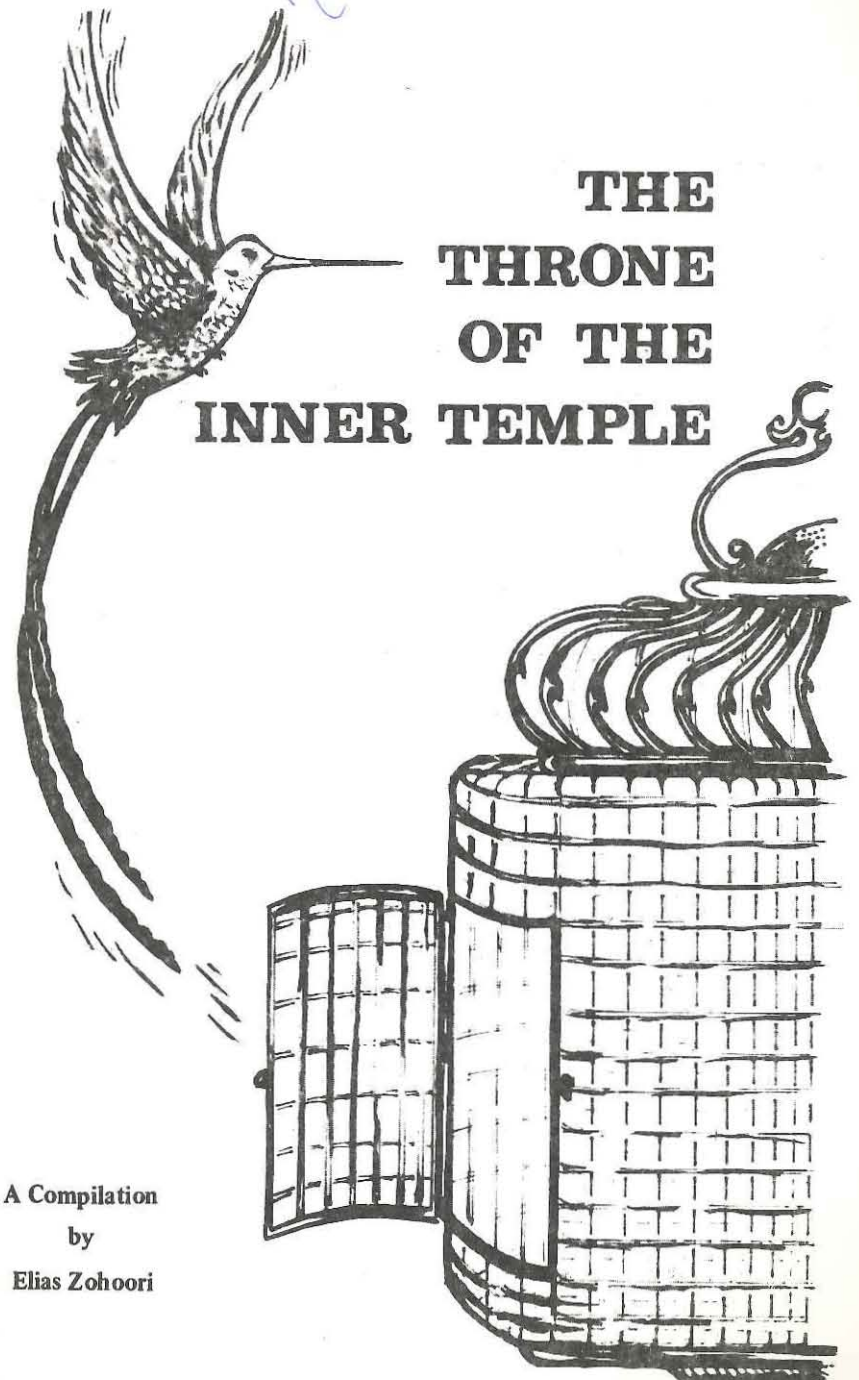


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THE THRONE OF THE INNER TEMPLE



A Compilation
by
Elias Zohoori

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THE THRONE OF THE INNER TEMPLE

Compiled
by
Elias Zohoori

Selections from Bahá'í Writings on
the Human Body, its Health and
Nutrition, purity and holiness, Science
of Medicine, illnesses, and physical
and spiritual healing.

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Elias Zohoori

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THE HUMAN BODY

Since this physical body is the throne whereon the inner temple is established, God hath ordained that the body be preserved to the extent possible, so that nothing that causes repugnance may be experienced.

The Báb

1. THE HUMAN BODY

THE THRONE OF THE INNER TEMPLE

1. "As this physical frame is the throne of the inner temple, whatever occurs to the former is felt by the latter. In reality that which takes delight in joy or is saddened by pain is the inner temple of the body, not the body itself. Since this physical body is the throne whereon the inner temple is established, God hath ordained that the body be preserved to the extent possible, so that nothing that causes repugnance may be experienced. The inner temple beholdeth its physical frame, which is its throne. Thus if the latter is accorded respect, it is as if the former is the recipient. The converse is likewise true.

"Therefore, it hath been ordained that the dead body should be treated with the utmost honour and respect."

(The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 95)

PRAISE BE TO GOD, THE BEST OF CREATORS

2. "...the embryo of man in the womb of the mother gradually grows and develops, and appears in different forms and conditions, until in the degree of perfect beauty it reaches maturity, and appears in a perfect form with the utmost grace... That is to say, the embryo passes through different states and traverses numerous degrees, until it reaches the form in which it manifests the words 'Praise be to God, the best of Creators.' "

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, US, 1970, pp. 212-213)

MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN BODY

3. "It is obvious that all created things are connected one to another by a linkage complete and perfect, even, for example, as are the members of the human body. Note how the members and component parts of the human body are connected one to another... The foot and the step, for example, are connected to the ear and the eye; the eye must look ahead before the step is taken. The ear must hear before the eye will carefully observe. And whatever member of the human body is deficient, produceth a deficiency in the other members. The brain is connected with the heart and stomach, the lungs are connected with all the members. So is it with the other members of the body.

"And each one of these members hath its own special function. The mind force — whether we call it pre-existent or contingent — doth direct and co-ordinate all the members of the human body, seeing to it that each part or member duly performeth its own special function. If, however, there be some interruption in the power of the mind, all the members will fail to carry out their essential functions, deficiencies will appear in the body and the functioning of its members, and the power will prove ineffective...

"Furthermore, although all created things grow and develop, yet are they subjected to influences from without. For instance, the sun giveth heat, the rain nourisheth, the wind bringeth life, so that man can develop and grow. Thus it is clear that the human body is under the influences from the outside, and that without those influences man could not grow..."

(*Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 48-49)

FIVE PHYSICAL AND
FIVE SPIRITUAL POWERS

4. "In man five outer powers exist, which are the agents of perception, that is to say, through these five powers man perceives material beings. These are sight, which perceives visible forms; hearing, which perceives audible sounds; smell, which perceives odors; taste, which perceives foods; and feeling, which is in all parts of the body, and perceives tangible things. These five powers perceive outward existences.

"Man has also spiritual powers: imagination, which conceives things; thought, which reflects upon realities; comprehension, which comprehends realities; memory, which retains whatever man imagines, thinks, and comprehends. The intermediary between the five outer powers and the inward powers, is the sense which they possess in common, that is to say, the sense which acts between the outer and inner powers, conveys to the inward powers whatever the outer powers discern. It is termed the common faculty,

because it communicates between the outward and inward powers, and thus is common to the outward and inward powers.

"For instance, sight is one of the outer powers; it sees and perceives this flower, and conveys this perception to the inner power — the common faculty — which transmits this perception to the power of imagination, which in its turn conceives and forms this image and transmits it to the power of thought; the power of thought reflects, and having grasped the reality, conveys it to the power of comprehension; the comprehension, when it has comprehended it, delivers the image of the object perceived to the memory, and the memory keeps it in its repository.

"The outward powers are five: the power of sight, of hearing, of taste, of smell, and of feeling. The inner powers are also five: the common faculty, and the powers of imagination, thought, comprehension, and memory."

(*'Abdu'l-Bahá — Bahá'í World Faith*, pp. 317-318)

MENTAL FACULTIES

5. "Now concerning mental faculties, they are in truth of the inherent properties of the soul, even as the radiation of light is the essential property of the sun. The rays of the sun are renewed but the sun itself is ever the same and unchanged. Consider how the human intellect develops and weakens, and may at times come to naught, whereas the soul changeth not. For the mind to manifest itself, the human body must be whole; and a sound mind cannot be but in a sound body, whereas the soul dependeth not upon the body."

(*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 337)

SYMPATHETIC NERVE

6. "The powers of the sympathetic nerve are neither entirely physical nor spiritual, but are between the two. The nerve is connected with both. Its phenomena shall be perfect when its spiritual and physical relations are normal.

"When the material world and the divine world are well co-related, when the hearts become heavenly and the aspirations become pure and divine, perfect connection shall take place. Then shall this power produce a perfect manifestation. Physical and spiritual diseases will then receive absolute healing."

(*'Abdu'l-Bahá: Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 309)

THAT PART MUST BE REMOVED

7. "Observe the human body, its limbs, its members, the eye, the ear, the organs of smell, of taste, the hands, the fingernails. Notwithstanding the differences among all these parts, each one within the limitations of its own being participateth in a coherent whole. If one of them faileth it must be healed, and should no remedy avail, that part must be removed."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 190)

SURGICAL OPERATION

8. "I ever pray on her behalf and beg from God His Divine remedy and healing. As in this Dispensation consultation with expert doctors is highly advisable, and acting in accordance with their prescriptions obligatory, it is well for her to undergo an operation if deemed necessary by such doctors."

(Abdu’l-Bahá)

VACCINATION

9. "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 becomes more perfect."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, December 24, 1943: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 222.)

ORGAN TRANSPLANT

10. "In reply to your letter of October 1st inquiring about organ transplants and Bahá'ís acting as donors for parts of the body we refer you first of all to our letter of March 3rd 1967 in which we quoted to you a passage from one of the beloved Guardian's letters on this subject.

"We are also able to give you the following from a letter of the beloved Guardian by his secretary: 'There is nothing in the teachings which could forbid a Bahá'í to bequeath his eyes to another person or for a hospital; on the contrary it seems a noble thing to do.' This message is from a letter dated September 6th, 1946.

"The House of Justice does not wish at the present time to go beyond the elucidation contained in the above statements."

(Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles)

CIRCUMCISION

11. "Also with regard to the practice of circumcision; the Teachings bear no reference to this matter, and it is therefore not enjoined upon the believers."

(Shoghi Effendi: *Dawn of A New Day*, p. 86)

STERILIZATION

12. "With respect to the question of involuntary sterilization of a patient, as raised by the medical student... now in .. we are requested to provide you with the following statement made on behalf of the beloved Guardian by his secretary to an individual believer in August 1939:

'As regards sterilization of the mentally deficient or the physically unfit, the Teachings bear no direct reference to this subject, and it therefore devolves on the Universal House of Justice to decide and legislate on this matter.'

The Universal House of Justice does not wish to legislate at this time on so complex and delicate an issue."

(Letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Jamaica, September 16, 1973)

BIRTH CONTROL

13. "You enquired whether we have anything in the Teachings concerning birth control and the sex element in marriage. Shoghi Effendi says that there is scarcely anything on that subject in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master, except a constant emphasis of mutual fidelity. Both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb emphasize the need of children in marriage. The latter, for example, states that to beget children is the highest physical fruit of man's existence. But neither say whether the number of children should be limited or not. Or if it is to be limited what is the proper method to be used."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, February 3, 1932, quoted in a *Compilation from the Universal House of Justice*)

NOT SPECIFICALLY ANSWERED IN WRITINGS

14. "As to the problem of birth control, neither Bahá'u'lláh nor ‘Abdu’l-Bahá have revealed anything direct or explicit regarding this question. But the Bahá'í Teachings, when carefully studied, imply that such current conceptions like birth control, if not necessarily wrong and immoral in principle,

have nevertheless to be discarded as constituting a real danger to the very foundations of our social life. For Bahá'u'lláh explicitly reveals in His Book of Laws that the very purpose of marriage is the procreation of children who, when grown up, will be able to know God and to recognize and observe His Commandments and Laws as revealed through His Messengers. Marriage is thus, according to the Bahá'í Teachings, primarily a social and moral act. It has a purpose which transcends the immediate personal needs and interests of the parties. Birth control, except in certain exceptional cases, is therefore not permissible."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 14, 1935 – *ibid.*)

POPULATION EXPLOSION AND BIRTH CONTROL

15. "In a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual he has further pointed out that the 'chief and sacred purpose' of marriage is 'the perpetuation of the human race... and its elevation to the true station destined for it by God.' In another letter written on his behalf it is stated: '... the fundamental purpose of marriage is to bring other souls into this world, to serve God and love Him.'

"We have not discovered any specific reference in the texts to the problem of population explosion in its relation to birth control. This question, of course, is a matter which is currently a subject of concern and speculation by many. A study of our teachings, however, indicates that in the future there will no doubt be a general improvement of standards of life and of health, but there will also be the full exploitation of unused and as yet unsuspected resources of the planet along with the control and tapping of its sources of new material, with a great increase in productivity.

"you have raised the point about the time of the appearance of the human soul. You are quite right in your deduction in this regard, as our teachings clearly confirm that the soul of man comes into being at conception.

"As to your desire and that of your husband to avoid any action which would permanently prevent you from bearing children, the only text we have so far found on the subject is in a letter to an individual believer from the beloved Guardian. The question asked was whether after a few children it would be permissible to have a surgical operation on the wife to prevent further conception. His reply was that such an act was unacceptable and unworthy, and those who commit the act were responsible before God.

