

Nature: Cause or Effect?

from the Risale-i Nur Collection
Humanity's Encounter with the Divine Series

Nature: Cause or Effect?

** Twenty-third Gleam*

Bediüzzaman
SAİD NURSİ

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Bediüzzaman and the Risale-i Nur

In the many dimensions of his lifetime of achievement, as well as in his personality and character, Bediüzzaman (1877-1960) was and, through his continuing influence, still is an important thinker and writer in the Muslim world. He represented in a most effective and profound way the intellectual, moral and spiritual strengths of Islam, evident in different degrees throughout its fourteen-century history. He lived for eighty-five years. He spent almost all of those years, overflowing with love and ardor for the cause of Islam, in a wise and measured activism based on sound reasoning and in the shade of the Qur'an and the Prophetic example.

Bediüzzaman lived in an age when materialism was at its peak and many crazed after communism, and the world was in great crisis. In that critical period, Bediüzzaman pointed people to the source of belief and inculcated in them a strong hope for a collective restoration. At a time when science and philosophy were used to mislead young generations into atheism, and nihilistic attitudes had a wide appeal, at a time when all this was done in the name of civilization, modernization and contemporary thinking and those who tried to resist them were subjected to the cruelest of persecutions, Bediüzzaman strove for the overall revival of a whole people, breathing into their minds and spirits whatever is taught in the institutions of both modern and traditional education and of spiritual training.

Bediüzzaman had seen that modern unbelief originated from science and philosophy, not from ignorance as previously. He wrote that nature is the collection of Divine

signs and therefore science and religion cannot be conflicting disciplines. Rather, they are two (apparently) different expressions of the same truth. Minds should be enlightened with sciences, while hearts need to be illumined by religion.

Bediüzzaman was not a writer in the usual sense of the word. He wrote his splendid work the *Risale-i Nur*, a collection exceeding 5,000 pages, because he had a mission: he struggled against the materialistic and atheistic trends of thought fed by science and philosophy and tried to present the truths of Islam to modern minds and hearts of every level of understanding. The *Risale-i Nur*, a modern commentary of the Qur'an, mainly concentrates on the existence and unity of God, the Resurrection, Prophethood, the Divine Scriptures primarily including the Qur'an, the invisible realms of existence, Divine Destiny and humanity's free will, worship, justice in human life, and humanity's place and duty among the creation.

In order to remove from people's minds and hearts the accumulated 'sediment' of false beliefs and conceptions and to purify them both intellectually and spiritually, Bediüzzaman writes forcefully and makes reiterations. He writes in neither an academic nor a didactic way; rather he appeals to feelings and aims to pour out his thoughts and ideas into people's hearts and minds in order to awaken them to belief and conviction.

This book includes selected sections from the *Risale-i Nur* collection.

On Nature or Refuting Naturalistic Atheism

[from *The Gleams*, the Twenty-third Gleam]

A reminder

The way of disbelieving naturalists is extremely irrational and based on superstitious beliefs. But why are such famous, intelligent naturalist philosophers able to accept such an obviously superstitious way of thought? The fact is that they cannot discern the reality of their way, which cannot help but yield such superstitious beliefs, although it is impossible to arrive at them reasonably or to accept them. They violently attack the Qur'an and the truths and essentials of belief, condemning whatever they cannot grasp as superstitious, and base their unbelief on nature. The Qur'anic verse, *Their Messengers said: "Can there be any doubt about God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth?"* (14: 10), which declares the existence and Oneness of God, is in fact too obvious to require discussion. Therefore, I will try to show why this is so and why it is impossible reasonably to infer the results the naturalist philosophers have arrived at with their

methods. However, since numerous proofs for the existence and Oneness of God have been elaborated in certain parts of the *Risale-i Nur*, I will offer here some other proofs and make a brief mention of some different proofs where necessary.

Introduction

O human! There are certain monstrous phrases uttered by people that imply unbelief. Some believers also use them without realizing what they actually mean. I will explain three of the most important of these.

THE FIRST: “The causes have brought it about.”

THE SECOND: “Things have formed by themselves.”

THE THIRD: “It is natural; nature necessitates and creates it.”

Indeed, since things undeniably exist, and, as clearly observed, each thing comes into existence with great artistry and many wise purposes, and since nothing is eternal or without beginning, and everything comes into existence within time, then, O unbeliever, either things, for example, that animal, have been invented by lifeless, unconscious, deaf, and blind material causes coming together in a way requiring universal knowledge, consciousness, and will, or they form by themselves, or nature, or what you call natural powers, caused it to exist. There is a fourth alternative

that combined with absolute Knowledge and Will, the Power of an All-Powerful One of Majesty has invented it. Since there is no other way to explain the existence of things other than these four, if the first three can decisively be proven to be impossible, the fourth way, which is the way of Divine Oneness, will necessarily and undoubtedly be proven true.

The first way

This is the theory that things come into existence by the coming together of material causes. Out of numerous arguments that show the falsity and impossibility of such a stance, I will mention only three.

The first impossibility

Suppose there are hundreds of jars full of quite different substances in a pharmacy. We want to make some sort of liquid medicine or ointment out of them. So we go to the pharmacy and find out what the necessary ingredients are and what amount of each we should use. We see that an extremely precise amount should be taken from every ingredient. If the minutest amount more or less is taken, both medicine and ointment will lose their special properties and be of no use.

