

The Bahá'ís of Florence Inter-Faith Devotional Service



“THE PURPOSE OF LIFE IN THE FAMILY AND IN SOCIETY”

Husband and Wife

Hinduism

In the beginning there was only the Self, one only. He desired, "May I have a wife in order to have offspring; may I have wealth in order to perform a work!" — for desire reaches this far. Even if one wishes, one cannot obtain more than this. As long as one does not attain each of these (desires), he thinks himself to be incomplete.

He found no joy; so even today, one who is all alone finds no joy. He yearned for a second. He became as large as a man and a woman locked in close embrace. This self he split into two; hence arose husband and wife. Therefore, as Yajnavalkya used to observe, "Oneself is like half of a split pea." That is why this void is filled by woman. He was united with her, and thence were born human beings.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.17 and 1.4.3

Judaism

What a rare find is a capable wife! Her worth is far beyond that of rubies. Her husband puts his confidence in her, and lacks no good thing. She is good to him,

never bad, all the days of her life. She looks for wool and flax, and sets her hand to them with a will. She is like a merchant fleet, bringing her food from afar. She rises while it is still night, and supplies provisions for her household, the daily fair of her maids. She sets her mind on an estate and acquires it; she plants a vineyard by her own labors. She girds herself with strength, and performs her tasks with vigor. She sees that her business thrives; her lamp never goes out at night. She sets her hand to the distaff; her fingers work the spindle. She gives generously to the poor; her hands are stretched out to the needy...She is clothed with strength and splendor; she looks to the future cheerfully. Her mouth is full of wisdom, her tongue with kindly teaching. She oversees the activities of her household and never eats the bread of idleness. Her children declare her happy; her husband praises her, "Many women have done well, but you surpass them all." Grace is deceptive, beauty is illusory; it is for her fear of the Lord that a woman is to be praised. Extol her for the fruit of her hand, and let her works praise her in the gates.

Kethuvim/ Proverbs 31.15

Christianity

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and He is the savior of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as (he Lord the church For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Ephesians 5.22-33

Baha'i Faith

And when He desired to manifest grace and beneficence to men, and to set the world in order, He revealed observances and created laws; among them He established the law of marriage, made it as a fortress for well-being and salvation, and enjoined it upon us in that which was sent down out of the heaven of sanctity in His Most Holy Book. He saith, great is His glory: "Marry, O people, that from you may appear he who will remember Me amongst My servants; this is one of My commandments unto you; obey it as an assistance to yourselves.

Baha'u'llah Baha'i Prayers (US), pg. 105

The Family

Zoroastrianism

May in this family discipline overcome indiscipline, peace discord, charity miserliness, devotion arrogance, the truth-spoken word the false-spoken word which destroys the holy order.

Avesta, Yasna 60.5

Buddhism

Supporting one's father and mother, cherishing wife and children and a peaceful occupation; this is the greatest blessing.

Sutta Nipata 262

Islam

Lord, give us joy in our wives and children, and make us models for the God-fearing.

Qur'an 25.74

Baha'i Faith

The beginning of magnanimity is when man expendeth his wealth on himself, on his family and on the poor among his brethren in his Faith.

Baha'u'llah Tablets of Baha'u'llah, page 156

Parents and Children

Judaism and Christianity

...He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

Psalm 78.5-7

Native Wisdoms

Do not despise the breath of your fathers, but draw it into your body. That our roads may reach to where the life-giving road of our sun father comes out, that, clasping one another tight, holding one

another fast, we may finish our roads together; that this may be, I add to your breath now. To this end: may my father bless you with life; may your road reach to Dawn Lake, may your road be fulfilled.

Zuni Prayer

Brethren, a new child is born. While in the uterus it was the woman's thing; safely delivered, it is everybody's child, a native of Nibo, a Nigerian.

He shall grow under the care of his parents; when mature he will look after his parents. He shall listen to the good advice of his parents; he ought not to obey wrong things.

We want truly good children, not any thing at all: He will grow up industrious, imitating father, mother, and other relations.

No evil child! Instead of a thief, may it pass away through miscarriage. The name of the baby is "Chinenye."

Igbo Naming Ceremony (Nigeria)

My father, thank you for petting me; my mother, thank you for making me comfortable; thank you for robing me with wisdom, which is more important than robing me with clothes. Slaves will minister unto you; servants will be your helpers- Children which I shall bear will minister unto you.

Yoruba Nuptial Chant (Nigeria)

If your parents take care of you up to the time you cut your teeth, you take care of them when they lose theirs.

