

Seize Thy Chance



Seize thy chance, for it will come to thee no more!

Bahá'u'lláh

Seize Thy Chance

**Destiny is a Choice
Have You Made Yours?**

www.TheKnowledgeOfGod.com



www.GlobalPerspective.org

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a nonprofit foundation

The purpose of this book is to show that:

- We are the captain of our soul. We have absolute freedom to choose our eternal spiritual destiny.
- We came to this world to learn what God has planned for us and to pursue that plan.
- The consequences of either ignoring or pursuing that plan are enormous.
- It is of supreme significance to “seize the moment” to learn about God’s plan and to choose our eternal spiritual destiny before our moments are all gone.
- What we think and talk about has the potential to turn into reality and transform our life.

Seize Thy Chance inspires you to ponder questions that matter most in your life, and yet you may have set them aside for the future, for a time that may never come. It offers new insights to help you make informed decisions about setting priorities in your life.

***Seize, O friends, the chance which this Day
offereth you, and deprive not yourselves of the
liberal effusions of His grace. Bahá’u’lláh***

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Eternity Lives in This Moment

*Seize thy chance, for it will come to thee no more.*¹ Bahá'u'lláh

In the context of eternity, our life span counts for less than a second, and yet we can make that second count more than the eternity that follows it—by the choices we make.

All of us have hidden spiritual talents that can create miracles and magic in our lives, yet seldom do we cultivate them. Our negative thoughts about our lack of capacity and unworthiness make us prisoners of our lower selves.

We cannot produce honey out of vinegar, no matter how hard we try. If we start with doubt and despair, we end up with doubt and despair. If we begin with hope and faith, we end up with hope and faith.

The difference between rain and a rainbow is a little sunlight. ***Seize Thy Chance*** can help you discover and blend the sunlight in your soul with the rain in your surroundings to create a beautiful and everlasting rainbow that will encircle your life.

The universe is overflowing with the knowledge of the Glory of God. All we need to do is to tune in to that source and experience the ecstasy and exhilaration of bathing in its celestial Splendor.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. *Psalms 19:19*

Thoughts create decisions, decisions create choices, and choices create the future. This book presents new threads of thoughts with which you can create new patterns of purpose and eventually

weave the magic carpet of your destiny. It invites you to take a break from the fast track of your busy schedule and come for a short walk through the rose garden to enjoy the enchanting flowers.

Life is brief. The spring does not last forever, the roses do not always stay in bloom; fall and winter are fast approaching.

Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.

Psalms 144:4

Teach us to count how few days we have and so gain wisdom of heart.

Psalms 90:12

Seize thy chance, for it will come to thee no more.²

Bahá'u'lláh

Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.

Isaiah 55:6

While daylight lasts we must carry on the work of him who sent me; night is coming, when no one can work.

Christ (John 9:4)

Imperishable glory I have chosen for thee... While there is yet time, return, and lose not thy chance.³

Bahá'u'lláh

The path to the Kingdom of Heaven is paved with desire, commitment, and determination. Apathy, inaction, doubt, and procrastination are obstacles and traps that prevent you from pursuing your destiny.

God extends His hand only to a hand that extends to Him.

Love was offered me and I shrank from its disillusionment; sorrow knocked at my door, but I was afraid; ambition called to me, but I dreaded the chances. Yet all the while I hungered for meaning in my life. And now I know that we must lift the sail and catch the winds of destiny...

Edgar Masters

Part I



A Sacred and Urgent Invitation to the Peoples of the World

I

The Puzzle

Seize Thy Chance is an attempt to solve this puzzle: Why do so many people fail to choose their destiny? Why do they leave this most fundamental of all choices in their lives to chance, to convenience, or to an unknown ancestor who lived and died long ago? Why do so many ignore, repress, postpone, forget, or avoid this most critical of all decisions?

This book shows that the failure to address this question has been extremely costly, not only to the individuals who have failed to take the responsibility, but to the collective destiny of humankind throughout all ages. It has diverted the human potential from peace to prejudice and war, from self-fulfillment to pain and suffering, and from kindness to cruelty and violence.

Instead of seeing through their own eyes, instead of investigating the truth for themselves, instead of judging with critical minds, people have simply conformed to the thinking of those around them. They have adopted the prejudices, the illusions, and the distorted views of their ancient ancestors and cultures. They have acted as if hatred is in their genes, and ignorance is in their chromosomes. They have lived as if bigotry is in their blood, their sense of superiority is in their skin, and their desire for segregation is in their cells—not in their souls.

Seize Thy Chance shows that we are not slaves to our past, that we hold our destiny in our hand, that we can and must break this

destructive and enduring cycle of separation, superiority, and prejudice.

Taking time for this most fundamental of all decisions—choosing our everlasting destiny—is not only our sacred duty but our most supreme glory and honor. If we fail to seek and find our destiny in the light of knowledge, we will get lost in the dark spheres of apathy and illusions.

This book shows that practicing the principles of *spiritual freedom* and *an independent search for truth* are the ultimate remedy, not only for resolving global and political conflicts, but also for fostering self-fulfillment and harmony in the hearts of humankind. Yet despite their supreme significance, these principles are universally ignored.

This book offers an insight and understanding into the forces that control us and prevent us from attaining our divine destiny, from manifesting our moral, spiritual, and social potential. It shows that the only way to be a finder is to be a seeker, that the foremost enemy of human happiness is a loss of desire to practice the principles of spiritual freedom and a continuous search for truth and knowledge. It invites the followers and leaders of all faiths to set aside their fears and prejudices, and to communicate with each other in a spirit of humility and understanding. It asks them to abandon their feelings of superiority and to treat one another with reverence and appreciation. It invites them to work together toward the goal of creating a global civilization ruled by justice and blessed with enduring peace and prosperity.

2

Freedom of Choice What Does It Mean?

If destiny is a choice, what does the word “choice” mean? To respond to this question, it is best to begin by deciphering the true meaning of its opposite: compulsion or coercion.

Consider this example. How many times do you remember responding to a knock on the door from a couple of neatly dressed but uninvited visitors who interrupted your daily routine to “sell” you their special dogmas or brand of truth? And if you talked with them, did you find them open to new ideas?

I have spoken with such friendly visitors many a time. Each time I hoped and tried to carry the friendly discussion beyond the primitive level of rote memory, and repetitive and simplistic statements, to a new territory: that of rational thinking and reasoning. But my hopes were always dashed by disappointment because they continued to give the same responses to my questions and challenges: a pre-recorded message that kept repeating itself! I found the friendly but zealous visitors completely closed to new ideas. I could not make even a small dent in their stone-like thinking. They listened to my questions and challenges only to play back their pre-recorded message.

