**Advice given by ‘Abdu’l-Baha to a believer**

**about marriage and family life**

December 22, 1918

Haifa

Now that thou art returning to America thou must think of taking unto thyself a wife. Do thou choose a girl who may be suitable to thy intellectual and spiritual ideals. She must be wise, intelligent, and a symbol of aspiring perfection. She must take an interest in all the problems pertaining to thy life, and be thy companion and partner in every phase of thy existence. She must be sympathetic, kind-hearted, happy, and endowed with a joyful disposition. Then thou must devote thyself to her happiness and love her with a glorious, spiritual love.

Before choosing a wife a man must think soberly and seriously that this girl will be his friend throughout all his life. It is not a temporary matter. She is a soul with whom he must associate all the days of his life; she will be his mate and his intimate confidant; therefore, day by day their love and their attachment to each other must increase.

The greatest bond that will unite the hearts of man and wife is faithfulness and loyalty. Both must exercise toward each other the utmost faithfulness and loyalty and not let any trace of jealousy creep between them; for this thing like unto poison vitiates the very foundation of love.

The man and wife must dedicate their knowledge, their talents, their fortunes, their titles, their bodies and their spirits, first to Baha’u’llah and then to each other. Their thoughts must be lofty, their ideals luminous, their hearts spiritual, and their souls the dawning-places of the rays of the Sun of Reality. They must not become ill-disposed toward each other on account of the ephemeral incidents and accidents of this changeful life. Their hearts must be spacious, as spacious as the universe of God. **In case any difference of opinion should arise between them, they must do their utmost to settle it by themselves, and not let its knowledge go out of the family; for people are apt to change a speck into a mountain.** Again, in case a circumstance causes a real offense between the two, they must not keep it in their hearts, but rather explain its nature to each other and try to remove it as soon as possible. They must prefer fellowship and amity to jealousy and hypocrisy, and be like two pure mirrors reflecting the light of the stars of love and beauty to each other.

You must tell to each other all your noble and heavenly conceptions. Have no secrets between you. Make your home a haven of rest and peace. Be ye hospitable and let the doors of your home be open to the faces of friends and strangers. Welcome everyone with a smiling face and let them all feel that they are in my home.

God has created such union and harmony between man and wife that no one can conceive in this world a greater plane of union. You must irrigate continually the tree of your union with the water of love and affection, so that it may remain green and verdant throughout all the seasons, producing the most luscious fruits for the healing of the nations.

In short, you two must live such a life that your home may become a vision of the paradise of Abha; so that whosoever enters therein may feel the essence of purity and cleanliness, and may cry out unconsciously: "Here is the home of love, here is the palace of love, here is the nest of love, here is the garden of love;" and you two, like unto two sweet-singing birds, must be perched on the highest branches of the tree of life, filling the air with songs of love and happiness.

Endeavor as far as you are able to lay the foundation of your love in the very center of your spiritual being, in the very heart of your consciousness, and do not let this foundation of love be shaken in the least.

And when God gives you sweet and lovely children, exert yourselves in their education and training, so that they may become the imperishable flowers of the divine rose-garden, the nightingales of the ideal paradise, the servants of the world of humanity and the fruits of the Tree of Life.

Live ye in such a manner that others may take your life as an example, and may say to each other: "Look! How they live like unto two doves in one nest with perfect love, affinity and harmony. It is as though God had kneaded from eternity the very essence of their beings for the love of each other."

When such conditions exist and such ideals hold sway, then you have taken a large portion from the everlasting life, have quaffed deeply from the fountain of Truth, and have spent your days in the paradise of glory gathering the immortelles of divine mysteries.

Be ye to each other as heavenly lovers and divine beloved ones. Spend your life in the paradise of love. Build your nest on the leafy branches of the tree of love. Soar ye in the clear atmosphere of love. Swim ye in the shoreless sea of love. Walk ye in the eternal rose-garden of love. Move ye in the shining rays of the sun of love. Be ye firm and steadfast in the path of love. Perfume your nostrils with the sweet fragrance of the flowers of love. Familiarize your ears with the soul-entrancing melodies of love. Be ye intoxicated with the wine of love. Drink ye deeply of the elixir of love. Let your ideals be the bouquet of love, and your conversation the white pearls of the ocean of love.

(‘Abdu’l-Baha, from a talk, December 22, 1918, Haifa; Star of the West, vol. 11, no. 1, March 21, 1920)

**1291. The "So-Called" Marriage Tablet**

"With regard to your question concerning the so-called Marriage Tablet printed on page 47 of the supplement of the British Prayer Book, this is not a Tablet, but a talk ascribed to the Master by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. It was given some time in December, 1918 about Sohrab's marriage. It cannot be regarded as Bahá'í scripture as 'nothing can be considered as scripture for which we do not have an original text,' as the beloved Guardian pointed out. The friends may use this talk, but it is not to be considered as scripture."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa, January 18, 1971: Bahá'í Journal of the United Kingdom, No. 218, August 1973, p. 2)