

## **On Nature**

[This booklet puts naturalistic atheism to death with no chance of reanimation, and totally shatters the foundation stones of unbelief.]

### **A Reminder**

This treatise explains through Nine Impossibilities, themselves comprising at least ninety impossibilities, just how unreasonable, crude and superstitious is the way taken by those Naturalists who are atheists. In order to cut short the discussion here and because these impossibilities have been explained in part in other sections of the Risale-i Nur, and some steps in the arguments have been skipped. It occurs to one, therefore, how is it that those famous and supposedly brilliant philosophers accepted such a blantly obvious superstition, and continue to pursue that way. Well, the fact is they could not see its reality. And I am ready to explain in detail and prove through clear and decisive arguments to whoever doubts it that these crude, repugnant and unreasonable impossibilities are the necessary and unavoidable result of their way; in fact, the very gist of their creed.<sup>1</sup>

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1. What occasioned the writing of this treatise were the attacks being made on the Qur'an by those who called everything that their corrupted minds could not reach a superstition, who were using Nature to justify unbelief, and were vilifying the truths of belief in a most aggressive and ugly fashion. Those attacks stirred up in my heart an intense anger which resulted in those perverted atheists and falsifiers of the truth receiving vehement and harsh slaps. Otherwise, the way generally followed by the Risale-i Nur is a mild, polite and persuasive one.

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

*Their prophets said: "Is there any doubt about God, Creator of the heavens and the earth?" (Qur'an, 14:10.)*

By declaring through the use of a rhetorical question that there cannot and should not be any doubt about God Almighty, this verse clearly demonstrates the Divine existence and Unity.

### **Introduction**

O man! You should be aware that there are certain phrases which are commonly used and imply unbelief. The believers also use them, but without realizing their implications. We shall explain three of the most important of them.

**The First: "Causes create this."**

**The Second: "It forms itself; it comes into existence and later ceases to exist."**

**The Third: "It is natural; Nature necessitates and creates it."**

Indeed, since beings exist and this cannot be denied, and since each being comes into existence in a wise and artistic fashion, and since each is not outside time but is being continuously renewed, then, O falsifier of the truth, you are bound to say either that the causes in the world create beings, for example, this animal; that is to say, it comes into existence through the coming together of causes, or that it forms itself, or that its coming into existence is a requirement and necessary effect of Nature, or that it is created through the power

of One All-Powerful and All-Glorious. Since reason can find no way apart from these four, if the first three are definitely proved to be impossible, invalid and absurd, the way of Divine Unity, which is the fourth way, will necessarily and self-evidently and without doubt or suspicion, be proved true.

## **THE FIRST WAY**

This to imagine that the formation and existence of things, creatures, occurs through the coming together of the causes in the universe. We shall mention only three of its numerous impossibilities.

### **First Impossibility**

Imagine there is a pharmacy in which there are hundreds of jars and phials filled with quite different substances. A living potion and a living remedy are required from those medicaments. So we go to the pharmacy and see that they are to be found there in abundance, yet in great variety. We examine each of the potions and see that the ingredients have been taken in varying but precise amounts from each of the jars and phials, one ounce from this, three from that, seven from the next, and so on. If one ounce too much or too little had been taken, the potion would not have been living and would not have displayed its special quality. Next, we study the living remedy. Again, the ingredients have been taken from the jars in a particular measure so that if even the most minute amount too much or too little had been taken, the remedy would have lost its special property.

Now, although the jars number more than fifty, the ingredients have been taken from each according to measures and amounts that are all different. Is it in any way possible or probable that the phials and jars should have been knocked over by a strange coincidence or sudden gust of wind and that only the precise, though different, amounts that had been taken from each of them should have been spilt, and then arranged themselves and come together to

form the remedy? Is there anything more superstitious, impossible and absurd than this? If an ass could speak, it would say: "I cannot accept this idea!", and would gallop off!

Similarly, each living being may be likened to the living potion in the comparison, and each plant to a living remedy. For they are composed of matter that has been taken in most precise measure from truly numerous and truly various substances. If these are attributed to causes and the elements and it is claimed, "Causes created these," it is unreasonable, impossible and absurd a hundred times over, just as it was to claim that the potion in the pharmacy came into existence through the phials being knocked over; by accident.

**In Short:** The vital substances in this vast pharmacy of the universe, which are measured on the scales of Divine Determining and Decree of the All-Wise and Pre-Eternal One, can only come into existence through a boundless wisdom, infinite knowledge and all-encompassing will. The unfortunate person who declares that they are the work of blind, deaf and innumerable elements and causes and natures, which stream like floods; and the foolish, delirious person who claims that that wondrous remedy poured itself out when the phials were knocked over and formed itself, are certainly unreasonable and nonsensical. Indeed, such denial and unbelief is a senseless absurdity.

## **Second Impossibility**

If everything is not attributed to the All-Powerful and All-Glorious One, Who is the Single One of Unity, but is attributed to causes, it necessitates that many of the elements and causes present in the universe intervene in the being of every animate creature. Whereas that different and mutually opposing and conflicting causes should come together of their own accord in complete order, with the finest balance and in perfect concord in the being of a tiny creature, like a fly, is such an obvious impossibility that anyone with even an

iota of consciousness would say: "This is impossible; it could not be!"

The tiny body of a fly is connected with most of the elements and causes in the universe; indeed, it is a summary of them. If it is not attributed to the Pre-Eternal and All-Powerful One, it is necessary for those material causes to be themselves present in the immediate vicinity of the fly; rather, for them all to enter into its tiny body; and even for them to enter each of the cells of its eyes, which are minute samples of its body. For if a cause is of a material nature, it is necessary for it to be present in the immediate vicinity of, and inside, its effect. And this necessitates accepting that the constituents and elements of the universe are physically present inside that minute cell, a place too small even for the tip of its antenna, and that they work there in harmony like a master.

A way such as this, then, shames even the most foolish of the Sophists.

### **Third Impossibility**

It is an established rule that, "If a being has unity, it can only have issued from a single being, from one hand." Particularly if it displays a comprehensive life within a perfect order and sensitive balance, it demonstrates self-evidently that it did not issue from numerous hands, which are the cause of conflict and confusion, but that it issued from a single hand that is All-Powerful and All-Wise. Therefore, to attribute a well-ordered and well-balanced being which has unity such as that to the jumbled hands of innumerable, lifeless, ignorant, aggressive, unconscious, chaotic, blind and deaf natural causes, the blindness and deafness of which increase with their coming together and intermingling among the ways of numberless possibilities, is as unreasonable as accepting innumerable impossibilities all at once. If we leave this impossibility aside and assume that material causes have effects, these effects can only occur through direct contact and touch. However, the contact of natural

causes is with the exteriors of living beings. And yet we see that the interiors of such beings, where the hands of material causes can neither reach nor touch, are ten times more delicate, well-ordered and perfect as regards art than their exteriors. Therefore, although tiny animate creatures, on which the hands and organs of material causes can in no way be situated, indeed they cannot touch the creatures' exteriors all at once even, are more strange and wonderful as regards their art and creation than the largest creatures, to attribute them to those lifeless, unknowing, crude, distant, vast, conflicting, deaf and blind causes can result only from a deafness and blindness compounded to the number of animate beings.

## THE SECOND WAY

This is expressed by the phrase "**It forms itself.**" It too involves many impossibilities and is absurd and impossible in many aspects. We shall explain three examples of these impossibilities.

### **First Impossibility**

O you obstinate denier! Your egotism has made you so stupid that somehow you decide to accept a hundred impossibilities all at once. For you yourself are a being and not some simple substance that is inanimate and unchanging. You are like an extremely well-ordered machine that is constantly being renewed and a wonderful palace that is undergoing continuous change. Particles are working unceasingly in your body. Your body has a connection and mutual relations with the universe, in particular with regard to sustenance and the perpetuation of the species, and the particles that work within it are careful not to spoil that relationship nor to break the connection. In this cautious manner they set about their work, as though taking the whole universe into account. Seeing your relationships within it, they take up their positions accordingly. And you benefit with your external and inner senses in accordance with the wonderful positions that they take.

If you do not accept that the particles in your body are tiny officials in motion in accordance with the law of the Pre-Eternal and All-Powerful One, or that they are an army, or the nibs of the pen of Divine Determining, with each particle as the nib of a pen, or that they are points inscribed by the pen of Power with each particle being a point, then in every particle working in your eye there would have to be an eye such as could see every limb and part of your body as well as the entire universe, with which you are connected. In addition to this, you would have to ascribe to each particle an intelligence equivalent to that of a hundred geniuses, sufficient to know and recognize all your past and your future, and your forbears and descendants, the origins of all the elements of your being, and the sources of all your sustenance.

To attribute the knowledge and consciousness of a thousand Plato's to a single particle of one such as you who does not possess even a particle's worth of intelligence in matters of this kind is a crazy superstition a thousand times over!

### **Second Impossibility**

Your being resembles a thousand-domed wondrous palace in which the stones stand together in suspension and without support. Indeed, your being is a thousand times more wonderful than such a palace, for the palace of your being is being renewed continuously in perfect order. Leaving aside your truly wonderful spirit, heart and other subtle faculties, each member of your body resembles a single-domed part of the palace. Like the stones of a dome, the particles stand together in perfect balance and order demonstrating the eye and the tongue, for example, each to be a wondrous building, extraordinary work of art, and miracle of power.

If these particles were not each officials dependent on the command of the master architect of the universe, then each particle would have to be both absolutely dominant over all the other particles in the body and absolutely subordinate to each of them; and

both equal to each and, with regard to its dominant position, opposed; and both the origin and source of most of the attributes that pertain only to the Necessarily Existent One, and extremely restricted; and both in absolute form, and in the form of a perfectly ordered individual artefact that could only, through the mystery of unity, be the work of the Single One of Unity.

Anyone with even a particle of consciousness would understand what an obvious impossibility this is; to attribute such an artefact to those particles.

### **Third Impossibility**

If your being is not 'written' by the pen of the Pre-Eternal and All-Powerful One, Who is the Single One of Unity, and is instead 'printed' by Nature and causes, there would have to be printing-blocks in Nature not only to the number of cells in your body, but to the number of their thousands of combinations, which are arranged in concentric circles. Because, for example, if this book which we hold in our hand is written, a single pen may write it relying on the knowledge of its writer. If, on the other hand, it is not written and is not attributed to its writer's pen, and if it is said that it exists of its own accord or it is ascribed to Nature, then, as a printed book, it would be necessary for there to be a different iron pen of each letter so that it could be printed. In a printing-press there have to be pieces of type to the number of letters in the alphabet so the letters in the book come into existence by means of them; pens to the number of those letters being necessary in place of a single pen.

As may be seen, sometimes a whole page is written in a single large letter from among those letters with a small pen in fine script, in which case a thousand pens would be necessary for one letter. Rather, if it took the form of your body, with all its components one within the other in concentric circles, there would have to be printing-blocks in each circle, for each component, to the number of the combinations that they form.



Now, see, if you claim this, which involves a hundred impossibilities, to be possible, then again if they are not attributed to a single pen, for those well-ordered, artistic pieces of type, faultless printing-blocks and iron pens to be made, further pens, printing-blocks and letters to the same number as themselves would be necessary. And they too would have to have been made; and they too would have to have been well-ordered and artistically fashioned. And so on. It would carry on in succession *ad infinitum* .

There, you too understand! This way of thinking is such that it involves impossibilities and superstitions to the number of particles in your body. O denier of God! See this, and quit the way of misguidance!

### **THE THIRD WAY**

**"Nature necessitates it; Nature makes it."** This statement contains many impossibilities. We shall mention three of them by way of examples.