Each encounter made me remember the French expression that “the hardest thing to open is a closed mind.” I found the visitors acting like a piece of software with a fixed program. I could detect

no compatibility between their pre-recorded version of truth and my questions and challenges. They acted as if a mysterious “virus” had totally scrambled their input and output.

Most of them behaved like a finicky eater who has been fed only hot dog, chips, and coke all his life. My basket of fresh fruits could not pique their curiosity. It would not even draw a glance.

The friendly visitors showed all the “symptoms” of being infected with raw zeal and instructed by rote learning. And they displayed all the passion of wanting to pass their “symptoms” to someone else! Nevertheless, I always treated them with respect and kindness and gave them credit for their “good will,” for their desire to spread faith, honesty, charity, and love.

I found their motives commendable, but not their strategies for testing the truth and spreading knowledge. “Good will” *by itself* can be deceptive and often difficult to define. Virtually all wars have been waged for the sake of a “good cause.” Each side has edified and glorified his cause, and then justified the demise of his “enemy” for the triumph of truth. “Good will” is good only if it is rooted in reality; if it is sustained by fact rather than by fiction, by reason rather than by self-deception and self-righteousness.

Every evil in the human heart grows out of self-deception. It starts with lying to one’s self, gradually falling in love with the lie, glorifying the lie, and finally spreading the lie—displaying it to others as a precious pearl of truth. If we overcome self-deception, we can overcome all evil. The root cause of all the sins and all the sufferings that we inflict on ourselves and on each other can be traced to lying—first to ourselves and then infecting others with that lie. If you ask a hundred parents why they abuse their children, you will hear the same answers: At first they will deny being abusers. (Denying is rooted in lying.) And if you press them, they will say, “It is for the good of the child!”

Self-deception concealed by good will can be very destructive. Would you ride a plane that is designed and built by workers whose only credentials are sincerity and compassion?

“Good will” and “sincerity” are like fire. They produce energy—heat and smoke. But to be useful, the energy must be controlled and directed. That is the reason for making and using a furnace. The source or substance of energy—gas or oil—must submit to the furnace, otherwise it may explode. Without the control of the furnace, the energy turns into a destructive force; with the control of the furnace, it turns into a useful force.

To manifest their potentials, the virtues of the heart must be tested, judged, and guided by the forces of the mind. The critical mind is the furnace of the heart. Without it, we end up with an explosion and smoke.

When we look at human history, we find a lot of fireworks and smoke, but little sign of a furnace. We see millions of believers killing each other because of their fiery zeal for their Lord. We see religion serving as a “salvation club” that separates people, that infects them with pride, prejudice, and a sense of superiority over non-members. We see Irish Catholics and Protestants greeting each other with grenades, bombs, and bullets. We see Jews and Muslims exchanging artillery in the Middle East. We see Eastern Orthodox Catholics attacking Kosovar and Bosnian Muslims, raping their young women, murdering their young men, and driving nearly a million innocent people out of their towns and villages in pursuit of a policy of “ethnic cleansing,” as if Muslims were pollutants in their land. We find thousands of Persian Bahá’ís—whose prime purpose is to promote peace and unity—persecuted by an Islamic government under the pretext of upholding the laws of the Qur’án.

What went wrong? What happened to the furnace? Why was it removed? Where were the critical minds of rational people to prevent the abuses and the explosions? To answer these questions, we need to resolve this critical point: How do people adopt their beliefs? By investigating and doing research as scientists do? Are

they guided by reason and evidence as true scholars are? Or do they simply *inherit* their beliefs from those who were born before them, who also inherited them from those who were born before them, and who also inherited them from those who were born before them?

Virtually all children follow the family religion. This process is carried out through a strategy called conversion by subtle coercion. To see how this strategy works, let us compare it with its opposite: *freedom*. How do they differ? The prime difference between the two strategies is this: *freedom* results from an exposure to *multiple choices*; *conversion by subtle coercion* results from an exposure to a *single choice*.

Let us start with a political example. The communist regime in the Soviet Union exposed its citizens only to communism. The political leaders ignited the peoples' hearts and souls with a fiery zeal for Marxism—a specific system of government that prospered by false promises of equality and justice for all. The communist leaders were so successful that Marxism spread and dominated the lives of many millions for decades. It served as a substitute for religion.

How did the communist leaders succeed? What strategies did they use? Their success lay mostly in this secret: they carefully kept the people ignorant of other systems, of other ideologies, of other ways of life. Two highly educated Russians told me that they really believed the big lie: that their standard of living was the highest in the world and that the Russians were lucky to live under the communist system.

The Marxist system in the Soviet Union presents a classic example of political conversion by coercion. Its phenomenal success in controlling so many millions for so many decades was mainly due to this strategy: Exposing the masses to a single political belief system, while ignoring and downgrading all the others.

What virtue, more than any other, nourishes the seed of freedom? The virtue of an impartial and independent investigation of truth. The seed of freedom can never germinate in the dark spheres of ignorance. It only grows in the light of reason and evidence, only in the land of true knowledge.

Why do children virtually always adopt the religion of their parents? Because they are exposed to only one choice—to only one system of beliefs. Exposing children to different religions is like teaching them to eat different fruits. If children are given only oranges, they learn to eat only oranges; if they are given only grapes, they learn to eat only grapes. And if they never see other fruits, then they will never know what they are missing. This is how conversion by subtle coercion takes root and endures.

Keeping people ignorant by practicing the principle of “exclusion” is by far the most effective, the most popular, and the most powerful of all control strategies. The success of the communist system, the endurance of their big lie among so many millions for so long, testifies to the awesome powers of “conversion by exclusion.” “The Iron Curtain” was only a visible symbol of a mightier curtain that dimmed the light of knowledge. In the darkness of that prison, people accepted and believed whatever they were told.

A prime purpose of this book is to open a window to the controlled confines of religion, to let a little light into the popular and vast prison of control by exclusion—a dark dungeon in which the masses of humankind continue to live, even in this enlightened age, without ever knowing it.

The process of conversion or control by exclusion is so gradual and so subtle that people seldom suspect it. Suppose a person grows up in a house without seeing the world beyond or experiencing freedom. Would he dream of a plan or a plot to escape?