Is it at all possible or conceivable that those jars could be knocked over by a storm and exactly the required amount from each ingredient should come

together to form the medicine and ointment demanded? Can there be something more superstitious or absurd than seeing such a coincidental formation as possible?

In this example we should think of each thing, particularly each living thing, as an animate ointment and each plant a living medicine. They are composed of numerous substances taken from a great variety of things in extremely precise amounts. Their attribution to the coincidental coming together of physical causes is much more impossible and inconceivable than the formation of any ointment or medicine as a result of the accidental coming together of substances in precisely required amounts, pouring from the jars as in the example.

In short, it is only by an all-comprehensive, limitless Wisdom, an infinite Knowledge, and an all-encompassing Will that any living thing in this vast pharmacy of the universe can be formed from the ingredients taken from substances in extremely precise amounts and measured on the scales of Divine Destiny or Determining and Decree. One who claims that they are the work of blind, deaf, and ignorant “natural causes and powers,” or elements like floods, is more stupid than the one who asserts that the medicine in the example is self-formed as the result of the jars being knocked over.

The second impossibility

If everything is attributed to “natural causes,” not to the All-Powerful One of Majesty, the One and Unique, this means that many of the physical elements and causes should be present and work in the body of every living thing or being. However, that so many different and conflicting causes and elements come together of their own accord in perfect order and extremely precise measurements in the body of even the smallest of creatures, like a tiny fly, is so obviously inconceivable that one with even the smallest bit of consciousness could say, “This is inconceivable; it cannot occur.” Indeed, the tiny body of a fly has a relationship and connection with most of the elements and causes in the universe; in fact, it is a summary or index of them. If it is not attributed to the Eternal, Powerful One, those elements and physical causes should be present and operate in it of their own accord. It is even required that they should be present and work in each of the cells of its eyes, which are tiny samples of its body. For if the causes or agents responsible for something’s existence are of a physical nature, they should be present in the immediate vicinity of, rather, inside their result. Therefore, attributing a fly to “natural” causes and elements requires that those causes and elements should be present and work in each of its cells. Even the most foolish of the people of sophistry would be ashamed of such an assumption.

The third impossibility

It is an established rule that “a single, unique thing of particular individuality can only have issued from a single, unique source.” If, in particular, a thing is a living one with a perfectly ordered and most sensitively balanced life, it will self-evidently display that it has not issued from numerous, different hands, which would be certain to cause great confusion and conflict, but rather it has issued from the Hand of a single All-Powerful, All-Wise One. Furthermore, the random coming together of innumerable inanimate, ignorant, unrestricted, unconscious, blind, and deaf “natural” causes and elements for the existence of something would only cause the increase of their blindness and deafness amidst the limitless probabilities. Therefore, attributing any being, which has a unique, particular individuality formed of innumerable elements in perfect order and a most sensitively balanced way, to such causes would be as unreasonable as accepting numberless impossibilities all at once.

Ignoring these impossibilities, physical causes or agents or powers affect something through direct contact. However, they have contact only with the exteriors of things or beings. But we see that the interiors of living beings in particular, where the hands of physical or “natural” causes or agents have no contact, are ten times better ordered, more delicate, and artistic than

their exteriors. The tiniest living things, the minutest creatures, which the hands of physical or “natural” causes and agents cannot reach and with which they do not have direct contact, not even with their exteriors, are more strange and wonderful in art and more amazing in creation than the largest creatures. This being the case, only one who is a hundred times more deaf and blind than the inanimate, ignorant, crude, distant, and conflicting causes and elements can attribute these creatures to those causes and elements.

The second way

This is the claim that things are formed by themselves. This is equally inconceivable and impossible in numerous ways. As examples, we will explain three of them.

The first impossibility

O denier of the Creator! You can accept something that is impossible as possible in numerous ways. For you exist and are not a simple, inanimate, or unchanging substance. Rather, you are like a perfectly well-ordered and continuously renewed factory or like a wonderful palace that undergoes continuous change and renewal. Innumerable particles are ceaselessly working in your body, which has connections and mutual relations with the universe, particularly in respect of the provision

and permanence of your species. The particles in your body are careful not to destroy those connections and relations. It is as if they consider the entire universe from the perspective of your relations with it and assume their positions accordingly. Therefore, if you do not accept that the particles in your body are not tiny officials moving in accordance with the law of the Eternal, All-Powerful One, or the soldiers of one of His hosts, or the nibs of the Pen of Divine Destiny, or the points of the Pen of the Divine Power, then each particle working in your eye would have to have an eye capable of seeing the whole of your body together with the whole of the universe, with which your body is connected and related. You would also have to ascribe to each particle an intelligence equivalent to that of a hundred geniuses; it would have to have the capacity to know your whole past and future, your ancestors and descendants, the origins of the elements that form your body, and the sources of your sustenance. Attributing the consciousness and knowledge of a thousand Platos to an unintelligent particle is obviously misguided.