Akan Proverb (Ghana)

My father sent for me; I saw he was dying- I buried him in that beautiful valley of winding waters. I love that land more than all the rest of the world. A man who would not love his father's grave is worse than a wild animal.

Nez Perce Tradition

Baha'i Faith

That which is of paramount importance for the children, that which must precede all else, is to teach them the oneness of God and the laws of God. For lacking this, the fear of God cannot be inculcated, and lacking the fear of God an infinity of odious and abominable actions will spring up, and sentiments will be uttered that transgress all bounds...

The parents must exert every effort to rear their offspring to be religious, for should the children not attain this greatest of adornments, they will not obey their parents, which in a certain sense means that they will not obey God. Indeed, such children will show no consideration to anyone, and will do exactly as they please.

Baha'u'llah Baha'i Education, pg.. 248

The Ideal Society

Judaism

Thus said the Lord: Do what is just and right; rescue from the defrauder him who is robbed; do not wrong the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; commit no lawless act, and do not shed the blood of the innocent in this place. For if you fulfill this command, then through the gates of the palace shall enter kings of David's line who sit upon his throne, riding horse-drawn chariots, with their courtiers and their subjects. But if you do not heed these commands, I swear by My self-declared the Lord- this palace shall become a ruin.

Nevi'im, Jeremiah 22.3-5

Islam

Verily, God enjoineeth justice and the doing of good and gifts to kindred; and he forbiddeth wickedness and wrong and oppression...Be faithful in the covenant of God when ye have covenanted, and break not your oaths after ye have pledged them; for now have ye made God to stand surety for you. Verily, God hath knowledge of what ye do. And, because you are more numerous people than some other people, be not like her who unravelleth the thread which she had strongly spun, by taking your oaths with mutual perfidy. God is making trial of you in this; and in the day of

resurrection he will assuredly clear up to you that concerning which ye are now at variance.

Qur'an 16.90

Baha'i Faith

If love and agreement are manifest in a single family, that family will advance, become illumined and spiritual; but if enmity and hatred exist within it, destruction and dispersion are inevitable. This is, likewise, true of a city. If those who dwell within it manifest a spirit of accord and fellowship, it will progress steadily and human conditions become brighter, whereas through enmity and strife it will be degraded and its inhabitants scattered. In the same way, the people of a nation develop and advance toward civilization and enlightenment through love and accord and are disintegrated by war and strife. Finally, this is true of humanity itself in the aggregate. When love is realized and the ideal spiritual bonds unite the hearts of men, the whole human race will be uplifted, the world will continually grow more spiritual and radiant and the happiness and tranquility of mankind be immeasurably increased. Warfare and strife will be uprooted, disagreement and dissension pass away and universal peace unite the nations and peoples of the world. All mankind will dwell together as one family, blend as the waves of one sea, shine as stars of one firmament and appear as fruits of the

same tree. This is the happiness and felicity of humankind. This is the illumination of man, the eternal glory and everlasting life; this is the divine bestowal.

'Abdu'l-Baha Promulgation of Universal Peace pgs 144-145

PRAYER

My God, the Object of my adoration, the Goal of my desire, the All-Bountiful, the Most Compassionate! All life is of Thee and all power lieth within the grasp of Thine omnipotence. Whosoever Thou exaltest is raised above the angels, and attaineth the station: "Verily, We uplifted him to a place on high"; and whosoever Thou dost abase is made lower than dust, nay, less than nothing,

O Divine Providence! Though wicked, sinful, and intemperate, we still seek from Thee a "seat of truth," and long to behold the countenance of the Omnipotent King. It is Thine to command, and all sovereignty belongeth to Thee, and the realm of might boweth before Thy behest. Everything Thou doest is pure justice, nay, the very essence of grace. One gleam from the splendors of Thy Name, the All-Merciful, sufficeth to banish and blot out every trace of sinfulness from the world, and a single breath from the breezes of the Day of Thy Revelation is enough to adorn all mankind with a fresh attire.

Vouchsafe Thy strength, O Almighty One, unto Thy weak creatures, and quicken them who are as dead, that haply they may find Thee, and may be led unto the ocean of Thy guidance, and may remain steadfast in Thy Cause. Should the fragrance of Thy praise be shed abroad by any of the divers tongues of the world, out of the East or out of the West, it would, verily, be prized and greatly cherished. If such tongues,

however, be deprived of that fragrance, they assuredly would be unworthy of any mention, be they words or thoughts.

We beg of Thee, O Providence, to show Thy way unto all men, and to guide them aright. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, the All-Knowing, the All-Seeing.

Baha'u'llah Prayers and Meditations pages 252 253

