



SESSION 8: ROOTS AND DIVERSITY

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this session is to recognize the feminine spirit at the core of the Abrahamic faiths. To achieve this goal, the session will focus on the following objectives:

1. Participants learn about the role of women as leaders and prophets in Abrahamic faiths.
2. Participants learn about feminist aspects of Qur'anic and Biblical scriptures and religions.
3. Question conventional wisdom about the patriarchal nature of Abrahamic faiths.

ACTIVITIES

Discussion

- ❖ Review and discuss the NOS chapter, "Women Who Have Names."
 - What does Brian Brown say about how women are treated in the Qur'an vs. the Bible?
 - What does Brian Brown say about the "golden rule" of religion? (p.145)
- ❖ Review the stories of the women assigned for research in the previous session.
 - Compare them to traditional (e.g. patriarchal) notions of leaders/heroes? How does the Abrahamic notion of a hero subvert the patriarchal notion of a hero/leader? Compare/contrast Moses and Pharaoh, Jesus and Caesar, David and Alexander. Participants may note the following traits common to biblical heroes and leaders:
 - Abrahamic leaders are accountable to the law of God (not a law unto themselves.)
 - Ambition is not the driving force. (Note that Moses was a reluctant leader.)
 - They are often chosen from the "least likely to succeed."

The following questions can be used to guide discussion on specific women.

- ❖ Compare/contrast Khadijah and Muhammad. Who was older? Who initiated the relationship? Who held the power in the relationship?
- ❖ What role did Mary Magdalene play in Jesus' ministry? What role did her witness play in the development of the Church?
- ❖ Review and discuss the story of Ruth.
 - Discuss her Moabite roots in light of the story of Lot. From whom was Ruth descended? What does "Moabite" mean in terms of the word's Hebraic roots? (Refer to Lot's story in Genesis for the word's meaning, an epithet Israelites used to refer an enemy people.)
 - Discuss David's (hence Jesus') roots as a result of having Ruth as an ancestor. What are the implications of this "interracial" heritage then and now?

READINGS AND ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT SESSION

For next session, participant should read the following:



Noah's Other Son

Session 8

1. NOS: Ch. 15, "The Mother of Jesus: Mary/Maryam ," pp.163-174.
 - a. Optional: NOS Ch. 14, "Cameo Appearances," pp.153-162.
2. Handouts on Biblical Criticism and Nestorianism from Wikipedia.