

### KEY POINTS

- Children: Central subject of the poem, representing individuals who come into the world.
- Not Your Children: Emphasizes that children belong to themselves and the future, not their parents.
- Life's Longing: Represents the force driving the creation and growth of life.
- Through You, Not From You: Indicates that parents are channels, not creators, of their children's individuality.
- House of Tomorrow: Symbolizes the future where children's souls reside, beyond parental control.
- Thoughts: Refers to the unique ideas and dreams that children develop independently.
- Bows and Arrows: Metaphor for parents (bows) guiding children (arrows) on their life path.
- Archer: Represents a higher power or life itself, guiding the direction of children's lives.
- Gladness: The positive attitude parents should have in supporting their children's growth.
- Path of the Infinite: Symbolizes the vast and unknown future that children will navigate.

### SUMMARY

Kahlil Gibran's poem "On Children" teaches that children are not owned by their parents, but are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through parents, but not from them, and belong to the future, or the house of tomorrow, which parents cannot see.

Parents can give their children love but not their thoughts, because children have their own minds. Gibran uses the imagery of bows and arrows: parents are the bows, and children are the arrows sent into the world. Parents should be happy to help guide their children, but understand that children will follow their own path.

### **II. Answer the following questions in one or two sentences each. (2 Marks Questions)**

1. What does Gibran mean when he says, "Your children are not your children"?  
**Answer:** Gibran means that children belong to themselves and the future, not to their parents, even though they come through them.
2. Why does Gibran say parents should give children love but not their thoughts?  
**Answer:** He says this because children have their own thoughts and dreams that are different from their parents.
3. What is the "house of tomorrow" in the poem?  
**Answer:** The "house of tomorrow" represents the future where children's souls live, a place that parents cannot visit or understand.

4. What do the bow and arrows symbolize in the poem?

**Answer:** The bow represents parents, and the arrows represent children. Parents help guide and support their children, but the children will follow their own path in life.

5. Why should parents be happy about "bending" as the archer sends forth the arrows?

**Answer:** Parents should be happy because their role in helping their children grow and succeed is important, even though the children will go their own way.

6. What does Gibran say about where children's souls live?

**Answer:** Gibran says children's souls live in the "house of tomorrow," meaning the future, which parents cannot visit.

7. How does Gibran describe the relationship between parents and children?

**Answer:** Gibran describes parents as bows and children as arrows, meaning parents guide their children, but children are sent into the world to live their own lives.

8. Why does Gibran say parents should not try to make their children like them?

**Answer:** He says this because each child is unique and should have the freedom to develop their own thoughts and identity.

9. What does the archer represent in the poem?

**Answer:** The archer represents a higher power or life itself, guiding the way parents help their children grow and succeed.

10. What feeling does Gibran encourage parents to have when raising their children?

**Answer:** Gibran encourages parents to feel gladness and joy when helping their children, knowing they play an important role in their children's journey.

11. How can parents support their children's independence, according to the poem?

**Answer:** Parents can support their children's independence by offering love and guidance without trying to control their thoughts or make them exactly like themselves.

12. What can parents learn from the image of the bow and arrow in raising their children?

**Answer:** Parents can learn that they provide strength and direction (like the bow), but once children are sent into the world (like arrows), they must follow their own path.

13. Why is it important for children to have their own thoughts, as Gibran suggests?

**Answer:** It's important because having their own thoughts helps children develop independence, creativity, and a sense of identity, allowing them to contribute to the future.

14. How does Gibran's idea of the "house of tomorrow" help children understand their own future?

**Answer:** It helps children understand that they belong to the future and will shape it in ways that even their parents might not fully understand.

15. What attitude should parents have when raising their children, based on Gibran's message?

**Answer:** Parents should have a positive and joyful attitude, recognizing that their role is to help their children grow into their own person, not to control their lives.

