

Spiritual Basis for Bio-Psycho-Social Health and Healing as Found in the Baha'i Writings

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to indicate the comprehensiveness of Baha'u'llah's Teachings as they pertain to the broad subject of mental, emotional and social healing and health, to show how greatly religious teachings can enrich the discoveries and effectiveness of the sciences that deal with psychosocial healing, and how tremendously the possibility of this cross-fertilization is advanced by the Baha'i Revelation.

Definition

"Psychosocial" is a key concept in the social work profession. It means, simply, "psychological" *and* "social," or the combination of the two. Social workers take pride in what we claim as our point of distinction: that we take a *psychosocial perspective*, viewing *the person-in-the-environment* or social context, rather than as an autonomous individual abstracted from family and society. Today, social work also recognizes the influence of biology and bodily health on the functioning of the individual, aspiring to a "*biopsychosocial perspective*." But nothing in social work that so clearly illustrates what might be called the *morabiopsychosocial* nexus as does 'Abdu'l-Baha. For example, when He explains how excessive indulgence of the appetites can lead to deadly diseases:

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

But man hath perversely continued to serve his lustful appetites.... 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.

...At whatever time highly-skilled physicians 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. ('Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, #134, p. 152 - 156) [*emphasis added*]

This is an example of the broad, bio-psycho-social perspective of 'Abdu'l-Baha, from Whose knowledge social work, as a profession, would greatly benefit, if His wisdom were integrated into its theory and practice.

It is in "the character, the conduct and the manners of men", that we enter into the subject matter of the fields of psychology, social work, and the human sciences in general. About this, He says much more. In 1912, 'Abdu'l-Baha affirmed that the ills of society and of its people are the greatest concern of this day. He identifies its disease and cure as given by Baha'u'llah, and states that man-made science, because of its inherent limitations, is unable to heal them, but that divine religion is able to do this:

The body politic today is greatly in need of a physician. It is similar to a human body afflicted with severe ailments. A doctor diagnoses the case and prescribes treatment. He does not prescribe, however, until he has made the diagnosis. *The disease which afflicts the body politic is a lack of love and absence of altruism.* In the hearts of men no real love is found, and the condition is such that, unless their susceptibilities are quickened by some power so that unity, love and accord may develop within them, there can be no healing, no agreement among mankind. *Love and unity are the needs of the body politic today.* Without these there can be no progress or prosperity attained. Therefore, the friends of God must adhere to the power which will create this love and unity in the hearts of the sons of men. Science cannot cure the illness of the body politic. Science cannot create amity and fellowship in human hearts. Neither can patriotism nor racial allegiance effect a remedy. It must be accomplished solely through the divine bounties and spiritual bestowals which have descended from God in this day for that purpose. This is an exigency of the times, and the divine remedy has been provided. The spiritual teachings of the religion of God can alone create this love, unity and accord in human hearts.

Therefore, hold to these heavenly agencies which God has provided so that through the love of God this soul-bond may be established, this heart-attachment realized and the light of the reality

of unity be reflected from you throughout the universe. If we do not hold fast to these divine agencies and means, no result will be possible. ('Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of the Universal Peace*, p. 171) [*emphasis added*]

Baha'i Teachings on PsychoSocial Healing

Many Baha'i Teachings shed light on the subject of the physical, psychological, emotional and social healing of the individual and of society. First of all, they tell us about the nature and function of religion, and that human well-being is the purpose of all religions: "They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples" (Baha'u'llah, *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, p. 19).

The Baha'i Teachings tell us that the creative energies of the various divine revelations are the source of life for mankind. 'Abdu'l-Baha explains that the scientific and cultural revolution of the twentieth century was the direct result of the most recent outpouring of divine revelation, the Revelation of Baha'u'llah in the nineteenth - an explanation which seems to have gone largely unnoticed, thus far:

There are certain means for its accomplishment by which mankind is regenerated and quickened with a new birth. This is the second birth mentioned in the heavenly Books. Its accomplishment is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The resuscitation or rebirth of the spirit of man is through the science of the love of God. It is through the efficacy of the water of life. This life and quickening is the regeneration of the phenomenal world. After the coming of the spiritual springtime, the falling of the vernal showers, this shining of the Sun of Reality, the blowing of the breezes of perfection, all phenomena become imbued with the life of a new creation and are reformed in the process of a new genesis.

...Even so is the spiritual springtime when it comes. When the holy, divine Manifestations or Prophets appear in the world, a cycle of radiance, an age of mercy dawns. Everything is renewed. Minds, hearts and all human forces are reformed, perfections are quickened, sciences, discoveries and investigations are stimulated afresh, and everything appertaining to the virtues of the human world is revitalized²⁴. Consider this present century of radiance, and compare it with the past centuries. What a vast difference exists between them! How discoveries have increased! What great projects have been accomplished! How many realities have become manifest!

²⁴ It is interesting to note the close parallels in the development of the science of psychology and the social work profession with the history of the Baha'i Revelation, which they follow.

How many mysteries of creation have been probed and penetrated! What is the cause of this? It is through the efficacy of the spiritual springtime in which we are living. Day by day the world attains a new bounty. In this radiant century neither the old customs nor the old sciences, crafts, laws and regulations have remained. The old political principles are undergoing change, and a new body politic is in process of formation....(Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of the Universal Peace*, p. 278)

The Baha'i Teachings tell us that the divine Teachings are the sources of all learning, and that the divine Manifestations are the very founders of civilization, and the bringers of healing to the individual and society. Baha'u'llah has said: "The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His Glory, and this cannot be attained save through the knowledge of His Divine Manifestation" (Baha'u'llah, from "Words of Wisdom", in *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, p 155-7).

