

The Tenth Principle — Equality of Sex

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The Tenth Principle of the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is the equality of the sexes.

God has created all creatures in couples. Man, beast, or vegetable, all the things of these three kingdoms[pg 161] are of two sexes, and there is absolute equality between them.

In the vegetable world there are male plants and female plants; they have equal rights, and possess an equal share of the beauty of their species; though indeed the tree that bears fruit might be said to be superior to that which is unfruitful.

In the animal kingdom we see that the male and the female have equal rights; and that they each share the advantages of their kind.

Now in the two lower kingdoms of nature we have seen that there is no question of the superiority of one sex over the other. In the world of humanity we find a great difference; the female sex is treated as though inferior, and is not allowed equal rights and privileges. This condition is due not to nature, but to education. In the Divine Creation there is no such distinction. Neither sex is superior to the other in the sight of God. Why then should one sex assert the inferiority of the other, withholding just rights and privileges as though God had given His authority for such a course of action? If women received the same educational advantages as those of men, the result would demonstrate the equality of capacity of both for scholarship.

In some respects woman is superior to man. She is more tender-hearted, more receptive, her intuition is more intense.



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It is not to be denied that in various directions woman at present is more backward than man, also that this temporary inferiority is due to the lack of educational opportunity. In the necessity of life, woman is more instinct with power than man, for to her he owes his very existence.

If the mother is educated then her children will be well taught. When the mother is wise, then will the children be led into the path of wisdom. If the mother be religious she will show her children how they should love God. If the mother is moral she guides her little ones into the ways of uprightness.

It is clear therefore that 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! 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!

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.[pg 163] So will it be with woman; her actions will show her power, there will no longer be any need to proclaim it by words.

It is my hope that women of the East, as well as their Western sisters, will progress rapidly until humanity shall reach perfection.

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.

Women 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!

