



From the
Risale-i Nur
Collection

The Flashes Collection

Bediuzzaman
Said Nursi

Translated from the Turkish 'Lem'alar'
by Şükran Vahide

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A Brief Look at Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Life, The Risale-i Nur, and The Flashes Collection

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

But he cried through the depths of darkness, “There is no god but You; Glory be unto You! I was indeed among the wrongdoers!”(21:87) * When he called upon his Lord saying: “Verily harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful.”(21:83) * But if they turn away, say: “God suffices me, there is no god but He; in Him do I place my trust – He the Sustainer of the Throne [of Glory] Supreme!”(9:129) * For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs.(3:178) * There is no strength and no power other than through God, the High, the Mighty.¹ * O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal! O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal! * And to those who believe guidance and healing.(41:44)

[This, the first section of the Thirty-First Letter, consists of six flashes each of which depicts one of the many lights of the above verses and phrases. Their recital thirty-three times each particularly between Maghrib and ‘Isha, the prayers at sunset and nightfall, is highly meritorious.]

¹ 1. See, *Bukhari*, Maghazi, 38; *Muslim*, Dhikr, 44-6.

* The translations of the First, Second, and Twentieth Flashes were originally made by Hamid Algar, Professor of Near Eastern Studies in the University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A., and published by the Risale-i Nur Institute of America in 1975. They have been slightly amended to fit the present work. (Tr.)

The First Flash

The supplication of Yunus ibn Matta² (Peace be upon our Prophet and upon him) is a most powerful supplication, a most effective means for obtaining answer to prayer.³ The gist of the celebrated story of Jonah (Peace be upon him) is as follows:

He was cast into the sea and swallowed by a large fish. The sea was stormy, the night turbulent and dark, and hope exhausted. But it was while he was in such a situation that his supplication:

There is no god other than You, Glory be unto You! Indeed, I was among the wrongdoers(21:87)

acted for him as a swift means of salvation. The secret of his supplication's power was this:

In that situation all causes were suspended, for Jonah needed to save him one whose command should constrain the whale and the sea, and the night and the sky. The night, the sea, and the whale were united against him. Only one whose command might subdue all three of these could bring him forth on the strand of salvation. Even if the entirety of creation had become his servants and helpers, it would have been of no avail. For causes have no effect. Since Jonah saw with the eye of certainty that there was no refuge other than the Causer of Causes, and unfolded to him was the meaning of divine oneness within the light of divine unity, his supplication was able suddenly to subdue the night, the sea, and the whale. Through the light of divine unity he was able to transform the belly of the whale into a submarine; and the surging sea, which in its awesomeness resembled an erupting volcano, into a peaceable plain, a pleasant place of excursion. Through the light of unity, he was able to sweep the sky's countenance clear of all

² The Prophet Yunus in the Qur'an is the Biblical Jonah, which name is henceforth used in the present work. (Tr.)

³ *Tirmidhi*, Da'wat, 81; *Musnad*, i, 170.

clouds, and to set the moon over his head like a lantern. Creation that had been pressing and threatening him from all sides now showed him a friendly face from every direction. Thus he reached the shore of salvation, where beneath the creeping-gourd tree he observed this favour of his Lord.

Now we are in a situation one hundred times more awesome than that in which Jonah (Peace be upon him) first found himself. Our night is the future. When we look upon our future with the eye of neglect, it is a hundred times darker and more fearful than his night. Our sea is this spinning globe. Each wave of this sea bears on it thousands of corpses, and is thus a thousand times more frightening than his sea. Our fish is the caprice of our soul which strives to shake and destroy the foundation of our eternal life. This fish is a thousand times more maleficent than his. For his fish could destroy a hundred-year lifespan, whereas ours seeks to destroy a life lasting hundreds of millions of years. This being our true state, we should in imitation of Jonah (Peace be upon him) avert ourselves from all causes and take refuge directly in the Causer of Causes, that is, our Lord and Sustainer. We should say: "There is no god but You, Glory be unto You! Indeed I was among the wrongdoers," and understand with full certainty that it is only He who can repel from us the harm of the future, this world, and caprice of our souls, united against us because of our neglect and misguidance. For the future is subject to His command, the world to His jurisdiction, and our soul to His direction.

What cause is there other than the Creator of the heavens and earth who can know the most subtle and secret thoughts of our heart; who can lighten the future for us by establishing the hereafter; who can save us from the myriad overwhelming waves of the world? No, outside that Necessarily Existent One, there is nothing that can in any way give aid and effect salvation except by His consent and command.

This being the case, considering that as a result of his supplication, the whale became for Jonah a vehicle, or a submarine, and the sea, a peaceable plain; and the night became gently lit for him by the moon, so too, we should make the same supplication: "There is no god but You, Glory be unto You! Indeed I was among the wrongdoers."

With the sentence "There is no god but You" we draw the gaze of mercy upon our future; with the word "Glory be unto You!" we draw it upon our world; and with the phrase "Indeed I was among the wrongdoers," we draw it upon our soul.⁴ Thus our future is illumined with the light of belief and the moonlike luminosity of the Qur'an, and the awe and terror of the night

⁴ See, *Bukhari*, Adhan, 149; Tawhid, 9; *Muslim*, Dhikr, 47-8; Hudud, 23.

are transformed into tranquillity and joy. Then too, embarking on the ship of the truth of Islam, fashioned in the dockyard of the Most Wise Qur'an, we may pass safely over the sea of this earthly abode, which through the alternation of life and death is boarded by corpses unnumbered, borne on the waves of the years and centuries, and cast into nothingness. Once aboard that ship we may reach the shore of salvation and fulfil our life's duty. The tempest and surging of the sea will appear a series of pleasing images on a screen, and instead of inspiring terror and dread, will delight, caress and illumine the reflective and the meditative gaze. By virtue of the mystery of the Qur'an, and the effect of that Criterion of Truth and Falsehood, our soul will no longer ride us, but instead become our mount. As we ride it, it will be for us a powerful means for the attainment of life everlasting.

I n S h o r t : Man, in accordance with the comprehensive nature of his being, as he suffers and shakes with malaria, so also he suffers from the shaking and tremors of the earth, and the supreme convulsion of all beings on the Day of Resurrection. As he fears the infinitesimal microbe, he also fears the shooting star that appears among the heavenly bodies. As he loves his home, he also loves the wide world. As he loves his little garden, he also ardently loves infinite and eternal paradise. Man's object of worship, Lord, refuge, saviour, and goal then can only be the One in the grasp of whose power is the whole universe, under whose command are both atom and planet. Man should therefore constantly say like Jonah (Peace be upon him):

There is no god but You, Glory be unto You! Indeed I was among the wrongdoers.

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

The Second Flash

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

When he called upon his Lord saying: “Verily harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful!”(21:83)

The supplication of Job (Upon whom be peace), the champion of patience, is both well-tested and effective. Drawing on the verse, we should say in our supplication, “O my Lord and Sustainer! Indeed harm has afflicted me, and You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful.”

The gist of the well-known story of Job¹ (Upon whom be peace) is as follows:

While afflicted with numerous wounds and sores for a long time, he recalled the great recompense to be had for his sickness, and endured it with utmost patience. But later, when the worms generated by his wounds penetrated to his heart and his tongue, the seat of the remembrance and knowledge of God,² he feared that his duty of worship would suffer, and so he said in supplication not for the sake of his own comfort, but for the sake of his worship of God:

“O Lord! Harm has afflicted me; my remembrance of You with my tongue and my worship of You with my heart will suffer.” God Almighty then accepted this pure sincere, disinterested and devout supplication in the most miraculous fashion. He granted to Job perfect good health and made manifest in him all kinds of compassion.³ This Flash contains five points:

¹ See, Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, xvii, 71-2; Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vi, 426; Ibn al-Mubarak, *al-Zuhd*, 49.

² See, Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh*, i, 98-100.

³ See, Qur'an, 21:84, 38:42-3. Also, *Bukhari*, Ghusl, 20; Tawhid, 35; *Musnad*, ii, 314.

FIRST POINT

Corresponding to the outer wounds and sicknesses of Job (Upon whom be peace), we have inner sicknesses of the spirit and heart. If our inner being were to be turned outward, and our outer being turned inward, we would appear more wounded and diseased than Job. For each sin that we commit and each doubt that enters our mind, inflicts wounds on our heart and our spirit.

The wounds of Job (Upon whom be peace) were of such a nature as to threaten his brief worldly life, but our inner wounds threaten our infinitely long everlasting life. We need the supplication of Job thousands of times more than he did himself. Just as the worms that arose from his wounds penetrated to his heart and tongue, so too the wounds that sin inflicts upon us and the temptations and doubts that arise from those wounds will – may God protect us! – penetrate our inner heart, the seat of belief, and thus wound belief. Penetrating too the spiritual joy of the tongue, the interpreter of belief, they cause it to shun in revulsion the remembrance of God, and reduce it to silence.

Sin, penetrating to the heart, will blacken and darken it until it extinguishes the light of belief.⁴ Within each sin is a path leading to unbelief. Unless that sin is swiftly obliterated by seeking God’s pardon, it will grow from a worm into a snake that gnaws on the heart.

For example, a man who secretly commits a shameful sin will fear the disgrace that results if others become aware of it. Thus the existence of angels and spirit beings will be hard for him to endure, and he will long to deny it, even on the strength of the slightest indication.

Similarly, one who commits a major sin deserving of the torment of Hell, will desire the non-existence of Hell wholeheartedly, and whenever he hears of the threat of Hell-fire, he will dare to deny it on the strength of a slight indication and doubt, unless he takes up in protection the shield of repentance and seeking forgiveness.

Similarly, one who does not perform the obligatory prayer and fulfil his duty of worship will be affected by distress, just as he would be in case of the neglect of a minor duty toward some petty ruler. Thus, his laziness in fulfilling his obligation, despite the repeated commands of the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity, will distress him greatly, and on account of that distress will desire and say to himself: “Would that there were no such duty of worship!” In turn, there will arise from this desire a desire to deny God, and

⁴ See, *Tirmidhi*, Tafsir Sura 83:1; *Ibn Maja*, Zuhd, 29; *Muwatta*, Kalam, 18; *Musnad*, ii, 297.

bear enmity toward Him. If some doubt concerning the existence of the Divine Being comes to his heart, he will be inclined to embrace it like a conclusive proof. A wide gate to destruction will be opened in front of him. The wretch does not know that although he is delivered by denial from the slight trouble of duty of worship, he has made himself, by that same denial, the target for millions of troubles that are far more awesome. Fleeing from the bite of a gnat, he welcomes the bite of the snake.

There are many other examples, which may be understood with reference to these three, so that the sense of,

Nay but their hearts are stained(83:14)

will become apparent.

SECOND POINT

As was explained concerning the meaning of divine determining, known as destiny, in the Twenty-Sixth Word, men have no right to complain in the case of disasters and illness for the following three reasons:

First Reason: God Most High has made the garment of the body with which He has clothed man a manifestation of His art. He has made man to be a model on which He cuts, trims, alters and changes the garment of the body, thus displaying the manifestation of various of His names. Just as the name of Healer makes it necessary that illness should exist, so too the name of Provider requires that hunger should exist. And so on.

The Lord of All Dominion has disposal over His dominion as He wishes.

Second Reason: It is by means of disasters and sicknesses that life is refined,⁵ perfected, strengthened and advanced; that it yields results, attains perfection and fulfils its own purpose.⁶ Life led monotonously on the couch of ease and comfort resembles not so much the pure good that is being, as the pure evil that is non-being; it tends in fact in that direction.

Third Reason: This worldly realm is the field of testing, the abode of service. It is not the place of pleasure, reward, and requital. Considering, then, that it is the abode of service and place of worship, sicknesses and misfortunes – as long as they do not affect belief and are patiently endured⁷ – conform fully to service and worship, and even strengthen it. Since they make each hour's worship equivalent to that of a day,⁸ one should offer thanks instead of complaining.

⁵ See, *Muslim*, Birr, 52; Abu Da'ud, Jana'iz, 1; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, i, 1500.

⁶ See, *Bukhari*, Marda, 1; *Muslim*, Birr, 52; *Tirmidhi*, Zuhd, 57; *Muwatta*, Jana'iz, 40.

⁷ See, *Tirmidhi*, Da'wat, 79; Nasa'i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, vi, 106.

⁸ See, *Darimi*, Riqaaq, 56; *Musnad*, ii, 159, 194, 198; iii, 148, 238, 258.

Worship consists in fact of two kinds, positive and negative. What is meant by the positive is obvious. As for negative worship, this is when one afflicted with misfortune or sickness perceives his own weakness and helplessness, and turning to his Compassionate Lord, seeks refuge in Him, meditates upon Him, petitions Him, and thus offers a pure form of worship that no hypocrisy can penetrate. If he endures patiently, thinks of the reward attendant on misfortune and offers thanks, then each hour that he passes will count as a whole day spent in worship. His brief life becomes very long. There are even cases where a single minute is counted as equal to a whole day's worship.

I once was extremely anxious because of an awesome illness that struck one of my brothers of the hereafter, Muhajir Hafiz Ahmed.⁹ But then a warning came to my heart: "Congratulate him!" Each minute he spends is counted as a whole day's worship. He was in any event enduring his illness in patience and gratitude.

THIRD POINT

As we have pointed out in one or two of the Words, whenever one thinks of his past life, he will say in his heart or with his tongue either "Ah!" or "Oh!" That is he will either experience regret, or say "Thanks and praise be to God!" Regret is inspired by the pains arising from the cessation of former pleasures and separation from them. For the cessation of pleasure is a pain in itself. Sometimes a momentary pleasure will cause everlasting pain. To think upon it will be like lancing a wound, causing regret to gush forth.

As for the lasting spiritual pleasure that comes from the cessation of momentary pains experienced in the past, it inspires man to exclaim, "Thanks and praise be to God!" In addition to this innate tendency of man, if he thinks of the reward that results from misfortune and the requital that awaits him in the hereafter, if he realizes that his brief life will count as a long life because of misfortune, then instead of being merely patient he should be thankful. He should say, "Praise be to God for every state other than unbelief and misguidance."¹⁰

⁹ Muhajir Hafiz Ahmed was a merchant in Barla* and among the first students of the *Risale-i Nur*. Bediuzzaman stayed in his guesthouse on first arriving in Barla in the early spring of 1926, and he assisted Bediuzzaman for the eight and a half years he remained in Barla.

* Bediuzzaman's place of exile, 1926-1934. A small village in Isparta Province in S. W. Turkey. (Tr.)

¹⁰ *Tirmidhi*, Da'wat, 45; *Ibn Maja*, Muqaddima, 23; Du'a, 2.

It is commonly said that misfortune is longlasting. Indeed it is, but not because it is troublesome and distressing as people customarily imagine, but rather because it yields vital results just like a long life.

FOURTH POINT

As was explained in the First Station of the Twenty-First Word, the power of patient endurance given to man by God Almighty is adequate to every misfortune, unless squandered on baseless fears. But through the predominance of delusion, man's neglect and his imagining this transient life to be eternal, he squanders his power of endurance on the past and the future. His endurance is not equal to the misfortunes of the present, and he begins to complain. It is as if – God forbid! – he were complaining of God Almighty to men. In a most unjustified and even lunatic fashion, he complains and demonstrates his lack of patience.

If the day that is past held misfortune, the distress is now gone, and only tranquillity remains; the pain has vanished and the pleasure in its cessation remains; the trouble is gone, and the reward remains. Hence one should not complain but give thanks for enjoyment. One should not resent misfortune, but love it. The transient life of the past comes to be counted as an eternal and blessed life because of misfortune. To think upon past pain with one's fancy and then to waste part of one's patience is lunacy.

As far as days yet to come are concerned, since they have not yet come, to think now of the illness or misfortune to be borne during them and display impatience, is also foolishness. To say to oneself "Tomorrow or the day after I will be hungry and thirsty" and constantly to drink water and eat bread today, is pure madness. Similarly, to think of misfortunes and sicknesses yet in the future but now non-existent, to suffer them already, to show impatience and to oppress oneself without any compulsion, is such stupidity that it no longer deserves pity and compassion.

In short, just as gratitude increases divine bounty, so too complaint increases misfortune, and removes all occasion for compassion.

During World War One, a blessed person in Erzurum was afflicted with an awesome disease. I went to visit him and he said to me complaining bitterly: "I have not been able to place my head on the pillow and sleep for a hundred nights." I was much grieved. Suddenly a thought came to me and I said:

"Brother, the hundred difficult days you have spent are now just like one hundred happy days. Do not think of them and complain; rather look at them and be grateful. As for future days, since they have not yet come, place your trust in your Compassionate and Merciful Lord. Do not weep

before being beaten, do not be afraid of nothing, do not give non-being the colour of being. Think of the present hour; your power of patient endurance is enough for this hour. Do not act like the maddened commander who expects reinforcement on his right wing by an enemy force deserting to join him from his left, and then begins to disperse his forces in the centre to the left and the right, before the enemy has joined him on the right. The enemy then destroys his centre, left weak, with a minimal force. Brother, do not be like him. Mobilize all your strength for this present hour, and think of divine mercy, reward in the hereafter, and how your brief and transient life is being transformed into a long and eternal form. Instead of complaining bitterly, give joyful thanks.”

Much relieved, he said, “Praise and thanks be to God, my disease is now a tenth of what it was before.”

FIFTH POINT consisting of three matters.

F i r s t M a t t e r : True and harmful misfortune is that which affects religion. One should at all times seek refuge at the divine court from misfortune in matters of religion and cry out for help.¹¹ But misfortunes that do not affect religion in reality are not misfortunes. Some of them are warnings from the Most Merciful One. If a shepherd throws a stone at his sheep when they trespass on another’s pasture, they understand that the stone is intended as a warning to save them from a perilous action; full of gratitude they turn back.¹² So too there are many apparent misfortunes that are divine warnings and admonishments, others that constitute the penance of sin;¹³ and others again that dissolve man’s state of neglect, remind him of his human helplessness and weakness, thus affording him a form of tranquillity. As for the variety of misfortune that is illness, it is not at all a misfortune, as has already been said, but rather a favour from God and a means of purification.¹⁴ There is a tradition which says: “As a tree drops its ripe fruit when shaken, so do sins fall away through the shaking of fever.”¹⁵

Job (Upon whom be peace) did not pray in his supplication for the comfort of his soul, but rather sought cure for the purpose of worship, when

¹¹ See, *Tirmidhi*, Da’wat, 79; Nasa’i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, vi, 106.

¹² See, *Bukhari*, Iman, 39; Buyu’, 2; *Muslim*, MUSAQAT, 107; Abu Nu’aym, *Hilyat al-Awliya’*, i, 11.

¹³ See, *Tirmidhi*, Tafsir Sura 4:24; *Musnad*, ii, 303, 335, 402.

¹⁴ See, *Muslim*, Birr, 52; *Abu Da’ud*, Jana’iz, 1; al-Daylami, *al-Musnad*, i, 123; al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, *Nawadir al-Usul*, i, 286.

¹⁵ *Bukhari*, Marda, 3, 13, 16; *Muslim*, Birr, 45; *Ibn Maja*, Adab, 56; *Darimi*, Riqaq, 57; *Musnad*, i, 381, 441, 455; iii, 152.

disease was preventing his remembrances of God with his tongue and his meditation upon God in his heart. We too should make our primary intent, when making that supplication, the healing of the inward and spiritual wounds that arise from sinning.

As far as physical diseases are concerned, we may seek refuge from them when they hinder our worship. But we should seek refuge in a humble and supplicating fashion, not protestingly and plaintively. If we accept God as our Lord and Sustainer, then we must accept too all that He gives us in His capacity of Lord. To sigh and complain in a manner implying objection to divine determining and decree is a kind of criticism of divine determining, an accusation levelled against God's compassion. The one who criticizes divine determining strikes his head against the anvil and breaks it. Whoever accuses God's mercy will inevitably be deprived of it. To use a broken hand to exact revenge will only cause further damage to the hand. So too a man who, afflicted with misfortune, responds to it with protesting complaint and anxiety, is only compounding his misfortune.

S e c o n d M a t t e r : Physical misfortunes grow when they are seen to be large, and shrink when they are seen to be small. For example, a dream enters one's vision at night. If one pays it attention it swells up and grows; if one does not, it disappears. So too if one attempts to ward off an attacking swarm of bees, they will become more aggressive; whereas if one pays them no attention they will disperse. Thus if one regards physical misfortunes as great and grants them importance, they will grow, and because of anxiety pass from the body and strike root in the heart. The result will then be an inward affliction on which the outward misfortune fastens to perpetuate itself. But if the anxiety is removed by contentment with the divine decree and reliance on God, the physical misfortune will gradually decrease, dry up and vanish, just like a tree whose roots have been severed. I once composed the following verses in description of this truth:

Cry not out at misfortune, O wretch, come, trust in God!

For know that crying out compounds the misfortune and is a great error.

Find misfortune's Sender, and know it is a gift within gift, and pleasure.

So leave crying out and offer thanks; like the nightingale, smile through your tears!

If you find Him not, know the world is all pain within pain, transience and loss.

So why lament at a small misfortune while upon you is a worldful of woe? Come, trust in God!

Trust in God! Laugh in misfortune's face; it too will laugh.
As it laughs, it will diminish; it will be changed and transformed.

If in single-handed combat one smiles at an awesome enemy, his enmity will be changed to conciliatoriness; his hostility will become a mere joke, will shrink and disappear. If one confronts misfortune with reliance on God, the result will be similar.

T h i r d M a t t e r : Each age has particular characteristics.¹⁶ In this age of neglect misfortune has changed its form. In certain ages and for certain persons, misfortune is not in reality misfortune, but rather a divine favour. Since I consider those afflicted with illness in the present age to be fortunate – on condition that their illness does not affect their religion – it does not occur to me to oppose illness and misfortune, nor to take pity on the afflicted. Whenever I encounter some afflicted youth, I find that he is more concerned with his religious duties and the hereafter than are his peers. From this I deduce that illness does not constitute a misfortune for such people, but rather a bounty from God. It is true that illness causes him distress in his brief, transient and worldly life, but it is beneficial for his eternal life. It is to be regarded as a kind of worship. If he were healthy he would be unable to maintain the state he enjoyed while sick and would fall into dissipation, as a result of the impetuosity of youth and the dissipated nature of the age.

Conclusion

God Almighty, in order to display His infinite power and unlimited mercy, has made inherent in man infinite impotence and unlimited want. Further, in order to display the endless embroideries of His names, He has created man like a machine capable of receiving unlimited varieties of pain, as well as infinite varieties of pleasure. Within that human machine are hundreds of instruments, each of which has different pains and pleasures, different duties and rewards. Simply, all of the divine names manifested in the macroanthropos that is the world also have manifestations in the microcosm that is man. Beneficial matters like good health, well-being, and pleasures cause man to offer thanks and prompt the human machine to perform its functions in many respects, and thus man becomes like a factory producing thanks.

¹⁶ See, Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, iv, 263; Khatib al-Baghdadi, *al-Jami' li-Akhlaq al-Rawi wa Adab al-Sami*, i, 212, 407.

Similarly, by means of misfortune, illness and pain, and other motion-inducing contingencies, the other cogs of the human machine are set in motion and revolution. The mine of weakness, impotence, and poverty inherent in human nature is made to work. It induces in man a state whereby he seeks refuge and help not only with a single tongue, but with the tongue of each of his members. Thus by means of those contingencies man becomes like a moving pen comprising thousands of different pens. He inscribes the appointed course of his existence on the page of his life or the Tablet in the World of Similitudes; he puts forth a declaration of the divine names; and becomes himself an ode to the glory of God, thus fulfilling the duties of his nature.

The Third Flash

[Emotion and spiritual pleasure have become mixed in this Flash to an extent, and since their exuberance does not much heed the principles of the intellect or the scales of thought nor conform to them, it should not be weighed up on the scales of logic.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Everything shall perish save His countenance; His is the command, and to Him shall you return.(28:88)*

The two phrases, “O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal! * O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!” both express the meaning of the above verse, and state two important truths. It was because of this that some of the chiefs of the Naqshbandi Order compiled some special invocations based on repetition of the phrases, and held it to be a concise set of Naqshi supplications. Seeing that the two phrases express the verse’s meaning, we shall explain several points concerning the significant truth they state.

FIRST POINT

The first time “O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!” is recited, like a surgical operation it severs the heart from everything other than God. It is as follows:

By virtue of his comprehensive nature, man is connected with almost all beings. Also included in his nature is a boundless capacity to love. For these reasons he nurtures love towards all beings. He both loves the huge world as though it were his house, and he loves eternal Paradise as though it were his garden. However, the beings he loves do not stop, they depart, and he constantly suffers the pain of separation. That boundless love of his becomes the means of boundless torment.

However, the fault in suffering such torment is his, for he was given a heart with an infinite capacity to love in order to direct it toward One possessing infinite undying beauty. By misusing it and spending it on transitory

beings, he has done wrong and suffers the punishment for his fault through the pain of separation.

Thus, the first time he utters: “O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!”, it severs his attachment to transitory beings; he leaves those objects of love before they leave him and he is thus cleared of his fault. It declares that love should be restricted to the Eternal Beloved, and expresses this meaning: “You are the only being that endures! Everything other than You is transient. My heart cannot become attached to anything transient, for it was created for everlasting love, to feel ardour lasting from pre-eternity to post-eternity. Since those innumerable beloveds are transitory and they leave me and depart, declaring, ‘O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!’ I shall leave them before they leave me. Only You are immortal, and I know and believe that beings can only be immortal by Your making them so. In which case, they should be loved with love of You. They are not otherwise worthy of the heart’s affection.”

When in this state, the human heart gives up innumerable objects of love; beholding the stamp of transitoriness on their beauty, it severs its attachment to them. It otherwise suffers wounds to the number of its beloveds. The second “O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!” is both a salve and an antidote for those wounds. That is, “O Eternal One! Since You are Eternal, that is sufficient, You take the place of everything. Since You exist, everything exists!”

Yes, the beauty, bounty, and perfection in beings, which excite love, are generally signs of the Truly Enduring One’s beauty and bounty and perfections, and passing through many veils, are pale shadows of them; indeed, they are the shadows of the manifestations of His most beautiful names.

SECOND POINT

Included in human nature is an intense love of immortality. Even, because of his power of imagination, man fancies a sort of immortality in everything he loves. He cries out from the depths of his being whenever he thinks of or sees their passing. All lamentations at separation are expressions of the weeping caused by love of immortality. If there were no imagined immortality, there would be no love. It might even be said that the intense desire for immortality arising from that passionate love of immortality, and from the spontaneous general prayer for immortality, is a reason for the existence of the eternal realm and everlasting Paradise. The Eternal One of Glory accepted man’s intense, unshakeable, innate desire and his powerful, effective, general prayer, for He created an eternal realm for him, a transient being.

Is it at all possible that the Munificent and Compassionate Creator would accept the insignificant wish of the tiny stomach and its supplication through the tongue of disposition for a temporary immortality by creating innumerable delicious foods, and not accept the intense desire of all humankind, which arises from an overpowering innate need, and its universal, constant, rightful, just prayer for immortality, offered through word and state? God forbid, a hundred thousand times! It is impossible that He would not accept it. Not to accept it would be in keeping with neither his wisdom, nor His justice, nor His mercy, nor His power.

Since man is most desirous of immortality, all his perfections and pleasures are dependent upon it. And since immortality is particular to the Eternal One of Glory; and since the Eternal One's names are enduring and immortal; and since the Eternal One's mirrors take on the hue of the Eternal One, and reflect His decree, and manifest a sort of immortality; for sure the matter most important for man, his most pressing duty, is to form a relation with that Eternal One and to adhere to His names. For everything expended on the way of the Eternal One receives a sort of immortality. The second "O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!" expresses this truth. In addition to healing man's innumerable spiritual wounds, it satisfies the intense wish for immortality inherent in his nature.

THIRD POINT

In this world, the effects of time on things, and on their passing, differ greatly. Beings are one within the other like concentric circles, yet they differ in regard to the speed of their passage.

Just as the hands of a clock counting the seconds, and those counting the minutes, hours, and days superficially resemble each other but differ in respect of their speed, so too the spheres of the body, soul, heart, and spirit in man differ from one another. For example, the body possesses an immortality, a life, and an existence in the present day, and even in the present hour while its past and future are dead and non-existent, but the heart's sphere of existence and life extends from many days previous to the present day and to many days in the future. Then the sphere of the spirit is vast; its life and existence extends from years previous to the present day to years subsequent to it.

By virtue of this capacity – in respect of knowledge, love, and worship of God the Lord and Sustainer and the pleasure of that Most Merciful One, from which spring the life of the heart and spirit – transient life in this world contains within it a perpetual life, results in an eternal life, and resembles everlasting life.

Yes, one second on the way of love, knowledge, and pleasure of the Truly Enduring One is like a year, otherwise a year is a second. A single second, even, on His way is immortal and many years. A hundred years of the people of neglect looking to this world are like a single second. There is the famous saying: “A moment’s separation lasts a year, and a year’s union passes in an instant.” I say the complete opposite to this: a moment’s union for God’s sake within the bounds of the Eternal One of Glory’s pleasure is a window opening onto not a year’s union, but permanent union. While not one year but perhaps a thousand spent in heedlessness and misguidance pass in an instant. There is a saying more famous that confirms this: “With enemies the broad earth is like a small cup, while with friends a needle’s eye becomes a broad arena.”¹

An explicit meaning of the first well-known saying above is this: since union with transitory beings is transient, however long it lasts it seems brief. A year of such union is as fleeting as a second; it is an illusion, a dream, causing regret and sorrow. Since the human heart desires immortality, it can receive in one year’s union only the tiniest pleasure within a fraction of a second, and a moment’s separation is like not one year but many. For the arena of separation is broad. If only for a second, separation inflicts years of destruction on the heart, since it yearns for eternity. For it bodes of innumerable separations. As for physical and lowly loves, for them the past and future are filled with separations.

While on the subject, we say this: O man! Do you want to make your brief and useless life immortal, long, beneficial, and fruitful? Since such a wish is demanded by humanity, spend your life on the way of the Truly Enduring One. For everything turned to that Eternal One receives the manifestation of immortality.

Since everyone fervently desires long life and yearns for immortality; and since there is a means of transforming this fleeting life into perpetual life and it is possible to make it lengthy; for sure anyone who has not lost his humanity will seek out the means and try to convert the possibility into reality and will act accordingly. Yes, the means is this: work for God’s sake, meet with others for God’s sake, labour for God’s sake; act within the bounds of “For God, for God’s sake, on account of God.”² Then all the moments of your life will be turned into years.

Alluding to this truth, verses of the Qur’an state that a single night such as the Night of Power is the equivalent of a thousand months, that is,

¹ See, Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Mudkhish*, i, 385; al-‘Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, ii, 246.

² See, *Tirmidhi*, Sunna, 15; *Abu Da’ud*, Qiyama, 60; *Musnad*, iii, 438, 440.

around eighty years. The expansion of time, a tried principle among the people of sainthood and reality, also alludes to this truth. For through its mystery, a few minutes' Ascension become many years and prove the existence of this truth and demonstrate it in fact. The few hours of the Prophet's (UWBP) Ascension had the length, breadth, and comprehensiveness of thousands of years, for by way of it he entered the world of eternity, and a few minutes of that world comprise thousands of years of this world.

There are, besides this, the numerous occurrences of the expansion of time experienced by the saints, constructed on this truth. It is related that some of them did a day's work in a single minute, and others performed a year's duties in an hour, while others recited the whole Qur'an in the space of a minute. Such veracious people of truth would never knowingly stoop to lying. There can be no doubt that they observed exactly the fact of the expansion of time,³ which has been thus numerous and unanimously reported.

The expansion of time experienced in dreams is a sort confirmed by everyone. Sometimes a day in the waking world, or many days, would be necessary to experience the happenings, words, pleasures, and pains experienced in a minute's dream.

I n S h o r t : For sure man is transitory, but he was created for immortality and to be a mirror to the Eternal One, and he was charged with duties which produce eternal fruits, and was given a form that is the means to manifesting the impresses of an Eternal One's eternal names. In which case, his true duty and happiness is to cling with all his powers and faculties to the names of that Perpetually Eternal One within the bounds of those things that please Him; it is to be turned towards Him, and to go to Him. As man's tongue utters "O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!," so his heart, spirit, mind, and all his subtle faculties should declare:

"He is the Eternal One! He is Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal! He is the Everlasting and Perpetual! He is the One who is sought, the Beloved! He is the One wished for and Worshipped!"

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

O our Sustainer! Do not take us to task if we forget or do wrong.(2:282)

³ The verses, "Said one of them: 'How long have we stayed [here]?' They said, 'We have stayed [perhaps] a day, or part of a day,'" (18:19) and, "So they stayed in their cave three hundred years, and [some] add nine [more]" (18:25) point to the traversing of time, while the verse, "Verily a day in the sight of your Sustainer is like a thousand years of your reckoning" (22:47) points to the expansion of time.

The Fourth Flash

The title, **The Highway of the Practices of the Prophet** was considered appropriate for this treatise.

[The Imamate question is a matter of secondary importance, but because of the excessive attention paid it, it was as though included among the matters of belief and dealt with by the sciences of kala'm and the principles of religion.¹ Here, it is discussed partly in this respect and partly in respect of its relevance to our basic duties towards the Qur'an and belief.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Now has come a prophet from among yourselves; it heavily weighs upon him that you might suffer; full of concern is he for you, and full of compassion and mercy towards the believers. * But if they turn away, say: God is enough for me, there is no god but He. In Him have I placed my trust, for He is the Lord and Sustainer of the Mighty Throne.(9:128-9) * Say: I ask no recompense of you save love of close kin.(42:23)*

We shall point out in two stations two of the many vast truths contained in these glorious verses.

First Station

The first station consists of four points.

FIRST POINT

This describes the perfect compassion and mercy of God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) towards his community.

¹ al-Iji, *Kitab al-Mawaqif*, iii, 331; Ahmad b. Muhammad, *Kitab Usul al-Din*, 269, 279

According to sound narrations, when at the terror of the resurrection everyone including the prophets will cry out for themselves, God's Messenger (UWBP) will demonstrate his pity and compassion² by calling out: "My community! My community!"³ As is affirmed by those who disclose the realities, when he was born, his mother heard the same words among his supplications.⁴ Then the whole history of his life, as well as the benevolence he taught demonstrate his perfect compassion and clemency. Also, by evincing an infinite need for his community's innumerable prayers,⁵ he showed a boundless compassion, for he showed that because of it he was concerned with the happiness of all of them. You can understand, therefore, how lacking in gratitude and conscience it is not to observe the practices of so kind and compassionate a leader.

SECOND POINT

Among the universal, general duties of his prophethood, God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) displayed great compassion in certain particular, minor matters. Superficially, his behaving so kindly in such matters seems unfitting for the supreme importance of the prophetic mission. But in reality, such minor matters were the tips or samples of a chain that would be the means whereby a universal, general function of prophethood would be fulfilled. The greatest importance was therefore given to the sample for the sake of the mighty chain.

For example, the extraordinary gentleness God's Messenger (UWBP) showed towards Hasan and Husayn in their childhood and the great importance he gave them⁶ was not only out of love and natural kindness and family feeling, it was rather because they were each the tip of a luminous thread of the office of prophethood, and the source, sample, and index of a community of great consequence which would receive the legacy of prophethood.

Indeed, the Messenger (UWBP) used to take Hasan (May God be pleased with him) tenderly into his arms and kiss his head⁷ for the sake of the luminous, blessed, Mahdi-like descendants who would spring from him, such as Shah Geylani, the Ghawth al-A'zam,⁸ who would be the inheritors of pro

² See, *Bukhari*, Tawhid, 32; *Muslim*, Iman, 326.

