

Topics covered in Rúhíyyih Khánúm's meeting with pioneers, Haiti, 20 November 1982

Informal notes by Greg Dahl

1. Her recent visits to places off the beaten track. Profiting from opportunities. Friends arriving. Prayer.
2. Why she meets specially with the pioneers. She loves Haiti, very happy with experience in the villages, reminds her of Africa, she would like to live here.
3. Continued. Anyone that can live in Haiti is lucky. Counsellor Arbab. Progress made in the last 2 years. Emphasis on deepening is good, but she feels there should be more enrolling of new believers.
4. Africa brought joy to the heart of the Guardian...because of the mass conversion. Creating a new world order requires millions of Bahá'ís, transformation of society, not just of individuals.
5. Every step forward creates new problems. But problems in the Cause will be solved. Not for us as individuals to worry. Example of the Maleatoa of Samoa, who was taken under the wing of the Universal House of Justice. He was not under the National Spiritual Assembly or the Counsellors.
6. All Bahá'ís should teach. A Bahá'í can outline the whole of the Revelation in about 20 to 30 minutes. If the individual accepts, he must be welcomed into the Bahá'í community. The moment you have 9 adults in a community, you have to elect a Local Spiritual Assembly, you can't say they aren't ready. There must be a reason for this approach, and we must have confidence. We can't expect too much of an infant, have to trust in its development, have patience.
7. The purpose of speech is to be heard. Prayers should be read so they can be heard. Don't teach the Faith by "don'ts", e.g., "drinking is forbidden in the Bahá'í Faith."
8. Suggestion to have a one-page newsletter every Bahá'í month with brief news on one side and Bahá'í teachings (e.g. Hidden Words) on the other, preferably in their own dialect, so that all Bahá'ís have some Bahá'í Writings they can read. Having something is more important than aiming for perfection in translation.
9. Local believers should know they should be teaching and enrolling new Bahá'ís. A shorter and more frequent newsletter is better than a longer and less frequent one. Urban, well-education Bahá'ís can often be patronizing to less well-educated villagers, expecting sophistication from them.
- 10-12. Suggestion of having a radio program or station for Haiti. Can start simply.
13. Bahá'ís are too much on the inside looking out, for example using too much insider jargon. In marketing, you think about what the customer wants, not what you want to sell.
- 14-15. Radio program, continued.
15. Do translations into Creole all have to be approved by the National Spiritual Assembly?
16. Shoghi Effendi was suspicious, 'Abdu'l-Bahá even more so, necessary to protect the Faith. We need to be able to visualize dangers, be vigilant. Bahá'ís often think

- everything is the Will of God, even a mess that they have made themselves. Bahá'ís are far too trusting, extraordinarily naïve. We shouldn't let people cheat or exploit us.
17. Backbiting and gossip are a question of motive. Being suspicious is not the same thing. Requires common sense.
The Guardian was a good bargainer, wouldn't accept to pay too much for something.
 18. Hassan Balyuzi told a story of 'Abdu'l-Bahá visiting in Harrod's in London, where Balyuzi's father was present. 'Abdu'l-Bahá liked something but said he couldn't agree to the price. After 'Abdu'l-Bahá got to the front door, a manager from the store came running after him and said they had agreed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's price. Another story from Shoghi Effendi that is included in the Priceless Pearl is regarding a cab driver in Alexandria to demanded too high a price from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Discussion of fair prices and economic justice.
 19. Regarding beggars in Port-au-Prince, Rúhíyyih Khánum said she told them she was not a tourist, and the next day they didn't bother her. They are exploiting tourists.
Duties to one's parents and to one's children. Doing praiseworthy deeds in the name of your parents (or others).
 20. Continued.
Cable from the House regarding renewed persecutions in Iran.
 21. Prayers for Iranian friends.
 22. Continued. Our services can be offered as a compensation for the suffering of the friends in Iran. We must teach. Haiti is a very fertile field, as remarked by Ruth Pringle.