

THE EQUALITY
OF WOMEN
AND MEN



A PRAYER TO BEGIN



O Thou who hast bowed thyself down in prayer before the Kingdom of God! Blessed art thou, for the beauty of the divine Countenance hath enraptured thy heart, and the light of inner wisdom hath filled it full, and within it shineth the brightness of the Kingdom. Know thou that God is with thee under all conditions, and that He guardeth thee from the changes and chances of this world and hath made thee a handmaid in His mighty vineyard....

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

In this day man must investigate reality impartially and without prejudice in order to reach the true knowledge and conclusions. What, then, constitutes the inequality between man and woman? Both are human. In powers and function each is the complement of the other. At most it is this: that woman has been denied the opportunities which man has so long enjoyed, especially the privilege of education....

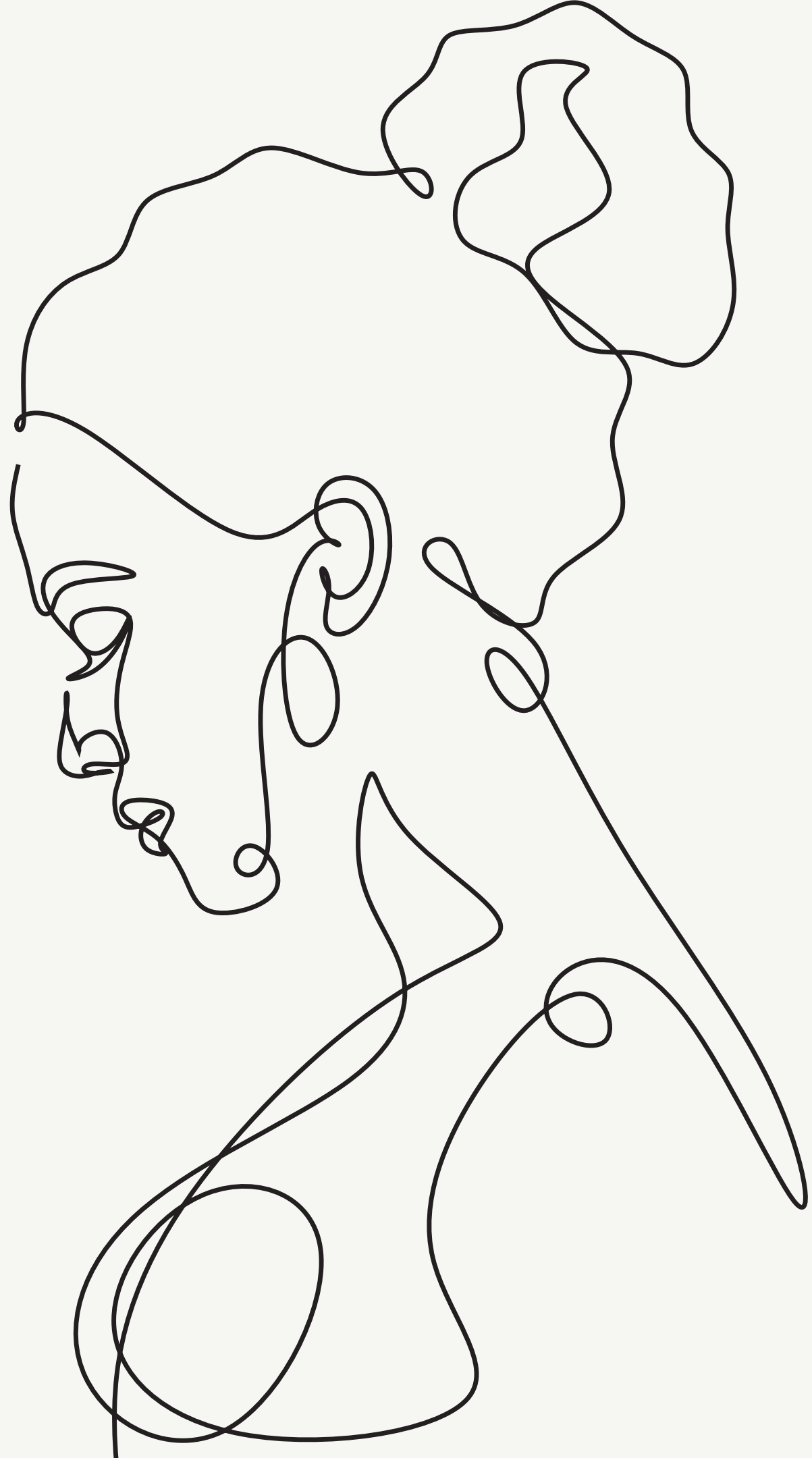
The truth is that all mankind are the creatures and servants of one God, and in His estimate all are human. Man is a generic term applying to all humanity. The biblical statement "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" does not mean that woman was not created. The image and likeness of God apply to her as well.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