This book is written:

- To show that there is nothing to fear from stepping out of one's comfort zone for a short excursion, that there is no loss in beholding the beauty of new gardens.
- To expose the controlled process by which virtually all people adopt their beliefs.
- To show how everyone can “unconvert” or liberate his or her soul from the narrow confines of “control by exclusion” and visit the vast vistas of spiritual freedom.

Regard *Seize Thy Chance* and its sequel—*On Wings of Destiny*—as a basket filled with fruits from a new vineyard. You are invited to taste them just for curiosity. If you do not like them, you can always go back to the one “fruit” you learned to like from childhood. What can you lose by entering a new vineyard and tasting new fruits?

This book is a reminder that every human being has a God-given right to spiritual freedom, which requires making choices. Can a person make a choice if he or she is exposed to only *one* set of beliefs? Most people abhor the idea of parents selecting spouses for their children. Why then do they readily accept the set of beliefs their great, great, great...grand parents selected for them long ago? Is one's everlasting destiny less significant than the choice of a spouse?

Seize Thy Chance does not try to “convert” anyone. “Converting” a person implies taking the right of freedom away from him. This book is written for just the opposite purpose: to liberate all those who are led to believe that *the one* version of truth that they learned from their parents, religious leaders, and culture is *the only* version of the truth. This book shows that the right to spiritual freedom is the most splendid and sacred right that Heaven bestows on humans. No one—no parent, no pastor, no priest, no rabbi, no mulla—is authorized to take this right away from a soul who must forever live with the consequences. Violating this right is an

injustice. It is like removing someone's eyes or putting an innocent person in prison.

Similarly, those who give up their spiritual freedom by allowing the dominant forces of culture to “compel” them into accepting a set of “inherited beliefs” passed from generation to generation, should recognize that they have abandoned the most glorious gift that God bestows on humans.

Most people resent being “converted,” yet without knowing it, they have already been “converted through exclusion”—by being exposed to only *one* set of beliefs and the prevailing views of only *one* culture—the *one* in which they were born. What if they had been born to another family and another culture?

A new age has dawned. We have broken the physical barriers of separation. The time has also come to break the spiritual barrier that has kept the hearts and souls of humankind separate. The time has come for all the peoples of the world, whatever their beliefs, to break away from the dark prison of “conversion by exclusion” by taking a step toward the light of knowledge.

3

The Compatible Software

Compare each of the world's great religions to a piece of software with a special name and special features. Is it possible that, in spite of their differences, they are compatible? If this question intrigues you, you will enjoy this book and its sequel.

All people hope for peace and prosperity. They wish for a world in which they can live with joy and happiness. Yet their hopes and wishes remain unfulfilled. Many people dream of a day when our chaotic planet will turn into a paradise of beauty and wonder. They wish for a celestial figure who will suddenly descend from heaven and invite all the residents of the earth to a great celebration—the dawning of a new day in human history. They pray for a *Global Platform*, where peoples of all cultures, races, and religions will gather together and learn to know and appreciate one another as equal members of one race—the human race.

Many people are unaware that their dream has already come true, that their wish has already been fulfilled, that their prayer has already been answered. They do not know that such a figure has already come. They have not heard that such a day has already dawned, and that such a platform has already been created. It has been the center of a spiritual revolution for more than a century. This spiritual revolution of unity and oneness, this universal platform of peace, communication, and understanding has already attracted and gathered millions from every culture, race, and

religion. It is called the Bahá'í Faith: the religion that breaks down the walls of separation between all religions; that demonstrates their common origin, and brings them together as a bouquet of beautiful flowers.

This book refers to this Faith only briefly. It invites you to examine it for spiritual enlightenment and as a possible solution to the world's conflicts and clashes. The next volume covers this question in greater depth. It shows how the Bahá'í teachings have opened a new door of understanding to all the peoples of the world, how its progressive principles have helped the followers of all faiths to overcome their feelings of separation and superiority. It explains how its message of oneness has inspired millions of people from diverse cultures and religions to communicate and live in peace and harmony despite their differences. But that is not the main topic of this volume. This volume primarily concerns freedom of choice. It shows that whatever the question, the answer is: ***Seek and ye shall find your divine destiny; knock, and new doors of knowledge shall open unto you.***

Seize Thy Chance does not try to “convert,” anyone to a set of beliefs but to convey understanding and to inspire openness. Its prime purpose is to initiate dialogue among the believers of the world's great religions, and to encourage and promote the recognition and appreciation of the principle of ***Spiritual Freedom*** as a sacred right of every human being.

Seize Thy Chance shows that there is no fear in learning about other faiths; that on the contrary, seeking knowledge and learning to know our global neighbors is not only our sacred duty but a supreme privilege and honor. It affirms these prime principles:

- We have neither the right to “coerce” nor the power to “convert” anyone. Only God can transform or “convert” a soul.
- What we can and must do is communicate.

I hope and pray that this book will offer some insight into one of the most fundamental yet widely neglected questions—our sacred duty and supreme honor to choose our everlasting destiny. I hope it prepares the ground for planting the seed of a magnificent and sacred mission that is well within our reach: Diverting our energies away from self-interest, isolation, and animosity and directing them toward the creation of a new spiritual civilization ruled by justice and co-operation between all nations. I hope it will bring us closer to a world in which justice rules, peace prevails, hope celebrates, and love and harmony rejoice. I hope it will inspire us to listen to the harmonious music of heaven—the divine symphony.

4

A Divine Conductor for a Global Symphony

Once I heard about a famous singer who was asked to perform for the disabled. She was quite busy, but because of her love for the disadvantaged, she promised to participate, though for only a few minutes. The singer arrived as planned and sang a few songs. Her time was almost up. The audience expected her to leave at any moment. But to their utter delight and amazement, she continued to sing, with much excitement and exhilaration, far beyond the expected time. When asked why, she said, “Because of two men in the audience—one black, the other white—sitting side by side, and clapping cheerfully for me.” “What was unusual about that?” she was asked. “You see,” she explained, “each of the two men had only one arm, but shared that arm with the other. Their applause was the sweetest song and the most splendid scene from heaven. I wanted that song and that scene to continue.”

In this world, we are the audience. We have a choice to sing or to remain silent, to fight with our fists, or clap with our hands.

We have a choice to sleep through this celestial banquet, or to arise and march to the music of our divine destiny.

We have a choice to turn our differences into bigotry and separation, or to cherish them and turn them into a bouquet of many beautiful flowers.

We have a choice to clench our hands, or to join them to create a circle of oneness and peace.

We have a choice to stay within our small comfort zones, or to attend the grand Symphony of Unity in Diversity.