#### **First Impossibility**

If the art and creativity, which are discerning and wise, to be seen in beings and particularly in animate beings are not attributed to the pen of Divine Determining and Power of the Pre-Eternal Sun, and instead are attributed to Nature and force, which are blind, deaf and unthinking, it becomes necessary that Nature either should have present in everything machines and printing-presses for their creation, or should include in everything power and wisdom enough to create and administer the universe. The reason for this is as follows:

The sun's manifestations and reflections appear in all small fragments of glass and droplets on the face of the earth. If those miniature, reflected imaginary suns are not ascribed to the sun in the

sky, it is necessary to accept the external existence of an actual sun in every tiny fragment of glass smaller than a match-head, which possesses the sun's qualities and which, though small in size, bears profound meaning; and therefore to accept actual suns to the number of pieces of glass.

In exactly the same way, if beings and animate creatures are not attributed directly to the manifestation of the Pre-Eternal Sun's Names, it becomes necessary to accept that in each being, and especially animate beings, there lies a nature, a force, or quite simply a god that will sustain an infinite power and will, and knowledge and wisdom. Such an idea is the most absurd and superstitious of all the impossibilities in the universe. It demonstrates that a man who attributes the art of the Creator of the universe to imaginary, insignificant, unconscious Nature is without a doubt less conscious of the truth than an animal.

### **Second Impossibility**

If beings, which are most well-ordered and well-measured, wise and artistically fashioned, are not ascribed to One Who is infinitely powerful and wise and instead are attributed to Nature, it becomes necessary for there to be present in every bit of soil as many factories and printing-presses as there are in Europe so that each bit of soil can be the means for the growth and formation of innumerable flowers and fruits, of which it is the place of origin and workshop. The seeds of flowers are sown in turn in a bowl of soil, which performs the duty of a flower-pot for them. An ability is apparent in the bowl of soil that will give shapes and forms which differ greatly from one another to all the flowers sown in it. If that ability is not attributed to the All-Glorious and All-Powerful One, such a situation could not occur without there being in the bowlful of soil immaterial, different and natural machines for each flower.

This is because the matter of which seeds, like sperm and eggs for example, consist is the same. That is, they consist of an

orderless, formless, paste-like mixture of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon and nitrogen. Together with this, since air, water, heat and light also are each simple, unconscious and flow against everything in floods, the fact that the all-different forms of those flowers emerge from the soil in a most well-ordered and artistic fashion self-evidently and necessarily requires that there are present in the soil in the bowl immaterial, miniature printing-presses and factories to the number of presses and factories in Europe so that they could weave this great number of living fabrics and thousands of various embroidered textiles.

Thus, you can see how far the unbelieving thought of the Naturalists has deviated from the realm of reason. And although brainless pretenders who imagine Nature to be creator claim to be "men of science and reason," see just how distant from reason and science is their thought, so that they have taken a superstition that is in no way possible, that is impossible, as a way for themselves. See this and laugh at them!

**If you ask:** If such extraordinary impossibilities and insurmountable difficulties occur when beings are attributed to Nature, how are those difficulties removed when they are attributed to the Single and Eternally Besought One? And how is the difficult impossibility transformed into that easy necessity?

**The Answer:** We saw in the First Impossibility that the manifestation of the sun's reflection displays its radiance and effect through miniature imaginary suns with complete ease and lack of trouble in everything from the minutest inanimate particle to the surface of the vastest ocean. If each particle's relationship with the sun is severed, it then becomes necessary to accept that the external existence of an actual sun could subsist, with a difficulty at the level of impossibility, in each of those minute particles.

Similarly, if each being is ascribed directly to the Single and Eternally Besought One, everything necessary for each being can be

conveyed to it through a connection and manifestation with an ease and facility that is at the level of necessity. If the connection is severed and each being reverts from its position as an official to being without duties, and is left to Nature and its own devices, it then becomes necessary to suppose that, with a hundred thousand difficulties and obstacles that reach the degree of impossibility, blind Nature possesses within it a power and wisdom with which to create and administer the universe so that it might bring into existence the wonderful machine of the being of an animate creature like a fly, which is a tiny index of the universe. This is impossible not just once but thousands of times over.

**In Short:**Just as it is impossible and precluded for the Necessarily Existent One to have any partner or like in respect of His Essence, so too is the interference of others in His dominicality and in His creation of beings impossible and precluded.

As for the difficulties involved in the Second Impossibility, as is proved in many parts of the Risale-i Nur, if all things are attributed to the Single One of Unity, all things become as easy and trouble-free as a single thing. Whereas if they are attributed to causes and Nature, a single thing becomes as difficult as all things. This has been demonstrated with numerous, decisive proofs and a summary of one of them is as follows.

If a man is connected to a king through being a soldier or an official, by reason of the strength of that connection, he may perform duties far exceeding his own individual strength. He may, on occasion, capture another king in the name of his own king. For he himself does not carry the equipment and sources of strength necessary to carry out the duties and work he performs, nor is he compelled to do so. By reason of the connection, the king's treasuries, and the army, which is behind him and is his point of support, carry his equipment and sources of strength. That is to say, the duties he performs may be as grand as the business of a king, and as tremendous as the actions of an army.

Indeed, through being an official, an ant destroyed Pharaoh's palace. Through the connection, a fly killed Nimrod off. And through the connection, the seed of a pine the size of a grain of wheat produces all the parts of a huge pine-tree. ( Yes, on there being this connection, the seed receives an order from Divine Determining and displays those wonderful duties. Should the connection be severed, the creation of the seed would require more equipment, power and art than the creation of the mighty pine-tree. For it would be necessary for the pine-tree out there on the mountain, which is the work of Divine power, to be physically present together with all its limbs and parts in what is only the potential tree within the seed and is the work of Divine Determining. For the mighty tree's factory is the seed. The determined, potential tree within it becomes manifest in the external world through Divine power, and becomes a physical pine-tree.)

Were the connection to be severed and the man discharged from his duties as an official, he would be compelled to carry the equipment and sources of strength necessary for his work himself. He would then only be able to perform duties in accordance with the sources of strength and ammunition that he was able to carry. If he was to be required in this situation to carry out his duties with the extreme ease of the first situation, it would be necessary to load on his back the sources of an army's strength and the arsenals and munitions factories of a king. Even clowns who invent stories and superstitions to make people laugh would be ashamed at this fanciful idea.

**In Short:** To attribute all beings to the Necessarily Existent One is so easy as to be necessary. While to attribute their creation to Nature is so difficult as to be impossible and outside the realm of reason.

### **Third Impossibility**

The following two comparisons, which are included in other parts of the Risale-i Nur, explain this impossibility.

A wild savage entered a palace which had been built in an empty desert, and completed and adorned with all the fruits of civilization. He cast an eye over its interior and saw thousands of well-ordered and artistically fashioned objects. Because of his boorishness and lack of intelligence, he said: "No one from outside had a hand in this, one of the objects from inside must have made this palace together with all of its contents," and started to investigate. However, whatever he looked at, even his untaught intelligence could not fathom out how it had made those things.

Later, he saw a notebook in which had been written the plan and programme of the palace's construction, an index of its contents and the rules of its administration. For sure, the notebook too, which was without hand, eye, or implement, like the rest of the objects in the palace, was completely lacking the ability to construct and decorate the palace. But, since he saw that in comparison with all the other things, the notebook was related to the whole palace by reason of its including all its theoretical laws, he was obliged to say: "There, it is this notebook that has organized, ordered and adorned this palace, and has fashioned all these objects and set them in their places." He transformed his uncouthness into ludicrous jabber.

Thus, exactly like this comparison, a boor who subscribed to Naturalist thought, which denies God, entered the palace of the universe, which is infinitely more well-ordered, more perfect and everywhere full of miraculous instances of wisdom than the palace in the comparison. Not thinking that it was the work of art of the Necessarily Existent One, Who is outside the sphere of contingency, and shunning that idea, he saw a collection of the laws of Divine practice and an index of dominical art, which are like a slate for writing and erasing of Divine Determining in the sphere of

contingency, and like a constantly changing notebook for the laws of the functioning of Divine power, and are extremely mistakenly and erroneously given the name 'Nature', and he said:

"These things require a cause and nothing else appears to have the relationship with everything like this notebook has. It is true that reason will in no way accept that this unseeing, unconscious and powerless notebook could carry out this creation, which is the work of an absolute dominicality and requires infinite power. But since I do not recognize the Eternal Maker, the most plausible explanation is to say the notebook made it, and makes it, so I shall say that." To which we reply:

O you mistaken unfortunate! Your foolishness exceeds anything imaginable! Lift your head out of the swamp of Nature and look beyond yourself! See an All-Glorious Maker to Whom all beings from particles to planets testify with their different tongues and Whom they indicate with their fingers! Behold the manifestation of the Pre-Eternal Inscraper, Who fashions the palace and Who writes its programme in the notebook! Study His decree, listen to the Qur'an! Be delivered from your delirious raving!

**Second Comparison:** A rustic bumpkin entered the bounds of a splendid palace and saw there the uniform actions of an extremely orderly army carrying out its drill. He observed a battalion, a regiment and a division stand to attention, stand at ease and march, and open fire when commanded as though they were a single private. Since his rude, uncultured mind could not comprehend, so denied, that a commander had been given command by the country's laws and by royal decree, he imagined that the soldiers were attached to one another with strings. He thought of what wonderful string it must be, and was amazed.

Later, he continued on his way till he came upon a magnificent mosque like Aya Sophia. He entered it at the time of Friday prayer and watched the congregation of Muslims rising,

bowing, prostrating and sitting at the sound of man's voice. Since he did not understand the Shari'a, which consists of a collection of immaterial, revealed laws, nor the immaterial rules proceeding from the Lawgiver's command, he fancied the congregation to be bound to one another by physical string, and that this wonderful string had subjected them and was making them move like puppets. And, coming up with this idea, which is so ridiculous as to make the most ignorant roar with laughter, he went on his way.

Exactly like this comparison, an atheist who subscribed to materialist thought, which is denial and pure brutishness, entered the universe, which is a splendid barracks of the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity for His innumerable forces, and a well-ordered mosque of that Pre-Eternal All-Worshipped One. He imagined the immaterial laws of the ordering of the universe, which proceed from the Pre-Eternal Monarch's wisdom, each to have material and physical existence; and supposed the theoretical laws of the sovereignty of dominicality, and the rules and ordinances of the Greater Shari'a, the Shari'a of Creation, which are immaterial and exist only as knowledge, each to have external, material and physical existence. But to set up in place of Divine power those laws, which proceed from the Divine attributes of knowledge and speech and only exist as knowledge, and to attribute creation to them; then to attach the name 'Nature' to them, and to deem force, which is merely a manifestation of dominical power, to be an independent almighty possessor of power, is a thousand times more low-fallen ignorance than the ignorance in the comparison.

**In Short:** The imaginary and insubstantial thing that Naturalists call Nature, if it has an external reality, can at the very most be work of art; it cannot be the Artist. It is an embroidery, and cannot be the Embroiderer. It is a set of decrees; it cannot be the Issuer of the decrees. It is a body of the laws of creation, and cannot be the Lawgiver. It is but a created screen to the dignity of God, and cannot be the Creator. It is passive and created, and cannot be a



Creative Maker. It is a law, not a power, and cannot possess power. It is the recipient, and cannot be the source.

**To Conclude:** Since beings exist, and as was stated at the beginning of this treatise, reason cannot think of a way to explain the existence of beings apart from the four mentioned, three of which were each decisively proved through three clear Impossibilities to be invalid and absurd, then necessarily and self-evidently the way of Divine Unity, which is the fourth way, is proved in a conclusive manner. The fourth way, in accordance with the verse quoted at the beginning:

*Is there any doubt about God, Creator of the heavens and the earth? (Qur'an, 14:10.)*

demonstrates clearly so that there can be no doubt or hesitation the Divinity of the Necessarily Existent One, and that all things issue directly from the hand of His power, and that the heavens and the earth are under His sway.