**III. Answer the following questions in about 60 words each  
(3 Marks)**

1. What does Gibran mean when he says, "They come through you but not from you"?

**Answer:** Gibran means that children are born through their parents but are not created or shaped entirely by them. Children have their own individuality, thoughts, and purpose in life. Parents may help bring them into the world, but the children belong to life itself, not to the parents.

2. Why does Gibran compare parents to bows and children to arrows?

**Answer:** Gibran compares parents to bows and children to arrows to show that parents provide strength, guidance, and support. However, just like arrows, once children are sent out into the world, they travel their own path. Parents help launch their children into life, but they don't control where they go.

3. What is the "house of tomorrow" and why can't parents visit it?

**Answer:** The "house of tomorrow" represents the future, where children's souls belong. Parents cannot visit this "house" because it symbolizes a time and space that is unknown to them. It suggests that children are part of a future that parents cannot fully see or understand, emphasizing the children's independence and their connection to a new world.

4. Why does Gibran say, "You may give them your love but not your thoughts"?

**Answer:** Gibran says this because while parents can care for and love their children, they should not try to impose their own beliefs and thoughts on them. Children need the freedom to develop their own minds and ideas. This helps them grow as individuals with their own perspectives and dreams.

5. How does Gibran's poem suggest parents should feel about their role in raising children?

**Answer:** Gibran suggests that parents should feel joy and gladness in their role. By comparing them to a bow, he implies that bending and guiding children should be a happy task, even though children will eventually follow their own path. Parents play a significant part in helping their children, but they should also embrace letting them go.

6. What does Gibran mean when he says, "For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow"?

**Answer:** Gibran means that children belong to the future, and their souls are connected to the time ahead. Parents cannot fully understand or control this future, as it's unknown to them. This emphasizes that children are part of a new world that is theirs to explore, while parents belong to the present.

7. Why does Gibran say, "You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you"?

**Answer:** Gibran encourages parents to learn from their children's energy, curiosity, and spirit, but not to force children to become like them. Life moves forward, and each generation has its own path. Children need to grow into their own people, rather than becoming copies of their parents.

8. What role does Gibran believe parents play in their children's lives, according to the poem?

**Answer:** Gibran believes parents act as guides who provide love and support, but they must let their children grow into their own individuals. Using the metaphor of bows and arrows, he suggests that parents help launch their children into the world but should not try to control or shape their journey.

9. How does Gibran's comparison of parents to bows and children to arrows reflect the theme of independence?

**Answer:** The comparison highlights the idea that while parents support and guide their children, the children must ultimately travel their own path in life. Like arrows released from a bow, children are meant to move forward independently, making their own choices and decisions as they progress through life.

10. Why does Gibran say parents cannot visit the future, even in their dreams?

**Answer:** Gibran says this to emphasize that the future belongs to children, not parents. The "house of tomorrow" represents a time and place parents cannot fully understand or control. Children are part of a new future that is beyond their parents' reach, symbolizing their independence and the natural flow of life.

11. How can parents help children grow while respecting their individuality, as suggested by Gibran?

**Answer:** Parents can provide love, support, and guidance while allowing children to form their own thoughts and dreams. Gibran suggests that parents should act as guides, not controllers, helping children navigate life without forcing them to be like their parents, thus respecting their independence and individuality.

12. What lesson can children learn from the idea of the "house of tomorrow"?

**Answer:** Children can learn that they belong to the future and have the power to shape it in ways their parents may not fully understand. This teaches them that their thoughts, ideas, and actions are important in creating their own path and building a new world that is different from the past.

13. How can Gibran's metaphor of bows and arrows help children understand their own life journey?

**Answer:** The metaphor shows that while parents provide strength and direction (like the bow), children (as arrows) must follow their own path in life. This helps children understand that while they may receive guidance, their choices and journey are ultimately their own, teaching them responsibility and independence.

