

Some Answered Questions, Moses

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



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Moses

Moses was for a long time a shepherd in the wilderness. To outward seeming He was a man Who had been reared in the bosom of tyranny, had become reputed among men as a murderer, had taken up the shepherd's staff, and was fiercely hated and reviled by Pharaoh's government and people. It was such a man Who freed a great people from the fetters of captivity and persuaded them to leave Egypt and settle in the Holy Land.

That people had sunk to the depths of degradation and were lifted up to the heights of glory. They were captives and were set free. They were the most ignorant of peoples and became the most learned. By virtue of that which He established, they so progressed as to be singled out among all nations, and their fame spread to every land, to such a degree that when the inhabitants of neighbouring lands wanted to praise someone they would say, "Surely he must be an Israelite!" Moses established laws and ordinances that conferred new life upon the people of Israel and led them to attain the highest degree of civilization at that time.

Such was their progress that the philosophers of Greece would come to seek knowledge from the learned men of Israel. Among them was Socrates, who came to Syria and acquired from the children of Israel the teachings of the oneness of God and the immortality of the spirit. He then returned to Greece and promulgated these teachings, whereupon the people of that land rose up in opposition to him, accused him of impiety, arraigned him before the court, and condemned him to death by poison.

Now, how could a man who was a stammerer, who had been brought up in the house of Pharaoh, who was known among men as a murderer, and who out of fear had long been a fugitive and a shepherd, establish in the world so mighty a Cause that the wisest philosophers of the earth would be incapable of producing a thousandth part thereof? This is clearly an extraordinary feat.



TRANSLATION

A man with a stammering tongue can hardly sustain an ordinary conversation, let alone accomplish what He did! No: Were He not assisted by a divine power, He would never have been able to carry out such a mighty task. These are arguments that none can deny. The materialistic thinkers, the Greek philosophers, and the great men of Rome who became renowned in the world were each versed in but one branch of learning. Thus Galen and Hippocrates were celebrated for their skill in medicine, Aristotle in logic and speculative reasoning, and Plato in ethics and divine philosophy. How can a mere shepherd lay the foundation for all these branches of learning? There is no doubt that He was assisted by an extraordinary power.

Observe how the people are subjected to tests and trials. Moses struck down an Egyptian to prevent an act of oppression, became known among men as a murderer—especially since the victim belonged to the ruling nation—and was obliged to flee, and it was after all this that He was raised up as a Prophet. Behold how, in spite of His disrepute, He was aided through an extraordinary power to establish such great institutions and mighty undertakings!