For as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.

1 Corinthians 11:12





...the equality of men and women is not a Western construct but a universal spiritual truth—a statement about human nature... That women should enjoy equal rights with men is a requirement of justice. It is a principle consonant with the highest standard of purity and sanctity, whose application strengthens family life and is essential to the regeneration and progress of any nation. Indeed, peace in the world and the advancement of civilization depend on its realization.

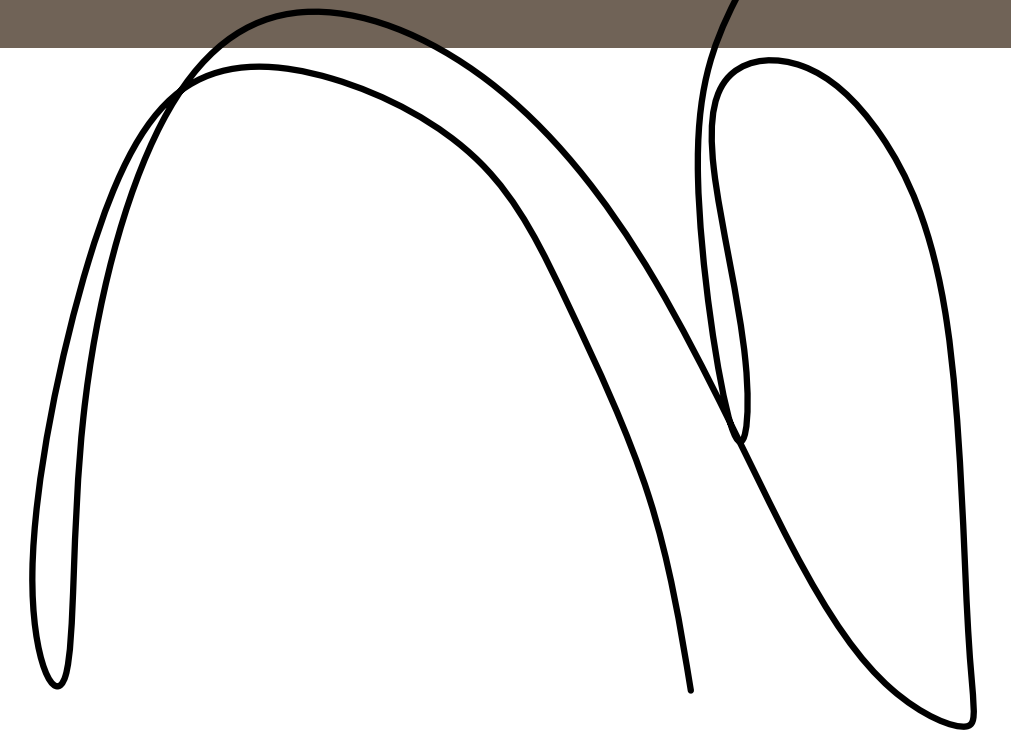
The Universal House of Justice

The emancipation of women, the achievement of full equality between the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged prerequisites of peace. The denial of such equality perpetrates an injustice against one half of the world's population and promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that are carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations. There are no grounds, moral, practical, or biological, upon which such denial can be justified. 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.

The Universal House of Justice

Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.

Kofi Annan



Men must use their influence, particularly in the civil, political and religious institutions they control, to promote the systematic inclusion of women, not out of condescension or presumed self-sacrifice but out of the belief that the contributions of women are required for society to progress. Women, for their part, must become educated and step forward into all arenas of human activity, contributing their particular qualities, skills and experience to the social, economic and political equation. Women and men together will ensure the establishment of world peace and sustainable development of the planet.