We have a choice to mourn and cry, or to laugh and dance to the songs of a Celestial Celebration.

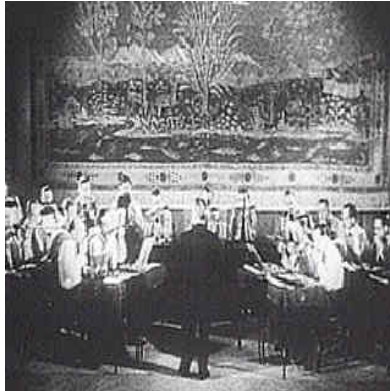
Just as our bodies are connected and attracted by the forces of gravity, so are our souls united by an even greater force. Unless we learn to sing and dance in harmony, we will continue to clash, to keep stepping on each others' feet and fall.

Compare our planet to a vast platform on which an orchestra is playing. The platform is magnificent. Its beauty is breath-taking, but the players are confused. They are not listening to one another. Instead of playing harmonious songs, they are producing many different noises at the same time. Their instruments are out of tune, their voices are hoarse, their ear drums are tired, their eyes are drunken! They are running in all directions. There is much pushing, shoving, and shouting.

What this orchestra needs is a conductor who can inspire each player to become the best at playing his part and the best at keeping the harmony with the others. Bahá'ís believe that God has sent a new Conductor, called Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, who has established the Bahá'í Faith. He has come to unite and harmonize the inhabitants of our beautiful planet. He offers a platform for peace and friendship for all nations. He invites all members of the human race to come together with their unique instruments to participate in this ***Global and Grand Symphony of Order, Oneness, and Harmony***. Together we can create the most magnificent melodies, the most splendid songs.

This celestial Symphony of Souls, called the Bahá'í Faith, has already attracted gifted players from every nation, race, religion, and culture. It presents a working model of unity, a perfect platform for peace and harmony. It invites music lovers from every

land to come to this divine banquet to see for themselves this grand and glorious Symphony of Souls.



Part II



The Walls of Separation and Prejudice

Who built them and why?

A Fireside Chat

To enhance communication, the rest of this book will be presented as a dialogue between two friends.

5

Destiny is a Choice



- ◆ Thank you for sharing the touching story of the two men sharing their arms to clap their hands. It has a timely message for our divided world.

What are the forces that keep people separated? Why do so many follow the religion of their ancestors, sometimes for thousands of years, without showing any desire to learn about other belief systems? Why have so many wars been waged in the name of God?

- ♥ Most people follow the religion of their ancestors because they are expected from childhood to remain loyal to their roots and to believe, without questioning, whatever their parents, priests, pastors, or rabbis believe. They are led to think that taking “the road less traveled” toward an unknown land outside their comfort zone, is unwise. Why would anyone who *has* the truth, *search* for the truth? Why would anyone step out of his safe ancestral circle? Why would anyone question his faith? Looking

beyond the borders of one's parental beliefs, they are told, is a sign of disloyalty.

Little by little these negative thoughts have etched permanent scars into the hearts and minds of the followers of all great religions. They have become permanent tattoos on the Soul of humankind. Over the course of many centuries, they have exerted a profound influence on the destiny of all nations. Unchallenged, they have set in motion a cycle of superiority, distrust, and avoidance among the followers of the world's great religions.

- ◆ Why have these divisive thoughts and negative images grown so strong and endured so long?
- ♥ I can think of two main reasons: The first is that they ride on people's natural inclinations, like a river flowing downhill.
- ◆ What are those natural inclinations? Why would so many people instinctively prefer separation?
- ♥ Consider these four reasons among others:
 - Instead of encouraging people to take action, negative thoughts allow them to stay within their comfort zones. Why would anyone leave a comfortable chair?
 - They support people's desire for superiority.
 - They reinforce their need for safety.
 - They awaken their instinctive fear of the unknown. People feel more at ease with like-minded people. This instinct also belongs to the animal kingdom. Most animals feel safer amongst their own kind. In observing herds of wild horses, it has even been noted that they tend to graze in groups of similar color.
- ◆ What is the second reason for the prevalence of negative images?

- ♥ The second reason relates to the role of religious leaders. We are not talking about a specific religion or denomination. We are talking about all religions and all denominations, and their leaders. Exceptions are extremely rare.

What role have these leaders played throughout the ages? They have ***constantly reinforced existing natural inclinations***. They have reassured people that what their instincts tell them is right, that it is in harmony with what God wants them to believe and practice.

Thus we have a perfectly tight and strong circle that is extremely resilient: people like to hear a respected or renowned authority tell them that they are “the saved souls,” that they are the ones who will be especially selected for heaven because they believe in a given name or belong to the right denomination. People like to be reassured again and again that their ticket to heaven is valid, permanent, and free. They know their sins may prove costly, but they are told that they can erase them simply by asking—for forgiveness. The leaders also need followers who will listen to them and provide them with a decent living. Thus we have ***a perfect match*** that fits like a hand in a glove. Note how clearly the prevalence of this “perfect match” has been predicted:

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, ***they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear***. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

- ◆ What you are saying makes sense, and the prophecies support it. But this is not what I was taught. I have been taught all my life to let the leaders explain everything to me. Aren't they the experts on the Scriptures?

♥ It is surprising to most believers to learn that the spiritual handicaps of religious leaders are far more severe than those of the lay people—the ones they lead.

- First, the leaders must overcome their own natural and negative inclinations, their own desires to stay within their comfort zones, like everyone else.
- Second, they must please their followers, who expect their leaders to be strictly loyal to their ancestral beliefs, and to tell them what they like to hear.
- Third, religious leaders must please not only their followers but also their superiors, who watch over them to make sure that they obey the rules and do not deviate from the accepted norms.

As you can see, the religious leaders are controlled both by the people they lead and by the people they follow: those who have more power than they do—their superiors.

It is a paradox! On the surface the religious leaders lead, but, in practice, they follow their followers and their more powerful leaders!

Let me cite an example. I know a liberal minister who had overcome, at least partially, his own natural inclinations for separation. As a gesture of good will, he once invited a non-Christian speaker to take his place on a Sunday morning. He knew this act was risky, yet he had the courage to take “the road less traveled.”

The guest speaker was a good communicator and was well received by her audience—until she made a brief statement that revealed her religious affiliation. That brief statement suddenly changed the mood of most of her listeners. They could not believe that their pastor would engage in such an unseemly act: invite an “unsaved” soul to lead the congregation! Some

members later protested and the pastor was censured by his superiors for allowing a non-Christian to occupy the pulpit!

