

# THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Contrary to common belief, the concept of the Holy Spirit is not specific to Christianity. The Holy Spirit constitutes, of course, the third aspect in the Christian Trinity, but this is just a particular application of its esoteric meaning. To fully understand the origin of this expression, we should remember that the word “Spirit” is as common in the Old Testament as in the New Testament. However, the meaning given to it differs between the two, this difference probably being due to the translators or to an intentional wish to alter its meaning.

In Genesis in the Old Testament, it is written: *The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.* As is confirmed by a comparative study of the Latin, Hebrew, and Greek translations of the Bible, the term “Spirit” (*Spiritus* in latin) corresponds in this phrase to the Hebrew word *Ruah*, and to the Greek word *Pneuma*, which are used to designate both the Breath of God and the Soul. While in the Kabbalah, the Divine Breath is represented by the expression *Ain Soph Aur*, which means “Ineffable Light.” Thus the connections end up forming a link between the Divine Light and the Holy Spirit. This is in fact the sense in which this term is used by Martinists.

The link thus formed between the Divine Light and the Holy Spirit allows us to understand why the latter is associated with the symbolism of fire in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Earthly fire in fact traditionally represents the regenerative pow-

er of the Divine Fire considered the agent of transmutation by means of which, according to Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, the Person of Desire can attain the state of a New Person. Furthermore, the letters *INRI*, carved on the cross of the Master Jesus, have to be interpreted in this allegorical sense, these letters being the abbreviation of the Latin phrase, *Ignis Natura Renovatur Integra*, meaning “By fire, nature is wholly regenerated.” Applied to humanity, this esoteric phrase means: “By the Divine Fire, human nature is wholly regenerated.” In its Christian context, it indicates that Jesus, as the Purifier and Regenerator of the world, came to Earth to consume the sins of the whole of humanity and purify it of its collective karma.

As well as the properties inherent in its heat, fire is also a source of light, for the smallest flame throws out light. It was thus natural that fire should become the symbol of good and of truth, in contrast to the shadows which represent evil and error. Fire also symbolizes the Divine Light and the state of consciousness attained by the person who receives Illumination. This is precisely why messiahs, prophets, and avatars are always described as beings who have gazed on the Divine Fire or have been consumed by it. One of the most significant examples of this is given to us in the Biblical account of how the Divine appeared to Moses in the form of a burning bush. In addition, in Christian iconography, the apostles are often represented with a flame above their heads, this flame

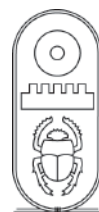


symbolizing the fact that they have been illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

Originally, the Holy Spirit therefore related to the Divine, and represented both the Light that the Divine spreads in the regenerated person and the Breath by means of which the Divine transmits this Light. This is the reason why initiates such as Willermoz, Boehme, Swedenborg, and Saint-Martin also see the Holy Spirit as the Word. Proceeding from this principle, the Gospel of John takes on another dimension, for we can then write it as follows: “In the beginning was the Spirit, and the Spirit was with God, and the Spirit was God.” Writing it in this way permits a better understanding of why the Divinity was then divided into a Tri-Unity symbolized in Christianity by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This division into three was instituted by the early writers of the Christian Church at the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, held respectively in 325 and 381 CE. Before this, Spirit had the traditional sense

that had been given to it in the Old Testament, meaning, once again, that of the Divine Breath.

Having just referred to the Divine Breath, it seems of interest to add that mystics have always attributed two further functions to the breath. The first is of a purely physiological nature and consists in expelling the maximum carbon dioxide from the lungs, to purify and regenerate them. This is the objective of certain breathing exercises. The second function of the breath has a spiritual dimension, and enables concentration on the cosmic essence contained in air, or its focalization to a particular point, most often as part of a specific mystical exercise. Thus, in certain religious ceremonies and different initiation rituals, the breath is used to pass on to candidates a special influx and confer on them a quality, authority, sacrament, power, or some other attribute, making them a distinctive agent of the Divinity and an instrument of its Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Omniscience. It is then up to



the initiate to make good use of what has been thus passed on, and to use it for his or her mystic quest and own inner evolution.

