

Some Answered Questions, The Miracles of Christ

'Abdu'l-Bahá

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The Miracles of Christ

Question: Certain miracles have been attributed to Christ. Should these accounts be taken literally or do they have other meanings? For it has been established through sound investigation that the inherent nature of each thing does not change, that all created things are subject to a universal law and organization from which they cannot deviate, and that hence nothing can possibly violate that universal law.

Answer: The Manifestations of God are sources of miraculous deeds and marvellous signs. Any difficult or impossible matter is to Them possible and permitted. For They show forth extraordinary feats through an extraordinary power, and They influence the world of nature through a power that transcends nature. From each one of Them, marvellous things have appeared.

But in the Sacred Scriptures a special terminology is used, and in the sight of the Manifestations of God these marvels and miracles are of no importance, so much so that They do not even wish them to be mentioned. For even if these miracles were considered the greatest of proofs, they would constitute a clear evidence only for those who were present when they took place, not for those who were absent.

For example, were a non-believing seeker to be told of the miracles of Moses and Christ, he would deny them and say: "Miracles have also long been ascribed to certain idols by the testimony of a multitude and recorded in books. Thus the Brahmans have compiled an entire book regarding the miracles of Brahma." The seeker would then ask: "How can we know that the Jews and the Christians speak the truth and that the Brahmans lie? For both are traditions, both are widely attested, and both have been recorded in a book. Each can be viewed as plausible or implausible, as with every other account: If one is true, both must be true; if one is accepted, both must be accepted." Therefore, miracles cannot be a conclusive proof, for even if they are valid proofs for those who were present, they fail to convince those who were not.

However, in the day of God's Manifestation, they that are endued with insight will find all things pertaining to Him to be miraculous. For these things are distinguished above all else, and this distinction is in itself an absolute miracle. Consider how Christ, alone and single-handed, with no helper or protector, with no legions or armies, and with the utmost meekness, raised aloft the banner of God before all the peoples of the world; how He withstood them; and how at last He



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subdued them all, even though outwardly He was crucified. Now, this is an absolute miracle which can in no wise be denied. Indeed, the truth of Christ stands in no need of further proof.

These outward miracles are of no importance to the followers of truth. For example, if a blind man is made to see, in the end he will again lose his sight, for he will die and be deprived of all his senses and faculties. Thus, causing the blind to see is of no lasting importance, since the faculty of sight is bound to be lost again in the end. And if a dead body be revived, what is gained thereby, since it must die again? What is important is to bestow true insight and everlasting life, that is, a spiritual and divine life; for this material life will not endure and its existence is tantamount to non-existence. Even as Christ said in reply to one of His disciples: "let the dead bury their dead"; for "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Consider that Christ reckoned as dead those who were nonetheless outwardly and physically alive; for true life is life eternal and true existence is spiritual existence. Thus if the Sacred Scriptures speak of raising the dead, the meaning is that they attained everlasting life; if they say that one who was blind was made to see, the meaning of this seeing is true insight; if they say that one who was deaf was made to hear, the meaning is that he acquired an inner ear and attained spiritual hearing. This is established by the very text of the Gospel where Christ says that they are like those of whom Isaiah once said, They have eyes and see not, they have ears and hear not; and I heal them.

Our meaning is not that the Manifestations of God are unable to perform miracles, for this indeed lies within Their power. But that which is of import and consequence in Their eyes is inner sight, spiritual hearing, and eternal life. Thus, wherever it is recorded in the Sacred Scriptures that such a one was blind and was made to see, the meaning is that he was inwardly blind and gained spiritual insight, or that he was ignorant and found knowledge, or was heedless and became aware, or was earthly and became heavenly.

As this inner sight, hearing, life, and healing are eternal, so are they truly important. Otherwise, what importance, worth, and value can mere animal life and powers possess? Even as an idle fancy, in a few days it will pass. For instance, if an unlit lamp is lighted, it will be extinguished again, but the light of the sun always shines resplendent, and this is what is important.