"When the Guardian was asked whether the exercise of birth control constitutes a sin in a case where the number of children would prevent the

father from fulfilling his obligation to educate his children, he states that it is the duty of Bahá'ís to uphold moderation in all things, and avoid illegal methods."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, July 31, 1970: *ibid.*)

GOD WILL PROTECT HIS OWN

16. "And finally we have the following statement written on behalf of the Guardian which we hope will shed more light on the subject: 'Regarding your question of whether you should have more children or not, the Guardian feels that this is a matter for you and your husband to decide. However, we must always bear in mind that God will protect His own, and that the Bahá'í children are the future servants of mankind who will help to carry the world forward into the glorious New Order which Bahá'u'lláh has prepared for it in this day of days. We should not face the future with fear, but with glad and assured hearts. "

(*ibid.*)

ABORTION

17. "The practice of abortion merely for the purpose of getting rid of unwanted children is absolutely prohibited in the Faith. Although there may be certain circumstances in which abortion might be justified, we do not wish to go into this question at this time. For the time being when such questions occur we leave it to the conscience of the individual doctor."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, June 9, 1969: *Bahá'í Journal of the British Isles*, No. 215, February 1973, p. 6)

18. "Basically the deliberate taking of human life is forbidden in the Cause, but the Sacred Text envisages certain possible exceptions to this rule and allows for the Universal House of Justice to legislate upon them. One such exception is the matter of abortion. It is clear that it is absolutely forbidden for a woman to have an abortion merely because she wants to have one, but there may be circumstances in which an abortion might be justified. However, at the present time we do not wish to legislate on whether or in what circumstances abortion may be permitted, and therefore the whole matter is left to the consciences of those concerned who must carefully weigh the medical advice on the case in the light of the general guidance given in the Teachings."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, February 5, 1975: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 255)

ABORTION AND SURGICAL OPERATION

19. "Abortion and surgical operations for the purpose of preventing the birth of unwanted children are forbidden in the Cause unless there are circumstances which justify such actions on medical grounds, in which case the decision, at present, is left to the consciences of those concerned who must carefully weigh the medical advice in the light of the general guidance given in the Teachings. Beyond this nothing has been found in the Writings concerning specific methods or procedures to be used in family planning. It should be pointed out, however, that the Teachings state that the souls appear at conception, and that therefore it would be improper to use a method, the effect of which would be to produce an abortion after conception has taken place."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 23, 1975: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 264)

20. "It is clear that to have a surgical operation merely to avoid unwanted children is not acceptable. However, as in the case of abortion, circumstances might exist in which such an operation would be justified. Individual believers called upon to make such a decision must be guided by the Bahá'í principles involved, the best professional advice available to them and their own consciences. In arriving at a decision the parties must also take into consideration the availability, reliability and reversibility of all contraceptive methods."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, October 25, 1971: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 264)

TUBAL LIGATION

21. "The Universal House of Justice has received your letter of April 29 asking about tubal ligation and has noted that you are familiar with general Bahá'í principles on the subject. However, it has directed us to say that under normal circumstances it is not permissible to have a surgical operation for the purpose of not having more children if such an operation could result in permanent sterility."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 28, 1978: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 263.)

INTRAUTERINE DEVICES

22. "As to the use of intrauterine devices, we understand that there is a difference of professional opinion as to how they work, i.e. whether they prevent conception or whether they prevent the fertilized ovum from attaching to the wall of the uterus. However, the Guardian has stated that the

individual life begins at conception. In using such devices, therefore, Bahá'ís will have to be guided by the best professional advice available and their own consciences. There is nothing in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, however, concerning the placing of foreign materials in the body for preventing birth."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, December 31, 1973: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 264)

THE TIME HAS NOT YET ARRIVED

23. "Another believer, having read this letter, asked the beloved Guardian whether all birth control methods for any purpose were absolutely prohibited by Bahá'í Teachings. The secretary to the beloved Guardian wrote on his behalf on 4 February, 1937, as follows:

"The Guardian has...given his careful consideration to your question regarding the Bahá'í view of birth control.

'... there is no reference whatsoever in the Writings on this subject. The utmost we can say is by way of reference from what Bahá'u'lláh has revealed regarding the nature, purpose and character of marriage. 'We, as Bahá'ís, are not therefore in a position either to condemn the practice of birth control or to confirm it.

'Birth control, however, when exercised in order to deliberately prevent the procreation of any children is against the Spirit of the Law of Bahá'u'lláh, which defines the primary purpose of marriage to be the rearing of children and their spiritual training in the Cause. The Universal House of Justice will have to consider this issue and give its verdict upon it.'

"The Universal House of Justice feels that the time has not yet arrived for legislation on this matter, and that these instructions provide sufficient guidance for the friends for the time being."

(Cited in an enclosure to a letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, July 31, 1970: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 263)

HUSBAND AND WIFE TO DECIDE

24. "There is nothing in the Sacred Writings specifically on the subjects of birth control, abortion or sterilization, but Bahá'u'lláh did state that the primary purpose of marriage was the procreation of children, and it is to this primary purpose that the beloved Guardian alludes in many of the letters which are quoted in the compilation. This does not imply that a couple are obliged to have as many children as they can; the Guardian's secretary clearly stated on his behalf, in answer to an enquiry, that it was for

the husband and wife to decide how many children they would have. A decision to have no children at all would vitiate the primary purpose of marriage unless, of course, there were some medical reason why such a decision would be required.

"You and your husband, therefore, should have no feeling that you are obliged to add to your already large family. This is a matter entirely for you to decide, and there are many methods of preventing conception, including self-discipline and restraint, to which you can have recourse. Sterilization, however, would be a more far-reaching action than any of these, with implications and results beyond those necessary for the immediate purpose of limiting the size of your family, and is not permissible in Bahá'í law except in rare instances where it is necessary for a medical reason."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 28, 1977: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 263)

EUTHANASIA (Mercy Killing)

25. "We have received your letter of March 18, 1974 in which you ask for the Bahá'í viewpoint on Euthanasia and on the removal of life support in medical cases where physiological interventions prolong life in disabling illnesses. In general our teachings indicate that God, the Giver of life, can alone dispose of it as He deems best, and we have found nothing in the Sacred Text on these matters specifically but in a letter to an individual written on behalf of the Guardian by his secretary regarding mercy killings, or legalized euthanasia, it is stated:

'... this is also a matter which the Universal House of Justice will have to legislate.'

Until such time as the Universal House of Justice considers legislation on Euthanasia, decisions in the matters to which you refer must be left to the consciences of those responsible."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska, May 17, 1974: *Lights of Guidance*, pp. 522-523)

26. "As to the Bahá'í viewpoint on the removal or withholding of life support in medical cases where intervention prolongs life in disabling illnesses, nothing has been found in the Sacred Text specifically on this matter. In such cases decision must be left to those responsible, including the patient."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, May 31, 1979: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 522)

SURROGATE MOTHERS AND ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

27. "The beloved Guardian, in a letter written on his behalf to an individual believer who enquired on the same subject (surrogate mothers and

artificial insemination), said "... there is nothing in our teachings about this, therefore there is no objection to having a baby by means of artificial insemination as long as your husband is the father of it.

"Artificial insemination is, therefore, permissible to a Bahá'í wife provided her husband is the donor."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, July 11, 1978: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 523)

DONATION OF SEMEN TO HOSPITAL

28. "In view of this (previous letter), the House of Justice has stated that it would not be proper for a Bahá'í to donate semen to a hospital for the artificial insemination of a woman other than his wife."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, May 25, 1979: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 523)

VIVISECTION

29. "As regards the question the Auckland Assembly has asked about vivisection, there is nothing on this subject in the Bahá'í teachings. At a future date such matters will no doubt be taken up by the International House of Justice."

(Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957, p. 130)

SUICIDE

30. "You must not injure yourself or commit suicide... Should anyone at any time encounter hard and perplexing times, he must say to himself, 'This will soon pass.' Then he will be calm and quiet. In all my calamity and difficulties I used to say to myself, 'This will pass away.' Then I became patient. If anyone cannot be patient and cannot endure, and if he wishes to become a martyr, then let him arise in service to the Cause of God. It will be better for him if he attains to martyrdom in this path. Arise ye in service to the Cause of God as the Apostles arose after the departure of Christ."

('Abdu'l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. XII, No. 18, p. 280)

31. "Regarding the 'In Memoriam' section of Bahá'í News: although suicide is so strongly condemned in the teachings, it does not mean that a person has ceased to be a Bahá'í because he killed himself; he should, therefore, be mentioned, the same as other believers, in this section."

(Shoghi Effendi: *Principles of Bahá'í Administration*, p. 14)

SELF-DEFENSE

32. "From the texts you already have available it is clear that Bahá'u'lláh has stated that it is preferable to be killed in the path of God's good-pleasure than to kill, and that organised religious attack against Bahá'ís should never turn into any kind of warfare, as this is strictly prohibited in our Writings...

"Of course the above principles apply also in cases when a Bahá'í finds himself involved in a situation of civil disorder. We have, however, advised the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States that under the present circumstances in that country it is preferable that Bahá'ís do not buy or own arms for their protection or the protection of their families."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, May 26, 1969: *Messages from the Universal House of Justice*, 1968-1973, p. 26)

33. "We have your letter of March 2, 1972 asking if ... a pioneer couple living in a remote area lacking police protection may have a weapon in their possession for defending themselves as thieves have broken into their house twice and robbed them.

"A hitherto untranslated Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá points out that in the case of attack by robbers and highwaymen, a Bahá'í should not surrender himself, but should try, as far as circumstances permit, to defend himself and later on lodge a complaint with the government authorities. A statement in a letter written on behalf of the Guardian indicates that in an emergency when there is no legal force at hand to appeal to a Bahá'í is justified in defending his life. Although we have advised certain National Assemblies in countries facing increasing civil disorder that it is preferable that Bahá'ís do not buy or own arms for their protection or the protection of their families, we feel that in the circumstances you have outlined in your letter it would be permissible to the pioneer family to keep a weapon in the house, provided the law permits."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Honduras, March 20, 1972: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 422)

DEATH

34. "O Son of the Supreme! I have made death a messenger of joy to thee. Wherefore dost thou grieve? I made the light to shed on thee its splendour. Why dost thou veil thyself therefrom."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 160)

35. "O Companion of My Throne! ... Live then the days of thy life, that are less than a fleeting moment, with thy mind stainless, thy heart unsullied, thy

thoughts pure and thy nature sanctified, so that, free and content, thou mayest put away this mortal frame, and repair into the mystic paradise and abide in the eternal kingdom for evermore."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *The Hidden Words, from the Persian*)

BURIAL

36. "Under the Bahá'í teachings it seems clear that the body is not to be embalmed. The burial should take place within an hour's travel time from the place of death. The preparation for the body for burial is a careful washing, and placing in a shroud of white cloth, silk preferably. There is nothing in the teachings with regard to turning the body over to Scientific Institutions for scientific research, therefore the individual may do as he wishes, until such time as the Universal House of Justice may legislate on this matter, if they ever do. The practice of the Orient, is to bury the person within 24 hours of the time of death; sometimes even sooner; although there is no provision in the teachings as to the time limit."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 2, 1955: *National Bahá'í Review*, April 1974, p. 3)

CREMATION

37. "He feels that, in view of what 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said against cremation, the believers should be strongly urged, as an act of faith, to make provisions against their remains being cremated. Bahá'u'lláh has laid down as a law, in the Aqdas, the manner of Bahá'í burial, and it is so beautiful, befitting and dignified, that no believer should deprive himself of it."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, July 7, 1947: *Bahá'í News*, No. 198, August 1947, p. 3)

38. "Concerning your question about cremation, the Bahá'í law stipulates burial. The instructions of Bahá'u'lláh contained in His Most Holy Book makes this law clear. Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf to an individual believer in 1955, comments that 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'also explained that burial is natural and should be followed.' The explanation of the Master referred to by Shoghi Effendi is found in the Tablets revealed by Him. One of those was published in *Star of the West*, Vol. XI, No. 19, page 317, from which we quote:

"Thy letter has been received. Due to the scarcity of time, I write the answer briefly: The body of man, which has been formed gradually must similarly be decomposed gradually. This is according to the rea

and natural order and Divine Law. If it had been better for it to be burned after death, in its very creation it would have been so planned that the body would automatically become ignited after death, be consumed and turned into ashes. But the divine order formulated by the heavenly ordinance is that after death this body shall be transferred from one stage to another different from the preceding one, so that according to the relations which exist in the world, it may gradually combine and mix with other elements, thus going through stages until it arrives in the vegetable kingdom, there turning into plants and flowers, developing into trees of the highest paradise, becoming perfumed and attaining the beauty of colour. Cremation suppresses it speedily from attainment to these transformations, the elements becoming so quickly decomposed that transformation to these various stages is checked.

When we realize that our physical bodies are composed of elements placed in the earth by their Creator, and which through the orderly process of His law are continually being used in the formation of beings, we can better understand the necessity for our physical bodies to be subjected to the gradual process of decomposition. As at the time of death, the real and eternal self of man, his soul, abandons its physical garment to soar in the realms of God, we may compare the body to a vehicle which has been used for the journey through earthly life and no longer needed once the destination has been reached.”

(Letter from the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, June 6, 1971: *Lights of Guidance*, pp. 156-157)

DONATION OF BODY FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

39. “There is nothing in the Teachings against leaving our bodies to medical science. The only thing we should stipulate is that we do not wish to be cremated, as it is against our Bahá’í Laws.

As many people make arrangements to leave their bodies to medical science for investigation, he suggests that you inquire either through some lawyer friend or through some hospital, how you could do this and then make the necessary provision in your Will, stipulating that you wish your body to be of service to mankind in death, and that, being a Bahá’í, you request that your remains not be cremated and not be taken more than an hour’s journey from the place you die.

The spirit has no more connection with the body after it departs, but, as the body was once the temple of the spirit, we Bahá’ís are taught that it must be treated with respect.”

(*Directives from the Guardian*, New Delhi, p. 46)

PHYSICAL DEATH PROCESS

40. “Concerning the question how long it takes for the spirit to properly disconnect itself from the body; there is no reference to that in the Writings.”

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 19, 1938: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 162)

REINCARNATION

41. “. . . No revelation from God has ever taught reincarnation; this is a man-made conception. The soul of man comes into being at conception.”

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 1, 1946: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 413)

42. “Evolution in the life of the individual starts with the formation of the human embryo and passes through various stages, and even continues after death in another form. The human spirit is capable of infinite development.

“Man’s identity or rather his individuality is never lost. His reality as a person remains intact throughout the various states of his development. He does not pre-exist in any form before coming into this world.”

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 26, 1939: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 413)

REINCARNATION DOES NOT EXIST

43. “We know from His Teachings that Reincarnation does not exist. We come on this planet once only. Our life here is like the baby in the womb of its mother, which develops in that state what is necessary for its entire life after it is born. The same is true of us. Spiritually we must develop here what we will require for the life after death. In that future life, God, through His mercy, can help us to evolve characteristics which we neglected to develop while we were on this earthly plane. It is not necessary for us to come back and be born into another body in order to advance spiritually and grow closer to God.

“This is the Bahá’í Teaching, and this is what the followers of Bahá’u’lláh must accept, regardless of what experiences other people may feel they have. You yourself must surely know that modern psychology has taught that the capacity of the human mind for believing what it imagines, is almost infinite. Because people think they have a certain type of experience, think they remember something of a previous life, does not mean they actually had the experience, or existed previously. The power of their mind would be quite sufficient to make them believe firmly such a thing had happened.”

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 22, 1954: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 415)

HEALTH

The Bounty of good health is the
greatest of all gifts.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

2. HEALTH

HEALTH – GREATEST OF ALL GIFTS

44. “Although ill health is one of the unavoidable conditions of man, truly it is hard to bear. The bounty of good health is the greatest of all gifts.”
(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 151)

FORGET YOURSELF BUT NOT YOUR HEALTH

45. “As to the fact that man must entirely forget himself, by this is meant that he should arise in the mystery of sacrifice and that is the disappearance of mortal sentiments and the extinction of blamable morals which constitute the temporal gloom, and not that the physical health should be changed into weakness and debility.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. VIII, No. 18, p. 231)

THE PURPOSE OF HEALTH

46. “Looking after one’s health is done with two intentions. Man may take good care of his body for the purpose of satisfying his personal wishes. Or, he may look after his health with the good intention of serving humanity and of living long enough to perform his duty toward mankind. The latter is most commendable.

“Between material things and spiritual things there is a connection. The more healthful his body the greater will be the power of the spirit of man;

the power of the intellect, the power of the memory, the power of reflection will then be greater.

