

Some Answered Questions, The Holy Spirit

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



Some Answered Questions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Fifth Edition, page 122

The Holy Spirit

Question: What is meant by “the Holy Spirit”?

Answer: By “the Holy Spirit” is meant the outpouring grace of God and the effulgent rays that emanate from His Manifestation. Thus Christ was the focal centre of the rays of the Sun of Truth, and from this mighty centre—the reality of Christ—the grace of God shone upon the other mirrors which were the realities of the Apostles.

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles means that that glorious and divine grace cast its light and splendour upon their realities. For otherwise egress and regress, descent and inherence are characteristics of bodies and not of spirits—that is, egress and inherence pertain only to sensible realities, not to intelligible subtleties; and intelligible realities, such as reason, love, knowledge, imagination, and thought, do not enter, exit, or inhere, but rather denote relationships.

For example, knowledge, which is a form acquired by the mind, is an intelligible thing, and to speak of entering into the mind or exiting from it is absurd. Rather, it is a relationship of acquisition, even as images are reflected in a mirror.

Thus, as it is evident and established that intelligible realities do not enter or inhere, it follows that it is in no wise possible for the Holy Spirit to ascend, descend, enter, exit, commingle, or inhere. At most it appears as the sun appears in a mirror.

Moreover, in certain passages of the Sacred Scriptures where allusion is made to the Spirit, a specific person is intended, as it is conventionally said in speech and conversation that such-and-such a person is spirit personified, or is the embodiment of mercy and generosity. In this case the focus is not upon the lamp but upon the light.



TRANSLATION

For instance, in reference to the Promised One that must come after Christ, it is said in John 16:12: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak."

Now consider carefully that the words "for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak" clearly imply that the Spirit of truth is embodied in a Man Who has a soul, Who has ears to hear and a tongue to speak. Likewise Christ is called the "Spirit of God", in the same way that we speak of the light and yet mean both the light and the lamp.