O you unfortunate worshipper of causes and Nature! Since the nature of each thing, like all things, is created, for it is full of art and is being constantly renewed, and, like the effect, the apparent cause of each thing is also created; and since for each thing to exist there is need for much equipment and many tools; there must exist a Possessor of Absolute Power Who creates the nature and brings the cause into existence. And that Absolutely Powerful One is in no need of impotent intermediaries to share in His dominicality and creation. God forbid! He creates cause and effect together directly. In order to demonstrate His wisdom and the manifestation of His Names, by establishing an apparent causal relationship and connection through order and sequence, He makes causes and Nature a veil to the hand of His power so that the apparent faults, severities and defects in things should be ascribed to them, and in this way His dignity be preserved.

Is it easier for a watch-maker to make the cog-wheels of a clock, and then arrange them and put them in order to form the clock? Or is it easier for him to make a wonderful machine in each of the cog-wheels, and then leave the making of the clock to the lifeless hands of those machines? Is that not beyond the bounds of possibility? Come on, you judge with your unfair reason, and say!

And is it easier for a scribe to collect ink, pen and paper, and then using them proceed to write out a book himself? Or is it easier for him to create in the paper, pen and ink a writing-machine that requires more art and trouble than the book, and can be used only for that book, and then say to the unconscious machine: "Come on, you write it!", and himself not interfere? Is that not a hundred times more difficult than writing it himself?

**If you say:** Yes, it is a hundred times more difficult to create a machine that writes a book rather than writing it out oneself. But is it not in a way easier, because the machine is the means for producing numerous copies of the same book?

**The Answer:** Through His limitless power, the Pre-Eternal Inscraper continuously renews the infinite manifestations of His Names so as to display them in ever-differing ways. And through this constant renewal, He creates the identities and special features in things in such a manner that no missive of the Eternally Besought One or dominical book can be the same as any other book. In any case, each will have different features in order to express different meanings.

If you have eyes, look at the human face: you will see that from the time of Adam until today, indeed, until post-eternity, together with the conformity of their essential organs, each face has a distinguishing mark in relation to all the other faces; this is a definite fact. Therefore, each face may be thought of as a different book. Only, for the artwork to be set out, different writing-sets, arrangements, and compositions are required. And in order to both

collect and situate the materials, and to include everything necessary for the existence of each, a completely different workshop will be required.

Now, knowing it to be impossible, we thought of Nature as a printing-press. But apart from the composition and printing, which concern the printing-press, that is, setting up the type in a specific order, the substances that form an animate being's body, the creation of which is a hundred times more difficult than that of the composition and ordering, must be created in specific proportions and particular order, brought from the furthest corners of the cosmos, and placed in the hands of the printing-press. But in order to do all these things, there is still need for the power and will of the Absolutely Powerful One, Who creates the printing-press. That is to say, this hypothesis of the printing-press is a totally meaningless superstition.

Thus, like these comparisons of the clock and the book, the All-Glorious Maker, Who is powerful over all things, has created causes, and so too does He create the effects. Through His wisdom, He ties the effect to the cause. Through His will, He has determined a manifestation of the Greater Shari'a, the Shari'a of Creation, which consists of the Divine laws concerning the ordering of all motion in the universe, and determined the nature of beings, which is only to be a mirror to that manifestation in things, and to be a reflection of it. And through His power, He has created the face of that nature which has received external existence, and has created things on that nature, and has mixed them one with the other.

Is it easier to accept this fact, which is the conclusion of innumerable most rational proofs-in fact, is one not compelled to accept it?-or is it easier to get the physical beings that you call causes and Nature, which are lifeless, unconscious, created, fashioned and simple, to provide the numberless tools and equipment necessary for the existence of each thing and to carry out those matters, which are performed wisely and discerningly? Is that not utterly beyond the

bounds of possibility? We leave it to you to decide, with your unreasonable mind!

**The unbelieving Nature-worshipper replied: "Since you are asking me to be fair and reasonable, I have to confess that the mistaken way I have followed up to now is both a compounded impossibility, and extremely harmful and ugly. Anyone with even a grain of consciousness would understand from your analyses above that to attribute the act of creation to causes and Nature is precluded and impossible, and that to attribute all things directly to the Necessarily Existent One is imperative and necessary. I say: 'ALL PRAISE BE TO GOD FOR BELIEF,' and I believe in Him. Only, I do have one doubt:**

**"I believe that Almighty God is the Creator, but what harm does it do to the sovereignty of His dominicality if some minor causes have a hand in the creation of insignificant matters and thereby gain for themselves a little praise and acclaim? Does it diminish His sovereignty in some way?"**

**The Answer:** As we have conclusively proved in other parts of the Risale-i Nur, the mark of rulership is that it rejects interference. The most insignificant ruler or official will not tolerate the interference of his own son, even, within the sphere of his rule. The fact that, despite being Caliph, certain devout Sultans had their innocent sons murdered on the unfounded apprehension that the sons would interfere in their rule demonstrates how fundamental is this **'law of the rejection of interference'** in rulership. And the **'law of prevention of participation,'** which the independence intrinsic to rulership necessitates, has shown its strength in the history of mankind through extraordinary upheavals whenever there have been two governors in a town or two kings in a country.

Thus, if the sense of rulership and sovereignty, which is a mere shadow in human beings, who are impotent and in need of assistance, rejects interference to this degree, prevents the

intervention of others, does not accept participation in its sovereignty, and seeks to preserve the independence of its position so jealously, then, if you can, compare this with an All-Glorious One Whose absolute sovereignty is at the degree of dominicality, Whose absolute rulership at the degree of Divinity, absolute independence at the degree of Oneness, and absolute lack of need at the degree of absolute power, and understand what a necessary requirement and inevitable necessity of that rulership is this rejection of interference, prevention of participation, and repulsion of partners.

**Concerning the second part of your doubt, you said:** "If some of the worship of some insignificant beings is directed towards certain causes, what deficiency does this cause to the worship of all beings, from particles to planets, which is directed towards the Necessarily Existent One, the Absolute Object of All Worship?"

**The Answer:** The All-Wise Creator of the universe made the universe like a tree with conscious beings as its most perfect fruit, and among conscious beings He made man its most comprehensive fruit. And man's most important fruit, indeed the result of his creation, the aim of his nature, and the fruit of his life are his thanks and worship. Would that Absolute Sovereign and Independent Ruler, that Single One of Unity, Who creates the universe in order to make Himself known and loved, give away to others man, the fruit of the whole universe, and man's thanks and worship, his most elevated fruit? Totally contrary to His wisdom, would He make vain and futile the result of creation and fruit of the universe? God forbid! Would He be content to give away the worship of creatures to others in a way that would deny His wisdom and His dominicality? And although He demonstrates through His actions that He wishes to make Himself known and loved to an unlimited degree, would he cause His most perfect creatures to forget Him by handing over to causes their thanks and gratitude, love and worship, and cause them to deny the exalted purposes in the universe?

O friend who has given up the worship of Nature! Now it is for you to say! To which he replied:

"All praise be to God, these two doubts of mine have now been resolved. And your two proofs concerning Divine Unity which demonstrate that the only True Object of Worship is He, and that nothing other than He is worthy of worship are so brilliant and powerful that to deny them would require as much arrogance as to deny the sun and the day."

### **Conclusion**

The person who gave up atheistic Naturalism and came to believe said: "All praise be to God, I no longer have any doubts, but there are still a few questions about which I am curious."

### **FIRST QUESTION**

"We hear many lazy people and those who neglect the five daily prayers ask: 'What need has God Almighty of our worship that in the Qur'an He severely and insistently reproves those who give up worship and threatens them with such a fearsome punishment as Hell? How is it in keeping with the style of the Qur'an, which is moderate, mild and fair, to demonstrate the ultimate severity towards an insignificant, minor fault?'"

**The Answer:** God Almighty has no need of your worship, nor indeed of anything else. It is you who needs to worship, for in truth you are sick. As we have proved in many parts of the Risale-i Nur, worship is a sort of remedy for your spiritual wounds. If someone who is ill responds to a compassionate doctor who insists on his taking medicines that are beneficial for his condition by saying: "What need do you have of it that you are insisting in this way?", you can understand how absurd it would be.

As for the severe threats and fearsome punishments in the Qur'an concerning the giving up of worship, they may be likened to a king, who, in order to protect his subject' rights, inflicts a severe punishment on an ordinary man in accordance with the degree that his crime infringes those rights.

In the same way, the man who gives up worship and ritual prayer is violating in a significant manner the rights of beings, who are like the subjects of the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, and is in fact acting unjustly towards them. For the perfections of beings are manifested through the glorification and worship performed by that aspect of them which is directed towards their Maker. The one who abandons worship does not and cannot see this worship. Indeed, he denies it. Furthermore, beings occupy an exalted position by reason of their worship and glorification, and each is a missive of the Eternally Besought One, and a mirror to the Names of its Sustainer. Since he reduces them from their high positions and considers them to be unimportant, lifeless, aimless, and without duties, he is insulting them, and denying and transgressing their perfections.

Indeed, everyone sees the world in his own mirror. God Almighty created man as a measure and scale for the universe. And from the world He gave a particular world to each person. This world He colours for him in accordance with his sincere beliefs. For example, a despairing, lamenting, weeping person sees beings as weeping and in despair, while a cheerful, optimistic, merry person sees the universe as joyful and smiling. A reflective man given to solemn worship and glorification discovers and sees to a degree the certain, truly existent worship and glorification of beings, while a person who abandons worship through either neglect or denial sees beings in a manner totally contrary and opposed to the reality of their perfections, thus transgressing their rights.

Furthermore, since the one who gives up prayer does not own himself, he wrongs his own soul, which is a slave of its True Owner.

His Owner delivers awesome threats in order to protect His slave's rights from his evil-commanding soul. Also, since he has given up worship, which is the result of his creation and the aim of his nature, it is like an act of aggression against Divine wisdom and dominical will, and he therefore receives punishment.

**In Short:** The abandoner of worship both wrongs his own soul, which is the slave and totally owned property of Almighty God, and wrongs and transgresses the rights of the perfections of the universe. Certainly, just as unbelief is an insult to beings, so is the abandonment of worship a denial of the universe's perfections. And since it is an act of aggression against Divine wisdom, it is deserving of awesome threats, and severe punishment.

Thus, it is to express this deservedness and the above facts that the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition chooses in a miraculous way that severe style, which, in complete conformity with the principles of eloquence, corresponds to the requirements of the situation.

## **SECOND QUESTION**

The person who had given up Naturalism and come to believe next asked:

"It is indeed a vast truth that each being is dependent on Divine will and dominical power in every aspect; in all of its functions, qualities and actions. By reason of this vastness, our narrow minds cannot comprehend it. However, the infinite abundance that we see around us, and the boundless ease in the creation and formation of things, and the infinite ease and facility in the way of unity, which was established through your proofs above, and the infinite ease that verses of the Qur'an like the following clearly demonstrate and expound,



*Your creation and resurrection is as a single soul (Qur'an, 31:28.),*

and,

*The matter of the Hour shall be but as the twinkling of the eye, or even closer (Qur'an, 16:77.)*

show this mighty truth to be a matter that is most acceptable and rational. What is the wisdom and secret of this ease?"

**The Answer:** This matter was elucidated in a most clear, decisive and convincing fashion in the explanation of,

*And He is powerful over all things,*

which forms the Tenth Phrase of the Twentieth Letter. In particular, it was demonstrated even more clearly in the Addendum to that Letter that when attributed to the Single Maker, all beings become as easy as a single being. If they are not attributed to that Single One of Unity, the creation of a single creature becomes as difficult as that of all beings, and a seed as problematical as a tree. When they are ascribed to their True Maker, the universe becomes as easy and trouble-free as a tree, a tree as easy as a seed, Paradise as easy as the spring, and the spring as easy as a flower. We shall now point out briefly one or two evidences that have been explained in detail in other parts of the Risale-i Nur out of the hundreds which explain the underlying reasons for and instances of wisdom in the conspicuous, boundless abundance and profusion of beings, the ease of the great number of individuals in each species, and the fact that well-ordered, artistically fashioned and valuable beings come into existence with immense speed and ease.