(*ibid.*, p. 230)

WISH THOU HEALTH FOR SERVING THE KINGDOM

47. "If the health and well-being of the body be expended in the path of the Kingdom, this is very acceptable and praiseworthy; and if it is expended to the benefit of the human world in general — even though it be to their material benefit and be a means of doing good — that is also acceptable. But if the health and welfare of man be spent in sensual desires, in a life on the animal plane, and in devilish pursuits — then disease is better than such health; nay, death itself is preferable to such a life. If thou art desirous of health, wish thou health for serving the Kingdom. I hope thou mayest attain a perfect insight, an inflexible resolution, a complete health and spiritual and physical strength in order that thou mayest drink from the fountain of eternal life and be assisted by the spirit of divine confirmation."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Bahá’í World Faith*, p. 376)

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

48. "When I speak of health, I refer to spiritual health. The health of the body is impermanent. However carefully one seeks to preserve it, he will inevitably some time become ill — his body broken. But spiritual health passeth not away; it is attained when the spirit of man is delivered from the conditions of this darkened world, and becomes enveloped and permeated by divine qualities."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Star of the West*.)

49. "Physical health is of no importance. The importance is in the spiritual health, which has a lasting effect and ecstasy. The more you think of the body the worst it becomes. Therefore, it is better not to pay so much attention to it..."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. XIX, p. 256)

50. "My spiritual health is always perfect. I enjoy an eternal health of the spirit. I hope all of the people of the world will win this celestial gift. Pray that the spiritual health of mankind may be improved daily, for there are many doctors who attend to the physical ailments of the people, but there are very few divine physicians. It is in this connection that Christ said: 'Do not be afraid of those people who have control over your body, but have fear of those who may control your spirit.' Let your spirit be free so that it may soar toward the heights of sanctity. Let your spirit unfold the white wings

of progress. Often physical sickness draws man nearer unto his Maker, suffers his heart to be made empty of all worldly desires until it becomes tender and sympathetic toward all sufferers and compassionate to all creatures. Although physical diseases cause man to suffer temporarily, yet they do not touch his spirit. Nay, rather, they contribute toward the divine purpose; that is, spiritual susceptibilities will be created in his heart."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *ibid.*, Vol. VIII, No. 18, pp. 230-231)

51. "And if thou art looking for the divine remedy which will cure the spirit of man of all diseases and make him obtain the health of the Divine Kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Take the greatest care of them."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 654)

SPIRITUAL MEDICINE

52. "I hope, as you have received physical health, you will receive your spiritual health. As the body will be cured of physical diseases, in the same way the spirit will be cured of all spiritual diseases. A cure of physical disease is very easy, but the cure of a spiritual disease is very difficult. If one has fever and you give him medicine, the fever will vanish, but if the spirit is afflicted with the disease of ignorance, it is difficult to remove that disease. For example, if the spiritual health is afflicted with the love of the world, spiritual medicine must be given. These medicines are the advices and commands of God, which will have effect upon it."

(Abdu’l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. VIII, No. 18)

SPIRITUAL HEALTH CONDUCTIVE TO PHYSICAL HEALTH

53. "I hope thou wilt become as a rising light and obtain spiritual health; and spiritual health is conducive to physical health."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Divine Art of Living*, p. 58)

MEANS OF SERVING HIS CAUSE

54. "You should always bear in mind Bahá’u’lláh’s counsel that we should take the utmost care of our health, surely not because it is an end in itself, but as a necessary means of serving His Cause."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 17, 1937: *Selections from Bahá’í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 6)

MERE KNOWLEDGE IS NOT HEALTH

55. "To admit that health is good does not constitute health. A skilled physician is needed to remedy existing human conditions. As a physician is required to have complete knowledge of pathology, diagnosis, therapeutics and treatment, so this world physician must be wise, skillful and capable before health will result. His mere knowledge is not health; it must be applied and the remedy carried out."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 152)

BE SUBMISSIVE TO GOD

56. "Man must not imagine disease but must ever trust God. Anyway, a man's life here in this world is temporary. He is in a world that is like a house, susceptible to every invasion, and God must protect man — man must be submissive to God. He must not occupy himself with the thoughts of things — imaginings. If a man thinks too much of his health, he will become afflicted."

(*Memories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 48)

REST AND RELAXATION

57. "He is delighted to hear you are now fully recovered and again active in your important work for the Cause. However, you should not neglect your health, but consider it the means which enable you to serve. It — the body — is like a horse which carries the personality and spirit, and as such should be well cared for so it can do its work! You should certainly safeguard your nerves, and force yourself to take time, and not only for prayer and meditation, but for real rest and relaxation. We don't have to pray and meditate for hours in order to be spiritual."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 23, 1947)

SLEEP

58. "If a man sleep, it should not be for pleasure, but to rest the body in order to do better, to speak better, to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God and to prove the truths."

(*Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 460)

59. "A teacher should sleep at night with the thought that the next day he may be refreshed in order to do his duty more fully in relation to teaching his pupils."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. VIII, No. 18, p. 231)

BE HAPPY

60. "Laugh and talk, don't lament and talk. Laugh and speak.

"Laughter is caused by the slackening or relaxation of the nerves. It is an ideal condition and not physical. Laughter is the visible effect of an invisible cause. For example, happiness and misery are super-sensuous phenomena. One cannot hear them with his ears or touch them with his hands. Happiness is a spiritual state..."

"This is the day of happiness. In no time of any manifestation was there the cause for happiness as now. A happy state brings special blessings. When the mind is depressed, the blessings are not received."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *ibid.*, Vol. XIII, No. 5, p. 102.)

61. "You must be happy always. You must be counted among the people of joy and happiness and must be adorned with divine morals. In a large measure happiness keeps our health while depression of spirit begets disease.."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *239 Days in ‘Akká*, p. 1)

62. "You must live in the utmost happiness. If any trouble or vicissitude comes into your lives, if your heart is depressed on account of health, livelihood or vocation, let not these things affect you. They should not cause unhappiness, for Bahá'u'lláh has brought you divine happiness. He has prepared heavenly food for you: He has destined eternal bounty for you..."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 183)

63. "Happiness has a connection with health preservation, and from sorrow, diseases are born."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. XIX, p. 254)

64. "Joy gives us wings. In times of joy our strength is more vital, our intellect keener... But when sadness visits us our strength leaves us."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 109)

65. "O Son of Man! Rejoice in the gladness of thine heart, that thou mayest be worthy to meet Me and to mirror forth My beauty."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 160)

PROOF OF NOBILITY

66. "Anybody can be happy in the state of comfort, ease, health, success, pleasure and joy; but if one will be happy and contented in the time of trouble, hardship and prevailing disease, it is the proof of nobility..."

“... Still, as the believers of God are turning to the limitless world, they do not become very depressed and sad by disastrous calamities — there is something to console them...”

(*Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Vol. 2, pp. 263-4)

GRIEF, SORROW, JEALOUSY, ANGER

67. “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.”

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, UK, p. 103)

THE SOUL IS AFFECTED

68. “If we are caused joy or pain by a friend, if a love prove true or false, it is the soul that is affected. If our dear ones are far from us — it is the soul that grieves, and the grief or trouble of the soul may react on the body.”

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, 1972, p. 65)

EXERCISE

69. “... Exercise is good when the stomach is empty; it strengthens the muscles. When the stomach is full it is very harmful...”

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Star of the West*, Vol. XIII, No. 9, p. 252)

70. “Some games are innocent, and if pursued for pastime cause no harm; but there is danger that pastime may degenerate into waste of time. Waste of time is not acceptable in the Cause of God, but recreation which may improve the bodily powers, as exercise, is desirable.”

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *ibid.*, Vol. VIII, No. 2)

HEALTH SOCIETY

71. “Regarding the health society of which thou art a member, once it cometh under the shelter of this (Bahá'í) Faith its influence shall increase a hundred fold.”

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections from the Meetings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 65-6)

ELECTRICAL POWER

72. “The climate is better here (at sea) (than at Ramlah, Egypt) because the moisture of the sea ascends and is not harmful while the moisture of the land near the sea is more intense and harmful to the health. Besides, by the

moving and surging of the water an electrical power is produced which is very beneficial to health.”

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Mahmúd's Diary*, p. 5)

BRIGHT WEATHER

73. “Bright and beautiful weather gives new life and strength to man, and if he has been sick, he feels once more in his heart the joyous hope of health renewed.”

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, 1972, p. 62)

HIGH BUILDINGS — IMMENSE POPULATIONS

74. “America will make rapid progress in the future, but I am afraid of these high buildings, and immense populations. These are not good for the public health.”

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Mahmúd's Diary*, p. 15)

FINE VOICE AND MUSIC

75. “A fine voice when joined to beautiful music causes a great effect, for both are desirable and pleasing. All these have in themselves an organization and are constructed on natural law. Therefore they correspond to the order of existence like something would fit into the mold. When it is so, this affects the nerves, and they affect the heart and spirit.”

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Bahá'í Writings on Music*, p. 8)

NUTRITION

“Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed you, and deprive not yourselves from His wondrous bounties...”

Bahá'u'lláh

3. NUTRITION

EAT OF THE GOOD THINGS

76. "Should a man wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing whatever to intervene between him and God, for God hath ordained every good thing, whether created in the heavens or in the earth, for such of His servants as truly believe in Him. Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God hath allowed you, and deprive not yourself from His wondrous bounties. Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are truly thankful."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 275)

77. "All that has been created is for man, who is at the apex of creation, and he must be thankful for the divine bestowals. All material things are for us, so that through our gratitude we may learn to understand life as a divine benefit..."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, US, 1970, p. 103)

CONTENTMENT

78. "Verily the most necessary thing is contentment under all circumstances; by this one is preserved from morbid conditions and from lassitude."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *ibid.*, p. 108)

ECONOMY

79. "Economy is the foundation of human prosperity. The spend-thrift is always in trouble. Prodigality on the part of any person is an unpardonable sin. We must never live on others like a parasitic plant... It is more kingly to be satisfied with a crust of stale bread than to enjoy a sumptuous dinner of many courses, the money for which comes out of the pockets of others."

('Abdu'l-Bahá: *ibid.*, p. 102)

WHEN TO EAT OR DRINK

80. "O God! The Supreme Knower! The Ancient Tongue speaks that which will satisfy the wise in the absence of doctors.

"O people, do not eat except when you are hungry. Do not drink after you have retired to sleep."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Star of the West*, Vol. XIII, No. 9, p. 252)

DIGESTION – MASTICATION

81. "Do not take nourishment except when (the process of) digestion is completed. Do not swallow until you have thoroughly masticated your food.

"That which is difficult to masticate is forbidden by the wise. Thus the Supreme Pen commands you. The taking of food before that which you have already eaten is digested is dangerous." (*ibid.*)

LIQUID FIRST

82. "Take first the liquid food before partaking of solid food..." (*ibid.*)

BREAKFAST

83. "A light meal in the morning is as a light to the body..." (*ibid.*)

OPPOSITE FOODS

84. "If two diametrically opposite foods are put on the table do not mix them. Be content with one of them..." (*ibid.*)

WALK A LITTLE

85. "When you have eaten walk a little that the food may settle..." (*ibid.*)

FRUIT AND GRAIN

86. "The food of the future will be 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 food is that which grows out of the ground." ('Abdu'l-Bahá: *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 102)

MEAT

87. "As humanity progresses, meat will be used less and less, for the teeth of man are not carnivorous. For example, the lion is endowed with carnivorous teeth which are intended for meat and if meat be not found, the lion starves. The lion cannot graze; its teeth are of different shape. The formation of a lion's stomach is such that it cannot receive nourishment save through meat. The eagle has a crooked beak; the lower part shorter than the upper. Were it to try to pick up grain it would find it impossible; were it to try to graze, it would fail. Therefore it is compelled to partake of meat. But the domestic animals, the cow, horse, donkey, sheep, etc., have herbivorous teeth formed to cut grass which is their fodder. The human teeth, the molars, are formed to grind grain. The front teeth, the incisors, are for fruits, etc. It is therefore quite apparent, according to the implements for eating, man's food is intended to be grain and not meat. When mankind is more fully developed the eating of meat will gradually cease."

('Abdu'l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. III, No. 10, p. 29)

88. "O thou who art voicing the praises of thy Lord! I have read thy letter, wherein thou didst express astonishment at some of the laws of God, such as that concerning the hunting of innocent animals, creatures who are guilty of no wrong.

"Be thou not surprised at this. Reflect upon the inner realities of the universe, the secret wisdoms involved, the enigmas, the inter-relationships, the rules that govern all. For every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are very powerful and admit of no imbalance, nor any slackening whatever. In the physical realm of creation, all things are eaters and eaten; the plant drinketh in the mineral, the animal doth crop and swallow down the plant, man doth feed upon the animal, and the mineral devoureth the body of man. Physical bodies are transferred past one barrier after another, from one life to another, and all things are subject to transformation and change, save only the cause of existence itself – since He is constant and immutable, and upon Him is found the existence of every species and kind, of every contingent reality throughout the whole of creation.

"Whensoever thou dost examine, through a microscope, the water man drinketh, the air he doth breathe, thou wilt see that with every breath of air, man taketh in an abundance of animal life, and with every draught of water, he also swalloweth down a great variety of animals. How could it ever be

possible to put a stop to this process? For all creatures are eaters and eaten, and the very fabric of life is reared upon this fact. Were it not so, the ties that interlace all created things within the universe would be unravelled.

“And further, whensoever a thing is destroyed, and decayeth, and is cut off from life, it is promoted into a world that is greater than the world it knew before. It leaveth, for example, the life of the mineral and goeth forward into the life of the plant; then it departeth out of the vegetable life and ascendeth into that of the animal, following which it forsaketh the life of the animal and riseth into the realm of human life, and this is out of the grace of thy Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate...”

(*Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 156/8)

HUNTING

89. “Bahá'u'lláh warns against hunting in excess and prescribes laws prohibiting the eating of game if it is found dead in a trap or net.”

(Bahá'u'lláh - *Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 63)

EATING OF PORK

90. “The eating of pork is not forbidden in the Bahá'í teachings.”

(Shoghi Effendi: *Dawn of A New Day*, p. 201)

TAKE SOME HONEY – YÁ BAHÁ'U'L-ABHÁ!

91. “Engage thou in commemorating God at every morn and turn unto the Horizon of Mercifulness.

“Take some honey, recite Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá, and eat a little thereof for several days. For these thy prevailing diseases are not on account of sins, but they are to make thee despise this world and know that there is no rest and composure in this temporal life.”

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 223)

FASTING

92. “Fasting is a symbol. Fasting signifies abstinence from lust. Physical fasting is the symbol of that abstinence, and is a reminder; that is, just as a person abstains from physical appetites, he is to abstain from self-appetites and self-desires. But mere abstinence from food has no effect on the spirit. It is only a symbol, a reminder. Otherwise it is of no importance. Fasting for this purpose does not mean entire abstinence from food. The golden rule

as to food is, do not take too much or too little. Moderation is necessary. There is a sect in India who practise extreme abstinence, and gradually reduce their food until they exist on almost nothing. But their intelligence suffers. A man is not fit to do service for God with brain or body if he is weakened by lack of food. He cannot see clearly.”

