

Worksheet 10 – Marriage & Relationships

General

1. What is the difference between love and lust?
 - Lust is simply an overemphasis or focus on the sexual impulse and thinking about sexually related activities. Sikhism encourages a balanced approach or “the middle path” to life.

Before Marriage

2. Is it okay for young Sikhs to have girl friends/ boy friends? Give reasons for why / why not?
 - This issue is often blown well out of proportion. Of course, it is acceptable for a Sikh to have a girl/boy friend. However, the relationship should not be sexual.
3. If you do have a girl friend/ boy friend what is acceptable behaviour e.g. going out together, kissing, hugging etc.
 - Sex before marriage is the only thing which is not allowed. Doing anything you would do with your friends of the same sex is acceptable like going to a restaurant, cinema, bowling, swimming, town etc.

Attitudes towards Marriage

4. If Guru Gobind Singh Ji said, ‘Recognise ye the whole human race as one’ then why do some Sikhs not permit inter – ‘caste’ marriage?
 - Sikhism has to be one of the most open and universal religions in the world. However, Indians are one of the most backward communities in many ways and Indians will refer to follow their traditions over Sikh guiding principles.
 - This practice will hopefully die out with the older generation.
5. Are there any solutions to the above problem?
 - It is pointless in trying to educate the older Sikh community because they are far too stuck in their old Hindu ideas. The younger generation should know the race/caste of a person is irrelevant.
6. Should Sikhs marry people of other religions?
 - There have been many studies which have shown that marrying a person from a different religious belief is bad for the children, because the children grow up more confused. If one individual is of a different religion then one of them must accept the other person’s religion if they want to get married and have mentally healthy children.

During Marriage

7. What are the four promises that a couple makes when they get married as per Sikh rites? (i.e. what is the significance of the circumambulation around the Guru Granth Sahib?)
 - Promise to remember God
 - Promise to develop a relationship with God
 - Promise to remove ones Ego
 - Commitment to the Dharma and experiencing oneness

8. Do you think we should recite a translation of the vow in English before the couple get up and walk round the SGGS, so that they understand what they are committing themselves to?
- The SGGSJ is not written in a single language. It consists of many different languages including Persian, Sanskrit etc. This means that the Sikh Gurus placed no special emphasis on any language like the Jews with Hebrew and the Hindus with Sanskrit and Muslims with Arabic.
 - Whenever we make a promise, we usually understand what we are committing ourselves to. It is silly to make a promise in front of God and not understand it.
 - An English translation of the four promises should be given from the stage BEFORE the couple are wedded in front of God.

Living as a Married Couple

9. If Sikhism is based on social and gender equality, then does that imply that men and women should both do house work (cooking, ironing, cleaning)?
- YES... everything should be shared out equally
10. Are married Sikhs allowed to use contraception? What about the pill which affects the body's natural processes?
- Yes. There is nothing in the Sikh Code of Conduct, which prohibits a Sikh from using e.g. condoms. However, contraceptive methods like the pill would not be encouraged for a Sikh because it affects the body's natural cycle. This may have dangerous side effects. The choice is inevitably up to you.
11. What are your ideas regarding the relationship between spirituality and sexuality?
- Sexuality can indeed lead a couple to heightened levels of consciousness in a shorter space of time if done with the correct approach. Sex can also pull individuals down into their shallow self. So sexuality is indeed a double edged sword and it must be approached with the correct consciousness.
12. What do you think about the Indian Love Manual
- This is an excellent manual to the sexual arts which lead to heightened levels of consciousness when used by two spiritual beings with the correct consciousness.

Having Children

13. If a couple is unable to have a child due to infertility of the husband or wife. Then is it acceptable to use another persons genetic material (artificially implanted) to have a child?
- No. It is not acceptable to have someone else's semen or egg artificially implanted
14. What are the alternatives for the above situation where the couple can't conceive?
- Adoption of a child
15. Is it acceptable to have a test tube baby, i.e. to select the eye colour, intelligence, skin colour of your baby?
- It is not the function of human beings to play God. However, it would be acceptable use such a technology to genetically screen for diseases and remove them.
16. If it was possible to eliminate any genetic deformities that a baby may have, before a baby is born, then would this option be allowed for a Sikh family?

- Yes, because it is actually helping to maintain a better quality of life for that individual and remove its suffering.

17. What is the Sikh view on abortion? What things should a person consider before choosing to have an abortion?

- Abortion is a personal choice. At the end of the day, if you bring a life into this world then you must be sure that you will be able to look after it and give it the attention it needs to grow up into a strong, healthy and secure adult. If you can not do this, then having a baby may not be a very good idea. Again, this is an individual choice.
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Controlling Sexual Energies

18. Lust is one of the 5 evils of the mind and controls a lot of people. How can we prevent this thief from taking over our mind?

- Daily meditation helps to build a stronger mind
- We can change our perception of other people. For example a young man or woman should be perceived as our own brother or sister and an older man or woman should be perceived as our own mother or father.
- Sat Kriya is a mediation which is used for sexual control. Please see a kundalini yoga website for information on his technique or our leaflet on sexuality and Sikhism.

19. Any other questions?