³ *Bukhari*, Tawhid, 36; Tafsir Sura 17:5; Fitan, 1; *Muslim*, Iman, 326, 327; *Tirmidhi*, Qiyama, 10; *Darimi*, Muqaddima, 8.

⁴ See, Suyuti, *al-Khasa'is al-Kubra*, i, 80, 85, 91; al-Nabhani, Hujjat Allah 'ala'l-'Alamin, 224, 227, 228.

⁵ See, *Tirmidhi*, Qiyama, 24.

⁶ See, *Bukhari*, Fada'il al-Ashab, 22; *Muslim*, Fada'il al-S'ahaba, 56, 60.

⁷ See, *Musnad*, v, 47; al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, iii, 32; xx, 274.

⁸ Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir Gilani, d. 561/1165-6. The eponymous founder of the Qadiri Order. (Tr.)

phethood and would uphold the sacred Shari‘a of Muhammad. He saw with the eye of prophethood the sacred services they would perform in the future, and applauded them.⁹ He kissed Hasan’s head as a sign of approval and encouragement.

Also, he embraced Husayn (May God be pleased with him) and showed him importance and tenderness on account of the illustrious Imams like Zayn al-‘Abidin and Ja‘far al-Sadiq, and the numerous Mahdi-like luminous persons, the true inheritors of prophethood, who would spring from his effulgent line, and for the sake of the religion of Islam and office of prophethood.

Since with his heart with its knowledge of the Unseen, the Prophet Muhammad’s (UWBP) luminous vision and future-penetrating eye observed from the Era of Bliss in this world the Assembly of the Resurrection on the side of post-eternity, and from the earth saw Paradise, and watched events which had occurred since the time of Adam and were concealed in the dark veils of the past, and even beheld the vision of the All-Glorious One, he surely saw the spiritual poles and the Imams who were to be the inheritors of prophethood, and the Mahdis, who would follow on in the lines of Hasan and Husayn. And for sure he would kiss their heads in the name of all of them. Yes, Shah Geylani has a large part in his kissing Hasan’s head.

THIRD POINT

According to one interpretation, the verse:

Say: I ask of you no recompense save love of close kin(42:23)

has the meaning: “God’s Noble Messenger (UWBP) wants no reward for fulfilling the duties of messengership; he wants only love for his family.”

If it is asked: According to this, it seems there is an advantage to be gained from a family relationship. Whereas, according to the meaning of:

The most honoured of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you,(49:13)

prophethood functions in respect of closeness to God, not of family relationships?

The Answer: With his vision that penetrated the Unseen, God’s Most Noble Messenger (UWBP) saw that his family would become a light-giving tree in the world of Islam. It would be from his family that the overwhelming majority of those persons who would act as guides and preceptors instructing every level of the world of Islam in human attainment and per

⁹ See, *Ibn Maja*, Muqaddima, 11; *Musnad*, iv, 172.

fection would emerge. He divined that his community's prayer for his family in the final section of the prescribed prayers: "O God, grant blessings to our master Muhammad and to the family of our master Muhammad, as You granted blessings to Abraham and to the family of Abraham; indeed, You are Worthy of Praise, Most Exalted"¹⁰ would be accepted. That is to say, just as the vast majority of the luminous guides among the people of Abraham were prophets of Abraham's family and line,¹¹ so he saw in his community the spiritual poles of his family performing the momentous duties of Islam, and in most of the paths and Sufi orders, like the prophets of Israel.¹² Therefore, being commanded to say: "Say: I ask of you no recompense save love of close kin," he wanted his community to love his family.

There are numerous narrations corroborating this fact. He repeatedly decreed: "I leave you two things. If you adhere to them, you will find salvation: one is God's Book, the other is my Family."¹³ For members of his family were the source and guardians of his practices (Sunna) and were charged with complying with them in every respect. This is why what was intended by this Hadith was adherence to the Book and the Prophet's practices. That is to say, in respect of the office of messengership it was the Prophet's (UWBP) practices that were sought from his family. So no one who abandoned his practices could truly be a member of his family, nor could such a person not be a true friend to them.¹⁴

Also, the reason he desired his community to gather round his family¹⁵ was that, with God's permission, he knew it was going to become very numerous in the course of time, and that Islam was going to become weak. An extremely strong and large mutually supportive group of people was therefore necessary to be the instrument through which the Islamic world would progress spiritually and morally, with divine permission. He thought of this and desired that his community should gather round his family.

Indeed, even if the members of the Prophet's (UWBP) family were not greatly in advance of others in matters of belief and faith, they were still far ahead of them in regard to submission, partiality, and partisanship. For they were followers of Islam by nature, birth, and temperament. Even if natural partiality is weak and unworthy, or unjustifiable even, it cannot be given

¹⁰ *Bukhari*, *Anbiya'*, 10; *Muslim*, *Salat*, 65-6.

¹¹ See, Ibn al-Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, xi, 162.

¹² See, al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iv, 384; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, ii, 83.

¹³ *Tirmidhi*, *Manaqib*, 31; *Musnad*, iii, 14, 17, 26.

¹⁴ See, al-Tabarani, *Mu'jam al-Awsad*, iii, 338; *Abu Da'ud*, *Fitan*, 2; *Musnad*, ii, 133.

¹⁵ See, al-Bazzar, *al-Musnad*, ix, 343; al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, iii, 45-6; xii, 34.

up. So would it be possible for a person to give up his support for a truth to which all his forefathers – who were most strong, most constant and true, and most illustrious – had been bound, and through which they had won glory, and for which they had sacrificed their lives, a truth the person clearly felt to be so fundamental and natural? Thus, due to this intense partiality and natural submission, the Prophet's (UWBP) family accepted the least hint in favour of the religion of Islam as though it were a powerful proof. For they were partial by nature. Others become partial only after some powerful proof.

FOURTH POINT

In connection with the Third Point, we shall indicate briefly a matter that has been disputed by the Shi'ites and the Sunnis and has been magnified to such an extent that it has been included in the books on doctrine, among the fundamentals of belief.¹⁶

The Sunnis say: "Ali (May God be pleased with him) was the fourth of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Abu Bakr the Veracious (May God be pleased with him) was superior to him and was more deserving of the Caliphate, therefore it passed to him first."¹⁷ While the Shi'ites say: "It was 'Ali's right. An injustice was done to him. 'Ali was the most worthy of them all." A summary of the arguments for their claims is this. They say: "The Hadiths of the Prophet (UWBP) about 'Ali,¹⁸ and with his title of King of Sainthood his being the recognized authority of the vast majority of the saints and spiritual paths, and his extraordinary knowledge, courage, and worship, and the Prophet's (Upon whom be blessings and peace) intense concern for him and towards his descendants all show that he was the most worthy. The Caliphate was always his right; it was seized from him."

The Answer: The fact that 'Ali (May God be pleased with him) followed the first three Caliphs, whom he repeatedly acknowledged,¹⁹ and held the position of their Shaikh al-Islam, refutes these claims of the Shi'ites. Furthermore, the victories of Islam and the struggles against its enemies in the time of the first three Caliphs and the events in 'Ali's time, refute the Shi'ites' claims, again from the point of view of the Islamic Caliphate. That is to say the Sunnis' claim is rightful.

If it is said, there are two sorts of Shi'ites, the Sainthood Shi'a and the

¹⁶ See, al-Taftazani, *Sharh al-'Aqa'id* (Turk. tr. Süleyman Uludağ), 321.

¹⁷ See, Ahmad b. Hanbal, *al-'Aqida*, i, 123; Ibn Abi 'Izz, *Sharh 'Aqida al-Tahawiyya*, i, 545, 548.

¹⁸ *Tirmidhi*, Manaqib, 19; *Ibn Maja*, Muqaddima, 11; *Musnad*, i, 84, 118; iv, 281.

¹⁹ See, *Bukhari*, Fada'il Ashab, 5; *Abu Da'ud*, Sunna, 7; *Musnad*, i, 106.

Caliphate Shi'a. Because they mixed hatred and politics the second group may have been unjust, but the first group were not concerned with partisan politics. However, the Sainthood Shi'a joined the Caliphate Shi'a. That is, some of the saints of the Sufi orders looked on 'Ali as superior and they endorsed the claims of the Caliphate Shi'a.

The Answer: 'Ali (May God be pleased with him) has to be considered in two respects. One is from the point of view of his personal perfections and rank, and the other is from the point of view of his representing the collective personality of the Prophet's (UWBP) family. As for this collective personality, it displays an aspect of the Most Noble Messenger's (UWBP) essential nature.

Thus, in regard to the first point, foremost 'Ali himself and all the people of truth gave precedence to Abu Bakr and 'Umar.²⁰ They saw their ranks as higher in the service of Islam and closeness to God. As for the second point, as the representative of the collective personality of the Prophet's (UWBP) family, which represents an aspect of the Muhammadan Truth, 'Ali has no equal. The highly laudatory Hadiths about 'Ali²¹ look to this second point. There is a sound narration that corroborates this: the Noble Messenger (UWBP) decreed: "The descendants of each prophet are from himself. My descendants are those of 'Ali."²²

The reason the Hadiths praising 'Ali more than the other three Caliphs have become so widespread is that the people of truth, that is, the Sunnis, spread many narrations about him in response to the Umayyads and Kharijites attacking and disparaging him unjustly. The other Rightly-Guided Caliphs were not subject to such criticism and detraction, so no need was felt to spread Hadiths about them.

Furthermore, the Prophet (UWBP) saw with the eye of prophethood the grievous events and internal strife to which 'Ali would be exposed in the future, and in order to save him from despair and his community from thinking unfavourably of him, he consoled him and guided his community with significant Hadiths like "Whosever master I am, 'Ali too is his master."²³

²⁰ See, al-Ghazali, *Qawa'id al-'Aqa'id*, i, 228; al-Kalabazi, *al-Ta'arruf li-Madhhab Ahl Tasawwuf*, i, 57.

²¹ *Tirmidhi*, *Manaqib*, 19; *Ibn Maja*, *Muqaddima*, 11; *Musnad*, i, 84, 118; iv, 281.

²² Tabarani, *al-Majma' al-Kabir*, no: 2630; al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, x, 333; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, 223, no: 1717.

²³ *Tirmidhi*, *Manaqib*, 19; *Ibn Maja*, *Muqaddima*, 11; *Musnad*, i, 84, 118, 119, 152, 331; iv, 281, 368, 370, 383; v, 347, 366, 419; al-Kattani, *Nazm al-Mutanathir fi'l-Ahadith al-Mutawatir*, 24; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, vi, 218; Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, ix, 42; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, ii, 130; iii, 134.

The excessive love of the Sainthood Shi'a towards 'Ali (May God be pleased with him) and – influenced by the Sufi Orders – their deeming him superior, does not make them answerable to the degree of the Caliphate Shi'a. For those who follow the path of sainthood look towards their spiritual guides with love, and the mark of love is excess;²⁴ it wants to see the beloved as greater than his rank. And that is how it sees him. Ecstasies may be forgiven excesses of love. So their deeming 'Ali more worthy because of their love may be excused on condition it does not turn into disparagement of the other Rightly-Guided Caliphs and enmity towards them, and does not go beyond the fundamental teachings of Islam.

As for the Caliphate Shi'a, since political prejudice took a hold of them they could not rid themselves of hatred and aggression, so forfeited their right to be excused. Even, confirming the saying, "Not for love of 'Ali, but out of hatred of 'Umar," since Persian national pride was wounded at 'Umar's hand,²⁵ they showed their revenge in the form of love of 'Ali. So also 'Amr ibn al-'As's rebellion against 'Ali and 'Umar ibn al-Sa'd's tragic war against Husayn²⁶ aroused in the Shi'a an intense anger and enmity towards the name of 'Umar.

The Sainthood Shi'a have no right to criticize the Sunnis, for the Sunnis have not decried 'Ali, indeed, they love him sincerely. But they avoid the excessive love which is described as dangerous in Hadiths.²⁷ The Prophet's (UWBP) praise of 'Ali's followers in the Hadiths²⁸ refers to the Sunnis. For it is the Sunnis among 'Ali's followers who love him in a moderate fashion and are the people of truth. Just as excessive love of Jesus (Upon whom be peace) is dangerous for Christians, so it has been made clear in sound Hadiths that that sort of excessive love for 'Ali is dangerous.²⁹

If the Sainthood Shi'a say: "Once 'Ali's consummate spiritual attainments are accepted, it is impossible to give precedence to Abu Bakr the Truthful."

The reply: It was as though the personal perfections of Abu Bakr, the

²⁴ *Abu Da'ud*, Adab, 113; *Musnad*, v, 194; vi, 450.

²⁵ See, Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, vi, 12, 21; al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-'Umam wa'l-Muluk*, iii, 283, 289.

²⁶ See, al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-'Umam wa'l-Muluk*, iii, 298; Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya wa'l-Nihaya*, viii, 193.

²⁷ *Musnad*, i, 160; Nasa'i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, v, 137; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iii, 132.

²⁸ al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsad*, vi, 354; vii, 343.

²⁹ Bukhari, *Ta'rikh al-Kabir*, ii, 257; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Fada'il al-Sahaba*: 1087, 1221, 1222; al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, ix, 133; Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-'Ilal il-Mutanahiya*, i, 223.

Supremely Veracious, and ‘Umar, the Supreme Distinguisher between True and False (May God be pleased with them), had been placed in the pan of some scales together with their achievements during their Caliphates, realized through their performance of the duties inherited from the Prophet (UWBP), and in the other pan had been placed ‘Ali’s (May God be pleased with him) extraordinary personal perfections together with the internal Caliphate struggles, which resulted from the tragic events he was compelled to enter upon and were the object of suspicion and distrust, and the Sunnis saw that Abu Bakr’s or ‘Umar’s or ‘Uthman’s (Dhi’l-Nurayn) pan weighed heavier, and so they gave them precedence.

Moreover, as is proved in the Twelfth and Twenty-Fourth Words, prophethood is so elevated in comparison to sainthood that a tiny manifestation of it is superior to a large manifestation of sainthood. In regard to this, the successes of the Supremely Veracious and the Supreme Distinguisher between True and False during their Caliphates was an indication for the Sunnis that their share in the legacy of prophethood³⁰ and the establishment of its laws had been divinely bestowed. Since ‘Ali’s personal perfections did not dismiss that greater share, which had been inherited from the Prophet (UWBP), he acted as Shaikh al-Islam for Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, the two Illustrious Elders, in the time of their Caliphates, and esteemed them. How should the Sunnis, who love and revere ‘Ali, not love and revere the two Elders, whom ‘Ali loved and revered sincerely? Let us make this truth clear by means of an example:

One of the sons of a very rich man is given twenty *batmans*³¹ of silver and four *batmans* of gold from his father’s legacy, and another is given five of silver and five of gold. So if the third is given three of silver and five of gold, of course the last two will receive less in quantity, but more in quality. Like this example, the lesser amount of the two elders’ share of the gold of the truth of divine immediacy, which was manifested in the legacy of prophethood and the establishment of its laws, would weigh heavier than the great amount of divine proximity and the perfections of sainthood which sprang from the jewel of sainthood. These points should also be taken into account when weighing them up.³² But if they are compared with one another from the point of view of personal courage, knowledge, and sainthood, the matter takes on a different complexion.

³⁰ See, *Bukhari*, Fada’il Ashab, 6; *Muslim*, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 15-16; *Tirmidhi*, Ruya, 9.

³¹ *Batman*: a weight varying from 5-30 lbs. [Tr.]

³² See, *Tirmidhi*, Ruya, 10; *Abu Da’ud*, Sunna, 8; *Musnad*, v, 44, 50.

Also, there can be no comparison in respect of the collective personality of the Prophet's (UWBP) family, which was represented in the person of 'Ali (May God be pleased with him), and of the Muhammadan Truth, which was manifested as a total inheritance in that collective personality. For contained in it was the mighty mystery of the Prophet Muhammad himself (Upon whom be blessings and peace).

As for the Caliphate Shi'a, they can claim no rights before the Sunnis other than shame. For although they say they have tremendous love for 'Ali (May God be pleased with him), they disparage him, and their creed necessitates accusing him of immorality. For they say that although Abu Bakr the Veracious and 'Umar were acting unjustly, 'Ali feigned approval for them; according to Shi'i terminology, he dissimulated. That is, he was frightened of them and behaved hypocritically.³³ But it is not love to hold that someone who was such a hero of Islam, won the title Lion of Allah,³⁴ and was the commander and guide of the faithful, was simulating love for people he did not love out of fear and deception, and was feigning approval for them in fear for more than twenty years, and was following wrongdoers. 'Ali (May God be pleased with him) would disclaim love that sort.

Thus, the people of truth's creed in no way disparages 'Ali, nor levels accusations of immorality at him. It does not attribute cowardice where there was such remarkable courage, but says that if 'Ali had not considered the Rightly-Guided Caliphs to be right, he would not have recognized them for a minute, nor obeyed them. It means that since he thought them right and preferable, he made over his courage and striving to the way of justice.³⁵

In Short: Too much or too little of anything is not good. Moderation is the middle way³⁶ and has been chosen by the Sunnis. But, alas, Kharijite ideas have infiltrated the Sunnis to an extent; so too addicts of politics and some atheists criticize 'Ali. They say, God forbid, that he did not understand politics so was not entirely worthy of the Caliphate and could not govern, and because of these unjust accusations, 'Alawis feel affronted at the Sunnis. Whereas Sunnis hold no principles or basic beliefs that necessitate such ideas. Indeed, they prove the opposite. The Sunnis cannot

³³ See, al-Razi, *I'tiqad Firaq al-Muslimin wa'l-Mushrikin*, i, 60, 61; Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhaj al-Sunna*, vi, 320.

³⁴ See, Ahmad b. 'Abdullah al-Tabari, *al-Riyad al-Nadira*, i, 245; *Zaha'ir al-'Uqba*, i, 92.

³⁵ Ibn Abi al-Hadid, *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*, i, 130-2.

³⁶ See, al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, iii, 402; v, 261; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, i, 470.

be condemned because of ideas that come from Kharijites and atheists. Indeed, the Sunnis are firmer followers of ‘Ali than the ‘Alawis. They mention ‘Ali in the laudatory fashion he deserves in all their khutbas and prayers. And the saints and purified scholars, the vast majority of whom belonged to the Sunni school, recognized him as a spiritual guide and the king of sainthood.³⁷ The ‘Alawis should ignore the Kharijites and atheists who have deservedly earned the enmity of both the ‘Alawis and the Sunnis, and not take sides against the people of truth. Some ‘Alawis even abandon the Prophet’s (UWBP) Sunna out of spite for the Sunnis. Anyway, we have said too much on this matter, for it has been discussed inordinately by the religious scholars.

O Sunnis, who are the people of truth, and ‘Alawis, whose way is love of the Prophet’s (UWBP) family! Quickly put an end to this meaningless, disloyal, unjust, and harmful dispute between you. Otherwise the atheistic current which is now so influential will make one of you a tool against the other, and use the one to crush the other. And after defeating the one it will destroy the tool. As believers in divine unity, it is essential that you leave aside unimportant matters that cause division, for there are a hundred fundamental sacred bonds between you that enjoin brotherhood and unity.

Second Station

The Second Station will be about the second truth of the verse,

*But if they turn away, say: “God suffices me, there is no god but He; in Him do I place my trust – He the Sustainer of the Throne [of Glory] Supreme!”(9:129)*³⁸

³⁷ See, Imam Rabbani, *al-Maktubat*, i, 134 (No: 251).

³⁸ The Second Station was designated the Eleventh Flash.

*Note: Our Master, Hazret-i Ustad, said in explanation of these two phrases in the footnote of the Sixth Chapter of the Twenty-Ninth Flash, which is in Arabic: “The degrees of these two phrases were written in Arabic because they are reflection and remembrance of God rather than intellectual knowledge.....” The Fourth Ray, called *Hasbiye Risalesi*, about the verse “For us God suffices, and he is the Best Disposer of Affairs,” was written subsequently in Turkish.

The Fifth Flash

A treatise was to be written that would explain in fifteen degrees a highly significant meaning of the verse, “For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs,”(3:173) but it has been postponed for now since it would have been concerned more with reflective thought and the recollection of God than with reality and intellectual knowledge. In fact, the important treatise called The Stairway of the Practices of the Prophet and Antidote for the Sickness of Innovation was originally known as the Fifth Flash, but since it comprised eleven points, it was designated the Eleventh Flash, and the Fifth Flash’s place remained unoccupied.

* * *

The Sixth Flash

Again, there was to have been a treatise explaining in fifteen or twenty degrees of reflective thought the important truth stated in numerous verses of the Qur’an and expressed by the phrase: “There is no power and strength save through God, the Exalted, the Mighty.”^{1,2} Like the Fifth Flash, this consisted of degrees I had perceived in myself and observed through reflection and remembrance of God in my journeying of the spirit. Therefore, since it was more a means to illumination and spiritual pleasure than intellectual knowledge and reality, it seemed appropriate to include it at the end of the Flashes, which are about reality, rather than among them.

¹ See, *Bukhari*, Tahajjud, 21; *Nasa’i*, Sahw, 83.

² See Note above.

The Seventh Flash

[This is about the seven sorts of predictions about the Unseen at the end of Sura al-Fath.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Truly did God fulfil the vision for His Messenger: You shall enter the Sacred Mosque, if God wills, with minds secure, heads shaved, hair cut short, and without fear. For He knew what you knew not, and He granted besides this, a victory soon to come. * It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion, and enough is God for a Witness. * Muhammad is the Messenger of God; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, [but] compassionate among each other. You will see them bow and prostrate themselves [in prayer], seeking grace from God and [His] good pleasure. On their faces are their marks, [being] the traces of their prostration. This is their similitude in the Torah; and their similitude in the Gospel is: like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, [filling] the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the unbelievers with rage at them. God has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness, and a great reward.(48:27-9)*

These three verses from Sura al-Fath contain many aspects of miraculousness. The Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition's miraculousness has ten universal aspects; the aspect related to its giving news of the Unseen may be seen in seven or eight ways in these three verses.

THE FIRST

“Truly did God fulfil the vision for His Messenger” to the end of the verse, gave certain news of the conquest of Mecca before it happened. It occurred two years later just as predicted.¹

¹ Ibn Hisham, *Sirat al-Nabawiyya*, v, 69; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, ii, 139, 146.

THE SECOND

“And He granted besides this, a victory soon to come” is stating that although the Truce of Hdaybiya was apparently opposed to Islam’s interests and the Quraysh were victorious to an extent, in reality it was a great victory and the key to further conquests. For with the Truce the physical sword was temporarily hung up, but the flashing diamond sword of the Qur’an was unsheathed, and it conquered minds and hearts. As a result of it, the two sides mixed with one another. The virtues of Islam and lights of the Qur’an rent the veils of obduracy and tribalism and prevailed. For example, people like Khalid ibn al-Walid, a brilliant warrior, and ‘Amr ibn al-‘As, a brilliant politician, who could not accept defeat, were defeated by the Qur’anic sword manifested through the Truce of Hdaybiya.² They submitted in perfect obedience to Islam in Medina, and Khalid became a “Sword of Allah,” a sword in the conquests of Islam.

An Important Question: What was the reason the Companions of the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), the Glory of the World and Beloved of the Sustainer of All the Worlds, were defeated by the idolators at the end of Uhud and beginning of Hunayn?³

The Answer: Among the idolators were many persons like Khalid who in the future would be equal to the leading Companions of that time. Therefore, so as not to degrade them entirely in the view of the future, which for them would be glorious and honourable, divine wisdom gave them in the past immediate recompense for their future good works and did not completely destroy their pride. That is to say, the Companions of the past were defeated by the Companions of the future, so that the future Companions would enter Islam, not through fear of the flashing sword but through zeal for the flash of truth, and so that they and their natural valour should not be brought low.

THE THIRD

The words, “and without fear” say this: “You shall circumambulate the Ka’ba in complete safety.” However at that time the majority of the nomadic peoples of the Arabian Peninsula were hostile, and most of the environs of Mecca and the tribe of Quraysh, enemies. By predicting: “Soon you shall circumambulate the Ka’ba without fear,” it was indicating and

² Ibn Hisham, *Sirat al-Nabawiyya*, iv, 7; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, iv, 252.

³ See, *Bukhari*, Maghazi, 54; Jihad, 52, 61, 97, 167; *Muslim*, Jihad, 79; *Tirmidhi*, Jihad, 15.

foretelling that the Arabian Peninsula would submit and all the Quraysh enter Islam and total security be established. And it all occurred exactly as predicted.⁴

THE FOURTH

“He it is who sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion” predicts with complete certainty that the religion which the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) brought would triumph over all religions. However at that time Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism had hundreds of millions of adherents and were the official religions of such world-dominant states as Rome, China, and Persia, which had hundreds of millions of subjects, and Muhammad the Arabian was unable to subdue his own small tribe even. Yet it is foretelling that the religion he brought would triumph over all religions and be victorious over all states. And it does this most clearly and categorically. The future confirmed this prediction, with the sword of Islam extending from the Pacific Ocean in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west.

THE FIFTH

“Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, [but] compassionate among each other. You will see them bow and prostrate themselves.” The beginning of this verse foretells explicitly the lofty qualities and virtues that made the Companions the most elevated of humankind after the prophets. And allusively it indicates the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, who would succeed to the Prophet’s (UWBP) position after his death through the institution of the Caliphate, and foretells the fine attributes⁵ which were what most distinguished each of them and marked them out. It is as follows:

“And those who are with him” alludes to Abu Bakr the Veracious, who was distinguished by being among the Prophet’s (UWBP) special followers and party to his conversation, and again being included among his special followers by being the first to die. While “are strong against the unbelievers” points to ‘Umar, who in the future would cause the countries of the globe to tremble at his conquests, and with his justice would descend on tyrants like a thunderbolt. And “compassionate among each other” gives news of ‘Uthman, who in the future when the most serious dissension was being fomented, would sacrifice his own life and spirit out of his perfect

⁴ Ibn Hisham, *Sirat al-Nabawiyya*, v, 69; Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, ii, 139, 146.

⁵ See, Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Fada’il al-Sahaba*, i, 434; Baghawi, *Ma‘alim al-Tanzil*, iv, 206.

compassion so that the blood of Muslims should not be spilt; he preferred to be martyred wrongfully while reading the Qur'an. And "You will see them bow and prostrate themselves [in prayer], seeking grace from God and [His] good pleasure" tells that with his complete worthiness to undertake the Caliphate and government, and his heroism, and his choosing perfect asceticism, worship, poverty, and frugality, and whose bowing and prostrating in prayer was corroborated by everyone, 'Ali (May God be pleased with him) was not responsible for his position in the future and the wars and strife in which he was involved, and that his intention and wish were for divine favour.

THE SIXTH

The phrase, "This is their similitude in the Torah" makes predictions concerning the Unseen in two respects:

The First: It cites these qualities of the Companions that are mentioned in the Torah, which for an unlettered person like the Prophet (Upon whom be blessings and peace) belonged to the World of the Unseen. Yes, as described in the Nineteenth Letter, the Torah contains the following lines about the Companions of the Prophet who was to come at the end of time: "The banners of the holy ones are together with them."⁶ That is, his Companions would be pious worshippers and righteous saints, so that they were described as "the holy ones," that is, "sacred." The Torah has been corrupted through translation into numerous languages, yet with many of its verses it still corroborates the words of Sura al-Fath, "This is their similitude in the Torah."

The Second aspect of it giving news of the Unseen is this: with this phrase it is predicting that the Companions and the generation that followed them would achieve such a degree of worship that the luminosity of their spirits would shine in their faces, and that marks would be apparent on their foreheads, like a stamp of sainthood, caused by their repeated prostrations. And indeed the future proved this brilliantly, with complete clarity and certainty. Many prominent persons caught up in that strange dissension and political upheaval demonstrated the mystery of "This is their similitude in the Torah," who day and night performed prayers of a thousand rakats like Zayn al-'Abidin, and performed the morning prayer with the ablutions of the previous evening, like Tavus al-Yamani.⁷

⁶ Deuteronomy, 33:2; Halabi, *al-Sirat al-Halabiya*, i, 218; Yusuf Nabhani, *Hujjat Allah 'ala'l-'Alamin*, 113.

⁷ See, Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, i, 359; al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lam Nubala'*, iv, 547.

THE SEVENTH

“And their similitude in the Gospel is: like a seed which sends forth its blade, then makes it strong; it then becomes thick, and it stands on its own stem, [filling] the sowers with wonder and delight. As a result, it fills the unbelievers with rage at them.” These phrases give news of the Unseen in two respects:

T h e F i r s t is the prediction in the Gospel about the Companions, which for the unlettered Prophet (UWBP) belonged to the World of the Unseen.

Yes, the Gospels contain such verses as, “With him is a staff of iron, and his community is like him”⁸ describing the Prophet who was to come at the end of time. That is, a Prophet would come who unlike Jesus (UWP) would wield the sword and be charged with waging jihad, as would his Companions. The one bearing “the staff of iron” would be the World’s Ruler. For in another place in the Gospels it says: “I am going so that the Ruler of the World may come.”⁹ That is to say, the World’s Ruler will come. It is thus understood from these two verses in the Gospels that at the outset the Companions would be few and weak, nevertheless they would sprout like seeds, grow, thicken, and find strength. Then when about to be overwhelmed and smothered by the rage this caused the unbelievers, they would subjugate mankind with their swords and prove that the Messenger (UWBP), their leader, was the Ruler of the World. These verses express exactly the meaning of the above verses of Sura al-Fath.

S e c o n d A s p e c t : The verses predict the following: due to their weakness and small number the Companions accepted the Pact of Hudaibiya, but within a short time they grew and acquired such strength and loftiness that, planted by the Hand of Power in the field of the face of the earth, they multiplied in most elevated, powerful, fruitful, and plentiful fashion. This was true in comparison with the shoots of mankind at that time, since these latter were short, weak, defective, and scant due to neglect and heedlessness. The Companions would grow strong causing illustrious governments to rage at them in envy, jealousy, and anger. The future verified this prediction in most brilliant fashion.

The prediction also make the following further slight hint: it indicates through the word “forgiveness” that, although while praising the Companions’ excellent qualities they should have been promised the greatest rewards, in the future they would commit serious errors due to strife. For

⁸ Nabhani, *Hujjat Allah ‘ala’l-‘Alamin*, 99, 114.

⁹ John, 16:7; Halabi, *al-Sirat al-Halabiya*, i, 214.

forgiveness indicates the existence of faults. At that time it would be forgiveness, the greatest bounty, that the Companions would want. The highest reward would be absence of punishment, thanks to forgiveness. The word “forgiveness” both makes this subtle allusion, and it is connected with the verse at the beginning of the Sura, “That God may forgive you your faults of the past and those to follow.”(48:2) By giving the good news of forgiveness at the start of the Sura not for true sins, since the Messenger (UWBP) was exempt from sin and did not commit them, but for a meaning in keeping with the rank of prophethood, and by giving the good news of forgiveness for the Companions at the end of the Sura, it adds a further subtlety to the allusion.

Of the ten aspects of miraculousness contained in the above-mentioned three verses at the end of Sura al-Fath, we have discussed here only the aspect concerning predictions about the Unseen, and of the numerous parts of that aspect, only seven. A flash of miraculousness in the positioning of the letters of the last verse is alluded to at the end of the Twenty-Sixth Word, which is about divine determining and man’s faculty of will. This last verse looks to the Companions both with its sentences, and to their situations with its phrases, and it describes their attributes with its words¹⁰ and letters; so too with the repetition of the number of letters it alludes to classes of famous Companions like the Companions of Badr, of Uhud, of Hunayn, of the Bench, and of Ridwan. Moreover, it expresses many further mysteries through ‘coincidences’ and *abjad* reckoning, which are branches of the science of *jafr* and keys to it.

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

¹⁰ See, Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Fada'il al-Sahaba*, i, 434; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Zad al-Masir*, vii, 446; Suyuti, *al-Durr al-Manthur*, vii, 544; Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, xxvi, 129; Baghawi, *Ma'alim al-Tanzil*, iv, 206.

[Predictions similar to these concerning the Unseen indicated by the allusive meanings of the verses at the end of Sura al-Fath will be discussed here briefly, also in connection with their allusive meanings.]

A Postscript

*And We should have shown them the Straight Way. * All who obey God and the Messenger are in the company of those on whom is the grace of God – of the Prophets, the Veracious, the Witnesses [or Martyrs], and the Righteous: And how goodly a company are these!(4:68-9)*

We shall point out two of the thousands of fine points expounding these verses.

FIRST POINT

Just as the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition expresses truths through its explicit, clear meanings and senses, so it expresses many allusive meanings through its styles and manner of exposition. Each of its verses contains numerous levels of meanings. The Qur'an proceeds from all-encompassing knowledge, so all its meanings may be intended. Its meanings are not restricted to one or two like man's speech, the product of his limited mind and individual will.

In consequence of this, innumerable truths contained in the Qur'an's verses have been expounded by Qur'anic commentators, and there are many more that have not been expounded by them. In addition to its explicit meanings, much significant knowledge is contained in its letters in particular and in its allusions.

SECOND POINT

With the terms, "of the Prophets, the Veracious, the Witnesses [or martyrs], and the Righteous: And how goodly a company are these!", the verse describes the people of the Straight Path and the groups of the Prophets, the caravan of the Veracious, the community of the Martyrs, the class of the Righteous, and those who follow them. These are the members of mankind who truly receive the divine bounties. Furthermore, having indicated explicitly the most perfect of those five groups in the world of Islam, it indicates their leaders and chiefs by mentioning their well-known attributes. In addi

tion, with a flash of miraculousness giving news of the Unseen, it specifies one aspect those chiefs' positions in the future.

Yes, "of the Prophets" looks explicitly to the Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), and the phrase "the Veracious" looks to Abu Bakr the Veracious. It also indicates that he would be second after the Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) and first to succeed him, and be known by the special title of Veracious and be seen at the head of all honest and upright people. Then "the Witnesses [or Martyrs]" refers to 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali (May God be pleased with all of them) together. It intimates that the three of them would succeed to the Caliphate after the Veracious One, and that the three of them would be martyred and the merits of martyrdom added to their other virtues.

"The Righteous" alludes to distinguished persons like the Companions of the Bench, and of Badr and Ridwan. While with its explicit meaning, "And how goodly a company are these!" encourages others to follow them, and with its implicit meaning, by showing the generation that succeeded them to be honoured and illustrious, it alludes to Hasan (May God be pleased with him), who as the fifth Caliph affirmed the Hadith "After me the Caliphate will last thirty years"¹ – in order to show its great value despite its brief duration.

In Short: Similarly to the verses at the end of Sura al-Fath, which look to the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, affirming them, these verses look in part and allusively to their future positions in a way that gives news of the Unseen. Flashes of this sort of miraculousness, the disclosing of facts about the Unseen, which is one sort of the Qur'an's miraculousness, are so numerous as to be incalculable. Literalist scholars limit them to forty or fifty verses because of their superficial view, but in reality they number more than a thousand. Sometimes a single verse has four or five aspects giving news of the Unseen.

O our Sustainer! Do not take us to task if we forget or do wrong.(2:286)
Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.(2:32)

¹ al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iii, 509; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Tamhid*, viii, 67. See also, *Tirmidhi*, Fitan, 48; *Musnad* v, 220. 221; al-'Albani, *Sahih Jami' al-Saghir*, no: 3336.