The second impossibility

Your body also resembles a wonderful palace that has a thousand domes kept in suspense with the stones all supporting one another. Rather, your body is a thousand times more wonderful than any palace. For that

palace of your body is constantly renewed in perfect order. Even if we ignore your spirit, your heart, and other immaterial faculties, each of which is extremely wonderful, each member of your body is like a domed mansion. Supporting one another in perfect order and balance, your atoms form miracles of Art and Power, such as the eyes and the tongue. If those atoms were not officials working in perfect obedience to the orders of the Builder of that universe, then each of them would have to both dominate and be dominated by all the other atoms of the body, and be the origin of many Attributes that belong to the Necessarily Existent One exclusively, yet be both absolutely independent and dependent at the same time. Therefore, attributing any existent being, which has a unique individuality because of being a work of the Single One of Unity and Uniqueness, to the innumerable atoms that form it, is an obvious, hundred-fold impossibility.

The third impossibility

If your body had not been “written” by the Pen of the Eternal All-Powerful One, Who is One and Unique, and were rather a work of nature or “natural” causes, then there would have to be as many printing-blocks or molds of nature as the number of its cells and the compounds they form in your body contained one within the other. For example, this book in your hand has either been written by a single scribe based on his

knowledge, or if you claim that it has been formed by itself or nature, then there would have to be as many keys as the number of its letters. There are as many iron letters in a printing press as the number of the letters in the alphabet. They have to be arranged one by one in order to write a word, and therefore it can be said that as many iron letters as there are letters of a book are required for a book to produce itself. Furthermore, there is a kind of calligraphy consisting of only one large letter, yet, in which, for example, a whole Qur'anic *sura* of five or six pages can be written. This means that in order to write a single letter in a printing press, we need thousands of iron letters. Similarly, each living thing or being is like such a letter. It contains almost everything that exists in the universe. So, just as the attribution of a book to itself or to its iron letters requires those letters to come together by themselves in a conscious, meaningful way in a printing press, if we attribute a living thing or being to itself, then we would have to accept that all of the atoms or innumerable samples of the universe have come together consciously to form it. Even if we were to accept this ridiculous idea, which involves as many impossibilities as the particles of a living being, even of the universe, it is infinitely far from explaining life and its origin, or the many immaterial faculties of a conscious living being, such as reason, consciousness, and willpower.

The third way

This is the claim that “it is natural; nature necessitates it and has created it.” This claim also involves numerous impossibilities, only three of which follow:

The first impossibility

If the art and creativity observed in living beings that display infinite knowledge, wisdom, and willpower are attributed not to the Pen of Determining and the Power of the Eternal Sun but to blind, deaf, and unconscious nature and “natural powers,” this means that we accept that either nature should have present innumerable machines or printing presses in every being to invent it or nature should include in every being enough knowledge, will, power, and wisdom to create and administer the universe.

Consider that we see a reflection of the sun in every transparent thing, in every piece of glass or bubble of water. If we do not attribute the suns appearing in every transparent thing to the one and single sun in the sky, then we have to accept that in all things, even in those that are so small that they cannot contain a match head, there is a miniature sun that possesses all the qualities of the sun in the sky. In addition, we would also have to accept that there are as many suns as there are reflections of the sun in every piece of glass or every bubble in the oceans, rivers, or lakes, and so on.

In exactly the same way, if all existent things, animate or inanimate, are not attributed to the manifestations of the Names of the Eternal Sun, then we would have to accept that everything, particularly every living thing or being, has in itself a nature or a power or, quite simply, a deity, that possesses infinite knowledge, will, power, and wisdom. Such an idea is the most false and superstitious of the impossibilities in the universe. One who ascribes the Art of the Creator of the universe to unconscious nature or certain nominal powers lacks consciousness more than any other being.

The second impossibility

If all those perfectly ordered, and most artistically and wisely fashioned things and beings were attributed not to an infinitely Powerful and Wise One, but to nature, this would mean that nature should have in every bit of soil as many factories and printing presses as exist in Europe so that each bit of soil can be the means for the formation and growth of the flowers and fruit-bearing trees which grow there. For a pot of soil displays the actual capacity to give shape and form to the many different flowers whose seeds are buried in it. So, if those flowers are not attributed to the All-Powerful One of Majesty, then there would have to be a different machine for each flower in the soil.

Like sperms and eggs, all seeds are formed of the same elements. Each is a composition of oxygen, hy-

drogen, carbon and nitrogen, and is exposed to the effects of such unconscious things as air, water, heat, and light. But we see that each flower has a particular shape, smell, and color, and is completely different from others. Therefore, this requires that in that soil there should be as many factories as there are in Europe so that all those different living fabrics, thousands of various embroidered textiles, could be woven.

Thus, you can see how unreasonable are the naturalists' and materialists' claims, and how unscientific and superstitious is attributing creativity to nature or causes or to things themselves.

If you ask: How do the difficulties that arise from the attribution of existence to nature disappear when existence is attributed to the Unique, Eternally Besought-of-All? How does existence, which is inconceivable when attributed to nature, become easy and necessary when attributed to God, the One and Unique?