God, the Infinite, is unknowable to mankind, the finite, except through His Manifestations, the divine Prophets, Who are demonstrably endowed with qualitatively superior capacities, and Who are the sources of the knowledge of God to man, throughout history. Thus, "[t]he first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation" (Baha'u'llah, *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, p. 19).

It follows, then, that:

It behoveth every one who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties [of recognition of and obedience to the Manifestation] are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration. (Baha'u'llah, *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, p. 19)

The personal and social purpose of religion, then, are given as follows: "The purpose underlying the revelation of every heavenly Book, nay of every divinely revealed verse, is to endue all men with righteousness and understanding, so that peace and tranquillity may be firmly established amongst them" (Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, p.206).

The Manifestation as Divine Physician

The Founders of the great religions are likened to physicians, Whose transcendent wisdom provides the superhuman remedy for the social ills of entire civilizations and an entire age:

The world of humanity may be likened to the individual man himself; it has its illness and ailments. A patient must be diagnosed by a skillful physician. The Prophets of God are the real Physicians. In whatever age or time They appear They prescribe for human conditions. They know the sicknesses; They discover the hidden sources of disease and indicate the necessary remedy. Whosoever is healed by that remedy finds eternal health. For instance, in the day of Jesus Christ the world of humanity was afflicted with various ailments. Jesus Christ was the real Physician. He appeared, recognized the symptoms and prescribed the real remedy. What was that remedy? It was His revealed teaching especially applicable to that age. Later on many new ailments and disorders appeared in the body politic. The world became sick; other severe maladies appeared, especially in the peninsula of Arabia. God manifested Muhammad there. He came and prescribed for the conditions so that the Arabs became healthy, strong and virile in that time.

In this present age the world of humanity is afflicted with severe sicknesses and grave disorders which threaten death. Therefore, Baha'u'llah has appeared. He is the real Physician, bringing divine remedy and healing to the world of man. He has brought teachings for all ailments.... These Holy Words and teachings are the remedy for the body politic, the divine prescription and real cure for the disorders which afflict the world. Therefore, we must accept and partake of this healing remedy in order that complete recovery may be assured. Every soul who lives according to the teachings of Baha'u'llah is free from the ailments and indispositions which prevail throughout the world of humanity; otherwise, selfish disorders, intellectual maladies, spiritual sicknesses, imperfections and vices will surround him, and he will not receive the life-giving bounties of God.

...The essential principles of His healing remedies are the knowledge and love of God, severance from all else save God, turning our faces in sincerity toward the Kingdom of God, implicit faith, firmness and fidelity, loving-kindness toward all creatures and the acquisition of the divine virtues indicated for the human world. These are the fundamental principles of progress, civilization, international peace and the unity of mankind. These are the essentials of Baha'u'llah's teachings, the secret of everlasting health, the remedy and healing for man. ('Abdu'l-Baha, Promulgation of the Universal Peace, pp. 204-205)

Holistic Definition of Health - Integration of the Spiritual with the Material

This passage illustrates the holism of the Baha'i concept of healing, and its approach to the healing of individuals and of society in general. Many health movements have aspired to holism in this century, and especially in recent decades. But none begin to approach the breadth or depth of 'Abdu'l-Baha's conception. A truly holistic approach to healing integrates the spiritual with the material, as explained:

When the material world and the divine world are well correlated, when the hearts become heavenly and the aspirations pure, perfect connection shall take place. Then shall this power produce a perfect manifestation. Physical and spiritual diseases will then receive absolute healing. ('Abdu'l-Baha, in Esselmont, *Baha'u'llah and the New Era*, p. 114)

Healing, in this view, consists of an integration of the spiritual with the physical, providing a resolution of the mind-body duality which so plagues Western man, in particular, and which has been the subject of much controversy throughout the history of psychology as a scientific discipline. Baha'u'llah warns that:

The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Knowing. If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation. Meditate on this, O people, and be not of them that wander distraught in the wilderness of error. (Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, pp. 342)

'Abdu'l-Baha, who endured 40 years of exile and imprisonment with Him, and Who knew Baha'u'llah better than anyone else, and Who was appointed by Him as the Center of His Covenant and Interpreter of His teachings, extols Baha'u'llah's knowledge and wisdom thus:

Now concerning our social principles, namely the teachings of His Holiness Baha'u'llah spread far and wide fifty years ago, they verily comprehend all other teachings. It is clear and evident that without these teachings progress and advancement for mankind are in no wise possible. Every community in the world findeth in these Divine Teachings the realization of its highest aspirations. These teachings are even as the tree that beareth the best fruits of all trees. Philosophers, for instance, find in these heavenly teachings the most perfect solution of their social problems, and similarly a true and noble exposition of matters that pertain to philosophical questions. In like manner men of faith behold the reality of religion manifestly

revealed in these heavenly teachings, and clearly and conclusively prove them to be the real and true remedy for the ills and infirmities of all mankind. (Abdu'l-Baha, *The Baha'i World Faith*, p. 347)

The healing of the ills of society and of the individual, therefore, lie in obedience to the divine command, the Law of Baha'u'llah.

The predecessor to Baha'u'llah, the Bab, speaking in His Station as the Manifestation, asserts, "For God hath ordained that all the good things which lie in the treasury of His knowledge shall be attained through obedience unto Me, and every fire recorded in His Book, through disobedience unto Me." (The Bab, *Selections from the Writings of the Bab*, p. 11).

