

Tablet to the Physician, or Tablet of Medicine: Tablet stu

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Name of Tablet in Arabic or Persian:

Lawh-i-Tibb. This Tablet has been published by the Wilmette Bahá'í Publishing Trust in _Majmu'a-yi Alwah-i Mubaraká_ (Cairo 1920, reprinted Wilmette 1981), pages 222-226.

Translation into English:

Tablet of Medicine, Tablet to a Physician. Not much has been written about this very important Tablet. It also hasn't been translated authoritatively, though a few passages have appeared in John Esslemont's _Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era_ and in the 1984 compilation from the Bahá'í World Centre Research Department _Bahá'í Writings on Some Aspects of Health, Healing, Nutrition and Related Subjects_.

Regarding the language used in the original, the Guardian wrote "The Tablet to a Physician was addressed to a man who was a student of the old type of healing prevalent in the East and familiar with the terminology used in those days, and. He addresses him in terms used by the medical men of those days. These terms are quite different from those used by modern medicine, and one would have to have a deep knowledge of this former school of medicine to understand the questions Bahá'u'lláh was elucidating" (ibid. 58, also cited _Lights of Guidance_ #945).

Significance of Name:

Was revealed to a physician and contains specific teachings regarding medicine, health, and the nature of spiritual healing.

Tablet was revealed in:

The first sentences, most of the Tablet, are in Arabic; the last few are in Persian

Name of Recipient:

Aqa Mírzá Muhammad-Riday-i-Tabib, a physician from Yazd

Reason for Revelation of the Tablet:

The tablet was written in praise of its recipient, and to provide him and the Bahá'ís with a number of teachings about health.

Date of Revelation:

Most probably the early 1870s; date not certain.

Place of Revelation:

'Akká, probably while Bahá'u'lláh was in the house of 'Udi Khammar (1871-73) or of Ilyas Abbud (1873-77)

Tone, subject, and genre of the Tablet:

Tone: Authoritative.

Subject: The subject of the tablet deals with matters of learning and knowledge

concerning medicine and health. At the end of the Tablet Bahá'u'lláh

also "exhorts men to education, goodly character and divine virtues"

and "deals with social teachings."

Genre: Letter addressed to an individual.

Voice of Tablet: [?]

Bahá'u'lláh

Outline Contents of Tablet:

In the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh vol. 3, 358-60, Taherzadeh summarizes the contents as

follows (I've excerpted this discussion and omitted ellipses):

In the Tablet known as the Lawh-i-Tibb Bahá'u'lláh:

- * advocates medical treatment when it is necessary
- * recommends treating the patient first through diet and resorting to medicine if the former proves ineffective
- * enumerates some of the basic prescriptions for good health and gives some dietary advice.
- * stresses the importance of contentment under all circumstances for good health
- * asserts that grief and sorrow will cause man the greatest misery
- * warns that jealousy will consume the body while anger will burn the liver.
- * exhorts the physician to heal the patient by first turning to God and seeking His assistance, and then prescribing the remedy
- * affirms that a physician who has recognized Him and has become

filled with His love will exert such an influence that his
mere
visit will restore health to the patient [elsewhere phrased
by
Taherzadeh as "the mere visit of a physician who has drunk
deep
of the wine of His love will cure the patient"]
* praises the science of medicine as being the most meritorious of
all sciences
* states that it is the means which God has created for the well-being
of mankind
* states the importance of courage and steadfastness in His Cause as
well as wisdom in teaching it
* categorically affirms that if the believers had faithfully carried
out
His commandments, the majority of the peoples of the world
would have embraced His Faith in His days.

Interestingly, Shoghi Effendi also had this to say about the Tablet of
Medicine:

"There is a Tablet of Medicine that Bahá'u'lláh has revealed and
which
is translated into English. That does not contain much of scientific
informations [sic] but has some interesting advices for keeping
healthy." (_Light of Divine Guidance_ vol. 2, 21)

Principal themes of the Tablet:

One student provided the following summary of the Tablet's contents, based on
Taherzadeh's descriptions:

1. Bahá'u'lláh advocates medical treatment when necessary,
recommending
treatment first through diet. Should this treatment prove
ineffective,
to resort to medicine:
2. He enumerates some basic prescriptions for good health and offers
dietary
advice
3. Bahá'u'lláh stresses the following:
 - a. contentment under all conditions for good health
 - b. asserts that grief and sorrow will cause man the
greatest misery
 - c. jealousy will consume the body and anger will burn the
liver
4. Bahá'u'lláh exhorts the physician first to turn to God for
assistance, then
prescribe the remedy
5. The physician who has recognized Bahá'u'lláh and is filled with

His love,

will exert such an influence that a mere visit will restore health to

the patient

6. Bahá'u'lláh praises the science of medicine as the most meritorious of all sciences

7. At the end of this Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh reveals a prayer for healing, one which is commonly known and recited by the friends

8. In this Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh states the importance of courage, steadfastness, and wisdom in teaching His Cause

9. He affirms that if the believers had carried out His commandments, most people would have accepted the Faith in His days

Tablet's relationship to other tablets:

1) It is at the end of this Tablet that Bahá'u'lláh reveals one of His most used healing prayers:

"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 succour in both this world and the world to come.

Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."

2) The Tablet also relates to the few places in the Aqdas in which Bahá'u'lláh prescribes specific practices for health, such as paring the nails, washing the feet, not using drugs or alcohol, and not using Persian pools. In verse 113, Bahá'u'lláh also has this to say:

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.

3) This was one of a number of Tablets Bahá'u'lláh addressed to Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá over his lifetime.

4) In Gleanings CVI is included an excerpt from Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Maneckji Sahib,

in which He says:

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.

5) Abdu'l-Bahá also expands on some Bahá'í teachings on health and healing in *Some*

Answered Questions, in a number of his talks, and in some pilgrims' notes.

Biography or bio note of the recipient of the Tablet:

Taherzadeh quotes Hájí Muhammad Tahir-i-Malmiri's description of Muhammad-Riday-

i-Tabib from Malmiri's unpublished memoirs (*Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh* vol. 3, 359):

"One of the early believers who embraced the Faith when Siyyid

Yahyáy-i-Darabi, known

as Vahid, came to Yazd, was Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Riday-i-Tabib. He was a skilled and

distinguished physician, and an embodiment of grace and steadfastness. The Pen of the Most

High revealed the Lawh-i-Tibb in his honour. In that exalted Tablet,

Bahá'u'lláh states

that the mere visit of a physician who has drunk deep of the wine of His love will cure the

patient. Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá was truly the fulfilment of these words of Bahá'u'lláh. He

used to cure the patient by administering very simple remedies. Truly, he possessed

wonderful qualities which made him a very special person in the community of the Most

Great Name. Owing to his intense piety he became highly disturbed when Mírzá Yahyá

broke the Covenant. As a result he was bewildered and stunned; he even became hesitant in

the Cause for a short time. Then it was as though Divine Providence sent Mullá Zaynu'l-

'Abidin, a native of Najafabad (he was entitled by Bahá'u'lláh as

Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin) to

Yazd in order to calm his agitation and dispel his doubts. Zaynu'l-Muqarribin at first stayed in the house of this servant in the district of Malamir, but when he learned of the intense anguish and distress that Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá was subjected to, he changed his residence and stayed in his home instead. Consequently, Mírzá Muhammad-Ridá became fully aware of the circumstances of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. He later received many Tablets from the Pen of the Most High, and served the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh with devotion and love till the end of his life. He was about eighty years old when he passed away."

— Tablet to the Physician, or Tablet of Medicine: Tablet study outline (Used by permission of the curator)