For example, if the command of a hundred soldiers is given to one officer, it is a hundred times easier than if the command of one soldier is given to a hundred officers. And if to equip an army it is

assigned to one headquarters, one law, one factory and the command of one king, it quite simply becomes as easy as equipping a single soldier. In the same way, if to equip one soldier it is referred to numerous headquarters, numerous factories and numerous commanders, it becomes as difficult as equipping an army. Because in order to equip a single soldier, it would require as many factories as are necessary for a whole army.

Again, since by reason of the mystery of unity, the vital necessities of a tree are provided through one root, one centre and according to one law, it produces thousands of fruits as easily as a single fruit. This is plain to see. If unity changes to multiplicity, and all the necessities vital for each fruit are provided from different places, to produce each fruit becomes as difficult as to produce the tree. And to produce a single seed, even, which is a sample and index of the tree, becomes as difficult as the tree. Because all the necessities vital for the tree's life are necessary for the seed.

Thus, there are hundreds of examples like these which show that it is easier for thousands of beings to come into existence through unity than for a single being to come into existence through multiplicity and ascribing partners to God. Since this truth has been proved with absolute certainty in other parts of the Risale-i Nur, we refer you to those and here only explain a most important reason for this ease and facility from the point of view of Divine knowledge, Divine Determining, and dominical power. It is as follows:

You are a being. If you attribute yourself to the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One, He creates you at a command through His infinite power out of nothing in an instant, like striking a match. If you do not do this and rather attribute yourself to physical causes and nature, then since you are a well-ordered summary, fruit, and miniature index and list of the universe, in order to make you, it would be necessary to sift with a fine sieve the universe and its elements, and to gather in precise measure from all the corners of the universe the substances of which your body is composed. For physical causes

only gather and join together. It is confirmed by people of reason that they cannot create out of nothing what is not present in them. Since this is the case, they would be compelled to collect together the body of a tiny animate being from every corner of the cosmos.

Now understand what ease there is in unity, Divine Unity, and what difficulties lie in misguidance and attributing partners to God!

**Secondly**, there is an infinite ease also with regard to Divine knowledge. It is like this: Divine Determining is an aspect of Divine knowledge; it determines a measure for each thing, which is like its particular and immaterial mould; the determined measure is like a plan or model for the thing's being. When Divine power creates, it does so with extreme ease in accordance with the determined measure. If the thing is not attributed to the All-Powerful One of Glory, Who possesses all-embracing, infinite and pre-eternal knowledge, as was described above, not only thousands of difficulties appear, but hundreds of impossibilities. For if it was not for the determined measure which exists in Divine knowledge, thousands of material moulds with external existences would have to be employed in the body of even a tiny animate being.

So, understand one reason for the infinite ease in unity and the endless difficulties in misguidance and ascribing partners to God. Realize what a veracious, correct, and exalted truth is stated by the verse,

*The matter of the Hour shall be but as the twinkling of the eye, or even closer.*

### **THIRD QUESTION**

The former enemy and now rightly-guided friend then asked: "Philosophers, who have made many advances these days, claim that nothing is created out of nothing, and nothing is annihilated and goes

to nothing; there is only composition and decomposition, and this makes the factory of the universe run. Is this correct?"

**The Answer:** Since the most advanced philosophers who did not consider beings in the light of the Qur'an saw that the formation and existence of beings by means of Nature and causes was so difficult as to be impossible -in the manner proved above-, they diverged into two groups.

One group became Sophists; abdicating reason, which is exclusive to human beings, and falling lower than mindless beasts, they found it easier to deny the universe's existence, and even their own existences, than to follow the way of misguidance, which claims that causes and Nature have the power to create. They therefore denied both themselves and the universe and descended into absolute ignorance.

The second group saw that in misguidance, according to which causes and Nature are creator, the creation of a fly or a seed, even, entails innumerable difficulties and requires a power unacceptable to reason. They were therefore compelled to deny the act of creation and to say: "Nothing can exist out of nothing." Seeing total annihilation also to be impossible, they declared: "What exists cannot go to nothing." They fancied an imaginary situation in which combining and decomposition, gathering and dispersion, occur through the motion of particles and the winds of chance.

Now, see! Those who consider themselves to be the most intelligent are the most profoundly ignorant and stupid. Understand just how ludicrous, debased, and ignorant misguidance makes man, and take a lesson!

Indeed, a Pre-Eternal Power created the heavens and the earth in six days, every year creates four hundred thousand species simultaneously on the face of the earth, and in six weeks every spring constructs a living world more full of art and wisdom than the world

itself. Thus, it is more foolish and ignorant than the Sophists, the first group above, to deny the act of creation and deem it unlikely that, like a chemical that when applied shows up invisible writing, Pre-Eternal Power should give external existence to beings, which, though externally non-existent, exist as knowledge, and whose plans and measures are determined in the realm of a Pre-Eternal Knowledge.

These unfortunates are absolutely impotent and have nothing at their disposal apart from the faculty of will. Although they are inflated like Pharaohs, they can neither annihilate anything nor create anything from nothing, even a minute particle. And so, although nothing comes into existence out of nothing at the hand of causes and Nature on which they rely, out of their stupidity they say: "Nothing comes from non-being, and nothing goes to non-being." And they even extend this absurd and erroneous principle to the Absolutely All-Powerful One.

Indeed, the All-Powerful One of Glory has two ways of creating:

**The First** is through origination and invention. That is, He brings a being into existence out of nothing, out of non-existence, and creates everything necessary for it, also out of nothing, and places those necessities in its hand.

**The Second** is through composition, through art. That is, He forms certain beings out of the elements of the universe in order to demonstrate subtle instances of wisdom, like displaying the perfections of His wisdom and the manifestations of many of His Names. Through the law of Providing, he sends particles and matter, which are dependent on His command, to these beings and employs the particles in them.

Yes, the Absolutely All-Powerful One creates in two ways: He both originates, and He composes. To annihilate what exists and

to make exist what does not exist is most simple and easy for Him. It is one of His constant and universal laws. The man, therefore, who says: "He cannot give existence to what does not exist" in the face of a power that in one spring makes exist out of nothing the forms and attributes of three hundred thousand animate creatures, and, besides their particles, all their conditions and states, such a man should himself be obliterated!

The person who gave up Nature and embraced the truth said: "Praise and thanks be to God Almighty to the number of particles in existence for I have attained to complete belief. I have been saved from delusion and misguidance. Not one of my doubts remains.

"ALL PRAISE BE TO GOD FOR THE RELIGION OF ISLAM, AND COMPLETE AND PERFECT BELIEF!"

*All glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise .(Qur'an, 2:32.)*

# **The Twenty-Third Word**

## **On The Nature of Humanbeing and Virtues of Belief**

[This Word contains Two Chapters]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

*Indeed, We have created man on the most excellent of patterns, \* Then sent him down to the lowest of the low, \* Except those who believe and do good deeds. ( Qur'an, 95:4-6. )*

### **FIRST CHAPTER**

*We shall explain in five 'Points' only five of the virtues of belief out of thousands.*

#### **FIRST POINT**

*Through the light of belief, man rises to the highest of the high and acquires a value worthy of Paradise. And through the darkness of unbelief, he descends to the lowest of the low and falls to a position fit for Hell. For belief connects man to the All-Glorious Maker; it is a relation. Thus, man acquires value by virtue of the Divine art and inscriptions of the dominical Names which become apparent in him through belief. Unbelief severs the relation, and due to that severance the dominical art is concealed. His value then is only in respect to the matter of his physical being. And since this matter has only a transitory, passing, temporary animal life, its value is virtually nothing. We shall explain this mystery by means of a comparison:*

For example: among man's arts, the value of the materials used and that of the art are entirely different. Sometimes they are equal, sometimes the material is more valuable, and sometimes it

happens that five Euro's worth of art is to be found in material like iron worth five *cents*. Sometimes, even, an antique work of art is worth a million Euros while the material of which it is composed is not worth five *cents*. If such a work of art is taken to the antiques market and ascribed to a brilliant and accomplished artist of former times, and announced mentioning the artist and that art, it may be sold for a million Euros. Whereas if it is taken to the scrap-dealers, the only price received will be for the five *cent's* worth of iron.

**Thus, man is such an antique work of art of Almighty God. He is a most subtle and graceful miracle of His power whom He created to manifest all his Names and their inscriptions, in the form of a miniature specimen of the universe.** If the light of belief enters his being, all the meaningful inscriptions on him may be read. As one who believes, he reads them consciously, and through that relation, causes others to read them. That is to say, the dominical art in man becomes apparent through meanings like, "I am the creature and artefact of the All-Glorious Maker. I manifest His mercy and munificence." That is, belief, which consists of being connected to the Maker, makes apparent all the works of art in man. Man's value is in accordance with that dominical art and by virtue of being a mirror to the Eternally Besought One. In this respect insignificant man becomes God's addressee and a guest of the Sustainer worthy of Paradise superior to all other creatures.

However, should unbelief, which consists of the severance of the relation, enter man's being, then all those meaningful inscriptions of the Divine Names are plunged into darkness and become illegible. For if the Maker is forgotten, the spiritual aspects which look to Him will not be comprehended, they will be as though reversed. The majority of those meaningful sublime arts and elevated inscriptions will be hidden. The remainder, those that may be seen with the eye, will be attributed to lowly causes, nature, and chance, and will become utterly devoid of value. While they are all brilliant diamonds, they become dull pieces of glass. His importance looks only to his animal, physical being. And as we said, the aim and fruit



of his physical being is only to pass a brief and partial life as the most impotent, needy, and grieving of animals. Then it decays and departs. See how unbelief destroys human nature, and transforms it from diamonds into coal.

## SECOND POINT

**Just as belief is a light which illuminates man and makes legible all the missives of the Eternally Besought One inscribed upon him, so too it illuminates the universe, and delivers the past and the future from darkness.** I shall explain this mystery with a comparison I saw during a vision, which concerns one meaning of the verse:

*God is the Protector of those who believe; He leads them out of darkness into light. (Qur'an, 2:257.)*

It was like this:

I saw in a vision an awesome bridge built between two high mountains situated opposite one another. Beneath the bridge was a valley of great depth. I was on the bridge. A dense darkness had enveloped every part of the world. I looked to my right and saw a vast grave swathed in an unending dense gloom, that is, I imagined it. I looked to my left and as though saw violent storms and calamities gathering amid terrifying waves of blackness. I looked beneath the bridge and imagined I saw a profound abyss. I had a dim torch in the face of this terrifying darkness. I used it and could see a little with its light. A most horrific situation appeared to me. In fact, such awful dragons, lions, and monsters appeared around me and on the bridge in front of me that I exclaimed: "Oh! This torch brings me only trouble!", and I angrily cast it to the ground and broke it. Then on smashing it, the darkness suddenly dispersed as though I had turned on the switch for a huge electric lamp that lit up the whole world. Everywhere was filled with the lamp's light. It showed everything as it was in reality.

I saw that the bridge I had seen was a highway through a plain passing over even ground. The vast grave I had seen on my right I realized consisted from top to bottom of beautiful, verdant gardens and gatherings for worship, service, conversation, and the remembrance of God under the direction of luminous men. The precipices and peaks on my left which I had imagined to be tempestuous and stormy I now saw fleetingly to be a vast, lovely, and elevated place of feasting, recreation, and enjoyment behind mountains that were adorned and pleasant. And the creatures I had thought to be terrifying monsters and dragons, I saw were familiar domestic animals like camels, oxen, sheep, and goats. Declaring, "All praise be to God for the light of belief," I recited the verse,

*God is the Protector of those who believe; He leads them out of darkness into light,*

and I awoke from my vision.