Baha'u'llah, quoted by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, identifies the cause of the social diseases afflicting humankind as "the weakening of the pillars of religion":

Religion is the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwell therein. The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the hands of the ignorant and made them bold and arrogant. Verily I say, whatsoever hath lowered the lofty station of religion hath increased the waywardness of the wicked, and the result cannot be but anarchy." "Religion is a radiant light and an impregnable stronghold for the protection and welfare of the peoples of the world, for the fear of God impelleth man to hold fast to that which is good, and shun all evil. Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue, and the lights of fairness, of justice, of tranquillity and peace cease to shine. (Baha'u'llah, in Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, pp. 186-187)

Laws and Precepts of Baha'u'llah Pertinent to PsychoSocial Healing

What, then, are the Laws of Baha'u'llah, as they pertain to the healing of society and the individual?

The Necessity for Search and the Independent Investigation of Truth

First, in the attainment of any goal, is the necessity of search: In His mystical treatise, *The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys*, Baha'u'llah expounds on this subject at length. Likening the stages of the journey of the soul to valleys, and speaking of search, He says, "The first is The Valley of Search. The steed of this Valley is patience; without patience the wayfarer

on this journey will reach nowhere and attain no goal....” (Baha’u’llah, *The Seven Valleys*, p. 4)

If our search be for knowledge of healing, we must be independent in our search for truth:

Another new principle, revealed by His Holiness Baha’u’llah, is the injunction to investigate truth; that is to say, no man should blindly follow his ancestors and forefathers. Nay, each must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears and investigate the truth himself in order that he may follow the truth instead of blind acquiescence and imitation of ancestral beliefs....(Abdu’l-Baha, The Baha’i World Faith, pp. 246-247)

Search and the investigation of truth is necessary both for those seeking healing, and for those seeking to provide healing. It is also the basis of science, which investigates the phenomena of material reality in the physical world.

To equip us in our search for truth, Baha’u’llah gives justice as the criteria of judgment and the standard whereby truth may be known. This standard is of relevance in all fields of human endeavor, including science, and is of particular relevance to anyone experiencing any kind of confusion or difficulty with ascertaining reality:

O Son of Spirit!

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. *By its aid thou shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor.* Ponder this in thy heart; how it behoveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes. (Baha’u’llah, *The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No.2) [*emphasis added*]

By weighing the equity of a proposition, we are able to evaluate it’s reasonableness, thereby becoming independent of others’ opinions. He also tells us much about the nature of justice, and how to create a just society (see Huddleston, 1989).

Prayer - a Ladder to Health and Healing

He commands us to pray so that we may be guided: He tells us when to pray, how to pray, how often to pray, where to pray, why to pray, what to pray for, and how prayer works, and gives us examples of His own prayers, and prayers endowed with special potency. Among these are prayers for healing, including the Long Healing Prayer, about which the

Guardian says, “These daily obligatory prayers, together with a few other specific ones, such as the Healing Prayer, the Tablet of Ahmad, have been invested by Baha’u’llah with a special potency and significance....” (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Baha’i Prayers*, p. 209)

He has also promised, as Christ did²⁵, that prayer will be answered:

Beg everything thou desirest from Baha’u’llah.
If thou art asking faith, ask of Him.
If thou art yearning after knowledge, He will grant it unto thee.
If thou art longing for the love of God, He will bestow it upon thee.
He will descend upon thee all His blessings.
(‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Star of the West*, Vol. IX, No. 9, cited in *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*, p. 114)

Prayer is useful and effective, and should be utilized by both doctors and patients.

The most blessed condition is the condition of prayer and supplication. Prayer is conversation with God. ...It creates spirituality, creates mindfulness and celestial feelings, begets new attractions of the Kingdom and engenders the susceptibilities of the higher intelligence. (‘Abdu’l-Baha, cited in *Star of the West*, vol. VIII, no. 4 [17 May 1917], p. 41)

Study and Chant the Holy Writings

He also commands us to study and chant the Holy Writings (see Baha’u’llah, BP, frontispiece). Study of the Holy Writings proves to be an inspirational source of guidance to everyone seeking answers.

Use The Greatest Name of God

He also gives us the Greatest Name of God to call upon for assistance in times of difficulty, crisis and urgency, and commands us to repeat the Greatest Name 95 times each day, saying, “Allah’u’Abha”, which means “God, the All-Glorious” (Baha’u’llah, KA, par. 18, p. 26). This enables us to maintain an orientation towards the Source of healing.

Seek and Follow Advice of a Physician

But in addition to prayer and study of the Holy Writings, He commands us, when in need of healing, to seek and follow the advice of a

²⁵ *Matthew* 7:7,8

physician: “Resort ye, in times of sickness, to competent physicians; We have not set aside the use of material means, rather have We confirmed it through this Pen, which God hath made to be the Dawning-place of His shining and glorious Cause.” (Baha’u’llah, *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, par. 113, p. 60)

Unity of Science and Religion. One of the (many) unique teachings of this Religion is Baha’u’llah’s teaching on the *complimentarity of science and religion*, upon which this exhortation depends:

Furthermore He proclaims that religion must be in harmony with science and reason. If it does not conform to science and reconcile with reason it is superstition. Down to the present day it has been customary for man to accept a religious teaching even though it were not in accord with human reason and judgment. The harmony of religious belief with reason is a new vista which Baha’u’llah has opened for the soul of man. (‘Abdu’l-Baha, *The Baha’i World Faith*, p. 246-247)

It can be reasoned that Baha’u’llah’s endorsement of science and medicine implies that this injunction also applies to the consultation of counselors and psychotherapists and social workers for the healing of mental, emotional and social ills, dysfunctions, and disorders, as the Universal House of Justice has stated in a letter written on its behalf to an individual believer: “[I]n your understanding of the mental phenomena which distress you, and in your efforts to overcome your problem it is perfectly proper to consult professional experts....” (in Helen Hornby, *The Lights of Guidance*, #953, p. 283)

