

## Pat's Stories: Miscellaneous

### Two Unexpected events on Pilgrimage:

In 1972 I was most fortunate to be able to go on Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and visit the Bahá'í Holy Shrines in Israel. Our family were pioneers in Barbados.

In those earlier days if one applied from somewhere other than a large country, one could expect to go in a relatively short time. This was, I suppose, because of the smaller number of Bahá'ís who applied from around the world, and a wider representation of more countries attending was desirable.

At any rate, within months of applying, I was there. This too, is a good story, but for another day.

When I was a new Bahá'í in Carmichael California in 1964, I was often dismayed at the laxity that Bahá'ís took to showing up at events on time. I have always been time orientated, so this bothered me, but I was told; oh, don't worry, this is Bahá'í time.

During the Pilgrimage, a visit to meet with the members of the Universal House of Justice was scheduled for 4:00 pm on one of the first days. What a wonderful prospect! Our small group of Pilgrims gathered before time in the room where we were to meet them. We stood around, chatting a bit, and without noticeable intrusion, chairs began to appear, and the Pilgrims were herded into them. The chatting stopped and we sat quietly for a bit, and then, an adjoining door to our room opened and out filed the members of the Universal House of Justice! It was truly one of the most thrilling moments of my life. I still feel the emotion well within me when I think of it. I looked up at the clock, it said 4.00pm. I thought: "Now, that is Bahá'í Time."

They spoke to us, and afterwards, they stayed and chatted with us. I noticed that most of the Bahá'ís had opened their prayer books, asking each member to sign them. I, of course, wanted to, but just couldn't make myself do it. It just didn't seem right. It was like they were movie stars or famous musicians or authors, and that was not how I felt about them. So, the moment passed and my prayer book remained unsigned.

A few days later, I went to the larger house of 'Abdu'l-Baha which was then being used as the meeting place for the Universal House of Justice and its staff. I was to have lunch with one of the staff that I had known before.

As I was waiting for her, Mr. Hushmand Fatheazam was just going out to lunch. I did not know him other than the brief meeting that the Pilgrims had previously had. But as he saw me, he stopped and said, "Wait a minute, I have something for you". For me? He went back into his office and came out right away with a book in his hand. It was a copy of his book, the "The New Garden." I opened it and he had signed it and inscribed a short message to me which started with my name! How do they do this; how do they know?