As you see, even if religious leaders partly overcome or control their own natural tendencies towards separation, which in itself is an incredible achievement, they must still face followers who control them on the one hand, and leaders with more power who threaten them with the loss of their job, on the other!

What incentive do religious leaders have to open their hearts along with their churches, synagogues, and mosques to “unsaved” strangers? What can they gain except to attract criticism and to promote uncertainty and confusion among their followers? When people hear different or conflicting stories, they begin to doubt the one story that they have heard all their lives.

Let me share with you another true story. Some years ago I met a university student named Ali, who had been brought to the United States by one of the churches. He was from a Muslim family, but he had converted to Christianity while attending a Christian elementary and secondary school in his homeland. (His parents considered his education more important than his religion.)

A minister, who was Ali’s intimate friend, then moved to the United States and invited Ali to come to his town to study at a state university, and later to attend a missionary medical school in the U.S.

While Ali was at the state university, I got to know him quite well. I listened to the story of his conversion and asked him a few critical questions that undermined “the theory of exclusive salvation,” questions such as:

- If God is love, why would He select a specific date in history to send a Savior. Did He not love the people who lived before this Savior as much as those who lived after Him?

- If God is love, why would He ignore nations who lived in places far away from Palestine—North America, South America, Africa, Australia, and many Asian countries such as China, India, and Japan?
- Jesus said, “I have *other sheep* that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:16). Does a loving shepherd discriminate against His *other sheep*?
- Would God punish loving and honest people who worshiped Him under another name?
 - ...God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. Acts 10:35
- Is it not more reasonable to believe that God sent various Teachers at different times in history, each of them being the only authority for His time and His territory?

Ali had never thought about these questions before and began to doubt his beliefs. Those who had invited him to this public university knew they were heading for trouble. By then it was too late. He had lost his faith in the only theory he had learned at school. He felt he was a hypocrite to go to a free medical school supported by that church without believing in their doctrines. He returned to his homeland and accepted a position as a biology professor.

Let me share with you one more story to demonstrate the power and the prevalence of the strategy of “control by exclusion.” I was once interviewed on the Christian Broadcasting Radio Station for about 15 minutes. In my interview, I mentioned a couple of biblical references to show that God has sent to humankind other belief systems that are as valid as Christianity and invited the listeners to investigate. Then I waited several weeks to hear the interview on the radio, but nothing happened. When I called, the interviewer apologized and said he could not

broadcast it. When I asked why, he said that the station manager had tried something like this, but got angry calls from some listeners. He did not want this to happen again.

- ◆ Your stories remind me of the way religious leaders treated Jesus.
- ♥ History repeats itself because people do not learn the lessons of history. Who were the ones most threatened by Jesus? Who were the ones who had the most to lose? The Bible repeatedly points to the spiritual handicaps of religious leaders. Consider these verses about the leaders who lived at the time of Jesus:

No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

I Corinthians 2:7-8

I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and wise, and revealing them to the simple. Yes, Father, such was thy choice.

Christ (Matt. 11:25-26)

Is there a single one of our rulers who has believed in him...?

John 7:48

Consider also these prophecies about the leaders of our time:

In that day...O My people, your leaders shall cause you to err, and confuse the course of your path.

Isaiah 3:7, 12

See also Jer. 25:33-36; Zech. 10:2-3

At that time...Hear the cry of the shepherds, the wailing of the leaders of the flock, for the Lord is destroying their pasture.

Jeremiah 25:33, 36

Ponder also these prophecies about the spread of knowledge and learning in our time:

...many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

Daniel 12:4

*People will be...always learning but never able to
acknowledge the truth.*

II Timothy 2:7

- ◆ Why does mere learning fail to help people acknowledge the truth?
- ♥ Because learning is the lamp, wisdom is the light. What is the value of a lamp without light? In this age, wisdom is extremely scarce, especially among our leaders. Prophecies also predict this missing link in our civilization:

...the wisdom of their wise men will vanish, and the discernment of the discerning will be lost.

It is not mere **book learning** that leads the heart to the fountain of truth; it is wisdom. A grain of wisdom is worth more than mountains of learning.

*At that time...Those who are **wise** will shine like the
brightness of the heavens...*

Daniel 12:1,3

*...those who are **wise** will understand.*

Daniel 12:10

- ◆ These prophecies seem to indicate that it is unwise to be complacent about the most critical question in our lives and leave our everlasting destiny in the hands of those who have lost their wisdom.
- ♥ Yes, the sum total of all the negative energies generated by people's natural inclinations toward separation, and the repeated reinforcements given to these tendencies by the religious leaders are awesome. They are emotionally more explosive and destructive than all the atomic arsenals on our planet. They are so powerful that they have kept hundreds of millions of souls separate and often at war for thousands of years! These negative energies have raised enduring and unshakable walls of separation and superiority in the hearts and minds of the followers of all past religions.

The believers have spoken about loving their neighbors as themselves, but they have kept themselves distant from their so

called “unsaved” neighbors as if they were occupants of another planet. Sometimes even members of the same family are divided and at war over religion. I know married couples of different faiths who live as if in different worlds. Centuries and even thousands of years have passed, and yet the followers of the world’s great religions have continued to keep their borders and their hearts closed to outsiders.

- ◆ Isn’t this the reason many people shy away from religion?
- ♥ Yes, the critics—those who dismiss any need for religion or God—keep asking: If love is the essence of their beliefs, why do the followers of these great faiths relate to one another as strangers? If peace is their purpose, why do they wage wars in the name of the one God they all worship?

These critics wonder why the religious leaders discourage their followers from examining other faiths. Are the leaders afraid that their followers will discover many common bonds and beliefs? Will that discovery open the way for them to question their own beliefs? What will happen to the leaders’ positions of authority if people break through the walls and escape the prisons of prejudice and separation?

The critics wonder why the religious leaders do not try to communicate and learn from each other as scientists do. What would be the state of civilization if scholars from various cultures had refused to interact and benefit from each other’s knowledge and experience? Would we not still be living in the Dark Ages? Isn’t lack of communication among religious leaders a reason why our spiritual advancement lags so far behind our scientific advancement?

