

... the future generation depends on the mothers of today. Is not this a vital responsibility for the woman? Does she not require every possible advantage to equip her for such a task?

Therefore, surely, God is not pleased that so important an instrument as woman should suffer from want of training in order to attain the perfections desirable and necessary for her great life's work!

Justice demands that the rights of both sexes should be equally respected since neither is superior to the other in the eyes of Heaven. Dignity before God depends, not on sex, but on purity and luminosity of heart. Human virtues belong equally to all!

Woman must endeavour then to attain greater perfection, to be man's equal in every respect, to make progress in all in which she has been backward, so that man will be compelled to acknowledge her equality of capacity and attainment.



In Europe women have made greater progress than in the East, but there is still much to be done! When students have arrived at the end of their school term an examination takes place, and the result thereof determines the knowledge and capacity of each student. So will it be with woman; her actions will show her power, there will no longer be any need to proclaim it by words.

God's Bounty is for all and gives power for all progress. When men own the equality of women there will be no need for them to struggle for their rights! One of the principles then of Bahá'u'lláh is the equality of sex.

## The Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í Faith is the youngest of the world's independent religions. Its founder, Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), is regarded by Bahá'ís as the most recent in the line of Messengers of God that stretches back beyond recorded time and that includes Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster, Christ and Muhammad.

The central theme of Bahá'u'lláh's message is that humanity is one single race and that the day has come for its unification in one global society. God, Bahá'u'lláh said, has set in motion historical forces that are breaking down traditional barriers of race, class, creed, and nation and that will, in time, give birth to a universal civilization. The principal challenge facing the peoples of the earth is to accept the fact of their oneness and to assist the processes of unification.

One of the purposes of the Bahá'í Faith is to help make this possible. A worldwide community of some five million Bahá'ís, representative of most of the nations, races and cultures on earth, is working to give Bahá'u'lláh's teachings practical effect. Their experience will be a source of encouragement to all who share their vision of humanity as one global family and the earth as one homeland.

### Principles of Bahá'í Belief

The Bahá'í Faith recognizes the unity of God and of His Prophets, upholds the principle of an unfettered search after truth, condemns all forms of superstition and prejudice, teaches that the fundamental purpose of religion is to promote concord and harmony, that it must go hand-in-hand with science, and that it constitutes the sole and ultimate basis of a peaceful, an ordered and progressive society.

It inculcates the principle of equal opportunity, rights and privileges for both sexes, advocates compulsory education, abolishes extremes of poverty and wealth, exalts work performed in the spirit of service to the rank of worship, recommends the adoption of an auxiliary international language, and provides the necessary agencies for the establishment and safeguarding of a permanent and universal peace.

**For more information on the principles of Bahá'í belief please visit:**

**[www.BahaiPrinciples.org](http://www.BahaiPrinciples.org)**

# PRINCIPLES OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

## The Equality of Women and Men



*In some respects woman is superior to man. She is more tender-hearted, more receptive, her intuition is more intense. - 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

**W**omen must make the greatest effort to acquire spiritual power and to increase in the virtue of wisdom and holiness until their enlightenment and striving succeeds in bringing about the unity of mankind. They must work with a burning enthusiasm to spread the Teaching of Bahá'u'lláh among the peoples, so that the radiant light of the Divine Bounty may envelop the souls of all the nations of the world!

To accept and observe a distinction which God has not intended in creation is ignorance and superstition. The fact which is to be considered, however, is that woman, having formerly been deprived, must now be allowed equal opportunities with man for education and training. There must be no difference in their education. Until the reality of equality between man and woman is fully established and attained, the highest social development of mankind is not possible. Even granted that woman is inferior to man in some degree of capacity or accomplishment, this or any other distinction would continue to be productive of discord and trouble.

The only remedy is education, opportunity; for equality means equal qualification. In brief, the assumption of superiority by man will continue to be depressing to the ambition of woman, as if her attainment to equality was

creationally impossible; woman's aspiration toward advancement will be checked by it, and she will gradually become hopeless. On the contrary, we must declare that her capacity is equal, even greater than man's. This will inspire her with hope and ambition, and her susceptibilities for advancement will continually



increase. She must not be told and taught that she is weaker and inferior in capacity and qualification. If a pupil is told that his intelligence is less than his fellow pupils, it is a very great drawback and handicap to his progress. He must be encouraged to advance by the statement, "You are most capable, and if you endeavor, you will attain the highest degree." - *'Abdu'l-Bahá*

**[Bahá'u'lláh] has declared that in the estimation of God there is no distinction of sex. The one whose heart is most pure, whose deeds and service in the Cause of God are greater and nobler, is most acceptable before the divine threshold - whether male or female.**

Religious strife, throughout history, has been the cause of innumerable wars and conflicts, a major blight to progress, and is increasingly abhorrent to the people of all faiths and no faith. Followers of all religions must be willing to face the basic questions which this strife raises, and to arrive at clear answers. How are the differences between them to be resolved, both in theory and in practice? The challenge facing the religious leaders of mankind is to contemplate, with hearts filled with the spirit of compassion and a desire for truth, the plight of humanity, and to ask themselves whether they cannot, in humility before their Almighty Creator, submerge their theological differences in a great spirit of mutual forbearance that will enable them to work together for the advancement of human understanding and peace.

The emancipation of women, the achievement of full equality between the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged prerequisites of peace. The denial of such equality perpetrates an injustice against



one half of the world's population and promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that are carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations. There are no grounds, moral, practical, or biological, upon which such denial can be justified. Only as women are welcomed into full partnership in all fields of human endeavour will the moral and psychological climate be created in which international peace can emerge. . .

The decision-making agencies involved would do well to consider giving first priority to the education of women and girls, since it is through educated mothers that the benefits of knowledge can be most effectively and rapidly diffused throughout society. In keeping with the requirements of the times, consideration should also be given to teaching the concept of world citizenship as part of the standard education of every child.

### O Children of Men!

**Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory. - Bahá'u'lláh**