

Some Answered Questions, Healing by Material Means

'Abdu'l-Bahá

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Healing by Material Means

Yesterday at table we mentioned, in connection with the question of spiritual medicine and healing, how illnesses can be cured through spiritual powers.

Now we will speak of material healing. The science of medicine is still in its infancy and has not yet reached maturity. But when it reaches that stage, treatments will be administered with things that are not repulsive to the senses of taste and smell, that is, through foods, fruits, and plants that have an agreeable taste and a pleasant smell. For the cause of the intrusion of illness into the human body is either a physical agent or a nervous excitement and stimulation.



As to physical agents, which are the primary cause of illness, their effect is due to the following: The human body is composed of numerous elements according to a particular state of equilibrium. So long as this equilibrium is maintained, man is preserved from sickness, but should this fundamental balance, which is the central requirement of a sound constitution, be upset, the constitution will be disrupted and illnesses will supervene.

For instance, if there is a deficiency in one of the component parts of the body and a surfeit of another, the state of equilibrium is disturbed and illness occurs. So, for example, equilibrium may require one component to be a thousand grams and another to be five grams. Should the former fall to seven hundred grams and the latter increase in such wise that the state of equilibrium is disturbed, then illness will supervene; and should equilibrium be restored through medicines and treatments, the illness will be overcome. Thus if the sugar component becomes excessive, the health is impaired; and when the physician forbids sweet and starchy foods, the sugar component diminishes, equilibrium is restored, and the illness is banished.

Now, the equilibration of these bodily components can be accomplished by one of two means, either through medicines or with foods, and when the constitution has recovered its equilibrium, the illness is banished. Since all the constituent elements of the human body are also found in plants, if one of these components were to become deficient, and if one were to partake of foods that are rich in that component, then equilibrium would be restored and the cure realized. So long as the aim is the equilibration of the component parts of the body, this can be equally effected through medicines or various foods.

The majority of the illnesses that afflict man also afflict animals, but the animal does not treat them through medicines. The animal's physician in the mountains and the wilderness is its





powers of taste and smell. The sick animal smells the plants that grow in the wilderness, eats those that its smell and taste find to be sweet and fragrant, and is cured. The reason is this: When, for example, the sugar component in its body becomes deficient, it craves sweet things and thus eats of sweet-tasting plants, for nature so urges and guides it. Thus, as the animal eats things that are pleasing to its smell and taste, the sugar component increases and it regains its health.

It is therefore evident that it is possible to cure illnesses by means of fruits and other foods. But as the science of medicine has not yet been perfected, this fact has not been fully understood. When this science reaches perfection, treatments will be administered with fragrant fruits and plants as well as with other foods, and with hot and cold waters of various temperatures.

This is only a brief explanation. God willing, and the occasion permitting, we will provide a more detailed explanation another time.