(‘Abdu'l-Bahá; *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, US, p. 184)

PURITY AND HOLINESS

The Bahá'í standard is very high, more particularly when compared with the thoroughly rotten morals of the present world.

Shoghi Effendi

4. PURITY AND HOLINESS

EXTERNAL CLEANLINESS

93. "Be the essence of cleanliness among mankind... under all circumstances conform yourselves to refined manners... let no trace of uncleanness appear on your clothes.. Immerse yourselves in pure water; a water which hath been used is not allowable."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, US, p. 103)

94. "The fact of having a pure and spotless body exerciseth an influence upon the spirit of man."

('Abdu'l-Bahá: *Bahá'u'lláh and The New Era*, US, p. 104)

95. "When man in all conditions is pure and immaculate, he will become the centre of the reflection of the manifest Light. In all his actions and conduct there must first be purity, then beauty and independence. The channel must be cleansed before it is filled with sweet water. The pure eye comprehendeth the sight and the meeting of God; the pure nostril inhalet the perfumes of the rose garden of bounty; the pure heart becometh the mirror of the beauty of truth. This is why, in the heavenly Books, the divine counsels and commands have been compared to water. Cleanliness and sanctity, purity and delicacy exalt humanity and make the contingent beings progress. Even when applied to physical things, delicacy causeth the attainment of spirituality, as it is established in the Holy Scriptures."

('Abdu'l-Bahá: *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 333)

96. "External cleanliness, although it is but a physical thing, hath a great influence upon spirituality." (ibid., p. 334)

BATHING

97. "Immerse yourselves in pure water; a water which hath been used is not allowable... Beware not to approach the reservoirs of the baths in Persia... Likewise, forsake the foul tanks (in the houses) and be of those who are pure. Verily We have desired to see in you the manifestations of Paradise on earth, so that there may emanate from you that whereat the hearts of the near ones shall rejoice. Whosoever poureth water upon himself and thus bathes his body, it is sufficient, and he does not need to be immersed therein. Verily, God hath desired to make things easy for you, as a favour, so that you may be of those who are thankful..."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Bahá'í Proofs*, p. 87)

PURE WATER

98. "Cleanse every impure thing with a water which will not change by the "three" (colour, taste, smell); beware not to use a water which is infected by the air (stagnant) or by any other thing..." (ibid., 86)

SEA OF PURENESS

99. "God hath removed the decree of uncleanness from all things, and from other nations, as a gift from God. Verily He is the Forgiving, the Beneficent. In the first (Day) of Ridván, when We manifested Ourselves to all in the world with Our Most Comely Names and Our Exalted Attributes, all things have been submerged in the sea of pureness. This is through My Favour, which surrounds all the creatures, so that they may consort with all religions, and deliver the Cause of your Lord the Clement...." (ibid.)

CLOTHING

100. "Whosoever hath impurity upon his clothing, his prayer will not ascend to God, and the Heavenly Concourse will shun him." (ibid., 87)

ROSE WATER – ATTAR

101. "Make use of rose-water, and also pure attar. This is what hath been pleasing to God from all eternity, so that what is wished by your Lord, the Mighty, the Wise, may be diffused from you..." (ibid.)

APPEARANCE

102. "Men are permitted to have their choice in the manner of habiliment, and in the cut of the beard and its dressing. But, beware, O people, not to make yourselves as playthings to the ignorant."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 193)

103. "... not to allow the growth of men's hair beyond the lobe of the ear... not to shave one's head."

(*Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 48)

FACIAL MAKE-UP

104. "Regarding Bahá'í women using facial make-up; individuals are entirely free to do as they please in such purely personal matters. As Bahá'ís are enjoined to use moderation in all things, and to seek the Golden mean, the National Spiritual Assembly can, if it deem it necessary or advisable, counsel the believers to use moderation in this respect also."

(Shoghi Effendi: *Dawn of A New Day*, p. 193)

OTHER ORDINANCES

105. "To wash one's feet; to cut one's nails; not to plunge one's hand in food (referring to the manner of eating)..."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pp. 48-51)

OPIUM

106. "As to opium, it is foul and accursed. God protect us from the punishment He inflicteth on the user. According to the explicit Text of the Most Holy Book, it is forbidden, and its use is utterly condemned. Reason showeth that smoking opium is a kind of insanity, and experience attesteth that the user is completely cut off from the human kingdom. May God protect all against the perpetration of an act so hideous as this, an act which layeth in ruins the very foundation of what it is to be human, and which causeth the user to be dispossessed for ever and ever. For opium fasteneth on the soul, so that the user's conscience dieth, his mind is blotted away, his perceptions are eroded. It turneth the living into the dead. It quencheth the natural heat. No greater harm can be conceived than that which opium inflicteth. Fortunate are they who never even speak the name of it; then think how wretched is the user..."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 146-150)

HALLUCINOGENS, A Form of Intoxication

107. "Concerning the so-called 'spiritual' virtues of the hallucinogens ... spiritual stimulation should come from turning one's heart to Bahá'u'lláh, and not through physical means such as drugs and agents. From the description given in your letter it appears that hallucinogenic agents are a form of intoxicant. As the friends, including the youth, are required strictly to abstain from all forms of intoxicants, and are further expected conscientiously to obey the civil law of their country, it is obvious that they should refrain from using these drugs.

"A very great responsibility for the future peace and well-being of the world is borne by the youth of today. Let the Bahá'í youth by the power of the Cause they espouse be the shining example for their companions."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, April 15, 1965: *National Bahá'í Review*, no. 3 March 1968)

The Use of Marijuana, LSD AND OTHER PSYCHEDELIC PRODUCTS

108. "In reply to your request of October 24, 1967 that we issue a statement concerning 'the use of marijuana, LSD and other psychedelic products', we have already informed the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States that Bahá'ís should not use hallucinogenic agents, including LSD, peyote and similar substances, except when prescribed for medical treatment. Neither should they become involved in experiments with such substances.

"Although we have no direct reference to marijuana in the Bahá'í Writings, since this substance is derived from what is considered to be a milder form of cannabis, the species used to produce hashish, we can share with you a translation from the Persian of a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on hashish:

"Regarding hashish you had pointed out that some Persians have become habituated to its use, Gracious God! this is the worst of all intoxicants, and its prohibition is explicitly revealed. Its use causeth the disintegration of thought and the complete torpor of the soul. How could anyone seek this fruit of infernal tree, and by partaking of it, be led to exemplify the qualities of a monster? How could one use this forbidden drug, and thus deprive himself of the blessings of the All-Merciful?...?"

(From the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Hawaiian Islands, November 11, 1967)

PEYOTE

109. "Anyone involved in the use of peyote should be told that in the

Bahá'í Faith spiritual stimulation comes from turning one's heart to Bahá'u'lláh and not through any physical means. They should therefore be encouraged to give up the use of peyote."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, November 9, 1963: *Alaska Bahá'í News*, May 1972, p. 4)

Note: The peyote cactus, source of the hallucinogen named mescaline, is taken ceremoniously by certain Indian tribes of the South-west of the United States. (*Bahá'í News*, No. 582, September 1979)

HASHISH

110. "Alcohol consumeth the mind and causeth man to commit acts of absurdity, but this wicked Hashish extinguisheth the mind, freezeth the spirit, petrifieth the soul, wasteth the body and leaveth man frustrated and lost."

('Abdu'l-Bahá)

111. "Regarding Hashish... this is the worst of all intoxicants, and its prohibition is explicitly revealed. Its use causeth the disintegration of thought and the complete torpor of the soul." ('Abdu'l-Bahá)

SMOKING TOBACCO

112. "Observe how pleasing is cleanliness in the sight of God, and how specifically it is emphasized in the Holy Books of the Prophets; for the Scriptures forbid the eating or the use of any unclean thing. Some of these prohibitions were absolute and binding upon all, and whoso transgressed the given law was abhorred of God and anathematized by the believers. Such, for example were things categorically forbidden the perpetration of which was accounted a most grievous sin, among them actions so loathsome that it is shameful even to speak their name.

"But there are other forbidden things which do not cause immediate harm, and the injurious effects of which are only gradually produced; such acts are also repugnant to the Lord, and blameworthy in His sight, and repellent. The absolute unlawfulness of these, however, hath not been expressly set forth in the Text, but their avoidance is necessary to purity, cleanliness, the preservation of health, and freedom from addiction.

"Among these latter is smoking tobacco, which is dirty, smelly, offensive -- an evil habit, and one the harmfulness of which gradually becometh apparent to all. Every qualified physician hath ruled -- and this hath also been proven by tests -- that one of the components of tobacco is a deadly poison, and that the smoker is vulnerable to many and various diseases. This is why

smoking hath been plainly set forth as repugnant from the standpoint of hygiene...

"My meaning is that in the sight of God, smoking tobacco is deprecated, abhorrent, filthy in the extreme; and, albeit by degrees, highly injurious to health. It is also a waste of money and time, and maketh the user a prey to a noxious addiction. To those who stand firm in the Covenant, this habit is therefore censured both by reason and experience, and renouncing it will bring relief and peace of mind to all men. Furthermore, this will make it possible to have a fresh mouth and unstained fingers, and hair that is free of a foul and repellent smell. On receipt of this missive, the friends will surely, by whatever means and even over a period of time, forsake this pernicious habit. Such is My hope..." ('Abdu'l-Bahá)

SMOKING BY DEGREES INJURIOUS

113. "... I wish to say that, in the sight of God, the smoking of tobacco is a thing which is blamed and condemned, very unclean, and of which the result is by degrees injurious. Besides it is a cause of expense and of loss of time and it is a harmful habit..."

('Abdu'l-Bahá: *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 335)

CIGARETTES, CIGARS AND TOBACCO SNUFF

114. "The use of cigarettes, cigars and tobacco snuff is not prohibited, even in the *Hazíratu'l-Quds*."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 6, 1935: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 272.)

SHOULD NOT BE MADE AN ISSUE

115. "As you have rightly noted... 'Abdu'l-Bahá advised against the smoking of tobacco. While the Teachings strongly condemn its use, they do not forbid it. To letters enquiring about this subject, the beloved Guardian replied through his secretary that we had no right to prevent anyone from smoking; that Bahá'ís were free to smoke but it was preferable for them not to do so; and, that this question should not be made an issue."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, April 8, 1965: *National Bahá'í Review*, No. 49, January 1972)

SMOKING DURING MEETINGS

116. "The use of tobacco, in common with other personal practices, should be subject to considerations of courtesy. The Bahá'í in his daily life, whether

smoker or non-smoker, should always be conscious of the rights of those about him and avoid doing anything which would give offence.

"With reference to smoking during the various types of Bahá'í meetings you mention, it is the responsibility of the Assembly, local or national, to decide on the matter for meetings under its direct control." (ibid.)

ALCOHOL

117. "Drink ye, O handmaidens of God, the Mystic Wine from the cup of My words. Cast away, then, from you that which your minds abhor, for it hath been forbidden unto you in His Tablets and His Scriptures. Beware lest ye barter away the River that is life indeed for that which the souls of the pure-hearted detest. Become ye intoxicated with the wine of the love of God, and not with that which deadeneth your minds, O ye that adore Him! Verily, it hath been forbidden unto every believer, whether man or woman. Thus hath the sun of My commandment shone forth above the horizon of My utterance, that the handmaidens who believe in Me may be illumined." (Bahá'u'lláh: *Guidance for Today and Tomorrow*, p. 209)

118. "The drinking of wine is, according to the text of the Most Holy Book, forbidden; for it is the cause of chronic diseases, weakeneth the nerves and consumeth the mind." ('Abdu'l-Bahá: ibid.)

119. "Alcohol consumeth the mind and causeth man to commit acts of absurdity."

('Abdu'l-Bahá: *National Bahá'í Review*, No. 3, March 1968, p. 2)

120. "Regarding the use of liquors, according to the text of the Book of Aqdas, both strong and light drinks are prohibited. The reason for this prohibition is that liquor leads the minds astray and is the cause of weakening the body. If alcohol were beneficial it would have been brought into the world by the divine creation not by the effort of man. Whatever is beneficial for man exists in creation. Now it has been proven and established medically and scientifically that liquors are harmful. Therefore, the meaning of that which is written in the Tablets — 'I have chosen for thee whatsoever is in the heavens and earth' — are those things which are according to the divine creation and not the things which are harmful. For instance, poison is one of the things: now how can we say that poisons are to be used habitually because God has created them for man? However, as to the spirituous liquors if prescribed by a doctor for the patient, and their use is necessary, then they may be used as directed." ('Abdu'l-Bahá)

121. "Concerning the use of alcoholic drinks and drugs the Guardian wishes

you to know that they have been explicitly forbidden in the "Kitáb-i-Aqdas". Opium is, undoubtedly, prohibited. But smoking, though allowed, is discouraged. Various other points which may be raised in this connection which have not been explained in the Holy Writings have to be carefully considered and acted upon by the future International House of Justice which is the body empowered by Bahá'u'lláh to legislate in all matters which have not been explicitly revealed in the Sacred Writings of the Faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, December 27, 1933: *Dawn of A New Day*, pp. 196-197)

CAKE FLAVOURS AND EXTRACTS

122. "You ask whether it is permissible for the friends to use cake flavours such as vanilla, lemon and rum flavoured extracts, as such flavours have a certain percentage of alcohol in them, and whether Bahá'ís may work in factories manufacturing such extracts.

"We have found no texts prohibiting the friends from using flavoured extracts in their food. This may be a matter for later legislating by the Universal House of Justice but for the time being the friends should be left free to do as they choose. The same principle applies to those who are employed in factories manufacturing such extracts."

(Letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, April 7, 1974)

FOODS FLAVOURED WITH ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS

123. "With reference to your question whether those foods which have been flavoured with alcoholic liquors such as brandy, rum, etc., should be classified under the same category as the intoxicating drinks, and consequently be avoided by believers, the Guardian wishes all the friends to know that such foods or beverages are strictly prohibited."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 9, 1939)

ALCOHOL FOR HOME REMEDIES

124. "Although it is clear from the teachings that the use of alcohol is permitted if it is prescribed by a physician for treatment purposes, we have not been able to find any instructions which permit its use in the preparation of home remedies for common illnesses."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, December 21, 1973)

ALCOHOL SHOULD NOT BE SERVED

125. "Bahá'ís should not serve alcoholic drinks at parties which they sponsor."

(From the letter of the Universal House of Justice; *Canadian Bahá'í News*, Special Section, March 1973)

126. "From the above quotations it is clear that on all occasions officially sponsored by Bahá'í Institutions or where the host is acting as a representative of the Cause alcohol should not be served. In private homes or in the course of business or professional activity it is left to the conscience of Bahá'ís themselves whether they serve alcoholic drinks to non-Bahá'ís but the obligation is very strong to observe the prohibition enjoined by Bahá'u'lláh."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, Feb. 8, 1968, *Canadian Bahá'í News*, Special Section, March 1973, p. 1.)