A Second Explanation of the Above Postscript¹

In addition to corroborating the predictions about the Unseen at the end of Sura al-Fath, the verse, “All ... are in the company of those on whom is the grace of God – of the Prophets, the Veracious, the Witnesses, and the Righteous: how goodly a company are these!”(4:69) elucidates what is meant by the people of the Straight Path and the verse “the path of those whom you have blessed”(1:7) and describes the luminous, large, familiar, attractive caravan travelling the lengthy road leading to eternity. It vigorously urges the believers and the intelligent to join, follow, and accompany it. In addition to its explicit meaning, like the verses at the end of Sura al-Fath, this verse indicates through allusive and figurative meanings – called in rhetoric *ma'arid al-kalam*² and *mustatba'at al-tarakib*³ – the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs and Hasan (May God be pleased with him), the fifth Caliph. It gives news of the Unseen in several respects, as follows:

Just as the above verse states through its explicit meaning that the caravan of the Prophets, the group of the Veracious, the community of the Martyrs and Witnesses, the category of the Righteous, and the class of the generation following the Companions are the people of the Straight Path and those among mankind who receive elevated divine bounties, and are ‘the doers of good;’ so too it indicates in a manner predicting the Unseen that the best and most excellent of those groups are found in the World of Islam, like this: it points to the heirs of the Prophets who follow on in succession through the mystery of the legacy of the Messenger of the End of Time’s (UWBP) prophethood, and to the caravan of the Veracious who follow on from the source of veracity of the Strictly Veracious One, and to the convoy of the Martyrs, who are bound through the rank of martyrdom to three of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and to the community of the Righteous, who are tied to it through the mystery of “And those who believe and do good works,”(2:82, etc.) and to the categories of the generation following

¹ My brothers have written down both explanations, since they found them useful. Otherwise one of them would have been sufficient.

² See, Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab*, vii, 183; Qurtubi, *al-Jami' bi-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, x, 191, 199.

³ See, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, i, 406; al-Munawi, *al-Ta'arif*, i, 32, 55; al-Hamawi, *al-Adhanat al-Adab*, ii, 194.

the Companions, who represented the mystery of “Say: If you do love God, follow me: God will love you and forgive you your sins; for God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful”(3:31) and were in the company of the Companions and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. So too, through its allusive meaning, it gives news through the epithet “and the Veracious” that Abu Bakr the Veracious would succeed to the Noble Messenger’s (Upon whom be blessings and peace) position after him, and would be Caliph, famous among the Muslim community with the title Strictly Veracious, and be the chief of the caravan of “the Veracious.” With the phrase “the Martyrs” it foretells the martyrdom of three of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and that after the Veracious there would three martyr Caliphs. Because “Martyrs (*Shuhada*’)” is plural and the lowest number [in Arabic grammar] of the plural is three. That means, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman, and ‘Ali (May God be pleased with them) would lead Islam after the Veracious One and would suffer martyrdom. And it occurred exactly as predicted.

Also, it is giving news through the phrase “the Righteous” that people like the People of the Bench who performed good works, acts of worship, and feared God, and are commended in the Torah, would be numerous in the future. While the phrase “How goodly a company are these!” praises the generation that followed the Companions and accompanied them in learning and good works. And in addition to showing that to accompany those four groups on the road to eternity is good and commendable, it indicates the importance of Hasan’s brief period as Caliph, as was confirmed by the Messenger’s (UWBP) prophecies: “The Caliphate after me will last thirty years,”⁴ and, “This my grandson Hasan is master of men, by means of whom God will reconcile two great groups,”⁵ thus quelling dispute and conflict. In this way it indicates that Hasan would be a fifth Caliph succeeding the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs. While through a device called in rhetoric *mustatba[^]a\ t al-tara\kêb*, it alludes to the fifth Caliph’s name with the phrase “How goodly (hasuna) a company are these!”

There are many further mysteries like these allusive predictions, but since they are outside our purpose, that door has not been answered for now. Numerous verses of the All-Wise Qur’an give news of the Unseen in many respects. This sort of the Qur’an’s predictions about the Unseen number thousands.

⁴ al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iii, 509; Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Tamhid*, viii, 67. See also, *Tirmidhi*, *Fitan*, 48; *Musnad*, v, 220, 221; al-‘Albani, *Sahih Jami‘ al-Saghir*, no: 3336.

⁵ *Bukhari*, *Fitan*, 20; *Sulh*, 9, *Fada’il Ashab al-Nabi*, 22, *Manaqib*, 25; *Darimi*, *Sunna*, 12; *Tirmidhi*, *Manaqib*, 25; *Nasa’i*, *Jum’a*, 27; *Musnad*, v, 38, 44, 49, 51.

Conclusion

A miraculous, subtle point of the All-Wise Qur'an that is manifested through 'coincidences'¹ is as follows:

In the All-Wise Qur'an, the divine names of Allah, Merciful (*Rahman*), Compassionate (*Rahim*), Sustainer (*Rabb*), and He (*Hu*) in place of Allah, are mentioned approximately four thousand times in all. The second type of *abjad*, reckoned according to the arrangement of the alphabet, makes the value of "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate" around four thousand also. Small fractions of large numbers do not spoil 'coincidence', so have been disregarded. Also, together with the two conjunctival *waw*'s within "*Alif. Lam. Mim.*", it makes approximately two hundred and eighty. In addition to coinciding with both the approximately two hundred and eighty instances of the word Allah in Sura al-Baqara, and the around two hundred and eighty verses of the Sura, if reckoned with the second sort of *abjad* reckoning, it again makes about four thousand. That coincides both with the five famous divine names mentioned above, and if the fractions are disregarded, with the numerical value of "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." That is to say, according to this mystery of 'coincidence,' "*Alif. Lam. Mim.*" is both a title denoting the One it signifies, and a name for al-Baqara, and a name of the Qur'an, and a concise index of both of them, and a sample, summary and seed of both, and a summary of "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate."

According to the well-known *Abjad* system, "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate" is equal in numerical value to the name of Sustainer. Similarly, if the doubled *Ra* in "the Merciful, the Compassionate (*ar-Rahman, ar-Rahim*)" is counted twice, it becomes nine hundred and ninety and a key to numerous important mysteries – with its nineteen letters, the key to nineteen thousand worlds.

Among the subtle 'coincidences' of the word Allah in the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition is that in the whole Qur'an eighty instances of the

¹ 'Coincidence' (*tevâfik*): the correspondence of letters or words in lines or patterns on one or several pages. (Tr.)

word at the beginning of the bottom line of pages correspond to each other in patterns. So too do eighty instances of the name at the end of the bottom line look to each other in the same way. And again fifty-five instances of the word Allah right in the centre of the bottom line fall one on top of the other, uniting as though to make a single instance of the name. At the start of the last line a single and sometimes three-letter word numbers, with gaps, twenty-five, thus when added to the coinciding fifty-five at the middle of the lines, makes a 'coincidence' of eighty; this makes a coincidence of eighty both at the beginning of the line and at the end. Could such a subtle, fine, orderly, symmetrical, miraculous 'coincidence' be without wisdom or subtlety? God forbid, such a thing could not be! Most certainly, significant treasures could be opened up with the tip of these coincidences.

*O our Sustainer! Do not take us to task if we forget or do wrong.(2:282)
 Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.(2:32)*

S a i d N u r s i

* * *

The Eighth Flash

This has been published in printed editions of *Sikke-i Tasdik-i Gaybî* (The Ratifying Stamp of the Unseen), and in hand-duplicated copies of The Flashes Collection.

The Ninth Flash

[Not everyone should read this Flash, for some people will not discern the subtle errors of the Unity of Existence, and are not in need of it.]

In His Name!

And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.(17:44)

My Dear, Loyal, Sincere, Conscientious Brother!

The reason I did not write a separate letter to my brother Abdülmecid,¹ was that I considered the letters I had written to you to be sufficient. After Hulûsî,² Abdülmecid is a valuable brother for me and a student. Every morning and evening he is present in name in my prayers together with Hulûsî, sometimes being mentioned first. First Sabri,³ then Hakkı Efendi⁴ profit from the letters I write you. I do not write them separate letters either. Almighty God made you a blessed elder brother to them. Correspond with Abdülmecid in my place; he should not worry, for after Hulûsî, I think of him.

¹ Abdülmecid ('Abd al-Majid) was Bediuzzaman's younger brother. He was a teacher of the religious sciences, then a Mufti, and translated parts of the *Risale-i Nur* into Arabic, and *Isharat al-I'jaz* and *Mesnevi-i Nuriye* from Arabic into Turkish. He died in 1967. (Tr.)

² Hulûsî Yahyagil was one of the first students of the *Risale-i Nur*, and was from Elazığ in eastern Turkey. When serving as a captain in the army in 1929 he visited Bediuzzaman, and in Bediuzzaman's words, "his zeal and seriousness were the most important reason for the last of the *Words (Sözler)* and the *Letters (Mektûbat)* being written." (Tr.)

³ Sabri Arseven. Known as Santral Sabri, he was one of Bediuzzaman's most important students in Barla and was also imam of the neighbouring village of Bedre. He died in 1954. (Tr.)

⁴ Hakkı Tıǧlı. He was from Eğridir and was imprisoned together with Bediuzzaman in Eskişehir in 1935. He also acted as Bediuzzaman's lawyer. (Tr.)

YOUR FIRST QUESTION

You ask a confidential question about one of your forebears signing himself, “al-Sayyid Muhammad.” My brother, it isn’t possible for me to give a scholarly answer to this or to research into it. However, I told my companions: “Hulûsi resembles neither the present-day Turks, nor the Kurds. I see other qualities in him.” They agreed with this. We said in accordance with the saying, “No talent is needed to receive God’s gifts,” the nobility observed in Hulûsi is a divine gift. Also, as you know, God’s Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) has two families. One consists of his descendants, and the other is the family of his prophethood’s luminous collective personality. You certainly belong to the latter, and I am of the opinion, though unsubstantiated, that in respect of his first family, your forefather’s signature was not without reason.

My Dear Brother!

A SUMMARY OF YOUR SECOND QUESTION

Muhyiddin al-‘Arabi⁵ said: “The spirit’s createdness consists of its unfolding.” With this question you are compelling a powerless wretch like me to contest an awesomely brilliant scholar of reality and genius of the occult sciences like Muhyiddin al-‘Arabi. However, relying on the teachings of the Qur’an I can attempt the discussion; even if I am only a fly, I can fly higher than that eagle.

My brother! You should understand that Muhyiddin would not deceive, but he could be deceived. He was rightly-guided, but could not act as a guide in all his works. What he saw was correct, but it was not reality. The reality of man’s spirit, about which you ask, is explained in the Twenty-Ninth Word, the discussion about the spirit.

Yes, in respect of its nature, the spirit is a law proceeding from the divine command, but it is a living law clothed in external existence and possessing external existence. Muhyiddin thought of it only from the point of view of its essential nature. His way of the Unity of Existence considers the existence of things to be imaginary. He had wondrous visions and unveiled the realities, but since he had chosen an independent way, he was compelled to apply, artificially and with forced interpretations, certain Qur’anic verses to his way and observations, thus marring the clarity of the

⁵ Muhyi al-Din ibn al-‘Arabi, an eminent scholar and thinker who profoundly influenced the development of Sufism. He was born in Andalusia in 560 A. H. and died in Damascus in 638 A. H. Among his best known works are *Fusus al-Hikam* and *al-Futuhât al-Makkiya*.

verses. In others of his treatises he expounds the straight highway of the Qur'an and of the Sunnis. He was a holy man who held a position all his own, and he was one of the well-accepted, but he exceeded the mark in his unbalanced disclosures and in many matters opposed the majority of the learned authorities.

It is because of this that although he was such an elevated and wondrous spiritual pole, unequalled down the ages, it is as though his particular way was very short and restricted to Sadruddin al-Qunawi.⁶ His works are only rarely benefited from by those on the straight path. Many of the authoritative scholars do not encourage study of those valuable works and some of them even prevent it.

Lengthy study and a very lofty, broad view is needed to show the fundamental differences together with their sources between Muhyiddin's way and that of the exacting scholars. Yes, the differences are so fine and profound and the sources, so elevated and extensive that Muhyiddin has not been censured and has continued to be accepted. For if in regard to thought, scholarship, and illumination the difference and sources had become apparent, it would have been very humiliating for him, and he would have been seen to be in serious error. Since the difference is so profound, we shall try to show it and the sources briefly by means of a comparison, and Muhyiddin's errors in the matter.

For example, the sun appears in a mirror. The mirror both contains the sun and is qualified by it. That is to say, in one respect the sun is present in the mirror, and in another it adorns the mirror, becoming a brilliant colour, attribute and quality of it. If the mirror had been a camera, it would have fixed the sun's image on photographic paper. In these cases, the sun in the mirror, and its semblance on the photographic paper, and its aspect that adorns the mirror and becomes like a quality of the mirror, are other than the actual sun. They are not the sun, but the sun's manifestation which has taken on another existence. As for the existence of the sun that is visible in the mirror, even if it is not identical with the sun that is visible outside, since it is tied to it and points to it, it is supposed to have the same existence.

In consequence of this, it may be said: "There is nothing apart from the actual sun in the mirror," meaning that the mirror contains it and intending the sun's external existence in the mirror. But if it is said that the sun's extended reflection, which has become like an attribute or quality

⁶ Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi (1209-74). One of Ibn al-'Arabi's foremost students, he wrote a number of works on Sufism, among which is *al-Nusus fi Tahqiq al-Tawr al-Makhsus*.

of the mirror, and its image which has been transposed to the photographic paper is the sun, it is wrong; it is an error to say: "There is nothing in them other than the sun." For there is the reflection on the mirror's shining face and the image formed on its back, and these have their own separate existences. For sure those existences are from the sun's manifestation, but they are not the sun. The human mind and imagination resemble this example of the mirror, as follows:

The information in the mirror of man's thought also has two faces: in one respect it is knowledge, in another, it is known. If we suppose the mind to contain what is known, then the known thing becomes something known by the mind; its existence is something different to the mind. If we suppose the mind to be qualified by the thing, it becomes an attribute or quality of the mind; then the thing becomes knowledge and has an external existence. Even if the existence of the thing known is essential (*jawhari*), it has an accidental external existence like the knowledge.

Thus, according to these two comparisons, the universe is a mirror. The true nature of beings is also mirror-like; they are subject to divine creation through pre-eternal power. In one respect, each being is a sort of mirror to one of the names of the Pre-Eternal Sun, displaying its embroideries. The followers of Muhyiddin's way unveiled them only in respect of being mirrors and containers, revealing the similitude of their existence in the mirror, from the point of view of denial. Supposing the reflection to be identical with the thing reflected, they did not think of other levels. They said: "There is no existent but He," and were in error. They almost went as far as denying the fundamental rule: "The reality of beings is constant."

As for the people of reality, they have seen through the mystery of the legacy of prophethood and the definite statements of the Qur'an that the embroideries and inscriptions that come into being in the mirrors of things through divine power and will are His works. They are "all from Him;" they are not "all Him."⁷ Things have an existence and their existence is constant to a degree. For sure it is weak compared to that of the Necessary Existence, like an illusion or imagining, but through the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One's creation, will, and power, it exists.

In the comparison, the sun in the mirror has an existence through its similitude apart from its external existence. And its expanded reflection also, which gives colour to and adorns the mirror, has an accidental and separate external existence. And the sun's image which is depicted on the

⁷ That is, everything is from Him; He creates everything. Not everything is Him so that it may be said "There is no existent save Him."

photographic paper on the back of the mirror also has a separate and accidental external existence.

Similarly, the inscriptions of beings, which appear through the manifestations of the sacred divine names – occurring through will, choice, and power – in the mirror of the universe and mirrors of the quintessential natures of things, have a created existence separate from the Necessary Existence. And this existence has been given a permanence through pre-eternal power. But if the connection were to be severed, all things would at once cease to be. Because for their continued existence, all things are every instant in need of their Creator’s preserving them. “The reality of things is constant,” but it is constant and permanent only through His making it so.

Thus, Muhyiddin’s saying: “Spirit is not created; it is a reality proceeding from the world of the divine command and from the attribute of will,” is contrary to many clear statements of the Qur’an and Hadiths, and according to the investigation above, he was confused, deceived, and had not seen the weak existences of things.

The places of manifestation of such divine names as Creator and Provider cannot be illusory or imaginary. Since the names have a reality, their places of manifestation also have an external reality.

YOUR THIRD QUESTION

You want instruction in the science of *jafr* that will be a key to it.

The Answer: We are not carrying out this work and service at our own wish and through our own planning. A better will than ours governs it, over and above our wills. The science of *jafr* is an absorbing and pleasurable occupation, but it busies us and detains us from our true duties. It has often happened that some of the Qur’an’s mysteries have been revealed through it as though it were a key, but on addressing myself to them with real enthusiasm and enjoyment, they eluded me. I have discovered two instances of wisdom in this:

The First: It may be discourteous towards the prohibition of “None knows the Unseen save God.”

The Second: Teaching the Islamic community about the fundamental truths of belief and the certain proofs of the Qur’an is a sacred service far exceeding in value and merit such occult sciences as *jafr*. Their firm evidences and categorical proofs allow no opportunity for exploitation, but occult sciences like *jafr* that are not bound by any firm rules, and are open to abuse and exploitation by charlatans. In any event, a little is bestowed whenever the need arises in this service of reality arises.

Among the keys of *jafr*, the easiest, and perhaps the purest and finest,

are the various sorts of ‘coincidences.’ These proceed from the divine name of Originator (Bedi’) and have been manifested in the name of Allah in the Qur’an and adorn the works we have published. They have been pointed out to an extent in several places in the work *Kerâmet-i Gavsiye* (The Wonders of al-Gawth al-A‘zam). For instance, the ‘coincidences’ showing something in several aspects constitutes a sign that has the strength of a proof. Sometimes with a number of deductions, a single ‘coincidence’ may form a proof. However, this is enough for now. If there is serious need, it will be made known to you.

YOUR FOURTH QUESTION

That is, not your question but Imam Ömer Efendi’s, about a wretched doctor saying that Jesus (UWP) had a father.⁸ With a lunatic interpretation, the doctor tried to show that a Qur’anic verse justifies his saying this.

At one time, the unfortunate man was trying to create something with the Disjointed Letters. He was working at it feverishly. Then I understood that he had perceived from the atheists’ attitude that they were going to attempt to abolish the Islamic script. He was struggling pointlessly as though to save the script in the face of that flood. Now in this matter, and in the Second Matter, he saw the atheists’ terrible attacks against the fundamentals of Islam, and I reckon he wanted to find a way of compromising through meaningless interpretations like that. Since definite verses like,

The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam,(3:59)

state that Jesus (Upon whom be peace) had no father, no importance should be given to what those who attempt to change such certain, veritable facts say with their idiotic, forced interpretations. For they suppose it impossible that the law of human reproduction be broken. But there is no law that has no exceptions and to which individuals have not been subject. And there is no universal rule that has not been breached by extraordinary individuals.

Since the time of Adam there has been no law to which there have been no individual exceptions. Firstly, the law of reproduction was violated in

⁸ The extraordinary achievements of an extraordinary human being who is the leader of a quarter of mankind, transformed humankind into angels of a sort, and left this world to make the heavens his dwelling – these extraordinary achievements demand an extraordinary form of the law of reproduction. For him to have been subject to that law in a dubious, unknown, unnatural, and even base way would have been inappropriate for him; anyway there was no need for him to have been. Moreover, the Qur’an’s explicit statements do not bear interpretation. How can the law of the angels’ sexuality, which is outside reproduction and in no way can be broken for the sake of repairing the law of human reproduction, which has been broken in a hundred ways – how can this law – together with such powerful laws as the law of the explicit verses of the Qur’an be violated?

regard to origins by the origins of the two hundred thousand animal species, and brought to an end. That is, the two hundred thousand progenitors of the species, quite simply like Adam's, violated the law of reproduction. They were not born of a father and mother and were given existence outside the law.

Furthermore, the greater part – innumerable individuals – of the hundred thousand species we see with our eyes every spring are created outside that law, on the surface of leaves and on putrified matter. So you can see just how unreasonable someone is who cannot accept with his reason the exception of a single individual in one thousand nine hundred years to a law that was violated and breached at its origin and has been breached every year even, and clings to forced interpretations of the definite statements of the Qur'an.

The things those wretches call natural laws are the laws called '*adat Allah* or divine practices, which are a universal manifestation of the divine command and dominical will, and which Almighty God changes for certain instances of wisdom. He shows that His will and choice govern in everything and in every law. Certain extraordinary individuals breach those practices. This truth He points out with His decree, "The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam."(3:59)

Ömer Efendi's **Second Question** concerning the doctor:

The doctor behaves extremely foolishly in this matter, so that to listen to what he says or give it importance is very demeaning. The unfortunate wants to be half way between belief and unbelief. I say the following, in reply not to his trifling words, but to Ömer Efendi's questioning:

The reason for the injunctions and prohibitions of the Shari'a are the divine command and divine prohibition. Advantages and instances of wisdom are to give them weight, and may be the reason for the command or prohibition from the point of view of the divine name of All-Wise.

For example, someone making a journey shortens the five daily prayers. There is a reason for (*illet*) and a purpose or instance of wisdom in (*hikmet*) shortening them. The reason is the journey, while the purpose is the difficulty involved. If on a journey and there is no difficulty involved, the prayers are still shortened. If not on a journey, and the person suffers a hundred difficulties in his own house, he may not shorten the prayers. For the difficulty occurring on some journeys is sufficient as the purpose for shortening the prayers, and is again sufficient for making the journey the reason.

Thus, in accordance with this rule of the Shari'a, the Shari'a's injunctions do not change due to purposes or instances of wisdom; they look to the true reasons. Apart from the harm and illness caused by pork, as the

doctor said, according to the saying, “The person who eats pork becomes piggish in some ways;”⁹ the pig is not harmless like other domestic animals. Its meat causes considerable harm rather than being beneficial. And it has been established medically that its powerful fat is also harmful, even in the lands of Europe which are powerfully cold, and is thus in fact and in meaning extremely harmful.

Instances of wisdom such as these are purposes for the divine prohibition and for its being forbidden. The wisdom does not have to be present in every instance and all the time. The reason does not change with the purpose and wisdom changing. If the reason does not change, the injunction does not change. From this rule it may be seen just how far from the spirit of the Shari‘a the unfortunate man was when he spoke. No importance should be given to what he said regarding the Shari‘a. The Creator has many animals in the form of unreasoning philosophers!

⁹ I wonder, does the fact that despite all the wondrous progress and civilization of Europe and its advances in science and knowledge beneficial for humanity, its people eat pork, not play some part in their becoming piggishly stuck in the darkness of materialism and naturalism, which are entirely the reverse of that progress, knowledge, and attainment? I ask you. Evidence that man’s temperament is affected by the food he eats is the saying: “The person who eats meat every day for forty days will suffer anxiety and sorrow in his heart,” which has become proverbial.

An Addendum to the Answer to Your Question about Muhyiddin al-‘Arabi

Question: Muhyiddin al-‘Arabi considered the Unity of Existence to be of the highest level. Likewise, some of the great saints who took the path of love followed him. However, you say that this matter is not of the highest level and is not real; that it is rather the way, to a degree, of those who become intoxicated and immersed in the divine, and of the people of love and ecstasy. So what, briefly, is the high level of the affirmation of divine unity pointed out by the clear verses of the Qur’an, through the mystery of the legacy of prophethood? Can you explain it?

The Answer: It is a hundred times beyond the ability of an utterly powerless unfortunate like myself to judge those elevated stations with his limited thought. I shall just explain one or two extremely brief points proceeding from the effulgence of the All-Wise Qur’an. Perhaps they will be useful in understanding the matter.

FIRST POINT

There are numerous reasons for becoming embroiled in the way of the Unity of Existence. One or two of them may be described as follows:

The First Reason: Because they could not squeeze into their brains the maximum degree of the creativity of dominicality, nor entirely establish in their hearts the idea that everything, through the mystery of divine oneness, is held directly in the grasp of dominicality and that all things have existence through divine power, choice, and will, those who took that way were obliged to say that everything is either Him, or does not have existence, or is imaginary, or is His manifestation or emanation.

The Second Reason: The mark of passionate love is to want never to be separated from the beloved and to flee desperately from such separation; to tremble at the thought of parting, to fear distance from the beloved as though fearing Hell, and to abominate transience; to love union with the love of one’s own spirit and life, and to yearn to be near to the beloved as though longing for Paradise. Thus, through adhering to a manifestation of divine immediacy in all things, those who took the way of the Unity of Existence disregarded separation and distance; supposing union and meeting to be permanent, they said: “There is no existent but He;” through the

intoxication of love and as demanded by the ecstasy of permanence, meeting, and union, they imagined that in the Unity of Existence was a most pleasurable way of illumination whereby they could be saved from the dreadfulness of separation.

That is to say, the first reason sprang from the fact that the hand of their intellects was unable to reach up to some of the truths of belief, which were extremely broad and elevated; they were unable to comprehend them, and had not developed completely in regard to belief. While the source of the second reason was the extraordinary unfolding of their hearts from the point of view of love, and their wondrous expansion and breadth.

However, the supreme level of divine unity, which the Purified Ones – who were the people of sobriety and great saints of the legacy of prophethood – saw through the explicit expositions of the Qur'an is both extremely elevated, and shows both the maximum level of dominicality and creativity and that all the divine names are real. It preserves the Qur'an's principles and does not spoil the balance of the decrees of dominicality. For they say that together with the oneness of His essence and His being free of space, with His knowledge Almighty God encompasses and determines directly all things together with all their attributes, and through His will He chooses and specifies them, and through His power He creates them. He creates and directs the whole universe as though it were a single being.

He creates the huge spring with the ease of creating a flower. Nothing obstructs anything else. There is no fragmentation in His regarding things. He is present everywhere at the same instant through the disposal of His knowledge and power. There is no division or distribution in His disposal. This mystery has been expounded and proved decisively in the Sixteenth Word and in the Second Stopping-Place of the Thirty-Second Word. Since, according to the rule, "Comparisons are incontestible," no attention should be paid to defects in comparisons and allegories, I shall set forth a very faulty comparison so that the difference between the two ways may be understood to a degree.

For example, let us imagine a huge, matchless, and wondrously adorned peacock which can fly from east to west in an instant, and opens and closes its wings, which stretch from north to south, are adorned with hundreds of thousands of fine patterns, and in every single feather of which are included brilliant arts. Now, there are two men observing it; they want to fly with the wings of the intellect and heart up to the elevated qualities of this bird, to its wondrous decorations. One looks at the peacock's condition and form and the marvellous inscriptions of power on all its feathers; he loves it with extreme passion and ardour; he in part abandons his attentive

reflective thought, and clings to love. But then he sees that every day those lovable decorations change and are transformed. Those objects of his love, which he worships, disappear and are lost.

While he should have said that through true divine unity, which he could not encompass with his mind, and absolute dominicality and the oneness of the divine essence, they were the artistic decorations of an Inscraper possessing universal creativity, he said instead – in order to console himself – that the spirit of the peacock was so sublime that its maker was within it, or that the peacock had become him, and that since its spirit had become one with its being, and its being had combined with its outward appearance, its spirit's perfection and being's exaltedness displayed those manifestations, displaying every moment a different inscription and beauty; it was not a true creation through its will, but rather a manifestation, an emanation.

As for the other man, he said that those harmonious, orderly decorations so full of art definitely required will, choice, intention, and purpose. It was impossible for there to be a manifestation without will, an emanation without choice.

Yes, the peacock had a beautiful and elevated nature, but it could not be the doer; it was passive. It could not become one with the active agent. Its spirit was fine and exalted, but it could not be the creator and disposer, only receptive and a means. For observedly in each of its feathers was an art performed with infinite wisdom and an inscription and decoration made through an infinite power. And these could not occur without will and choice. The arts indicating perfect wisdom within perfect power, and perfect dominicality and mercy within perfect wisdom were not the work of some sort of manifestation. The scribe who had written that gilded notebook could not be inside it and be united with it. The notebook rather only had contact with the nib of the scribe's pen. In which case, the wondrous decorations of the similitude of the peacock known as the universe were a gilded missive of the peacock's Creator.

Now, look at the peacock and read the missive. Say to its Scribe: "What wonders God has willed! Blessed be God! Glory be to God!" The person who supposes the missive to be the scribe, or the scribe to be inside the letter, or fancies the missive to be imagination, has surely mislaid his reason in the veils of love, and been unable to see the true form of reality.

Among the varieties of passionate love, the one most giving rise to the way of the Unity of Existence, is love of this world. When it turns into true love, love of this world, which is temporary, is transformed into the Unity of Existence. A person loves a personal beloved with worldly love. Then,

unable to accept in his heart his beloved's transience and ephemerality, he consoles himself by saying that his beloved is a mirror reflecting the beauty of the True Object of Love and Worship, and attaches himself to a reality, so acquiring permanence for him through true love.

In the same way, when due to the constant blows of death and separation the strange love of the person who takes the huge world and the universe in its totality as his beloved is transformed into true love, he seeks refuge in the way of the Unity of Existence in order to save that great beloved of his from death and separation. If he has extremely powerful and elevated belief, it becomes a pleasurable, luminous, acceptable level, as with those resembling Muhyi'd-Din al-'Arabi. However, it is possible he may fall into various abysses, embrace materiality, and become submerged in causes. As for the Unity of Witnessing, it is harmless; it is an exalted way of the people of sobriety.

*O God, show us what is indeed the truth, and make us follow it!
 Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.(2:32)*

The Tenth Flash

Blows Dealt by Divine Compassion

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

On the Day when every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil. But God cautions you [to remember] Himself. And God is full of kindness to those who serve Him.(3:30)

One meaning of the above verse is to be expounded and explained by the blows dealt by divine compassion that my comrades in the service of the Qur'an receive for mistakes they make as the result of human nature. So a succession of extra-ordinary events proceeding from the service of the Qur'an will be explained together with an instance of Gawth al-A'zam's¹ wonder-working, since he supervises this sacred service with God's permission and assists it with his saintly influence. Then those who perform it may persevere earnestly in their service.

There are three sorts of wonder-working associated with this sacred work:

The First Sort is that aspect which prepares the work and urges those employed to perform it.

The Second Sort removes obstacles and repulses the evil of those who oppose it and deals them blows. There are numerous instances of this second sort and they are lengthy,² so postponing them to another time we shall discuss the third sort, which are the lightest.

The Third Sort is this: Whenever those who work sincerely in this ser

¹ See Note 8, Page 36-7.

² For example, people who oppose religion themselves suffer in this world a greater penalty than the torments and distress they inflict on students of the *Risale-i Nur*; they receive what they have given.

vice become lax, they receive a compassionate slap. So coming to their senses, they take up their work again. Incidents of this sort number more than a hundred. Out of only twenty, thirteen or fourteen received compassionate slaps, while six or seven received restraining slaps.

THE FIRST

This concerns this unfortunate Said: whenever I have flagged in my duties, and saying, “What is it to me?,” have become preoccupied with my own private affairs, I have received a slap. I have formed the opinion that I received it due to my neglect. Because whatever my purpose was that deceived me and spurred me on, I received a slap that was the reverse of it. Then studying the compassionate slaps that my sincere friends have received, they were always the opposite of whatever their aim was – if they were neglectful – so that we have come to the conclusion that such incidents were wonders proceeding from service of the Qur’an.

For example, as long as this unfortunate Said was busy teaching the truths of the Qur’an in Van at the time of the Shaykh Said events,³ the suspicious government did not and could not interfere with me. Then when I said “What is it to me?,” and thinking of myself withdrew into a ruined cave on Mount Ereğ in order to save my life in the hereafter, they arrested me for no reason and sent me into exile. I was brought to Burdur.

There, again as long as I was serving the Qur’an... at that time all the exiles were watched very closely and I was supposed to report to the police in person every evening, but I and my sincere students held ourselves to be exceptions. The Governor there complained to Fevzi Pasha⁴ when he visited but Fevzi Pasha replied: “Don’t interfere with him! Treat him with respect!” What made him say that was the sacred nature of service of the Qur’an. Yet whenever I was overcome by the idea of saving myself and thought only of my life in the hereafter and there was a temporary slackening in my serving the Qur’an, I received a slap contrary to my intentions. That is to say, I was sent from one place of exile to another. I was sent to Isparta.

In Isparta I took up my duties again. After twenty days, a number of cowardly people said by way of a warning: “Perhaps the government won’t look kindly on this situation. It would be better if you go a bit cautiously.”

³ Shaykh Said of Palu was the Naqshbandi shaikh who led the famous uprising in eastern Turkey against the Ankara government in early 1925. He was captured and sentenced to death in Diyarbakır, 29th June 1925. (Tr.)

⁴ This refers to Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, Chief of General Staff of the Turkish army. (Tr.)

Again the idea of thinking only of myself took hold of me, and I said: “Don’t let anyone come!” And I was taken from that place of exile and sent to a third, to Barla.

And in Barla whenever a slackness has come over me and the idea of thinking of myself alone has gripped me, one of these serpents and two-faced hypocrites from among ‘the worldly’⁵ has been set to pester me. During this eight years eighty such incidents have befallen me; I could recount them, but am cutting them short so as not to bore people.

My brothers! I have described some of the compassionate slaps I have received, now if you will permit it and forgive me, I shall relate some that have befallen you. Don’t be offended. If anyone is offended, I will not put his name.

THE SECOND

My true brother and first and most superior and self-sacrificing student, Abdülmecid,⁶ had a fine house in Van. He was well-off and he was a teacher. Following his own ideas, he did not join those who were attempting to send me to the border region against my wishes, which was a place more in need of Qur’anic service, and as though for my benefit, did not vote for it. As though, if I had gone there, my service of the Qur’an would not have been apolitical or sincere, and they would have expelled him from Van – so he did not take part. But he received a compassionate slap contrary to his intentions, for he had to leave both Van, and his beautiful house, and his native region; he was compelled to go to Ergani.

THE THIRD

Hulûsi Bey⁷ was crucial to our service of the Qur’an. There were a number of things when he returned to his native region from Eğridir that would have afforded him much enjoyment and worldly happiness, perhaps causing him to become slack in his service of the Qur’an, which pertains solely to the hereafter. For he was reunited with his parents, whom he had not seen for a long time, and he was back home, and because he had returned there with rank and honour, the world was smiling on him and appeared good. However, for those employed in serving the Qur’an, either the world must be vexed with them, or they must be vexed at the world, so that they can perform that service sincerely and earnestly.

⁵ ‘The worldly’ (*ehl-i dūnya*): those whose view is restricted to the life of this world, and who disregard the hereafter, or those who sell religion for this world. (Tr.)

⁶ See note 1, page 58. (Tr.)

⁷ See note 2, page 58. (Tr.)

Hulûsi's heart was certainly unshakeable, but his situation drove him to slackness and he received a slap from divine compassion. For one or two years a number of dissemblers were set to pester him, which drove away all his worldly pleasure. They made both the world vexed at him, and him vexed at the world. So in the true meaning of the word he embraced his duty earnestly.

THE FOURTH

This is Muhâjir Hâfiz Ahmed.⁸ He himself said the following:

“Yes, I confess that I made a mistake when interpreting the question of my life in the hereafter and its connection with my service of the Qur'an. I had a wish that would cause me to be lax in my service, and I received a blow that was compassionate, but also severe and was atonement. It was like this: my Master (Ustad) was not in favour of the new measures.⁹ My mosque was next to his house and the Three Months¹⁰ were drawing close. If I had abandoned my mosque, both I would have forfeited much reward, and the district would have grown accustomed to not praying. If I had not carried out the new practices, I would have been barred. So according to my interpretation I wanted my Master, whom I loved more than my life, to temporarily move to another village. I did not know that if he moved, or went to another region, it would cause a temporary lapse in my service of the Qur'an. Just at that juncture I received a blow. It was compassionate but so awesome that three months later I still have not regained my senses. However, praise be to God, according to what my Master says, it was imparted to him that we may hope from divine mercy that each minute of the calamity is equivalent to a day's worship. For the mistake was not due to enmity; the wish occurred to me only because I was thinking of my life in the hereafter.”