14. How does Gibran's idea of giving love but not thoughts help in developing a child's individuality?

**Answer:** By giving love but not imposing their thoughts, parents encourage children to think for themselves and develop their own ideas. This allows children to grow as independent individuals with their own personalities, capable of making decisions and finding their own path, which is essential for building confidence and self-reliance.

15. What can parents and children learn from Gibran's message about "bending in the archer's hand for gladness"?

**Answer:** Parents can learn to find joy in guiding and supporting their children without trying to control their futures. Children can understand that their parents' sacrifices and efforts are made with love, and this mutual respect helps both parents and children develop a healthy, supportive relationship based on trust and freedom.

**IV. Answer the following questions in about 100 words each  
(4 Marks)**

1. How, according to the speaker of 'On Children', should parents look upon their children?

**Answer:** According to the speaker in 'On Children', parents should view their children not as possessions but as independent individuals who belong to life itself. While children may come through their parents, they do not belong to them. Parents should nurture and love their children but allow them to have their own thoughts, dreams, and identities. Children are part of the future, and parents must respect their individuality and the fact that they are separate from them.

2. What attitude should parents have towards their children according to the poem, 'On Children'?

**Answer:** In the poem, the speaker advises parents to avoid being possessive or controlling. They should give their children freedom to explore their own paths in life. Parents are encouraged to offer love and guidance, but not to force their own thoughts or beliefs on their children. Instead of molding them into their likeness, parents should allow their children to develop into their unique selves, respecting their individuality and supporting their journey towards the future.

3. How does the poem, 'On Children', bring out the relationship between parents and children?

**Answer:** The poem uses metaphors to illustrate the relationship between parents and children, portraying parents as bows, children as arrows, and God as the archer. It emphasizes that while parents provide support and guidance, they cannot control the destiny or the future of their children. The poem highlights the idea that children have their own identities and futures, and parents' role is to provide strength and stability, allowing their children to grow freely and find their own paths in life.

4. 'On Children' offers new insights into the parent-child relationship. Discuss.

**Answer:** 'On Children' presents a modern perspective on the parent-child relationship, emphasizing the individuality of children and their independence from their parents. Instead of seeing children as extensions of themselves, parents are encouraged to understand that their children have their own lives, thoughts, and purposes. The poem challenges traditional notions of parenting, which often involve control and possession, by suggesting that parents should provide love and guidance but allow children the freedom to shape their own futures.

5. The poem, 'On Children', rejects conservative upbringing of children. Explain.

**Answer:** 'On Children' rejects the idea of a conservative upbringing where parents impose their beliefs, values, and expectations on their children. The poem advocates for a more open and liberating approach to parenting, where children are encouraged to think for themselves and pursue their own dreams. It suggests that children belong to the future, and parents should not constrain them by trying to make them replicas of themselves. The poem calls for parents to trust their children's ability to shape their own identities and destinies.

6. 'Parents are bows, children are arrows, and God is the archer.' How does the poem, 'On Children', answer the above question and highlight these images?

**Answer:** The poem uses the image of the bow, arrow, and archer to illustrate the dynamic between parents, children, and a higher force (God or destiny). Parents, represented by the bow, provide strength and support to launch their children, the arrows, into the world. God, as the archer, determines the direction of the arrow, symbolizing that parents do not have control over their children's futures. The bow must bend in order for the arrow to fly, signifying that parents should be flexible and understanding, allowing their children the freedom to reach their full potential while offering stability.

7. We cannot keep pace with our children's lives and thoughts. How is this elaborated in 'On Children'?

**Answer:** In 'On Children', the speaker emphasizes that children are part of the future and their thoughts belong to a world that parents cannot access, even in their dreams. The poem acknowledges that the world is constantly evolving, and children represent the next generation, carrying new ideas and perspectives. Parents, rooted in the past and present, may find it difficult to keep pace with their children's ever-changing lives and thoughts. This reinforces the idea that parents should not try to control or dictate their children's lives, but instead, allow them to grow and flourish in their own time and way.