

[Eternal Partnership for a Healthy Society](#)

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE

## Eternal Partnership for a Healthy Society

Men and women have equal rights and duties in making a better world through high conduct

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Originally, a long, long time ago, the ancestors of the Hindus settled in the lush and spiritually comfortable land of India to pursue their continuous search for Divine Light and Wisdom. The warm, ever-green and fruit-loaded land and climate was well suited for their purpose, which was the search for knowledge. The Sanskrit name of India, Bhaa-rat, explains it very well: Desirous of Seeking Divine Light.

In those days our rishis and sages were married. All work was shared. Women were equal participants in religious rites, and all activities, like farming. Neglecting the children, which should never happen, was not an issue, because the family business was in the home. My firm opinion is that men and women have eternal partnership in this universe. Both have played equal parts in the promotion of civilization, culture and knowledge. All men and women have roles to play in this world. All lives are born with a purpose. That Divine Purpose is to explore the limits of consciousness which by nature is

infinite and limitless. Are not all men and women children of the Infinite?

Does not history prove that civilization has been promoted by individual and collective little acts of love and hate? A boy or a girl both get a place in the womb of the mother, and both have claims upon the heritage of the father. Does this not clearly indicate that both have equal rights and duties to each other and as members of the group? A society also functions like an organism, and parts of the body need to remain healthy and strong singly to promote the general health and activities of the whole body. As two eyes, ears, hands and feet cooperate fully in the survival of the body, so do men and women both need to function individually and collectively for the over-all promotion of the world, which is just a collection of smaller social, religious, cultural and geographical units.

If we find a hole, a drawback in our society, in which society failed to provide comforts, opportunities and justice, both sexes are equally responsible. Nothing has ever been achieved in the world without a price. Necessary preparations must be made to pave the road of the future. If somewhere we lacked in our efforts, both men and women are responsible for that shortcoming.

Instead of grieving at the past, we should focus our attention on a better future. Leave no stone unturned. Time, mind, money and resources are the wealth of the universe, all to be utilized to create a better world for tomorrow. God has done a great justice by giving every one equal time and energy. Let us promote the whole society, and we will have equal shares of

joy. The Vedas and Upanishads lay stress on the word sarva, which means all. It includes women as well as men. The mantras boldly proclaim:

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah

Sarve santu niraamayaa

Sarve bhadrani pashyantu

Maa kashchid dukhmaapnuyaat.

"May all be happy, healthy, cultured, wise, peaceful and reach the aim of perfection."

All includes women, who were, in ancient times, equal participants in all affairs of society and politics, shoulder to shoulder with their husbands, like Arundhati, wife of sage Vashista, and Kaikeyi who went to the battlefield and saved her husband King Dashrath, father of Ram. Later, when India was invaded, it was essential for ladies to remain cloistered at home, only doing housework. Over time this became a way of living widely accepted by society for its convenience in the division of work and for the sake of the children's upbringing.

Men and women both should aspire to a very high code of conduct to be able to give right direction to future generations. If both partners are good, loving, caring and share the joys and responsibilities equally, nothing can go wrong. The problems arise when one partner is idle, bad-natured or has a bad character. From childhood both men and women should be trained to be efficient in work and should develop good nature, habits and character through studies and practices. One learns to become a good citizen through the "kiss and care" of the parents. A citizen is one who cares for her country. Husband and wife must care for each other. There will be changes and you can do anything you want. But be prepared for the

consequences, which should not be hurtful to anyone.

There is so much negative publicity today given to the evil side of our society. Crimes become the news of the day and this in turn engenders more negative behavior. Instead let us focus on the family. Everything begins with a loving family. All should aspire to live up to the high ideals expressed in this prayer:

Om saha naa vavatu; Saha nau bhunaktu  
Saha viryam karavaa-vahai  
Tejasvi-naava-dhita-mastu maa vidvishaavahai

May God protect us. May God be pleased with us.

May we work together with vigor. May our studies illumine us.

May we have no contention or hostility between us.

This wisdom applies not only to the Guru and disciple relationship but also to other partners of life. But, for the sake of personal freedom, people have given up so much. I see so much loneliness in America. Instead there should be mutual trust, mutual affection. Rama and Sita are the best examples--like two bodies, but merged as one. Like two legs they move together, one after the other. For this we will all have to make adjustments. Children also must be taught how to adjust to the changing times. But it can be done. We all

have to work hard to maintain the harmony of our relationships.

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