

Some Answered Questions, The Influence of the Stars and the Interconnectedness of All Things

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



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The Influence of the Stars and the Interconnectedness of All Things

Question: Do the stars of the heavens have a spiritual influence upon human souls or not?

Answer: Certain celestial bodies exert a physical influence upon the earth and its creatures which is clear and apparent and which requires no explanation. Consider the sun, which, through the help of divine grace, nurtures the earth and all its creatures. Indeed, were it not for the light and heat of the sun, all earthly things would entirely cease to exist.

As to spiritual influences, although it might seem strange that these stars should exert a spiritual influence upon the human world, yet were you to reflect deeply upon this matter you would not be greatly surprised by it. My meaning, however, is not that the deductions that the astrologers of old made from the motions of the stars and planets were true, for these were mere figments of the imagination which had their origin with the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Chaldean priests, or rather stemmed from the idle conjectures of the Hindus and the superstitions of the Greeks, the Romans, and the other star worshippers. My meaning, instead, is that this endless universe is like the human body, and that all its parts are connected one with another and are linked together in the utmost perfection. That is, in the same way that the parts, members, and organs of the human body are interconnected, and that they mutually assist, reinforce, and influence each other, so too are the parts and members of this endless universe connected with, and spiritually and materially influenced by, one another. For example, the eye sees and the entire body is affected; the ear hears and every limb and member is stirred. Of this there is no doubt, for the world of existence is also like a living person. Thus, the interconnection that exists between the various parts of the universe requires mutual influences and effects, whether material or spiritual.

For those who deny the spiritual influence of material things, we mention this brief example: Beautiful sounds, wondrous tones, and harmonious melodies are accidents which affect the air; for sound consists in vibrations of the air, and through these vibrations the nerves of the tympanum are excited and hearing results. Now consider how the vibrations of the air, which are an accident among accidents and which are accounted as naught, attract and exhilarate the spirit of man and move him to the utmost: They cause him to laugh and to weep, and can even induce him to throw himself in harm's way. Observe, then, what a connection exists between the spirit of man and the vibrations of the air, that the latter can transport him to another state



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and so overwhelm him as to entirely deprive him of patience and composure. Consider how strange this is, for nothing comes forth from the singer and enters into the listener, and yet great spiritual effects are produced. This intimate relationship between all created things is therefore bound to give rise to spiritual influences and effects.

It was already mentioned that the parts and members of the human body mutually influence one another. For instance, the eye sees and the heart is affected. The ear hears and the spirit is influenced. The heart finds peace, the thoughts expand, and all the members of the body experience a state of well-being. What a connection and relationship this is! And if such relationships, such spiritual influences and effects, are found among the various members of the body of man, which is only one particular being among many, then there must assuredly exist both spiritual and material relationships among the countless universal beings. And although our present methods and sciences cannot detect these relationships among the universal beings, their existence is nonetheless clear and indisputable.

In sum, all beings, whether universal or particular, are mutually connected in accordance with God's consummate wisdom and mutually influence one another. Were it not so, the all-embracing organization and universal arrangement of existence would become disordered and disrupted. And as all created things are most soundly connected one with another, they are well ordered, arranged, and perfected.

This matter deserves close examination and calls for careful attention and deep reflection.