

The connection between women, science and peace

CORRESPONDENT

The writings of the Baha'i Faith provide a conceptual framework that encourages the involvement of women in the scientific endeavour and delineates the unique qualities that women can bring to the sciences. Through examining the lives of early women scientists whose contributions revolutionised their field, one can glimpse those unique qualities in action.

The Baha'i writings also provide a standard for understanding the psychological barriers encountered by women who wish to enter male-dominated sciences and for validating the struggle most central to women's lives--that of balancing career and parental responsibilities. Finally, they provide the moral authority for demanding the changes that must take place in the scientific community if humanity is to benefit from women's contributions.

THE Baha'i writings are not only historically unique as a religious doctrine in explicitly promoting the equality of women and men, but are also explicit on the subject of women in science. Moreover, they make an unequivocal connection between the participation of women in all arenas of society and the attainment of world 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. 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.

According to Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'i Faith, peace is not attainable unless unity is established, and unity is only attainable through justice. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expounded on numerous occasions on His father's principle of the equality of women and men. In a talk 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave in Sacramento, California, in 1912, He connected women to global prosperity, saying that, "Until womankind reaches the same degree as man, until she enjoys the same arena of activity, extraordinary attainment for humanity will not be realised; humanity cannot win its way to heights of real attainment."

He went on to say that "woman must receive the same education as man and all inequality be adjusted." While enjoining both women and men to choose occupations of service to humanity, in a talk in Boston, Massachusetts, He specifically encouraged women to devote their "energies and abilities toward the industrial and agricultural sciences" and seek to assist humankind "in that which is most needful". If one wonders why 'Abdu'l-Bahá put such emphasis on women's involvement in science, His views on science itself are illuminating. "Science," He says, "is the very foundation of all individual and national development. Without this basis of investigation development is impossible." He further testifies to the permanence of this power once it is obtained by an individual or country, stating that "All blessings are divine in origin, but none can be compared with this power of intellectual investigation and research. . .

All other blessings are temporary... this is a kingship and dominion which none may usurp or destroy." It follows that He wanted women, as well as men, to be empowered to bring about social and economic development and that He believed that social progress, including world peace itself, was dependent upon the full participation of women in the scientific and social arenas.

The Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing and legislative body of the Bahá'i Faith, has written that "it is through educated mothers that the benefits of knowledge can be most effectively and rapidly diffused throughout society." 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that there 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.

For the day will come when these girls will become mothers. Mothers are the first educators of children, who establish virtues in the child's inner nature. They encourage the child to acquire perfections and goodly manners, warn him against unbecoming qualities, and encourage him to show forth resolve, firmness, and endurance under hardship, and to advance on the highroad to progress.

Science permeated with feminine ideals

BUT what is special about women, and in what way must they be focused to help catalyse change? 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirmed that women have certain qualities in which

they are strong, qualities they can bring to various human arenas that will, in fact, transform them to such a degree that the resulting climate will be conducive to harmony and peace. Amongst these are intuition and receptiveness, mental alertness, "abundance of mercy and sympathy," concern for "the needy and suffering," and "moral courage" greater than that of men.

Rather than suggesting that women emulate men, 'Abdu'l-Bahá exhorts them to "strive to show in the human world" that they "are most capable and efficient, that their hearts are more tender and susceptible than the hearts of men, that they are more philanthropic and responsive toward the needy and suffering, that they

are inflexibly opposed to war and lovers of peace." The qualities 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggested are highly developed in women as a group are universal qualities of human character. Women's relative strength in these traits at the present time results from the divergent emphasis in the evolution of the sexes.

The shift required in civilisation, therefore, is for the positive female qualities to be given more prominence and acceptance in various arenas of human endeavour. By applying such qualities to science, women can encourage science to focus more sharply on the social and economic development of humankind, thereby fulfilling its most noble purpose.



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR LEASING OF BOITEKANELO COLLEGE (BC) SOUVENIR SHOP IN TLOKWENG CAMPUS

BC is seeking to engage reputable companies to lease its souvenir shop based in its Campus in Tlokweng. The preferred Bidder for the Souvenir will be required to provide the following;

1. Demonstrate relevant experience capability as well as ability to finance and run the shop, atleast 2 references
2. Bidders Profile
3. Registration Documents
4. Certificate of Incorporation
5. Tax Clearance

- Companies will be expected to demonstrate compliance to regulatory requirements for the expression of operation of the souvenir shop.
- To ensure that the souvenir shop is adequately stocked to serve the student and staff population of Boitekanelo College.



Companies wishing to participate on this EOI are to send Proposals through email to;
procurement@boitekanelo.ac.bw

All enquiries to be directed to:
Ms. Tshepo Mokgachane or Peggy Molelekeng:
3980535 / 3980501
During office hours.

Late submissions will not be accepted

Closing Date: 26th February 2021
At 1600Hrs



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