Thus, the two mountains were the beginning and end of life; that is, this world and the Intermediate Realm. The bridge was the road of life. To the right was the past, and to the left, the future. As for the small torch, it was the human ego, which is egotistical, relies on what it knows, and does not heed the heavenly revelation. The things imagined to be the monsters were the the events and strange creatures of the world.

Thus, one who relies on his ego, who falls into the darkness of heedlessness and is afflicted with the blackness of misguidance resembles my first state in the vision, which, like with the pocket-torch and due to deficient and misguided knowledge, saw the past in the form a huge grave amid darkness imbued with non-existence. It showed the future to be a stormy and desolate wasteland governed by coincidence, and events and beings, which are all submissive officials of One All-Wise and All-Compassionate to be monsters. Such a person as though manifests the verse,

*And those who reject belief, their protectors are the evil ones; they lead them out of light into darkness. (Qur'an, 2:257.)*

But if such a man attains to Divine guidance and belief enters his heart, and if the tyranny of his soul is smashed and he heeds God's Book, he will resemble my second state in the vision. Then the universe will suddenly take on the colour of day and be filled with Divine light. The world will recite the verse,

*God is the light of the heavens and the earth. (Qur'an, 24:35.)*

Then he will see with the eye of the heart that the past is not a vast grave, but where the groups of purified spirits who each century having performed their duties of worship under the leadership of a prophet or saint exclaim, "**God is Most Great!**" on completion of the duties of their lives, and fly to elevated abodes, moving on to the past. He will look to the left, and through the light of belief distinguish in the distance a feasting-place of the Most Merciful set up in palaces of bliss in the gardens of Paradise, beyond the mountainous revolutions of the Intermediate Realm and the hereafter. And he will realize that the storms and earthquakes and tempestuous events are all submissive officials, and understand that they are the means for instances of wisdom which though apparently harsh are in fact most gentle, like the storms and rains of spring. He will even see death to be the introduction to eternal life, and the grave, the door to everlasting happiness. You can deduce further aspects for yourself. Apply the reality to the comparison!

### **THIRD POINT**

**Belief is both light and strength.** Yes, one who acquires true belief may challenge the whole universe and be saved from the pressure of events in accordance with the strength of his belief. Saying, "**I place my trust in God,**" he travels through the mountainous waves of events in the ship of life in complete safety. He entrusts all his burdens to the hand of power of the Absolutely

Powerful One, voyages through the world in ease, then takes his rest in the Intermediate Realm. Later he may fly up to Paradise in order to enter eternal happiness. Otherwise, if he does not rely on God, rather than flying, the burdens of the world will drag him down to the lowest of the low. **That is to say, belief necessitates affirmation of Divine unity, affirmation of Divine unity necessitates submission to God, submission to God necessitates reliance on God, and reliance on God necessarily leads to happiness in this world and the next.** But do not misunderstand this, reliance on God is not to reject causes altogether; it is rather to know that causes are a veil to the hand of power and have recourse to them. Knowing that attempting causes is a sort of active prayer, it is to seek the effects only from Almighty God, recognize that the results are from Him alone, and to be thankful to Him.

Those who place their trust in God and those who do not, resemble the two men in this story:

One time two men loaded heavy burdens onto both their backs and heads, and buying tickets, boarded a large ship. As soon as they boarded it, one of them left his load on the deck, and sitting on it guarded it. The other, however, since he was both stupid and arrogant, did not put down his load. When he was told: "Leave that heavy load on the deck and be comfortable," he replied: "No, I won't put it down, it might get lost. I am strong, I'll guard my property by carrying it on my head and back." He was told again: "This reliable royal ship which is carrying you and us is stronger, it can protect it better than you. You may get giddy and fall into the sea together with your load. Anyway you will gradually lose your strength, and by degrees those loads will get heavier and your bent back and brainless head will not have the power to bear them. And if the Captain sees you in this state, he will either say that you are crazy and expel you from the ship, or he will think you are ungrateful, accusing our ship and jeering at us, and he will order you to be put into prison. Also you are making a fool of yourself in front of everyone. For the perceptive see that you are displaying weakness through your conceit, impotence through your pride, and abasement and hypocrisy

through your pretence, and have thus made yourself a laughing-stock in the eyes of the people. Everyone's laughing at you." Whereupon the unfortunate man came to his senses. He put down his load on the deck and sat on it. He said to the other: "Ah! May God be pleased with you. I've been saved from that difficulty, from prison, and from making a fool of myself."

O man who does not place his trust in God! You too come to your senses like that man and place your trust in Him, so that you may be delivered from begging before all the universe, trembling before every event, from pride, making a fool of yourself, misery in the hereafter, and the prison of the pressures of this world.

#### FOURTH POINT

**Belief makes man into man, indeed, it makes man into a king. Since this is so, man's basic duty is belief and supplication. Unbelief makes man into an extremely impotent beast.**

Out of thousands of proofs of this matter, the differences in the ways animals and man come into the world are a clear indication and decisive proof. Yes, these differences show that humanity becomes humanity through belief. For when animals come into the world, they come complete in all points in accordance with their abilities as though having been perfected in another world; that is, they are sent. They learn all the conditions of their lives, their relationships with the universe, and the laws of life in either two hours or two days or two months, and become proficient in them. Animals like sparrows and bees acquire in twenty days the power to survive and proficiency in their actions that man only acquires in twenty years; that is, they are inspired with them. This means that the animals' fundamental duty is not to be perfected through learning and progress by acquiring knowledge, nor to seek help and offer

supplications through displaying their impotence, but in accordance with their abilities to work and act. Their duty is active worship.

As for man, he needs to learn everything when he comes into the world; he is ignorant, and cannot even learn completely the conditions of life in twenty years. Indeed, he needs to go on learning till the end of his life. Also he is sent to the world in a most weak and impotent form, and can only rise to his feet in one or two years. Only in fifteen years can he distinguish between harm and benefit, and with the help of mankind's experience attract things advantageous to him and avoid others that are harmful. This means that man's innate duty is to be perfected through learning and to proclaim his worship of God and servitude to Him through supplication. That is to say, it is to know the answers of the questions: "Through whose compassion is my life so wisely administered in this way? Through whose generosity am I so kindly raised? Through whose graciousness am I so delicately nurtured and ministered to?" It is to beseech and supplicate the Provider of Needs through the tongue of impotence and poverty; it is to seek from Him. It is to fly to the high station of worship and servitude to God on the wings of impotence and poverty.

**This means that man came to this world to be perfected by means of knowledge and supplication.** In regard to his nature and abilities everything is tied to knowledge. **And the foundation, source, light, and spirit of all true knowledge is knowledge of God, and its essence and basis is belief in God.**

Furthermore, since man is subject to endless tribulations and afflicted with innumerable enemies despite his boundless impotence, and suffers from endless needs and has innumerable desires despite his boundless poverty, after belief, his fundamental innate duty is supplication. As for supplication, it is the basis of worship of God and servitude to Him. In order to secure a desire or wish he cannot obtain, a child will either cry or ask for it, that is, he will supplicate through the tongue of his impotence either actively or verbally, and

will be successful in securing it. In the same way, man is like a delicate, petted child in the world of living creatures. He has to either weep at the Court of the Most Merciful and Compassionate One through his weakness and impotence, or supplicate through his poverty and need, so that the things he wants may be made subject to him, or he may offer thanks for their being made so. Otherwise like a silly child who creates a fuss over a fly, saying: "With my own strength I subjugate things it is not possible to subjugate and things a thousand times more powerful, and I make them obey me through my own ideas and measures," he displays ingratitude for the bounties. And just as this is contrary to man's innate nature, so he makes himself deserving of severe punishment.

## FIFTH POINT

Belief necessitates supplication as a certain means of securing needs, and both human nature has an intense desire for it, and Almighty God decrees,

***Say: My Sustainer would not concern Himself with you but for your supplication, (Qur'an, 25:77.)***

which has the meaning of: What importance would you have if you did not offer Me supplications? He also commands:

*Call upon Me and I will answer you. (Qur'an, 40:60.)*

If you say: We frequently offer supplications, but they are not accepted. But the verse is general, it states that every supplication is answered.

**The Answer: To answer is one thing, to accept is something quite different.** Every supplication is answered, but its

being accepted and exactly what was sought being given is dependent on Almighty God's wisdom. For example, if a sick child calls the doctor, saying: "Doctor! Doctor!", and he replies: "Here I am, what do you want?", and the child says: "Give me that medicine!", the doctor will either give him exactly what he asks for or something better and more beneficial for him. Or knowing that medicine is harmful for his illness, he will give him nothing.

Thus, since Almighty God is all-present and all-seeing, He responds to the supplications of His servants. Through His presence and response, He transforms the desolation of loneliness and solitude into familiarity. But He does this, not in accordance with man's capricious and importunate demands, but in accordance with the requirements of dominical wisdom; He gives either what is sought or what is better than it, or He gives nothing at all.

**Also, supplication is a form of worship and recognition of man's servitude to God. The fruits of this pertain to the hereafter.** The aims pertaining to this world are the times of a particular sort of supplication and worship. For example, the prayers and supplications for rain are a form of worship. Drought is the time for such worship. Worship and supplications of this sort are not in order to bring rain. If they are performed with that intention alone they are not worthy of acceptance, for they are not sincere worship. Sunset is the time of the evening prayers. And eclipses of the sun and moon are the times of two particular prayers known *assalat al-kusuf* and *salat al-khusuf*. That is to say, with the veiling of the two luminous signs of the night and day, God's tremendousness is proclaimed, so Almighty God calls his servants to a sort of worship at those times. The prayers are not so that the sun and moon will be revealed (whose appearance and how long the eclipses will continue have anyway been reckoned by astronomers).

In just the same way, drought is the time for the prayers for rain, and the visitation of calamities and infliction of harmful things the times of certain supplications when man realizes his impotence



and through his supplication and entreaty seeks refuge at the Court of One Possessing Absolute Power. Even if the calamities are not lifted despite many supplications, it may not be said that they were not accepted. It should rather be said that the time for the supplication is not yet over. If through His graciousness and munificence Almighty God removes the calamity, light upon light, then the time for that supplication is over and done with. That is to say, supplication has the meaning of worship and man's acknowledging his servitude to God.

**As for worship and servitude to God, it should be purely and sincerely for God's sake.** Man should only proclaim his impotence and seek refuge with Him through supplication, he should not interfere in His dominicality. He should leave the taking of measures to Him and rely on His wisdom. He should not accuse His Mercy.

Indeed, what is in reality established by the Qur'an's clear verses is that just as all beings offer their own particular glorification and worship, so what rises to the Divine Court from all the universe is supplication. **This is either through the tongue of innate ability** like the supplication of plants and animals, through they seek forms from the Absolute Bestower and to display and manifest His Names. **Or it is through the tongue of innate need.** These are the supplications for all their essential needs -beyond their power to obtain- offered by animate beings. Through this tongue, the animate beings seek certain things from the Absolutely Generous One for the continuance of their lives, like a sort of sustenance. **Or it is supplication through the tongue of exigency,** through which all beings with spirits who find themselves in some plight or predicament make supplication and seek urgent refuge with an unknown protector; indeed, they turn to the All-Compassionate Sustainer. If there is nothing to prevent it, these three sorts of supplication are always accepted.

**The fourth sort of supplication is the most well-known; it is our supplication.** This too is of two sorts: one is active and by disposition, and the other, verbal and with the heart. For example, having recourse to causes is an active prayer. To gather together causes is not in order to create the effect, but through the tongue of disposition to take up an acceptable position in order to seek the effect from Almighty God. To plough a field is to knock at the door of the treasury of mercy. Since this sort of active supplication is directed towards the Absolutely Generous One's Name and title, it is accepted in the great majority of cases.

