

From the Bahá'í Writings on Health

Introduction

. . . the Guardian's secretary has stated on his behalf that "It is premature to try and elaborate on the few general references to health and medicine made in our Holy Scriptures." The believers must guard against seizing upon any particular text which may appeal to them and which they may only partially or even incorrectly understand. -
- quoted in a letter from the Universal House of Justice on 24 January 1977.

1058. In this world we are influenced by two sentiments, Joy and Pain. Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, our intellect keener, and our understanding less clouded. We seem better able to cope with the world and to find our sphere of usefulness. But when sadness visits us we become weak, our strength leaves us, our comprehension is dim and our intelligence veiled. The actualities of life seem to elude our grasp, the eyes of our spirits fail to discover the sacred mysteries, and we become even as dead beings. (Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 109)

. . .man cannot live singly and alone. He is in need of continuous cooperation and mutual help. . . . A man living alone in the wilderness will eventually starve. . . . he is in need of cooperation and reciprocity. -Abdu'l Bahá, Foundations of World Unity

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Add to Our Physical Life

1012. Whenever ye fall ill, refer to competent physicians. Verily, We have not abolished recourse to material means, rather have We affirmed it through this Pen which God hath made the Dawning Place of His luminous and resplendent Cause. ("Kitab-i-Aqdas," ¶ 113)

1016. In all circumstances they should conduct themselves with moderation; if the meal be only one course this is more pleasing in the sight of God; however, according to their means, they should seek to have this single dish be of good quality. ("Kitab-i-Badi'" - translated from the Persian)

1036. O thou who art attracted to the fragrant breathings of God! I have read thy letter addressed to Mrs. Lua Getsinger. Thou hast indeed examined with great care the reasons for the incursion of disease into the human body. It is certainly the case that sins are a potent cause of physical ailments. If humankind were free from the defilements of sin and waywardness, and lived according to a natural, inborn equilibrium, without following wherever their passions led, it is undeniable that diseases would no longer take the ascendant, nor diversify with such intensity. But man hath perversely continued to serve his lustful appetites, and he would not content himself with simple foods. Rather, he prepared for himself food that was compounded of many ingredients, of substances differing one from the other. With this, and with the perpetrating of vile and ignoble acts, his attention was engrossed, and he abandoned the temperance and moderation of a natural way of life. The result was the engendering of diseases both violent and diverse.

1019. Do not neglect medical treatment when it is necessary, but leave it off when health has been restored.... Treat disease through diet, by preference, refraining from the use of drugs; and if you find what is required in a single herb, do not resort to a compounded medicament. Abstain from drugs when the health is good, but administer them when necessary. (Cited in J. E. Esslemont, "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", 5th rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), p. 106)

1046. When the science of medicine reaches perfection, treatment will be given by foods, aliments, fragrant fruits and vegetables, and by various waters, hot and cold in temperature. (Some Answered Questions, pp 257)

1045. Question.--Some people heal the sick by spiritual means--that is to say, without medicine. How is this? Answer.--Know that there are four kinds of curing and healing without medicine. Two are due to material causes, and two to spiritual causes. Of the two kinds of material healing, one is due to the fact that in man both health and sickness are contagious. The contagion of disease is violent and rapid, while that of health is extremely weak and slow. If two bodies are brought into contact with each other, it is certain that microbic particles will pass from one to the other. In the same way that disease is transferred from one body to another with rapid and strong contagion, it may be that the strong health of a healthy man will alleviate a very slight malady in a sick person. That is to say, the contagion of disease is violent and has a rapid effect, while that of health is very slow and has a small effect, and it is only in very slight diseases that it has even this small effect. The strong power of a healthy body can overcome a slight weakness of a sick body, and health results. This is one kind of healing. The other kind of healing without medicine is through the magnetic force which acts from one body on another and becomes the cause of cure. This force also has only a slight effect. Sometimes one can benefit a sick person by placing one's

hand upon his head or upon his heart. Why? Because of the effect of the magnetism, and of the mental impression made upon the sick person, which causes the disease to vanish. But this effect is also very slight and weak.

1095. Now, if thou wishest to know the true remedy which will heal man from all sickness and will give him the health of the divine kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Focus thine attention upon them. ("Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá", sec 133, pp. 151-52)

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Subtract from Our Physical Life

1052. **When the question was asked, "What will be the food of the future?" The answer was , "Fruit and grains. The time will come when meat will no longer be eaten. Medical science is only in its infancy, yet it has shown that our natural diet is that which grows out of the ground. The people will gradually develop up to the condition of this natural food."** (Julia M. Grundy. "Ten Days in the Light of 'Akka", rev. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979), pp. 8-9)

1028. Regarding the eating of animal flesh and abstinence therefrom, know thou of a certainty that, in the beginning of creation, God determined the food of every living being, and to eat contrary to that determination is not approved. For instance, beasts of prey, such as the wolf, lion and leopard, are endowed with ferocious, tearing instruments, such as hooked talons and claws. ... But now coming to man, we see he hath neither hooked teeth nor sharp nails or claws, nor teeth like iron sickles. From this it becometh evident and manifest that the food of man is cereals and fruit. Some of the teeth of man are like millstones to grind the grain, and some are sharp to cut the fruit. Therefore he is not in need of meat, nor is he obliged to eat it. Even without eating meat he would live with the utmost vigour and energy. For example, the community of the Brahmins in India do not eat meat; notwithstanding this they are not inferior to other nations in strength, power, vigour, outward senses or intellectual virtues. Truly, the killing of animals and the eating of their meat is somewhat contrary to pity and compassion, and if one can content oneself with cereals, fruit, oil and nuts, such as pistachios, almonds and so on, it would undoubtedly be better and more pleasing. (From a Tablet - translated from the Persian)

