# Wangthonglung Team Retreat

# Session 1a: Opening; Creating a Spiritual Atmosphere

**Objectives:**

1. To create a spiritual atmosphere for the retreat.

**Time:** 40 minutes

Materials / Preparation:

* overheads of quotations
* handout of prayer and quotes
* pens
* paper, envelopes, and a box
* perfume
* table cloth
* flowers

**Steps:**

## **[1] Preparation for the meeting**: Throw away what concerns us………..”

* 1. After participants are in the meeting room already, *welcome everyone*.

Then look surprised and explain:

*“Oh! Wait! We are in the wrong place! We are starting in the wrong place. We have to prepare ourselves before we enter the room. Let’s all go outside.”*

Leave the meeting room to another, temporary location.

* 1. **Have a participant read the following quotation:**

*“When you present yourselves in the meetings,*

*before entering them,*

*free yourselves from all that you have in your heart,*

*free your thoughts and your minds from all else save God, and speak to your heart.*

*That all may make this a gathering of love,*

*make it the Cause of illumination,*

*make it a gathering of attraction of the hearts,*

*surround this gathering with the Lights of the Supreme Concourse*

*so that you may be gathered together with the utmost love.”*

‘Abdu’l-Baha, Baha’i Meetings: The Nineteen Day Feast, p. 20

Also quoted in Daily Readings: July 12

**1.3 Share the following points:**

* *“Let us follow the exhortation of ‘Abdu’l-Baha.*
* *We all come with our outside cares, or frustration, concerns.*
* *Let's pause, think about any negative feelings that we may have, which we are consciously or unconsciously bringing into our retreat /gathering.*
* *“Let us: “Speak to our hearts” as ‘Abdu’l-Baha tells us we should do.”*
* *“Throughout our gathering, we will use inner reflection. Let us all take a moment to reflect on what negative attitudes we may have, frustrations with ourselves, maybe others, stress from home, problems at work… anything that may detract from harmony and unity in our gathering etc.”*

* Hand out a piece of paper to each participant.

*“After reflecting, write those negative feelings, frustrations, or concerns on a piece of paper.*

* When everyone has finished writing, say:

*Okay… now scrunch it up into a ball and then throw it into this garbage box.*

*We do not want to take any of these things into our gathering.*

*This is our symbol for freeing ourselves of these things. We will let these go!”*

*As facilitators, we will do this too! We must all enter our gathering with love in our hearts.*

* Pass around a box, and everyone can put their paper in it. Then throw the box in a trash can – or burn.
  1. **Have someone say the following prayer and then the quote from ‘Abdu’l-Baha and then enter the room.**

|  |
| --- |
| O God! Dispel all those elements which are the cause of discord, and prepare for us all those things which are the cause of unity and accord!  O God! Descend upon us Heavenly Fragrance and change this gathering into a gathering of Heaven!  Grant to us every benefit and every food.  Prepare for us the Food of Love!  Give to us Food of Knowledge!  Bestow upon us the Food of Heavenly Illumination!”  In your hearts remember these things, and then enter the Unity Feast  ‘Abdu’l-Baha, Baha’i Meetings: The Nineteen Day Feast, p. 20 |

|  |
| --- |
| “….each one must consider all those who are present as better and greater than himself, and each one must consider himself less than the rest. Know their station as high, and think of your own station as low.”  ‘Abdu’l-Baha, Baha’i Meetings:  The Nineteen Day Feast, pp. 20 |

“Now let us enter the room………..”

**[2] Re-enter the meeting room**

Prepare the room while people are out so it is more beautiful:

In the room prepare:

* a picture of Abdu’l-Baha (projected)
* have flowers displayed (if possible)
* table cloth
* a scent of roses (need perfume)
* soft music

Allow people to sit quietly.

Go around and pour a bit of rose perfume on everyone’s hands as a welcome.

Share: *When we prepare ourselves, we can feel the spirit of Abdu’l-Baha and he promises He is with us.*

Share with the friends the quote from Abdu’l-Baha, via PowerPoint:

“Remember, whether or not I be on earth,

My presence will be with you always.”

“ไม่ว่าเราอยู่บนโลกนี้หรือไม่

จงจำไว้ว่าเราจะอยู่กับเจ้าเสมอ”

Remind people that:

*“Abdu’l-Baha is with us in our gathering …. and He will be with us from the start until the end.”*

*We can call on Him any time in our hearts.”*

*"Now, we are in the right place, and we are ready to begin our gathering."*

**Prayer and Quote:**

**Read before entering the room.**

ข้าแต่พระผู้เป็นเจ้า!

ขอทรงสลายองค์ประกอบทั้งหมดที่เป็นเหตุของความไม่ลงรอยกัน

และขอทรงเตรียมทุกสิ่งที่เป็นเหตุของเอกภาพ

และความเป็นน้ำหนึ่งใจเดียวกันสำหรับเรา!

ข้าแต่พระผู้เป็นเจ้า!

ขอทรงให้สุคนธรสสวรรค์ลงมาสู่ และเปลี่ยนแปลงที่ชุมนุมนี้เป็นที่ชุมนุมสวรรค์!

ขอทรงประทานประโยชน์และอาหารทุกอย่างให้แก่เรา

ขอทรงเตรียมอาหารแห่งความรักสำหรับเรา!

ขอทรงให้อาหารแห่งความรู้แก่เรา!

ขอทรงประทานอาหารแห่งความสว่างสวรรค์แก่เรา!”

ในหัวใจของเจ้าจงระลึกถึงสิ่งเหล่านี้ และจากนั้นให้เข้าไปในงานฉลองแห่งเอกภาพ

* พระอับดุลบาฮา

“แต่ละคนต้องถือว่าทุกคนที่อยู่นั่นดีกว่าและสำคัญกว่าตน และแต่ละคนต้องถือว่าตนเองสำคัญน้อยกว่าคนอื่นทั้งหมด รู้ว่าพวกเขามีสถานะสูง และสถาานะของตัวเจ้าเองต่ำ”

* พระอับดุลบาฮา

(NOTE: Provisional Translations)