‘Abdu’l-Baha further elucidates the criteria or standards of judgment by which conclusions can reliably be reached, thereby establishing a standard of knowledge for a new science which integrates traditional science and religion. He begins by saying that the four criteria or standards of judgment by which the human mind reaches its conclusions, the standards of the senses, of the intellect, of tradition or scripture, and of inspiration, are faulty and inaccurate, by themselves:

All of them are liable to mistake and error in conclusions. But a statement presented to the mind accompanied by proofs which the senses can perceive to be correct, which the faculty of reason can accept, which is in accord with traditional authority and sanctioned by the promptings of the heart [thereby meeting all four criteria], can be adjudged and relied upon as perfectly correct, for it has been proved and tested by all the standards of judgment and found to be complete. When we apply one test, there are possibilities of mistake. This is self-evident and manifest. (‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Promulgation of the Universal Peace*, p. 255)

The Baha'i Teachings have the highest regard for the value of science. But they view the study and practice of revealed religion as a science, too - a divine science which must go hand-in-hand with the human sciences. Of science, He states:

Scientific knowledge is the highest attainment upon the human plane, for science is the discoverer of realities. It is of two kinds: material and spiritual. Material science is the investigation of natural phenomena; divine science is the investigation of spiritual verities. The world of humanity must acquire both. A bird has two wings; it cannot fly with one. Material and spiritual science are the two wings of human uplift and attainment. Both are necessary - one the natural, the other supernatural; one material, the other divine. By the divine we mean the discovery of the mysteries of God, the comprehension of spiritual realities, the wisdom of God, inner significances of the heavenly religions and foundation of the law. (Abdu'l-Baha, *Promulgation of the Universal Peace*, p 138)

Oneness of Mankind

During His address to the faculty of Stanford University, 'Abdu'l-Baha explained, "The most important principle of divine philosophy is the oneness of the world of humanity, the unity of mankind, the bond conjoining east and west, the tie of love which blends human hearts..." (in *The Baha'i World Faith*, p. 244). Hence, in all the psychosocial healing arts, unity is found to be the key to healing, whether it be the integration of the material and spiritual self of the individual, the unity of husband and wife in marriage, or of the members of the family, the community, the nation, or of the nations and peoples of the world - in every case, unity presages peace and well-being for all. This requires the elimination of prejudices of all kinds.

Physical and Spiritual Healing

The Baha'i Faith recognizes physical *and* spiritual healing. This is predicated on the understanding of the existence of the spiritual or ideal world as the source of creative energies which interpenetrate and manifest in physical reality; of the spiritual faculties, capacity and nature of man; and of the complementary relationship of the two aspects of reality. Its teachings are uniquely abundant on these topics, about which much is asserted, explained, demonstrated and proven - another of the distinctions of the Revelation of Baha'u'llah. 'Abdu'l-Baha says:

There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. ...Both means should be used and practiced.

Illnesses which occur by reason of physical causes should be treated by doctors with medical remedies; those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus, an illness caused by affliction, fear, nervous impressions, will be healed more effectively by spiritual rather than by physical treatment. Hence, both kinds of treatment should be followed; they are not contradictory. ...Thou shouldst give equal attention to spiritual treatments, for they produce marvellous effects. ('Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, #133, p. 151)

Many mental and social disorders such as depression, anxiety, phobias, social anxiety, the behavioral addictions, psychosomatic disorders, character and personality disorders, relationship problems, and the larger-scale social and political problems of society can be considered as being due to spiritual causes, at least in large part. Hence, the methods and processes by which they may be treated must be spiritual in nature, as well. (Material remedies may also be needed.)

Speech as Medium of Spiritual Communication

Psychotherapy, as a methodology for psychological healing, may correctly be regarded as an essentially *spiritual* process. It consists of the sometimes-profound influence of one soul upon another almost exclusively by means of the use of verbal and non-verbal communication. Aside from communication, precious little else occurs of a material nature during the psychotherapeutic interaction. The reciprocal communication of the contents of one person's mind to another through speech, with resulting influence upon the spirit and behavior of the other is essentially a spiritual phenomenon. 'Abdu'l-Baha's explanation of the power of mere sound to move the human spirit, is eloquently pertinent here:

...Although sounds are but vibrations in the air which affect the ear's auditory nerve, and these vibrations are but chance phenomena carried along through the air, even so, see how they move the heart. A wondrous melody is wings for the spirit, and maketh the soul to tremble for joy. ('Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, p. 147)

Baha'u'llah comments upon the power of human speech, identifying the qualities that are required in the speaker for his speech to achieve influence. It would seem these qualities are relevant to the therapist, as well:

The Great Being saith: Human utterance is an essence which aspireth to exert its influence and needeth moderation. As to its influence, this is conditional upon refinement which in turn is dependent upon hearts which are detached and pure. As to its moderation, this hath to be combined with tact and wisdom as prescribed in the Holy Scriptures and Tablets.

Every word is endowed with a spirit, therefore the speaker or expounder should carefully deliver his words at the appropriate time and place, for the impression which each word maketh is clearly evident and perceptible. The Great Being saith: One word may be likened unto fire, another unto light, and the influence which both exert is manifest in the world. Therefore an enlightened man of wisdom should primarily speak with words as mild as milk, that the children of men may be nurtured and edified thereby and may attain the ultimate goal of human existence which is the station of true understanding and nobility. And likewise He saith: One word is like unto springtime causing the tender saplings of the rose-garden of knowledge to become verdant and flourishing, while another word is even as a deadly poison. It behoveth a prudent man of wisdom to speak with utmost leniency and forbearance so that the sweetness of his words may induce everyone to attain that which befitteth man's station.