NOT EVEN IN PLUM PUDDING

127. "Under no circumstances should Bahá'ís drink. It is so unambiguously forbidden in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, that there is no excuse for them even touching it in the form of a toast, or in a burning pudding; in fact, in any way."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 3, 1957, cited in a letter from the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, December 21, 1972)

WORKING IN BARS OR TAVERNS

128. "We have your letter of June 13 asking whether a Bahá'í may own an establishment in which alcoholic liquors are sold, and also whether a Bahá'í may work in bars or taverns.

"For the time being the friends should consider this as a matter of conscience and should avoid either engaging in the sale of liquor or in employment involving the sale of liquor inasmuch as such actions are in violation of the spirit of the prohibition in Bahá'í law."

(Letter from the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Spain, August 4, 1964)

HABITS

129. "... Avoid all harmful habits: they cause unhappiness in the world. (Bahá'u'lláh: *Star of the West*, Vol. XIII, No. 9, p. 252)

130. "I cannot understand why people insist on the fact that one cannot give up a thing once he is accustomed to it. One can do it very easily if he makes up his mind fully, resolving to quit it forever. It is all a matter of character and determination."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *ibid.*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, p. 21)

131. "When I was in Paris one of the believers brought me a soft cushion and urged me to put it under my head. I became accustomed to it and as there is none in this hotel my neck has pained me all these nights. I will have none of it! When I was young I often had a brick or a piece of rock as my pillow, and I slept soundly ... One must never accustom himself to anything the absence of which may disturb his comfort." (*ibid.*, p. 20)

A HOLY LIFE

132. "What Bahá'u'lláh means by chastity certainly does not include the kissing that goes on in modern society. It is detrimental to the morals of young people, and often leads them to go too far, or arouses appetities which they cannot perhaps at the time satisfy legitimately through marriage, and the suppression of which is a strain on them.

"The Bahá'í standard is very high, more particularly when compared with the thoroughly rotten morals of the present world. But this standard of ours, will produce healthier, happier, nobler people, and induce stabler marriages..."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer: *Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973*, p. 108; *Bahá'í News* No. 202, December 1947, p. 3)

133. "The Master's words to ..., which you quoted, can certainly be taken as the true spirit of the teachings on the subject of sex. We must strive to achieve this exalted standard."

(From a letter dated 19 October 1947 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

Note: The Master's words, from a pilgrim's note, referred to in the above extract, are as follows:

"Women and men must not embrace each other when not married, or not about to be married. They must not kiss each other... If they wish to greet each other, or comfort each other, they may take each other by the hand."

KISSING INDISCRIMINATELY

134. "We have your letter of October 24th in which you ask about the current practice of kissing and embracing among the friends both in Europe and America.

"As you know, in the 'Advent of Divine Justice' the beloved Guardian has stated the principles of Bahá'í conduct which apply and he has condemned easy familiarity and frivolous conduct. Certainly, the practice of indiscriminate kissing and embracing involving unrelated people of opposite sexes is not desirable and is discouraged. Particularly in these days when restraints are being abolished one by one, the Bahá'ís should make great efforts to uphold in their personal lives and in their relationships to each other, the standards of conduct set forth in the teachings."

(Letter from the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, 8 November 1966; *Bahá'í News Supplement*, No. 113, July 1967, p. 3)

A CHASTE AND HOLY LIFE

135. "... a chaste and holy life, ... calls for the abandonment of a frivolous conduct, with its excessive attachment to trivial and often misdirected pleasures. It requires total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks, from opium, and from similar habit-forming drugs. It condemns the prostitution of art and literature, the practices of nudism and of companionate marriage, infidelity in marital relationships, and all manner of promiscuity, of easy familiarity, and of sexual vices. It can tolerate no compromise with the theories, the standards, the habits, and the excesses of a decadent age. Nay rather it seeks to demonstrate, through the dynamic force of its example, the pernicious character of such theories, the falsity of such standards, the hollowness of such claims, the perversity of such habits, and the sacrilegious character of such excesses."

(Shoghi Effendi: *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 25)

SEX IMPULSE

136. "The standard inculcated by Bahá'u'lláh seeks, under no circumstances, to deny any one the legitimate right and privilege to derive the fullest advantage and benefit from the manifold joys, beauties, and pleasures with which the world has been so plentifully enriched by an All-Loving Creator."

(Shoghi Effendi)

137. "The Bahá'í Faith recognizes the value of the sex impulse, but condemns its illegitimate and improper expressions such as free love, companionate marriage and others, all of which it considers positively harmful to

man and to the society in which he lives. The proper use of the sex instinct is the natural right of every individual, and it is precisely for this very purpose that the institution of marriage has been established. The Bahá'ís do not believe in the suppression of the sex impulse but in its regulation and control."

(From letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, quoted by the Universal House of Justice; *Messages from the Universal House of Justice*, 1968-1973, p. 108)

SEXUAL PROBLEMS – HOMOSEXUALITY

138. "A number of sexual problems, such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the best medical assistance. But it is clear from the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled and overcome. This may require a hard struggle, but so also can be the struggle of a heterosexual person to control his or her desires. The exercise of self-control in this, as in so very many other aspects of life, has a beneficial effect on the progress of the soul."

(*Messages of the Universal House of Justice*, 1968-73, p. 110)

139. "Homosexuality is highly condemned and often a great trial and cause of suffering to a person, as a Bahá'í. Any individual so afflicted must, through prayer, and any other means, seek to overcome this handicap.."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, Oct. 6, 1956)

140. "Homosexuality, according to the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, is spiritually condemned. This does not mean that people so afflicted must not be helped and advised and sympathized with. It does mean that we do not believe that it is a permissible way of life..."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 21, 1954: *Lights of Guidance*, pp. 272-3)

141. "... Bahá'u'lláh has spoken very strongly against this shameful sexual aberration, as He has against adultery and immoral conduct in general. We must try and help the soul to overcome them..."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 6, 1956)

142. "No matter how devoted and fine the love may be between people of the same sex, to let it find expression in sexual acts is wrong. To say that it is ideal is no excuse. Immorality of every sort is really forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and homosexual relationships He looks upon as such, besides being against nature.

"To be afflicted this way is a great burden to a conscientious soul. But through the advice and help of doctors, through a strong and determined effort, and through prayer, a soul can overcome this handicap.

"God judges each soul on its own merits. The Guardian cannot tell you what the attitude of God would be towards a person who lives a good life in most ways, but not in this way. All he can tell you is that it is forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh, and that one so afflicted should struggle and struggle again to overcome it. We must be hopeful of God's mercy but not impose upon it."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 26, 1950: *Lights of Guidance*, pp. 273-4)

MASTURBATION

143. "Masturbation is clearly not a proper use of the sex instinct, as this is understood in the Faith. Moreover, it involves, as you have pointed out, mental fantasies, while Bahá'u'lláh, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, has exhorted us not to indulge our passions and in one of His well-known Tablets 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages us to keep our 'secret thoughts pure'. Of course many wayward thoughts come involuntarily to the mind and these are merely a result of weakness and are not blameworthy unless they become fixed or, even worse, are expressed in improper acts. In 'The Advent of Divine Justice', when describing the moral standards that Bahá'ís must uphold both individually and in their community life, the Guardian wrote:

'Such a chaste and holy life, with its implications of modesty, purity, temperance, decency, and clean-mindedness, involves no less than the exercise of moderation in all that pertains to dress, language, amusements, and all artistic and literary avocations. It demands daily vigilance in the control of one's carnal desires and corrupt inclinations.'

"Your problem, therefore, is one against which you should continue to struggle, with determination and with the aid of prayer. You should remember, however, that it is only one of the many temptations and faults that a human being must strive to overcome during his lifetime, and you should not increase the difficulty you have by over-emphasizing its importance. We suggest you try to see it within the whole spectrum of the qualities that a Bahá'í must develop in his character. Be vigilant against temptation, but do not allow it to claim too great a share of your attention. You should concentrate, rather, on the virtues that you should develop, the services you should strive to render, and, above all, on God and His attributes, and devote your energies to living a full Bahá'í life in all its many aspects."

(From letter of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer: *Lights of Guidance*, pp. 269-270)

SCIENCE OF MEDICINE

This knowledge is the most important of all the sciences, for it is the greatest means from God, the life-giver to the dust, for preserving the bodies of all people . . .

Bahá'u'lláh

5. SCIENCE OF MEDICINE

SCIENCES AS WILL BENEFIT YOU

144. “We have granted you permission to study such sciences as will benefit you, not those sciences which will lead to idle disputes. Better is this for you, did ye but know.”

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Selections from Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 1)

MEDICINE – THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL SCIENCES

145. “This knowledge (of the healing art) is the most important of all the sciences, for it is the greatest means from God, the Life-giver to the dust, for preserving the bodies of all people, and He has put it in the forefront of all sciences and wisdoms. For this is the day when you must arise for My victory.”

(Bahá'u'lláh – *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 137)

IN HIS HALLOWED NAME

146. “Well is it with the physician who cureth the ailments in My hallowed and dearly-cherished Name.”

(Bahá'u'lláh – *Selections from Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 1)

LOVE OF GOD AND SCIENCES

147. "With the love of God all sciences are accepted and cherished; without it, they are fruitless, nay, rather a cause of madness. Every science is like unto a tree. If the love of God is its fruit, it is a blessed tree; if not, it is a dry wood and eventually fuel for fire." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *ibid.*, p. 1)

STRIVE TO BECOME HIGHLY QUALIFIED IN THIS SCIENCE

148. "You should endeavour to study the science of medicine. . . Strive day and night that you may become highly qualified in this science. And when you wish to dispense treatment set your heart toward the Abhá Kingdom entreating divine confirmation."

('Abdu'l-Bahá: *ibid.*, p. 2)

MEN OF CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE

149. "In connection with the question as to whether Bahá'ís should be familiar with the different sciences and branches of study, Shoghi Effendi wishes me to inform you that both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have given a very high position to men of culture and knowledge and Bahá'u'lláh says in one of His Tablets that respect shown to such people is incumbent upon all Bahá'ís. Furthermore there is no doubt that familiarity with different branches of study widens one's point of view and we can then understand and realize the significance of the Bahá'í Movement and its principles much more."

(From letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 14, 1924: *ibid.*, p. 5)

PSYCHIATRY

150. "There is nothing in our teachings about Freud and his method. Psychiatry treatment in general is no doubt an important contribution to medicine, but we must believe it is still a growing rather than a perfected science. As Bahá'u'lláh has urged us to avail ourselves of the help of good physicians Bahá'ís are certainly not only free to turn to psychiatry for assistance but should, when available, do so. This does not mean psychiatrists are always wise or always right; it means we are free to avail ourselves of the best medicine has to offer us."

(From letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, January 12, 1957: *ibid.*, pp. 8-9)

PSYCHOLOGY

151. "... Psychology is still a very young and inexact science, and as the years go by Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice)

HYPNOTISM

152. "Hypnotism hath a weak influence over bodies, but hath no result. But the power of the kingdom of God is great. If thou canst, endeavour to obtain a share of that power."

('Abdu'l-Bahá: *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Vol. I, p. 169)

AUTO-SUGGESTION OR HYPNOTISM

153. "What comes under the heading of psychic practices 'Abdu'l-Bahá has warned us against; but any form of auto-suggestion or hypnotism which is used by medical science and by properly qualified physicians we are free to take advantage of, if we feel that the doctor using such practices is qualified and will not abuse his rights."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, February 15, 1957: *Selections from Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 9)

TO PHYSICIANS

By My Life! the physician who has drunk from the Wine of My love, his visit is healing, and his breath is mercy and hope.

Bahá'u'lláh

6. TO PHYSICIANS

BECOME UNIQUE IN THY PROFESSION

154. “.. Thou must endeavour greatly so that thou mayest become unique in thy profession and famous in those parts, because attaining perfection in one’s profession in this merciful period is considered to be worship of God...”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from Bahá’í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 2)

THIS IS WORSHIP

155. “This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people. Service is prayer. A physician ministering to the sick, gently, tenderly, free from prejudice and believing in the solidarity of the human race, he is giving praise.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, UK, 1972, p. 177)

WHENEVER THOU ATTENDETH A PATIENT

156. “O thou sincere servant of the True One and spiritual physician of the people! Whenever thou attendeth a patient, turn thy face toward the Lord of the Kingdom, supplicate assistance from the Holy Spirit and heal the ailments of the sick one...”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from Bahá’í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 1)

157. “And when you wish to dispense treatment set your heart toward the Abhá Kingdom entreating divine confirmation.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *ibid*, p. 2)

TO PRESCRIBE A FITTING MEDICINE

158. "... The doctor must be aware of, and know, all the members and parts, as well as the constitution and state of the patient, so that he can prescribe a medicine which will be beneficial against the violent poison of the disease. In reality the Doctor deduces from the disease itself the treatment which is suited to the patient, for he diagnoses the malady, and afterwards prescribes the remedy for the illness. Until the malady be discovered how can the remedy and treatment be prescribed? The doctor then must have a thorough knowledge of the constitution, members, organs, and state of the patient, and be acquainted with all diseases and all remedies, in order to prescribe a fitting medicine."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, US, 1970, p. 182)

HE IS THE HEALER

159. "In God must be our trust. There is no God but Him, the Healer, the Knower, the Helper... Nothing in earth or heaven is outside the grasp of God.

"O Physician! In treating the sick, first mention the name of Thy God, the Possessor of the Day of Judgment and then use what God hath destined for the healing of His creatures. By My Life! the physician who has drunk from the Wine of My love, his visit is healing, and his breath is mercy and hope. Cling to Him for the welfare of the constitution. He is confirmed by God in his treatment."

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, US, 1970, p. 112)

PHYSICIAN WITH TWO POWERS

160. "O thou distinguished physician! ... Praise be to God that thou hast two powers: one to undertake physical healing and the other spiritual healing. Matters related to man's spirit have a great effect on his bodily condition. For instance, thou shouldst impart gladness to thy patient, give him comfort and joy, and bring him to ecstasy and exultation... Therefore, treat thou the sick with both powers. Spiritual feelings have a surprising effect on healing nervous ailments."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 150)

NOT BLAMEWORTHY

161. "... If a doctor consoles a sick man by saying: 'Thank God you are better, and there is hope of your recovery,' though these words are contrary to the truth, yet they may become the consolation of the patient and the turning-point of the illness. This is not blameworthy."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, US - 1970, p. 251)

HEAL THE SICKNESS OF THE IGNORANT ONES

162. "Say to (Dr.) ... that he studied physical medicine and he cured physical diseases. I beg of God that he may become a spiritual physician and heal the sickness of the ignorant ones."

(*Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Vol. III, p. 507)

163. "O thou yearning one! Be thou a physician to every sick one and teach thou every ignorant one; that is, show thou to others the way of the Kingdom and guide them to life eternal." (ibid., p. 524)

COMBINE THE TWO SERVICES

164. "Thou shouldst continue thy profession and at the same time try to serve the Kingdom of God."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 2)

165. "Verily, I beseech the Lord of Hosts to increase thy faith each day over that of the pervious day, to confirm thee through His Holy Spirit, to give thee capacity to partake of the lights of knowledge and wisdom, to make thee a herald of the Covenant in those regions, and to instruct thee in that which thou knowest not: so that thou mayest become a physician for bodies as well as souls, to heal bodies with the medicines which are useful and beneficial for physical (sickness), and to cure hearts and souls with that antidote which quickeneth hearts and souls.