The second sort is to offer supplication with the tongue and the heart. It is to seek certain wishes which the hand cannot reach. **The most important aspect, the most beautiful aim, the sweetest fruit of this is this:"The one who offers the supplications knows that there is Someone Who hears the wishes of his heart, Whose hand can reach all things, Who can bring about each of his desires, Who takes pity on his impotence, and answers his poverty."**

O impotent, needy man! Do not neglect a means like supplication, which is the key to the treasury of mercy and to an inexhaustible strength. Cling to it! Rise to the highest peaks of humanity! Include in your supplications those of all the universe, like a king! *Say, From You alone do we seek help, (Qur'an, 1:4.)* like a servant and deputy representing all the universe! Be on the Most Excellent Pattern of creation!

\* \* \*

## SECOND CHAPTER

Including Five Remarks with Respect to Man's Happiness and Misery

[Since man has been created on the most excellent of patterns and has been given most comprehensive abilities, he has been cast into an arena of trial and examination in which he may rise or fall to stations, ranks, and degrees from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, from the earth to the Divine Throne, and from minute particles to the sun. He has been sent to this world as a miracle of Divine Power, the result of creation, and a wonder of Divine art before whom have been opened two roads leading either to infinite ascent or infinite descent. We shall explain the mystery of this awesome progress and decline of man's in five 'Remarks'.]

### FIRST REMARK

Man stands in need of most of the varieties of beings in the universe and is connected to them. His needs spread through every part of the world, and his desires extend to eternity. Just as he wants a flower, so he wants the spring. Just as he desires a garden, so does he also desire everlasting Paradise. Just as he longs to see a friend, so does he long to see the All-Beauteous One of Glory. Just as in order to visit one he loves who lives somewhere else, he is in need for his beloved's door to be opened to him, so too in order to visit the ninety-nine per cent of his friends who have travelled to the intermediate realm and so be saved from eternal separation, he needs to seek refuge at the court of an Absolutely Powerful One Who will close the door of this huge world and open the door of the hereafter, which is an exhibition of wonders, and remove this world and establish the hereafter in its place.

Thus for man in this position the only True Object of Worship will be One in Whose hand are the reins of all things, with Whom are the treasuries of all things, Who sees all things, and is present everywhere, who is beyond space, exempt from impotence,

free of fault, and far above all defect; an All-Powerful One of Glory, an All-Compassionate One of Beauty, an All-Wise One of Perfection.

O man, if you are the slave of Him alone, you will earn a place superior to all creatures. But if you hold back from this servitude to Him, you will become an abased slave to impotent creatures. If you rely on your ego and own power and abandoning reliance on God and supplication, deviate into pride and boasting, then you will fall lower than an ant or bee in regard to goodness and creation, and become weaker than a spider or a fly. You will become heavier than a mountain in regard to evil and destruction, and more harmful than a pestilence.

**Yes, O man! You have two aspects: one is that of creation, good, acts, and positivity. The other is the aspect of destruction, non-existence, evil, negativity, and passivity.** In regard to the first aspect, you are lower than a bee or sparrow, and weaker than a spider or fly. Whereas in regard to the second aspect, you surpass the mountains, earth, and skies; you take on a burden before which they expressed their impotence and from which they shrank, and you assume a sphere more extensive and vaster than them. For when you create and do good, you are able to do so only to the extent of your own power and strength and to the degree your hand can reach. But when you commit evil and destruction, then your evil overwhelms and your destruction spreads.

For example, unbelief is an evil, a destruction, an absence of affirmation. But that single evil comprises insulting the whole universe, belittling all the Divine Names, and abusing all humanity. For these beings have elevated positions and important duties; they are dominical missives, Divine mirrors, and Divine officials. But unbelief dismisses them from their rank of being mirrors, officials changed with duties, and bearing meanings, and reduces them to the level of futility and being the playthings of chance. And through the destruction of death and separation, it lowers them to the degree of

being swiftly decaying ephemeral matter lacking all importance and value, to being nothing. So too through denial it insults the Divine Names, the inscriptions, manifestations, and beauties of which are to be seen throughout the universe and in the mirrors of beings. And it casts down to a position more abased and weaker, more powerless and needy than the lowliest transient animal the one who holds the rank of God's vicegerent on earth, known as man. For man is a well-composed ode of wisdom proclaiming the manifestations of the Sacred Divine Names, and a seed-like self-evident miracle of Divine power containing all the members of an eternal tree, and who, with assuming the 'Supreme Trust,' rose to being higher than the earth, sky and mountains and gained superiority over the angels. It reduces him to the level of being a common sign-board lacking all meaning, confused, and swiftly decaying.

**In Short:** In regard to destruction and evil, the evil-commanding soul may commit infinite crimes, but concerning creativity and good, its power is extremely little and partial. Yes, he may destroy a house in one day, while it cannot be built in a hundred. However, if the soul gives up egoism and seeks good and existence from Divine assistance, and if it foregoes evil and destruction and relying on the soul, and seeking forgiveness becomes a true slave of God's, then it will manifest the meaning of the verse,

*God will change their evil into good. (Qur'an, 25:70.)*

Its infinite capacity for evil will be transformed into an infinite capacity for good. It will acquire the value of the Most Excellent of Patterns and ascend to the highest of the high.

O heedless man! See Almighty God's munificence and generosity! Although it would be justice to record one evil as a thousand and a single good deed as one or not at all, He records a single evil as one, and a single good deed as ten, and sometimes as seventy or seven hundred, or even sometimes as seven thousand. You will also understand from this Remark that to be sent to Hell,

which is so dreadful, is retribution for the deed and pure justice, while to be sent to Paradise is pure generosity.

## SECOND REMARK

**Man has two faces: one, concerning his ego, looks to the life of this world. The other, concerning worship and servitude to God, looks to eternal life.** In respect to the first face he is a wretched creature whose capital consists only of the following: of will he has only a partial power of choice like a hair; of power, a weak ability to acquire; of life, a fast dying flame; of a life-span, a fleeting brief spell; and of being, a swiftly decaying small body. Together with this, he is one delicate, weak individual out of the innumerable individuals of the numberless varieties of beings dispersed through the levels of the universe.

In respect of the second face and especially his impotence and poverty, which are turned towards worship, man has truly great breadth and vast importance. For the All-Wise Creator has included in man's nature an infinitely vast impotence and boundlessly huge poverty, so that he can be an extensive mirror containing the innumerable manifestations of an All-Powerful and Compassionate One Whose power is infinite, an All-Generous All-Rich One Whose wealth is boundless.

Indeed, man resembles a seed. This seed has been given significant immaterial members by Divine power and a subtle, valuable programme by Divine Determining, so that it may work beneath the ground, and emerging from that narrow world, enter the broad world of the air, and asking its Creator with the tongue of its disposition to be a tree, find a perfection worthy of it. If, due to bad temperament, the seed uses the immaterial members given it in attracting certain harmful substances under the ground, in a short time it will rot and decay in that narrow place without benefit. But if the seed conforms to the creational command of,

*God is the Splitter of the seed-grain and date-stone (Qur'an, 6:95.)*

and employs well those immaterial members, it will emerge from that narrow world, and through becoming a large fruit-bearing tree, its tiny particular reality and its spirit will take on the form of an extensive universal reality.

Similarly, significant members and valuable programmes have been deposited in man's nature by Divine power and determining. If man uses those immaterial members on the desires of his soul and on minor pleasures under the soil of worldly life in the narrow confines of this earthly world, he will decay and decompose in the midst of difficulties in a brief life in a constricted place like the rotted seed, and load the responsibility on his unfortunate spirit, then depart from this world.

If, however, he nurtures the seed of his abilities with the water of Islam and light of belief under the soil of worship and servitude to God, conforms to the commands of the Qur'an, and turns his faculties towards their true aims, they will produce branches and buds in the World of Similitudes and the Intermediate Realm; he will be a seed of great value and a shining machine containing the members of an everlasting tree and permanent truth which will be the means to innumerable perfections and bounties in Paradise. And he will be a blessed and luminous fruit of the tree of the universe.

**Yes, true progress is to turn the faces of the heart, spirit, intellect, and even the imagination and other subtle faculties given to man towards eternal life and for each to be occupied with the particular duty of worship worthy of it. Progress is not as the people of misguidance imagine, to plunge into the life of this world in all its minute details and in order to taste every sort of pleasure, even the basest, make subject to the evil-commanding soul all the subtle faculties and the heart and**

**intellect, and make them assist it; to do this is not progress, it is decline.** I saw this fact in a vision which is described in the following comparison:

I was entering a large town when I looked and saw it was full of large palaces. At the doors of some of these palaces was merry-making like a brilliant theatre; it captured and held everyone's attention and was entertaining them. I looked carefully and saw that the lord of such a palace had come to the door; he was playing with a dog and assisting the merry-making. The ladies were indulging in sweet conversation with ill-mannered youths. Grown-up girls were organizing the children's games. And the doorkeeper had taken the role of directing the others. I then realized that the inside of the huge palace was completely empty. Its refined duties all remained undone. The morals of its inhabitants had declined so that they had taken on these roles at the door.

I passed on until I came to another large palace. I saw that there was a faithful dog stretched out at the door and a stern and taciturn doorkeeper; it had an undistinguished appearance. I was curious: why was the other the way it was and this palace like this? I went inside. Then I saw that the inside was very merry. Apartment over apartment, the people of the palace were busy with their different refined duties. The men in the first apartment were overseeing the administration and running of the palace. In the apartment over that, girls were teaching the children. Above that the ladies were occupied with fine arts and beautiful embroideries. And on the top floor, the lord was exchanging news with the king, and was busy with his own elevated duties in order to maintain the peoples' tranquillity and his own attainments and progress. They did not stop me since I was not visible to them, and I was able to wander around. Then I came out and looked around: everywhere in the town were these two sorts of palaces. I asked about this and they told me: "The palaces where there is merry-making at the door and whose insides are empty belong to the foremost of the unbelievers and people of misguidance. The others belong to honourable Muslim



notables." Then in one corner I came across a palace on which was written my name, SAID. I was curious. I looked more closely and I as though saw my image on it. Calling out in utter bewilderment, I came to my senses and awoke.

And now I shall interpret this vision for you. May God cause good to come of it.

The town was human social life and the city of man's civilization. Each of the palaces was a human being. The people of the palaces were the subtle faculties in man like the eyes, ears, heart, inner heart, spirit, intellect, and things like the soul and caprice, and powers of lust and anger. Each of man's faculties has a different duty of worship, and different pleasures and pains. The soul and caprice and powers of lust and anger are like the doorkeeper and the dog. Thus, to make the elevated subtle faculties subject to the soul and caprice and make them forget their fundamental duties is certainly decline and not progress. You can interpret the rest for yourself.

### THIRD REMARK

**In regard to his acts and deeds and his labour man is a weak animal, an impotent creature.** The extent of his power of disposal and ownership in this respect is so narrow that it is no greater than as far as his hand can reach. Domestic animals, even, the reins of which have been given to man, have each taken a share of his weakness, impotence, and laziness, so that if they are compared with their wild counterparts, a great difference is apparent. (Like domestic goats and cattle, and wild goats and cattle). But in regard to passivity, acceptance, supplication, and entreaty, man is an honoured traveller in this hostel of the world. He is the guest of One so generous that infinite treasuries of mercy have been opened to him and innumerable unique beings and servants subjugated to him. And

a sphere so large has been prepared for this guest's recreation, amusement, and benefit that half its diameter is as long and broad as the imagination can stretch.

**Thus, if man relies on his ego, and making worldly life his goal, attempts to taste temporary pleasures while struggling to make his living, he becomes submerged within an extremely constricted sphere, then departs.** All the members, systems, and faculties given him will testify against him at the resurrection and will bring a suit against him. Whereas if he knows himself to be a guest and spends the capital of his life within the sphere of permission of the Generous One of Whom he is the guest, he will strive for a long, eternal life within a broad sphere, then take his rest and ease. And later, he may rise to the highest of the high.

