

Some Answered Questions, The Birth of Christ

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



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The Birth of Christ

Question: How was Christ born of the Holy Spirit?

Answer: In regard to this question, the divine and the material philosophers disagree. The former believe that Christ was born of the Holy Spirit, while the latter deem such a thing to be impossible and untenable, and hold that He must have necessarily had a human father.

In the Qur'án it is said: "And We sent Our Spirit to her, and He took before her the form of a perfect man", meaning that the Holy Spirit assumed a human form, as an image appears in a mirror, and conversed with Mary.

The material philosophers believe that there must be pairing, and assert that a living body cannot come into being from a lifeless one or materialize without the union of male and female. They believe that, beyond man, this is impossible in animals, and that, beyond animals, it is impossible even in plants. For this pairing of male and female exists in all the animals and plants. They even argue that the Qur'án itself affirms this pairing of all things: "Glory be to Him Who hath created all the pairs, of such things as earth produceth, and out of men themselves, and of things beyond their ken"; that is, man, animals, and plants are all found in pairs. "And of everything have We created two kinds"; that is, We have created all things in pairs.

Briefly, they say that a man without a human father cannot be imagined. The divine philosophers, however, reply: "Such a thing is not impossible, although it has not been observed, and there is a difference between that which is impossible and that which has merely not been observed. For example, in the days before the telegraph, the instantaneous communication of East and West had not been observed but was not impossible; likewise, the photograph and the phonograph had not been observed but were not impossible."



TRANSLATION

The material philosophers insist upon their belief, and the divine philosophers reply: "Is this terrestrial globe eternal or was it originated?" The material philosophers answer that, according to well-established scientific findings, it is proven to be originated; that in the beginning it was a molten sphere and gradually became temperate; that a crust was formed around it; and that upon this crust plants came into being, then animals, and finally man.

The divine philosophers say: "It follows clearly from your statement that the human species upon the terrestrial globe was originated and is not eternal. Then surely the first man had neither father nor mother, for the existence of the human species has an origin in time. Now, which is more problematic: that man should come into being, albeit gradually, with neither father nor mother, or that he should come into being without a father? As you admit that the first man came into being with neither father nor mother, whether it be gradually or in a short period of time, there can remain no doubt that a man without a human father is also possible and logically admissible. One cannot therefore simply reject this as impossible, and to do so would betray a lack of fairness. For example, if you say that this lamp was once lit with neither wick nor oil, and then say that it is impossible for it to be lit without the wick, this betrays a lack of fairness." Christ had a mother, but the first man, according to the material philosophers, had neither father nor mother.