He then goes on to comment on the power of the Word of God, which can be drawn upon to facilitate every healing process:

O friend of mine! The Word of God is the king of words and its pervasive influence is incalculable. It hath ever dominated and will continue to dominate the realm of being. The Great Being saith: The Word is the master key for the whole world, inasmuch as through its potency the doors of the hearts of men, which in reality are the doors of heaven, are unlocked....

Methinks people's sense of taste hath, alas, been sorely affected by the fever of negligence and folly, for they are found to be wholly unconscious and deprived of the sweetness of His utterance. How regrettable indeed that man should debar himself from the fruits of the tree of wisdom while his days and hours pass swiftly away. Please God, the hand of divine power may safeguard all mankind and direct their steps towards the horizon of true understanding. (Baha'u'llah, *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, p. 173-174)

Self-Knowledge

Self-knowledge is a core objective of most psychotherapy processes, and is described as an essential path to spiritual development in the Baha'i Teachings. While Baha'u'llah says, "the source of all learning is the knowledge of God", He also says:

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that Most Great Light. Methinks, but for the potency of that revelation, no being could ever exist. How resplendent the luminaries of knowledge that shine in an atom, and how vast the oceans of wisdom that surge within a drop! To a supreme degree is this true of man, who, among all created things, hath been invested with the robe of such gifts, and hath been singled out for the glory of such distinction. For in him are potentially revealed all the attributes and names of God to a degree that no other created being hath excelled or surpassed. All these names and attributes are applicable to him. Even as He [Muhammad] hath said: "Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery." ...Even as He hath revealed: "We will surely show them Our signs in the world and within themselves."²⁶ Again He saith: "And also in your own selves: will ye not then behold the signs of God?"²⁷ And yet again He revealeth: "And be ye not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves."²⁸ In this connection, He Who is the eternal King... hath spoken: "He hath known God who hath known himself." (Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, p 177-178)

He further states:, "True loss is for him whose days have been spent in utter ignorance of his self" (Baha'u'llah, from "Words of Wisdom", in *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, p 156). Hence, the divine command to 'know thyself': "[M]an should know his own self and recognize that which leadeth unto loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty" (Baha'u'llah, from "Tarazat", in *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, p 35).

The search for self-knowledge constitutes a large part of most psychotherapy, and its attainment is widely experienced as a means to healing by those who participate in the process.

'Abdu'l-Baha tells us much about ourselves:

Man is the highest degree of materiality and at the beginning of spirituality – that is to say, he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. ...He has the animal side as well as the angelic side, and the aim of an educator is to so train human souls that their angelic aspects may overcome their animal side.... That is why he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. Not in any other of the species of the world of existence is there such a difference, contrast, contradiction and opposition as in the species of

²⁶ Qur'an 41:53

²⁷ Qur'an 51:21

²⁸ Qur'an 59:19

man.... Briefly, all the perfections and virtues, and all the vices, are qualities of man.” (Abdu’l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 235-6)

Just as the earth attracts everything to the centre of gravity, and every object thrown upward into space will come down, so also material ideas and worldly thoughts attract man to the centre of self. Anger, passion, ignorance, prejudice, greed, envy, covetousness, jealousy and suspicion prevent man from ascending to the realms of holiness, imprisoning him in the claws of self and the cage of egotism. The physical man, unassisted by the divine power, trying to escape from one of these invisible enemies, will unconsciously fall into the hands of another. No sooner does he attempt to soar upward than the density of the love of self, like the power of gravity, draws him to the centre of the earth. The only power that is capable of delivering man from this captivity is the power of the breaths of the Holy Spirit. (‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Selections of Baha’i Scriptures*, p. 241, quoted in *Baha’i Readings*, p.305)

Shoghi Effendi helps us to resolve the ancient conflict in our understanding of the Holy Scriptures as to whether the self is good or evil:

...[S]elf has really two meanings, or is used in two senses, in the Baha’i writings; one is self, the identity of the individual created by God. This is the self mentioned in such passages as “he hath known God who hath known himself”, etc. The other self is the ego, the dark, animalistic heritage each one of us has, the lower nature that can develop into a monster of selfishness, brutality, lust and so on. It is this self we must struggle against, or this side of our natures, in order to strengthen and free the spirit within us and help it to attain perfection.

Self-sacrifice means to subordinate this lower nature and its desires to the more godly and noble side of ourselves. Ultimately, in its highest sense, self-sacrifice means to give our will and our all to God to do with as He pleases. Then He purifies and glorifies our true self until it becomes a shining and wonderful reality. (from a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 10, 1947, in Helen Hornby, *The Lights of Guidance*, #386, pp. 113-4)

Cleanliness and Purity as a Condition of Spiritual Progress. In the magnificent Tablet of Purity, ‘Abdu’l-Baha explains to us how lifestyle factors contribute to spirituality - guidance which is particularly pertinent to the rampant problems of addiction facing contemporary societies:

O Friends of the Pure and Omnipotent God! To be pure and holy in all things is an attribute of the consecrated soul and a necessary characteristic of the unenslaved mind. The best of perfections is immaculacy and the freeing of oneself from every defect. Once the

individual is, in every respect, cleansed and purified, then will he become a focal centre reflecting the Manifest Light.

First in a human being's way of life must be purity, then freshness, cleanliness, and independence of spirit. ...

