

The Quran and its Message

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Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

WHAT IS THE QURANIC RUH (SPIRIT)?

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One notes from the following Quranic verses that the 'ruh' (spirit) and the 'malaika' (angels) are two separate entities.

078.038

"The Day that the Spirit (Arabic: ruhu) and the angels (Arabic: malaikatu) will stand forth in ranks, none shall speak except any who is permitted by (God) Most Gracious, and He will say what is right"

070.004

"The angels (Arabic: malaikatu) and the spirit (Arabic: ruhu) ascend to him in a Day the measure whereof is (as) fifty thousand years"

097.004

"Descend the angels (Arabic: malaikatu) and the Spirit (Arabic: ruhu) therein by permission (of) their Lord for every affair"

The Quran further uses the term 'Ruh' (spirit) in two main contexts:

- (1) 'Ruh' as the Holy Spirit
- (2) 'Ruh' as Divine Energy

(1) 'RUH' AS THE HOLY SPIRIT (RUH AL-QUDUS)

Before we analyse the term from the Quran's perspective, it is important to take note of the following verse. This verse makes it absolutely clear that very little information is imparted by the Quran with regards the nature of 'The Spirit' or what it completely entails.

017.085

"They are asking thee concerning the Spirit (**Arabic: ruhi**). Say: The Spirit is by command of my Lord (**Arabic: ruh min-amr**), and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little."

The first point to note is that **Gabriel** has **never** been mentioned as an 'angel' (malaika) in the Quran. Furthermore, it appears from a Quran's perspective that 'Gabriel' is synonymous with the 'Holy Spirit' (ruh al-qudus).

016.102

"Say, the Holy Spirit (**Arabic: ruh al-qudus**) has brought the revelation from thy Lord in Truth, in order to strengthen those who believe, and as a Guide and Glad Tidings to Muslims"

002.097

"Say: Whoever is an enemy to **Gabriel** - for he indeed brings down the (revelation) to thy heart by **God's will**, a confirmation of what went before (**Arabic: bayna yadayhi ***), and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe"

* bayna yadayhi (**Please see related article [1] below**)

In the following verse, it appears that the 'ruh al-qudus' has also been described as a 'True / Trustworthy Spirit' (ruh al-ameen).

026.192-193

"And indeed! it is a revelation of the Lord of the Worlds, Which the True / Trustworthy Spirit (**Arabic: Ruh al-ameen**) has brought down"

The 'ruh al-qudus' (Holy Spirit) has been used to strengthen Prophet Jesus ^(pbuh)

002:087 (Part)

"...We gave Jesus the son of Mary Clear (Signs) and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit (**Arabic: ruh al-qudus**)..."

(Please also see verses 2:253 and 5:110)

It is very likely that the 'Ruh' that was sent to Mary was also Gabriel (ruh al-qudus / Holy Spirit) which changed form into the likeness of perfect man.

019:017

"Then she chose seclusion from them. Then We sent to her Our Spirit (**Arabic: ruhana**) and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man"

(2) 'RUH' AS DIVINE ENERGY - SPIRIT OF HIS COMMAND

There appears to be two further types of Divine energy being suggested by the Quran:

- (1) Divine energy which manifests as a command (ruh min amr)
- (2) Divine energy which is breathed to form life endowing it with certain faculties (min ruh).

It is quite possible that the two are actually synonymous and that the Divine energy to form life is part of the Divine command. However, for the purposes of this article, they will be addressed separately.

DIVINE ENERGY AS A COMMAND

016.002

"He sends down His angels with the Spirit of His Command (**Arabic: ruhi min amrihi**), to such of His servants as He pleases, (saying): "Warn (Man) that there is no god but I: so keep your duty to Me."

040.015

"Raised high above ranks (or degrees), (He is) the Lord of the Throne (of Authority): by His Command does He send the Spirit of His command (**Arabic: ruha min amrihi**) to any of His servants he pleases, to warn (men) of the Day of the Meeting"

042.052

"And thus have We inspired in you (Muhammad) a Spirit of Our command (**Arabic: Ruha-min amr(ina)**). You knew not what the Scripture was, nor what the Faith. But We have made it a light whereby We guide whom We will of Our bondmen. And lo! you verily do guide to a right path,

DIVINE ENERGY TO FORM LIFE

015.029

"So When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit (**Arabic: min ruhi**), fall ye down in obeisance to him."

032.009

"Then He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of His spirit (**Arabic: min ruhihi**). And He gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling (and understanding): little thanks do ye give!"

From the following verse, it appears clear that a 'Ruh' from God is also used to strengthen believers. Whether the reference in this verse is an appeal to God's Divine energy as a command or is

synonymous with the Holy Spirit (as used to strengthen Prophet Jesus ^(pbuh) in verse 2:87) is open to discussion.

058:22 (part)

".... For such He has decreed faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with a spirit from Himself (Arabic: ruhi-minhu). And He will admit them to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow"

FINAL THOUGHTS

The above article briefly examined the uses of the Arabic term 'ruh' (spirit) in light of the Quran with a view to ascertain the best possible understanding.

The Quran seems to suggest two types of 'ruh'. One remains a reference to the Holy Spirit (ruh al-qudus) and the other to God's Divine Energy which includes his command (ruh min-amr / min ruhi).

Related Articles:

- (1) ['Between his Hands' or 'Before It' \(Ma Bayna Yadayhi\)](#)
- (2) [Do Animals Have Souls?](#)

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