- ◆ Are there some people who don’t fit the mold?
- ♥ Despite their strong grip over the hearts and minds of humankind, the forces of conformity, complacency, and desire for superiority do not suffocate everyone’s spiritual freedom. In spite of their overwhelming powers, appeals to fear and

avoidance do not affect or intimidate everyone. There is always a small minority of adventurous and audacious seekers of truth who will cross any border, break through any wall, or climb any mountain in pursuit of truth and knowledge. They accept challenges not because they are easy, but because they are hard. These seekers go beyond what their parents and the leaders of their church, synagogue, or mosque tell them to accept as the sole vision of truth.

They follow in the footsteps of scientists. They do not distort reality with preconceived expectations. They appreciate a rose by its beauty and fragrance, not by its name. They know a nightingale by its song, not by its nest. They judge with their own minds, walk on their own power, and see with their own eyes.

O SON OF SPIRIT! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.⁴

Bahá'í Scriptures

- ◆ The people you describe are the true champions. They are the spiritual heroes of every age. What makes them different? We hear so much about Olympians, seldom about spiritual champions.
- ♥ It would be wonderful to make a scientific study of their lives. These spiritual heroes, these independent and impartial seekers of truth put their trust in God, not in their fear of the unknown; in choice, not in chance; in truth, not in tradition; in their own mental and spiritual powers, not in other people's perception or prejudice. They remember these wondrous words spoken long ago to conformers, who put tradition above the truth:

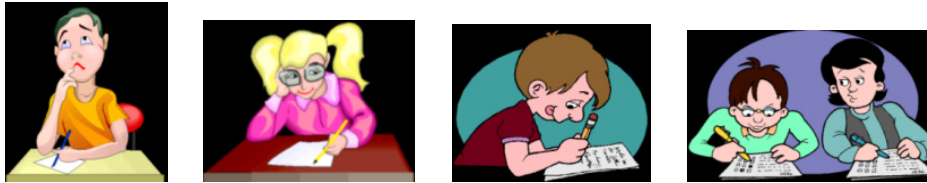
***You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God
in order to observe your own traditions! Christ (Mark 7:9)***

As your fathers did, so do you. Acts 7:51

They believe that growth requires courage. They know that always staying within their comfort zones will lull them to sleep.

***If you always do
What you've always done,
You'll always be
What you've always been.***

These champions of spiritual freedom recognize that a true choice requires inquiry. They want to test their ancestors, to know if they did their homework before choosing their destiny. They want to know if they looked at all the choices before marking their answers.



***Life is like a multiple choice test. Look at
all choices before deciding on one.***

These independent and impartial seekers of truth consider their freedom to choose their destiny a glorious gift and a supreme blessing from God, not a burden to be shifted to others. They do not pass this gift to a pastor, a priest, a rabbi, or a mulla as if it were a handful of gravel. They do not throw it to the wind as if it were a worthless piece of paper.

They know the gift is theirs, and no one else has the right to lay hands on it. They recognize its supreme significance. They know it is a ***Celestial Scroll*** on which they are entitled to choose and write their everlasting destiny. They cherish it as their lives. They accept it as their fundamental right and

responsibility. They consider it the hallmark of their humanity. They know that the right to search and choose their destiny is an incomparable honor bestowed on them by their Creator.

...behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it... Christ (Rev. 3:8)

Happy are they who obey his instructions, *who set their hearts on finding him.* Psalms 119:2

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; *knock, and it shall be opened unto you:* For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Christ (Matt. 7:7-8)

These adventurous seekers of truth believe that failing either to walk through the “open door” that God has set before them, or to knock on a “closed door” that He promises to open, shows a lack of faith, of courage, and of commitment. They know that this failure has far-reaching and grave consequences, not only for their souls but for the soul of the world.

- ◆ Failing to claim this glorious gift of freedom is far more serious than most people imagine. I did not give it much thought.
- ♥ Following chance and failing to make a choice has many consequences:
 - It implies abandoning our most awesome responsibility to our Creator.
 - It indicates a desire to live on “handouts,” to survive on other people’s spiritual earnings and savings.
 - It implies saying: “I have no wings of my own. I will ride on another flier, and let him decide my destination.”
 - It is having the right to choose to live in the most magnificent mansion, but to *abandon that right.*
- ◆ It is ironic that virtually all people leave the most critical choice in their lives—their everlasting destiny—to chance.

- ♥ Yes, they think and act like a gambler who invests all his wealth in lottery tickets and then hopes for the best. Instead of making a choice, he takes a chance. Most people follow their ancestors and assume that somehow they will be led to heaven!
- ◆ What else prevents people from exercising their spiritual freedom?
- ♥ Most people live with two critical misconceptions that have enduring consequences. First, they underestimate the supreme significance of their spiritual choices—choices that determine their ultimate and everlasting destiny. Second, they believe that they can only act in one of two ways: Either to follow the religion of their ancestors, or to drift away from that religion.
- ◆ You seem to be describing my life. I have never taken time to investigate the beliefs of other faiths. I have not even investigated my own faith. I simply consented to what my parents and pastors told me to believe. I didn't think I had the wisdom and the knowledge to make a choice. I did not have confidence in my judgment and often wondered: "How can anyone be sure?"
- ♥ The way you felt and acted is the rule, not the exception. But it is an unreasonable rule. It is the opposite of what God asks us to follow. Consider this comparison. Seldom do people rent or buy *the first* house they see. Why then do they choose the everlasting house of their destiny so casually? They devote so much effort to their *earthly* house, why then do they devote so little effort to their *everlasting* house?
- ◆ What about the second group—those who drift away from their parental religion?
- ♥ They do not make a choice either. Instead of acting, they *react*. They walk through the house their parents chose for them, look around, step out, and stay out! They would rather be homeless than live in a house that is falling apart. This response is becoming quite popular. Today we have millions of spiritually homeless wanderers.

6

Breaking Down the Walls of Separation and Prejudice

- ◆ How can people overcome the obstacles that keep them separate? How can they come to an agreement on fundamental issues?
- ♥ We need to start with this prime principle: *True choice requires persistent investigation*. The two alternatives that many people select from—following a faith they may not like, or putting their faith on hold—do not represent a true choice.
- ◆ But in this complex and chaotic world, how can they find the truth simply by persistent investigation?
- ♥ Success in any task depends on *following certain rules*. Some rules are specific, others work as broad principles. They apply to all tasks. Whether we want to graduate from college with honors, be excellent parents, or succeed in a business, we need to live by rules inspired by attributes and virtues such as: desire, commitment, persistence, positive expectations, honesty, fairness, sincerity, compassion, self-respect, the ability to communicate, a deep desire to learn and grow, and an open, critical, and curious mind.