...[I]n every aspect of life, purity and holiness, cleanliness and refinement, exalt the human condition and further the development of man's inner reality. Even in the physical realm, cleanliness will conduce to spirituality.....[P]hysical cleanliness doth also exert its effect upon the human soul. (Abdu'l-Baha, the "Tablet of Purity," *The Baha'i World Faith*, p. 333)

Various Laws and Exhortations

Baha'u'llah sets out various laws and exhortations, each of which have implications for establishing the habits, morals, rhythms and structures of a peaceful global society and for the health of individuals. Shoghi Effendi summarizes these very succinctly in his incomparable history of the Baha'i Revelation, titled *God Passes By*. In it, he first characterizes Baha'u'llah's Book of Laws, the Kitab-i-Aqdas, as "this Charter of the future world civilization [which] its Author...announces...." Then he summarizes its contents:

In this Book He, ...prescribes the obligatory prayers; designates the time and period of fasting; prohibits congregational prayer except for the dead; fixes the Qiblih [point of adoration]; institutes the Huququ'llah (Right of God); formulates the law of inheritance; ordains the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar; establishes the Nineteen Day Feasts, the Baha'i festivals and the Intercalary Days; abolishes the institution of priesthood; prohibits slavery, asceticism, mendicancy, monasticism, penance, the use of pulpits and the kissing of hands; prescribes monogamy; condemns cruelty to animals, idleness and sloth, backbiting and calumny; censures divorce; interdicts gambling; the use of opium, wine and other intoxicating drinks; specifies the punishments for murder, arson, adultery and theft; stresses the importance of marriage and lays down its essential conditions; imposes the obligation of engaging in some trade or profession, exalting such occupation to the rank of worship; emphasizes the necessity of providing the means for the education of children; and lays upon every person the duty of writing a testament and of strict obedience to one's government.

Apart from these provisions Baha'u'llah exhorts His followers to consort, with amity and concord and without discrimination, with the adherents of all religions; warns them to guard against fanaticism, sedition, pride, dispute and contention; inculcates upon them immaculate cleanliness, strict truthfulness, spotless chastity, trustworthiness; hospitality, fidelity, courtesy, forbearance, justice and fairness; counsels them to be "even as the fingers of one hand and the limbs of one body"; calls upon them to arise and serve His Cause; and assures them of His undoubted aid. He, furthermore,

dwells upon the instability of human affairs; declares that true liberty consists in man's submission to His commandments; cautions them not to be indulgent in carrying out His statutes; prescribes the twin inseparable duties of recognizing the "Dayspring of God's Revelation" and of observing all the ordinances revealed by Him, neither of which, He affirms, is acceptable without the other. (in God Passes By, p. 214-215)

One can surmise, as one contemplates this listing and studies their actual contents in depth, how profoundly the application of these laws will alter future society and effect the biopsychosocial healing of humanity.

Of particular interest to social scientists are the laws and precepts that regulate family life:

Regarding *marriage and divorce*, Baha'u'llah:

- Proclaims the equality of men and women as one of the distinguishing fundamental principles of His religion,
- Regulates the expression of the sexual impulse, requiring chastity and fidelity of all believers, male and female alike, confining the legitimate expression of the sexual impulse to marriage, prohibiting polygamy and homosexual relations;
- Ordains marriage as a divine institution to be entered into voluntarily, at the individual's option;
- Proclaims marriage to be a "fortress of well-being" for the partners, the members of the family, and society, and declares it to be the foundation for an "ever-advancing civilization";
- Defines its basic purpose to be the procreation and education of children;
- Requires the consent of all living parents for marriage while reserving to the individual the right to choose their partner, and specifies the dowry;
- Subordinates the will of the individual to that of the family and of society, while reinforcing the responsibilities of families and society for each of its members;
- Assigns responsibility to parents for the spiritual and material education of their children, and obligates children to obey their parents.
- Provides guidance regarding the training and discipline of children, giving great importance to the education of children²⁹, advising the use of verbal chastisement, reward and punishment in their

²⁹ *While the children are yet in their infancy feed them from the breast of heavenly grace, foster them in the cradle of all excellence, rear them in the embrace of bounty. Give them the advantage of every useful kind of knowledge. Let them share in every new and rare and wondrous craft and art. Bring them up to work and strive, and accustom them to hardship. Teach them to dedicate their lives to matters of great import, and inspire them to undertake studies that will benefit mankind. ('Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha, p. 129)*

- training, but prohibiting unkindness and the striking of children³⁰;
- Gives first priority to the education of women, as first educators of the child;
- Discourages divorce, establishing antipathy as the only valid reason for divorce;
- Requires the observance of a Year of Patience, which includes physical separation, abstinence from intercourse and courtship of others, and efforts at reconciliation, prior to divorce.

Regarding *the economic arrangements of society*, Baha'u'llah:

- Assigns to the husband certain responsibilities for the support of the wife, and delineates the extent of those responsibilities;
- Establishes certain basic provisions of inheritance, which, uniquely, includes provisions for one's teachers;
- Establishes the elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty as one of the basic principles of His Revelation,
- Recommending the voluntary sharing of wealth and encouragement of philanthropy,
- And establishing the confidential contribution of funds to the institutions of the Faith as a sacred obligation of every believer, assigning responsibility for the care and education of the poor to the institutions of His religion;
- And providing a fair and equitable method of progressive taxation which provides for the basic needs of all.
- He provides moral guidance regulating the relations of people with one another
- And establishes institutions which not only safeguard and promulgate His Faith, but which serve as models for the regulation of the affairs all people, and the governance of a future global civilization. These institutional arrangements are unique in human history while combining the best features of foregoing systems, and are well-worth study by anyone who purports to be a serious student of society.

