

## *What Is the Illusion of Waiting and Wishing?*

Bahá'u'lláh speaks again and again of *fancies, illusions*, and *idle imaginings* that dominate our lives.

### O SON OF MAN!

Many a day hath passed over thee whilst thou hast busied thyself with thy *fancies and idle imaginings*. How long art thou to slumber on thy bed? Lift up thy head from slumber, for the Sun hath risen to the zenith, haply it may shine upon thee with the light of beauty [emphasis added].<sup>1</sup>

An illusion is a false assumption that we accept as true and then give it full power and authority to direct the course of our lives and destinies. Among the countless illusions human beings cherish is that of *waiting and wishing*. What are they waiting for? Here are just a few examples from a long list prepared by an author:

- Inspiration
- Permission
- Reassurance
- More time
- An obvious scapegoat
- The kids to leave home
- The lion to lie down with the lamb
- A better time

- A more favorable horoscope
- An absence of risk
- Someone to discover me
- More adequate safeguards
- My love to rekindle
- My ego to improve
- My self-esteem to be restored
- Someone to be watching me
- A clearly written set of instructions
- A significant relationship
- A disaster
- Time to almost run out
- The pot to boil
- Spring
- Various aches and pains to subside
- Shorter lines at the bank
- Someone else to screw up
- The next time around
- You to stand out of my light
- California to fall into the ocean
- My grandfather's estate to be settled
- A cue card
- You to go first
- A signal from Heaven<sup>2</sup>

An enchanting illusion popular among many believers is that if they wait long enough, they will be suddenly raptured or raised to the heavens on high. They are waiting for an angel to come to their place of residence, greet them, embrace them, lift them by their hands, lead them high into the heavens, and then put them with all their loved ones in the gardens of peace

and gladness—where they will live forevermore, where they can look down on all the sinners and their doubting friends on earth and say, “I told you so!” The problem is this: Many of those who cherish and enjoy such fancies are so intensely gripped by fear of being deceived that they do not even dare to take their hands out of their pockets, lest they will be picked by the wrong angel! They are so careful, they do not even look heavenward for fear of attracting a deceiving angel! They feel the safest place is the comfort zone of their own denomination. They are so conservative, they even insure their hats!

As people fear the loss of their possessions, so do they fear the loss of their faith. Anyone with a different belief system is considered a potential thief. What is the best protection against a thief? A security system and a locked house. What is the best protection against the loss of faith? Systematic avoidance, ignorance, and a closed mind.

Studies indicate that those who face a fatal disease or approach old age often have this regret: I wish I had been more daring; I wish I had been more adventurous. Consider the following passage from the memoirs of an old person on the verge of passing from this life:

- I've been one of those people who never go anywhere without a thermometer, a hot-water bottle, a raincoat, and a parachute.

- If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall.
- I'd dare to make more mistakes next time.
- I would take more chances.
- I would travel lighter next time.
- I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers.
- I would go to more dances.
- I would ride more merry-go-rounds.
- I would pick more daisies.<sup>3</sup>

What does the illusion of waiting and wishing teach us? It teaches us that the world does not wait for anyone; that apathy, inaction, and fear stifle the human spirit; that courage and a sense of adventure are the attributes of the faithful; that we must cherish the honor of choosing our everlasting destiny before we have lost that chance. Simply waiting and wishing for a miracle will not lead us to the haven of hope and peace. As a rule, it leads us to the depths of despair. The parable of the talent uttered by Jesus (Matt. 25:14-30) testifies to the truth of this principle.

The powers and intensity of illusions and fancies in human life are incredible. They are so vast and fascinating that they deserve an entire volume.

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1. *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* (Arabic), no. 62.

2. Canfield, Jack and Mark Victor Hansen. *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc. 1993, pp. 247-249.
3. Canfield, Jack and Mark Victor Hansen. *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 1993, pp. 287-288.



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