1029. Thou hast written regarding the four canine teeth in man, saying that these teeth, two in the upper jaw and two in the lower, are for the purpose of eating meat. Know thou that these four teeth are not created for meat-eating, although one can eat meat with them. All the teeth of man are made for eating fruit, cereals and vegetables.

These four teeth, however, are designed for breaking hard shells, such as those of almonds. But eating meat is not forbidden or unlawful, nay, the point is this, that it is possible for man to live without eating meat and still be strong. Meat is nourishing and containeth the elements of herbs, seeds and fruits; therefore sometimes it is essential for the sick and for the rehabilitation of health. There is no objection in the Law of God to the eating of meat if it is required. So if thy constitution is rather weak and thou findest meat useful, thou mayest eat it. (From a Tablet - translated from the Persian)

1031. O ye, God's loved ones! Experience hath shown how greatly the renouncing of smoking, of intoxicating drink, and of opium, conduceth to health and vigour, to the expansion and keenness of the mind and to bodily strength. There is today a people[1] who strictly avoid tobacco, intoxicating liquor and opium. This people is far and away superior to the others, for strength and physical courage, for health, beauty and comeliness. A single one of their men can stand up to ten men of another tribe. – Ábdu'l-Baha

1036. It is certainly the case that sins are a potent cause of physical ailments. If humankind were free from the defilements of sin and waywardness, and lived according to a natural, inborn equilibrium, without following wherever their passions led, it is undeniable that diseases would no longer take the ascendant, nor diversify with such intensity.

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Add to Our Spiritual Life

1018. Thy Name is my healing, O my God! And remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou are verily the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Bahá'u'lláh.

1035. There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first is by the treatment of physicians; the second consisteth in prayers offered by the spiritual ones to God and in turning to Him. Both means should be used and practised. Illnesses which occur by reason of physical causes should be treated by doctors with medical remedies; those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus an illness caused by affliction, fear, nervous impressions, will be healed more effectively by spiritual rather than by physical

treatment. Hence, both kinds of treatment should be followed; they are not contradictory.

958. Through the faculty of meditation man attains to eternal life; through it he receives the breath of the Holy Spirit -- the bestowal of the Spirit is given in reflection and meditation.

The spirit of man is itself informed and strengthened during meditation; through it affairs of which man knew nothing are unfolded before his view. Through it he receives Divine inspiration, through it he receives heavenly food.

Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state man abstracts himself: in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective mood he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things-in-themselves. To illustrate this, think of man as endowed with two kinds of sight; when the power of insight is being used the outward power of vision does not see.

This faculty of meditation frees man from the animal nature, discerns the reality of things, puts man in touch with God. (Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 174)

1058. The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror; if you put it before earthly objects it will reflect them. Therefore if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly subjects he will be informed of these.

But if you turn the mirror of your spirits heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in your hearts, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be obtained.

Therefore let us keep this faculty rightly directed -- turning it to the heavenly Sun and not to earthly objects -- so that we may discover the secrets of the Kingdom, and comprehend the allegories of the Bible and the mysteries of the spirit. (Abdu'l-Baha, Paris Talks, p. 175)

1047. We should all visit the sick. When they are in sorrow and suffering, it is a real help and benefit to have a friend come. Happiness is a great healer to those who are ill. ("The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks Delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His Visit to the United States and Canada in 1912" 2nd. ed. (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982), p. 204)

1020. Verily the most necessary thing is contentment under all circumstances; by this one is preserved from morbid conditions and from lassitude. Yield not to grief and sorrow: they cause the greatest misery. Jealousy consumeth the body and anger doth

burn the liver: avoid these two as you would a lion. (Cited in "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era", p. 108)

1035. Now, if thou wishest to know the true remedy which will heal man from all sickness and will give him the health of the divine kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Focus thine attention upon them. ("Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá", sec 133, pp. 151-52)

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Subtract from Our Spiritual Life

180. I hope that in this nether world thou shalt attain unto heavenly light, thou wilt free the souls from the gloom of nature, which is the animal kingdom, and cause them to reach lofty stations in the human kingdom. Today all people are immersed in the world of nature. That is why thou dost see jealousy, greed, the struggle for survival, deception, hypocrisy, tyranny, oppression, disputes, strife, bloodshed, looting and pillaging, which all emanate from the world of nature. Few are those who have been freed from this darkness, who have ascended from the world of nature to the world of man, who have followed the divine Teachings, have served the world of humanity, are resplendent, merciful, illumined and like unto a rose garden. Strive thine utmost to become godlike, characterized with His attributes, illumined and merciful, that thou mayest be freed from every bond and become attached at heart to the Kingdom of the incomparable Lord. This is Bahá'í bounty, and this is heavenly light. (Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 206)