

## Module 04: How Did Abolitionism Lead to the Struggle for Women 's Rights?

### Evidence 9: "Am I not a Woman and a Sister?" 1832

# A

#### Introduction

The article below appeared in an early column in the "Ladies Department" of *The Liberator*. Rhetorically addressed to the woman in the engraving but more likely directed to *The Liberator's* white female readership, the column highlighted the large numbers of black women ("one million of them") "groaning between the. . .oppressive yoke" of chattel slavery as a way to inspire white women to act on their behalf.

#### Questions to Consider

- According to the author of the article, what were the implications of identifying with enslaved women as "women" and "sisters?"
- What parallels does the author draw between the experiences and feelings of enslaved black women and those of free white women?

#### Document



"Am I not a Woman and a Sister?"

YES!

We acknowledge that thou art a woman and a sister; and our sympathies have been awakened in thy behalf, although there are many who still remain in a state of apathy in regard to thy sufferings; yet we hope, by the blessing of God on our united exertions in your behalf, that the day will ere long arrive, when your oppressors will behold, and turn from their iniquitous ways; for the thought is too revolting, that there is so much indifference manifested by our sex, on this subject, although one million of them are now groaning beneath the same oppressive yoke with thyself. But the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; and He who rides upon the wings of the wind, in whom is all power, can command a calm. He can rouse the sluggish every where, He can break the fetters and release the oppressed slaves from the power of the cruel tyrant; then they will no longer be heard to groan under the lash of the unfeeling driver, whose every blow bears witness of the savage barbarity of the monster, or the shrieks of the afflicted mother be heard at the parting of her dear offspring, (the only consolation of her heart). But something must be done: an effort must be made: nothing can be done without an effort: and it is in the power of American women to do much, in the cause of African emancipation; they can form societies; each member agreeing to do all in her power to abolish this horrible travail, to spread the alarm by patronizing the Liberator — and to abstain from using the fruits of iniquity and oppression.

Source:

*The Liberator* 2.11 (17 March 1832).