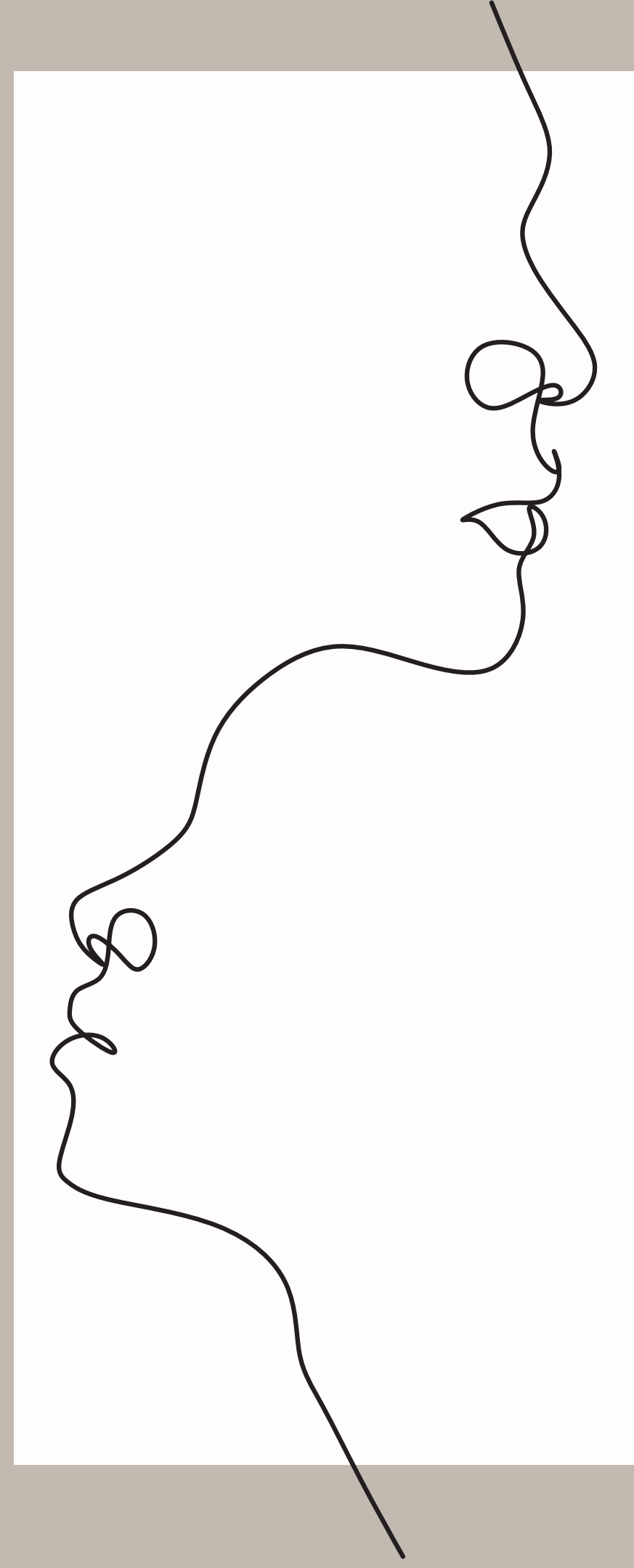
Bahá'í International Community

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

We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.

Malala Yousafzai



It is essential that men engage in a careful, deliberate examination of attitudes, feelings, and behavior deeply rooted in cultural habit, that block the equal participation of women and stifle the growth of men.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

The full development of men and boys is inextricably linked to the advancement of women. A society characterized by gender equality serves the interests of both sexes.

Bahá'í International Community

Women will only have true equality when men share with them the responsibility of bringing up the next generation.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg





For the world of humanity possesses two wings: man and woman. If one wing remains incapable and defective, it will restrict the power of the other, and full flight will be impossible. Therefore, the completeness and perfection of the human world are dependent upon the equal development of these two wings.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

...until woman and man recognize and realize equality, social and political progress here or anywhere will not be possible... Until these two members are equal in strength, the oneness of humanity cannot be established, and the happiness and felicity of mankind will not be a reality.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