"O My friend, it is incumbent upon thee to be severed (from all else save God), to be attracted, to be sincere, and to spend thy life in the path of God. Be thou holy, spiritual, divine, lively, brilliant, Godlike, sanctified, pure, with merciful character, firm in the Covenant, fluent and knowing; and gaze toward the Kingdom of El-Abhá with a heart brimming over with the love of God, with tears flowing in the commemoration of God, with a face scintillating through the light of God, with a heart sincere to the beloved of God, and with a sword which divides truth from falsehood. By God, the True One, the Spirit of Bahá will assist thee with such strength that all the concourse of the earth will fail (to withstand)."

(*Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Vol. I, pp. 166-7)

THE SKILLFUL PHYSICIAN

166. "The human being cannot remain in one condition: different maladies occur which have each a special remedy. The skillful physician does not give the same medicine to cure each disease and each malady, but he changes

remedies and medicines according to the different necessities of the diseases and constitutions. One person may have a severe illness caused by fever, and the skilled doctor will give him cooling remedies; and when at some other time the condition of the person has changed, and fever is replaced by chills, without doubt the skilled doctor will discard cooling medicine and permit the use of heating drugs: this change and alteration is required by the condition of the patient, and is an evident proof of the skill of the physician."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, US – 1970, pp. 108-9)

THE ALL-KNOWING PHYSICIAN

167. "The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements."

(*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 213)

CORRUPT PRACTICES

168. "The Guardian feels that your attitude towards the corrupt practice of accepting commissions from fellow physicians and pharmacies is most admirable. The more upright and noble the Bahá'ís are in their conduct, the more they will impress the public with the spiritual vitality of the Faith they believe in."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 20, 1953, *Living the Life*, p. 18)

DOCTORS SHOULD NOT WORK ON THE NINE BAHÁ'Í HOLY DAYS

169. "He thinks it is better for Bahá'í doctors not to work on our nine Holy Days – but, of course, that does not mean they should not attend the very sick people and emergencies on these days."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, August 2, 1946: *Dawn of A New Day*, p. 116)

ILLNESSES

... as we suffer these misfortunes we must remember that the Prophets of God Themselves were not immune from these things that men suffer. They knew sorrow, illness and pain too.

Shoghi Effendi

7. ILLNESSES

WORLD OF MATTER – SOURCE OF SORROW

170. "...but all the sorrow and the grief that exist come from the world of matter – the spiritual world bestows only the joy! If we suffer, it is the outcome of material things, and all the trials and troubles come from this world of illusion.

"For instance, a merchant may lose his trade and depression ensues. A workman is dismissed and starvation stares him in the face. A farmer has a bad harvest, anxiety fills his mind. A man builds a house which is burnt to the ground and he is straightway homeless, ruined, and in despair.

"All these examples are to show you that the trials which beset our every step, all our sorrow, pain, shame and grief, are born in the world of matter; whereas the spiritual Kingdom never causes sadness. A man living with his thoughts in this Kingdom knows perpetual joy. The ills all flesh is heir to do not pass him by, but they only touch the surface of his life, the depths are calm and serene."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, UK - 1972, p. 110)

PROPHETS OF GOD NOT IMMUNE FROM SUFFERING

171. "...as we suffer these misfortunes we must remember that the Prophets of God Themselves were not immune from these things which men suffer. They knew sorrow, illness and pain too. They rose above these things through Their spirits, and that is what we must try and do too, when afflicted.

The troubles of this world pass, and what we have left is what we have made of our souls; so it is to this we must look – to becoming more spiritual, drawing nearer to God, no matter what our human minds and bodies go through.”

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 5, 1949: *Bahá'í News*, Vol. 231, May 1950, p. 1)

PECULIARITIES OF THIS PHYSICAL WORLD

172. “O thou maid-servant of God! Although in body thou art weak and ill and, like Job, the object of many trials, yet (Praise be to God!) thou art strong in spirit and in the utmost health and joyousness. The peculiarities of this physical world are illness and diseases, and the essences of the universe of God are health and vigor. The body is like unto the lamp and the spirit like unto the light. Praise be to God, that the light is in the utmost brilliancy, no matter if the lamp is somewhat affected.”

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. IX, No. 15, p. 173)

SOUL INDEPENDENT OF BODILY AILMENTS

173. “That a sick person showeth signs of weakness is due to hindrances that interpose themselves between his soul and his body, for the soul itself remaineth independent of any bodily ailments.” (Bahá'u'lláh)

174. “Know thou that the soul of man is exalted above, and is independent of all infirmities of body and mind.”

(Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 153-4)

RESULT OF OUR OWN DEEDS

175. “The trials of man are of two kinds. (a) The consequences of his own actions. If a man eats too much, he ruins his digestion; if he takes poison he becomes ill or dies.. If he drinks too much he will lose his equilibrium. All these sufferings are caused by the man himself, it is quite clear therefore that certain sorrows are the result of our own deeds.”

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, pp. 49-50)

DISEASE – IMBALANCE OF CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS

176. “O thou who art attracted to the fragrant breathing 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 has 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.

“For the animal, as to its body, is made up of the same constituent elements as man. Since, however, the animal contenteth itself with simple foods and striveth not to indulge its importunate urges to any great degree, and committeth no sins, its ailments relative to man's are few. We see clearly, therefore, how powerful are sin and contumacy as pathogenic factors. And once engendered these diseases become compounded, multiply, and are transmitted to others. Such are the spiritual, inner causes of sickness.

“The outer, physical causal factor in disease, however is a disturbance in the balance, the proportionate equilibrium of all those elements of which the human body is composed. To illustrate: the body of man is a compound of many constituent substances, each component being present in a prescribed amount, contributing to the essential equilibrium of the whole. So long as these constituents remain in their due proportion, according to the natural balance of the whole – that is, no component suffereth a change in its natural proportional degree and balance, no component being either augmented or decreased – there will be no physical cause for the incursion of disease.

“For example, the starch component must be present to a given amount. So long as each remaineth in its natural proportion to the whole, there will be no cause for the onset of disease. When, however, these constituents vary as to their natural and due amounts – that is, when they are augmented or diminished – it is certain that this will provide for the inroads of disease.

“This question requireth the most careful investigation. The Báb hath said that the people of Bahá must develop the science of medicine to such a degree that they will heal illnesses by means of foods. The basic reason for this is that if, in some component substance of the human body, an imbalance should occur, altering its correct, relative proportion to the whole, this fact will inevitably result in the onset of disease. If, for example, the starch component should be unduly augmented, or the sugar component

decreased, an illness will take control. It is the function of a skilled physician to determine which constituent of his patient's body hath suffered diminution, which hath been augmented. Once he hath discovered this, he must prescribe a food containing the diminished element in considerable amounts, to re-establish the body's essential equilibrium. The patient, once his constitution is again in balance, will be rid of his disease.

"The proof of this is that while other animals have never studied medical science, nor carried on researches into diseases or medicines, treatments or cure — even so, when one of them falleth a prey to sickness, nature leadeth it, in fields or desert places, to the very plant which once eaten, will rid the animal of its disease. The explanation is that if, as an example, the sugar component in the animal's body hath decreased, according to a natural law the animal hankereth after a herb that is rich in sugar. Then, by a natural urge, which is the appetite, among a thousand different varieties of plants across the field, the animal will discover and consume that herb which containeth a sugar component in large amounts. Thus the essential balance of the substances composing its body is re-established, and the animal is rid of its disease.

"This question requireth the most careful investigation. When highly-skilled physicians shall fully examine this matter, thoroughly and perseveringly, it will be clearly seen that the incursion of disease is due to a disturbance in the relative amounts of the body's component substances, and that treatment consisteth in adjusting these relative amounts, and that this can be apprehended and made possible by means of foods.

"It is certain that in this wonderful new age the development of medical science will lead to the doctors' healing their patients with foods. For the sense of sight, the sense of hearing, of taste, of smell, of touch — all these are discriminative faculties, their purpose being to separate the beneficial from whatever causeth harm. Now, is it possible that man's sense of smell, the sense that differentiates odours, should find some odour repugnant, and that odour be beneficial to the human body? Absurd! Impossible! In the same way, could the human body, through the faculty of sight — the differentiator among things visible — benefit from gazing upon a revolting mass of excrement? Never! Again, if the sense of taste, likewise a faculty that selecteth and rejecteth, be offended by something, the thing is certainly not beneficial; and if, at the outset, it may yield some advantage, in the long run its harmfulness will be established.

"And likewise, when the constitution is in a state of equilibrium, there is no doubt that whatever is relished will be beneficial to health. Observe how an animal will graze in a field where there are a hundred thousand kinds of herbs and grasses, and how, with its sense of smell, it snuffs up the odours of

the plants, and tastes them with its sense of taste; then it consumes whatever herb is pleasurable to these senses, and benefits therefrom. Were it not for this power of selectivity, the animals would all be dead in a single day; for there are a great many poisonous plants, and animals know nothing of the pharmacopeia. And yet, observe what a reliable set of scales they have, by means of which to differentiate the good from the injurious. Whatever constituent of their body hath decreased, they can rehabilitate by seeking out and consuming some plant that hath an abundant store of that diminished element; and thus the equilibrium of their bodily components is reestablished, and they are rid of their disease.

"At whatever time highly-skilled physicians shall have developed the healing of illnesses by means of foods, and shall make provision for simple foods, and shall prohibit humankind from living as slaves to their lustful appetites, it is certain that the incidence of chronic and diversified illnesses will abate, and the general health of all mankind will be much improved. This is destined to come about. In the same way, in the character, the conduct and the manners of men, universal modifications will be made.

"Salutations be unto thee, and praise."

(*Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 152-156)

PRAYER AND CONTINUED EFFORT

177. "Such hindrances (i.e. illness and other difficulties) no matter how severe and insuperable they may at first seem, can and should be effectively overcome through the combined and sustained power of prayer and of determined and continued effort."

(Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá'í News*, Vol. 134, p. 2)

CANCER

178. "Cancer is such a terrible scourge in the world today! But when the believers are called upon to go through such bitter ordeals they have the faith to sustain them, the love of their Bahá'í friends to comfort them, and the glorious words of Bahá'u'lláh regarding immortality to give them confidence and courage. Blessed are we, indeed, even in the midst of our greatest trials." (Shoghi Effendi: *Directives from the Guardian*, New Delhi, p. 39)

NOT STATED IT IS A SPIRITUAL DISEASE

179. "There is no authority for the statement which is alleged to have been said by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the effect that cancer is a spiritual disease. The saying is quite unauthoritative, and should not be circulated."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 10, 1939)

MADNESS CAN BE CURED THROUGH PRAYER

180. "Disease is of two kinds, material and spiritual. For instance, a cut on the hand — if you pray for the cut to be healed, and do not stop its bleeding, you will not do much good; this needs a material remedy.

"Sometimes, if the nervous system is paralysed through fear, a spiritual remedy is necessary. Madness, incurable otherwise, can be cured through prayer. . It often happens that sorrow makes one ill. That illness can be cured by spiritual means."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. VIII, No. 18, p. 230)

SPEECH DIFFICULTY

181. "He will certainly continue to pray for your dear son's progress in overcoming his speech difficulty — a difficulty which, though it may embarrass him, only makes others admire his efforts the more."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 5, 1949: *Selections from Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 8)

MENTAL DISEASES

182. "In the Bahá'í teachings it is made quite clear that when one is ill, one should seek the best available medical advice. This naturally leaves a person free to choose what they consider good in medical opinion. If you and ...'s mother feel that she is improving under the care of your own doctor, and ... is willing to wait and be patient and see if she goes on making progress, there can surely be no objection to her doing this. There are a great many as you know mental diseases and troubles at present, and the one thing Bahá'ís must not do is take a defeatist attitude toward them. The power of the Faith is such that it can sustain us on a much higher level in spite of whatever our ailments might be, than other people who are denied it. This however does not mean that we should ignore medical opinion and treatment. On the contrary, we should do our best to procure the opinion of specialists and competent doctors."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 12, 1957: *Selections from Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, pp. 8-9)

183. "It is very hard to be subject to any illness, particularly a mental one. However, we must always remember these illnesses have nothing to do with our spirit or our inner relation to God.

"It is a great pity that as yet so little is really known of the mind, its workings and the illnesses that afflict it; no doubt, as the world becomes more spiritually minded and scientists understand the true nature of man, more humane and permanent cures for mental diseases will be found."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 12, 1948: *ibid*, p. 8)

ELECTRIC SHOCK TREATMENT

184. "The Guardian, much as his heart goes out to you in your fear and suffering, cannot tell you whether electric shock treatments should or should not be used. as this is purely a medical question, and there is no reference to such details in our Scriptures. The best scientists must pass upon such methods, not laymen.

"You must always remember, no matter how much you or others may be afflicted with mental troubles and the crushing environments of these State Institutions, that your spirit is healthy, near to our Beloved, and will in the next world enjoy a happy and normal state of soul. Let us hope that in the meantime scientists will find better and permanent cures for the mentally afflicted. But in this world such illness is truly a heavy burden to bear."

(*ibid.*)

HEALING

All true healing comes from God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

8. HEALING

TWO WAYS OF HEALING

185. "O maid-servant of God, there are two kinds of disease, spiritual and physical. Physical diseases are cured by medicine and the essence of shrubs and plants. Diseases which are caused by the emotions of the mind are cured by the power of the spirit of man. But the power of the divine spirit dominates all the bodily ailments and those of the mind. When the spirit of man is confirmed and assisted by the confirmations of the Holy Spirit, then it will show its effect in every condition in the world of existence.

"As to mental healing, it also has an effect because some reflections are produced between the hearts by the power of concentration. From this power of concentration impressions are produced and healing or relief is realized from these impressions." ('Abdu'l-Bahá)

186. "There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first is by the use of remedies, of medicines; the second consists in praying to God and in turning to Him. Both means should be used and practiced.

"Illness caused by physical accident should be treated 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 by spiritual rather than by physical treatment. Hence, both kinds of remedies should be considered. Moreover, they are not contradictory, and thou shouldst accept the physical remedies as coming from the mercy and favour of God, Who hath revealed and made manifest medical science so that

His servants may profit from this kind of treatment also. Thou shouldst give equal attention to spiritual treatments, for they produce marvellous effects.

“Now, if you wishest to know the divine 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 the teachings of God. Guard them sacredly.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from Bahá’í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 4.)

PRAYER ALONE IS NOT SUFFICIENT

187. “As you know, Bahá’u’lláh has ordained that in case of illness we should always consult the most competent physicians. And this is exactly what the Guardian strongly advises you to do. For prayer alone is not sufficient. To render it more effective we have to make use of all the physical and material advantages which God has given us. Healing through purely spiritual forces is undoubtedly as inadequate as that which materialist physicians and thinkers vainly seek to obtain by resorting entirely to mechanical devices and methods. The best result can be obtained by combining the two processes: spiritual and physical.” (Shoghi Effendi: *ibid.*, p. 6)

SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL HEALING ESSENTIAL AND COMPLEMENTARY

188. “With regard to your question concerning spiritual healing. Such a healing constitutes, indeed, one of the most effective methods of relieving a person from either the mental or physical pains and sufferings. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has in His Paris Talks emphasized its importance by stating that it should be used as an essential means for effecting a complete physical cure. Spiritual healing, however, is not and cannot be a substitute for material healing, but it is a most valuable adjunct to it. Both are indeed essential and complementary.”