The answer: We have seen when explaining the existence of a sun in every transparent thing on the earth, including every drop or bubble of water in the oceans that it is inconceivable and impossible for there to be as many suns as there appears to be. But if we attribute those (reflected) suns to the single sun in the sky, it is extremely easy to explain their existence. (It can even be said that the existence of the sun makes the existence of innumerable reflected suns necessary and

inevitable.) Likewise, attributing all existent things to a Unique, Eternally Besought-of-All makes their existence so easy that we cannot help but think that their existence is necessary and inevitable. A connection between them and that Unique One is enough for their existence. But if this connection is cut off, with each thing being left to nature or to itself, then we would have to accept that in order to create a tiny creature like a fly, which is a miniature sample of the universe, blind and deaf nature should have enough knowledge, power, and wisdom to create and govern the entire universe. This is a thousand-fold impossibility.

In short, just as it is inconceivable and impossible that the Necessarily-Existent One should have any partner or like in His Divine Essence, so too is the participation or interference of others in His creation and Lordship over His creation inconceivable and impossible.

As for the second part of the question, as stated in many other parts of the *Risale-i Nur*, when existence is attributed to the Single One of Uniqueness, then the being of all things becomes as easy as that of a single thing. But if it is attributed to “natural” causes or nature, it becomes as difficult for each thing to exist as it is for all things.

When a person joins the military or is connected to the state as an official, that person can be the means for the fulfillment of duties that exceed their own individ-

ual power and influence by a hundred thousand times. They can even take a king captive in the name of the state. Yet this person does not, nor are they compelled to, carry the equipment and power necessary to fulfill all the duties in which they play a part. By reason of their connection, the army, which is their point of support, carries such necessities. Therefore, any duties this one person carries out may be as great as those of the army or state. It is just like an ant as an official of God being able to destroy the palace of the Pharaoh, or a fly killing Nimrod, or a pine seed, the size of a grain of wheat, producing all the parts of a huge pine tree.¹ If the connection of the person with the army is severed, leaving them to their own devices, then either their power will be restricted to themselves, or they will have to carry all the equipment belonging to the army and possess its power if they are required to carry out the same duties as they do as a member of the army. Even the clowns who invent stories and fantasies to make people laugh would be too ashamed to relate the second case.

¹ Due to its connection with the Creator, that seed works under the command of Divine Destiny or Determining and is the means for the fulfillment of many extraordinary duties. If that connection is cut off, the creation of the seed requires more capacity, equipment, and skill than it takes to create a huge pine tree. For all the parts of the pine tree, which is a work of Divine Power, would be present in the potential tree—the seed, which is a work of Divine Destiny. The factory that produces a tree is a seed. The tree encapsulated in the seed by Destiny grows into a tree with that Power.

To cut it short, when attributed to the Necessarily Existent One, the existence of all things is so easy as to be regarded as necessary and inevitable. But when attributed to nature, the existence of all things is unreasonable, impossible, and inconceivable.

The third impossibility

The following two comparisons, which are mentioned in some other parts of the *Risale-i Nur*, explain this impossibility:

THE FIRST COMPARISON: A wild, uneducated man enters a palace which has been built in a vast desert and decorated with all the fruits of civilization. Having examined all the thousands of marvelous, artistically made objects, as there is no one in the palace and due to his ignorance and lack of sufficient intelligence, he thinks that one of the objects in the palace must have made the palace with whatever there is in it. But whichever object he examines, he cannot convince even his crude and uneducated intellect that that object has built the palace.

Later, he finds a notebook in which there is written the detailed plan of the palace, a list of its contents, and the rules of its management. It is also impossible for the notebook, which has no hands, eyes, or tools, to have built and decorated the palace. However, having not encountered anything visible to which he can

attribute the existence of the palace, and since in comparison with the other objects the notebook, which contains the rules of the palace's construction, decoration, and management, seems to be more able to explain its existence, the man feels obliged to say, "It is this notebook which designed and built the palace, and decorated it with all those objects, which it had made and set in this palace." Is this not sheer stupidity and nonsense?

As in this comparison, a naturalist who denies God enters this palace of the universe, which is infinitely more well-ordered and more perfect than the palace in the above-mentioned comparison, and which is decorated with miracles of Wisdom throughout. Not thinking that it is the work of the Necessarily Existent Being's Art, Who is beyond the sphere of contingency, and evading that thought, he focuses on what they wrongly call "nature." Nature is, in fact, a board of Divine Destiny or Determining in the sphere of contingency. Divine Destiny or Determining uses it for inscribing and erasing Its judgments. From another perspective, nature is an ever-changing notebook of the titles or laws of the Divine Power's regular acts, and an index of the works of His Art as the Lord of the worlds. However, the naturalist who enters the palace of the universe says, "All these things require a cause for their existence. There is nothing visible that is more

apt than this ‘notebook’ to attribute it to. Even though it is completely unreasonable to accept this blind, unconscious, ignorant, and powerless ‘notebook’ as the creator of the palace of the universe, which clearly requires an infinite knowledge and power for its existence, since I do not admit the existence of the Eternal Maker, I had better say that this ‘notebook’ has made this palace.” To which we reply:

O foolish one! Lift your head out of the swamp of naturalism, and turn round! You will see the Maker of Majesty, to Whom all things, from atoms to galaxies, testify, each with its own tongue, and at Whom they point, each with its own finger. Behold the manifestation of the Eternal Designer, Who has made that palace and written its program in that “notebook”! Lend an ear to His Book—the Qur’an—and be saved from your nonsensical words!