Conclusion

In short, all of these features of the Baha'i Revelation, in part and

³⁰*Let the mothers consider that whatever concerneth the education of children is of the first importance. Let them put forth every effort in this regard, for when the bough is green and tender it will grow in whatever way ye train it. Therefore it is incumbent upon the mothers to rear their little ones even as a gardener tendeth his young plants. Let them strive by day and by night to establish within their children faith and certitude, the fear of God, the love of the Beloved of the worlds, and all good qualities and traits. Whensoever a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart; and if the slightest undesirable trait should manifest itself, let her counsel the child and punish him, and use means based on reason, even a slight verbal chastisement should this be necessary. It is not, however, permissible to strike a child, or vilify him, for the child's character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse. ('Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha, p. 125)*

in their totality, bear great relevance to the disciplines which are engaged in efforts to provide biological, psychological and social healing for mankind, at whatever level, and are therefore worthy of close investigation, analysis, integration and practical application.

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Appendix

SELECTIONS FROM THE BAHAI WRITINGS

The Divine Physician

The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and correctly diagnose its ailments. No man, however acute his perception, can ever hope to reach the heights which the wisdom and understanding of the Divine Physician have attained. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician of this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy? In like manner, every time the Prophets of God have illumined the world with the resplendent radiance of the Day Star of Divine knowledge, they have invariably summoned its peoples to embrace the light of God through such means as best befitted the exigencies of the age in which they appeared. They were thus able to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and to shed upon the world the glory of their own knowledge. It is towards the inmost essence of these Prophets, therefore, that the eye of every man of discernment must be directed, inasmuch as their one and only purpose hath always been to guide the erring, and give peace to the afflicted. These are not days of prosperity and triumph. The whole of mankind is in the grip of manifold ills. Strive, therefore, to save its life through the wholesome medicine which the almighty hand of the unerring Physician hath prepared.

- Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, p 80

The Source of All Learning, The Knowledge of God

The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His Glory, and this cannot be attained save through the knowledge of His Divine Manifestation.

- Baha'u'llah, from "Words of Wisdom", in *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, p 155-7

Self-Knowledge

The first Taraz and the first effulgence which hath dawned from the horizon of the Mother Book is that man should know his own self and recognize that which leadeth unto loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty.

Baha'u'llah, from "Tarazat", in *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, p 34-6

Hath Known God Who Hath Known Himself

...Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that Most Great Light. Methinks, but for the potency of that revelation, no being could ever exist. How resplendent the luminaries of knowledge that shine in an atom, and how vast the oceans of wisdom that surge within a drop! To a supreme degree is this true of man, who, among all created things, hath been invested with the robe of such gifts, and hath been singled out for the glory of such distinction. For in him are potentially revealed all the attributes and names of God to a degree that no other created being hath excelled or surpassed. All these names and attributes are applicable to him. Even as He [Muhammad] hath said: "Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery." Manifold are the verses that have been repeatedly revealed in all the Heavenly books and the Holy Scriptures, expressive of this most subtle and lofty theme. Even as He hath revealed: "We will surely show them Our signs in the world and within themselves." And yet again He revealeth: "And be ye not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves." In this connection, He Who is the eternal King – may the souls of all that dwell within the mystic Tabernacle be a sacrifice unto Him – hath spoken: "He hath know God who hath known himself."

- Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, p 177-178; also *Kitab-i Iqan* p 102:2

Spiritual Nature of Man

"Man is the highest degree of materiality and at the beginning of spirituality," 'Abdu'l-Baha says, " – that is to say, he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. He is at the last degree of darkness, and at the beginning of light; that is why it has been said that the condition of man is the end of the night and the beginning of day, meaning that he is the sum of all the degrees of imperfection, and that he possesses the degrees of perfection. He has the animal side as well as the angelic side, and the aim of an educator is to so train human souls that their angelic aspects may overcome their animal side.... That is why he is the end of imperfection and the beginning of perfection. Not in any other of the species of the world of existence is there such a difference, contrast, contradiction and opposition as in the species of man.... Briefly, all the perfections and virtues, and all the vices, are qualities of man."

- 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Some Answered Questions*, p 235-6.

The Two Meanings of Self in the Baha'i Writings: 1) The Identity of the Individual Created by God, and 2) The Ego

...[S]elf has really two meanings, or is used in two senses, in the Baha'i writings; one is self, the identity of the individual created by God. This is the self mentioned in such passages as "he hath known God who hath known himself", etc. The other self is the ego, the dark, animalistic heritage each one of us has, the lower nature that can develop into a monster of selfishness, brutality, lust and so on. It is this self we

must struggle against, or this side of our natures, in order to strengthen and free the spirit within us and help it to attain perfection.

Self-sacrifice means to subordinate this lower nature and its desires to the more godly and noble side of ourselves. Ultimately, in its highest sense, self-sacrifice means to give our will and our all to God to do with as He pleases. Then He purifies and glorifies our true self until it becomes a shining and wonderful reality.

- From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in Hornby, *Lights Of Guidance*, p 113-4

Science and Spiritual Development

If we look with a perceiving eye upon the world of creation, we find that all existing things may be classified as follows: First – Mineral – that is to say matter or substance appearing in various forms of composition. Second – Vegetable – possessing the virtues of the mineral plus the power of augmentation or growth, indicating a degree higher and more specialized than the mineral. Third – Animal – possessing the attributes of the mineral and vegetable plus the power of sense perception. Fourth – Human – the highest specialized organism of visible creation, embodying the qualities of the mineral, vegetable and animal plus an ideal endowment absolutely minus and absent in the lower kingdoms – the power of intellectual investigation into the mysteries of outer phenomena. The outcome of this intellectual endowment is science which is especially characteristic of man. This scientific power investigates and apprehends created objects and the laws surrounding them. It is the discoverer of the hidden and mysterious secrets of the material universe and is peculiar to man alone. The most noble and praiseworthy accomplishment of man therefore is scientific knowledge and attainment.