THE FIFTH

This is Hakkı Efendi.¹¹ Since he is not here now, I am deputizing for him as I did for Hulûsi Bey, and say this: while Hakkı Efendi was carrying out to the letter his duties as student, an immoral Kaymakam¹² came to the district. So he hid what he had written so that harm should come neither to

⁸ See note 4, page 24. (Tr.)

⁹ That is, innovations opposed to the marks of Islam, like the Turkish call to prayer.

¹⁰ *Şuhûr-u selâse* (Ar. *al-Shuhur al-Thalatha*): The three holy months of Rajab, Sha‘ban, and Ramadan. (Tr.)

¹¹ See note 4, page 58. (Tr.)

¹² The head official of a district (Tr.)

his Master, nor to himself. He temporarily gave up his service of the Risale-i Nur. Suddenly, a court case was opened against him, which was a sort of slap dealt by divine compassion. He was going to have to pay a fine of a thousand liras. He was subject to the threat for a year, until he came here and we met, and on his return he again took up his service of the Qur'an and the duties of being a Risale-i Nur student. Then the compassionate slap's sentence was lifted, and he was acquitted.

Later a further duty commenced for the students, which concerned the writing out of the Qur'an in a new way.¹³ A section was given to Hakkı Efendi. He embarked on it enthusiastically and wrote out a thirtieth part of the Qur'an. But because of his straitened circumstances he felt compelled to secretly undertake someone's defence in a court case. He suddenly received another compassionate slap. He broke the finger he used to hold his pen with. It was as though warning him: "This finger won't write out both a lawyer's case and the Qur'an!" We were astonished at his finger because we did not know about his taking on the case. Then it was understood that the sacred, pure service of the Qur'an did not want to involve the fingers which were particular to it in other work. Anyway I know Hulûsi Bey like I know myself and spoke in his place, and Hakkı Bey is just the same. If he does not like my acting as his proxy, he can write about his slap himself!

THE SIXTH

This is Bekir Efendi.¹⁴ He is not here at present, so in the same way that I deputized for my brother Abdülmecid, relying on his confidence and loyalty and what all my close friends like fiamlı Hafız and Süleyman Efendi say and know, I say this: Bekir Efendi had the Tenth Word printed. Then we sent him the Twenty-Fifth Word, about the Qur'an's Miraculousness, to print before the new letters were introduced.¹⁵ We also wrote that we would send him the printing costs, as we sent him the costs of printing the Tenth Word. But thinking of my poverty and seeing that the printing costs would be around four hundred liras, Bekir Efendi thought to himself: "Perhaps the Hoja won't be pleased if I pay it out of my own pocket," and his soul deceived him. It was not printed and caused considerable harm to our service of the Qur'an. Two months later nine hundred liras of his were

¹³ This refers to its being written so as to show the miracle of the 'coincidences.' (For 'coincidences', see note 1, page 56 – Tr.)

¹⁴ Bekir Dikmen 1898-1954. He was a merchant of Barla. (Tr.)

¹⁵ That is, the introduction of the Latin alphabet at the end of 1928. (Tr.)

stolen and he received a compassionate but severe blow. God willing, the lost nine hundred liras was like a sort of almsgiving.

THE SEVENTH

This is Şamlı Hafız Tefik.¹⁶ He himself says: “Yes, I confess that because of some things I did unknowingly and in error that would have caused harm to our service of the Qur’an, I received two compassionate slaps. I have no doubt that they were the result of that.

“**The First:** All praise be to God, I was endowed with handwriting of the Arabic script which is to a degree suitable for writing the Qur’an. My Master first of all assigned me three thirtieth parts of the Qur’an to write out, and divided the rest among the others. Desire to write out the Qur’an destroyed my wish to perform the service of writing out the rough and final drafts of the parts of the Risale-i Nur. I even had the conceited idea of wanting to surpass the others who did not know how to write the Arabic script properly. I had even said arrogantly when my Master told me as a precaution about the writing that it was for him: “I know this. I don’t need to learn it.” I received an extraordinary and unimaginable slap because of this mistake: what I wrote was not even as good as that of a brother (Husrev) who knew the least about writing the Arabic script. We were all astonished. And we have understood now that it was a slap.

“**The Second:** I confess that two of my attitudes were damaging for the complete sincerity necessary for service to the Qur’an, which has to be purely for God’s sake, and I received a severe blow. For I am like a stranger in the region, and foreign. Also – but I should not complain – since I did not observe frugality and contentment, important rules of my Master, I suffer from poverty. I am compelled to mix with selfish and arrogant people, and so, may God forgive it, I was forced to be generous in hypocritical and sycophantic manner. My Master frequently warned, reminded, and scolded me, but unfortunately I could not stop myself. On the one hand satans from among jinn and men were profiting from this situation of mine which was opposed to the spirit of service of the All-Wise Qur’an, and on the other it caused a coldness and slackness in our service.

“In the face of this fault of mine, I received a severe, but God willing compassionate, blow. I have no doubt that it happened in consequence of that fault. The blow was this: although for eight years I have had both close

¹⁶ Tefik Göksu, 1887-1965, was Bediuzzaman’s student and scribe in Barla, and was imprisoned together with him in Eskişehir and Denizli. He saw Bediuzzaman in Damascus in 1911, where his father was serving in the army, hence his name Şamlı. (Tr.)

relations with my Master and been his writer of rough drafts and final drafts, for around eight months, I had been unable to benefit from the Risale-i Nur. We were astonished at this situation. Both I and my Master sought the reason, wondering why it was thus. Now we feel certain that those truths of the Qur'an are light and luminous, and cannot unite with the darkness of artificiality, flattery, and abasement. So the meaning of those truths' lights were drawing away from me, appearing foreign to me and as strangers. I beseech Almighty God that He will grant me sincerity worthy of such service, and save me from hypocrisy and artificiality towards 'the worldly.' I request of firstly my Master and all my brothers that they pray for me.

“The most faulty,
“Şamlı Hafız Teyfik”

THE EIGHTH

This is Seyrani. Like Husrev, he was one of my students who was enthusiastic about the Risale-i Nur and had a good understanding of it. I consulted my students in Isparta about the 'coincidences,' which are a key to the mysteries of the Qur'an and to the science of jafr. They responded and took part eagerly, but because Seyrani had other ideas and points of interest, he did not respond, and in addition wanted me to give up the truth I knew to be certain. He wrote me a letter that upset me considerably. I said: “Alas! I have lost this student.” Certainly I wanted to enlighten his ideas, but a further meaning confused matters. He received a blow from divine compassion: he remained for nearly a year in a place of seclusion (that is, in prison).

THE NINTH

This is the Hâfiz Zühtü the Elder. At a time he was as though supervising the Risale-i Nur students in Ağrus, not considering the students' spiritual honour to be sufficient – although they had made it their way to follow the practices of the Prophet (UWBP) and avoid innovations – he took it on himself to teach a serious innovation in the hope of increasing his standing in the eyes of 'the worldly.' He perpetrated an error that was diametrically opposed to our way. He received an awesome slap from divine compassion. An incident occurred that completely destroyed his family's honour. Unfortunately, Hâfiz Zühtü the Younger was also affected by the grievous incident although he was not deserving of any slap. But God willing it will act as a beneficial surgical operation delivering his heart from worldly attachment and making it over totally to the Qur'an.

THE TENTH

This is someone called Hâfiz Ahmed (May God have mercy on him). For two or three years he wrote out the treatises in encouraging fashion and he benefited from them. Then ‘the worldly’ took advantage of a weak trait in his character. His enthusiasm was dampened. He had relations with ‘the worldly,’ perhaps so that he would avoid being harmed by them and have some say with them, and win some sort of position, and make his scant livelihood more plentiful. But in return for the slackness and harm that was thus caused to his service of the Qur’an, he received two blows. One was that he had to support five more people with his scant means, and his situation became truly wretched. The second slap: as someone who was sensitive in regard to honour and self-respect and could not brook anyone’s criticism or objections, he was unknowingly used as a shield by some cunning people in such a way that his honour was sullied. Ninety per cent of his honour was destroyed and ninety per cent of people were turned against him. May God forgive him! God willing, he will come to his senses and return in part to his duty.

THE ELEVENTH

This was not written since perhaps he would not agree.

THE TWELFTH

This is the teacher, Galib (May God have mercy on him). Yes, he performed great services loyally and appreciatively in writing out final drafts of the treatises, displaying no weakness in the face of any difficulties. Most days he would come, and listening eagerly, copy them down. Then in return for a fee of thirty liras he had the whole of *The Words* and *Letters* written out. His aim was to distribute them in his native region and to enlighten the people there. But due to certain ideas, he did not distribute the treatises as he had envisaged and left them in their box. Suddenly a grievous event occurred due to which he suffered distress for a year. He gained numerous unjust, tyrannical enemies in place of a handful of official enemies who would have been inimical just because he had distributed the treatises, and lost some of his friends.

THE THIRTEENTH

This is Hâfiz Halid¹⁷ (May God grant him mercy). He said:

¹⁷ A teacher by profession, Hafiz Halid Tekin was a native of Barla. He was one of Bediuzzaman’s close students there, also acting as his scribe. (Tr.)

“Yes, I confess that I was feverishly engaged in writing out rough drafts of the works my Master disseminated in serving the Qur’an, when the post of imam in a mosque in our quarter became available. With the intention of dressing once again in my former robe and wearing the turban, I temporarily neglected my service and avoided doing it. I received a compassionate slap contrary to my intentions. Although for eight or nine months I acted as imam, extraordinarily I was unable to wear the turban, despite the repeated promises of the Mufti. I have no doubt that this compassionate slap was the result of my error. I was both someone addressed by my Master, and was his scribe of rough drafts. He suffered difficulties due to my neglect. In any event... Still, thanks be to God, we realized my error and understood just how sacred this service is. We were confident that we had behind us a Master like a protecting angel, like Shah Geylani.

“The weakest of God’s servants,
“Hâfız Halid”

THE FOURTEENTH

This consists of the three small slaps the three Mustafa’s received.

The First: For eight years Mustafa Çavuş (May God grant him mercy) attended to our small private mosque, and saw to its stove, paraffin, and even the matches. I learnt later that for the eight years he provided for the paraffin and matches out of his own pocket. On the night before Friday in particular he would join the congregation as long as there was no other essential matter to attend to. Then, taking advantage of his ingenuousness, ‘the worldly’ said to him: “They are going to interfere in Hâfız’s – one of the scribes of the *Words* – wearing a turban. He should also temporarily stop making the call to prayer secretly. You tell the scribe to take off his turban before they remove it by force.” They did not know that it was extremely difficult for someone with a lofty spirit like Mustafa Çavuş to tell someone else employed in service of the Qur’an to remove his turban. But he told him what they had said.

That night I dreamt that Mustafa Çavuş came to my room with dirty hands behind the Kaymakam. I asked him the following day: “Mustafa Çavuş, who did you see today? I dreamt of you with dirty hands behind the Kaymakam.” He replied: “Alas! The village headman told me to ‘tell the scribe.’ I didn’t know what was behind it.”

Also, that same day he brought almost an okka¹⁸ of paraffin to the mosque. In a way he had never done before, he left the door open and a

¹⁸ An *okka* was the equivalent of 2.9 lbs. (Tr.)

kitten entered. Then a big man came, and supposing the paraffin in the ewer to be water, sprinkled it all around the mosque, in order to clean it and the mess left by the kitten on the prayer-mat. It is extraordinary that he did not smell the paraffin. That is to say, the mosque did not allow the man to smell it, in order to tell Mustafa Çavuş through the tongue of disposition: “We don’t need your paraffin. I haven’t accepted it because of the mistake you made.” That week on the eve of Friday and other important prayers, even, he was unable to join the congregation, although he tried to. Then he repented earnestly and asked forgiveness, and he regained his purity of heart.

The Second Mustafa’s: These are my worthy, hard-working, and important student Mustafa from Kuleönü, and his most loyal, self-sacrificing friend, Hâfız Mustafa (May God grant him mercy). After the religious festival I sent word telling them not to come lest ‘the worldly’ bother us and discourage us in our service of the Qur’an, but if they had to come, they should come singly. Then one night, three of them came all together. They intended to leave before dawn. In a way that had never happened before, neither Mustafa Çavuş, nor Süleyman Efendi, nor myself, nor themselves, had thought of taking any clear precautions; we were made to forget to do so. Each of us left it to the others and took no measures. They left before dawn. Then for two hours they were pounded by such a storm that I was alarmed thinking that they would not survive it. This winter there had been no such storm, nor had I pitied anyone so much. As a punishment for his lack of caution, I was going to send Süleyman after them to find out if they were well and safe. Mustafa Çavuş said: “If he goes, he will be stranded too, and I’ll have to go after him to find him. Then Abdullah Çavuş will have to come after me.” So saying: “We place our trust in God!” we waited.

Question: You consider the calamities visited on your special friends to be slaps; punishment for laxity in their service of the Qur’an. Whereas those that are truly inimical to you and to the service of the Qur’an remain safe and sound. Why are friends dealt slaps while enemies are left untroubled?

The Answer: According to, “Wrongdoing does not continue, but unbelief does,”¹⁹ friends’ errors are wrongdoing of a sort in this service of the Qur’an, and therefore are swiftly punished. A person receives a compassionate slap and if he is sensible, realizes his error. But enemies oppose this service and try to prevent it on account of misguidance. Knowingly or

¹⁹ al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, ii, 107.

unknowingly, their aggression against our service assists atheism. Since unbelief persists, generally they do not receive any blows immediately.

Just as the penalties of those perpetrating small crimes are delivered locally and serious crimes are sent to the high courts, so too, according to the rules, the small errors of believers and close friends are punished swiftly and in part in this world, in order to quickly purify them. But the crimes of the people of misguidance are so great that since their punishments exceed this brief worldly life, as required by justice they are referred to the Supreme Tribunal in the eternal realm, and mostly they do not receive any punishment here.

The Hadith “This world is the prison of the believers and the Paradise of the unbelievers”²⁰ alludes to this truth. That is to say, because the believer receives partial punishment for his faults in this world, it is a place of punishment for him. It is a dungeon and Hell in relation to his happiness in the hereafter. And since the unbelievers will not be released from Hell and they in part receive the rewards for their good works in this world and their large sins are postponed, this world is their Paradise in relation to their life in the hereafter. For in reality and in meaning the believer is also far happier in this world than the unbeliever. A believer’s faith is quite simply like a Paradise in his spirit; while the unbeliever’s unbelief sets afire a sort of Hell in his being.

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

²⁰ Muslim, Zuhd, 3; Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 16; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 3; Musnad, ii, 197, 323, 389, 485.

The Eleventh Flash

The Stairway of the Practices of the Prophet (UWBP) and Antidote for the Sickness of Innovations

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

Now has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; it grieves him that you should perish; ardently anxious is he over you; to the believers is he most kind and merciful.(9:128)

[The first station of this verse is the Highway of the Prophet's (UWBP) Practices,¹ and its second station, the Stairway of the Prophet's (UWBP) Practices.]

*But if they turn away, say: "God suffices me, there is no god but He; in Him do I place my trust – He the Sustainer of the Throne [of Glory] Supreme!"(9:129) * Say: "If you do love God, follow me: God will love you and forgive you your sins; for God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."(3:31)*

Eleven of the hundreds of points concerning these two sublime verses will be explained concisely.

FIRST POINT

God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) said: "Whoever adheres to my practices (Sunna) when my community is corrupted shall receive the reward of a hundred martyrs."²

Yes, to adhere to the Prophet's (UWBP) practices is certainly highly

¹ That is, the Fourth Flash. (Tr.)

² Ibn 'Adiyy, *al-Kamil fi 'l-Du 'afa'*, ii, 739; al-Mundhiri, *al-Tarhib wa 'l-Tarhib*, i, 41; Tabarani, *al-Majma' al-Kabir*, 1394; 'Ali ibn Husam al-Din, *Muntakhabat Kanz al-'Ummal*, i, 100; al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, viii, 132.

commendable and worthwhile, and is even more so when innovations are rife. To comply with them in even a small matter of behaviour, particularly when the Prophet's (UWBP) community is corrupted, signifies a powerful belief and fear of God. And to follow the practices recalls the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) directly, and such recollection is transformed into recollection of the divine presence. The moment they are observed in even the least significant dealings, in the conduct of eating,³ drinking,⁴ or sleeping,⁵ such habitual, natural acts become meritorious acts of worship in compliance with the Shari'a. For the person thinks of following God's Messenger (UWBP) and conceives of his actions as conduct of the Shari'a. Then he recalls that the Messenger (UWBP) brought the Shari'a, and then his heart turns to Almighty God, the True Lawgiver, and he gains a sort of awareness of the divine presence and a sense of worship.

By virtue of this mystery, the person who makes it his habit to follow the Prophet's (UWBP) practices transforms all his acts into worship, and may make his whole life fruitful and yielding of reward.

SECOND POINT

Imam-i Rabbani, Ahmad Faruqi (May God be pleased with him) said: "I saw while traversing the degrees in my spiritual journeying that the ranks of the saints that were most brilliant, splendid, subtle, and sound were those who made following the Prophet's (UWBP) practices the basis of their way. Even ordinary saints of those ranks appeared more splendid than the highest saints of the other."⁶

Yes, Imam-i Rabbani, the Regenerator of the Second Millennium (May God be pleased with him) speaks the truth. One who takes the Prophet's (UWBP) practices as his guiding principles rises to the station of being beloved of God under the shadow of God's Beloved (UWBP).

THIRD POINT

At a time this poor Said was struggling to emerge from the Old Said, his intellect and heart were floundering among truths in a terrible spiritual storm resulting from lack of a guide and the pride of his evil-commanding soul. They were being tossed around, rising and falling, sometimes from the Pleiades to the ground, sometimes from the ground to the Pleiades.

³ See, *Tirmidhi*, At'ima, 47; *Abu Da'ud*, Ashriba, 15; *Ibn Maja*, At'ima, 7; *Musnad*, vi, 143, 207, 265.

⁴ See, *Bukhari*, Ashriba, 26; *Muslim*, Ashriba, 122-3; *Tirmidhi*, Ashriba, 14.

⁵ See, *Bukhari*, Da'wat, 8; *Tirmidhi*, Da'wat, 29; *Abu Da'ud*, Adab, 177.

⁶ Imam Rabbani, *al-Maktubat*, i, 240 (No: 260).

At that time I observed that like qibla-directing compasses showing the course to be followed in ships, each of the matters of the practices, even small points of conduct, were like electric switches among innumerable hazardous, dark ways. Whenever in the course of that spiritual journeying I saw myself under awesome pressure overwhelmed by truly burdensome loads, I followed the matters of the practices touching on the situation, I experienced a lightness as though all my burdens were being lifted from me. By submitting to them, I was saved from doubts and scruples, that is, from such anxieties as: “Is this course of action right, is it beneficial?” But if I gave them up, I looked and saw that the pressure was intense; there were numerous ways and it could not be known where they led. The load was heavy, and I was utterly powerless. My view was short, and the way, dark. But whenever I adhered to the Prophet’s (UWBP) practices, the way was lit up and seen to be safe. I felt as though the load was being lightened and the pressure lifted. At those times I confirmed through my own observations what Imam-i Rabbani had said.

FOURTH POINT

At one time, I saw myself in a strange world that arose from a state of mind produced by contemplating death and affirming the proposition “Death is a reality,”⁷ and from the transience and passing of the world. I saw myself as a corpse standing at the head of three huge corpses.

One: I was like a tombstone at the head of the immaterial corpse of all living creatures, with which I was connected through my life and which had entered the grave of the past.

The Second: In the graveyard of the globe on the face this century, which was the tombstone at the head of the vast corpse buried in the grave of the past of all the species of living creatures, with which mankind is connected through its life, I was a mere point that would be swiftly erased, an ant that would quickly die.

The Third: Since the universe is certain to die on Doomsday, that is how I saw it. In addition to seeing myself in terror at the death agonies of that vast corpse, in wonder and astonishment at its death, my own death too, which is certain to occur in the future, appeared to be happening at that time. In accordance with “And if they turn away (to the end of the verse),” (9:129) on my death all beings, all my beloveds, turned their backs on me, abandoning me and leaving me alone. My spirit was being driven towards

⁷ See, Ahmad ibn Muhammad, Kitab Usul al-Din, i, 213; al-Qinnawji, Qatf al-Thamar fi Bayan ‘Aqida Ahl al-Athar, i, 121.

the future on the side of post-eternity, which resembles a boundless ocean. Whether it wanted or not, it would be cast into the ocean.

While in that truly strange and sorrowful state of mind, help reached me from belief and from the Qur'an; the verse, "But if they turn away, say: 'God suffices me, there is no god but He; in Him do I place my trust – He the Sustainer of the Throne [of Glory] Supreme!'" came to my assistance, like a safe and trusty boat. My spirit boarded the verse with complete confidence and joy. I understood that besides its explicit meaning, an allusive meaning had consoled me so that I had found tranquillity and serenity.

Yes, its explicit meaning says to God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace): "If the people of misguidance turn away, shun your Shari'a and practices and do not heed the Qur'an, do not worry. Say: Almighty God is enough for me. I place my trust in Him. He will raise up others in their place who will follow me. The throne of His rule encompasses everything; the rebellious cannot escape outside its bounds, nor do those who seek assistance remain unaided." While its allusive meaning says this:

"O man! And O leader and guide of mankind! If all beings leave you and depart for non-existence on the path of transience; if living beings part from you and hasten down the road of death; if people abandon you and enter the graveyard; if the people of neglect and misguidance do not heed you and fall into darkness; do not be anxious. Say: Almighty God suffices me. Since He exists, everything exists. Those who have departed have not gone to non-existence; they have departed for another of His realms. Out of His infinite generosity and from among His innumerable soldiers, that Owner of the Sublime Throne sends others in their place. Those who have entered the graveyard have not been annihilated; they have departed for another world. He will send other officials in their place. And He can send obedient servants who follow the true path in place of those who fall into misguidance. Since it is thus, He takes the place of everything. Nothing can take the place of His favours, His regard."

This allusive meaning caused the three awesome corpses which had filled me with terror to take on another form. They became a wisdom-displaying passage, an instructive excursion, a journeying for the performance of duties, a demobilization and a charging with duties, whereby the universe is shaken up, and comes and goes.

FIFTH POINT

The sublime verse,

Say: "If you do love God, follow me: God will love you"(3:31)

proclaims in definite fashion just how necessary and important it is to follow the Prophet's (UWBP) practices. Yes, among the syllogisms of logic, this verse is the most powerful and certain of the sort called hypothetical or conditional syllogisms. It is as follows:

To exemplify a hypothetical syllogism it is said in logic: "If the sun comes out, it will be daytime." For a positive result it is said: "The sun has come out. One may therefore conclude that it is daytime." For a negative result, it is said: "It is not daytime. One therefore draws the conclusion that the sun has not come out." According to logic, these two conclusions, negative and positive, are definite.

In just the same way, the above verse says: "If you love God, you will follow God's Beloved (UWBP). If you do not follow him, it points to the conclusion that you do not love God." If a person loves God, it entails following the practices of God's Beloved (UWBP). Yes, the person who believes in Almighty God will certainly obey Him. And the most acceptable, the most direct, and the shortest among the ways of obeying Him is without doubt the way God's Beloved (UWBP) showed and followed.

Yes, it is necessary and self-evident that the All-Generous One of Beauty who fills the universe with so many bounties should want thanks from conscious creatures in return. And clearly that All-Wise One of Glory who adorns the universe with so many miracles of art will make the most excellent of conscious creatures His addressee and interpreter, and the herald and leader of His servants. And certainly and self-evidently that All-Beauteous One of Perfection, who makes the universe reflect the innumerable manifestations of His beauty and perfections, will give the most perfect worshipful stance to the person who is the most comprehensive, perfect measure and means of displaying His beauty, perfection, names, and art, which He clearly loves and wants to display; He will make his conduct a fine example to others and encourage them to follow him so that his fine conduct may appear in others too.

I n S h o r t : Love of God necessitates and results in following the Prophet's (UWBP) practices. How fortunate the person who follows them to a large extent! And woe on the person who does not appreciate the practices and adopts innovations!

SIXTH POINT

The Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) said: “All innovations are misguidance, and all misguidance leads to Hell.”⁸ That is to say, according to the verse,

This day have I perfected for you your religion,(5:3)

not to care for the rules of the Illustrious Shari‘a and principles of the Prophet’s (UWBP) practices after they have been completed and perfected and to adopt new creations, or God forbid, create innovations, which infers considering them to be deficient, is misguidance and leads to Hell-fire.

There are degrees in the practices:⁹ some are compulsory; these may not be given up. This sort are described in detail in the Illustrious Shari‘a. They are incontestable and can in no way be changed. Another sort are voluntary, and these are of two sorts:

One sort includes those practices related to worship. They too are described in the books of the Shari‘a and to change them is innovation. The other sort is known as “conduct” (*adab*); these practices are mentioned in the books of the Prophet’s (UWBP) biography. Opposition to them cannot be called innovation, but it is opposition of a sort to the Prophet’s (UWBP) conduct and means not benefiting from its light and true courtesy. Following this sort entails emulating him in customary, natural acts and dealings, which are known through unanimous reports. For example, there are numerous practices showing the conduct of speaking, and explaining the principles of eating, drinking, and sleeping, and social relations. Practices of this sort are called “conduct.” The person who practises them transforms his habitual actions into worship and receives significant effulgence. Practising the smallest aspect of such conduct recalls God’s Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), which imparts a light to his heart.

The most important among the practices are those that symbolize Islam and are connected with its ‘marks.’ The marks of Islam are worship, concern the community, and quite simply are general rights of a sort. Just as the whole community benefits from one person doing them, so too if he gives them up, the whole community is answerable. There can be no hypocrisy in the performance of marks of this sort, and they should be proclaimed openly. Even if they are of the voluntary sort, they are still more important than personal obligatory acts.

⁸ *Muslim*, Jum‘a, 43; *Abu Da‘ud*, Sunna, 5; *Nasa‘i*, ‘Idayn, 22; *Ibn Maja*, Muqaddima, 6, 7; *Darimi*, Muqaddima, 16, 23; *Musnad*, iii, 310, 371; iv, 126, 127.

⁹ See, *Darimi*, Muqaddima, 49; al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsat*, iv, 215; al-Daylami, *al-Musnad*, ii, 345.

SEVENTH POINT

The Practices of the Prophet (UWBP) are courtesy. There is no matter among them beneath which a light, and courtesy, is not found. God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) said: "My Sustainer taught me good conduct, and how well he taught me."¹⁰ Yes, anyone who studies his biography and is acquainted with his practices will certainly understand that Almighty God brought together in His Beloved every sort of courtesy and good conduct. So if anyone gives up the practices, he abandons courtesy. He exemplifies the rule, "The ill-mannered person is deprived of divine favour," and is discourteous in a way that causes him loss.

Q u e s t i o n : How can there be courtesy in the face of the Knower of All Things, who sees and knows everything and from whom nothing can be hidden? Situations which cause shame or embarrassment cannot be concealed from Him. One sort of courtesy is covering the necessary members and veiling distasteful situations. But nothing can be hidden from the sight of the Knower of All Things.

T h e A n s w e r : *Firstly:* Giving it the greatest importance, the Glorious Creator wants to show that His art is beautiful; He veils detestable things; He attracts attention to His bounties by decorating them. So too, He wants to show to conscious beings that His creatures and servants are beautiful. Their appearing in ugly situations is a sort of rebellion against His names of Beauteous, Adorner, Subtle, and Wise, and is contrary to courtesy. Thus, the courtesy of the Prophet's (UWBP) practices means assuming a stance of pure courtesy within the bounds of the Glorious Maker's names.

Secondly: Professionally, a doctor may examine the private member of someone who is canonically a stranger to him, and if necessary it may be shown to him and this cannot be said to be discourteous. Indeed, it may be said that the conduct of medicine requires it. But the same doctor may not examine the member as a man, or as a preacher or teacher, and courtesy cannot issue a *fatwa* permitting it to be shown. To do so would be shameless.

In just the same way, the Glorious Maker has numerous names and each has a different manifestation. For example, just as the name of Oft-Forgiving requires the existence of sins and Veiler, the existence of faults, so the name of Beauteous does not wish to see ugliness. Names pertaining to divine beauty and perfection like Subtle, Munificent, All-Wise, and All-Compassionate require that beings be in the most beautiful form and best possible situations. Such names want to display their beauties in the view

¹⁰ al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, i, 224; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmu' Fatawa*, xviii, 375; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, i, 70.

of angels, spirit beings, jinn and man through the beautiful states and fine conduct of beings. Thus, the conduct of the practices are the signs of this elevated conduct, and its principles and samples.

EIGHTH POINT

Coming after the verse, “Now has come to you a Messenger [to the end of the verse],”(9:128) which shows the Noble Messenger’s (Upon whom be blessings and peace) perfect kindness and compassion towards his community, the verse, “But if they turn away, say: ‘God suffices me...’”(9:129) says:

O mankind! And O Muslims! You should understand how lacking in conscience and unreasonable it is to turn away from the practices and the decrees that the Noble Prophet (UWBP) conveys as though casting aspersions on his self-evident compassion, for he guides you with infinite kindness, expending all his strength for your good, and curing with his practices your spiritual wounds.

O compassionate Prophet and clement Messenger! If they do not recognize this vast compassion of yours and out of their foolishness turn their backs and do not listen, don’t be anxious. Sufficient for you is the All-Glorious One, under whose command are the cohorts of the heavens and earth, and the sovereignty of whose dominicality rules over the sublime all-encompassing throne. He will muster around you His true, obedient troops and make them heed you and accept your decrees!

Yes, there is no matter of the Shari‘a of Muhammad (UWBP) and his practices which does not contain numerous instances of wisdom. This wretched one claims and is ready to prove it, despite all his faults and powerlessness. Furthermore, the seventy to eighty parts of the Risale-i Nur so far written are like seventy to eighty truthful witnesses testifying to how full of wisdom and truth are the matters of Muhammad’s (UWBP) practices and his Shari‘a. If I were capable of it and they had been written, seven thousand treatises on this subject could not completely describe those instances of wisdom, let alone seventy.

Moreover, I have observed and experienced perhaps a thousand times in my own self that the principles and matters of the Shari‘a and practices of the Prophet (UWBP) are all highly beneficial remedies for sicknesses of the spirit, mind, and heart, and particularly for social sicknesses, and that matters put forward by philosophy cannot take their place, and to an extent I have made known to others in the Risale-i Nur what I have experienced. If anyone doubts this claim of mine, let them refer to the parts of the Risale-i Nur and see for themselves.

It may be seen from this just how profitable it is to try to follow as far as is possible the practices of such a person, and how advantageous for eternal life, and how beneficial for worldly life.

NINTH POINT

Actually following to the letter every aspect of the Prophet's (UWBP) practices is only bestowed on the highest of the elite. If it is not possible to follow them in practice, everyone can seek to do so by intention, purpose, and by supporting them and being biased towards them. In any event one is compelled to follow the obligatory and compulsory sorts. And even if there is no sin involved in giving up the practices which are 'recommended', it results in considerable loss of merit. And if they are changed, it is a great error. When the practices are followed in habitual actions and dealings, such acts become worship. While if they are not followed, it is not to be reproved, but the benefit from the light of the daily conduct of God's Beloved (UWBP) is less.

New creations in the ordinances concerning worship are innovation, and since innovations are opposed to the verse,

This day have I completed for you your religion,(5:3)

they are to be rejected.¹¹ However, the recitations and invocations of the Sufi way are not innovations, on condition they originate in the Book and Sunna, and even if they differ in form and manner, their basis and principles do not oppose the Prophet's (UWBP) practices or change them, they are not innovations. Certainly some scholars classed a number of these as innovations, but called them "commendable innovations."¹² Imam-i Rabbani, the Regenerator of the Second Millennium, (May God be pleased with him) said:

"On my spiritual journeying, I saw that words narrated from the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) were luminous, shining with the rays of his practices. But when I saw invocations and states not narrated from him, there was no light on them, even if they were brilliant and powerful. The most brilliant of them was not equal to the least of the first sort. I understood from this that the rays of the Prophet's (UWBP) practices are an elixir. Also, for those seeking light, the practices are sufficient; there is no need to seek light outside them."

¹¹ See, *Bukhari*, I'tisam, 5; *Buyu'*, 60; *Sulh*, 5; *Muslim*, 'Aqdiyya, 18; *Abu Da'ud*, Sunna, 6.

¹² See, al-Iji, *Kitab al-Mawaqif*, i, 159; al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, ii, 256; Ibn Rajab, *Jami' al-'Ulum wa'l-Hikam*, i, 267; Ibn 'Abidin, *Hashiyya*, i, 390.

This statement of such a hero of reality and the Shari‘a shows that the Prophet’s (UWBP) practices are the foundation stone of the happiness of both worlds and the source and spring of all attainment and perfection.

O God! Bestow upon us the ability to follow the Illustrious Practices of the Prophet (UWBP).

O our Sustainer! We believe in what You have revealed to Your Prophet; then write us down among those who bear witness.(3:53)

TENTH POINT

The verse,

Say: “If you do love God, follow me: God will love you(3:31)

displays a miraculous conciseness, for many phrases are included in its three phrases. It is as follows:

The verse says: “If you believe in God (May His Glory be exalted), you will surely love Him. Since you love God, you will act in the manner He loves. To do that, you must resemble the one God loves, and he may be resembled by following him. Whenever you follow him, God will love you too. Anyway you have to love God so that He shall love you.”

These phrases express only a brief and concise meaning of the verse. It means that man’s most exalted goal is to receive Almighty God’s love. The verse shows that this may be achieved by following God’s Beloved (UWBP) and his practices. If at this stage three points are proved, the above truth will become completely clear.

F i r s t P o i n t : Man was created with an infinite innate love for the universe’s Creator. For included in his nature are a love of beauty, an ardour for perfection, and passion for bestowal. His love increases proportionately to the degrees of beauty, perfection, and bestowal, reaching the furthest degrees of ecstatic ardour.

Furthermore, tiny man’s tiny heart may hold a love as great as the universe. Yes, the fact that writings equivalent to a library of thousands of books may be inscribed in the faculty of memory, which is a coffer of the heart’s the size of a lentil, shows that the human heart may contain the universe and bear love that great.

Since inherent in human nature is such an infinite capacity to love bestowal, beauty, and perfection; and since the universe’s Creator possesses infinite sacred beauty, the existence of which is self-evidently established by His works apparent in the universe; and since He possesses infinite holy perfection, the existence of which is necessarily proved by the embroideries of His art to be seen in beings; and since He is the owner of

infinite bounties, the existence of which is certainly, indeed, self-evidently established by the infinite varieties of His bestowal and bounties to be observed in living creatures; these surely demand infinite love from man, who is the most comprehensive, the most needy, the most thoughtful, and the most yearning of conscious beings.