THE SECOND COMPARISON: An extremely rough, uneducated man enters a magnificent barracks. He watches the disciplined actions of a marvelously ordered army carrying out its drill. A regiment, a battalion, and an army corps sit down, stand up, march, and take up and put down arms as though they were a single private. Since his crude mind cannot understand this and thus denies that the army is working under the orders of a commander acting according to the laws of the state, he imagines that all the soldiers are tied to one another with strings. He thinks what a wonderful string this must be and is astonished.

Later, on Friday, he goes and enters a magnificent mosque, for example Ayasofya (Haghia Sophia). He observes that the congregation of Muslims performing the Friday congregational Prayer rises, bows, prostrates, and sits at the voice of one man. Since he does not know the Shari‘a, which is the collection of sacred Divine laws and principles that guide the lives and worship of Muslims, he imagines that the members of the congregation are bound to one another with strings which control them and make them move like puppets. With this most ridiculous idea in his mind, he leaves the mosque.

Like this comparison, a naturalist denier of God enters this world, which is, in one respect, a splendid barracks of the Sovereign of eternity for His numerous hosts, and, in another respect, a well-ordered mosque of the Eternal, All-Worshipped One for His servants. He fancies that the laws which the Eternal Sovereign’s Wisdom has established for the order and operation of the universe—the laws which have only nominal existence and are in fact the titles of His acts in the administration of the universe—have a physical existence and have enough knowledge and power to govern the entire universe. Instead of attributing these to the Divine Power, he attributes the existence and operation of the universe to these laws of nominal existence which he calls “nature”—and which have

no power, knowledge, wisdom, consciousness, and will—and to what he calls “natural forces,” which are in truth a manifestation of Divine Power. He regards these forces as an independent power that is able to direct the universe. This is a thousand times greater abasing ignorance than the ignorance of the man in the above-mentioned comparison.

In short, if the thing which naturalists call “nature” has an external reality, it can, at the very most, be a work of art, not an artist; it can be a design, not a designer; a set of decrees, not an issuer of decrees; a set of the laws of the creation and operation of the universe, not a lawgiver; a created veil before God’s Dignity, not a creator; something originated according to God’s way of acting, not an originator; only a law, not an independent, conscious power or a powerful one; and a set of lines to inscribe on, not a source or origin or an author.

To conclude, since things and beings exist and, as stated in the introduction of this treatise, there can be no other way to explain their existence than the four mentioned above, and since the first three of these ways have been proven to be invalid because of the impossibilities elucidated, then necessarily and self-evidently, the fourth way is clearly the only valid way. It is the way of Divine Existence and Unity. It is indicated by the verse quoted at the beginning, *Can there*

be any doubt about God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth? (14: 10), which clearly and undoubtedly states that there can be no doubt about the Existence or Unity of God, and that everything issues directly from His Hand of Power, and the heavens and the earth are under His Grasp of supreme control and direction.

O one who attributes creativity to “nature” and “natural” causes! The nature of everything, like the things themselves, is created, for it is full of art, original, and particular to itself. In addition, like everything itself, which is the result of a cause, its apparent cause is also created. In addition, the existence of everything depends on the existence of numerous “instruments.” Therefore, there must be an Absolutely Powerful One Who creates both the things and their nature and causes, and the instruments required. And what need does that All-Powerful One have to share impotent causes in His creativity and Lordship over existence? God forbid such a thought! Rather, He creates things together with their causes so that He displays the manifestations of His Names and His Wisdom. By so doing, He establishes an apparent, ordered cause-and-effect relationship, and makes the apparent causes a veil in people’s sight between His Dignity and what people may see as being defective or incompatible with mercy in things and events.

Which is easier and more reasonable for a watch-maker? Making the cogs of a clock and then arrang-

ing them to form the clock, or inserting a wonderful machine inside the cogs and then leaving the making of the watch to the lifeless hands of the machine? Is the second alternative easier and more reasonable or inconceivable and impossible? Use your reason to be the judge!

Or a scribe readies a pen, a piece of paper, and ink to write a book. Is it easier and more reasonable for him to write the book by himself, or to invent a machine inside the pen, the piece of paper, and the ink, more artistic and more troublesome than the book itself, and then tell that unconscious machine to write the book, while he does not interfere? Is not the second alternative a hundred times more difficult than the first?

If you say: It is true that inventing a machine to write a book is a hundred times more difficult than writing it, but there is also an ease in this because numerous copies of the same book can be produced with that machine.

The answer: By ever renewing the limitless manifestations and effects of His Names through His boundless Power in order to exhibit them in ever differing fashions, the Eternal Designer and Inscraper creates things with such particular identities and features that none of the missives of the Eternally Besought-of-All and the books of the Lord are the same as others. In or-

der to display different meanings, each thing must have a different identity and features particular to itself.