Science may be likened to a mirror wherein the images of the mysteries of outer phenomena are reflected. It brings forth and exhibits to us in the arena of knowledge all the product of the past. It links together past and present. The philosophical conclusions of bygone centuries, the teachings of the prophets and wisdom of former sages are crystallized and reproduced in the scientific advancement of today. Science is the discoverer of the past. From its premises of past and present we deduce conclusions as to the future. Science is the governor of nature and its mysteries, the one agency by which man explores the institutions of material creation. All created things are captives of nature and subject to its laws. They cannot transgress the control of these laws in one detail or particular. The infinite starry worlds and heavenly bodies are nature's obedient subjects. The earth and its myriad organisms, all minerals, plants and animals are thralls of its dominion. But man through the exercise of his scientific, intellectual power can rise out of this condition, can modify, change and control nature according to his own wishes and uses. Science, so to speak, is the "breaker" of the laws of nature.

Consider, for example, that man according to natural law should dwell upon the surface of the earth. By overcoming this law and restriction however he sails in ships over the ocean, mounts to the zenith in aeroplanes and sinks to the depths of the sea in submarines. This is against the fiat of nature and a violation of her sovereignty and dominion. Nature's laws and methods, the hidden secrets and mysteries of the universe, human inventions and discoveries, all our scientific acquisitions should naturally remain concealed and unknown, but man through his intellectual acumen searches them out of the plane of the invisible, draws them into

the plane of the visible, exposes and explains them. For instance, one of the mysteries of nature is electricity. According to nature this force, this energy should remain latent and hidden, but man scientifically breaks through the very laws of nature, arrests it and even imprisons it for his use.

In brief, man through the possession of this ideal endowment of scientific investigation is the most noble product of creation, the governor of nature. He takes the sword from nature's hand and uses it upon nature's head. According to natural law, night is a period of darkness and obscurity, but man by utilizing the power of electricity, by wielding this electric sword overcomes the darkness and dispels the gloom. Man is superior to nature and makes nature do his bidding. Man is a sensitive being; nature is minus sensation. Man has memory and reason; nature lacks them. Man is nobler than nature. There are powers within him of which nature is devoid. It may be claimed that these powers are from nature itself and that man is a part of nature. In answer to this statement we will say that if nature is the whole and man is a part of that whole, how could it be possible for a part to possess qualities and virtues which are absent in the whole? Undoubtedly the part must be endowed with the same qualities and properties as the whole. For example, the hair is a part of the human anatomy. It cannot contain elements which are not found in other parts of the body, for in all cases the component elements of the body are the same. Therefore it is manifest and evident that man, although in body a part of nature, nevertheless in spirit possesses a power transcending nature; for if he were simply a part of nature and limited to material laws he could possess only the things which nature embodies. God has conferred upon and added to man a distinctive power, the faculty of intellectual investigation into the secrets of creation, the acquisition of higher knowledge, the greatest virtue of which is scientific enlightenment.

This endowment is the most praiseworthy power of man, for through its employment and exercise, the betterment of the human race is accomplished, the development of the virtues of mankind is made possible and the spirit and mysteries of God become manifest. Therefore I am greatly pleased with my visit to this university. Praise be to God! That this country abounds in such institutions of learning where the knowledge of sciences and arts may readily be acquired.

As material and physical sciences are taught here and are constantly unfolding in wider vistas of attainment, I am hopeful that spiritual development may also follow and keep pace with these outer advantages. As material knowledge is illuminating those within the walls of this great temple of learning, so also may the light of the spirit, the inner and divine light of the real philosophy glorify this institution. The most important principle of divine philosophy is the oneness of the world of humanity, the unity of mankind, the bond conjoining east and west, the tie of love which blends human hearts....

- ' Abdu'l-Baha, in Baha'i World Faith, pp. 242-244.

***Sins are a Potent Cause of Physical Ailments,
The Spiritual Causes of Sickness,
The Healing of Illnesses by Means of Foods,
And PsychoSocial Healing***

...It is certainly the case that sins are a potent cause of physical ailments. If humankind were free from the defilements of sin and waywardness, and lived

according to a natural, inborn equilibrium, without following wherever their passions led, it is undeniable that diseases would no longer take the ascendant, nor diversify with such intensity.

But man hath perversely continued to serve his lustful appetites, and he would not content himself with simple foods. Rather, he prepared for himself food that was compounded of many ingredients, of substances differing one from another. 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....

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.

- 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, #134, p. 152 – 156 (ellipsis)

Spiritual Healing

There are two ways of healing sickness, material means and spiritual means. The first is by the treatment of physicians; the second consisteth in prayers offered by the spiritual ones to God and in turning to Him. Both means should be used and practiced.

Illnesses which occur by reason of physical causes should be treated by doctors with medical remedies; those which are due to spiritual causes disappear through spiritual means. Thus, an illness caused by affliction, fear, nervous impressions, will be healed more effectively by spiritual rather than by physical treatment. Hence, both kinds of treatment should be followed; they are not contradictory. Therefore, thou shouldst also accept physical remedies inasmuch as these too 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. Thou shouldst give equal attention to spiritual treatments, for they produce marvellous effects.

Now, if thou wishest to know the true remedy which will heal man from all sickness and will give him the health of the divine kingdom, know that it is the precepts and teachings of God. Focus thine attention upon them.

- 'Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, #133, p. 151, and *Baha'i World Faith*, p. 375