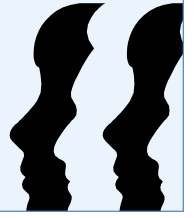


Interfaith Unity Feast

1556 Bell Road - Nashville, TN

We are drops of one ocean, leaves of one tree.



Two Wings of a Bird: The Equality of Women and Men

- **Welcome - Taraneh Lohrasbi**
- **Opening Prayers**

Bahá'í Prayer

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God! leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord. — **Bahá'u'lláh**

Hindu Prayer

O God
Let us be united; Let us speak in harmony;
Let our minds apprehend alike.
Common be our prayer; common be the end of our assembly;
Common be our resolution; Common be our deliberations.
Alike be our feelings; Unified be our hearts;
Common be our intentions; perfect be our unity.
— **Rig-Veda**

Christian Prayer (The Lord's Prayer)

Our Father, Who art in heaven,
Hallowed by thy Name
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen. — **Matthew 6:9-13**

- **Guest Speaker - Dorothy Marcic**
- **Music - Stephanie Urbina Jones**
- **Holy Writings**

From the Bahá'í Holy Writings

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is the equality of women and men. The world of humanity has two wings—one is women and the other man. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly. Should one wing remain weak, flight is impossible. Not until the world of women becomes equal to the world of men in the acquisition of virtues and perfections, can success and prosperity be attained as they ought to be.

— **'Abdu'l-Bahá: Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá**

In past ages it was held that woman and man were not equal - that is to say woman was considered inferior to man, even from the standpoint of her anatomy and creation. She was considered especially inferior in intelligence, and the idea prevailed universally that it was not allowable for her to step into the arena of important affairs. In some countries man went so far as to believe and teach that woman belonged to a sphere lower than human. But in this century, which is the century of light and the revelation of mysteries, God is proving to the satisfaction of humanity that all this is ignorance and error; nay, rather, it is well established that mankind and womankind as parts of composite humanity are co-equal and that no difference in estimate is allowable, for all are human....”

— **'Abdu'l-Bahá: Promulgation of Universal Peace, Page 133.**

From the Hindu Holy Writings

I am He, you are She;
I am Song, you are Verse,
I am Heaven, you are Earth.
We two shall here together dwell,
becoming parents of children. — **Hinduism, Atharva Veda 14.2.71**

From the Jewish Holy Writings

Compared to other cultures of the time, Jewish women enjoyed great liberty and esteem, and many women distinguished themselves as prophetesses and leaders in Jewish society. Women such as Miriam, Deborah, Esther and others played important and decisive roles in Israel's history.

Miriam, the daughter of Pharaoh, rescued baby Moses in the bulrushes of the Nile river and arranged for Moses' actual mother to be his nurse. In Exodus, Chapter 15: 20-21 Miriam is given the gift of prophesy and sings a victory song after the children of Israel cross the Red Sea.

The story of Deborah is found in Judges, Chapter 4-5. The Jews were in bondage to Jabin, a Canaanite King. Deborah, a Prophetess, served as Israel's Judge when no men were willing to lead. She would sit under a palm tree and the people would bring their cases to her. Later, she helped lead an army which defeated the enemy.

The story of Esther is found in the book that bears her name. King Xerexs of Persia had his wife deposed after she refused to entertain some of his friends. A beauty contest was held and the Jewish girl Esther was chosen to be the new Queen. Her influence and wisdom with affairs of state are elaborated on in the Book of Ester.

As evidence of the equality of men and women, the Ten Commandments require children to honor both their father and mother: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you." — **Exodus 20:12**

From the Christian Holy Writings

By the time of Jesus, women no longer had the freedoms and status they had enjoyed in the Old Testament era. Jewish society had become very much male-dominated. Women were considered to be inferior beings and were assigned almost the same status as slaves. They were not educated, not allowed to take any leadership roles, and confined to mostly domestic duties.

Jesus' attitude toward women was radically different from what was customary at the time. Women normally stayed home and attended to domestic duties. But Jesus allowed women to travel with Him and His twelve disciples. In Luke 8: 1-3 it is written that Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna - and many others - travelled with the group. And in Luke 10:38-42, we find that at the home of Mary and Martha, "Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching." Martha was irritated that Mary was not helping with food preparations and complained to Jesus, who said, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and John, Salome, Joanna, Susanna, and other women were prominent among Jesus' devoted followers. Some remained with Jesus to comfort Him at His crucifixion when all His apostles had fled in terror (Matthew 27:55-56, Mark 15:40-41), and Mary Magdalene and other women were privileged to be the first to discover that Jesus had risen from the dead. (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16: 1-7; Luke 24:1-11.)

From the Buddhist Holy Writings

In ancient India, the position of women does not appear to have been a very happy one. Generally women seemed to have been looked upon as being inferior to men. Their freedom was extremely limited. Their main role was considered to be that of housewives, managing the affairs in the house according to the wishes of their husbands. In marriage, her life was also often miserable. In addition to sharing her husband with a co-wife, if he died first, his wife was expected to kill herself by jumping into the funeral pyre of her husband.

From the Buddhist Holy Writings (continued)

Buddhism does not consider women as being inferior to men. The Buddha emphasized the fruitful role the woman can play and should play as a wife, a good mother in making the family life a success. In the family, both husbands and wives are expected to share equal responsibility and discharge their duties with equal dedication. The husband is admonished to consider the wife a friend, a companion, a partner. The wife is expected to acquaint herself with the trade, business or industries in which the husband engaged, so that she would be in a position to manage his affairs in his absence. Buddha unhesitatingly accepted that women are capable of realizing the Truth, just as men are and he permitted women to be admitted into the Order.

— **Buddhist Studies: Buddha Dharma Education Association; Buddhism and Women**

From the Muslim Holy Writings

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because God has given the one more strength than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in the husband's absence what God would have them guard. — **Islam. Qur'an 4.34**

- **Music — Lida Roshan**
- **Holy Writings**

From the Bahá'í Holy Writings

Bahá'í Scripture emphatically states that women will be the greatest factor in establishing universal peace and international arbitration. "So it will come to pass that when women participate fully and equally in the affairs of the world, when they enter confidently and capably the great arena of laws and politics, war will cease; for woman will be the obstacle and hindrance to it." — **'Abdu'l-Bahá, promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 375**

From the Bahá'í Holy Writings

Know thou, O handmaid, that in the sight of Bahá, women are accounted the same as men, and God hath created all humankind in His own image, and after His own likeness. That is, men and women alike are the revealers of His names and attributes, and from the spiritual viewpoint there is no difference between them. Whosoever draweth nearer to God, that one is the most favoured, whether man or woman. — **'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.**

Women have equal rights with men upon earth; in religion and society they are a very important element. As long as women are prevented from attaining their highest possibilities, so long will men be unable to achieve the greatness which might be theirs. — **'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 133**

Divine 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! — **'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 162.**

- **Music - Stephanie Urbina jones**
- **Closing Prayer**

From the Jewish and Christian Faiths

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.
— **Numbers 6:24-27**

- **Closing Remarks**
- **Refreshments**



The Unity Feast is sponsored by the Greater Nashville Bahá'í Community

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