Moreover, all the members and systems given to man will be happy with him and testify in favour of him in the hereafter. For sure, all the wonderful faculties given to men were not for this insignificant worldly life, but for an everlasting life of great significance. For if we compare man with the animals, we see that man is very rich in regard to faculties and members, a hundred times more so than the animals. But in the pleasures of worldly life and in animal life he falls a hundred times lower. For in each pleasure he receives is the trace of thousands of pains. The pains of the past and fears of the future and the pain at each pleasure's passing spoil the enjoyment to had from them, and leave a trace in the pleasure. But animals are not like that. They receive pleasure with no pains. They take enjoyment with no sorrow. Neither the sorrows of the past cause them suffering, nor the fears of the future distress them. They live peacefully, and offer thanks to their Creator.

**This means that if man, who is created on the most excellent of patterns, restricts his thought to the life of this world, he falls a hundred times lower than a creature like a sparrow, although he is higher than the animals.** I explained this fact in

another place by means of a comparison. It is related to this, so I shall repeat it here. It was like this:

A man gave one of his servants ten pieces of gold and told him to have a suit of clothes made in a particular cloth. Then to a second one, he gave a thousand pieces of gold, and putting in the servant's pocket a note on which certain things were written, sent him to a market. The first servant bought an excellent suit of the finest cloth with the ten pieces of gold. While the second servant did not use his head, and looking at the first servant and not reading the account-note in his pocket, he gave the thousand pieces of gold to a shop keeper and asked for a suit of clothes. The dishonest shopkeeper gave him a suit of the very worst-quality cloth. Then the wretched servant returned to his lord and received a severe reprimand and a terrible punishment.

Thus, even the most unintelligent will understand that the thousand pieces of gold given the second servant were not to buy a suit of clothes, but for some important trade.

In just the same way, each of the immaterial members and subtle faculties in man have expanded to a degree a hundred times greater than that of the animals. For example, consider faculties and members like man's eyes, which can discern all the degrees of beauty, and his sense of taste, which can distinguish all the varieties of the particular tastes of foods, and his mind, which can penetrate to all the subtlest points of reality, and his heart, which yearns for every sort of perfection, and then consider the extremely simple members of the animals which have developed only one or two degrees. There is just this difference, that in animals a member particular to some function and special to a particular species develops more. But this development is particular.

**The reason for man's wealth in regard to faculties is this: by reason of the mind and thought, man's senses and feelings have greatly developed and expanded. And numerous emotions**

**have come into being because of the multiplicity of his needs. And his senses have become extremely diverse. And because of the comprehensiveness of his nature, desires have appeared turned towards numerous aims. And because he has numerous duties due to his nature, his members and faculties have expanded greatly. And since he has been created with a nature capable of performing every sort of worship, he has been given abilities which embrace the seeds of all perfections.**

Thus, this great wealth in faculties and abundant capital was certainly not given for procuring this temporary worldly life. **Rather, man's fundamental duty is to perform his duties, which look to innumerable aims; and proclaim his impotence, poverty, and faults in the form of worship; and observing the glorifications of beings with a universal eye, to bear witness to them; and seeing the instances of the assistance of the Most Merciful One, to offer thanks; and gazing on the miracles of dominical power in beings, to contemplate on them as objects from which lessons may be drawn.**

O man who worships this world, is the lover of worldly life, and is heedless of the meaning of 'the most excellent of patterns'! The Old Said saw the reality of worldly life in a vision. It transformed him into the New Said. You too listen to it in the form of a comparison:

I saw that I was a traveller and was going on a long journey; that is to say, I was being sent. The one who was my lord gradually gave me some of the money from the sixty gold pieces he had allotted me. I spent them, and came to a hostel where there were amusements of all kinds. In one night in that hostel I spent ten pieces of gold on gambling, amusements, and the enjoyment of fame. In the morning I had no money left. Moreover I had done no trade nor bought any goods for the place I was going. All that remained to me from the money were sins and pains, and from the amusements,

wounds and sorrow. While in that sorry state, a man suddenly appeared. He said to me:

"You have wasted all your capital and deserve punishment. You are going to your destination bankrupt and with your hands empty. But if you have any sense, the door of repentance is open. When you receive the fifteen pieces of gold that remain to you, keep half of them in reserve. That is, obtain the things necessary for you in the place where you are going."

I looked, my soul did not agree to this.

So he said: "A third, then."

My soul still did not obey him.

Then he said: "A quarter."

My soul could not give up the habits to which it was addicted, so the man angrily turned his back on me and left.

Suddenly, the scene changed. I was in a train in a tunnel, which was travelling fast as though downwards vertically. I took fright. But what could I do, there was no escape anywhere. Strangely, attractive flowers and enticing fruits appeared on both sides of the train. And I, like the foolish and inexperienced, looked at them and stretching out my hand, tried to pick them. But they were covered in thorns and tore at my hands when I touched them making them bleed. With the movement of the train, my hands were lacerated at being parted from them. They cost me much. Suddenly a porter on the train said:

"Give me five *kurush* and I shall give you as much of the flowers and fruits as you want. You are caused the loss of a hundred *kurush* with your hands being torn, rather than five *kurush*. Also there is a penalty; you cannot pick them without permission."

In distress I put my head out of the window and looked ahead to see when the tunnel would end. I saw that in place of the tunnel's entrance were numerous holes. People were being thrown into them from the long train. I saw a hole opposite me. On either side of it was a gravestone. I looked in amazement. I saw that written on one of the gravestones was the name SAID. In my bewilderment and anxiety I exclaimed: "Alas!" Then suddenly I heard the voice of the man who had given me advice at the door of the hostel. He asked: "Have you come to your senses?" I replied: "Yes, but it is too late now."

So he said: "Repent and place your trust in God."

I replied that I would. Then I awoke and saw myself as the New Said; the Old Said had disappeared.

So, that was the vision. May God cause good to come of it! I shall interpret one or two parts of it, then you can interpret the rest for yourself.

The journey was the journey which passes from the World of Spirits, through the mother's womb, youth, old age, the grave, the Intermediate Realm, the resurrection, and the Bridge of Sirat towards eternity. The sixty pieces of gold were the sixty years of life. I reckoned I saw the vision when I was forty-five years old. I had nothing to guarantee it, but a sincere student of the All-Wise Qur'an advised me to spend half of the fifteen that remained to me on the hereafter. The hostel for me was Istanbul. The train was time, and each year a carriage. As for the tunnel, it was the life of this world. The thorny flowers and fruits were illicit pleasures and forbidden amusements which cause pain while indulging in them on thinking of their passing, and on separation lacerate the heart, making it bleed. They also cause a punishment to be inflicted. The porter on the train told me to give him five *kurush* so that he would give me as many as I wanted.

The meaning of this is as follows: the pleasures and enjoyment man receives through licit striving within the sphere of what is lawful are sufficient for him. No need remains to enter the unlawful. You may interpret the rest for yourself.

#### **FOURTH REMARK**

**Man resembles a delicate and petted child in the universe. There is a great strength in his weakness and great power in his impotence. For it is through the strength of his weakness and power of his impotence that beings have been subjected to him.** If man understands his weakness and offers supplications verbally and by state and conduct, and recognizes his impotence and seeks help, since he has offered thanks by exhibiting them, he achieves his aims and his desires are subjugated to him in a way far exceeding what he could achieve with his own power. Only, he sometimes wrongly attributes to his own power the attainment of a wish that has been obtained for him through the supplications offered by the tongue of his disposition. For example, the strength in the weakness of a chick causes the mother hen to attack a lion. And its newly-born lion cub subjugates to itself the savage and hungry lioness, leaving the mother hungry and the cub full. See this strength in weakness and manifestation of Divine mercy, which are worthy of notice!

Just as through crying or asking or looking unhappy, a child subjugates the strong to himself, and is so successful in getting what he wants that he could not obtain one thousandth of it with a thousand times his own strength. That is to say, since weakness and impotence excite compassion and a sense of protection towards him, the child can subjugate heroes to himself with his tiny finger. Now, should such a child with foolish conceit deny the compassion and accuse the protection saying: "I subjugate these with my own strength", of course he will receive a slap.

In the same way, if, like Qarun, man says:

*I have been given it on account of the knowledge I have,  
(Qur'an, 28:78.)*

that is, "I gained this through my own knowledge and my own power" in a way that demonstrates ingratitude and denies his Creator's mercy and accuses His wisdom, he will of course deserve a punishing blow. This means that man's domination and human advances and the attainments of civilization, which are to be observed, have been made subject to him not through his attracting them or conquering them or through combat, but due to his weakness. He has been assisted because of his impotence. They have been bestowed on him due to his indigence. He has been inspired with them due to his ignorance. They have been given him due to his need. And the reason for his domination is not strength and the power of knowledge, but the compassion and clemency of the Sustainer and Divine mercy and wisdom: they have subjugated things to him. Yes, what clothes man, who is defeated by vermin like eyeless scorpions and legless snakes, in silk from a tiny worm and feeds him honey from a poisonous insect is not his own power, but the subjugation of the Sustainer and the bestowal of the Most Merciful, which are the fruits of his weakness.

**O man! Since the reality of the matter is thus, give up egotism and arrogance. With the tongue of seeking help proclaim your impotence and weakness at the Divine Court, and with the tongue of entreaty and supplication, your poverty and need. Show that you are His slave. Say:**

*God is enough for us, for He is the Best Disposer of Affairs,  
(Qur'an, 3:173.)*

**and rise in degree.**



Also, do not say: "I am nothing. What importance do I have that the universe should purposefully be made subject to me by an Absolutely All-Wise One, and universal thanks required of me?" Because for sure you are as though nothing with respect to your soul and form, but from the point of view of duty and rank, you are an observant spectator of this majestic universe, an eloquent, articulate tongue of these beings so full of wisdom, a discerning reader of this book of the universe, a supervisor of these creatures full of wonder at their glorifications, and like a foreman of these beings full of respect for their worship.

Yes, O man! In regard to your vegetable physical being and animal soul, you are a deaf particle, a contemptible atom, a needy creature, a weak animal, who, tossed on the awesome waves of the flood of beings, is departing. But being perfected through the light of belief, which comprises the radiance of Divine love, and through the training of Islam, which is enlightened, in regard to humanity and servitude to God, you are a king, and a universal within particularity, and within your insignificance, a world, and within your contemptibility, a supervisor of such high rank and extensive sphere that you can say: "My Compassionate Sustainer has made the world a house for me, the sun and moon lamps for it, and the spring, a bunch of flowers for me, and summer, a table of bounties, and the animals, He has made my servants. And He has made plants the decorated furnishings of my house."

**To conclude: If you heed Satan and your soul, you will fall to the lowest of the low. But if you heed Truth and the Qur'an, you will rise to the highest of the high and become the Most Excellent Pattern of the universe.**

## **FIFTH REMARK**

**Man has been sent to this world as an official and guest, and has been given abilities of great significance. And he has**

**been entrusted with important duties in accordance with those abilities. In order to employ man in fulfilling those aims and duties, powerful encouragement and severe threats have been made.** We shall here summarize the fundamentals of worship and of man's duties, which we have explained at length elsewhere, so that the mystery of '**the Most Excellent of Patterns**' may be understood.

On coming into the universe man has two aspects of worship and being a slave of God's. One is worship and contemplation in the absence of the Object of Worship. The other is worship and supplication in His presence and addressing Him directly.

**First Aspect:** It is to affirm submissively the sovereignty of dominicality apparent in the universe and to observe its perfections and virtues in wonder.

Then it is to proclaim and herald the unique arts which consist of the inscriptions of the Sacred Divine Names and to display them to others.

