

Some Answered Questions, The Greatness of Christ

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



Some Answered Questions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Fifth Edition, page 100

The Greatness of Christ

Question: What is the virtue and benefit of being without a father?

Answer: A great man is a great man, whether or not he is born of a human father. If being without a father were a virtue, Adam would excel and surpass all the Prophets and Messengers, for He had neither father nor mother. That which is conducive to greatness and glory are the splendours and outpourings of the divine perfections. The sun is born of matter and form, which can be likened to father and mother, and still it is absolute perfection; darkness has neither matter nor form, neither father nor mother, and yet it is sheer imperfection. The matter of Adam's physical life was dust, but the physical matter of Abraham was a pure seed; and it is certain that a pure and goodly seed is superior to earth and stone.

Furthermore, in John 1:12–13 it is said: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It follows clearly from this verse of John that even the existence of the Apostles proceeds from a spiritual reality rather than from a material power. The honour and greatness of Christ reside not in His being without a father, but rather in His divine perfections, outpourings, and splendours. Were the greatness of Christ due to His lacking a father, Adam would be even greater, for He had neither father nor mother.

It is said in the Old Testament, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Observe that Adam is said to have come into being from the spirit of life. Moreover, John's utterance in regard to the Apostles proves that they also proceeded from the heavenly Father. Hence it is clear and evident that the holy reality—the true existence—of every great man proceeds from God and owes its being to the breath of the Holy Spirit.

Our meaning is that, if being without a father were the greatest of human attainments, then Adam would surpass everyone, for He had neither father nor mother. Is it better for a man to be created from living matter or from dust? Certainly it is better to be created from living matter. But Christ was born from, and came into existence through, the Holy Spirit.

In brief, the honour and glory of those sanctified Souls, the Manifestations of God, are due to Their heavenly perfections, outpourings, and splendours, and to nothing else.



TRANSLATION