Indeed, all human beings are capable of infinite love for the All-Glorious Creator, and in the face of His beauty, perfection, and bestowal, the Creator is more deserving of love than anyone. All the varieties of love and intense attachment a believing human being has for his life, immortality, and existence, his world, his self, and other beings, are mere droplets of his capacity to love God. His various intense emotions are transformations of that capacity to love, and distillations of it in other forms. It is clear that just as man takes pleasure at his own happiness, so he receives pleasure at the happiness of others to whom he is attached. And just as he loves someone who saves him from disaster, so he loves someone who saves those he loves. In consequence of this mental attitude, if a person thinks only of this out of all the varieties of divine bounties bestowed on all men, he will say:

My Creator saved me from non-existence, which is eternal darkness, and gave me a beautiful world like this one. Then when the time comes for me to die, He will again save me from non-existence, which is eternal extinction, and from annihilation, and bestow on me in an eternal realm an everlasting and truly magnificent world. And just as He has bestowed on me external and inner senses and feelings with which to benefit from all the varieties of delights and good things of the world and to roam around it and make excursions, so He bestows innumerable bounties on all my relatives and friends and fellow-men, all of whom I love and to whom I am attached. Those bounties are also mine in a way, because I am happy and receive pleasure at their happiness. Since in accordance with the rule, 'Man is the slave of bestowal,'¹³ everyone in a sense worships benevolence, certainly in the face of such innumerable favours, since I have a heart as great as the universe, it necessitates its being filled with love at those favours, and I want to fill it. If in fact I am unable to love that much, I can do so potentially, by intention, belief, acceptance, appreciation, longing, taking the part of, and by will. And so on.

Analogies may be drawn with the love for bestowal we have briefly alluded to here for the love man feels for beauty and perfection. As for the unbelievers, they are infinitely hostile because of their unbelief, and even bear a wrongful and insulting enmity towards the universe and all beings.

¹³ Abu Nu'aym, *Hilya al-Awliya'*, iv, 121; al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, i, 381; Khatib al-Baghdadi, iv, 276, vii, 346; al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, *Nawadir al-Usul*, i, 149.

S e c o n d P o i n t : Love of God necessitates following the Practices of Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace). For to love God is to do what pleases Him, and the things that please Him are manifested in most perfect form in the person of Muhammad (UWBP). There are two ways of resembling Muhammad's (UWBP) actions and deeds:

The First: Obeying Almighty God's commands in respect of loving Him and within the bounds of what pleases Him necessitates following them, for the most perfect leader in such matters is the person of Muhammad (UWBP).

The Second: Since the person of Muhammad (UWBP) is the chief means of man receiving innumerable divine favours, he is surely worthy of boundless love for the sake of Almighty God. If man is capable of resembling someone he loves, by nature he wants to do so. This definitely necessitates that those who love God's Beloved (UWBP) try to resemble him by following his illustrious practices.

T h i r d P o i n t : Almighty God has boundless love, just as He has infinite compassion. Just as He makes Himself loved in infinite fashion through all the fine qualities and adornment of the creatures in the universe, so He loves in particular conscious beings who respond with love to His making His artefacts loved. It may be clearly understood how important and exalted an aim it is to try to attract the love of the Being one manifestation of whose mercy are all the subtle wonders and good things and delights and bounties of Paradise. Since it is stated clearly that His love is won only through following Muhammad's (UWBP) practices, it is certain that it should be man's greatest aim and his most urgent duty.

ELEVENTH POINT

This consists of three matters.

First Matter : The sources of the Noble Messenger's (UWBP) illustrious practices are threefold: his words, his acts, and his conduct. And each of these has three categories: obligatory, voluntary, and laudable.

It is imperative to follow those that are obligatory and compulsory, and penalties and punishment are incurred for giving them up. Everyone is charged with following them. As for the voluntary sort, as a means of winning God's love, the believers are again charged with following them, but they receive no penalty if they fail to do so. However, to act in accordance with them and to follow them is highly meritorious, while to change them is innovation, misguidance, and a great error. To emulate the Prophet's (UWBP) customary actions is extremely laudable and in accordance with wisdom, and is beneficial for both personal life and social life and for

humankind. For all his habitual actions produce numerous things beneficial for life, and furthermore, by following them, such conduct and actions become worship.

Yes, since as both friend and foe agree, the person of Muhammad (UWBP) manifested the highest degrees of moral virtues; and since as all are agreed, he is the most famous and excellent member of the human race; and since as is indicated by his thousands of miracles, and testified to by the World of Islam that he founded and its achievements, and is affirmed by the truths of the Qur'an, which he heralded and interpreted, he was the most excellent Perfect Man and most excellent guide; and since as the fruit of following him, millions of the people of perfection have advanced through the degrees of attainment and reached the happiness of both worlds; for sure his practices and actions are the finest examples to be followed, and the safest guides, and the soundest laws to be adopted as principles. Happy the person who has a large share of following the Prophet's (UWBP) practices. While those who are lazy and do not follow them suffer vast loss, and those who consider them to be unimportant commit a great crime, while if they criticize them, which infers denying them, it is serious misguidance.¹⁴

Second Matter: Almighty God decrees in the All-Wise Qur'an,
And you [stand] on an exalted standard of character.(68:4)

According to sound narrations, when the distinguished Companion 'A'isha the Veracious (May God be pleased with her) described the Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), she would say: "His character is the Qur'an."¹⁵ That is to say, Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace) is the exemplar of the fine moral qualities described by the Qur'an. He conforms to them more than anyone, and his nature was created in accordance with them.

So even lunatics would understand how unfortunate are those heedless members of his community who believe in him yet give no importance to his practices or want to change them, despite each of his deeds, states, words, and actions being worthy of emulation by mankind.

Third Matter: Since the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) was created with the most moderate character in the most perfect form, his actions and rest all proceeded on moderation and

¹⁴ See, *Bukhari*, I'tisam, 2; *Ahkam*, 1; *Jihad*, 109; *Muslim*, 'Imara, 33; *Nasa'i*, Bay'at; 27; *Musnad*, ii, 361.

¹⁵ *Muslim*, Salat al-Musafirin, 139; *Abu Da'ud*, Tatawwu', 26; *Nasa'i*, Tatawwu', 2; *Musnad*, vi, 54, 91, 163, 188, 216; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, v, 170; Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, i, 345; iv, 112.

equanimity.¹⁶ His biography shows clearly that he always acted with moderation and equanimity, and avoided excess and negligence.

Yes, God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) conformed completely to the command:

Therefore stand firm [in the Straight Way] as you are commanded,(11:112)

and moderation is apparent in all his acts, words, and conduct. For example, since his reasoning faculty was free of wiliness and stupidity, which are excess and deficiency – resembling its corruption and darkness, it always functioned with wisdom, the middle way and means of moderation. Similarly, far from rage and cowardice, which are the corruption of the power of anger and its excess and deficiency, his power of anger was always employed with sacred courage, which is the middle way and means of moderation of that power. And so too, purified of licentiousness and frigidity, which are the excess and deficiency of the power of animal appetites and its corruption, his power of passion always took chasteness, the means of moderation of that power, as guide, at the degree of maximum virtuousness. And so on. In all his practices, daily conduct, and in carrying out the injunctions of his Shari'a, he chose the way of moderation and avoided excess and deficiency, and wastefulness and prodigality, which are wrongdoing and darkness. He avoided wastefulness absolutely and took frugality as his guide in his speech even, and in eating and drinking. Thousands of books have been written describing the details of this truth. In accordance with "A hint is enough for the wise," we make do with this drop from the ocean and cut the story short here.

O God, grant blessings to he who brought together in his person all fine moral qualities, and manifested the mystery of, "And you [stand] on an exalted standard of character," and who said: "Whoever adheres to my practices when my community is corrupted shall receive the reward of a hundred martyrs."

And they shall say: "Praise be to God, who has guided us to this [felicity]; never could we have found guidance, had it not been for the guidance of God; indeed it was the truth that the prophets of our Sustainer brought to us."(7:43)

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

¹⁶ See, *Musnad*, vi, 68, 155; al-Tayalisi, *al-Musnad*, 49; Abu Ya'la, *al-Musnad*, iv, 478; al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, x, 314.

The Twelfth Flash

[This explains two fine points related to the Qur'an, and was written in connection with two minor questions put by Re'fet Bey.¹]

In His Name, be He glorified!
And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.(17:44)

Peace be upon you, and on your brothers, and God's mercy and blessings!

My Dear, Loyal Brother, Re'fet Bey,

Your questions at this difficult time put me in a difficult position. On this occasion they are both unimportant, but they did seem to me to be significant since they are related to two points of the Qur'an and your question about the globe of the earth touches on criticisms about the seven levels of the earth and the heavens made by geography and astronomy. So disregarding the unimportant nature of the questions, I shall explain two fine points about two verses of the Qur'an, in a scholarly and general way.

FIRST TOPIC

This consists of two points.

F i r s t P o i n t : According to the verses,

*How many are the creatures that carry not their own sustenance? It is God who feeds [both] them and you.(29:60) * For God is He who gives [all] sustenance – Lord of Power, Steadfast [for ever],(51:58)*

sustenance is supervised by the All-Powerful One of Glory and comes directly from the treasury of His mercy. Since the sustenance of all living creatures is guaranteed by the Sustainer, none should die of hunger.

¹ Re'fet Barutçu, 1886-1975. He first visited Bediuzzaman in Barla in 1931 and thereafter became one of his close students, serving prison sentences together with him in Eskişehir and Denizli. He was a retired yüzbaşı (captain) in the army.

Whereas apparently many do die of it and of lack of food. This is a fact on the one hand and a mystery on the other, and may be solved as follows:

The Sustainer's guarantee is true; none die of hunger. For that All-Wise One of Glory stores up some of the food He sends to the bodies of living creatures as fat, as reserves. In fact, He stores up a part of the sustenance He sends to each cell, in the cell, like a reserve stock to be spent when no food comes from outside. The creatures die before the store is finished. That is to say, death in such cases is not from lack of sustenance; the creatures die from mistakenly acquired habits and due to illness resulting from the desire for the wrong things and the giving up of habit.

Yes, the natural sustenance stored up in the bodies of living creatures in the form of fat generally lasts perfectly well for forty days. It may even last twice that long in cases of illness or certain ecstatic states. It was written in the newspapers thirteen years ago (and now it is thirty-nine) that out of extreme stubbornness, a man in prison in London managed to live quite healthily for seventy days eating nothing at all.

Since the natural sustenance lasts from forty days to seventy or eighty; and since the manifestation of the divine name of Provider is apparent on the face of the earth truly extensively; and since foods flow forth from breasts and from wood even in completely unexpected fashion; if man so full of evil does not interfere with his mistaken choices and confuse things, that name comes to the assistance of the living creature before the natural sustenance is consumed, preventing death from starvation. In which case, if those who die of hunger do so in less than forty days, it is definitely not from lack of sustenance. Rather, in accordance with the saying, "the abandoning of habit is fatal," it occurs either from a bad habit or from illness resulting from the giving up of habits. In which case it may be said that there is no death from hunger.

Indeed, observedly, sustenance is in inverse proportion to power and will. For example, when still in the womb, young are completely deprived of power and will yet are fed to repletion. Then when they come into the world they still lack power and will, but since they have some sort of ability and potential senses, needing only to fasten their mouths to the breast, the most perfect, nutritious and easily digestible food is given to their mouths from those fountains, in the gentlest form and strangest way. Then as they acquire a little amount of power and will, that readily available, fine food starts to be withdrawn from them. The fountains of the breasts dry up and the infants' food is sent from elsewhere. However, since their power and will are still insufficient to search for it, so the Munificent Provider sends their parents' tenderness and compassion to assist them. Whenever

their power and will are perfected, then their sustenance does not hasten to them and is not made to do so. The sustenance remains in its place, saying: “Come and search for me and take me!” That is to say, sustenance is in inverse proportion to power and will. We have indeed explained in many parts of the *Risale-i Nur* that animals most lacking in will and power are better nourished and live better than those with greater will and power.

Second Point: There are different sorts of possibility, like reasonable possibility, customary possibility, and ordinary possibility. If an event is not within the bounds of reasonable possibility, it is rejected, and if it is not within the bounds of customary possibility, it is a miracle but may not easily be wonder-working. If there is nothing similar to it, either according to common usage or in principle, it can only be accepted through a categorical proof as clear as witnessing.

In consequence of this, the extraordinary states of Sayyid Ahmad Badawi,² who for forty days refrained from eating bread even, are within the bounds of customary possibility. It may have been both wonder-working and an habitual practice out of the ordinary. Yes, there are numerous unanimous reports concerning Sayyid Ahmad Badawi’s (May his mystery be sanctified) wondrous states and absorption in ecstasy. On occasion, he ate only once in forty days, but he did not do that all the time; he achieved it sometimes as an instance of wonder-working. It possibly became a habit for him because he did not feel the need to eat while in a state of ecstasy. Wonders of this sort have been reliably narrated about many saints of his kind. As we proved in the first Point, stored-up sustenance remains undepleted for more than forty days, and it is possible not to eat for that length of time through habit, and such a state has been reliably reported about people who were out of the ordinary. It therefore cannot be denied.

² Sayyid Ahmad Badawi (d. 675/1276). He was born in Morocco and eventually settled in Tanta in Egypt. He is famous as one of the four Spiritual Poles whose saintly powers persisted after their deaths.

Two important matters will be explained in connection with the second question, for the sciences of geography and astronomy have criticized the verse and foolishly even tried to deny it, because with their abbreviated laws and narrow principles and tiny scales they have been unable to ascend to the heavens of the Qur'an, and have been unable to discover the seven levels of meanings in the stars of its verses.

FIRST IMPORTANT MATTER

This is about the earth having seven levels like the heavens. This matter appears to the philosophers of the present time to be untrue; their sciences about the earth and heavens find it unacceptable, and making it a pretext, they oppose some of the truths of the Qur'an. We shall point out concisely a few points about this.

T h e F i r s t : *Firstly*, the verse's meaning is one thing and the parts of the meaning and points confirming it, another. The meaning cannot be denied if one of the many parts of the universal meaning is absent. Of the numerous parts of the universal meaning concerning the seven levels of the heavens and seven layers of the earth, seven points confirming it are clearly apparent.

Secondly, the verse does not explicitly state that "the earth has seven layers." The apparent meaning of the verse is,

God is He Who created seven heavens and of the earth what is similar... [to the end of the verse]:(65:12)

"He created the earth like the seven heavens, and made it a dwelling place for His creatures." It does not say: I created it in seven levels. Its being similar is in regard to createdness and being the habitation of creatures.

T h e S e c o n d : The globe of the earth is certainly very small in relation to the heavens, but as the exhibition, display, gathering place and centre of countless divine artefacts, as the heart and immaterial centre of the vast, endless heavens, it is equivalent to them, like the heart may be seen as equivalent to the body. For this reason, the earth having seven³ climes, as was supposed from early times; also the well-known seven continents, Europe, Africa, Oceania, the two Asias, and the two America's; also together with the seas, the East, West, North, and South, the well-known seven regions of this face and on the face of the New World; also the

³ The seven repetitions of the word seven here makes a fine 'coincidence' (T. *tevâfik*; Ar. *tawâfuq*).

various, contiguous seven levels from the centre to the outer crust, which have been established by science; and the famous seven universal elements called the seven levels, which comprise the seventy simple elements that are the means of perpetuating animate creatures' lives; also the four elements of water, air, fire, and earth, together with the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, making seven levels and realms; also the seven realms of the earth verified by those who uncover the secrets of creation and the people of witnessing, who are very numerous, their testimony that they are the worlds and habitations of jinns, demons, and other various sentient and living creatures; also the seven levels indicating that seven further globes exist resembling our globe, and that they are the dwelling places of living creatures – from these indications it has been understood from verses of the Qur'an that the earth too has seven levels.

It thus becomes clear that the earth has seven sorts of levels that exist in seven ways. The eighth, which is the final meaning, is important from another point of view; it is not included in the seven.

T h e T h i r d : Since the Absolutely Wise One wastes nothing and creates nothing in vain; and since creatures exist for conscious beings and find their perfection by means of conscious beings and rejoice through them and are saved from futility by means of them; and since observedly the Absolutely Wise One, the All-Powerful One of Glory, fills the element of air, and world of water, and layer of earth with innumerable living beings; and since just as air and water are not an obstacle to the movement of animals, so dense matter like earth and stone do not form obstacles to the passage of matter like electricity and X-rays; for sure the All-Wise One of Glory, the Undying Maker, will not leave empty and uninhabited the broad spaces and worlds and caves and seven contiguous layers from the centre of our globe to the outer crust, which is our habitation and centre. He has certainly populated them and created and settled there conscious beings appropriate to those worlds. Since those sentient creatures must be angels and spirit beings of a sort, the densest and hardest layer even will be to them as the sea is to fish and the air is to birds. The awesome heat at the centre of the earth even must be for those conscious creatures like the sun's heat is for us. Created from light, for those sentient spirit beings fire is like light.

T h e F o u r t h : Mentioned in the Eighteenth Letter is a comparison about the depictions made by the people of illumination of the strange wonders of the earth's levels, which are outside the bounds of reason. A summary is this:

In the Manifest Realm the globe is a seed, while in the World of Similitudes and Intermediate Realm it is so vast as to be equal to the heavens. If

the people of illumination have seen a level of the earth particular to demons which has a breadth of a thousand years, it is not in the seed of the earth that pertains to the Manifest World; but is a manifestation of its branches and levels in the World of Similitudes. Since an apparently insignificant level of the earth has such a vast manifestation in another world, surely it may be said that it has seven levels which are the equivalent of the seven levels of the heavens. In order to call to mind the above points, the Qur'an's verses allude to them by showing in a miraculously concise way that the tiny earth is the equivalent of the seven levels of the heavens.

SECOND IMPORTANT MATTER

*The seven heavens and the earth and all that is in them extols and glorifies Him [to the end of the verse](17:44) * And has applied His design to the heavens and fashioned them into seven heavens, and He has full knowledge of all things.(2:29)*

Numerous verses like these depict the heavens as sevenfold. It is appropriate to write here only a summary of this matter, which of necessity we expounded extremely briefly in the commentary *Isharat al-I'jaz* (Signs of Miraculousness), while on the front in the first year of Great War. It is as follows:

Ancient philosophy conceived of the heavens as being nine in number; accepting in the tongue of the Shari'a the throne of God and seat of God together with the seven heavens, they depicted the heavens in strange manner. The glittering terms of the philosophers held mankind under their sway for many centuries. In fact, many Qur'anic commentators were compelled to make the apparent meanings of verses conform to their school. In this way the All-Wise Qur'an's miraculousness was veiled to an extent. As for the new philosophy, called modern science, in the face of the excesses of ancient philosophy about the heavens it went to the other extreme and quite simply denied the heavens' existence. The former went to excess and the latter was deficient; they were unable to portray reality in its entirety.

As for the sacred wisdom of the All-Wise Qur'an, it left aside such excess and deficiency, and choosing the middle way said that the All-Glorious Maker created the seven levels of the heavens. The planets swim in the heavens like fish and glorify God. It says in a Hadith: "The skies are waves held back."⁴ That is, the heavens are an ocean the waves of which are stationary.

⁴ *Tirmidhi*, Tafsir Sura 58, 1; *Musnad*, ii, 370; al-Mubarakfuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi*, No: 3352; al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, viii, 132.

We shall prove this Qur'anic truth extremely briefly with rules and seven aspects of meaning.

First Rule: It is established by science and philosophy that limitless space is not an infinite vacuum, but is filled with matter called ether.

The Second: It is established by science and reason, indeed by observation, that a matter which fills space is the bond of the laws governing the heavenly bodies like those of attraction and repulsion, and is the conductor and transmitter of such forces in matter as light, heat, and electricity.

The Third: It has been established empirically that while remaining as ether, it has various forms and formations like other matter. Just as there are three states of the same matter, liquid, gas and solid, for instance, steam, water, and ice; so there is nothing to reasonably prevent ether having seven states or levels; it cannot be objected to in any way.

The Fourth: If the heavenly bodies are studied carefully, it will be seen that there is a difference in the levels. The level that contains the vast nebular sphere called the Milky Way of course does not resemble the level of the fixed stars. It is as if those stars have ripened and matured like the fruits of summer, while the uncountable stars apparent in the form of a cloud in the Milky Way are constantly emerging and beginning to mature. According to accurate conjecture, the level of fixed stars also appears different to the level of the solar system. And so on. One may adduce seven systems and seven levels which differ from one another.

The Fifth: It is established by conjecture, sense, inductive reasoning, and experience that if a material is given order and form and if other artefacts are made from the material, it is transformed into various levels and forms. For example, when a diamond mine is worked, from the material, ashes, coal, and diamonds are produced. And when fire is lit, it separates into the levels of flame, smoke, and embers. And when water and oxygen are combined, levels like water, ice, and steam are formed. That is to say, when a single substance is worked, it may separate into levels. In which case, when Creative Power started to work in the substance called ether, in accordance with the verse, "And fashioned them into seven heavens," it created from it seven sorts of heavens as differing levels.

The Sixth: The above indications necessarily indicate both the existence, and the plurality, of the heavens. Since the heavens are certainly numerous, and the Bringer of Sure News (UWBP) stated in the tongue of the Qur'an that they number seven, for sure they are seven.

The Seventh: Since in Arabic, terms like seven, seventy, and seven hundred express multiplicity, those universal seven levels may comprise multiple levels.

In Short: The All-Powerful One of Glory created the seven heavens from ether, and forming it into levels, ordered it with a truly fine and wondrous order and sowed the stars in it. Since the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition is a pre-eternal address speaking to all the classes of all mankind and the jinn, for sure each of those classes will receive its share from the Qur'an's verses and its verses will contain various and numerous meanings, both explicit and implicit, in a way that will satisfy the understanding of each.

Yes, the breadth of the Qur'anic address and the comprehensiveness of its meanings and indications and its conforming to and flattering all the degrees of understanding from the most uneducated common people to the highest of the elite shows that all its verses have an aspect which looks to each class. Thus, in consequence of this mystery, as an example, seven classes of men understand as follows the meaning of seven various levels from the universal meaning "seven heavens:"

A short-sighted and narrow-minded class of men understands the atmosphere from the verse "and fashioned them into seven heavens." While another class of men befogged by astronomy understands the famous stars known popularly as the seven planets, and their orbits. Yet another group understands seven celestial globes resembling our globe, which are inhabited by living creatures.⁵ A further group of men understands the solar system being separated into seven levels, and seven solar systems together with our system. And yet another group understands the ether being separated into seven levels. Another class of men with broader ideas counts all the visible skies gilded with stars as a heaven, and saying that it is this world's heaven, understands that there are six levels of heavens besides it. And mankind's seventh and highest class do not consider the seven heavens to be restricted to the Manifest World, and understands that the Worlds of the Hereafter and the Unseen, and this world, and the World of Similitudes all have seven heavens, each of which is an encompassing container and roof.

Similarly, there are many further particular meanings in the universal of the verse, like the above-mentioned seven levels of meaning of the seven levels. Everyone receives his share according to his understanding and everyone finds his sustenance at that heavenly table.

Since the verse has thus numerous points confirming it, the unreasoning philosophers and foolish astronomers attacking the verse in that way on the pretext of denying the heavens is like silly children throwing stones at a

⁵ See, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, ii, 535; al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, xxviii, 153-4.

star in the hope of making it fall. Because if one of the points confirming it from the verse's universal meaning is correct, the universal meaning is correct and true. A particular even which is not literally true but is commonly accepted may be included in the universal meaning in order to conform to the generally held ideas. Whereas we saw numerous particulars which are right and true. Now look at this unfair, unjust geography and drunken intoxicated astronomy: how wrong these two sciences have been, closing their eyes to the universal meaning, which is right and correct and true, and not seeing the aspects which confirm it and are absolutely right; they have fancied an imaginary and extraordinary particular to be the meaning of the verse and thrown stones at the verse! And they have broken their own heads and lost their belief!

I n S h o r t : Since like jinns and satans, unbelieving materialist ideas have been unable to ascend to the seven levels of the skies of the Qur'an, which was revealed in seven recitations,⁶ and with seven aspects, seven sorts of miraculousness, seven truths, and seven pillars, they do not know what there is and what there is not in the stars of its verses and give false and inaccurate reports. So falling stars like the above discussion descend on their heads from the stars of those verses and scorch them. Yes, the heavens of the Qur'an cannot be ascended to by means of the jinn-like ideas of philosophy. The stars of its verses can only be risen to through the ascension of true wisdom and the wings of belief and Islam.

O God! Grant blessings to the Sun of the skies of prophethood and Moon of the firmament of messengerhood, and to his Family and Companions, the stars of guidance for the rightly-guided.

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

O God! O Sustainer of the Heavens and Earth! Adorn the hearts of the translator of this treatise and his companions with the stars of the truths of the Qur'an and belief. Amen.

⁶ See, *Bukhari*, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 5, 27; *Tawhid*, 553; *Muslim*, Salat al-musafirin, 270; *Tirmidhi*, Qira'at, 2.

The Thirteenth Flash

This, the Thirteenth Flash, explains the meaning of
“I seek refuge with God from Satan the Accursed”

[This is about seeking refuge with God from Satan. Thirteen indications will be written. Some of them have been explained and proved in various places in the Twenty-Sixth Word and other parts of the Risale-i Nur so here will be discussed only briefly.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
And say: O My Sustainer, I seek refuge with You from the whisperings of the
Evil Ones, * And I seek refuge with you, my Sustainer, lest they should come
near me.(23:97-8)*

FIRST INDICATION

Q u e s t i o n : Although evil spirits do not interfere in the universe in any way in regard to creation; and through His mercy and favour Almighty God takes the part of the people of truth; and the attractive beauties and virtues of truth and reality strengthen and encourage the people of truth, and the repulsive ugliness of misguidance revolts the people of misguidance; what is the reason for Satan’s party very often gaining the upper hand; what is the wisdom in it? And why should the people of truth always seek refuge with God from Satan’s evil?

T h e A n s w e r : The wisdom and purpose is this: for the most part, misguidance and evil are negative, destructive, and pertain to non-existence. While in the great majority of cases, guidance and good are positive, constructive, repairing, and pertain to existence. Everyone knows that one man can destroy in one day a building constructed by twenty men in twenty days. Yes, a person continues to live due to the existence of all the basic members and conditions of life, life being particular to the All-Glorious Creator’s power; yet, by severing a member a tyrant may make

the person manifest death, which is non-being in relation to life. Therefore, the saying “Destruction is easy” has become proverbial.

In consequence, the people of misguidance sometimes triumph over the people of truth, who are very powerful, with what is in reality a weak force. But the people of truth possess a stronghold so unassailable that when they take refuge in it, those fearsome enemies cannot draw close; they can do nothing. If they cause some temporary harm, according to the verse,

And the end is [best] for the righteous,(7:128, etc.)

everlasting reward and profit make up for the damage. That impregnable stronghold, that fortified citadel, is the Shari‘a of Muhammad (UWBP) and his practices.

SECOND INDICATION

Q u e s t i o n : The creation of devils, who are pure evil, and their harassing the people of belief, and many people not believing and going to Hell because of them, appears to be terrible and ugly. How does the mercy and beauty of the Absolutely Beauteous One, the Absolutely Compassionate One, the Truly Merciful One, permit this infinite ugliness and awesome calamity? Many people have asked about this question, and it occurs to many people.

T h e A n s w e r : In addition to the minor evils, there are numerous universal good purposes in the existence of Satan, and human attainments and perfections. Yes, however many the degrees from a seed to the huge tree, the degrees in the abilities lodged in human nature are more numerous. They range from a minute particle to the sun. For these abilities and potentialities to develop, action is required, a transaction is necessary. In such a transaction the action of the mechanism of progress is triggered through striving. And striving occurs due to the existence of evil spirits and harmful things. Otherwise man’s station would have been constant like that of the angels; there would have been no classes in humankind, which resembles thousands of species. It is contrary to wisdom and justice to abandon a thousand instances of good so as to avoid one minor evil.

For sure the majority of people embrace misguidance due to Satan, but importance and value look mostly to quality; they look to quantity little or not at all. If someone has a thousand and ten seeds which he buries, and under the earth the seeds undergo a chemical reaction as a result of which ten become trees and a thousand rot, the profit the man receives from the ten seeds which have become trees certainly eliminates the loss he suffers from the thousand rotted ones. In exactly the same way, through the struggle against the soul and Satan, the profit, honour, enlightenment, and value

for humankind gained by ten perfect men, who are like stars, certainly reduce to nothing the harm caused to mankind through the people of misguidance embracing unbelief, who are so base as to be considered vermin. Since this is so, divine mercy, wisdom, and justice have permitted the existence of Satan, and allowed him to molest men.

O people of belief! Your armour against this awesome enemy is the fear of God fashioned on the workbench of the Qur'an, and your shield is the Noble Messenger's (UWBP) practices, and your weapon, seeking refuge with God from Satan, and seeking forgiveness, and taking refuge in divine protection.

THIRD INDICATION

Q u e s t i o n : The very great complaints and massing of forces against the people of misguidance in the All-Wise Qur'an does not appear to the reason to be conformable with its equitable and apt eloquence and the congruence and moderation of its style. It is quite simply as though it is mustering armies against a single man. It threatens him on account of one minor action as though he had committed thousands of crimes. It affords him a position and complains about him as though he were an aggressive partner, despite his being bankrupt and having no share of the property. What is the reason for this and the wisdom in it?

T h e A n s w e r : The reason for it is this: because the evil spirits and those who follow them take the path of misguidance, they can cause great destruction with a small act, and they can violate the rights of many creatures and cause much harm with a small deed.

For example, by some small action or neglecting a small duty, a man on a king's large merchant ship can be the cause of all the efforts of those employed on it and all the fruits of their labour being lost and going for nothing. The illustrious owner of the ship therefore complains about and threatens the rebellious man in awesome fashion on account of all his subjects who are connected with the ship. And he inflicts a terrible punishment on him, taking into account not his insignificant action but its dreadful results, not in his own name but in that of the rights of his subjects.

In exactly the same way, through their apparently insignificant mistakes and sins, the people of misguidance, Satan's party, who are on the ship of the earth together with the people of guidance, transgress against the rights of numerous creatures and nullify the results of their elevated duties. The Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity's awesome threats and complaints about them, therefore, and His mobilization of forces against them are pure wisdom within perfect eloquence, and are most apt and appropriate.

It is in conformity with the requirements of the situation, which is the definition of eloquence and its basis.¹ And it is free of exaggeration, which is wastefulness in words.

It is clear that the person will be wretched who does not take refuge in a secure stronghold in the face of terrible enemies who wreak much destruction with little action. O people of belief! Such a heavenly stronghold of steel is the Qur'an. Enter it and be saved!

FOURTH INDICATION

Investigative scholars and the people of illumination have agreed that non-existence is pure evil and existence, pure good. Yes, in the great majority of cases, good, virtues, and perfections are based on existence and are related to it. Even if they are superficially negative and hint of non-existence, their basis is in existence and pertains to it. While the basis and leaven of all ugliness, such as misguidance, evil, calamities, and sins, is non-existence and denial. Their badness and ugliness arise from non-existence. Even if they appear superficially to be positive and pertaining to existence, essentially they are non-existence and denial.

Also, observedly, the existence of something like a building is realized through the existence of all its parts. While its destruction, non-existence, and annihilation occur through the non-being of one of its main parts. Furthermore, existence requires an existent cause, it is based on a cause that has an actual reality. Whereas non-existence may be based on things which pertain to non-existence. Such things may be the cause of something non-existent.

In consequence of this rule, despite the awesome destruction in the universe of devils from among jinn and men, and the varieties of unbelief, misguidance, evil, and destruction they perpetrate, they neither interfere one iota in creation, nor do they have any share in divine sovereignty. Moreover, they do not perform those acts through any power or ability; they perpetrate many of the things they do through neglect and abstaining from action. They commit evils by not allowing good to be done, that is, they become evil. For since bad and evil are a sort of destruction, their causes do not have to be an existent power and active creativity. Indeed, vast destruction is wrought due to one non-existent matter or one condition being nullified.

It was because the Zoroastrians did not develop this mystery that they

¹ See, al-Khamawi, *Khizana al-Adab*, ii, 482; al-Qazwani, *al-Idah fi 'Ulum al-Balagha*, i, 15-6.

believed there was a creator of good in the universe, called Yazdan, and a creator of evil, called Ahriman.² However, the imaginary god of evil they called Ahriman was Satan, who causes evil through the power of choice and the power to act, which has no ability to create.

O people of belief! Your most effective weapon and equipment for repairs in the face of this awesome destruction of Satan is seeking forgiveness from God, and declaring “I seek refuge with God,” to have recourse to Him. And your stronghold is the Prophet’s (UWBP) practices.

FIFTH INDICATION

In the revealed scriptures Almighty God points out to mankind great rewards like Paradise and terrible punishments like Hell, and He gives guidance, many admonishments and reminders, and threats and encouragement. But despite there being so many means guiding the people of belief to the straight path, they are defeated in the face of the feeble, unrewarding, repellent stratagems of Satan’s party. At one time this caused me much thought. How is it, I wondered, that although they believe, they disregard Almighty God’s severe threats? Why isn’t their belief enough? They are carried away by Satan’s baseless wiles and rebel against God, although according to the verse, “Feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan.”(4:76) Some of my own friends, even, although they sincerely affirmed the teachings about reality they had heard from me a hundred times and had an excessively good opinion of me and relations with me, they were carried away by the trite and hypocritical compliments of a corrupt person, and took up a position in favour of him and against me. “Glory be to God!” I exclaimed, “How can a person fall so low? What a deceitful man he was.” I slandered him and committed a sin.

Later, the truth explained in the previous Indications became clear and illuminated many obscure points. Thanks be to God, through its light I understood both that the All-Wise Qur’an’s powerful encouragement and assurances are completely in place, and that the people of belief being deceived by Satanic machinations is not due to a lack of belief or weakness of faith. I understood too that someone who commits grievous sins is not an unbeliever, and that the Mu‘tazilites and some Kharijite sects are in error by stating: “The person who commits a grievous sin is either in a state of unbelief or is between belief and unbelief,”³ and that that unfortunate

² See, al-Shahristani, *al-Milal wa'l-Nihal*, i, 232-3; al-Ijī, *Kitab al-Mawaqif*, iii, 65; Tahir ibn Muhammad, *al-Tabsir fi'l-Din*, i, 91, 113, 142.

³ See, al-Ijī, *Kitab al-Mawaqif*, iii, 548; Ibn Abi'l-'Izz, *Sharh 'Aqida al-Tahawiyya*, i, 356-62.

friend of mine sacrificing a hundred lessons in reality to win the attentions of such a scoundrel was not despicable abasement and degeneration; I thanked Almighty God and was saved from the abyss. For as I said before, Satan pushes man into serious peril because of some insignificant matter that in reality lacks existence. Moreover, man's soul always listens to Satan; and his powers of anger and animal appetites are like both receivers and transmitters of Satan's whisperings.

It is in consequence of this that Almighty God's names of Oft-Forgiving and All-Compassionate are turned to the people of belief with a maximum manifestation, and He points out in the All-Wise Qur'an that the greatest gift He bestows on the prophets is forgiveness and He calls on them to seek forgiveness. Repeating the blessed words, "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate" at the start of every Sura and commanding that it be recited at the commencement of all good works,⁴ He shows that His all-encompassing mercy embraces the universe and is a stronghold and place of refuge. And by the command, "Seek refuge with God,"(7:200, etc.) He makes a shield of the phrase, "I seek refuge with God from Satan the Accursed."

