim.

"The religion of God is for love and unity; make it not the cause of enmity and dissension."

For instance, if one member of a family is a Bahá'í and others are not, this may cause problems. If a parent is a Bahá'í, he or she should remember:

"service to the Cause should not produce neglect of the family."

And if a son or daughter is a Bahá'í and the parents are not, this is the advice:

"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."

Bahá'ís believe that everyone has the right to their own beliefs. They also have the right to practise their religion, but not to the extent that it causes disunity and unhappiness to others. Some sacrifices may have to be made, even if only temporarily:

"It is one of the essential teachings of the Faith that unity should be maintained in the home."

#### The Effect of A Happy Home

"If love and agreement are manifest in a single family, that family will become illumined and spiritual..."

"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."

"Consider the harmful effect of discord and dissension in a family; then reflect upon the favours and blessings which descend upon the 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!"

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