It is clear that the Christian Tri-Unity possesses an esoteric meaning which transcends the anthropomorphic notion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, considered as the third person of this Trinity. From an esoteric point of view, the Father corresponds to Divine Thought, the Son to the Divine Word, and the Holy Spirit to Divine Action. According to this principle, the whole of Creation, visible and invisible, was conceived, set in motion, and maintained in action by the Grand Architect of the Universe. Moreover, this triple work is found in humans, for people are endowed with thought, word, and action. This is the reason that all sacred writings expound, in more or less the same form, that “humans were made in the image of the Divine.” The aim of humanity’s spiritual evolution is to realize this, and express this image in our daily conduct, thus reintegrating with our original state of Adam Kadmon.

In one of his writings, Willermoz perfectly summarizes this viewpoint. He says:

The first of the powers operating in God is the Divine Thought or Intention, which creates, conceives, and depicts within itself all planes of emanation and creation. It is the first agent of manifestation of the Unity. We call it Father of All Things and specifically attribute to it All-Powerfulness.

The next power is Divine Will, the second agent of the manifestations of the Unity. It is the Word and the expression of the Divine Intention. This is why we call it the Only Son of God and specifically attribute to it the All-Knowing Infinite Wisdom.

The third power is Divine Action itself, the great Fiat, which governs and carries out the perfect accomplishment

of all planes of spiritual creation and emanation conceived in the Thought of the Father, taken on and determined by the Will of the Son. We call it Holy Spirit, for it is truly the Spirit of the Divine Unity and of all the powers conjoined.

In his work entitled *The Man [Person] of Desire*, Louis-Claude de SaintMartin also refers to the symbolism of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here is what he writes:

The Eternal, all-powerful Creator, whose infinite power extends through the universe of spirits and bodies, contains within Its immensity countless numbers of beings which It emanates from Its bosom as It pleases. It gives to each of these beings laws, precepts, and commandments, which serve as points of connection between these different beings and this great Divinity.

The connection between all these beings with the Being is so absolute, that no effort by these beings can prevent it. Whatever they do, they can never come out of the circle they have been placed in, and each point of the circle that they travel over could never for a moment cease being connected to its center. Even more so, the center could never cease being in bond, communication, and connection with the center of centers.

The connection of individual centers with the universal center is the Holy Spirit; the connection of the universal center with the center of center of centers is the Son; and the center of centers is the all-powerful Creator. In this way, God the Father creates beings, His Son gives them life, and this life is the Holy Spirit.

These explanations mean that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit correspond to spheres of activity belonging to the Divine,

which consequently transcend Creation. This is why these spheres do not appear in the Tree of the Sephiroth. When we look at this Tree, we notice in fact that the three higher emanations, coming directly from Divine Thought, Word, and Action, correspond to Kether, Chokmah, and Binah. These three sephiroth though, although they constitute the higher world, are still part of the world of manifestation. They designate attributes of the Divine, or more precisely the main laws by which the Divine manifests in the invisible world. Thus Kether designates the first of the Divine's emanations, considered as the androgynous principle of Creation. Chokmah represents the second emanation and designates the masculine principle. And Binah, the third emanation, symbolizes the feminine principle. We find these three principles at the origin of all that exists, on both the material and the spiritual planes.

The question we may ask is why, in the Christian tradition, is Jesus likened to the Holy Spirit. In fact, in the New Testament

it is often said that Jesus is "the Spirit incarnate," or "the one by whom the Spirit was made flesh." Along the same lines, Jesus is described as "Pure Spirit" and "Radiant Spirit." This is so, I believe, because Jesus is considered as having been the most perfect Avatar humanity has known through its successive ages of evolution. To put this another way, the Master Jesus is probably the only one to have achieved the highest state of consciousness that a person can attain at the end of one's incarnations. As such, he was the living expression of the Divine Word, in other words, the expression of the very Spirit of the Divine.

During periods of meditation, we can invoke the Holy Spirit that is the Divine Breath which purifies, regenerates, inspires, and illumines all beings. Each time we do this sincerely and with the hope that this Breath will enter our body and soul, we will receive a spiritual influx that will raise us inwardly, even if we are not aware of it.

