

# Some Answered Questions, The Connection between God and His Manifestations

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



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## The Three Stations of the Divine Manifestations

Know that, while the Manifestations of God possess infinite virtues and perfections, They occupy only three stations: The first is the material station; the second is the human station, which is that of the rational soul; and the third is that of divine manifestation and heavenly splendour.

As for the material station, it has an origin in time, for it is composed of the elements, and every composition must ultimately be decomposed. It is indeed impossible for composition not to be followed by disintegration.

The second station is that of the rational soul, which is the human reality. This also has a beginning, and the Manifestations of God share it in common with all humanity.

The third station is that of divine manifestation and heavenly splendour, which is the Word of God, the everlasting Grace, and the Holy Spirit. This station has neither beginning nor end; for firstness and lastness pertain to the contingent world and not to the world of God. For God the beginning and the end are one and the same. Similarly, the reckoning of days, weeks, months, and years—of yesterday and today—is made with respect to the earth; but in the sun such things are unknown: There is neither yesterday, nor today, nor tomorrow, neither months nor years—all are equal. Likewise, the Word of God is sanctified above all these conditions and exalted beyond every law, constraint, or limitation that may exist in the contingent world.

Know that, although human souls have existed upon the earth for a myriad ages and cycles, the human soul is nonetheless originated. And since it is a sign of God, once it has come into being it is everlasting. The human spirit has a beginning but no end: It endures forever. Likewise, the various species found upon the earth have an origin in time; for it is acknowledged by all that there was a time when these species existed nowhere on the face of the earth, and indeed a time when the earth itself did not exist. But the world of existence has always been, for it is not confined to this terrestrial globe.

Our meaning is that, although human souls are originated, they are nevertheless immortal, enduring, and everlasting. For the world of things is a world of imperfection in relation to that of man, and the world of man is a world of perfection in relation to that of things. When imperfect



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things reach the stage of perfection, they become everlasting. This is meant as an example: Seek to grasp the true intent.

Now, the reality of prophethood, which is the Word of God and the state of perfect divine manifestation, has neither beginning nor end, but its radiance varies like that of the sun. For example, it dawned above the sign of Christ with the utmost splendour and radiance, and this is eternal and everlasting. See how many world-conquering kings, how many wise ministers and rulers have come and gone, each and all fading into oblivion—whereas even now the breezes of Christ still waft, His light still shines, His call is still upraised, His banner is still unfurled, His armies still do battle, His voice still rings sweetly, His clouds still rain down life-giving showers, His lightning still streaks forth, His glory is still clear and indisputable, His splendour is still radiant and luminous; and the same holds true of every soul that abides beneath His shade and partakes of His light.

It is therefore evident that the Manifestations of God have three stations: the physical station, the station of the rational soul, and the station of divine manifestation and heavenly splendour. The corporeal station will inevitably perish. As to the station of the rational soul, despite having a beginning, it has no end and is endowed with everlasting life. But as to that holy Reality of which Christ says “the Father is in the Son”, it has neither beginning nor end: Its “beginning” refers merely to His revelation of His own station. Thus, by way of analogy, He likens His silence to sleep: A man who is silent is like one who is asleep, and when he speaks, it is as though he has awakened. And yet the sleeping and the wakeful man are one and the same person: No change has taken place in his station, his loftiness, sublimity, inner reality, or innate nature. It is merely that the condition of silence has been likened to sleep, and that of manifestation to wakefulness. A man, whether sleeping or awake, is the same man: Sleep is simply one possible state, and wakefulness another. And so it is that the period of silence is compared to sleep, and the period of manifestation and guidance to wakefulness.

In the Gospel it is said: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” It follows then that Christ did not attain His Messianic station and His perfections at the moment of His baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. Rather, the Word of God has always been, and will ever remain, in the loftiest heights of sanctity.