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, February 16, 1935: *Extracts from the Guardian’s letters on Spiritualism, Reincarnation and Related Subjects*, p. 7)

TRUE HEALING

189. “All true healing comes from God. There are two causes for sickness, one is material, the other spiritual. If the sickness is of the body, a material remedy is needed, if of the soul, a spiritual remedy.

“If the heavenly benediction be upon us while we are being healed then only can we be made whole, for medicine is but the outward and visible means through which we can obtain the heavenly healing. Unless the spirit

is healed, the cure of the body is worth nothing. All is in the hands of God, and without Him there can be no health in us.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, UK – 1972, p. 19)

190. “There is but one power which heals – that is God. The state or condition through which healing takes place is the condition of the heart. By some this state is reached through pills, powders, and physicians. By others through hygiene, fasting, and prayer. By others through direct perception. All that we see around us is the work of mind. It is mind in the herb and in the mineral that acts on the human body, and changes its conditions.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. VIII, No. 18, p. 233)

MATERIAL HEALING

TREATMENT THROUGH DIET AND HERB

191. “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.”

(Bahá’u’lláh: *Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era*, p. 106)

HEALING WITH FOOD, FRUIT, ETC.

192. “... let us speak of material healing. The science of medicine is still in a condition of infancy; it has not reached maturity, but when it has reached this point, cures will be performed by things which are not repulsive to the smell and taste of man; that is to say aliments, fruits and vegetables which are agreeable to the taste and have an agreeable smell. For the provoking cause of disease – that is to say, the cause of the entrance of disease into the human body – is either a physical one or is the effect of excitement of the nerves.

“But the principal causes of disease are physical; for the human body is composed of numerous elements, but in the measure of an especial equilibrium. As long as this equilibrium is maintained, man is preserved from disease; but if this essential balance, which is the pivot of the constitution, is disturbed, the constitution is disordered, and disease will supervene.

“For instance, there is a decrease in one of the constituent ingredients of the body of man, and in another there is an increase; so the proportion of the equilibrium is disturbed, and disease occurs. For example, one ingredient must be one thousand grammes in weight, and another five grammes, in order that the equilibrium be maintained. The part which is one thousand grammes diminishes to seven hundred grammes, and that which is five grammes augments until the measure of the equilibrium is disturbed; then disease

occurs. When by remedies and treatments the equilibrium is re-established, the disease is banished. So, if the saccharine constituent increases, the health is impaired; and when the doctor forbids sweet and starchy foods the saccharine constituent diminishes, the equilibrium is re-established and the disease is driven off. Now the re-adjustment of these constituents of the human body is obtained by two means; either by medicines or by aliments; and when the constitution has recovered its equilibrium, disease is banished. All the elements that are combined in man, exist also in vegetables; therefore if one of the constituents which compose the body of man diminishes, and he partakes of foods in which there is much of that diminished constituent, then the equilibrium will be established, and a cure will be obtained. So long as the aim is the re-adjustment of the constituents of the body, it can be effected by medicine or by food.

“The majority of the diseases which overtake man also overtake the animal; but the animal is not cured by drugs. In the mountains, as in the wilderness, the animal’s physician is the power of taste and smell. The sick animal smells the plants that grow in the wilderness, he eats those that are sweet and fragrant to his smell and taste, and is cured. The cause of his healing is this: when the saccharine ingredient has become diminished in his constitution, he begins to long for sweet things; therefore he eats an herb with a sweet taste, for nature urges and guides him; its smell and taste please him, and he eats it. The saccharine ingredient in his nature will be increased, and health will be restored.

“It is therefore evident that it is possible to cure by foods, aliments, and fruits; but as today the science of medicine is imperfect, this fact is not yet fully grasped. 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...”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 266-8.)

LEAVE IT OFF!

193. “Abstain from drugs when the health is good, but administer them when necessary...”

(Bahá’u’lláh: *Star of the West*, Vol. XIII, No. 9, p. 252)

CONSULT SKILLFUL PHYSICIANS

194. “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.”

(Bahá’u’lláh: *Selections from Bahá’í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 1)

195. “Whatever the competent physicians or surgeons prescribe for a patient should be accepted and complied with.” (ibid.)

196. “One must obey the command of God and submit to medical opinion. You undertook this journey to comply with His command and not for the sake of healing, since healing is in the hand of God, not in the hand of doctors.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá: ibid, p. 4)

197. “It is incumbent upon every one to seek medical treatment and to follow the doctor’s instructions, for this is in compliance with the divine ordinance, but, in reality, He Who gives healing is God.” (ibid.)

198. “Therefore thou shouldst also accept physical remedies inasmuch as these two have come from the mercy and favour of God, Who hath revealed and made manifest medical science so that His servants may profit from this kind of treatment also.”

(*Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 151-2)

199. “Whatever the skilled physicians prescribe is pleasing and acceptable.”

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 10, 1928: *Selections from Bahá’í Writings on Some Aspect of Health and Healing*, p. 5)

200. “You should always bear in mind Bahá’u’lláh’s instruction to the effect that in case of any illness, no matter how slight, we should always seek the help and advice of the most competent physicians.”

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 17, 1937: ibid, p. 6)

201. “.. You have written about your poor sight. According to the explicit divine text the sick must refer to the doctor. This decree is decisive and everyone is bound to observe it. While you are there you should consult the most skilled and the most famed eye specialist.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá: ibid., p. 4)

202. “... follow the advice which Bahá’u’lláh has so repeatedly given in His Tablets namely, that in case of sickness we should invariably consult the most competent physicians, follow their instructions and leave the rest in God’s hands.” (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 29, 1938: ibid., p. 7)

EVEN IF PATIENT IS EMINENT PHYSICIAN

203. “According to the explicit decree of Bahá’u’lláh one must not turn aside from the advice of a competent doctor. It is imperative to consult one

even if the patient himself be a well-known and eminent physician. In short, the point is that you should maintain your health by consulting a highly-skilled physician." ('Abdu'l-Bahá: *ibid.*, p. 4)

204. "He was very sorry to hear that you have been so afflicted by disease; and he assures you that he will supplicate for your healing in the Holy Tomb.

"He also urges you to consult first-class doctors, and see if perhaps modern medicine has not found a remedy for this malady which is afflicting you so sorely.

"He urges you in spite of your disability to persevere in spreading the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, for this will attract to you the divine blessings."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 1, 1951: *ibid.*, p. 8)

205. "He was very sorry indeed to hear of your serious affliction, but he feels very strongly that you should not despair of your condition but on the contrary put yourself in the hands of the best specialists you can find and combat this disease both spiritually and physically."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 6, 1945: *ibid.*)

206. "As already urged by cable, he should continue the treatment. He should not be in a hurry but must comply with the instructions of a skillful physician and not go against what the doctor may prescribe or advise."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 20, 1938: *ibid.*, p. 7)

HOWEVER CRITICAL AND HOPELESS

207. "As regards Miss ... Shoghi Effendi feels unspeakably grateful for all the kind assistance you have been continually extending to her father in this assuredly heart-rending, nay indeed calamitous situation facing him. You did certainly well, however critical and hopeless his daughter's case may have been considered by the doctors, to advise him to take her to a hospital, and give her the best treatment medical science could possibly offer. In doing so you have acted in full conformity with the counsel so tenderly and repeatedly given by Bahá'u'lláh that in case of illness one should invariably consult and follow the treatment of competent and conscientious physicians."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 18, 1939: *ibid.*)

SHOULD NOT PASSIVELY SUBMIT TO DISEASE

208. "He was very sorry to hear of the condition of your sister-in-law... He has already assured her that he will pray for her in the Holy Shrines, and advised her not to passively submit to her disease but to take the very best care of herself under the guidance of the best physicians available."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, January 17, 1945: *ibid.*)

209. "He fully sympathizes with you in this great sorrow that has afflicted you. At such occasions, the true servants of God should be resigned and try to act wisely, using at the same time all available means to help their loved one who is in distress and is suffering from illness.

"Bahá'u'lláh tells us that in case of disease we should pray but at the same time refer to competent physicians, and abide by their considered decisions. Shoghi Effendi wishes you therefore to find whether your son has really become ill, and if he is, then follow the directions of the doctor. Being versed in the medical sciences they can treat better than a loving mother can. You can render your assistance by praying for him and at the same time helping the physicians to treat him."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, April 9, 1933: *ibid.*, pp. 5-6)

SPIRITUAL HEALING

FOUR KINDS OF CURING AND HEALING WITHOUT MEDICINE

210. "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 diseases 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 to 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 and 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.

"Of the two other kinds of healing which are spiritual, that is to say, where the means of cure is a spiritual power, one results from the entire concentration of the mind of a strong person upon a sick person, when the latter expects with all his concentrated faith that a cure will be effected from the spiritual power of the strong person, to such an extent that there will be a cordial connection between the strong person and the invalid. The strong person makes every effort to cure the sick patient, and the sick patient is then sure of receiving a cure. From the effect of these mental impressions an excitement of the nerves is produced, and this impression and this excitement of the nerves will become the cause of the recovery of the sick person. So when a sick person has a strong desire and intense hope for something, and hears suddenly of the tidings of its realization, a nervous excitement is produced, which will make the malady entirely disappear. In the same way, if a cause of terror suddenly occurs, perhaps an excitement may be produced in the nerves of a strong person, which will immediately cause a malady. The cause of the sickness will be no material thing, for that person has not eaten anything, and nothing harmful has touched him; the excitement of the nerves is then the only cause of the illness. In the same way the sudden realization of a chief desire will give such joy that the nerves will be excited by it, and this excitement may produce health.

"To conclude, the complete and perfect connection between the spiritual doctor and the sick person — that is, a connection of such a kind that the spiritual doctor entirely concentrates himself, and all the attention of the sick person is given to the spiritual doctor from whom he expects to realise health — causes an excitement of the nerves, and health is produced. But all this has effect only to a certain extent, and that not always. For if some one is afflicted with a very violent disease, or is wounded, these means will not remove the disease or close and heal the wound. That is to say, these means have no power in severe maladies, unless the constitution helps, because a strong constitution often overcomes disease. This is the third kind of healing.

"But the fourth kind of healing is produced through the power of the Holy Spirit. This does not depend on contact, nor on sight, nor upon presence; it is not dependent upon any condition. Whether the disease be slight or severe, whether there be a contact of bodies or not, whether a personal connection be established between the sick person and the healer

or not, this healing takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 293-5)

ART OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

211. "O thou pure and spiritual one! Turn thou toward God with thy heart beating with His love, devoted to His praise, gazing toward His Kingdom and seeking help from His Holy Spirit in a state of ecstasy, rapture, love, yearning, joy and fragrance. God will assist thee, through a Spirit from His Presence, to heal sickness and diseases."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 628)

212. "Without the help of God man is even as the beasts that perish, but God has bestowed such wonderful power upon him that he might ever look upward, and receive, among other gifts, healing from His Divine Bounty."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 20)

213. "When giving medical treatment turn to the Blessed Beauty, then follow the dictates of thy heart. Remedy the sick by means of heavenly joy and spiritual exultation, cure the sorely afflicted by imparting to them blissful glad-tidings and heal the wounded through the resplendent bestowals. When at the bedside of a patient, cheer and gladden his heart and enrapture his spirit through celestial power. Indeed such a heavenly breath quickeneth every mouldering bone and reviveth the spirit of every sick and ailing one."

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Selections from Bahá’í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 3)

214. "With regard to your question concerning spiritual healing. Such a healing constitutes, indeed, one of the most effective methods of relieving a person from either the mental or physical pains and sufferings. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has in His Paris Talks emphasized its importance by stating that it should be used as an essential means for effecting a complete physical cure. Spiritual healing, however, is not and cannot be a substitute for material healing, but it is a most valuable adjunct to it. Both are indeed essential and complementary." (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, February 16, 1935: *ibid.*, p. 29)

215. "With reference to your question concerning spiritual healing. Its importance, as you surely know, has been greatly emphasized by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Who considered it, indeed, as an essential part of physical processes of healing. Physical healing cannot be complete and lasting unless it is reinforced by spiritual healing. And this last one can be best obtained through obedience to the laws and commandments of God as revealed to us through His Manifestations. Individual believers, however, can also help by imparting healing to

others. But the success of their efforts depends entirely on their strict adherence to the Teachings, and also on the manner in which they impart them to others. According to Bahá'u'lláh man cannot obtain full guidance directly from God. He must rather seek it through His Prophets. Provided this principle is clearly understood and explained, the Guardian sees no harm that the friends should try to effect spiritual healing on others. Any such cure effected, however, should be done in the name of Bahá'u'lláh and in accordance with His Teachings. For God, and God alone is the Supreme and Almighty Physician and all else are but instruments in His hands."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 23, 1935: *Extracts from the Guardian's letters on Spiritualism, Reincarnation and Related Subjects*, p. 8)

THE POWER OF THE GREATEST NAME

216. "O maid-servant of God! Continue in healing hearts and bodies and seek healing for sick persons by turning unto the Supreme Kingdom and by setting the heart upon obtaining healing through the power of the Greatest Name and by the spirit of the love of God."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Vol. III, p. 629)

FILLED WITH THE LOVE OF BAHÁ

217. "He who is filled with the love of Bahá, and forgets all things, the Holy Spirit will be heard from his lips and the spirit of life will fill his heart, the lights of the sign will shine forth from his face, words will issue from his mouth in strands and pearls, and all sickness and disease will be healed by the laying on of the hands."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. VII, No. 10, p. 99)

HEALING POWER OF CHRIST

218. "Christ healed by the power of His word, because the word of the Messiah was the Holy Spirit purified from all else.

"The words of many speakers are mixed with the lusts of their souls and their worldly appetites; therefore they will have neither authority nor success.

"Jesus said: 'Arise, take up thy bed and walk.' He did not use prayers or mental suggestion. He used spiritual authority in the command which was the power of the Holy Spirit manifest in Him. Therefore his word was obeyed because it was creative."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Star of the West*, Vol. VIII, No. 18, p. 231)

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE TREATMENT

219. "You have asked concerning approval of Christian Science treatment and healing. Spirit has influence; prayer has spiritual effect. Therefore we pray, 'O God! heal this sick one!' Perchance God will answer. Does it matter who prays? God will answer the prayer of every servant if that prayer is urgent. His mercy is vast, illimitable."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 241)

HEALING POWER OF PRAYER

220. "... The prayers which were revealed to ask for healing apply both to physical and spiritual healing. Recite them, then, to heal both the soul and the body. If healing is right for the patient, it will certainly be granted; but for some ailing persons, healing would only be the cause of other ills, and therefore wisdom does not permit an affirmative answer to the prayer...