If you have eyes, look at the human countenance: you will see that although from the time of Adam all human faces have had the same structure and organs, each has particular features distinguishing it from all others. Therefore, each human face is a different, particular book. Creating each with its particular features requires a different writing set and a different composition. In order to collect the necessary materials for each and establish each exactly in its place, there must be a completely different workshop. Even if we, supposing what is impossible to be possible, think of nature as a printing press, in addition to making a new arrangement of the iron keys of letters for every piece of writing, all the particles required for the existence of each body must be collected from all corners of “nature” in exact amounts and specific proportions and arranged in it in perfect order; this is a hundred times more difficult than arranging the iron keys of letters for every piece of writing. In order to do all these things, there is still an absolute need for the all-encompassing Knowledge, Will and Power of the absolutely Powerful One. Therefore, this hypothesis of a machine is a totally meaningless fantasy.

Like these comparisons of the watch and book, the Maker of Majesty, the All-Powerful One creates both

the causes and their effects together, and out of His Wisdom makes the existence of the effects dependent on their causes. He has an assembly of laws for the creation and operation of the universe, which are in fact the titles of His acts of creation and direction. By His Will, He has appointed a nature for each thing as a mirror to those acts or laws, and by His Power He creates each thing according to its nature. Therefore, is it easier to accept this truth, which, being completely reasonable and the conclusion of innumerable rational proofs, leaves us no other alternative but to accept it, or to assume that what you call nature and natural causes, which are blind, unconscious, contained in time and space, mortal, and devoid of any knowledge or will, have the limitless equipment required for the existence of each and every thing, and are able to carry out such deeds as the creation and direction of a whole universe, which require infinite knowledge, wisdom and discernment? Is this second alternative not beyond all possibility, even inconceivable?

The disbelieving naturalist replies: Even if in the light of your explanations I admit that the way of thought I have adopted to date is beyond reason and unacceptable, and believe in the ‘Necessarily Existent One’ as the Creator of all things, saying ‘All praise be to God for belief,’ still I have one doubt. Although we accept that God is the Creator, what harm can there

be in some insignificant causes playing a certain role in the creation of some things in respect to the sovereignty of God's Lordship? Does this imply a defect on the part of His Sovereignty?

The answer: As clearly explained in some parts of the *Risale-i Nur*, by its very nature, sovereignty rejects interference. Even an insignificant director or official does not tolerate the interference of even his own child with his authority. The fact that in history some religious rulers have killed their innocent sons in fear that the sons might attempt to interfere in their rule demonstrates how fundamental this "law of rejection of interference" is in rulership. The "law of prevention of others' participation," which the independence of sovereignty demands, rejects the existence of two sovereigns at the same time in the same place, whether it be a country or town. This has shown its great force through upheavals in human history.

Thus, if the sense of relative and transient rulership and sovereignty in humanity, which is powerless and in need of help, rejects the interference and participation of others, and seeks to preserve its independence in its position so jealously, then, if you can, compare how indispensable the rejection of interference and prevention of participation is to the All-Majestic One, Whose absolute sovereignty is based on or arises from His absolute Lordship over creation, Whose absolute rulership

arises from His Divinity, Whose absolute independence arises from His absolute Oneness and Uniqueness, and Whose absolute self-sufficiency arises from His absolute Power.

As for the second part of your doubt, which is: If certain parts in the creation and control of some insignificant things is attributed to some insignificant causes, and those things assign some part of their worship to those causes, what harm does this cause in the worship of all beings from particles to galaxies, which is dedicated to the Necessarily Existent Being, Who is the Absolute Object of Worship?

The answer: The All-Wise Creator of the universe has made the universe like a tree with conscious beings as its most perfect fruit, and humanity as the most comprehensive fruit among conscious beings. Should that Absolute Sovereign and All-Independent Ruler, that Single One of Uniqueness, Who has created the universe so that He could be known and loved, allow others to own humanity, the fruit of the whole universe? Would He also allow humanity's thanks and worship, for which it has been created, and which are therefore its most elevated fruit, to be dedicated to others? Would He, totally contrary to His Wisdom, make the result of creation and the fruit of the universe futile and in vain? God forbid such a thought!

Also, would He give consent to the worship of creatures being dedicated to others, which would mean a denial of His Wisdom and Lordship? While He demonstrates through His acts that He wills to be known and loved to a boundless degree, would He cause Himself to be forgotten and His most elevated purposes for the existence of the universe to be denied by allowing the thankfulness, love, and worship of all creatures to be directed towards anything else other than Him?

O friend who has given up naturalism! Now it is your turn to speak! He replies:

All praise be to God, these two doubts of mine have been resolved. You have convincingly explained God's absolute Oneness and why He is only the True Object of Worship, and that nothing else other than Him has the right to be worshipped and is not worthy of worship. Therefore, the denial of this truth would mean arrogance to the extent of denying the sun and the daytime.

Conclusion

The person who has renounced naturalism and accepted belief in God said, "All praise be to God; I no longer have any doubts concerning God's existence and Oneness, but still I have a few questions."

The first question

We hear many people who are idle in performing the daily Prayers ask: What need does God Almighty have for our worship? Why in the Qur'an does He severely reprimand those who do not worship and threaten them with such a terrible punishment as Hell? How does it behoove the moderate, mild, and balanced style of the Qur'an to display such severity in the face of an insignificant fault?

The answer: Truly, God Almighty has no need at all for your worship, nor indeed for anything else. But you need to worship, for in truth you are spiritually ill. We have indicated in many parts of the *Risale-i Nur* that worship is a cure for many spiritual wounds of humanity. If a patient responds to a compassionate doctor who insists that he should take the medicines prescribed for his illness, saying, "What need do you have for the medicine? Why are you insisting in this way?", you can understand how foolish this would be.