SIXTH INDICATION

One of Satan's most dangerous stratagems is this: he makes certain sensitive and ingenuous people confuse imagining unbelief with affirming it. He shows the imagining of misguidance to be the affirmation of it. He also conjures up in their imaginations ugly thoughts about holy individuals and sacred things. He shows also things which are essentially possible together with those that are reasonably possible, thus making those things appear to be doubts opposed to the certainty of belief. Then the wretched sensitive man supposes that he has fallen into misguidance and unbelief, and that his certainty of belief has been lost; he falls into despair and becomes the plaything of Satan. Satan works both his despair, and that weak vein of his, and his confusion, so that he either goes mad, or exclaiming: "All is lost," embraces misguidance. We have explained in some parts of the *Risale-i Nur* just how lacking in substance are these diabolical stratagems, so here shall discuss them only briefly, as follows:

Just as a snake's image in a mirror cannot bite, nor the similitude of fire burn, or the reflection of filth soil; so the reflections of unbelief and association of partners with God cannot corrupt belief nor the shadows of

⁴ See, *Ibn Maja*, *Nikah*, 19; *Musnad*, ii, 359; al-Nasa'i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, vi, 127-8; 'Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf*, vi, 189; Ibn Hibban, *al-Sahih*, i, 173-4.

misguidance, or the imaginings of ugly abuse and words in the mirror of the imagination or of thought change faith, or damage respectful courtesy. For the well-known rule goes, “To imagine abuse is not abuse, to imagine unbelief is not unbelief, and to conceive of misguidance is not misguidance.”

As for the question of doubts in belief, possibilities that are essentially possible do not belie the certainty of belief and do not harm it. One of the established rules of the science of the principles of religion is: “An essential impossibility cannot negate the certainty afforded by knowledge.”⁵ For example, we are certain that Barla Lake is in its place consisting of water. It is, however, essentially possible that this very moment the lake sank into the ground. It is within the bounds of possibility that it might sink. But since there is nothing to indicate such a possibility, it is not a reasonable possibility and cause doubt. For another established rule of the principles of religion is: “A possibility that does not arise from any proof or evidence holds no importance.” That is, an essential possibility unsupported by any indication cannot be deemed a reasonable possibility and so cause doubts and warrant importance.

Hence, the unfortunate man exposed to those Satanic whisperings supposes that due to essential possibilities he has lost his certain belief in the truths of faith. For example, numerous essential possibilities about the human aspects of the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) may occur to him which cause no harm to his firm belief, but he imagines that they have and so suffers harm.

Also, sometimes Satan suggests bad things about Almighty God in the form of whisperings in the heart. The man trembles, supposing that his heart is corrupted so that it says such things. But his fear and trembling and lack of consent shows that those words did not come from his heart; they rather came from Satanic whisperings, and were imparted and caused to be imagined by Satan.

Also, among man’s subtle faculties are one or two that I have been unable to specify; they do not heed the will and power of choice and probably should not be held responsible. Sometimes they govern, do not listen to the truth, and incline towards wrong. Then Satan whispers to the man: “You’re not capable of attaining to reality and belief, so you involuntarily attempt what is futile and fruitless. That means your fate has condemned you to perdition.” The wretched man falls into despair and is ruined.

The believer’s stronghold in the face of the former stratagems of Satan

⁵ See, al-Ghazzali, *al-Manhul*, 122; al-Mujaddidi, *Qawa'id al-Fiqh*, 11, 143.

are the truths of belief and incontestable matters of the Qur'an, the limits of which have been defined by the principles of the purified exacting scholars. And in the face of the latter stratagems, the believer's stronghold is to seek refuge with God and to attach no importance to them. For the more importance is given them, the more it attracts attention to them, and they grow and swell. The believer's antidote and remedy for such spiritual wounds is adhering to the practices of the Prophet (UWBP).

SEVENTH INDICATION

Question: The Mu'tazilite authorities considered the creation of evil to be evil, and therefore did not attribute the creation of unbelief and misguidance to God, as if by so doing they were exonerating Him. They misguidedly said: "Man creates his own actions."⁶ They also said: "A believer who commits a grievous sin loses his belief,⁷ for believing in God and affirming Hell is incompatible with such acts. Out of fear at a minor prison sentence in this world, a man restrains himself from acting contrarily to the law, so if he commits serious sins, which infers disregard of divine wrath, it certainly points to his lack of belief."

The Answer to the first part of the question: as is elucidated in the treatise on divine determining,⁸ the creation of evil is not evil; it is the inclination to do evil that is evil. For creation and bringing into being look to all the results. Since the existence of one evil is preliminary to numerous good results, by virtue of those results, the creation of the evil becomes good, and is as though good. For example, fire has a hundred good results, but if because they misuse their wills people make the fire evil for themselves, they cannot say that the creation of evil is evil. In the same way, the creation of devils has numerous wise results such as human progress; so if a person is defeated by Satan due to his misuse of his will and misguided inclinations, he cannot say that the creation of Satan is evil. For he did evil to himself because he was himself disposed to it.

Yes, since the tendency is a particular relation, it has a particular evil result and becomes evil. But since creation looks to all the results, the creation of evil is not evil; it is good. The Mu'tazilites did not understand this mystery, so they said: "The creation of evil is evil, and the creation of bad,

⁶ See, al-Maturidi, *al-Tawhid*, i, 92, 169, 314, 315; Ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl fi 'Milal*, ii, 121; iii, 57, 59.

⁷ See, al-Iji, *Kitab al-Mawaqif*, iii, 548; Ibn Abi'l-'Izz, *Sharh 'Aqida al-Tahawiyya*, i, 356-62.

⁸ The Twenty-Sixth Word. See, *The Words* (Istanbul: Sözlük Publications, 2008), 477-90. (Tr.)

bad.” And to exonerate Almighty God of all fault, they did not ascribe the creation of evil to Him; they fell into misguidance, wrongly interpreting the pillar of belief “belief in divine determining, both the good of it and the evil of it are from God.”⁹

The Answer to the second part of the question “How can someone who commits grievous sins remain a believer?”: Firstly, their error may be understood clearly from the previous Indications, so there is no need to repeat it. Secondly, the man’s evil-commanding soul prefers an ounce of immediate, present pleasure to a ton of postponed, hidden pleasure; similarly, he shrinks at the fear of an immediate slap more than at a year’s torment in the future. Furthermore, if the emotions dominate a person, they do not heed the reason and mind. Desires and delusions govern in him, and he prefers the slightest, most trivial present pleasure to huge reward in the future, and he shrinks from some minor present distress more than from some terrible postponed torment. For desire, illusions, and emotions do not see the future, indeed, they deny it. And if the soul assists them, the heart, which is the seat of belief, and the mind, fall silent and are defeated. In which case, committing grievous sins does not arise from lack of belief, but from the defeat of the heart and mind by the predominant emotions, desires, and illusions.

Moreover, as is understood from the previous Indications, since the way the passions and evil work is through destruction, they are extremely easy. Satans from among jinn and men quickly drive people down that road. It is an astonishing situation, for according to a Hadith, a light to the extent of a fly’s wing from the World of Eternity¹⁰ is comparable to the pleasure and bounties a person receives in his entire life in this world,¹¹ yet following Satan, certain unfortunates prefer the pleasures of this fleeting world, which are a mere fly’s wing in comparison with the pleasures of that eternal world, which are worth all this world.

It is for these reasons that the All-Wise Qur’an repeatedly and insistently, and with encouragement and threats, restrains believers from sin and urges them to do good.

One time this severe guidance of the All-Wise Qur’an gave me the idea that these continual warnings and reminders imply that believers are inconstant and faulty. They suggest a situation inconsistent with man’s integrity.

⁹ *Muslim*, Iman, 39; *Tirmidhi*, Iman, 4; *Abu Da’ud*, Sunna, 17; *Nasa’i*, Iman, 6; *Ibn Maja*, Muqaddima, 63.

¹⁰ *Tirmidhi*, Zuhd, 13; *Ibn Maja*, Zuhd, 3; *Musnad*, v, 154, 177.

¹¹ See, al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami’ al-Ahkam al-Qur’an*, xiii, 7.

For although a single order from his superior is sufficient to exact an official's obedience, if the superior repeats the same order ten times, the official will be seriously offended. He will say: "You are insulting me. I am not disloyal." However, the All-Wise Qur'an insistently repeats the same command to the most sincere believers.

At the time I was puzzling over this idea, I had two or three loyal friends. I frequently used to warn and remind them lest they be deceived by the machinations of satanic humans. They were not offended at me, nor said I was insulting them. However I used to tell myself that I was offending them with these continual admonitions and that I was accusing them of disloyalty and inconstancy. Then suddenly the truth explained and proved in the above Indications became clear. I understood that the All-Wise Qur'an's insistent repetitions were apt and exactly as required by the situation, and wise and not excessive or accusing; they were pure wisdom and pure eloquence. I understood too the reason those loyal friends of mine were not offended. A summary of the truth is this:

Since evil spirits provoke people in respect of destruction, they commit much evil with few actions. People who take the path of truth and guidance, therefore, are in need of much caution and great care and repeated warnings and various assistance. For this reason Almighty God offers assistance to the people of belief through His thousand and one names by way of those repetitions, and stretches out thousands of compassionate hands to help them. He does not slight their integrity, but upholds it. He does not belittle man, but shows Satan's evil to be great.

O people of truth and people of guidance! The way to be saved from the above-mentioned wiles of satanic jinn and men is this: make your headquarters the school of the people of the truth, the Sunnis; enter the stronghold of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition's incontestable matters; and take the Prophet's (UWBP) practices as your guide; find safety and salvation!

EIGHTH INDICATION

Q u e s t i o n : You have proved in the above Indications that the way of misguidance is easy, and is destruction and aggression, so that many take it. Whereas in other parts of the Risale-i Nur you have proved decisively that the way of unbelief and misguidance is so fraught with difficulties and problems that no one should take it; that it is not possible to follow it. And you have shown that the path of belief and guidance is so easy and clear that everyone should take it.

T h e A n s w e r : There are two sorts of unbelief and misguidance. One pertains to actions and secondary matters, and is also denial and

rejection of the matters of belief. This kind of misguidance is easy. It is a non-acceptance of the truth, an abdication, non-existence, and the absence of acceptance. In the *Risale-i Nur*, this sort has been shown to be easy.

As for the second sort, it pertains not to actions and secondary matters, but is a judgement of the mind and pertains to belief. It does not only deny belief, but opens up a way that is the opposite of it. It is the acceptance of what is false and invalid, the proof of the reverse of truth. This is not only the denial and refutation of belief, it is its opposite. It is not non-acceptance so that it should be easy, but the acceptance of non-being, and can only be accepted through proving non-existence. In accordance with the rule "Non-existence cannot be proved,"¹² it is certainly not easy to prove it.

Thus, the unbelief and misguidance shown in other parts of the *Risale-i Nur* to be so difficult and problematic as to be impossible is this sort. Anyone with even a grain of intelligence would not take this way. Moreover, as is demonstrated, it imparts such grievous pains and suffocating darkness that anyone reasonable to the tiniest degree would not follow it.

If it is asked: Why do most people take it, seeing that it is so grievous, dark, and difficult?

The Answer: They have fallen into it and cannot extricate themselves. And because the animal and vegetable powers in man do not see the consequences and do not think of them, and come to dominate man's subtle faculties, such people do not want to extricate themselves, so console themselves with immediate, temporary pleasure.

Question: Since misguidance gives rise to such dreadful suffering and fear, the unbeliever should not be able to live, let alone receiving pleasure from life. He should be crushed by the pain and be absolutely terrified. For although by reason of his humanity he desires innumerable things and loves life, because of his unbelief, he constantly sees death confronting him as eternal extinction and everlasting separation, and the passing of beings and deaths of his friends and those he loves as annihilation and eternal parting, so how can such a man live? How can he receive pleasure from life?

The Answer: He deceives himself through an extraordinary sophistry of Satan, and lives. He supposes he receives a superficial pleasure. We shall allude to the true nature of this with a well-known comparison.

It is related that they said to the ostrich: "You've got wings, so fly!" But it folded its wings and said: "I'm a camel," and didn't fly. So it fell into the hunter's trap, and not wanting the hunter to see it, stuck its head in the sand. However, it left its huge body exposed, as prey for the hunter. They

¹² Ibn Qayyim, *al-Sawa'iq al-Mursala*, iv, 1310; *al-Ruh fi'l-Kalam*, i, 198.

later said to it: “You say you’re a camel, so you should carry loads.” Whereupon it opened its wings and declared: “I’m a bird,” and so avoided being a beast of burden. But then it had neither protector nor food, and was pursued by the hunters.

In exactly the same way, the unbeliever gave up absolute disbelief in the face of the Qur’an’s heavenly proclamations and fell into scepticism. If he is asked: “You think death is eternal extinction. How can a person live when he perpetually sees before him the gallows on which he is to be hanged? How can he be happy?” Thanks to the portion he has received of the Qur’an’s universal mercy and all-encompassing light, the man replies: “Death doesn’t mean going to nothingness; perhaps there is life after death.” Or else he plunges his head in the sand of heedlessness like the ostrich so that the appointed hour will not spot him and the grave will not watch him and the transience of things will not let fly their arrows at him!

I n S h o r t : When like the ostrich the unbeliever looks on death and decline as extinction, his scepticism makes him consider possible the certain tidings of the Qur’an and revealed scriptures concerning belief in the hereafter afford him a possibility. He grasps the possibility and does not suffer that ghastly pain. If he is then told: “Since one will go to an everlasting realm, to have a good life there, here one has to put up with the difficulties of performing the religious obligations,” his scepticism leads him to reply: “Perhaps there is no such world, so why should I work for something that doesn’t exist?” That is to say, he is saved from the pain of eternal nothingness by the possibility of immortality afforded by that decree of the Qur’an, and clinging onto the possibility of unbelief, he is saved from the hardship of the religious obligations by the possibility of non-existence afforded by his scepticism. That is to say, from this point of view, he supposes he receives more pleasure from this life than the believers, for due to the possibility afforded by unbelief he is saved from the hardship of the religious obligations, and due to the possibility afforded by belief, he does not expose himself to everlasting pains. However, this satanic sophistry is extremely superficial, temporary, and without benefit.

Thus, the All-Wise Qur’an produces a sort of manifestation of mercy for the unbelievers too that to an extent saves their lives in this world from being Hell; it induces doubt in them, so they live through doubt. Otherwise, by recalling the Hell of the hereafter they would have suffered the torments of a sort of Hell in this world too, and they would have been compelled to commit suicide.

O people of belief! Fully confident in your belief enter under the protection of the Qur’an, which will save you from eternal extinction and the

hells of this world and the hereafter. Submissively and appreciatively remain within the bounds of the Prophet's (UWBP) practices, and so be saved from both misery in this world and torment in the next!

NINTH INDICATION

Question: Why is it that the people of guidance, who are God's party, are so often defeated by the people of misguidance, who are Satan's party, despite the Glory of the World (Upon whom be blessings and peace) being at their head and their receiving so much divine mercy and assistance and so many favours? What was the reason for the dissemblers of Medina insisting on misguidance and their not embracing guidance, despite being close to the brilliant sun-like prophethood and messengerhood of the Seal of the Prophets (UWBP) and the Qur'anic truths, which are more captivating than the universal laws of attraction?

The Answer: To solve the two parts of this awesome question, a profound principle must be explained. It is like this:

The All-Glorious Creator of the universe has two sort of names, those pertaining to His glory and those pertaining to His beauty. Since the names require to demonstrate their decrees through different manifestations, the Glorious Creator blended together opposites in the universe. Bringing them face to face, he gave them aggressive and defensive positions, in the form of a wise and beneficial contest. Making the opposites transgress one another's bounds, He brought conflict and change into being, and made the universe subject to the law of change and transformation and the principles of progress and advancement. In humankind, the comprehensive fruit of the tree of creation, he gave the law of contest an even stranger form, and opening the door to striving, which would be the means to all human progress, He gave Satan's party certain faculties with which to challenge God's party.

It is because of this subtle mystery that the prophets were often defeated by the people of misguidance. And the people of misguidance, who are extremely weak and impotent, temporarily triumph over the people of truth, who in reality are extremely strong, and struggle against them. The wisdom in this strange opposition is as follows:

Misguidance and unbelief comprise both non-existence and omission, so that they are extremely easy and do not require action. They also give rise to destruction, which is also easy, and need little action. They are also a source of aggression, which may cause much harm to many with little action, and by way of intimidating others and satisfying the soul's desire for power, may secure rank and position for a person. There is also

freedom in misguidance and unbelief, which gratifies man's vegetable and animal powers, which are blind to consequences and obsessed by present pleasure, and induces such subtle faculties as the heart and reason to give up their humane and far-sighted duties.

However, the sacred way of foremost the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), the Beloved of the Sustainer of All the Worlds, and of the people of prophethood and the people of guidance, both pertains to existence, and is firmly established, and is constructive, and is based on the important principles of action, moderation, prudence and foresight, worship, and smashing the domination and independence of the evil-commanding soul.¹³ It is because of this that the dissemblers of the Prophet's (UWBP) time in Medina closed their eyes to that refulgent sun like bats, and surrendering themselves to a satanic force of repulsion in the face of that huge attraction, remained in misguidance.

If it is said: The Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) was the Beloved of the Sustainer of All the Worlds;¹⁴ and he held truth in his hand and spoke the truth with his tongue;¹⁵ and among the soldiers of his army were angels;¹⁶ and he watered a whole army with one handful of water;¹⁷ and provided a feast for a thousand men with four handfuls of wheat and the meat of one kid;¹⁸ and caused the unbelievers' army to flee by throwing a handful of dust at them, which entered all their eyes;¹⁹ so how was that dominical commander who performed a thousand miracles similar to these, defeated at the end of Uhud²⁰ and at the beginning of Hunayn?²¹

The Answer: God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) was sent to mankind as an exemplary guide and leader so that

¹³ See, al-Bayhaqi, *al-Zuhd*, 157; al-Ghazzali, *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, iii, 4; al-Daylami, *al-Musnad*, iii, 408; Ibn Rajab, *Jami' al-'lum wa'l-Hikam*, i, 196; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, v, 538; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, i, 160; ii, 222.

¹⁴ See, *Tirmidhi*, *Manaqib*, 1; al-Daylami, *Muqaddima*, 8.

¹⁵ See, *Qur'an*, 17:105.

¹⁶ See, *Qur'an*, 3:123-5. Also, *Bukhari*, *Maghazi*, 11.

¹⁷ See, *Bukhari*, *Wudu'*, 32; *Manaqib*, 25; *Maghazi*, 35; *Muslim*, 'Imara, 72, 73; *Fada'il*, 5-6; *Tirmidhi*, *Manaqib*, 6; *Nasa'i*, *Tahara*, 61; *Musnad*, iii, 329.

¹⁸ See, *Bukhari*, *Hiba*, 28; *At'ima*, 6; *Maghazi*, 29; *Manaqib*, 25; *Muslim*, *Ashriba*, 141-2, 175; *Tirmidhi*, *Manaqib*, 6; *Ibn Maja*, *At'ima*, 47; *Muwatta'*, *Sifat al-Nabi*, 19; *Musnad*, i, 197-8.

¹⁹ See, *Muslim*, *Jihad*, 81; *Darimi*, *Siyar*, 16; *Musnad*, i, 103, 368; v, 286, 310.

²⁰ See, *Bukhari*, *Jihad*, 65; *Bad'u'l-Khalq*, 11; *Manaqib al-Ansar*, 22; *Maghazi*, 18; *Ayman*, 15; *Diyat*, 16; *Abu Da'ud*, *Jihad*, 106; *Musnad*, iv, 293-4.

²¹ See, *Bukhari*, *Maghazi*, 54; *Jihad*, 52, 61, 97, 167; *Muslim*, *Jihad*, 79; *Tirmidhi*, *Jihad*, 15.

men might learn from him the rules of social and personal life, become accustomed to obeying the laws of the All-Wise One of Perfection, and act in conformity with the principles of His wisdom. If the Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) had always relied on wonders and miracles, he could not have been absolute guide and leader.

He therefore displayed miracles from time to time, in answer to need, solely to make them affirm his claim to prophethood and to nullify the unbelievers' denial. At other times he obeyed the divine commands more than anyone, and more than everyone acted in conformity with the divine laws in creation, established through dominical wisdom and will, and submitted to them. He used to wear armour when confronting the enemy,²² and would order his troops to enter their trenches.²³ He received wounds and suffered hardship.²⁴ In this way he obeyed and observed to the letter the laws of divine wisdom and the Greater Shari'a of Creation.

TENTH INDICATION

One of the most cunning of Iblis's wiles is to make those who follow him deny himself. Since at this time people whose minds have been tainted by materialist philosophy in particular have been hesitant in these self-evident matters, we shall say one or two things in the face of this stratagem of Satan. They are as follows:

There are self-evidently corporeal evil spirits who perform Satan's functions. It is also certain to the same degree that there are evil spirits without bodies from the jinns. If they were clothed in physical bodies, they would be the same as those evil human beings. Also, if those evil spirits in human form were able to leave aside their bodies, they would be those jinn-satans. Indeed, in consequence of this terrible relationship one deviant school pronounced: "After they have died, excessively evil spirits in human form become devils."

It is well-known that when something of high quality is corrupted it becomes more corrupted than something of less quality. For example, if yoghurt and milk go bad they may still be eaten, but if oil goes bad it becomes inedible, and poisonous even. Similarly, if the most noble, indeed the highest of creatures, man, is corrupted, he becomes more corrupt than a depraved animal. Like vermin who enjoy the stink of putrifying matter and

²² See, *Abu Da'ud*, Jihad, 75; *Ibn Maja*, Jihad, 18; *Musnad*, iii, 449.

²³ See, *Bukhari*, Maghazi, 29; Jihad, 34, 161; Qadar, 16; Tamanni, 7; *Muslim*, Jihad, 125.

²⁴ See, *Bukhari*, Jihad, 80, 85, 163; *Wudu'*, 72; Maghazi, 24; Nikah, 123; Tibb, 27; *Muslim*, Jihad, 101; *Tirmidhi*, Tibb, 34; *Ibn Maja*, Tibb, 15.

snakes who take pleasure at biting and poisoning, they take pride and pleasure at the evils and wicked immorality of the swamp of misguidance, being gratified at the harms and crimes of the darkness of evil-doing; quite simply they take on the nature of Satan. Yes, a decisive indication of the existence of devils from the jinn, is the existence of human satans.

Secondly: All the hundreds of decisive evidences proving the existence of angels and spirit beings in the Twenty-Ninth Word prove also the existence of evils spirits. We refer this aspect to that Word.

Thirdly: The existence of the angels, the representatives and supervisors of the laws of the good matters in the universe, is established and agreed upon by all the religions. So too, the existence of evil and satanic spirits, who are the representatives and ushers of evil matters and the means of the laws of such matters, is required by wisdom and reality, and is certain. Indeed, in evil matters, a conscious screen is more necessary. For as is stated at the beginning of the Twenty-Second Word, since everyone cannot see the true good of everything, the All-Glorious Creator has made apparent intermediaries a screen to apparent evils and defects, so that objections should not be levelled at Him, nor His mercy be accused, nor his wisdom criticized or unjustly complained about, and so that objections, criticisms, and complaints should be directed at the screen, and not turned to the Generous Creator, the Absolutely Wise One. Just as He made illness a screen to the appointed hour of death in order to save Azra'il from the complaints²⁵ of His servants who die, so too He made Azra'il a screen to the seizing of the spirits of the dying so that the complaints at that situation, which is fancied to be lacking in compassion, should not be directed at Almighty God. And even more certainly, dominical wisdom demanded the existence of Satan, so that objections and criticisms in the face of evils and bad things should not be directed at the All-Glorious Creator.

Fourthly: Just as man is a small world, the microcosm, so is the world a large human being, the macroanthropos. Small man is an index and summary of the macroanthropos. The large originals of the samples in man will necessarily be found in the macroanthropos. For example, the existence of man's faculty of memory is a certain indication of the existence of the Preserved Tablet in the world. So too everyone has experienced in himself the inner faculty situated in a corner of the heart which is the means to diabolical suggestions²⁶ and temptations and is a satanic tongue that speaks at the

²⁵ See, Abu Nu'aym, *Hilya al-Awliya'*, v, 51; al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, *Nawadir al-Usul*, i, 177-8; al-Suyuti, *al-Durr al-Manthur*, vi, 543.

²⁶ See, *Tirmidhi*, Tafsir Sura 35:2; al-Nasa'i, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, vi, 305; al-Bazzar, *al-Musnad*, v, 394; Abu Ya'la, *al-Musnad*, vii, 278; viii, 417.

promptings of the surmising faculty and the corrupted power of imagination, which becomes like a small Satan and acts contrary to its owner's will and opposed to his desires – these are certain evidences of the existence of great satans in the world. And since the inner faculty which is the means of diabolical suggestions and the power of imagination are an ear and a tongue, they infer the existence of an external evil individual who blows on the one and makes the other speak.

ELEVENTH INDICATION

The All-Wise Qur'an states in miraculous fashion that the universe grows angry at the evil of the people of misguidance, and the universal elements becomes wrathful and beings, furious. Awesomely, it depicts the storm visited on Noah's people and the assaults of the heavens and earth, the anger of the element air at the denial of the 'Ad and Thamud peoples, and the fury of the sea and element water at the people of Pharaoh, and the rage of the element earth at Qarun, and in accordance with the verse, "Almost bursting with fury,"(67:8) the vehemence and anger of Hell at the people of unbelief in the hereafter, and the rage of the other beings at the unbelievers and people of misguidance; in miraculous fashion it restrains the people of misguidance and rebellion.

Question: Why do the unimportant actions and personal sins of unimportant men attract the anger of the universe in this way?

The Answer: As proved in other parts of the Risale-i Nur and in the previous Indications, unbelief and misguidance are terrible aggression and crimes that concern all beings. For one of the most important results of the universe's creation is man's worship and his responding to divine dominicality with belief and submission. However, due to the denial which is a part of disbelief, the people of unbelief and misguidance reject that supreme result, which is the ultimate reason for the continued existence of beings, and they therefore perpetrate a sort of transgression against the beings' rights. Moreover, since they deny the manifestations of the divine names which are apparent in the mirrors of beings and exalt their value, they both insult those sacred names, and by degrading the value of all beings, greatly depreciate them. Also, although beings are dominical officials charged with elevated duties, by their unbelief, the people of misguidance cast them down, and showing them to be lifeless, transitory, meaningless creatures, they in a way violate the rights of all of them.

Thus, since the varieties of misguidance impair to a greater or lesser extent the dominical wisdom in the universe's creation and the divine purposes in the world's continued existence, the universe becomes angry at the

people of rebellion and misguidance, as do all beings and creatures.

O wretched man, whose being is small but guilt great and sin grievous! If you want to be delivered from the wrath of the universe, the rage of beings, and the aversion of creatures, here is the means: enter the sacred bounds of the All-Wise Qur'an and follow the practices of God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), who was the herald of the Qur'an. So put yourself within its fold and adhere to the practices!

TWELFTH INDICATION

This consists of four questions and answers.

First Question: How can infinite torment in an endless Hell in return for limited sins in a limited life be justice?

The Answer: It was understood clearly in the above Indications, and particularly in the Eleventh, that unbelief and misguidance constitute an infinite crime and are transgression against innumerable rights.

Second Question: It is said in the Shari'a that Hell is punishment for actions, but Paradise is a divine favour.²⁷ What is the reason for this?

The Answer: It is clearly shown in the above Indications that with his faculty of will and trifling wishes, man causes awesome destruction and evils by giving form and reality to something non-existent or theoretical. Similarly, since his soul and appetites always incline towards evil and harm, he is responsible for the evils that occur as a result of his trivial wishes. For his soul wanted them and his desires gave rise to them. And since evil pertains to non-existence, the servant is the agent and Almighty God creates it. Being responsible for the infinite crime, he certainly deserves infinite punishment.

However, since good deeds and actions pertain to existence, man's will and wishes cannot be the direct cause of their existence. Man cannot be the true agent in such acts. Also, his evil-commanding soul does not tend towards good deeds; it is divine mercy that requires them and dominical power that creates them. Man can only lay claim to them through belief, a wish, or an intention. And having claimed them, such good works consist of thanks for the infinite divine bounties received, such as the gifts of belief and existence. Such thanks looks to past bounties, while Paradise is a favour of the Most Merciful which since it has been promised by Him will be given. Apparently it is a reward, but in reality it is a favour.

²⁷ See, Qur'an, 10:58. See also, *Bukhari*, Riqaq, 18; *Marda*, 19; *Muslim*, Sifat al-Munafiqin, 71-3, 75-6, 78.

That is to say, in evils the soul is the cause and deserves the punishment, while in good deeds, both the cause and the occasion are from God. Man can only lay claim to them through belief. He may not say: "I want the reward," but he may say: "I hope for divine favour."

Third Question: It is understood from the above explanations that since evils multiply through contagion and aggression, a single evil deed should be recorded as a thousand; and since good deeds pertain to existence, they do not multiply nor do they occur through the servant's creative act or the desires of his soul; they therefore should not be recorded at all or as only one. So why are evil deeds recorded as one and good deeds as ten, and sometimes as thousands?²⁸

The Answer: In this way Almighty God demonstrates His perfect mercy and the beauty of His compassionateness.

Fourth Question: The successes the people of misguidance have achieved and the power they display and their victories over the people of guidance show that they rely on some power and truth. This means either that the people of guidance possess some weakness, or that the misguided possess some truth?

The Answer: God forbid, neither do they possess any truth, nor do the people of truth have any weakness. But regrettably some of the ordinary people who are short-sighted and unreasoning become doubtful and hesitant, and harm comes to their belief. For they say: If the people of truth had possessed complete truth and reality, they should not have suffered defeat and abasement to this degree. For the truth is powerful. According to the fundamental principle "Truth is exalted and shall not be overcome,"²⁹ power lies in truth. If the people of misguidance had not possessed a true power and point of support, they could not have predominated over the people of truth and triumphed to this extent.

The Answer: As is proven in the above Indications, the defeat of the people of truth does not arise from lack of power and absence of truth, and as is also proven, the people of misguidance's victory does not spring from their power and capacity and their having some source of support. Hence, the answer to this question is all the above Indications; here we shall only point out a number of the tricks and weapons they employ, as follows:

I myself have frequently observed that mischief-makers, who form ten per cent, defeat the righteous, who form ninety per cent. I used to be astonished and curious. Investigating, I understood certainly that their victory

²⁸ See, Qur'an, 6:160. See also, *Bukhari*, Iman, 31; *Muslim*, Iman, 206.

²⁹ See, *Bukhari*, Jana'iz, 79: "al-Islam ya'lu wa la yu'la."

results not from power, but from corruption, baseness, destruction, taking advantage of differences among the people of truth, sowing conflict among them, from playing on their weak traits of character and grafting them with such traits, and exciting the emotions of the soul and personal hatred, and through working the evil capacities in human nature which are like mines of corruption, and through hypocritically flattering the soul's tyranny in the name of fame and glory, and through everyone fearing their unfeeling destruction. By means of diabolical machinations like these, they temporarily triumph over the people of truth. But in accordance with the verse,

And the end is [best] for the righteous,(7:128)

and the rule, "Truth is exalted and shall not be overcome," in addition to its not yielding any significant benefit for them, their temporary triumph will lead to their earning Hell for themselves and Paradise for the people of truth.

Thus, because in misguidance those without power appear powerful and the insignificant win fame, they take up a position opposed to the people of truth. In this way conceited, fame-seeking, hypocritical people demonstrate their power although it has little substance and win a position for themselves through intimidating others and causing harm; they are seen and attention is drawn to them, and the destruction of which they are the cause, not through power and ability, but through omission and failure to act, is attributed to them and they become talked about. Just like the person obsessed with fame who defiled a place of worship so that everyone would talk about him. Even if it meant being execrated, so long as he was talked about, his worship of fame made it appear desirable to him. The case became proverbial.

O wretched man created for the eternal realm and enamoured of this transient world! Study closely the meaning of the verse,

And neither heaven nor earth shed a tear over them,(44:29)

and heed it. Look, what does it say? With its explicit meaning it says: "When the people of misguidance die, the heavens and earth, which are connected with man, do not weep over them, that is, they are pleased at their deaths." While with its implied meaning, it says: "The heavens and earth weep over the bodies of the people of guidance when they die; they do not want them to depart." For all the universe is connected with the people of belief and its beings are happy with them. For by virtue of their belief they know the Creator of the Universe, so appreciate the universe's value, and respect and love it. They do not nurture implicit enmity and contempt for it like the people of misguidance.

O man, think! You are bound to die. If you follow your soul and Satan, your neighbours, and even your relations, will be happy at being delivered from you. But if saying, "I seek refuge with God from Satan the Accursed," you follow the Qur'an and the Merciful One's Beloved (UWBP), then in accordance with your degree the heavens and earth and all beings will be sorry at your parting, and in effect weep. Mourning in elevated fashion and giving you a splendid send-off, they will indicate that you will have a good welcome in the world of eternity according to your degree, when you enter it through the door of the grave.³⁰

THIRTEENTH INDICATION

This consists of three points.

First Point: One of Satan's most cunning wiles is to deceive people with narrow minds, short views, and constricted hearts concerning the immensity of the truths of belief. He says: "It is said that a single Being directs and administers within His dominicality all particles and planets and stars and all the other beings and all their states. How can a person believe in such an immense and extraordinary matter? How can it be contained in the heart? How can the mind accept it?" He awakens a feeling of denial in respect of human impotence.

The Answer: The way to silence this wile of Satan's is "God is Most Great!" And its true answer is "God is Most Great!" Yes, the reason "God is Most Great!" is the most frequently repeated of all the marks of Islam is to eliminate this wile. For it is through the light of "God is Most Great!" that man's impotence and lack of power, weakness and lack of strength, and narrow thought see such infinitely vast truths and affirm them. It is through the strength of "God is Most Great!" that man sustains those truths, and situates them within the sphere of "God is Most Great!" And he says to his heart which starts to doubt:

It is self-evident that the universe is administered and directed in most orderly fashion. There are two ways in which this may occur:

The First Way: It is possible that despite its wondrous immensity, such an astonishing work comes about through wondrous art in a wondrous way. So this first way is that the universe exists through the dominicality, will, and power of a Single and Eternally Besought One, to whose existence are witnesses to the number of beings, indeed, of minute particles.

The Second Way: This is the way of unbelief and associating partners with God, which is in no way possible and is so difficult as to be impossible

³⁰ See, *Tirmidhi*, Qiyama, 26 (2460); *Ibn Maja*, Zuhd, 31; *Musnad*, ii, 364; vi, 140.

and is in no respect reasonable. For as is proved decisively in many parts of the Risale-i Nur such as the Twentieth Letter and Twenty-Second Word, there would have to be present in all the beings in the universe and even in every single particle absolute divinity and all-encompassing knowledge and infinite power so that the total order and regularity, the sensitive balance and distinction, and the perfect, adorned embroideries of art to be observed in beings could come into existence.

In Short: If there were no immense and tremendous dominicality, which is completely appropriate and fitting, it would necessitate following a way that is in every respect unreasonable and precluded. Even Satan cannot propose fleeing from such necessary immensity, and suggest accepting impossibility.

Second Point: Another of Satan's cunning wiles is to prevent man admitting his faults in order to close up the way of seeking forgiveness and taking refuge with God. He also incites the egotism of the human soul, so that the soul defends itself like a lawyer, quite simply acquitting itself of all fault.

Yes, a soul that listens to Satan does not want to see its own faults. Even if it does see them, it explains them away in a hundred ways. According to the saying: "The eye of contentment is blind to faults,"³¹ when a person looks with pleasure on his soul, he does not see its errors. And because he does not see them, he does not admit to them or seek forgiveness, or seek refuge with God from them, so becomes the plaything of Satan. How can the soul be relied on when a noble prophet like Joseph (UWP) said:

"Nor do I absolve my own self [of blame]; the [human] soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Sustainer do bestow His mercy."?(12:53)

The person who accuses his soul, sees its faults. And he who admits his faults, seeks forgiveness for them. And he who seeks forgiveness, takes refuge with God. And he who takes refuge with God, is saved from Satan's evil. Not to see one's faults is a greater fault than the first fault. And not to admit to one's faults is a serious defect. If one sees the fault, it ceases to be a fault. If one admits it, one becomes worthy of forgiveness.³²

Third Point: A satanic wile corrupting the life of society is this: not to see all the virtues of a believer on account of a single bad point. Those unjust people who heed this wile of Satan are in this way inimical to

³¹ Ibn 'Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq*, xxxiii, 219; xxxvi, 319; al-Ghazzali, *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, iii, 36; al-Qalqashandi, *Subh al-A'sha'*, ix, 196.

