

Some Answered Questions, The Power and Perfections of the Divine Manifestations

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



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The Two Kinds of Prophets

Question: How many kinds of Prophets are there in general?

Answer: Prophets are in general of two kinds. Some are independent Prophets Who are followed, while others are not independent and are themselves followers.

The independent Prophets are each the Author of a divine religion and the Founder of a new Dispensation. At Their advent the world is clothed in a new attire, a new religion is established, and a new Book revealed. These Prophets acquire the outpouring grace of the divine Reality without an intermediary. Their radiance is an essential radiance like that of the sun, which is luminous in and of itself and whose luminosity is an essential requirement rather than being acquired from another star: They are like the sun and not the moon. These Daysprings of the morn of Divine Unity are the fountainheads of divine grace and the mirrors of the Essence of Reality.

The other kind of Prophets are followers and promulgators, for their station is contingent rather than independent. They acquire divine grace from the independent Prophets and seek the light of guidance from the reality of universal prophethood. They are like the moon, which is not luminous and radiant in and of itself but which receives its light from the sun.

The universal Prophets Who have appeared independently include Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muḥammad, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh. The second kind, which consists of followers and promulgators, includes Solomon, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. For the independent Prophets are founders; that is, They establish a new religion, recreate the souls, regenerate the morals of society, and promulgate a new way of life and a new standard of conduct. Through Them a new Dispensation appears and a new religion is inaugurated. Their advent is even as the springtime, when all earthly things don a new garment and find a new life.

As to the second kind of Prophets, who are followers, they promulgate the religion of God, spread His Faith, and proclaim His Word. They have no power or authority of their own, but derive theirs from the independent Prophets.



TRANSLATION