

body and of the spirit as well, for here both husband and wife are aglow with the same wine, both are enamoured of the same matchless Face, both live and move through the same spirit, both are illumined by the same glory. This connection between them is a spiritual one, hence it is a bond that will abide forever. Likewise do they enjoy strong and lasting ties in the physical world as well, for if the marriage is based both on the spirit and the body, that union is a true one, hence it will endure. If, however, the bond is physical and nothing more, it is sure to be only temporary, and must inexorably end in separation.

When, therefore, the people of Bahá undertake to marry, the union must be a true relationship, a spiritual coming together as well as a physical one, so that throughout every phase of life, and in all the worlds of God, their union will endure; for this real oneness is a gleaming out of the love of God.

In the same way, when any souls grow to be true believers, they will attain a spiritual relationship with one another, and show forth a tenderness which is not of this world. They will, all of them, become elated from a draught of divine love, and that union of theirs, that connection, will also abide forever.

—`Abdu'l-Bahá

O ye two believers in God! The Lord, peerless is He, hath made woman and man to abide with each other in the closest companionship, and to be even as a single soul. They are two helpmates, two intimate friends, who should be concerned about the welfare of each other.

If they live thus, they will pass through this world with perfect contentment, bliss, and peace of heart, and become the object of divine grace and favour in the Kingdom of heaven. But if they do other than this, they will live out their lives in great bitterness, longing at every moment for death, and will be shamefaced in the heavenly realm.

Strive, then, to abide, heart and soul, with each other as two doves in the nest, for this is to be blessed in both worlds. —`Abdu'l-Bahá

From Wikipedia:

Bahá'í marriage is union of a man and a woman. Its purpose is mainly spiritual and is to foster harmony, fellowship and unity between the two partners. The Bahá'í teachings on marriage call it a fortress for well-being and salvation and place marriage and the family as the foundation of the structure of human society.

The Bahá'í teachings on marriage see it as an eternal bond that survives past the lives of the partners in the physical life, and into the spiritual worlds. Thus the teachings stress that during courting the partners must take the utmost care to become acquainted with each other's character. Furthermore, the husband and wife should be united not only physically, but also spiritually, so that they can improve the spiritual life of each other, and that they can spiritually advance towards God.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahai_marriage

SOURCES: info.bahai.org, and bahai-library.org

**For more information:
1-800-22UNITE**

<http://www.bahai.org/>

**Local Meetings:
<http://www.meetup.com/Bahai-Faith-Palm-Beach-County-south/>**

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Bahá'í Faith

Love and Marriage

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

Bahá'ís understand that the family is the basic unit of society. Unless this all-important building block is healthy and unified, society itself cannot be healthy and unified.

Monogamous marriage stands at the foundation of family life.

Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, said marriage is "a fortress for well-being and salvation." The Bahá'í writings further state that married couples should strive to become "loving companions and comrades and at one with each other for time and eternity..."

Bahá'ís view preparation for marriage as an essential element in ensuring a happy marriage. The process of preparation includes a requirement for parental approval of the choice of a spouse. This does not mean that Bahá'í marriages are arranged. Individuals propose marriage to the persons of their own choice. However, once the choice is made, the parents have both the right and the obligation to weigh carefully whether to give consent to, and thus guide, their offspring in one of life's most important decisions.

Bahá'ís believe that this requirement helps to preserve unity within the marriage—and within the extended family. As did previous Messengers of God, Bahá'u'lláh asks His followers to honor their parents. Obtaining parental permission for marriage reaffirms the importance of the bond between child and parent. It also helps to create a supportive network of parents in the often difficult first years of a marriage.

Simple vows and ceremony

Once parental permission is obtained, the marriage takes place, requiring only the simplest of ceremonies. In the presence of two witnesses designated by the local Bahá'í governing council, the couple recites the following verse: "We will all, verily, abide by the will



of God." For Bahá'ís, that simple commitment to live by God's will implies all of the commitments associated with marriage, including the promises to love, honor, and cherish; to care for each other regardless of material health or wealth; and to share with and serve each other.



Beyond these simple requirements, Bahá'ís are free to design their own marriage celebration. Depending on personal tastes, family resources, and cultural traditions, Bahá'í ceremonies run the gamut from small to large, including all manner of music, dance, dress, food and festivity.

As in most religions, the marriage vow is considered sacred in the Bahá'í Faith. The partners are expected to be absolutely faithful to each other.

The Faith's emphasis on the equality of women and men, however, and its promotion of consultation as a tool for problem-solving mean that the roles of husband and wife within a Bahá'í marriage are not the traditional ones. Women are free to pursue careers that interest them; men are expected to share in household duties and child-rearing.

So-called "interracial marriage" is also encouraged in the Bahá'í teachings, which stress the essential oneness of the human race.

Divorce is allowed but discouraged

If a Bahá'í marriage fails, divorce is permitted, although it is strongly discouraged. If Bahá'ís choose to seek a divorce, they must spend at least one year living apart and attempting to reconcile. If a divorce is still desired after that year, it is then granted, dependent on the requirements of civil law. This "year of patience," as it is known to Bahá'ís, is supervised by the local Spiritual Assembly, the local Bahá'í governing council.

The key purpose of Bahá'í marriage—beyond physical, intellectual and spiritual

companionship—is children. Bahá'ís view child-rearing not only as a source of great joy and reward, but as a sacred obligation. While stating firmly that women must enjoy full equality with men, Bahá'u'lláh's teachings also recognize explicitly the innate differences between the feminine and masculine natures—both physical and emotional. Bahá'ís understand, accordingly, that mothers have a special role to play in the early education of children—especially during the first few years of life when the basic values and character of every individual is formed.

Since Bahá'ís believe that the soul appears at the moment of conception, the parents pray for the well-being of the unborn child while it is still in the womb. Education in general, and Bahá'í education in particular are of paramount importance in Bahá'í families. From their earliest years, the children are encouraged to develop the habits of prayer and meditation, and to acquire knowledge, both intellectual and spiritual.

From the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith

...And when He desired to manifest grace and beneficence to men, and to set the world in order, He revealed observances and created laws; among them He established the law of marriage, made it as a fortress for well-being and salvation, and enjoined it upon us in that which was sent down out of the heaven of sanctity in His Most Holy Book. He saith, great is His glory: 'Marry, O people, that from you may appear he who will remember Me amongst My servants; this is one of My commandments unto you; obey it as assistance to yourselves.' —Bahá'u'lláh

Marriage, among the mass of the people, is a physical bond, and this union can only be temporary, since it is foredoomed to a physical separation at the close.

Among the people of Bahá, however, marriage must be a union of the