³² See, al-Daylami, *al-Musnad*, v, 199; al-Quda'i, *Musnad al-Shihab*, ii, 44.

believers. However, when Almighty God weighs up deeds with absolute justice on the supreme scales at the Last Judgement, He will judge in accordance with the predominance of good deeds over evils and vice versa. Seeing that the causes of evil deeds are numerous and their existence is easy, sometimes He veils numerous bad deeds with a single good deed.

That is to say, dealings in this world should be in accordance with divine justice. If a person's good points are greater in regard to quality or quantity than his bad points, he is deserving of love and respect. Indeed, one should forgive numerous bad points on account of a single laudable virtue. However, due to the vein of tyranny in his nature, at the promptings of Satan, the person forgets the hundred virtues of others because of a single bad point; he is hostile towards his believing brother, and commits sins. Just as a fly's wing covering the eye conceals a mountain, so too, the veil of hatred makes man conceal virtues as great as a mountain due to a single evil resembling a fly's wing; he forgets them, is hostile towards his brother believer, and becomes a tool of corruption in the life of society.

By means of another wile resembling this one, Satan corrupts the integrity of peoples' thoughts. He impairs sound judgement concerning the truths of belief and damages integrity and correctness of thought. It is like this:

He desires to destroy hundreds of evidences proving the truths of belief with a slight hint refuting them. Whereas it is an established principle that "a single proof is superior to a hundred denials." The statement of a witness proving a claim is preferable to a hundred people denying it. Consider this truth by means of the following comparison:

There is a palace with a hundred doors all closed. If one of its doors is opened, the palace may be entered and all the doors opened. If all the doors are open and one or two are closed, it may not be said that the palace cannot not be entered.

Thus, the truths of belief are the palace. Each evidence is a key; it proves the truths and opens a door. If one of the doors remains closed, the truths of belief cannot be abandoned and denied. Satan however, in consequence of certain things or by means of heedlessness or ignorance, points out a door that has remained closed, thus causing a person to disregard all the positive evidences. He deceives the person, saying: "See, this palace cannot be entered. Perhaps it isn't a palace and perhaps there's nothing inside it."

O wretched man afflicted by Satan and his wiles! If you want the life of religion and of society and personal life all to be healthy, and if you want integrity of thought, a sound view, and a sincere heart, weigh up your

actions and thoughts on the scales of the incontestable matters of the Qur'an and the balance of the Prophet's (UWBP) practices. Always take the Qur'an and the practices as your guide. Say: "I take refuge with God from Satan the Accursed," and seek refuge with God Almighty!

The above thirteen Indications are thirteen keys. Use them to open the door of the fortified stronghold of the Sura,

*Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of mankind * The Ruler of mankind * The God of mankind * From the mischief of the Whisperer [of evil], who withdraws [after his whisper]- * [The same] who whispers into the hearts of mankind- * Among jinns and among men;(114:1-6)*

enter this secure citadel and find safety!

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

*And say: O My Sustainer, I seek refuge with You from the whisperings of the Evil Ones, * and I seek refuge with you, my Sustainer lest they should come near me.(23:97-8)*

The Fourteenth Flash

[This consists of two stations. The first consists of the answer to two questions.]

*In His Name be He glorified!
And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.(17:44)*

Peace be upon you, and God's mercy and blessings!

My Dear and Loyal Brother, Re'fet Bey!

The answer to the question you ask about the Bull and the Fish is to be found in several parts of the Risale-i Nur. The Third Branch of the Twenty-Fourth Word contains an explanation of that sort of question, in the light of twelve important rules called twelve principles. Those rules all offer criteria for understanding the various interpretations of the Prophet's (UWBP) Hadiths, and comprise important principles for dispelling doubts that may arise about them. Unfortunately at the moment a number of circumstances prevent my becoming occupied with scholarly matters that are not inspiration. I therefore cannot reply to your question as you asked it. I have to be busy with the inspiration when it comes to my heart, I am compelled to be busy with it. I answer some questions because they coincide with the inspirations, so don't be offended. I cannot answer all questions as they deserve. But this time let me reply briefly to your question.

This time you ask in your question: "The hojas say that the earth rests on a bull and a fish, but geography sees it hanging in space and travelling like a star. There is neither bull nor fish?"

The Answer: There is a sound narration attributed to people like Ibn 'Abbas (May God be pleased with him) which says that the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) was asked: "What does the world rest on?" He replied: "On the Bull and the Fish."¹ In one narration,

¹ See, Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iv, 636; al-Mundhiri, *al-Tarhib wa'l-Tarhib*, iv, 257; al-Haythami, *Majmu' al-Zawa'id*, viii, 131; Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Muntazam*, i, 172.

he said, “On the Bull,” and on another occasion he said, “On the Fish.” Some Hadith scholars applied this Hadith to superstitions and stories taken from Isra’iliyat, related since early times. Scholars of the Children of Israel who became Muslims especially applied it to stories about the Bull and the Fish they had seen in the former scriptures, altering it to mean something strange. For now I shall explain three ‘principles’ and three ‘aspects’ in connection with your question.

FIRST PRINCIPLE

When some of the Israelite scholars became Muslims, their former knowledge became Muslim along with them and was ascribed to Islam. However, what they knew contained errors which were certainly their errors and not Islam’s.

SECOND PRINCIPLE

On comparisons and metaphors passing from the elite to the common people, that is, on their falling from the hands of learning to those of ignorance, with the passage of time they are imagined to be literally true. For example, when I was a child an eclipse of the moon occurred. I asked my mother: “Why has the moon gone like that?” She replied: “A snake has swallowed it.” “It can still be seen,” I said. She replied: “The snakes up there are like glass; they show the things inside them!”

For a long time I recalled this childhood memory. Pondering over it, I would say: “How could such a false superstition come to be repeated by serious people like my mother?” Then when I studied astronomy I realized that people like her who repeated it supposed a metaphor to be reality. For when the vast circle called the zodiac, which is the circle denoting the degrees of the sun, and the circle of the declination of the moon, which is the circle depicting its mansions, pass over one another, it gives each of the two circles the form of an arc. Using a subtle metaphor the astronomers called the two arcs “the two great serpents.” They called the points of intersection of the two circles “the head” and “the tail.” When the moon comes to the head and the sun to the tail, in the terminology of astronomy, an interposition of the earth occurs. That is, the globe of the earth passes right between the two of them and the moon is eclipsed. According to the above metaphor, “the moon has entered the serpent’s mouth.” Thus, when this elevated and scholarly metaphor entered the language of the common people, in the course of time it took on the shape of a huge snake swallowing the moon.

Thus, with a sacred and subtle metaphor and meaningful allusion, two great angels were called the Bull (T. Sevr; Ar. Thawr) and the Fish (T. Hût; A. Hut), but on entering

the common language from the elevated tongue of the prophethood, the metaphor was transformed and given a literal meaning, and they took on the form of a truly enormous bull and awesome fish.

THIRD PRINCIPLE

Just as the Qur'an contains allegories and comparisons, and with them teaches profound matters to the ordinary people; so do Hadiths contain comparisons and allegories; they express profound truths by means of familiar comparisons. For example, as we have described in two other places, one time in the presence of the Prophet (UWBP) a deep rumbling was heard. He said: "It is the sound of a rock which has been rolling downhill for seventy years and has now hit the bottom of Hell."² A few minutes later someone arrived and reported that a famous seventy-year-old dissembler had died, thus proclaiming the true meaning of the Noble Messenger's (Upon whom be blessings and peace) highly eloquent comparison.

For now, three 'aspects' will be explained in reply to your question:

The First: Almighty God appointed four angels – called the Eagle (Nasr – Aquila) and the Bull (Thawr – Taurus)³ – as bearers of the divine throne and the heavens, to supervise His dominical sovereignty. He also appointed two angels as supervisors and bearers of the earth, which is the small brother of the heavens and companion of the planets. One of them was called the Bull and the other, the Fish. The reason for His giving these names is this:

There are two parts to the earth, one is water and the other is land. Fish inhabit the part that is water, while agriculture, the support of human life, is practised with bulls and oxen, which inhabit the part of the earth that is land; agriculture rests on the shoulders of oxen. Since the two angels appointed to the earth are both commanders and supervisors, they surely have some sort of relationship with the bovine and piscine species. Indeed, "And the knowledge is with God," the angels are represented in the Worlds of the Inner Dimensions of Things and of Similitudes in the forms of a bull and a fish.⁴ Thus, alluding to their relationship and supervision and those

² See, *Muslim*, Janna, 12; *Musnad*, iii, 315, 341, 346.

³ Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, 433; Dhahabi, *Mizan al-I'tidal*, iv, 352; al-Suyuti, *al-Durr al-Manthur*, i, 329.

⁴ The globe of the earth is a dominical ship ploughing through the oceans of space, and according to a Hadith, is the tillage of the hereafter, that is, an arable field and nursery. How fitting, then, are the name of Fish for the angel who commands that huge lifeless and unconscious ship and makes it swim through those seas at the divine command in regular, purposeful fashion, and the name of Bull for the angel who with divine permission supervises that arable field.

two important species of the earth, with his miraculous manner of expression the Prophet (UWBP) said: “The earth is on the Bull and the Fish,” thus stating in one fine, concise sentence a page of profound truths.

Second Aspect: If it is said: “What does the government and its rule rest on?,” it will be said in reply: “On the sword and the pen.” That is, it rests on the valour of the soldier’s sword and the perspicacity and justice of the official’s pen. In the same way, since the earth is the dwelling-place of animate beings and the commander of animate beings is man, and fish are the means of livelihood of the majority of men who live by the sea, and the majority of those who do not live by the sea live by means of agriculture, which rests on the shoulders of bulls and oxen, and fish are also an important means of trade, just as the state rests on the sword and the pen, so it may also be said that the earth rests on the ox and the fish. For man cannot survive if the ox does not work or fish do not produce millions of eggs; life would cease and the All-Wise Creator would destroy the earth.

Thus, replying in a most miraculous, elevated, and wise way, God’s Noble Messenger (UWBP) said: “The earth rests on the bull and the fish.” He taught an extensive truth with two words and showed how closely linked man’s life is to the life of the animal species.

Third Aspect: In the view of ancient cosmology the sun travelled and a constellation was defined every thirty degrees of its journey. If hypothetical lines were drawn connecting the stars in the constellations with one another, some take on the shape of a lion, others the shape of scales, others the shape of a bull, and yet others the shape of a fish. Names were given to the constellations in consequence of those relationships. But in the view of astronomy this age, the sun does not travel. The constellations remain idle and without work, for the earth travels instead of the sun. They assume shapes on a small scale within the annual orbit of the earth on the ground, instead of those lofty idle constellations above. Thus, the heavenly constellations are represented out of earth’s annual orbit, and each month the earth is in the shadow and likeness of one of the constellations. It is as if they are represented in the mirror-like annual orbit of the earth.

For this reason, as we mentioned above, on one occasion the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) said: “On the Bull,” and on another he said: “On the Fish.” Yes, he indicated a truly profound truth that would be understood only many centuries later, and said in the miraculous prophetic tongue: “On the Bull,” because at that time the earth was in the likeness of the constellation Taurus. And on being asked a month later, he replied: “On the Fish,” for then the earth was in the shadow of the constellation of Pisces.

Yes, he said: “On the Bull and the Fish” and alluded to an elevated truth that would be understood in the future, and hinted at the earth’s duty of motion and journeying, and the heavenly constellations being idle and without guests in regard to the sun, and that the constellations which truly work are in the earth’s annual orbit and that it is the earth which journeys and performs duties in the constellations.

And God knows best what is right.

The extraordinary and unreasonable stories in some Islamic books are either *isra’iliyat*, or they are allegories, or they are the interpretations of the Hadith scholars, which careless people have supposed to be Hadiths and have attributed them to God’s Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace).

O our Sustainer! Do not take us to task if we forget or do wrong.(2:282)

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

THE SECOND QUESTION is about the People of the Cloak.

My brother! Regarding your question about the People of the Cloak, only one of the many instances of wisdom concerning it will be explained, as follows:

Many mysteries and instances of wisdom are found in God’s Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) covering ‘Ali (May God be pleased with him) and Fatima (May God be pleased with her) and Hasan and Husayn (May God be pleased with them) with the blessed cloak he wore, and his praying for them with the verse,

[And God only wishes] to remove all abomination from you, members of the Family, and to make you pure and spotless.(33:33)⁵

I shall not discuss the mysteries, but one instance of wisdom connected with the function of messengership is this:

God’s Noble Messenger (UWBP) saw with the eye of prophethood, which penetrated the Unseen and beheld the future, that thirty or forty years later serious strife would erupt among the Companions and the generation that succeeded them, and that blood would be spilt. He witnessed that three of the people under his cloak would be the most distinguished of

⁵ This narration has various lines of transmission, see, *Muslim*, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 61; *Tirmidhi*, *Manaqib*, 60; *Musnad*, i, 330; iv, 107; vi, 292, 296, 298, 304; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, ii, 416; iii, 147; al-Haythami, *Majma’ al-Zawa’id*, ix, 166, 169; al-Suyuti, *al-Durr al-Manthur*, v, 197; Kandahlawi, *Hayat al-Sahaba*, iv, 105.

them. So he enfolded them in his cloak, giving the four, plus himself, the title of the Five People of the Cloak.⁶ In this way he wanted to acquit and exonerate ‘Ali (May God be pleased with him) in the view of the Islamic community; to console and offer condolences to Husayn (May God be pleased with him); to congratulate Hasan and proclaim the honour he would acquire by removing through reconciliation serious discord, and his supreme value for the Islamic community; and to show that Fatima’s descendants would be pure and honoured.

For sure ‘Ali was the rightful Caliph, but since the blood that would be spilt held great importance and since in the view of the community his acquittal and exoneration were important on account of the function of messengership, the Noble Messenger (UWBP) in this way absolved him. He invited the Kharijites and the aggressive supporters of the Umayyads to be silent, for they criticized him and accused him of error and misguidance. Yes, the excesses perpetrated against ‘Ali (May God be pleased with him) by the extreme supporters of the Kharijites and Umayyads and their accusations of misguidance, and the truly tragic, distressing events in Husayn’s (May God be pleased with him) time together with the excesses and innovations of the Shi‘a and the absolving of the two Shaykhs, have all been most damaging for the people of Islam.

Thus, with his cloak and prayer, the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) absolved Husayn of responsibility, and cleared him of the accusations and bad opinion of the Islamic community. So too he congratulated Hasan for the good he was to do for the community by bringing about the reconciliation. And he announced that being known as the Prophet’s Family, the blessed progeny of Fatima would be highly honoured, like those of Mary’s mother,⁷ who said:

I commend her and her offspring to your protection from the Evil One, the Rejected.(3:36)

O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad, and to his righteous, pure, and pious Family, and to his Companions, noble and select strivers in God’s way. Amen.

⁶ See, *Muslim*, Fada’il al-Sahaba, 61; Ibn Abi Shayba, *al-Musannaf*, vi, 370.

⁷ She was called Hanna bint Fakuz; see, al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, ii, 648, 651; al-Tabari, *Jami’ al-Bayan*, iii, 235, 237, 241, 244, 294.

Second Station

This consists of six of the thousands of mysteries contained in
 “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate”

NOTE: A bright light from “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” concerning divine mercy appeared to my dull mind from afar. I wanted to record it for myself in the form of notes, to hunt it down and capture it, and circumscribe the light with twenty to thirty mysteries. But unfortunately I was not able to do this at the present time and the twenty or thirty mysteries were reduced to five or six. When I say: “O man!”, I mean myself. Although this lesson addresses my own soul in particular, I refer it as the Second Station of the Fourteenth Flash for the approval of my meticulous brothers in the hope that it may benefit those with whom I am connected spiritually and whose souls are more discerning than mine. This lesson looks to the heart more than the reason, and to spiritual pleasure and perception rather than rational proofs.

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

[The Queen] said: “Ye chiefs! Here is – delivered to me – a letter worthy of respect. It is from Solomon, and is [as follows]: In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”(27:29-30)

A number of mysteries will be mentioned in this station.

FIRST MYSTERY

I saw one manifestation of “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” as follows:

On the face of the universe, the face of the earth, and the face of man are three stamps of dominicality one within the other and each showing samples of the others.

The First is the great stamp of Godhead, which is manifested through the mutual assistance, co-operation, and embracing and corresponding to one another of beings in the totality of the universe. This looks to “In the Name of God.”

The Second is the great stamp of divine mercifulness, which is manifested through the mutual resemblance and proportion, order, harmony, favour and compassion in the disposal, raising, and administration of plants

and animals on the face of the earth. This looks to “In the Name of God, the Merciful.”

Then is the exalted stamp of divine compassionateness, which is manifested through the subtleties of divine beneficence, fine points of divine clemency, and rays of divine compassion on the face of man’s comprehensive nature. This looks to “the Compassionate” in “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”

That is to say, “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” is the sacred title of three stamps of divine oneness, which form a luminous line on the page of the world, and a strong cord, and shining filament. That is, by being revealed from above, the tip of “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” rests on man, the fruit of the universe and miniature copy of the world; it binds the lower world to the divine throne; it is a way for man to ascend to the human throne.

SECOND MYSTERY

In order not to overwhelm minds by divine unity, which is apparent in the boundless multiplicity of creatures, the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition constantly points out the manifestation of divine oneness within divine unity. For example, the sun encompasses numberless things with its light. A truly extensive conceptual ability and comprehensive view is necessary to behold the sun itself in the totality of its light. So, lest the sun be forgotten, it is displayed in every shining object by means of its reflection. And in accordance with their capacities, all lustrous objects reflect the sun’s attributes, such as its light and heat and the seven colours in its light, together with the manifestation of its essence. So too, the sun’s attributes encompass all the things facing it.

In exactly the same way, “And God’s is the highest similitude”(16:60) – but let there be no mistake in the comparison – just as divine oneness and eternal besoughtedness have a manifestation together with all the divine names in everything, in animate creatures in particular, and especially in man’s mirror-like essence; so too through divine unity each of the divine names connected to beings encompasses all things. Thus, lest minds become overwhelmed by divine unity and hearts forget the Most Pure and Holy Essence, the Qur’an constantly draws attention to the stamp of divine oneness within divine unity. And that stamp, with its three salient points, is “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”

THIRD MYSTERY

What makes this boundless universe rejoice is clearly divine mercy.

What illuminates these dark beings is self-evidently divine mercy. What fosters and raises creatures struggling with their endless needs is self-evidently again divine mercy. What causes the whole universe to be turned towards man, like a tree together with all its parts is turned towards its fruit, and causes it to look to him and run to his assistance is clearly divine mercy. What fills and illuminates boundless space and the empty, vacant world and makes it rejoice is self-evidently divine mercy. And what designates ephemeral man for eternity and makes him the addressee and beloved of the Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal One is self-evidently divine mercy.

O man! Since divine mercy is such a powerful, inviting, sweet, assisting lovable truth, say: “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,” adhere to this truth and be saved from absolute desolation and the pains of unending needs! Draw close to the throne of the Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal Monarch, and availing yourself of the compassionate and rays of divine mercy, become His addressee, friend, and beloved.

All the realms of beings in the universe are purposively gathered around man and are made to hasten to meet all his needs with the utmost order and wisdom, which clearly arises from one of two situations. Either each realm of beings knows man, obeys him, and runs to help him, which just as it is completely irrational is also impossible in many respects; or an absolutely impotent being like man has to possess the power of the mightiest absolute sovereign; or this assistance occurs through the knowledge of an Absolutely Powerful One behind the veil of the universe. That is to say, it is not that the different beings in the universe know man, but that they are the evidences of a Knowing, Compassionate One who is acquainted with him and knows him.

O man! Come to your senses! Is it at all possible that the All-Glorious One, who causes all the varieties of creatures to turn towards you and stretch out their hands to assist you, and to say: “Here we are!” in the face of your needs – is it possible that He does not know you, is not acquainted with you, does not see you? Since He does know you, He informs you that He knows you through His mercy. So you should know Him too, and with respect let Him know that you know Him, and understand with certainty that what subjugates the vast universe to an absolutely weak, absolutely impotent, absolutely needy, ephemeral, insignificant creature like you, and despatches it to assist you, is the truth of divine mercy, which comprises wisdom, favour, knowledge, and power.

Most certainly, a mercy such as this requires universal and sincere thanks, and earnest and genuine respect. Therefore, say: “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,” which is the interpreter and expression

of such sincere thanks and genuine respect. Make it the means of attaining to the mercy, and an intercessor at the court of the All-Merciful One.

The existence and reality of divine mercy are as clear as the sun. For just as a woven tapestry centred on one point is formed by the order and situation of the threads of its warp and weft coming from all directions, so too the luminous threads extending from the manifestation of a thousand and one divine names in the vast sphere of the universe weave such a seal of compassionateness, tapestry of clemency, and seal of benevolence within a stamp of mercy that it demonstrates itself to minds more brilliantly than the sun.

The Beauteous All-Merciful One, who orders the sun and moon, the elements and minerals, and plants and animals like the warp and weft of a vast woven tapestry through the rays of His thousand and one names, and causes them to serve life; and demonstrates His compassion through the exceedingly sweet and self-sacrificing compassion of mothers, plant and animal; and subjugates animate creatures to human life, and from this demonstrates man's importance and a most lovely large tapestry of divine dominicality, and manifests His brilliant mercy; – that Most Merciful One has, in the face of His own absolute lack of need, made His mercy an acceptable intercessor for animate creatures and man.

O man! If you are truly a human being, say: "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Find that intercessor! For sure, it is clearly, self-evidently, divine mercy which, without forgetting or confusing any of them, raises, nurtures, and administers the innumerable plant and animal species on the earth at precisely the right time and with perfect order, wisdom, and beneficence, and stamps the seal of divine oneness on the face of the globe of the earth. The existence of divine mercy is as certain as the existence of the beings on the face of the earth, so do the beings offer evidences of its reality to their own number.

Just as there is this seal of mercy and stamp of divine oneness on the face of the earth, so on the face of man's nature is a stamp of divine mercy that is not inferior to the stamp of compassion and vast stamp of mercy on the face of the universe. Simply, man has so comprehensive a nature he is as though the point of focus of a thousand and one divine names.

O man! Is it at all possible that the One who gives you this face, and places such a stamp of mercy and seal of oneness on it would leave you to your own devices, attach no importance to you, pay no attention to your actions, make the whole universe, which is turned towards you, futile and pointless, and make the tree of creation rotten and insignificant with decayed fruit? Would He cause His mercy to be denied, although it is as

obvious as the sun, as well as His wisdom, which is as clear as daylight, and neither of which can in any way be doubted, nor are in any way deficient? God forbid!

O man! Understand that there is a way to ascend to the throne of divine mercy, and that is, “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.” If you want to understand the importance of this ascent, look at the beginning of the one hundred and fourteen Suras of the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition, and at the beginnings of all estimable books, and at the start of all good works. A clear proof of the God-determined grandeur of “In the Name of God” is that Imam Shafi’i (May God be pleased with him), one of the very foremost Islamic scholars, said: “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate is only one verse, yet it was revealed one hundred and fourteen times in the Qur’an.”¹

FOURTH MYSTERY

In the face of the manifestation of divine unity within boundless multiplicity, declaring: “You alone do we worship”(1:5) is not sufficient for everyone; the mind wanders. One’s heart would have to be as broad as the globe to observe the Single One behind the unity in the totality of beings, and to say: “You alone do we worship, and from You alone do we seek help!”(1:5) In consequence, so that the seal of divine oneness should be apparent on all species and realms of beings just as it is shown clearly on individual objects, and that they should call to mind the Single One, it is shown within the stamp of divine mercy. Thus everyone at every level may turn to the Most Pure and Holy One, and saying: “You alone do we worship, and from You alone do we seek help,” address Him directly.

It is in order to express this mighty mystery and clearly point out the seal of divine oneness that the All-Wise Qur’an suddenly mentions the smallest sphere and most particular matter when describing the vastest sphere of the universe, for example, the creation of the heavens and the earth. That is, so that the mind does not wander, nor the heart drown, and the spirit may find its True Object of Worship directly, while mentioning the creation of the heavens and earth it opens a discussion of man’s creation and voice, and the subtle details of the bounties and wisdom in his features, for example. This truth is demonstrated in miraculous fashion by the verse,

¹ See, al-Shafi’i, *al-Umm*, i, 208; al-Jassas, *Ahkam al-Qur’an*, i, 8; al-Ghazzali, *al-Mustafa*, i, 82; Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Tahqiq fi Ahadith al-Khilaf*, i, 345-7; al-Zayla’i, *Nasb al-Raya*, i, 327.

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and in your colours.”(30:22)

Within innumerable creatures and infinite multiplicity, there are stamps of unity like concentric circles of many sorts and degrees from the greatest stamp to the smallest. But however clear the unity is, it is still unity within multiplicity; it does not truly address observers. Hence, there has to be the stamp of divine oneness behind unity so that unity does not call to mind multiplicity and before the Most Pure and Holy One a way may be opened up to the heart directly.

Furthermore, a truly captivating design, shining light, agreeable sweetness, pleasing beauty, and powerful truth – which is the stamp of divine mercy and seal of divine compassion – has been placed on the stamp of divine oneness in order to direct gazes towards it and attract hearts. Yes, it is the strength of that mercy that attracts the gazes of conscious beings, draws them to it, and causes them to reach the seal of oneness and to observe the Single One, and from that to truly manifest the address of “You alone do we worship, and from You alone do we seek help.”

It is because “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” is the index of Sura al-Fatiha and a concise summary of the Qur’an that it is the sign and interpreter of this mighty mystery. The person who clasps it may travel through the levels of divine mercy. And the person who causes this interpreter to speak may learn about the mysteries of divine mercy and behold the lights of divine compassion and pity.

FIFTH MYSTERY

There is a Hadith which goes something like this: “God created man in the form of the Most Merciful.”² It has been interpreted by some Sufis in an extraordinary way, unfitting for the tenets of belief. Some of them who were ecstasies even considered man’s spiritual nature to be in the form of the All-Merciful. Since ecstasies are mostly immersed in contemplation and confused, they are perhaps to be excused in holding views contrary to reality. But on consideration, people in their right senses cannot accept ideas of theirs that are contrary to the fundamentals of belief. If they do, they are in error.

Indeed, the Most Pure and Holy Deity, who administers with order the whole universe as though it were a palace or house, and spins the stars as though they were particles and causes them to travel through space with

² See, *Bukhari*, Isti’dhan, 1; *Muslim*, Birr, 115; *Janna*, 28; *Musnad*, ii, 244, 251, 315, 323, 434, 463, 519.

wisdom and ease, and employs minute particles as though they were orderly officials, has no partner, match, opposite, or equal. So too, according to the meaning of the verse:

There is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He hears and sees [all things],(42:11)

He has no form, like, or peer, and there is nothing resembling Him or similar to Him. However, according to the meaning of the following verse and its parabolic comparison,

And His is the highest similitude in the heavens and the earth, and He is Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom,(30:27)

His actions, attributes, and names may be considered. That is to say, allegory and comparison may be used in connection with His actions. One of the many things intended by the above-mentioned Hadith is: “Man is in a form that displays the divine name of All-Merciful in its entirety.” Yes, as we explained before, the divine name of All-Merciful is manifested through the rays of a thousand and one names on the face of the universe, and is apparent through the innumerable manifestations of God’s absolute dominicality on the face of the earth. Similarly, its complete manifestation is apparent in a small measure in man’s comprehensive form, the same as on the faces of the earth and universe.

The Hadith suggests also that the evidences of the Necessarily Existent One offered by such proofs, mirrors, and manifestations of the Most Merciful as animate creatures and man are so certain, clear, and obvious that just as it may be said of a shining mirror which reflects the image of the sun: “That mirror is the sun,” indicating the clarity of its brilliance and evidence, so it has been said and may be said: “Man is in the form of the All-Merciful One,” indicating the clarity of his evidence and completeness of his relation. It is in consequence of this mystery that the more moderate of those who believed in the Unity of Existence said: “There is no existent but He,” as a way of expressing the clarity of this evidence and perfection of the relation.

O God! O Most Merciful One! Most Compassionate One! For the sake of “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” have mercy on us as befits Your Compassionateness, and allow us to understand the mysteries of “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” as befits Your Mercifulness. AMEN.

SIXTH MYSTERY

O unhappy man afflicted by boundless impotence and endless wants! See from the following how valuable and acceptable an intercessor is divine mercy. For it is a way to know the All-Glorious Sovereign in whose army both the stars and minute particles serve together in perfect order and obedience – the Glorious Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, who is self-sufficient and utterly without need. He is rich without limit and in no way in need of the universe and its beings. The whole cosmos is under His command and direction, utterly obedient beneath His majesty and grandeur, submissive before His sublimity. That is divine mercy for you, O man! It raises you to the presence of the One who lacks all need, the Eternal Sovereign, and makes you His friend, addressee, and well-loved servant. But just as you cannot reach the sun and are far from it although it fills your mirror with its light, reflection, and manifestation, and you can in no way draw near to it; in the same way you are infinitely distant from the Most Pure and Holy One, the Sun of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, and cannot draw near to Him, but the light of His mercy brings Him nearer to us.

O man! Anyone who finds this mercy finds an eternally unfailing treasury of light. And the way to find it is by following the practices of the Most Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), who was the most brilliant exemplar and representative of mercy, its most eloquent tongue and herald, and was described in the Qur'an as a "Mercy to All the Worlds."

The way to attain to this embodiment of mercy who is a mercy to all the worlds is to utter the prayer calling down God's blessings upon him. Indeed, the meaning of this prayer is mercy. As a prayer of mercy for that living embodiment of divine mercy, it is a means of reaching the Mercy to All the Worlds (UWBP).³ So, make this prayer the means to the mercy to all the worlds for yourself, and at the same time make him the means of reaching the mercy of the Most Merciful One.

The whole Muslim community in all its vastness uttering this prayer which is synonymous with mercy for the Mercy to All the Worlds (UWBP) proves in brilliant fashion what a precious gift is divine mercy, and how broad is its sphere.

T o C o n c l u d e : Just as the most precious jewel in the treasury of

³ See, *Muslim*, Salat, 11, 70; *Tirmidhi*, Witr, 21; *Abu Da'ud*, Salat, 36, 210; Witr, 26; *Nasa'i*, Jum'a, 5; *Adhan*, 37; *Sahw*, 55; *Ibn Maja*, Iqama al-Salat, 79; *Darimi*, Salat, 206; *Riqaq*, 58; *Musnad*, ii, 168, 375, 485; iii, 102, 445: iv, 8.

mercy is the Prophet Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace), its doorkeeper, so is its first key “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate,” and its most easy key the prayer for the Prophet (UWBP).

O God! Through the truth of “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” grant blessings and peace to the one whom You sent as a mercy to all the worlds as befits Your mercy, and in veneration of him, and to all his Family and Companions. And grant us mercy so as to make us free of want for the mercy of any other than You from among Your creatures. AMEN.

Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us. Indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.(2:32)

* * *

The Fifteenth Flash

This consists of the Indexes of *Sözler* (The Words), *Mektûbat* (Bediuzzaman Said Nursi – Letters 1928-1932), and *Lem’alar* (The Flashes Collection), from the First to the Fourteenth Flash. They have been included in the relevant volumes and not been published here.

The Sixteenth Flash

*In His Name, be He glorified!
And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.(17:44)*

Peace be upon you, and God's mercy and blessings!

My Dear and Loyal Brothers Hoja Sabri, Hâfız 'Ali, Mes'ud, the Mustafâ's, Husrev, Re'fet, Bekir Bey, Rüştü, the Lütfi's, Hâfız Ahmed, Shaykh Mustafa, and the others! It occurred to my heart to explain to you in concise informative fashion four small matters that have been the subject of curiosity and questions.

THE FIRST

Certain of our brothers like Çaprazzâde Abdullah Efendi had heard related from the diviners of realities that this last Ramadan a relief from difficulties, a victory, would occur for the Sunnis, whereas it did not occur. Why do such people of sainthood and illumination make predictions that are contrary to reality? They asked me, and a summary of the reply I gave them, with which I was inspired, is this:

It says in a Hadith: "Sometimes a calamity is visited on a person, but if it meets with almsgiving, it is repelled."¹ The underlying meaning of this Hadith shows that while appointed events are going to come to pass under certain conditions, they do not occur. That is to say, the appointed events of which the people of illumination are aware are not absolute, but restricted by certain conditions; if the conditions are not fulfilled, the event does not occur. However the event, like the appointed hour of death, which is suspended, is written and determined in the Tablet of Appearance and Dissolution,² which is a sort of notebook of the Pre-Eternal Tablet. It is only

¹ al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, i, 492; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, ii, 30; Tirmidhi, *Zakat*, 28; Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, viii, 261; al-Bayhaqi, *Shu'ab al-Iman*, iii, 245.

² See, al-Nawawi, *Sharh Sahih Muslim*, xvi, 114; Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, x, 415-6.

extremely rarely that illuminations penetrate as far as the Pre-Eternal Tablet; mostly they cannot rise that far.

In consequence, predictions made as a result of interpretations or illuminations this last Ramadan and Feast of Sacrifices or at other times that do not occur because the conditions on which they were dependent were not fulfilled, do not give the lie to those who told of them. For they were determined, but did not come about because the conditions were not fulfilled.

Yes, the sincere prayers of the majority of the Sunnis that innovations in the month of Ramadan be abrogated formed a condition and important reason. But since innovations had entered the mosques in Ramadan, they hindered the acceptance of the supplications, and the relief did not arrive. Just as in accordance with the above Hadith, alms-giving repels calamities, the sincere supplications of the majority attract a general release from troubles. Since the power of attraction was not formed, the victory was not given.

SECOND CURIOUS QUESTION

The last two months there has been a lively political situation in the face of which some attempt should have been made to alleviate conditions both for myself and the brothers with whom I am connected. While there was a strong possibility that this could have been achieved, I attached no importance to the situation, and on the contrary, had an idea in support of ‘the worldly’ who oppress me. A number of people were astonished at this. They said: “What do you think about the policies followed by those at the head of these innovators and in part dissembling people who torment you, so that you do nothing to them?” A summary of my reply is as follows:

The greatest danger facing the people of Islam at this time is their hearts being corrupted and belief harmed through the misguidance that arises from science and philosophy. The sole solution for this is light; it is to show light so that their hearts may be reformed and their belief, saved. If one acts with the club of politics and prevails over them, the unbelievers descend to the degree of dissemblers. And dissemblers are worse than unbelievers. That is to say, the club cannot heal the heart at this time, for then unbelief enters the heart and is concealed, and is transformed into dissembling. And at this time, a powerless person like myself cannot employ both of them, the club and the light. For this reason I am compelled to embrace the light with all my strength and cannot consider the club of politics whatever form it is in. We are not charged with physical jihad at the moment, whatever that duty demands. Yes, in accordance with a person’s way, a club is necessary to form a barrier against the assaults of the unbelievers or apostates. But we only have two hands. Even if we had a hundred

hands, they would be sufficient only for the light. We do not have any other hands with which to hold the club!