Can anyone in any profession succeed without living by the rules inspired by these virtues? Is it reasonable then to assume that success in every endeavor depends on following rules—except success in choosing our spiritual destiny? Is it reasonable

to assume that success in every profession depends on living by virtues and following rules—except for being a rabbi, a priest, a pastor, or a mulla? The law of cause and effect knows no exception. Can we know without learning? Can we grow without effort?

To attain our spiritual destiny, we must follow a set of fundamental rules. Without following those rules, success is absolutely impossible.

- ◆ What rules do you mean?
- ♥ The first and most fundamental rule is commitment to God’s command that we must seek: “**Seek**, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 7:7). But how do most people follow this rule? Many believers simply ignore it, while others distort it or even reverse its meaning and do the opposite of what it asks. They act as if they were told:

Seek and ye shall be deceived! Knock and it shall be closed unto you!

- ◆ What is the next rule?
- ♥ The next rule is also found in the same verse. It is expressed in the word *shall*. The verse does *not* say:
 - Seek and ye shall lose!
 - Seek and ye shall get lost!
 - Seek and the devil shall get you!

It says: “Seek and ye *shall find*.” Thus, the second rule is total trust in God’s promise that he who seeks *shall* find.

- ◆ Why would a person fail to practice the command enclosed in “**Seek!**” and hesitate to believe in the promise enclosed in “**Shall!**”?
- ♥ Two reasons stand out among many others:
 - Lack of faith
 - Negligence

Lack of faith: Jesus said that at the time of His return, “many will turn away from the faith” (Matt. 24:10). Faith in what? Faith in God’s Word, in His instructions and commands. The problem is this: the loss of “faith” is invisible. Did the Jews, who lived at the time of Jesus, know that they had lost their “faith”? If they knew, they would have shown humility rather than pride and self-righteousness.

Negligence: Just as people neglect their physical health, they neglect their spiritual health. Most people don’t pay attention to their spiritual destiny. No wonder Jesus repeatedly said: “Watch!” (Matt. 24:42). What does “Watch!” mean? It means “Pay attention!” “Don’t be negligent!”

Anyone who has faith in God should recognize that “**Seek**” is a command and “**Shall**” is a promise. Would God issue an unnecessary command or make a false promise?

- ◆ Besides obeying and trusting God, what are the other rules that the truth seeker must follow?
- ♥ Let me give you a brief list of some of the most fundamental rules:
 - **Obey God’s command: Seek and search with a sincere desire and a pure heart.**
 - **Trust in God’s promise that He is watching, that He knows you are obeying His command.**
 - **Pray that God will respond to your request. Plead with God for His response.**
 - **Be persistent; never give up praying.**
 - **Pray to God to help you discover and overcome the traps or obstacles hiding in your soul.**
 - **Listen to God’s response to your prayers and pleadings.**

- **Choose your everlasting spiritual destiny in the light of the guidance you receive.**

- ◆ Could you explain how each of these rules helps us to find our destiny? How each of them helps us to learn what God has planned for us?
- ♥ Obedience to the command “Seek” awakens our souls and moves us to action. Trust in the word “Shall” instills hope and positive expectations. It sustains and supports the rule of obedience.

Today many people lack faith in God’s commands. That is why apathy—rather than ecstasy and desire—controls their lives.

The purpose of praying is to get God’s attention, to draw from His powers.

Persisting (actively searching) and pleading (passionately yearning) are evidences of obedience, trust, commitment, and the sincerity of the prayer.

The whole heart must be on fire. The whole soul must be in passionate love. The whole mind must be in persistent search.

Blessed are those who...seek Him with *the whole* heart!

Psalms 119:2

If you search with *all* your heart, I will let you find Me...

Jeremiah 29:13-14

Praying without striving is like sleeping in a car and hoping that it will drive us to our destination. Striving without praying is like driving in the dark of the night without headlights.

Consider Jesus’ promise. He said that He will come “like a thief.” Can a detective find a thief while sleeping in his car or driving in the dark of the night without lights?

The ultimate purpose of praying, persisting, and pleading is to discover and overcome. Discover and overcome what? The hidden obstacles or traps deep in our souls. These obstacles

prevent us from connecting our souls to God, from hearing His Voice, from finding our divine destiny.

- ◆ Are these traps or obstacles found in every soul?
- ♥ Virtually everyone holds or hides a few of them in his heart.
- ◆ Could you cite some examples of these obstacles or traps?
- ♥ Unfortunately, they are numerous. Among them are lack of faith in God or in one's ability to know the truth, fear of the unknown, submission to tradition and to authority figures, concern about the judgment of loved ones and friends, self-righteousness, apathy, lack of humility, narrow-mindedness, worldliness, lack of a desire to devote time to one's spiritual destiny, and many others.

Some people act as if God has not given them the mind to tell the difference between good and evil and the power to avoid evil. They live with the constant fear of falling into someone else's trap. They believe that the devil roams across the globe in search of victims, like a hungry hunter, with hidden schemes and snares.

Human beings are well-known for their tendency to avoid responsibility and shift blame onto others. We should recognize that the most dangerous traps are the ones we devise and lay for ourselves—in our own hearts and souls.

Be careful not to spend your time feasting, drinking, or worrying about worldly things. If you do, that day might come on you suddenly, *like a trap* on all people on earth.

Christ (Luke 21:34-35)

- ◆ Is it hard to discover and overcome the hidden traps in our souls?
- ♥ Yes, it is perhaps the most awesome challenge anyone can ever face.
- ◆ Why is it so hard?

- ♥ Because the traps are evasive and invisible—hidden deep in our souls. Removing them is as hard as removing the roots of an old tree with one’s fingertips. No one can do this without God’s help. That is the purpose of praying. It requires a sense of supreme commitment to search for them, to find them, and to dig them out.

The problem is this: We gradually get used to our traps. Without them, we feel exposed, insecure, and even threatened. They provide us with a comfort zone. As long as they serve a purpose, we try to keep them.

These traps are extremely efficient and powerful. Even one of them can keep a soul in the darkness of ignorance and illusions for a lifetime. They gain their power not from reason but from emotions, not from faith but from fear. Each seeker of truth must first search for and remove the specific traps hidden in his or her soul as if they are cancerous cells.

- ◆ Could you explain how a trap suffocates our spiritual freedom?
- ♥ One of the hidden traps that suffocates our freedom is attachment. Consider this story. A little girl rushed to her older brother saying, “I put my hand inside this vase, but can’t take it out.” Her brother helped her try every trick he could think of, but nothing happened. Finally, their mother was called. She told her little daughter, “Try to relax, then open your hand, and gently pull it out.” “I can’t do that mom!” “Why can’t you?” “Because, if I open my hand, I will lose my candy!”

