

Stem Cells

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Letter 1: Question from an individual

To the Universal House of Justice

11 August 2001 CE

Allah`u'Abha dear brothers in the Blessed Beauty!

Here in the United States, President Bush has just allowed funding for limited research on stem cell therapies. I now know what the secular laws in the US say about this, but I am concerned about what Bahá'í Law says about using this type of therapy. As a Bahá'í who could potentially benefit greatly from this type of therapy, I am reluctant to even inquire from my physician about its possibilities for curing my brain damage, either as a possible research subject or using this therapy once it is fully developed by the scientific community, until I know whether or not Bahá'í Law allows for this.

I know that the House is very busy with many pressing concerns, but I am sure that I am not the only Bahá'í needing to know these answers who could also greatly benefit from this type of therapy. When you have time, I would much appreciate your consultation and guidance on this issue. Thank you. Please also understand that, regardless of how this may impact on me personally, I am ready to abide fully by whatever guidance and decisions Bahá'u'lláh chooses to give through the Supreme Body, out of my great love for the Blessed Beauty and for the Institutions He has set up for our guidance. I am confident that, even if a cure for my condition is not within the scope of His Will, that He will continue to provide me with what I need and with opportunities to be of service to His Cause.

In His service and yours,

Dianne Bradford

Letter 2: Response from the Universal House of Justice:

23 August 2001

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your email message of 11 August 2001 to the Universal House of Justice regarding stem cell research and therapy has been warmly received at the Bahá'í World Centre, and has been forwarded to our Department for reply.

You ask whether stem cell therapy is acceptable in Bahá'í law. As you are no doubt aware, this new area of scientific inquiry involves a distinction between embryonic and other aspects of stem cell research. Reports appearing in the press and in scientific literature indicate that such exploration is at an

early stage. Many fundamental questions about the biological and genetic features of the processes involved, and the physiological implications, remain unresolved, and will become clear only with the passage of time.

Nothing specific has been found in the Bahá'í Writings regarding stem cell research and the types of therapy to which it may apply. The House of Justice regards it as premature for it to give consideration to these matters and their spiritual consequences. For the present, believers faced with questions about them are free to come to their own conclusions based on their knowledge of the Baha' i teachings on the nature and purpose of life. However, they should be careful not to make dogmatic statements or to offer their own understanding as a teaching of the Faith.

We have been asked to assure you of the prayers of the House of Justice in the Holy Shrines that the therapy you seek for your own well-being may be found.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
Department of the Secretariat

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