As for the severe threats of the Qur'an against the non-fulfillment of the duty of worship with terrible punishments, it is like this: In order to protect his subjects' rights, a monarch punishes an ordinary man to the extent that he violates those rights. Likewise, one who does not worship, including in particular the Prayer, is seriously violating the rights of the creatures who are like subjects of the Absolute Sovereign of eternity. For the perfection of creatures displays itself through

glorification and other kinds of worship manifested by their relationship with the Maker. One who does not worship does not, indeed cannot, see their worship, and even denies it. By reducing the creatures from their position of each being a missive of the Eternally Besought-of-All and a mirror to His Names by reason of their worship to the degree of being insignificant, inanimate, meaningless, aimless, and randomly existent things, this person has insulted them, and denies their perfections.

Indeed, everyone sees the universe in their own mirror. God Almighty has created humanity as a measure and scale for the universe. He has given each person a particular, private world out of the universe. The particular world of each person takes on the color of his or her heart. For example, a desperate, weeping person sees creatures as weeping and in despair, while a cheerful, optimistic one sees them as also cheerful and smiling. One who worships God Almighty in a serious, reflective manner can discern to certain degree the actual worship and glorifications of creatures, while a person who does not worship, due to either heedlessness or denial, thinks of creatures in a manner devoid of any truth and completely contrary to their actual perfections, and thus violates their rights.

Furthermore, no one is their own creator and owner; everyone is a servant of God Almighty. Therefore,

those who do not perform the prescribed Prayers, defeated by their carnal, evil-commanding soul, wrong themselves, although they are servants of their Master and Owner. So, their Owner makes severe threats in order to protect His servant's rights against the evil-commanding soul, and to restore them. In addition, one who does not worship, which is God's purpose for His creation or the ultimate reason for a person's existence, is transgressing the Divine Will and Wisdom, and therefore deserves punishment.

In short, those who do not worship both wrong themselves, the servants of God Almighty owned by Him, and wrong and transgress the rights of creatures that arise from the perfections they share as worshipping servants of God. Just as unbelief is an insult to creatures, so too is the non-fulfillment of the duty of worship a denial of the perfections shared by creatures. Likewise, it is a transgression against Divine Wisdom and this deserves severe threats and punishment. It is in order to express this truth that the Qur'an of miraculous expression has chosen the severe style under discussion, which, in complete conformity with eloquence, corresponds to the requirements of the situation.

The second question

The person who has renounced naturalism and has come to believe next asks: It is astonishing that with

whatever it has and whatever it does, and in every aspect, everything totally depends on Divine Will and Power. The infinite abundance which we clearly see in existence, and the limitless ease in the creation of things that arise from their being created by One God, and which is demonstrated by such Qur'anic verses as

Your creation and your resurrection are but as (the creation and resurrection) of a single soul (31: 28), and The matter of the Hour (of Doom) is (in relation with the Divine Power) but the twinkling of an eye, or even quicker (16: 77),

show that this supreme, astonishing fact is completely acceptable and rational. However, we cannot comprehend this supreme, astonishing fact. How do you explain this ease?"

The answer: It was explained clearly and in a convincing way while commenting on, *He is powerful over all things*, which is the Tenth Phrase of the Twentieth Letter. In particular, it was explained even more clearly in the Addendum to that Letter that when all things are attributed to One, Single Maker, their existence becomes as easy as the existence of a single thing. If they are not attributed to a Single One of Uniqueness, the existence of a single thing becomes as difficult as the existence of all things; indeed, the existence of a seed becomes as difficult as the existence of a tree. But if all things are attributed to their

true Maker, the existence of the universe becomes as easy as the existence of a tree, and the existence of a tree as that of a seed, and the existence of Paradise as that of spring, and the existence of spring as that of a flower. In some parts of the *Risale-i Nur*, we have mentioned many reasons for and several instances of wisdom behind the limitless value of things despite the infinite abundance in existence, and the perfect artistry in everything despite the infinite facility and speed in things coming into existence. We will briefly point out only a few of them as follows:

For example, if the command of a hundred privates is given to one officer, their command will be a hundred times easier than the command of a single private by a hundred officers. Likewise, the equipping of an army by a single center or factory or government is as easy as the equipping of a single soldier, while the equipping of a single soldier by many different centers of command or factories is as difficult as that of a whole army. For there would have to be as many factories as there is equipment for an army.

It is observed that by reason of growing from a single seed and on one root and of growing and feeding through a single law, the growth of a tree that yields thousands of fruits is as easy as a single fruit. But if a tree were dependent on multiple sources for its growth, with the result that all the necessities vital for

each fruit were to be provided from different places, then each fruit would become as difficult to produce as a tree. To produce even a single seed, which is a sample and index of the tree, would be as difficult as the production of the tree. For all the substances for the growth and life of a tree are also necessary for the seed.

