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Some Answered Questions

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54: ON THE PROCEEDING OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT FROM GOD

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Question.—In the Bible it is said that God breathed the spirit into the body of man. What is the meaning of this verse?

Answer.—Know that proceeding is of two kinds: the proceeding and appearance through emanation, and the proceeding and appearance through manifestation. The proceeding through emanation is like the coming forth of the action from the actor, of the writing from the writer. Now the writing emanates from the writer, and the discourse emanates from the speaker, and in the same way the human spirit emanates from God. It is not that it manifests God—that is to say, no part has been detached from the Divine Reality to enter the body of man. No, as the discourse emanates from the speaker, the spirit appears in the body of man.

But the proceeding through manifestation is the manifestation of the reality of a thing in other forms, like the coming forth of this tree from the seed of the tree, or the coming forth of the flower from the seed of the flower, for it is the seed itself which appears in the form of the branches, leaves and flowers. This is called the proceeding through manifestation. The spirits of men, with reference to God, have dependence through emanation, just as the discourse proceeds from the speaker and the writing from the writer—that is to say, the speaker himself does not become the discourse, nor does the writer himself become the writing; no, rather they have the proceeding of emanation. ²⁰⁶ The speaker has perfect ability and power, and the discourse emanates from him, as the action does from the actor. The Real Speaker, the Essence of Unity, has always been in one condition, which neither changes nor alters, has neither transformation nor vicissitude. He is the Eternal, the Immortal. Therefore, the proceeding of the human spirits from God is through emanation. When it is said in the Bible that God breathed His spirit into man, this spirit is that which, like the discourse, emanates from the Real Speaker, taking effect in the reality of man.

But the proceeding through manifestation (if by this is meant the divine appearance, and not division into parts), we have said, is the proceeding and the appearance of the Holy Spirit and the Word, which is from God. As it is said in the Gospel of John, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God”; ¹ then the Holy Spirit and the Word are the appearance of God. The Spirit and the Word mean the divine perfections that appeared in the Reality of Christ, and these perfections were with God; so the sun manifests all its glory in the mirror. For the Word does not signify the body of Christ, no, but the divine perfections manifested in Him. For Christ was like a clear mirror which was facing the Sun of Reality; and the perfections of the Sun of Reality—that is to say, its light and heat—were visible and apparent in this mirror. If we look into the mirror, we see the sun, and we say, “It is the sun.” Therefore, the Word and the Holy Spirit, which signify the perfections of God, are the divine appearance. This is the meaning of the verse in the Gospel which says: “The Word was with God, and the Word was God”; ² for the divine perfections are not different from the Essence of Oneness. The perfections of Christ are called the Word because all the beings are in the condition of letters, and one letter has not a complete meaning, while the perfections of Christ have the power of the word because a complete ²⁰⁷ meaning can be inferred from a word. As the Reality of Christ was the manifestation of the divine perfections, therefore, it was like the word. Why? Because He is the sum of perfect meanings. This is why He is called the Word.

And know that the proceeding of the Word and the Holy Spirit from God, which is the proceeding and appearance of manifestation, must not be understood to mean that the Reality of Divinity had been divided into parts, or multiplied, or that it had descended from the exaltation of holiness and purity. God forbid! If a pure, fine mirror faces the sun, the light and heat, the form and the image of the sun will be resplendent in it with such manifestation that if a beholder says of the sun, which is brilliant and visible in the mirror, “This is the sun,” it is true. Nevertheless, the mirror is the mirror, and the sun is the sun. The One Sun, even if it appears in numerous mirrors, is one. This state is neither abiding nor entering, neither commingling nor descending; for entering, abiding, descending, issuing forth and commingling are the necessities and characteristics of bodies, not of spirits; then how much less do they belong to the sanctified and pure Reality of God. God is exempt from all that is not in accordance with His purity and His exalted and sublime sanctity.

The Sun of Reality, as we have said, has always been in one condition; it has no change, no alteration, no transformation and no vicissitude. It is eternal and everlasting. But the Holy Reality of the Word of God is in the condition of the pure, fine and shining mirror; the heat, the light, the image and likeness—that is to say, the perfections of the Sun of Reality—appear in it. That is why Christ says in the Gospel, “The Father is in the Son”—that is to say, the Sun of Reality appears in the mirror. ³ Praise be to the One Who shone upon this Holy Reality, Who is sanctified

among the beings!

1. John 1:1. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
2. John 1:1. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
3. Cf. John 14:11; 17:21. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]

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