Opium

Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l-Baha, Shoghi Effendi

Partial translation



Opium

"Gambling and the use of opium have been forbidden unto you. Eschew them both, O people, and be not of those who transgress. Beware of using any substance that induceth sluggishness and torpor in the human temple and inflicteth harm upon the body. We, verily, desire for you naught save what shall profit you, and to this bear witness all created things, had ye but ears to hear." \[\]

"It hath been forbidden you to smoke opium. We, truly, have prohibited this practice through a most binding interdiction in the Book. Should anyone partake thereof, assuredly he is not of Me. Fear God, O ye endued with understanding!" ²

"It is inadmissible that man, who hath been endowed with reason, should consume that which stealeth it away. Nay, rather it behooveth him to comport himself in a manner worthy of the human station, and not in accordance with the misdeeds of every heedless and wavering soul."

"O ye, God's loved ones! Experience hath shown how greatly the renouncing of smoking, of intoxicating drink, and of opium, conduceth to health and vigour, to the expansion and keenness of the mind and to bodily strength. There is today a people[(Possibly Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the Sikhs)] who strictly avoid tobacco, intoxicating liquor and opium. This people is far and away superior to the others, for strength and physical courage, for health, beauty and comeliness. A single one of their men can stand up to ten men of another tribe. This hath proved true of the entire people: that is, member for member, each individual of this community is in every respect superior to the individuals of other communities.

"Make ye then a mighty effort, that the purity and sanctity which, above all else, are cherished by Abdu'l-Baha, shall distinguish the people of Bahá; that in every kind of excellence the people of God shall surpass all other human beings; that both outwardly and inwardly they shall prove superior to the rest; that for purity, immaculacy, refinement, and the preservation of health, they shall be leaders in the vanguard of those who know. And that by their freedom from

- 1. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 155
- 2. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 190
- 3. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 119



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enslavement, their knowledge, their self-control, they shall be first among the pure, the free and the wise." 4

"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." ⁵

"Concerning the use of alcoholic drinks and drugs the Guardian wishes you to know that they have been explicitly forbidden in the "Kitab-i-Aqdas". Opium is, undoubtedly, prohibited. But smoking, though allowed, is discouraged. Various other points which may be raised in this connection and 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 Baha'u'llah to legislate in all matters which have not been explicitly revealed in the Sacred Writings of the Faith." ⁶

"the use of opium ... any substance that induceth sluggishness and torpor This prohibition of the use of opium is reiterated by Baha'u'llah in the final paragraph of the Kitab-i-Aqdas. In this connection, Shoghi Effendi stated that one of the requirements for "a chaste and holy life" is "total abstinence ... from opium, and from similar habit-forming drugs." Heroin, hashish and other derivatives of cannabis such as marijuana, as well as hallucinogenic agents such as LSD, peyote and similar substances, are regarded as falling under this prohibition.

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^{4.} Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, sec. 129, pp. 150, Lights of Guidance, no. 1188

^{5.} Abdu'l-Baha: Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, Wilmette, 1982, sec. 129, pp. 148-149

^{6.} On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Dawn of a New Day, December 27, 1933

O ye lovers of God! In this, the cycle of Almighty God, violence and force, constraint and oppression, are one and all condemned. It is, however, mandatory that the use of opium be prevented by any means whatsoever, that perchance the human race may be delivered from this most powerful of plagues. And otherwise, woe and misery to whoso falleth short of his duty to his Lord.

In one of His Tablets Abdu'lBaha has stated concerning opium: "the user, the buyer and the seller are all deprived of the bounty and grace of God."

In yet another Tablet, Abdu'lBaha has written: Regarding hashish you have 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 the fruit of the 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?

Alcohol consumeth the mind and causeth man to commit acts of absurdity, but this opium, this foul fruit of the infernal tree, and this wicked hashish extinguish the mind, freeze the spirit, petrify the soul, waste the body and leave man frustrated and lost.

It should be noted that the above prohibition against taking certain classes of drugs does not forbid their use when prescribed by qualified physicians as part of a medical treatment." 7



^{7.} Notes to Kitab-i-Aqdas no. 170