Thus, there are hundreds of examples like these which show that it is easier for thousands of things that are dependent on a single source to come into existence than for a single thing depending on multiple sources to come into existence. Referring you to some other parts of the *Risale-i Nur* for a detailed explanation of this fact, we will here explain only a significant aspect of it that is related to Divine Knowledge, Power, and Destiny. It is as follows:

You are an existent being. If you attribute yourself to the Eternal, All-Powerful One, you will understand how He has created you with a single command out of nothing, like striking a match. However, if you do not attribute yourself to Him, but rather to physical causes and nature, then since you are a well-ordered summary, a fruit, and a miniature index of the universe, in order to make you, all the substances necessary for the formation of your body would have to be finely sieved from the universe and collected from all its corners in precise measures. For material substances are only

used for formation or composition, and physical causes may serve only as means for their collection. Every sensible person knows and admits that they cannot create out of nothing what they themselves do not have. Therefore, they would have to collect all the particles of substances necessary for the body of even a minute living being from all corners of the universe.

Now understand what ease there is in Divine Unity and attributing everything to Him, and what difficulties lie in misguidance, in associating partners with God!

Secondly, when everything is attributed to a Single Creator, existence is infinitely easy from the perspective of there being Divine Knowledge as well. It is as follows:

Destiny is identical with Knowledge in one respect. It appoints a certain measure for each thing, which can be regarded as its particular, immaterial mold. That measure or mold appointed by Destiny serves as a model for its existence. When Divine Power creates, It does so with extreme ease according to that appointed measure. Now, if that being is not attributed to the All-Powerful One of Majesty with an unlimited, all-encompassing, eternal Knowledge, not only do thousands of difficulties appear, but its existence would be a hundred times more inconceivable. For if it were not for the measure appointed by Divine Destiny or Knowledge, thousands of material

molds made in the physical world would have to be used in the body of a minute organism.

So, understand why there is infinite ease in attributing everything to a single Source, and why there are endless difficulties in accepting multiple sources or associating partners with God. Also, realize what an objective, undeniable, clear, and elevated truth is stated by the verse, *The matter of the Hour (of Doom) is (in relation with the Divine Power) but the twinkling of an eye, or even quicker (16: 77).*

The third question

The friend who has found the right guidance asks: Those most renowned among philosophers claim that nothing is invented out of nothing, and nothing goes into absolute extinction. The factory of the universe runs on the cycle of composition and decomposition. Is this so?

The answer: Those most renowned among the philosophers who do not view creation in the light of the Qur'an see the formation and existence of creatures by nature and physical causes as inconceivably difficult and they are divided into two groups. One group is the Sophists. Abdicating reason, which is exclusive to humanity, they find it easier to deny the existence of the universe, including their own, than to follow the way of misguidance which attributes creativity to

nature and physical causes. Denying, therefore, both their own and the universe's existence, they descend into absolute ignorance.

The second group is aware of the fact that ascribing creativity to nature and physical causes incurs endless difficulties even for the existence of so tiny a creature as a fly or a seed, and is therefore irrational. This leads them to deny the act of creation, and claim that nothing can exist out of nothing, and annihilation is impossible. They fancy that everything consists in the cycle of composition, decomposition, and re-composition, dependent on the random motion of atoms and the winds of coincidence.

Now, see the ignorance of those who consider themselves to be the most intelligent of all, and understand to what points of intellectual poverty misguidance can drag people!

Consider an Eternal Power Which created the universe in six days, and shows Itself in the simultaneous creation and re-creation of hundreds of thousands of species on the earth every year, and replaces the world every spring in six weeks with a new one more full of art and wisdom than the former! Like applying a chemical to invisible writing to make it visible, this Power gives external existence to the archetypes of things and beings already determined and identified in Divine Knowledge by Divine Destiny. Therefore, it would be more fool-

ish and ignorant than the Sophists to deny this Power the capacity of creation and reject the act of creation. Since both these two groups of unfortunate ones, who are absolutely impotent in themselves and have nothing more than a partial willpower at their disposal, yet are more proud and refractory than Pharaoh, and nature and physical causes, on which they rely, are unable to make something out of nothing and annihilate it utterly, they claim that nothing exists out of nothing, and something existent does not go into non-existence, thus denying the Absolutely All-Powerful One creation and sending into non-existence.

The All-Powerful One of Majesty has two kinds of creating. One is origination and invention. That is to say, He brings a being into existence out of nothing together with whatever is necessary for it. The other is making and composing. That is, in order to demonstrate the perfection of His Wisdom and numerous subtle instances of It, such as displaying manifestations of many of His Names, He makes certain things out of the elements of the universe. Being the All-Providing, He also dispatches to them atoms and substances subservient to His command, and makes them operate within.

Thus, bringing into existence out of non-existence and sending into non-existence are two constant, infinitely easy practices of the Absolutely All-Powerful One, Who both invents or originates and makes or

composes. One who makes the claim that a Power Which each spring creates out of nothing the forms and attributes of hundreds of thousands of living species together with all their conditions and states cannot give existence to what does not exist deserves non-existence.

The one who abandons naturalism and accepts the truth concludes: Praise and thanks be to God Almighty, I have attained perfect belief to the number of the particles of existence, and have been saved from groundless suppositions and misguidance. And not one of my doubts remains.

All praise be to God for the Religion of Islam and perfection in belief!

All-Glorified are You. We have no knowledge save what You have taught us. Surely You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

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