

MEDITATIONS ON

THE POWER OF

Woman

ELEVATE

O dear sisters,
ardent lovers of Bahá'u'lláh,
may my soul be offered up for your devotion,
your staunchness, and your steadfastness!

Bahíyyih Khánúm

It is my earnest hope that you, His distinguished leaf, together with the other maidservants of the All-Merciful in that land, may be so enkindled by the flame set ablaze by the hand of God as to illumine the whole world through the quickening energy of the love of God, and that through the eloquence of your speech, the fluency of your tongue, and the confirmations of the Holy Spirit you will be empowered to expound divine wisdom in such manner that men of eloquence, and the scholars and sages of the world, will be lost in bewilderment.

Bahíyyih Khánum

*W*ell is it with the...handmaiden
who hath hearkened to His Voice and become of the blissful.
Verily, she is a champion of the field of true understanding.
To this the Tongue of Truth beareth witness from His exalted Station.
O My leaf, blessed art thou for having responded to My call
when it was raised in the name of the True One.
Thou didst recognise My Revelation
when men of renown were immersed in manifest idle fancies.
Thou hast verily attained the mercy of thy Lord time and again.
Render thanks unto Him and glorify Him with thy Praise.
He is, in truth, with His handmaidens and servants who have turned towards Him.
The shining glory from the Horizon of My Kingdom be upon thee
and upon the one who hath guided thee to My straight path.

Bahá'u'lláh

...*T*he greatness of this wondrous Age
will be manifested as a result of progress in the world of women.
This is why ye observe that in every land the world of women is on the march, and
this is due to the impact of the Most Great Manifestation,
and the power of the teachings of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

*T*he woman is indeed of the greater importance to the race.
She has the greater burden and the greater work.
Look at the vegetable and the animal worlds.
The palm which carries the fruit is the tree most prized by the date grower...
for a long journey the mare has the longest wind.
For her greater strength and fierceness,
the lioness is more feared by the hunter than the lion...
The woman has greater moral courage than the man;
she has also special gifts which enable her
to govern in moments of danger and crisis.
If necessary she can become a warrior.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

...*W*omen go neck and neck with the men.
In no movement will they be left behind.
Their rights with men are equal in degree.
They will enter all the administrative branches of politics.
They will attain in all such a degree
as will be considered the very highest station of the world of humanity
and will take part in all affairs.
Rest ye assured. Do ye not look upon the present condition;
in the not far distant future the world of women
will become all-refulgent and all-glorious...
the entrance of women into all human departments
is an irrefutable and incontrovertible question.
No soul can...prevent it.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

...It is well established in history that where woman has not participated in human affairs the outcomes have never attained a state of completion and perfection. On the other hand, every influential undertaking of the human world wherein woman has been a participant has attained importance. This is historically true and beyond disproof... The most momentous question of this day is international peace and arbitration, and universal peace is impossible without universal suffrage.

It has been objected by some that woman is not equally capable with man and that she is deficient by creation. This is pure imagination. The difference in capability between man and woman is due entirely to opportunity and education. Heretofore woman has been denied the right and privilege of equal development. If equal opportunity be granted her, there is no doubt she would be the peer of man. History will evidence this. In past ages noted women have arisen in the affairs of nations and surpassed men in their accomplishments.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

In past ages humanity has been defective and inefficient because it has been incomplete.

War and its ravages have blighted the world; the education of woman will be a mighty step toward its abolition and ending, for she will use her whole influence against war...

In truth, she will be the greatest factor in establishing universal peace and international arbitration.

Assuredly, woman will abolish warfare among mankind.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

*T*here can be no improvement unless the girls are brought up in schools and centres of learning, unless they are taught the sciences and other branches of knowledge, and unless they acquire the manifold arts, as necessary, and are divinely trained.

Bahá'u'lláh

*T*he world in the past has been ruled by force,
and man has dominated over woman
by reason of his more forceful and aggressive qualities
both of body and mind.

But the balance is already shifting;
force is losing its dominance,
and mental alertness, intuition,
and the spiritual qualities of love and service,
in which woman is strong,
are gaining ascendancy.

Hence the new age will be an age less masculine
and more permeated with the feminine ideals,
or, to speak more exactly, will be an age in which
the masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more evenly balanced.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

*T*he effulgence of the rays of the Sun of Truth is abundant and the favours of the Blessed Beauty surround the women believers... At every moment a bounteous bestowal is revealed. The handmaidens of the Merciful should seize the opportunities afforded in these days. Each one should strive to draw nigh unto the divine Threshold and seek bounties from the Source of existence. She should attain such a state and be confirmed with such a power as to make, with but the utterance of one word, a lowly person to be held in reverence, initiate him who is deprived into the world of the spirit, impart hope to the despondent, endow the portionless one with a share of the great bestowal, and confer knowledge and insight upon the ignorant... and alertness and vigilance on the indolent and heedless. This is the attribute of the handmaidens of the Merciful. This is the characteristic of the bondswomen of God's Threshold.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

O Thou Kind Bestower, O Nourisher of our souls and hearts!
We have no aim, except to walk Thy path;
we have no wish, except to bring Thee joy.
Our souls are united, and our hearts are welded, each to each.
In offering Thee our thanks and praise,
in following Thy ways and soaring in Thy skies, we are all one.
We are helpless, stand Thou by us, and give us strength.
Thou art the Protector, the Provider, the Kind.

Bahíyyih Khánum

① God...my cherished hope is to raise the banner of service
and to become a maidservant at Thy Holy Threshold;
to ride on a charger
and penetrate the army of the ignorant,
defeat the mighty regiments
and subvert the foundations of error and violation.
Thou art the Helper of the weak,
Thou art the Sustainer of the poor,
Thou art the Succourer of the handmaidens.
Verily, Thou art the Almighty and All-Powerful.

Bahíyyih Khánúm

1. Bahíyyih Khánum, from *Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf: A Compilation from Bahá'í Sacred Texts and Writings of the Guardian of the Faith and Bahíyyih Khánum's Own Letters*, no.91. ↵
2. Ibid, no.5. ↵
3. Bahá'u'lláh, translated from a Persian and Arabic tablet, published in 'Women', *Compilation of Compilations* (1991), vol.2, no.93. ↵
4. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, translated from a Persian tablet, published in 'Bahá'í Education', *Compilation of Compilations* (1991), vol.1, no.67. ↵
5. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, pp.102-103. ↵
6. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, pp.182-183. ↵
7. *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912*, p. 134. ↵
8. *Ibid.*, p. 108. ↵
9. Bahá'u'lláh, translated from a Persian and Arabic tablet, published in 'Women', *Compilation of Compilations* (1991), vol.2, no.93. ↵
10. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted by J.E. Esslemont in *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. ↵
11. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, translated from a Persian tablet, *A Compilation on Women*, compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, Bahá'í World Centre, January 1986, no.96. ↵
12. Bahíyyih Khánum, from *Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf: A Compilation from Bahá'í Sacred Texts and Writings of the Guardian of the Faith and Bahíyyih Khánum's Own Letters*, no.42. ↵
13. Abdu'l-Bahá, translated from a Persian tablet, *A Compilation on Women*, compiled by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, Bahá'í World Centre, January 1986, no.97. ↵

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