

On the Question of Vaccination: A Compilation

Regarding your question about vaccination: These are technical matters which have not been specifically mentioned in the teachings, and consequently the Guardian cannot make any statement about them. No doubt medical science will progress tremendously as time goes by, and the treatment of disease become more perfect.

(From a letter dated December 24, 1943 written on behalf of the Guardian
to an individual believer)

There is nothing in the Bahá'í Teachings regarding vaccinations but only general indications about health; therefore, the Guardian cannot advise you on this subject.

One thing is clear—that Bahá'u'lláh has said we should consult a good physician if we are ill; and as good physicians nowadays prescribe mostly drugs, it would not seem that a Bahá'í could refuse to take them. However, they are free to use their own judgment as to what kind of a physician they consider a good physician, and ultimately decision as to whether to have one's child vaccinated or not must rest with the parents in consultation with the doctor on whom they rely.

(From a letter dated February 15, 1957, written on behalf of the Guardian)

Finally, you comment that the law, presumably in . . . , gives the option to religions to state a preference about immunization but not about healing methods, and you ask why cannot a Bahá'í use the Bahá'í writings to support an individual's request not to have an immunization. The House of Justice confirms the letter your National Spiritual Assembly wrote to your Local Spiritual Assembly about this matter and points out that your daughter's citation of Bahá'í Scripture in support of her application must have given the impression that the Bahá'í Faith is against immunization. For your information, the following extract from a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer on 26 March 1943, is shared with you:

He feels that if you contemplate writing a book dealing with various schools of medicine you should not associate it in any way with the Bahá'í teachings, as this is a highly specialized subject and there are very few references in the teachings to these matters. It is premature to try and elaborate on the few general references to health and medicine made in our Holy Scriptures.

(From a letter dated April 9, 1981, written on behalf of
the Universal House of Justice)

It is important that national Bahá'í communities give careful attention to improving the community life of the villagers. As your letter suggests, the implementation of an immunization programme for the children of the . . . is very important and it is highly commendable that the Bahá'í friends should be engaged in this work.

(From a letter dated November 10, 1986, written on behalf of
the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly)

The Universal House of Justice received your email letter of 17 April 2008, regarding the possibility of being excused from vaccinations on religious grounds, and has directed us to respond as follows. . . .

As there is no prohibition in the Writings against vaccinations, this is a matter left to the individuals concerned to decide and, consequently, there are no grounds upon which a Bahá'í could claim religious exemption.

(From a letter dated May 14, 2008, written on behalf of
the Universal House of Justice)

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 22 October 2012 requesting guidance on whether it is advisable for your daughter to receive the meningitis vaccine required at her school and has asked us to provide the following in response.

Nothing has been found in the Bahá'í Writings on the subject of vaccinations or their prohibition, and it is left to each believer to consult competent physicians in this regard. If one finds that there are differing views within the medical community on the matter, it is suggested that the friends distinguish between doctors who are well-trained in medical sciences and those who are not, keeping in mind that the Faith is not associated with any particular school of medical theory or practice. Further, since there is no prohibition against immunizations in the Teachings, should one decide to forgo vaccination, the impression should not be created that the decision is based on religious grounds. If after consultation with competent physicians you are unable to make a decision, you are encouraged to turn to family members, friends, or individuals whose judgment you trust.

(From a letter dated November 12, 2012, written on behalf of
the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer)