

LETTERS

Appeal - Tenant required for Bahá'í Centre

Is there anyone out there who is interested in pioneering to the Orkney Islands to live in the flat above the Bahá'í Centre?

The Orkney Islands is quite a unique place to live and to serve the Faith. They were first mentioned by name by Abdu'l Bahá in the Tablets of the Four Year Plan. Shoghi Effendi named the islands as one of the virgin territories to be opened during the 10 Year Crusade.

The Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Orkney Islands, Mr Charles Dunning was very quick to answer to the call of the Guardian, and settled in Orkney in the early stages of the Crusade.

Charles was much loved by the Guardian and Rúhíyyih Khánum refers to the admiration the Guardian had for this man in the video "The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith".

Rúhíyyih Khánum, herself, visited the Bahá'í Centre in Orkney in the 1980s and confirmed that a former owner of the building, a native Orcadian, had been a doctor of the Guardian in London.

The Centre was acquired as part of the Seven Year Plan when the Universal House of Justice asked that a modest centre be acquired for the island groups.

The living accommodation in the flat consists of a living room/dining area, two bedrooms a small kitchen and a toilet and shower room.

Anyone interested in coming to join our community in Orkney and living in this flat should contact the secretary - Rosemary McLaughlin, "Norvana", Rendall, Orkney Isles KW17 2NZ Tel: 01856 761624, e-mail: <mailto:rosemary@laughlin.demon.co.uk>

Food choice is a touchy issue

The author of this letter refers to the article: "The Case for Veganism in the Bahá'í Faith" from Bahá'í Journal UK February 2000 -

"There is nothing in the teachings about whether people should eat their food cooked or raw; exercise or not exercise; resort to specific therapies or not; nor is it forbidden to eat meat." (Shoghi Effendi: Health, Healing, p481)

"It is certain, however, that if man can live on a purely vegetarian diet and thus avoid killing animals, it would be much preferable. This is, however, a very controversial question and the Bahá'ís are free to express their views on it." (9 July 1931, Shoghi Effendi: Health, Healing, p476)

"In matters of diet, as in medicine, the Universal House of Justice feels that the believers should be aware that a huge body of scientific knowledge has been accumulated as a guide to our habits and practices. Here too, as in all other things, the believers should be conscious of the two principles of moderation and courtesy in the way they express their opinions and in deciding whether they should refuse food offered to them or request special foods." (Multiple Authors: Lights of Guidance, p299)

I feel that a persuasive approach goes beyond the "expressing of views" and fails to uphold the principles of "moderation and courtesy". Food choice is a personal and touchy issue. It can become a bone of contention as 'Abdu'l Baha has assured us that "people will gradually develop up to the condition of this natural food."

(Compilation of Compilations, para 1052)

I do not wish to belittle the author's efforts in sharing what he knows from personal experience to be beneficial. The dispassionate sharing of facts on this topic might have been very helpful for many readers. However, the use of argumentation to support veganism, and its publication in the Bahá'í Journal, could be taken by the readers to mean that the Faith itself endorses this diet.

"it must be clearly understood that no specific school of nutrition or medicine has been associated with the Bahá'í teachings." (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, July 11, 1978, in Lights of Guidance, p299)

Kim Bowden-Kerby, Reviewer for "Healing Through Unity" e-mail newsletter

Visiting the Mother Temple of Europe fairly easy, fairly cheap

Together with four other Bahá'ís from Devon, I have recently returned from a brief, but very wonderful visit to the "Mother Temple of Europe" near Frankfurt. If you can go please do, I can promise you will enjoy it.

We flew to the new Hahn airport which receives "no frills" flights - Ryanair flew us there for less than £40 (it cost more to get the coach to Stansted Airport!). There is a connecting bus to Frankfurt which takes around an hour and a half. A rail track is planned for the future.

We clubbed together and took a taxi to the House of Worship which cost about £30 return each (about 50 miles).

We would be happy to pass on information to anyone thinking of taking this route. We made a lot of new friends on the way and people were very helpful, many spoke English.

Carole Huxtable

LETTERS We welcome letters on any topic of general interest. Personal attacks or denigratory comments will not be printed. Letters may be edited for reasons of brevity or clarity. Opinions expressed in these columns are not necessarily those of the National Spiritual Assembly or the Editor.