

## Consultation Guidelines

### A. Guidelines to Consultation

The purpose of consultation is to show that the views of several individuals are assuredly preferable to one person, even as the power of a number of people is of course greater than the power of one.

Consultation bestows greater awareness and transforms conjecture into certitude. It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leads the way and guides. For everything there is a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation.

The purpose is to emphasize the statement that consultation must have for its object the investigation of truth. One who expresses an opinion should not voice it as correct and right but set it forth as a contribution to the consensus of opinion, for the light of reality becomes apparent when two opinions coincide. A spark is produced when flint and steel come together. One should weigh their opinion with the utmost serenity, calmness and composure. Before expressing their own views he or she should carefully consider the views already advanced by others. If they find that a previously expressed opinion is more true and worthy, they should accept it immediately and not willfully hold to an opinion of their own. By this excellent method one endeavors to arrive at unity and truth.

The members thereof must take counsel together in such ways that no occasion for ill-feeling or discord may arise. This can be attained when every member expresses with absolute freedom their own opinion and sets forth their argument. Should any one oppose, they must on no account feel hurt for not until matters are fully discussed can the right way be revealed. The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions.

They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden.

### B. Backbiting-Free Space

If any speak ill of an absent one, the only result will clearly be this: they will dampen the zeal of the individual and tend to make them indifferent. For backbiting is divisive, it is the leading cause among of a disposition to withdraw.

If any individual should speak ill of one who is absent, it is incumbent on his hearers, in a friendly manner, to stop them, and say in effect: would this detraction serve any useful purpose? Would it contribute to the aim of the organization? No, on the contrary, it would make the dust to settle so thickly on the heart that the ears would hear no more, and the eyes would no longer behold the light of truth.

(Taken from the Baha'i Writings)