Then it is to weigh on the scales of perception the jewels of the dominical Names, which are all like hidden treasures; it is to appreciatively affirm their value with the discerning heart.

Then it is to study and ponder over in wonder the pages of beings and leaves of the earth and sky, which are like missives of the pen of power.

Then through beholding admiringly the adornment and subtle arts in beings, it is to feel love for knowledge of their All-Beauteous Creator, and to yearn to ascend to the presence of their All-Perfect Maker and to receive His favours.

**Second Aspect:** This is the station of presence and address wherein man passes from the work to the producer of the work and he sees that an All-Beauteous Maker wants to make himself known

and acquainted through the miracles of His own art, and he responds with knowledge and belief.

Then he sees that an All-Compassionate Sustainer wants to make himself loved through the fine fruits of His mercy. So through confining his love and worship to Him, he makes himself love Him.

Then he sees that an All-Generous Bestower is nurturing him with the delights of bounties material and immaterial, and in return he offers Him thanks and praise with his actions, conduct, words, and as far as he can, with all his senses and faculties.

Then he sees that an All-Beauteous and Glorious One is announcing His tremendousness and perfections, and glory and beauty in the mirrors of these beings, and is drawing attentive gazes to them. So in response he declares: "God is Most Great! Glory be to God!", and in humility prostrates in love and wonder.

Then he sees that a Possessor of Absolute Riches is displaying His boundless wealth and treasures amid an absolute munificence. So in response, exalting and praising Him, he entreats and asks for them, expressing his utter need.

Then he sees that the All-Glorious Creator has made the face of the earth like an exhibition and displayed on it all His antique works of art. So in response he exclaims in appreciation: "What wonders God has willed!", and in admiration: "What blessings God has bestowed!", and in wonder: "Glory be to God!", and in astonishment: "God is Most Great!"

Then he sees that in His palace of the universe a Single One of Unity has struck seals of unity on all beings with His inimitable signature, and with His stamps, signets, and cyphers particular to Him; that He inscribes the signs of His unity; and planting the banner of unity in every region of the world, He proclaims His dominicality.

And he responds with assent, belief, submission, worship, and affirmation of His unity.

Thus, through worship and contemplation of this kind he becomes a true man. He shows that he is on the Most Excellent of Patterns. Through the auspiciousness of belief he becomes a reliable vicegerent of God's on earth worthy of bearing the Trust.

O heedless man created on the Most Excellent of Patterns, who, through the misuse of his will is descending to the lowest of the low! Listen to me! In the heedlessness induced by the intoxication of youth I, like you, thought the world was fine and lovely. Then the moment I awoke in the morning of old age, I saw how ugly was the world's face that was not turned towards the hereafter, which I had previously imagined to be beautiful. To see this and how beautiful was its true face, which looks to the hereafter, you may refer to the two 'Signboards' in the Second Station of the Seventeenth Word, and see for yourself.

*The First Signboard* depicts the reality of the world of the people of neglect, which long ago, like the people of misguidance, I saw through the veil of heedlessness, but without being intoxicated.

*The Second Signboard* indicates the reality of the worlds of the people of guidance. I left it in the form it was written long ago. It resembles poetry, but it is not truly that...

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 2:32.)*

*O My Sustainer! Expand for me my breast \* Make easy for me my affair \* And loosen the knot on my tongue \* That they may understand my words. (Qur'an, 20:25-8.)*

*O God! Grant blessings to the subtle unitary Muhammadan essence, the Sun in the skies of mysteries and manifestation of lights, the centre of the orbit of glory and the pole of the sphere of beauty. O God! By his mystery in Your presence and by his journeying to You, succour my fear, and right my stumbling, and dispel my grief and my greed, and be mine, and take me from myself to Yourself, and bestow on me annihilation from myself, and do not make me captivated by my soul and veiled by my senses, and reveal to me all hidden secrets, O Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One! O Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One! O Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One! And grant mercy to me and to my companions and to the people of belief and the Qur'an. Amen. O Most Merciful of the Merciful and Most Generous of the Generous!*

*And the close of their prayer will be: All Praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds.*

## THE SIXTH TOPIC FROM THE ELEVENTH RAY

[This consists of a single, brief proof of the pillar of belief, 'Belief in God,' for which there are numerous decisive proofs and explanations in many places in the Risale-i Nur.]

In Kastamonu a group of high-school students came to me, saying: **"Tell us about our Creator, our teachers do not speak of God." I said to them: "All the sciences you study continuously speak of God and make known the Creator, each with its own particular tongue. Do not listen to your teachers; listen to them.**

"For example, a well-equipped pharmacy with life-giving potions and cures in every jar weighed out in precise and wondrous measures doubtless shows an extremely skilful, practised, and wise pharmacist. In the same way, to the extent that it is bigger and more perfect and better stocked than the pharmacy in the market-place, the pharmacy of the globe of the earth with its living potions and medicaments in the jars which are the four hundred thousand species of plants and animals shows and makes known to eyes that are blind even -by means of the measure or scale of the science of medicine that you study- the All-Wise One of Glory, Who is the Pharmacist of the mighty pharmacy of the earth.

"To take another example; a wondrous factory which weaves thousands of sorts of cloth from a simple material doubtless makes known a manufacturer and skilful mechanic. In the same way, to whatever extent it is larger and more perfect than the human factory, this travelling dominical machine known as the globe of the earth with its hundreds of thousands of heads, in each of which are hundreds of thousands of factories, shows and makes known -by means of the measure or scale of the science of engineering which you study- its Manufacturer and Owner.

"And, for example, a depot, store, or shop in which has been brought together and stored up in regular and orderly fashion a

thousand and one varieties of provisions undoubtedly makes known a wondrous owner, proprietor, and overseer of provisions and foodstuffs. In just the same way, to whatever degree it is vaster and more perfect than such a store or factory, this foodstore of the Most Merciful One known as the globe of the earth, this Divine ship, this dominical depot and shop holding goods, equipment, and conserved food, which in one year travels regularly an orbit of twenty-four thousand years, and carrying groups of beings requiring different foods and passing through the seasons on its journey and filling the spring with thousands of different provisions like a huge waggon, brings them to the wretched animate creatures whose sustenance has been exhausted in winter, -by means of the measure or scale of the science of economics which you study- this depot of the earth makes known and makes loved its Manager, Organizer, and Owner.

"And, for example, let us imagine an army which consists of four hundred thousand nations, and each nation requires different provisions, uses different weapons, wears different uniforms, undergoes different drill, and is discharged from its duties differently. If this army and camp has a miracle-working commander who on his own provides all those different nations with all their different provisions, weapons, uniforms, and equipment without forgetting or confusing any of them, then surely the army and camp show the commander and make him loved appreciatively. In just the same way, the spring camp of the face of the earth in which every spring a newly recruited Divine army of the four hundred thousand species of plants and animals are given their varying uniforms, rations, weapons, training, and demobilizations in utterly perfect and regular fashion by a single Commander-in-Chief Who forgets or confuses not one of them -to whatever extent the spring camp of the face of the earth is vaster and more perfect than that human army, - by means of the measure or scale of the military science that you study- it makes known to the attentive and sensible, its Ruler, Sustainer, Administrator, and Most Holy Commander, causing wonderment and acclaim, and makes Him loved and praised and glorified.

"Another example: millions of electric lights that move and travel through a wondrous city, their fuel and power source never being exhausted, self-evidently make known a wonder-working craftsman and extraordinarily talented electrician who manages the electricity, makes the moving lamps, sets up the power source, and brings the fuel; they cause others to congratulate and applaud him, and to love him. In just the same way, although some of the lamps of the stars in the roof of the palace of the world in the city of the universe -if they are considered in the way that astronomy says- are a thousand times larger than the earth and move seventy times faster than a cannon-ball, they do not spoil their order, nor collide with one another, nor become extinguished, nor is their fuel exhausted. According to astronomy, which you study, for our sun to continue burning, which is a million times larger than the earth and a million times older and is a lamp and stove in one guest-house of the Most Merciful One, as much oil as the seas of the earth and as much coal as its mountains or as many logs and much wood as ten earths are necessary for it not to be extinguished. And however much greater and more perfect than this example are the electric lamps of the palace of the world in the majestic city of the universe, which point with their fingers of light to an infinite power and sovereignty which illuminates the sun and other lofty stars like it without oil, wood, or coal, not allowing them to be extinguished or to collide with one another, though travelling together at speed, to that degree -by means of the measure of the science of electricity which you either study or will study- they testify to and make known the Monarch, Illuminator, Director, and Maker of the mighty exhibition of the universe; they make Him loved, glorified, and worshipped.

"And, for example, take a book in every line of which a whole book is finely written, and in every word of which a sura of the Qur'an is inscribed with a fine pen. Being most meaningful with all of its matters corroborating one another, and a wondrous collection showing its writer and author to be extraordinarily skilful and capable, it undoubtedly shows its writer and author together with



all his perfections and arts as clearly as daylight, and makes him known. It makes him appreciated with phrases like, "What wonders God has willed!" and "Blessed be God!" Just the same is the mighty book of the universe; we see with our eyes a pen at work which writes on the face of the earth, which is a single of its pages, and on the spring, which is a single folio, the three hundred thousand plant and animal species, which are like three hundred thousand different books, all together, one within the other, without fault or error, without mixing them up or confusing them, perfectly and with complete order, and sometimes writes an ode in a word like a tree, and the complete index of a book in a point-like seed. However much vaster and more perfect and meaningful than the book in the example mentioned above is this compendium of the universe and mighty embodied Qur'an of the world, which is infinitely full of meaning and in every word of which are numerous instances of wisdom, to that degree -in accordance with the extensive measure and far-seeing vision of the natural science that you study and the sciences of reading and writing that you have practised at school- it makes known the Inscraper and Author of the book of the universe together with His infinite perfections. Proclaiming "God is Most Great!", it makes Him known. Uttering phrases like "Glory be to God!", it describes Him. Acclaiming Him with words like "All praise be to God!", it makes Him loved.

**"Thus, hundreds of other sciences like these make known the Glorious Creator of the universe together with His Names, each through its broad measure or scale, its particular mirror, its far-seeing eyes, and searching gaze; they make known His attributes and perfections.**

"It is in order to give instruction in this matter, which is a brilliant and magnificent proof of Divine unity, that the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition teaches us about our Creator most often with the verses, *Sustainer of the Heavens and the Earth (Qur'an, 6:1.)*, and, *He created the Heavens and Earth (Qur'an, 13:16.)*" I said this to the schoolboys, and they accepted it completely, affirming it by

saying: "Endless thanks be to God, for we have received an absolutely true and sacred lesson. May God be pleased with you!" And I said:

**"Man is a living machine who is grieved with thousands of different sorrows and receives pleasure in thousands of different ways, and despite his utter impotence has innumerable enemies, physical and spiritual, and despite his infinite poverty, has countless needs, external and inner, and is a wretched creature continuously suffering the blows of death and separation. Yet, through belief and worship, he at once becomes connected to a Monarch so Glorious he finds a point of support against all his enemies and a source of help for all his needs, and like everyone takes pride at the honour and rank of the lord to whom he is attached, you can compare for yourselves how pleased and grateful and thankful and full of pride man becomes at being connected through belief to an infinitely Powerful and Compassionate Monarch, at entering His service through worship, and transforming for himself the announcement of the execution of the appointed hour into the papers releasing him from duty."**

I repeat to the calamity-stricken prisoners what I said to the schoolboys: "One who recognizes Him and obeys Him is fortunate even if he is in prison. While one who forgets Him is wretched and a prisoner even if he resides in a palace." Even, one wronged but fortunate man said to the wretched tyrants who were executing him: **"I am not being executed but being demobilized and departing for where I shall find happiness. But I see that you are being condemned to eternal execution and am therefore taking perfect revenge on you."** And declaring: "There is no god but God!", he happily surrendered up his spirit.

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.( Qur'an, 2:32.)*

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