It is hard to get used to a hand caught in a vase, but quite easy to get used to the comfort zone of being attached to outdated beliefs and traditions. The soul caught in this trap wants to stay in its home, even if its home is a prison.

That one trap alone can suffocate our higher selves and deprive us of the honor of choosing our everlasting spiritual destiny. We may live and die in that trap without ever suspecting its presence. If one trap can muster and exert this much power,

imagine the combined forces of multiple traps that most people unknowingly harbor in their hearts and souls.

Let me mention one more trap: conformity to the majority. Suppose you were wandering aimlessly along a street, and you suddenly came upon a cross-road. Then you saw 99 percent of the people turn left and only 1 percent turn right. Which direction would be more attractive to you? Note this clear warning against simply following the crowd:

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Christ (Matt. 7:13-14)

- ◆ Thank you for clarifying the difficulties and the rules of searching for and finding the truth.
- ♥ It is amazing. People recognize that success in any endeavor is as dependent on following the rules as human life is dependent on breathing. And yet when it comes to religion, they make an exception. How can we be faithful believers without being faithful to God's command, without following the rules, without being true seekers?
- ◆ Do all those who investigate and accept the Bahá'í Faith follow those rules?
- ♥ Let me give you a brief description of most of the Bahá'ís I know. Virtually all of them received some religious training during their early years. But they were not the type of people who believed everything they were told. They questioned their parents, teachers, pastors, priests, and rabbis.

They were independent and critical thinkers who demanded answers. And if they did not receive answers, they would not give up. They practiced "Seek and ye shall find" with all their hearts and souls. They lived by these rules:

...thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with *all* thy heart and with *all* thy soul.

Deuteronomy 4:29

Watch [Pay attention! Investigate!], ***pray always***. Christ (Luke 21:36)

They followed these instructions:

[Be] ye yourselves like unto men that wait [look ASV] for their Lord... Christ (Luke 12:36)

Keep your eyes open, keep on the alert... Christ (Mark 13:33)

They knew that to find a treasure, they must keep searching, looking, and digging:

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. Christ (Matt. 13:44)

...if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will...find the knowledge of God. Proverbs 2:3-5

These independent and adventurous seekers of truth, searched, persisted, prayed, and pleaded with God until they overcame the obstacles hidden in their souls.

How much can you see while wearing dark glasses? What happens when you take them off? Suddenly a new world emerges before your eyes. ***Following the rules does for the soul what light does for watchful eyes.***

In the stories of the spiritual adventures of most Bahá'ís you will find an invisible hand that gently guided them to their divine destiny. This is how praying manifests its powers. It works in subtle, mysterious, and magical ways.

These daring seekers knew that by their decisions they determined their destiny. Therefore, instead of reacting—abandoning their precious faith—they acted. They took charge. Like an eagle, they began to soar on their own wings.



They crossed many borders. They searched and soared above many mountains and valleys, forests and meadows.

They continued their flight on Wings of Destiny to their destination. They knew that they had been given wings not for resting but for reaching out, not for surrendering their spiritual destiny but for soaring and discovering the gifts of God—glorious gardens of grace, joy, and peace.

- ◆ As you said, we are taught from childhood to be “loyal” to our beliefs. Even the thought of investigating another religion instills guilt in many people.
- ♥ But what we are really taught is that we should be loyal to the authority figures. Loyalty means being faithful to God’s commandments that we must seek and have confidence that if we search with a pure heart, He will guide us. This is the true meaning of loyalty.

Can we be loyal to God if we give away our right to choose our destiny to someone else, who may have vested interests in keeping us where we are? Are we wise if we exchange our single spiritual handicap for other people’s multiple handicaps?

Leaving one’s comfort zone for an unknown journey takes a strong faith. It requires supreme courage and commitment to actively seeking answers to our questions by studying religions other than our own.

- ◆ I am willing to search and to follow the rules. The goal is so magnificent that it justifies every effort. I would like to think

that I am a soaring eagle, not a scared chicken! I have lots of questions and will put you to the test.

- ♥ I will be delighted and honored to play a part in your spiritual journey. I would love to serve as your tour guide. I enjoy the company of adventurous travelers. I will take you across the border into a new and wonderful land. You can be certain of safe return to your home.



How lofty is the station which man, if he but choose to fulfill his high destiny, can attain! To what depths of degradation he can sink, depths which the meanest of creatures have never reached! ⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

Seize the time, therefore, ere the glory of the divine springtime hath spent itself, and the Bird of Eternity ceased to warble its melody... This is My counsel unto thee and unto the beloved of God. Whosoever wisheth, let him turn thereunto; whosoever wisheth, let him turn away. God, verily, is independent of him and of that which he may see and witness. ⁶

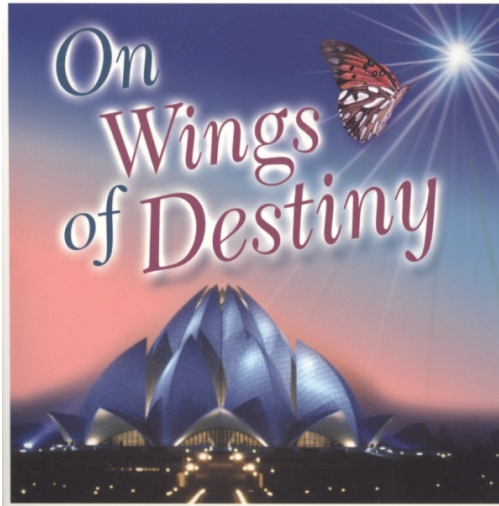
Bahá'u'lláh

Seize ye, O loved ones of the All-Merciful, the chalice of eternal life proffered by the hand of the bountiful favors of your Lord, the Possessor of the entire creation, then drink ye deep therefrom. I swear by God, it will so enrapture you that ye shall arise to magnify His Name and proclaim His utterances amidst the peoples of the earth... ⁷

Bahá'u'lláh



Seize Thy Chance presents only the first part of the dialogue. You can read the rest of it in the next volume: *On Wings of Destiny*.



This volume mainly presents the questions; the next volume provides the answers. This volume looks at the causes of the world's moral, social, and spiritual decline; the next volume offers the solutions. *Seize Thy Chance* prepares the ground. *On Wings of Destiny* plants the seed.

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