"... The power of the Holy Spirit healeth both physical and spiritual ailments..." (Abdu'l-Bahá)

221. "No doubt, the power of prayer is very great, yet consultation with experts is enjoined by Bahá'u'lláh."

(Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá'í News*, No. 108, p. 10)

222. "The healing prayers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh can be effective even though used by non-believers. But their effectiveness is of course greater in the case of those who fully accept the Revelation."

(Shoghi Effendi: *Directives from the Guardian*, New Delhi, p. 60)

DIFFICULTIES SHOULD BE OVERCOME THROUGH PRAYER

223. "Such hindrances, no matter how severe and insuperable they may at first seem, can and should be effectively overcome through the combined and sustained power of prayer and of determined and continued effort..."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 6, 1939: *Bahá'í News* No. 134, p. 2)

NO BAHÁ'Í HEALER OR BAHÁ'Í TYPE OF HEALING

224. "The Guardian knows nothing about your kind of healing, nor would he care to go into the question in detail, as he has no time for such matters. But he can lay down for your guidance certain broad principles: There is no such thing as BAHÁ'Í HEALERS or a BAHÁ'Í TYPE OF HEALING. In His Most Holy Book (The Aqdas) Bahá'u'lláh says to consult the best physicians,

in other words, doctors who have studied a scientific system of medicine; He never gave us to believe He Himself would heal us through 'healer', but rather through prayer and the assistance of medicine and approved treatments.

"Now, as long as your healing is in no opposition to these principles, as long as you do not try and take the place of a regular doctor in trying to heal others, but only give them your kind of help through constructive suggestion, or whatever it may be – and do not associate this help with being a channel of the direct grace of Bahá'u'lláh, the Guardian sees no harm in your continuing your assistance to others. But you must conscientiously decide whether in view of the above you are really justified in continuing. He will pray for your guidance and happiness."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 6, 1948: *Directives from the Guardian*, New Delhi, p. 36)

225. "He feels the attitude taken by you and the Assembly of Caracas toward the remarkable healing powers exhibited by ... has been the right one. To associate such things with the Cause would be only to ultimately injure its reputation and misrepresent it, as her powers – which are certainly very hard to find any logical explanation for – are not common to Bahá'ís, but rather a phenomenon seen among individuals, (rarely), of religious background.

"As to its being direct inspiration from Bahá'u'lláh, we certainly cannot say this. We can only be grateful that she has actually been able to help people who direly needed it. She herself being a devoted Bahá'í, there is no reason why she should not be known as one. But certainly it should in no way be connected with her healing powers."

(*ibid.*, September 30, 1949)

226. "The Guardian has already heard about ...'s seemingly remarkable powers of healing and he wrote the friends who communicated with him that he feels that she is naturally free to use this power, so far beyond our understanding, but not a unique phenomenon in history by any means, for the good of others, but that it is better not to directly associate it with the Faith.

"In other words, this dear soul is a Bahá'í, and we are all proud that she is one. But she should not give the impression she is a Bahá'í healer, for we have no such thing, but rather that she is a Bahá'í by faith, whom God seems to have blessed with this precious bounty individually of being able to often heal others." (*ibid.*, October 26, 1949)

227. "He does not feel that you should try to do anything special about the capacity you feel to help people when they are ill. This does not mean you should not use it when the occasion arises, such as it did recently. But he

means you should not become a HEALER such as the Christian Scientists have, and we Bahá'ís do NOT have." (*ibid.*, December 25, 1949)

228. "We have no reason to believe that the healing of the Holy Spirit cannot be attracted by ordinary human beings. But this is rare, a mystery, and gift of God." (*ibid.*, March 26, 1950)

229. "The Guardian sees no reason why you should not continue to help sick people. As he wrote some of the believers regarding this matter previously, as long as you do not say you are healing them as a Bahá'í, or because you are a Bahá'í (because we have no 'healers' in the Cause as such) there can be certainly no objection to your doing it. On the contrary, to be able to help another soul who is in suffering is a great bounty from God."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 5, 1950: *Extracts from the Guardian's Letters on Spiritualism, Reincarnation and Related Subjects*, p. 9)

230. "He thinks your Assembly's decision regarding spiritual healing being demonstrated at a Bahá'í meeting was quite sound. We should try not to have the Faith identified with such things in the eyes of the public officially. What the believers do privately, which in no way contravenes the Teachings, is their own affair."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, June 25, 1953; *ibid.*, p. 9)

GREATER EFFECT

231. "We should all visit the sick. When they are in sorrow it does them much good to have a friend come. Happiness is a great healer to those who are ill. In the East it is the custom to call upon the patient often and meet him individually. The people in the East show the utmost kindness and compassion. This has greater effect than the remedy itself. You must always have this thought of kindness and compassion when you see a sick person. You must call upon him. You must exercise the utmost love and affection..."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 199)

232. "O thou servant of God! To look after the sick is one of the greatest duties. For every soul who becomes sick, the other friends should certainly offer their lives (in service) with the utmost kindness."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections from Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health and Healing*, p. 5)

9. SOME BAHÁ'Í PRAYERS FOR HEALING

“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, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”

— Bahá'u'lláh

“O God, my God! I beg of Thee by the ocean of Thy healing, and by the splendors of the Day-Star of Thy grace, and by Thy Name through which Thou didst subdue Thy servants, and by the Pervasive power of Thy most exalted Word and the potency of Thy most august Pen, and by Thy mercy that hath preceded the creation of all who are in heaven and on earth, to purge me with the waters of Thy bounty from every affliction and disorder, and from all weakness and feebleness.

“Thou seest, O my Lord, Thy suppliant waiting at the door of Thy bounty, and him who hath set his hopes on Thee clinging to the cord of Thy generosity. Deny him not, I beseech Thee, the things he seeketh from the ocean of Thy grace and the Day-Star of Thy loving-kindness.

“Powerful art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. There is none other God save Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.”

— Bahá'u'lláh

“Praised be Thou, O Lord my God! I implore Thee by Thy Most Great Name through which Thou didst stir up Thy servants and build up Thy cities, and by Thy most excellent titles, and Thy most august attributes, to assist Thy people to turn in the direction of Thy manifold bounties, and set their faces toward the Tabernacle of Thy wisdom. Heal Thou the sicknesses that have assailed the souls on every side, and have deterred them from directing

their gaze toward the Paradise that lieth in the shelter of Thy shadowing Name, which Thou didst ordain to be the King of all names unto all who are in heaven and all who are on earth. Potent art Thou to do as pleaseth Thee. In Thy hands is the empire of all names. There is none other God but Thee, the Mighty, the Wise.

“I am but a poor creature, O my Lord; I have clung to the hem of Thy riches. I am sore sick; I have held fast the cord of Thy healing. Deliver me from the ills that have encircled me, and wash me thoroughly with the waters of Thy graciousness and mercy, and attire me with the raiment of wholesomeness, through Thy forgiveness and bounty. Fix, then, mine eyes upon Thee, and rid me of all attachment to aught else except Thyself. Aid me to do what Thou desirest, and to fulfill what Thou pleasest.

“Thou art truly the Lord of this life and of the next. Thou art, in truth, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”

— Bahá'u'lláh

“Glory be to Thee, O Lord my God! I implore Thee by Thy Name, through which Thou didst lift up the ensigns of Thy guidance, and didst shed the radiance of Thy loving-kindness, and didst reveal the sovereignty of Thy Lordship; through which the lamp of Thy names hath appeared within the niche of Thine attributes, and He Who is the Tabernacle of Thy unity and the Manifestation of detachment hath shone forth; through which the ways of Thy guidance were made known, and the paths of Thy good pleasure were marked out; through which the foundations of error have been made to tremble, and the signs of wickedness have been abolished; through which the fountains of wisdom have burst forth, and the heavenly table hath been sent down; through which Thou didst preserve Thy servants and didst vouchsafe Thy healing; through which Thou didst show forth Thy tender mercies unto Thy servants and revealedst Thy forgiveness amidst Thy creatures — I implore Thee to keep safe him who hath held fast and returned unto Thee, and clung to Thy mercy, and seized the hem of Thy loving providence. Send down, then, upon him Thy healing, and make him whole, and endue him with a constancy vouchsafed by Thee, and a tranquility bestowed by Thy Highness.

“Thou art, verily, the Healer, the Preserver, the Helper, the Almighty, the Powerful, the All-Glorious, the All-Knowing.”

— Bahá'u'lláh

“Glory be to Thee, O Lord my God! I beg of Thee by Thy Name through which He Who is Thy Beauty hath been established upon the throne of Thy Cause, and by Thy Name through which Thou changest all things, and gatherest together all things, and callest to account all things, and reward-

est all things, and preservest all things, and rewardest all things — I beg of Thee to guard this handmaiden who hath fled for refuge to Thee, and hath sought the shelter of Him in Whom Thou Thyself art manifest, and hath put her whole trust and confidence in Thee.

“She is sick, O my God, and hath entered beneath the shadow of the Tree of Thy healing; afflicted, and hath fled to the city of Thy protection; diseased, and hath sought the Fountain-Head of Thy favors; sorely vexed, and hath hastened to attain the Well-Spring of Thy tranquillity; burdened with sin, and hath set her face toward the court of Thy forgiveness.

“Attire her, by Thy sovereignty and Thy loving-kindness, O my God and my Beloved, with the raiment of Thy balm and Thy healing, and make her quaff of the cup of Thy mercy and Thy favors. Protect her, moreover, from every affliction and ailment, from all pain and sickness, and from whatsoever may be abhorrent unto Thee.

“Thou, in truth, art immensely exalted above all else except Thyself. Thou art, verily, the Healer, the All-Sufficing, the Preserver, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”

— Bahá'u'lláh

“Thou art He, O my God, through Whose names the sick are healed and the ailing are restored, and the thirsty are given drink, and the sore-vexed are tranquillised, and the wayward are guided, and the abased are exalted, and the poor are enriched, and the ignorant are enlightened, and the gloomy are illumined, and the sorrowful are cheered, and the chilled are warmed, and the downtrodden are raised up. Through Thy Name, O my God, all created things were stirred up, and the heavens were spread, and the earth was established, and the clouds were raised and made to rain upon the earth. This, verily, is a token of Thy grace unto all Thy creatures.

“I implore Thee, therefore, by Thy name through which Thou didst manifest Thy God-Head, and didst exalt Thy Cause above all creation, and by each of Thy most excellent titles and most august attributes, and by all the virtues wherewith Thy transcendent and most exalted Being is extolled, to send down this night from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing upon this suckling, whom Thou hast related unto Thine all-glorious Self in the kingdom of Thy creation. Clothe him, then, O my God, by Thy grace, with the robe of well-being and health, and guard him, O my Beloved, from every affliction and disorder, and from whatever is obnoxious unto Thee. Thy might, verily, is equal to all things. Thou, in truth, art the Most Powerful, the Self-Subsisting. Send down, moreover, upon him, O my God, the good of this world and of the next, and the good of the former and latter generations. Thy might and Thy wisdom are, verily, equal unto this.”

— Bahá'u'lláh

10. LONG HEALING PRAYER

He is the Healer, the Sufficer, the Helper, the All-Forgiving,
the All-Merciful.

I call on Thee O Exalted One, O Faithful One, O Glorious One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Sovereign, O Upraiser, O Judge!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Peerless One, O Eternal One, O Single One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou abiding One!

I call on Thee O Most Praised One, O Holy One, O Helping One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Omnipotent, O Most Wise, O Most Great One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Clement One, O Majestic One, O Ordaining One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Beloved One, O Cherished One, O Enraptured One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Mightiest One, O Sustaining One, O Potent One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Ruling One, O Self-Subsisting, O All-Knowing One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Spirit, O Light, O Most Manifest One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Thou Frequented by all, O Thou known to all,
 O Thou Hidden from all!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Concealed One, O Triumphant One, O Bestowing One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Almighty, O Succouring One, O Concealing One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Fashioner, O Satisfier, O Uprooter!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Rising One, O Gathering One, O Exalting One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Perfecting One, O Unfettered One, O Bountiful One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Beneficent One, O Withholding One, O Creating One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Most sublime One, O Beauteous One, O Bounteous One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Just One, O Gracious One, O Generous One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O All-Compelling, O Ever-Abiding, O Most Knowing One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Magnificent One, O Ancient of Days, O Magnanimous One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Well-guarded One, O Lord of Joy, O Desired One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Thou King to all, O Thou Compassionate with all,
 O Most Benevolent One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Haven for all, O Shelter to all, O All-Preserving One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Thou Succourer of all, O Thou Invoked by all,
 O Quickening One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Unfolder, O Ravager, O Most Clement One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Thou my Soul, O Thou my Beloved, O Thou my Faith!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Quencher of thirsts, O Transcendent Lord,
 O Most Precious One!
 Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
 O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Greatest Remembrance, O Noblest Name,
O Most Ancient Way!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Most Lauded, O Most Holy, O Sanctified One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Unfastener, O Counsellor, O Deliverer!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Friend, O Physician, O Captivating One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Glory, O Beauty, O Bountiful One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O the Most Trusted, O the Best Lover,
O Lord of the Dawn!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Enkindler, O Brightener, O Bringer of Delight!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Lord of Bounty, O Most Compassionate,
O Most Merciful One!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Constant One, O Life-giving One, O Source of all Being!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Thou Who penetratest all things, O, All-Seeing God,
O Lord of Utterance!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Manifest yet Hidden, O Unseen yet Renowned,
O Onlooker sought by all!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

I call on Thee O Thou Who slayest the lovers, O God of Grace to the wicked!
Thou the Sufficing, Thou the Healing, Thou the Abiding,
O Thou Abiding One!

O Sufficer, I call on Thee, O Sufficer!
O Healer, I call on Thee, O Healer!
O Abider, I call on Thee, O Abider!
Thou the Ever-Abiding, O Thou Abiding One!

Sanctified art Thou, O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy generosity, whereby the portals of Thy bounty and grace were opened wide, whereby the Temple of Thy Holiness was established upon the throne of eternity; and by Thy mercy whereby Thou didst invite all created things upto the table of Thy bounties and bestowals; and by Thy grace whereby Thou didst respond, in Thine own Self with Thy word "Yea!" on behalf of all in heaven and earth, at the hour when Thy sovereignty and Thy grandeur stood revealed, at the dawn-time when the might of Thy dominion was made manifest. And again do I beseech Thee, by these most bounteous names, by these most noble and sublime attributes, and by Thy most Exalted Remembrance, and by Thy pure and spotless Beauty, and by Thy hidden Light in the most hidden pavilion, and by Thy Name, cloaked with the garment of affliction every morn and eve, to protect the bearer of this blessed Tablet, and whoso reciteth it, and whoso cometh upon it, and whoso passeth around the house wherein it is. Heal Thou, then, by it every sick, diseased and poor one, from every tribulation and distress, from every loathsome affliction and sorrow, and guide Thou by it whosoever desireth to enter upon the paths of Thy guidance, and the ways of Thy forgiveness and grace.

Thou art verily the Powerful, the All-Sufficing, the Healing, the Protector, the Giving, the Compassionate, the All-Generous, the All-Merciful.

— Baha'u'lláh