

Some Answered Questions, The Connection between God and His Creation

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



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The Connection between God and His Creation

Question: What is the nature of the connection between God and His creation, between the Absolute and Inaccessible One and all other beings?

Answer: The connection between God and His creation is that of the originator and the originated, of the sun and the dark bodies of the universe, of the craftsman and his handiwork. Not only is the sun sanctified in its very essence above all the bodies that receive its illumination, but its light is also, in its essence, sanctified from and independent of the earth. So, though the earth is nurtured by the sun and is the recipient of its light, the sun and its rays are nonetheless sanctified above it. But were it not for the sun, the earth and all terrestrial life could not exist.

The procession of creation from God is a procession through emanation. That is, creation emanates from God; it does not manifest Him. The connection is that of emanation and not of manifestation. The light of the sun emanates from the sun; it does not manifest it. Appearance through emanation is like the appearance of the rays from the sun: The sanctified Essence of the Sun of Truth cannot be divided or descend into the condition of the creation. In the same way, the sun does not divide itself or descend upon the earth, but its rays—the outpourings of its grace—emanate from it and illumine the dark bodies.

But appearance through manifestation is like the manifestation of the branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruit from the seed; for the seed itself becomes the branches and fruit, and its reality descends into them. This manifestational appearance would be sheer imperfection and utterly impossible for the Most High, for this would require unconditioned pre-existence to take on the attributes of the originated, absolute independence to become abject poverty, and the essence of existence to become pure non-existence; and this is in no wise possible.

It follows that all things have emanated from God; that is, it is through God that all things have been realized, and through Him that the contingent world has come to exist. The first thing to emanate from God is that universal reality which the ancient philosophers termed the “First Intellect” and which the people of Bahá call the “Primal Will”. This emanation, with respect to its action in the world of God, is not limited by either time or place and has neither beginning nor end, for in relation to God the beginning and the end are one and the same. The pre-existence



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of God is both essential and temporal, while the origination of the contingent world is essential but not temporal, as we have already explained another day at table.

Though the First Intellect is without beginning, this does not mean that it shares in the pre-existence of God, for in relation to the existence of God the existence of that universal Reality is mere nothingness—it cannot even be said to exist, let alone to partake of the pre-existence of God. An explanation of this matter was provided on a previous occasion.

As for created things, their life consists in composition, and their death in decomposition. But matter and the universal elements cannot be entirely destroyed and annihilated. No, their annihilation is merely transformation. For instance, when man dies, his body becomes dust, but it does not become absolute non-existence: It retains a mineral existence, but a transformation has taken place, and that composition has been subjected to decomposition. It is the same with the annihilation of all other beings; for existence does not become absolute non-existence, and absolute non-existence does not acquire existence.