THIRD CURIOUS QUESTION

Why do you violently oppose war, although, with foreign forces like the British and Italians interfering in the government recently, it would have excited Islamic zeal – the true point of support and source of moral strength of this country’s government – and been a means to an extent of reviving the marks of Islam and repulsing innovations? Why have you offered prayers for its being settled by peaceful means and come out fervently in support of the innovators’ government? Is this not indirect support of innovations?

The Answer : We want relief, release, happiness, and victory, but not with the sword of the unbelievers. Let their swords be the end of them! We are not in need of any advantage proceeding from them. In fact it is those obstinate Europeans who have set the dissemblers to pester the people of belief, and have raised the atheists.

As for the calamity of war, it would cause great harm to our service of the Qur’an. The majority of our most valuable, self-sacrificing brothers are under the age of forty-five, and would be forced because of war to leave their sacred service of the Qur’an and enroll in the army. If I had the money, I would gladly pay the thousand liras necessary to exempt each of such valuable brothers from military service. With hundreds of my valuable brothers leaving the Qur’anic service of the Risale-i Nur and laying hands on the club of physical jihad, I feel a loss in myself of a hundred thousand liras. These two years of Zekâi’s military service, even, have caused perhaps a thousand liras of his immaterial profit to be lost. Anyway... Like the One Powerful Over All Things sweeps and cleans in a minute the atmosphere filled with clouds and shows the shining sun in clear skies, so He may dispel these black, merciless clouds and show the truths of the Shari‘a like the sun, and give them without expense or trouble. We await it from His mercy that He will not sell them to us expensively. May He give intelligence to the heads of those at the top, and belief to their hearts; that would be enough. Then matters would put themselves to rights.

FOURTH CURIOUS QUESTION

They ask: “Since what you hold in your hand is light, not a club, and light may not be objected to, nor fled from, nor can harm come from showing it, why do you advise caution to your friends, and prevent them showing many light-filled parts of the Risale-i Nur to people?”

A brief reply to the question is this: the heads of most of those at the top are drunk and they cannot read them. And even if they do read them, they cannot understand them; they give them the wrong meaning, and interfere. They should not be shown them until they come to their senses lest they interfere. There are also many unscrupulous people who out of spite or ambition or fear, deny the light or close their eyes to it. Therefore, I advise my brothers to be cautious and not to give the truths to those who are unfit,³ or do things which excite the suspicions of ‘the worldly.’⁴

³ See, *Ibn Maja*, Muqaddima, 17.

⁴ An anecdote about an event that could have led to something serious: yesterday morning the son-in-law of one of my friends came to me. Joyfully, as one bearing good news, he said to me: “They’ve printed one of your books in Isparta and a lot of people are reading it.” I replied: “That prohibited one hasn’t been printed; a number of copies have been obtained by means of a hectograph, about which the government can say nothing.” And I added: “Be careful not to say anything about this to those two dissemblers, your friends. They’re looking for something to use as a pretext.” My friends! The man was the son-in-law of one of my friends, and in that connection may also be thought of as my friend, but because he is the barber he is the friend of the unscrupulous teacher and dissembling District Officer. One of our brothers apparently said something there without being aware of it, so it was a good thing that he came first and told me about it. I warned him and anything untoward was forestalled. And behind this screen the duplicating machine published thousands of copies.

Conclusion

Today I received a letter from Re'fet Bey. In connection with his question about the Prophet's (UWBP) beard, I say this:

It is established by Hadiths that the number of hairs from the blessed beard of the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) was small. But despite their being few – for instance, thirty, forty, fifty or sixty – the fact that there are hairs from the blessed beard in thousands of places caused me much thought at one time. It occurred to me then that what is known as his blessed beard consists not only of its hairs, but also the hair of his blessed head, which the Companions, who neglected nothing,⁵ preserved when he cut it. His luminous, blessed hair, which would be preserved for ever, numbered thousands and may be equal to what is now extant.

I also wondered at that time whether or not it was established with sound documentary evidence that the hair found in all mosques was the Messenger's (UWBP) hair so that it was acceptable to visit it. Then it occurred to me that it was the cause of visits, and of benedictions being uttered for the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), and his being venerated and loved,⁶ and thus was not looked at for what it actually was. Therefore, even if the hair was not truly from the Messenger's (UWBP) blessed beard, since it was held to be so because of its appearance, and it functioned as a means of veneration, regard, and benedictions, it did not have to be authenticated. So long as there was no definite evidence to the contrary, that was sufficient. For generally held opinions and the acceptance of the Islamic community count as a sort of proof.

If some of the pious object to such matters on grounds of fear of God, or caution, or resolution, they do so in particular cases. And if they say it is an innovation, it should be included among commendable innovations, for it is a means of benedictions for the Prophet (UWBP) being recited. Re'fet Bey said in his letter that the matter had led to an argument among the brothers. I advise my brothers that they do not argue in such a way as to cause differences and conflict; they should grow accustomed to discussing things as an exchange of ideas, without arguing.

⁵ See, *Bukhari*, Wudu', 33; *Muslim*, Hajj, 311-26; *Musnad*, iii, 133, 137.

⁶ See, *Muslim*, Salat, 11, 70; *Tirmidhi*, Witr, 21; *Abu Da'ud*, Salat, 36, 210; Witr, 26; *Nasa'i*, Jum'a, 5; Adhan, 37; Sahw, 55; *Ibn Maja*, Iqama al-Salat, 79; *Darimi*, Salat, 206; Riqaq, 58; *Musnad*, ii, 168, 375, 485; iii, 102, 445: iv, 8.

*In His Name, be He glorified!
And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.(17:44)*

Peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessings.

My Dear and Loyal Brothers from Senirkent, İbrahim, Şükrü, Hâfız Bekir, Hâfız Hüseyin, Hâfız Receb Efendi!

The atheists have for a long time objected to the three matters you sent with Hâfız Tevfik.

The First: According to the explicit meaning of the verse, "Until when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it set in a spring of murky water,"(18:86) he saw the sun setting in a hot, mud spring.

The Second: Where is the barrier of Dhu'l-Qarnayn?

The Third: This is about Jesus (UWP) coming at the end of time⁷ and killing the Dajjal.⁸

The answers to these questions are lengthy, so indicating them briefly we say this: since the verses of the Qur'an express matters in accordance with the styles of Arabic, in conformity with apparent meanings, in a way everyone will understand, they frequently explain things in the form of metaphors, allegories, and comparisons. So to consider the verse, "set in a spring of murky water:" Dhu'l-Qarnayn saw the sun setting on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, which appeared to be a boiling, muddy spring, or in the fiery, smoking crater of a volcano. That is, evidently the Atlantic Ocean appeared to Dhu'l-Qarnayn in the distance as the large pool of a spring surrounded by a swamp which in the intense heat of summer was steaming and vaporizing; he saw the sun's apparent setting in a part of it. Or he saw the sun, the eye of the skies, being hidden in a new, fiery crater at the summit of a volcano which was spewing out rocks, earth, and lava.

Yes, the All-Wise Qur'an's miraculously eloquent expression teaches many matters with this sentence. Firstly, it explains that Dhu'l-Qarnayn's journey to the west coincided with the intense heat of summer, the area of a swamp, sunset, and the time of a volcanic eruption, and so alludes to many instructive matters, such as the complete conquest of Africa.

It is well-known that the sun's motion is apparent, indicating the hidden movement of the earth and giving news of it. What it intends is not the actual setting of the sun. Also the spring is a metaphor. From the distance a

⁷ See, *Muslim*, Fitan, 110; *Tirmidhi*, Fitan, 59, 62; *Abu Da'ud*, Malahim, 14; *Ibn Maja*, Fitan, 33; *Musnad*, iii, 420; iv, 181, 226, 390; vi, 75.

⁸ The Dajjal is the Antichrist, related to appear at the end of time. (Tr.)

large sea appears to be a small pool. It is most meaningful and apt according to the mysteries of eloquence⁹ to liken a sea appearing beyond swamps with mists and vapours rising from it due to the heat to a muddy spring, with word *'ayn*, which in Arabic means both spring, and sun, and eye. It appeared like that to Dhu'l-Qarnayn because of the distance. So too, the Qur'an comes from the sublime throne and commands the heavenly bodies, so its heavenly address stating that the subjugated sun, which performs the duty of a lamp in this guesthouse of the Most Merciful One, is hidden in a dominical spring like the Atlantic Ocean, is fitting for its loftiness and sublimity; with its miraculous style it shows the sea to be a hot spring and steaming eye. And that is how it appears to heavenly eyes.

I n S h o r t : The use of the term “a muddy spring” for the Atlantic Ocean indicates that Dhu'l-Qarnayn saw that huge ocean as a spring due to the distance. But because the Qur'an sees everything from close to, it did not see what Dhu'l-Qarnayn saw, which was a sort of illusion. Indeed, since the Qur'an comes from the heavens and looks to them, it sometimes sees the earth as an arena, sometimes as a palace, sometimes as a cradle, and sometimes as a page. So its calling the vast misty, vaporous Atlantic Ocean a spring shows its lofty sublimity.

YOUR SECOND QUESTION

Where is the barrier of Dhu'l-Qarnayn? Who were Gog and Magog?

The Answer : Long ago I wrote a treatise about this question and it silenced the atheists. I do not have it with me now, and my memory is not working and helping me. Also, this question is discussed briefly in the Third Branch of the Twenty-Fourth Word. We shall therefore only indicate very briefly two or three points about it, as follows:

According to explanations given by investigative scholars, and as indicated by the title Dhu'l-Qarnayn, names beginning with the suffix Dhu, like Dhu'l-Yazan, were used by the kings of Yemen, so this Dhu'l-Qarnayn was not Alexander the Great. He was one of the kings of Yemen¹⁰ who lived at the time of Abraham (UWP)¹¹ and received instruction from

⁹ In accordance with the mysteries of rhetoric the word “spring” (*'ayn*) in “in a spring of murky water” makes a subtle allusion, as follows: after gazing on the beauty of divine mercy on the face of the earth, the eye of the sun in the face of the sky – and after beholding divine tremendousness above, the eye of the sea in the earth – these two eyes close one within the other, and the eyes on the earth close also. Thus, with one miraculous word the Qur'an recalls this, and alludes to eyes resting from their duties.

¹⁰ See, Abu Su'ud, *Tafsir Abi Su'ud*, v, 239-40; Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vi, 385; al-Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, xvi, 27.

¹¹ See, al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, xi, 47; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, i, 180; iii, 101; Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vi, 382; al-Faqihi, *Ahbar Makka*, iii, 221.

Khidr.¹² Alexander the Greek lived approximately three hundred years before Christ, and was taught by Aristotle.¹³

Human history goes back in regular fashion approximately three thousand years. This deficient and short view of history is not accurate concerning pre-Abrahamic times. It continues back either as superstition, or as denial, or in very abbreviated form. The reason the Dhu'l-Qarnayn of Yemen was since early times in Qur'anic commentaries known as Alexander,¹⁴ was either because it was one of his names and he was Alexander the Great or the Alexander of Ancient Times, or else the following:

The particular events mentioned in Qur'anic verses are the tips of universal events. Thus, through his prophetic guidance, Alexander the Great, who was Dhu'l-Qarnayn, built a barrier between some peoples, oppressors and oppressed, and built the famous Great Wall of China to prevent the raids of those cruel enemies. Similarly, many powerful kings and world conquerors like Alexander the Greek followed in the path of Dhu'l-Qarnayn materially, while the prophets and spiritual poles, who are the kings of man's spiritual world, followed him in spiritual matters and guidance; they built barriers between mountains, one of the most effective means of saving the oppressed from oppressors,¹⁵ and later constructed strongholds on mountain peaks. They founded these themselves through their material power, or through their guidance and planning. Then they built walls surrounding towns and citadels inside the towns, and finally they made machine-guns and Dreadnoughts, which were like mobile citadels. The most famous barrier on earth, the Great Wall of China, covers a distance of several days' journeying and was built to halt the incursions against the oppressed peoples of India and China of the savage tribes known in the Qur'an as Gog and Magog, and otherwise known as the Mongols and Manchurians. These tribes several times threw the world of humanity into chaos. Pouring out from behind the Himalayas, they wrought destruction from east to west. A long wall was built between two mountains close to the Himalayan mountains which for a long time prevented the frequent assaults of those savage peoples, and barriers were also built through the efforts of the kings of ancient Persia, who resembled Dhu'l-

¹² See, al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, xi, 47.

¹³ See, Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vi, 382-3; al-Shawkani, *al-Fath al-Qadir*, iii, 307; al-Khamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, i, 184; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, ii, 17, 488.

¹⁴ See, al-Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, xvi, 17; al-Qurtubi, *al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, xi, 45; al-Shawkani, *al-Fath al-Qadir*, iii, 307; al-Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma'ani*, xvi, 26.

¹⁵ There are numerous artificial barriers on the face of the earth that with the passing of time have taken on the appearance of mountains or have become unrecognizable.

Qarnayn, in the mountains of Caucasia, in the region of Darband, to halt the inroads of the plundering and pillaging Tatar peoples. There are very many barriers of this sort. Since the All-Wise Qur'an speaks with all mankind, it mentions what is apparently a particular incident, and recalls all events similar to it. It is from this point of view that the narrations differ concerning the Barrier and Gog and Magog, as well as the writings of the Qur'anic commentators about them.

Furthermore, the All-Wise Qur'an switches from one event to another distant one due to the association of ideas. The person who fails to think of this association supposes the two events to be close in time. Thus, the Qur'an's predicting the end of the world from the destruction of the Barrier is not because the two events are close in time, but to make two subtle points connected with the association of ideas. That is, the world will be destroyed just as the Barrier will be destroyed. Also, just as mountains, which are natural divine barriers, are firm and will be destroyed only at the end of the world; so the Barrier is firm as a mountain and will be levelled to dust only at the destruction of the world. Even if it suffers damage from the assaults of time, it will mostly remain intact. Yes, the Great Wall of China is one particular meaning of the universal meaning of the Barrier of Dhu'l-Qarnayn and has been standing for thousands of years and is still there for all to see. It is read as a long, petrified, meaningful line from ancient history, written by man's hand on the page of the earth.

YOUR THIRD QUESTION

Brief replies concerning Jesus (Upon whom be peace) killing the Dajjal are found in both the First and the Fifteenth Letters, which should suffice you.

In His Name!

And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.(17:44)

Peace be upon you, and God's mercy and blessings.

My Dear Self-Sacrificing, Loyal, Conscientious Brothers, Hoja Sabri and Hâfiz Ali!

Your important question concerning the verse at the end of Sura Luqman about "the five hidden things"(31:34)¹⁶ deserves a serious reply, but unfortunately neither my present state of mind nor my physical condition permit it. I shall allude only very concisely to one or two points your question touches on.

Your question indicates that atheists who have deviated from the true path of religion have made objections and criticisms concerning the time of rain falling and nature of the embryos in the womb from among "the five hidden things." They have said: "Instruments in the observatory can discover when rain is to fall, so someone other than God knows. Also the sex of embryos can be learnt by means of X-rays. This means it is possible to learn "the five hidden things."

T h e A n s w e r : The time rain falls is tied not to any law, but directly to divine will. One instance of wisdom in its appearance from the treasury of mercy being dependent on a particular divine wish is as follows:

The most important things in the universe and the most valuable are existence, life, light, and mercy. These look directly, without intermediary or veil, to divine power and a particular divine wish. With other creatures, apparent causes are veils to the disposal of divine power, and regular laws and principles screen the divine will and wish to an extent. However, no such veils have been placed on existence, life, light, and mercy, for the purpose they serve is not in force in those things.

Since the most important truths in existence are mercy and life, and rain is the source of life and means of mercy, indeed is pure mercy, of a certainty intermediaries will not veil it, nor will laws and monotony screen the wishes that are God's alone. In this way everyone in every situation will all the time be obliged to offer thanks and worship and supplications and prayers. If rain had been included under a law, everyone would have relied on the law and the door of thanks and supplication would have been closed.

¹⁶ See, *Bukhari*, *Istisqa'*, 29; *Tafsir Sura* 6:1; 13:1; 31:2; *Tawhid*, 4; *Musnad*, ii, 24; 52, 58, 122.

It is clear that there are numerous benefits in the sun's rising, but since it is tied to a regular law, supplications are not offered for its rising and thanks are not given. And since because of the law it is a part of human knowledge that it will rise again tomorrow, it is not counted among the matters of the Unseen. But the particular occurrences of rain do not follow any law, so men are all the time obliged to take refuge at the divine court with prayers and supplications. Human knowledge has been unable to specify the times of precipitation, men therefore consider it a special bounty proceeding from the treasury of mercy alone, and truly offer thanks.

In consequence the verse includes the time rain falls among "the five hidden things." Deducing the preliminaries of rain with instruments in observatories and specifying the times of precipitation is not knowing the Unseen, but knowing by studying some of its preliminaries when it has emerged from the World of the Unseen and drawn close to the Manifest World. When the most hidden events of the Unseen occur, or when they are close to occurring, they may be perceived through a sort of premonition. But that is not knowing the Unseen, but knowing that something exists or is close to existence. In fact, I sometimes perceive the rain twenty-four hours before it arrives due to a sensitivity in my nerves. That is to say, the rain has preliminaries, forerunners; they make themselves felt through a sort of dampness, making it known that rain is to follow. Just like a law, this situation is a means of reaching matters that have left the World of the Unseen but not yet entered the Manifest World. But to know when rain will fall that has not yet set foot in the Manifest World, nor left through a particular divine wish the treasury of mercy, is peculiar to the One All-Knowing of the Unseen.

THE SECOND MATTER

Learning by means of X-rays whether a child in the womb is male or female is not contrary to the meaning of the verse, "And He Who knows what is in the wombs,"(31:34) which refers to the Unseen. For what is intended by the verse are the preliminaries of the child's particular capacity and the appointed course of its life, which it will acquire in the future, and even the wondrous stamp of the Eternally Besought One on its face – the child being known in this way is particular to the One All-Knowing of the Unseen.¹⁷ Even if a hundred thousand X-ray-like minds of men were to combine, they still could not discover its true features, each of which is a mark distinguishing the child from all the other members of the human

¹⁷ See, *Bukhari*, Bad' al-khalq, 6; *Anbiya'*, 1; *Muslim*, Qadar, 1.

race. So how could they discover the non-physical features of its abilities, which are a hundred times more wondrous than its physical features.

We said at the beginning that existence, life, and mercy are the most important truths in the universe and that the most important station is theirs. Therefore, one reason for the comprehensive truth of life looking with all its fine points and subtleties to the divine will and wish and mercy, which are particular to God Almighty, is this:

Since life together with all its faculties is the source and means of thanks and worship, laws and monotony – which are a veil to God’s will, and apparent intermediaries – which screen His mercy, have not been placed on it. Almighty God has two manifestations in the physical and non-physical features of unborn children.

One shows divine unity, oneness, and eternal besoughtness, for the child testifies to divine unity by being similar to other human beings in respect of its basic members and human faculties. With this tongue it shouts out: “Whoever gave me these features and members is the Maker of all human beings, for they resemble me in regard to basic members, and He is the Maker too of all living beings.”

This tongue of the child in the womb does not pertain to the Unseen; it may be known since it follows a law and general rule and the species. It is a branch and tongue of the Manifest World that has entered the World of the Unseen.

The Second Aspect: With the tongue of the features of its particular capacity and its individual features, it proclaims its Maker’s choice, will and wish and particular mercy and that He is under no restriction. But this tongue comes from the deepest Unseen; none other than Pre-Eternal Knowledge can see it before it comes into existence, nor comprehend it. These features cannot be known while in the womb even if one or other of the child’s thousand members is seen!

I n S h o r t : The features of the embryo’s innate capacity and its physical features offer both evidence for divine unity and proofs of divine will and choice. If Almighty God grants success, a number of further points shall be written about “the five hidden things.” But for now I have no more time and my condition does not permit it, so I conclude here.

The Enduring One, He is the Enduring One!

S a i d N u r s i

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

In His Name, be He glorified!
And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.(17:44)

My Dear, Loyal, Curious Brother, Re'fet Bey!

You ask in your letter about the ten subtle faculties. It is not appropriate to give instruction in the Sufi way at present; there are in any case the works about them written by the learned shaykhs of the Naqshbandi Order. Our duty at the present time is to disclose mysteries, not to relate existent matters. Don't be offended, I can't give the details. I shall only say this much: Imam-i Rabbani defined the ten subtle faculties as the heart, spirit, inner heart (*sirr*), *khafi*, *akhfa*, and a faculty related to each of the four elements in man, and he discussed briefly the progress of one faculty in each stage of the spiritual journeying.

I myself observe that there are numerous subtle faculties in man's comprehensive disposition and vital potentialities, of which ten have become famous. The philosophers and literalist scholars made those ten faculties the basis of their theories in another form, and called them the five external senses and five internal senses, these latter being the windows or samples of the ten faculties. In fact, man's ten subtle faculties, which are well-known by both the learned and ordinary people, are related to the Sufis' ten subtle faculties. For example, if such faculties as the conscience, nerves, emotions, intellect, desires, power of animal appetites, and power of anger are added to the heart, spirit, and inner heart, the ten subtle faculties are shown in another way. There are many other faculties in addition to these, like the sense of premonition, and various motive and appetitive powers. To expound this question completely would be very lengthy, and as I have little time, I am compelled to cut it short.

As for your second question, about the aspect of things which looks to themselves, and the aspect which looks to their Maker (*mânâ-yi ismî* and *mânâ-yi harfî*), they are explained at the start of all books on Arabic grammar. Moreover, there are ample explanations of them, together with comparisons, in the works of the science of reality called *The Words* and *Letters*. Further discussion would be superfluous for someone intelligent and exacting like yourself. If when you look at the mirror, you look at it for the glass, you will intentionally see the glass; Re'fet will strike the eye secondarily, indirectly. Whereas if your purpose is to look at the mirror in order to see your blessed face, you will intentionally see lovable Re'fet. You will exclaim: "So blessed be God, the Best of Creators!"(23:14) The glass of the mirror will strike your eye secondarily and indirectly.

Thus, in the first instance, the glass of the mirror is ‘the meaning that looks to the thing itself,’ while Re’fet is its ‘significative meaning.’ In the second instance, the glass of the mirror is ‘the significative meaning,’ that is, it is looked at not for itself but for another meaning; that is, the reflection. The reflection is ‘the meaning which looks to the thing itself.’ That is, it is included in one respect in the definition “it points to a meaning in itself.” While the mirror verifies the definition of its ‘significative meaning,’ which is “it points to the meaning of another.”

According to the Qur’anic view, all the beings in the universe are letters, expressing through their ‘significative meaning,’ the meaning of another. That is, they make known the names and attributes of that Other. Soulless philosophy for the most part looks in accordance with ‘the meaning which looks to the thing itself’ and deviates into the bog of nature. However, I do not have the time now for much talk. In fact, I cannot even write the final and easiest and most important part of the Index. Convey my greetings to your study companions, in particular, Husrev, Bekir, Rüşdü, Lütfü, Shaykh Mustafa, Hâfız Ahmed, Sezâi, the Mehmed’s, and the Hojas. I pray for the blessed innocents in your household.

The Enduring One, He is the Enduring One!

Your brother,

S a i d N u r s i

The Seventeenth Flash

[This Flash consists of Fifteen Notes taken from *Zühre*.]

Introduction

Twelve years before this Flash was written,¹ I wrote down in note form in Arabic in such treatises as *Zühre*, *Şu'le*, *Habbe*, *Şemme*, *Zerre*, and *Katre*, a number of flashes concerning divine unity which became clear to me through dominical grace during an unfolding of the spirit and progress of the mind and journey of the heart in divine knowledge. But since they were written to show only one tip of a lengthy truth and point out only one beam of a shining light, and since each was in the form of a memento and reminder for myself only, their benefits for others were limited, and particularly as the great majority of my most select and special brothers were unable to read Arabic. On their insistent and pressing requests, therefore, I was obliged to write in Turkish an approximation of those notes, those flashes, in part expounding them and in part abbreviating them. Since these notes and Arabic treatises form the first of the New Said's works proceeding from the knowledge of reality, which he to a degree witnessed in the form of illumination, their meanings have been written unchanged. Because of this, a number of the sentences are included here despite being mentioned in others of the Words. And some are not expounded despite being very concise, so that the refinement of the original should not be lost.

¹ Twelve years previously was 1340/1921.

First Note

I addressed myself saying: O heedless Said! Know that it is unworthy of you to attach your heart to something that will not accompany you after this world comes to an end and on its destruction will part from you. It is not reasonable to fasten your heart to transitory things that will turn their backs on you and leave you when the age in which you live comes to an end, and will not befriend you on the journey through the Intermediate Realm, or accompany you to the door of the grave,² and which, leaving you for ever after one or two years, will burden you with their sins and out of spite abandon you at the moment of accomplishment.

If you are sensible, you will give up matters that will be shattered and destroyed under the blows of worldly revolutions and the stages of the Intermediate Realm and clashing upheavals of the hereafter; which are not able to accompany and befriend you on the journey to eternity. Give them no importance! Do not grieve at their passing!

Consider your own nature; among your subtle faculties is one that will be content with nothing other than eternity and the Eternal One. It can address itself to none but He. It cannot demean itself for any other. Should you give it the whole world, it would not satisfy that innate need. It is the sovereign of your senses and faculties. So obey it, for it obeys the All-Wise Creator's command! Find salvation!

Second Note

I had a true dream in which I said to people: "O man! One of the Qur'an's principles is this: consider nothing other than Almighty God to be greater than yourself to the degree that you worship it. And do not consider yourself to be greater than anything else to the degree that you become arrogant and haughty before it. For just as all creatures are equal in regard to their distance from being fit to be worshipped, so too are they equal in regard to their createdness."

² See, *Bukhari*, Riqaq, 42; *Muslim*, Zuhd, 5; *Nasa'i*, Jana'iz, 52; *Musnad*, iii, 110.

Third Note

O heedless Said! You have illusions and see the exceedingly temporary world as undying and permanent. When you look around yourself at the world, you see it as stable to a degree, and constant. Since looking with the same view you also consider your own transient self to be constant, you only take fright at Doomsday. You are only frightened at that as though you were going to live till then.³

Use your reason! You and your personal world are perpetually subject to the blows of death and decline. Your illusion and sophistry resemble this comparison: if you have a mirror and hold it up to a house or a town or a garden, their images will appear in it. If the mirror is moved the tiniest amount or the smallest change occurs to it, the images become confused and distorted. The fact that the actual house, town or garden outside the mirror continue and are constant is of no avail to you, for the house in the mirror in your hand and your town and garden are only in the scale and proportions which the mirror gives you.

Your life is the mirror. The support and mirror of your world and its centre is your life. Every minute it is possible that the house, town, and garden will die and be destroyed, their condition is such that any minute they may collapse on your head and your doomsday will come. Since it is thus, do not burden this life and world of yours with loads they cannot raise and support!

Fourth Note

Know that it is generally the practice of the All-Wise Creator to return important and valuable things exactly the same. That is to say, renewing most things in similar form in the alternating of the seasons and changing of the centuries, He returns the things of value and importance exactly. This law of divine practice is seen to be mostly unvarying in the resurrections of the days, years, and centuries.

In consequence of this constant law, we say: since according to the agreement and testimony of science, man is the most perfect fruit of the tree of creation, and among creatures is the most important, and the most valuable, and since a human person is equivalent to a species of the other

³ See, al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, iv, 64; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, ii, 368.

animals, it may be surmised with certainty that at the supreme resurrection, each human being will be returned exactly the same, with his body and all his attributes.

Fifth Note

Western science and civilization had to some extent a place in the Old Said's thought, so when the New Said embarked on his journeys of the mind and the heart, they were transformed into sicknesses of the heart and were the cause of excessive difficulties. The New Said therefore wanted to shake off from his mind that fallacious philosophy and dissolute civilization. In order to silence the emotions of his evil-commanding soul, which testified in favour of Europe, he was compelled to hold in his spirit the following discussion – which in one respect is very brief and in another is long – with the collective personality of Europe.

It should not be misunderstood; Europe is twofold. One follows the sciences which serve justice and right and the industries beneficial for the life of society through the inspiration it has received from true Christianity; this first Europe I am not addressing. I am addressing the second corrupt Europe which, through the darkness of the philosophy of Naturalism, supposing the evils of civilization to be its virtues, has driven mankind to vice and misguidance. As follows:

On my journey of the spirit at that time I said to Europe's collective personality, which apart from beneficial science and the virtues of civilization, holds in its hand meaningless, harmful philosophy and noxious, dissolute civilization:

Know this, O second Europe! You hold a diseased and misguided philosophy in your right hand and a harmful and corrupt civilization in your left, and claim, "Mankind's happiness is with these two!" May your two hands be broken and may these two filthy presents of yours be the death of you! And so they shall be!

O you unhappy spirit which spreads unbelief and ingratitude! Can a man who is suffering torments and is afflicted with ghastly calamities in both his spirit and his conscience and his mind and his heart be happy through his body wallowing in a superficial, deceptive glitter and wealth? Can it be said that he is happy?

Don't you see that on feeling despair at some minor matter and his hope for some illusory wish being lost and his being disillusioned at some insignificant business, such a person's sweet imaginings become bitter for him,

what is pleasant torments him, and the world constricts him and becomes a prison for him? But what happiness can you ensure for such a wretched person who through your inauspiciousness has suffered the blows of misguidance in the deepest corners of his heart to the very foundations of his spirit, and because of this whose hopes have all been extinguished and whose pains all arise from it? Can it be said of someone whose body is in a false and fleeting paradise and whose heart and spirit are suffering the torments of Hell that he is happy? See, you have led astray wretched mankind in this way! You make them suffer the torments of Hell in a false heaven!

O evil-commanding soul of mankind! Consider the following comparison and see where you have driven mankind. For example, there are two roads before us. We take one of them and see that at every step is some wretched, powerless person. Tyrants are attacking him, seizing his property and goods, and destroying his humble house. Sometimes they wound him as well. The heavens weep at his pitiful state. Wherever one looks, things are continuing in this vein. The sounds heard on this way are the roars of tyrants and the groans of the oppressed; a universal mourning envelops the entire way. A person is afflicted with a boundless grief since due to his humanity man is pained at the suffering of others. But because his conscience cannot endure so much pain, one who travels this way is compelled to do one of two things: either he strips off his humanity and embracing a boundless savagery bears such a heart that so long as he is safe and sound, he is not affected even if all the rest of mankind perish, or else he suppresses the demands of the heart and reason.

O Europe corrupted with vice and misguidance and drawn far from the religion of Jesus! You have bestowed this hellish state on the human spirit with your blind genius which, like the Dajjal,⁴ has only a single eye.⁵ You afterwards understood that this incurable disease casts man down from the highest of the high to the lowest of the low, and reduces him to the basest level of animality. The only remedy you have found for it are the fantasies of entertainment and amusement and anodyne diversions which temporarily numb the senses. These remedies of yours are being the death of you, and so they shall be. There! The road you have opened up for mankind and the happiness you have given it resembles this comparison.

The second road, the All-Wise Qur'an has bestowed on mankind; it is like this: We see that in every stopping-place, every spot, every town are patrols of a Just Monarch's equitable soldiers doing the rounds. From time

⁴ The Dajjal: the Antichrist related to come at the end of time. (Tr.)

⁵ See, *Bukhari*, Anbiya', 48; Libas, 68; Ta'bir, 11, 13; Fitan, 26; *Muslim*, Iman, 273-6.

to time at the King's command a group of the soldiers is discharged. Their rifles, horses and gear belonging to the state are taken from them and they are given their leave papers. They are apparently sad to hand over their familiar rifles and horses, but in reality are happy to be discharged and extremely pleased to visit the Monarch and return to his court.

Sometimes the demobilization officials encounter a raw recruit who does not recognize them. "Surrender your rifle!" they say. The soldier replies: "I am a soldier of the King and I am in his service. I shall go to him later. Who are you? If you come with His permission and consent, I greet you with pleasure, show me His orders. Otherwise go away and stay far from me. Even if I remain on my own and there are thousands of you, I shall still fight you, and it would not for myself, because I do not own myself; I belong to my King. Indeed, my self and the rifle I have now are in trust from my owner. I shall not submit to you because I have to safeguard the trust and defend my King's honour and dignity!"

This situation then is one of thousands on the second way which are the cause of joy and happiness. You can think of the others for yourself. Throughout the journey there is the mobilization and despatch of troops with joy and celebrations under the name of birth, and the discharge of troops with cheer and military bands under the name of death. This road has been bestowed on mankind by the All-Wise Qur'an. Whoever accepts the gift wholeheartedly travels down it to happiness in this world and the next. He feels neither grief at the things of the past nor fear at those of the future.

O second corrupted Europe! A number of your rotten and baseless foundations are as follows. You say: "Every living being from the greatest angel to the tiniest fish owns itself and works for itself and struggles for its own pleasure. It has the right to life. Its aim and purpose and all its endeavour is to live and continue its life." And you declare idiotically: "Life is conflict," because you suppose to be conflict the compassionate, munificent manifestations of the universal law of the All-Generous Creator which is manifested through plants hastening to the assistance of animals and animals hastening to the assistance of man through a principle of mutual assistance, which is conformed to in perfect obedience by all the principal beings of the universe.

How can particles of food hastening with total eagerness to nourish the cells of the body – a manifestation of the principle of mutual assistance – be conflict? How can it be a clash and struggle? It is, rather, mutual help at the command of a Munificent Sustainer.

Another of your rotten foundations is, as you say: "Everything owns

itself.” A clear proof that nothing owns itself is this: among causes the most noble and with regard to choice the one with the most extensive will is man. But out of the most obvious acts connected to man’s will like thinking, speaking, and eating, only a hundredth single, doubtful, part is subject to his will and is within his power. So how can it be said that he owns himself?

If the highest beings with the most extensive will are thus inhibited from real power and ownership to this degree, someone who says that the rest of beings, animate and inanimate, own themselves merely proves that he is more animal than the animals and more lifeless and unconscious than inanimate beings.

What pushes you to make such an error and casts you into this abyss is your one-eyed genius. That is, your extraordinary, ill-omened brilliance. Due to that blind genius of yours, you have forgotten your Sustainer, who is the the Creator of all things, you have attributed His works to imaginary nature and causes, you have divided up the Creator’s property among idols, false gods. In regard to this and in the view of your genius, every living creature and every human being has to resist innumerable enemies on his own and struggle to procure his endless needs. They are compelled to do this with the power of a minute particle, a fine thread-like will, a fleeting flash-like consciousness, a fast extinguishing flame-like life, a life which passes in a minute. But the capital of those wretched animate creatures is insufficient to answer even one of the thousands of their demands. When smitten by disaster, they can await no salve for their pain other than from deaf, blind causes. They manifest the meaning of the verse:

For the prayer of those without faith is nothing but [futile] wandering [in the mind].(13:14)

Your dark genius has transformed mankind’s daytime into night. And in order to warm that dark, distressing, unquiet night, you have only illuminated men with deceptive, temporary lamps. Those lamps do not smile at them with joy, they rather smirk idiotically at their pitiful and lamentable state. Those lights mock and make fun of them.

In the view of your pupils, all living beings are miserable, calamity-stricken, and subject to the assaults of oppressors. The world is a place of universal mourning. Issuing from it are cries and wails at death and suffering. The pupil who has absorbed your instruction thoroughly becomes a pharaoh. But he is an abject pharaoh who worships the basest things and holds himself to be lord over everything he reckons advantageous. A student of yours is obstinate, but an obstinate wretch who accepts utter abasement

for a single pleasure. He is so despicable as to kiss Satan's foot for some worthless benefit. And he is a bully. But because he has nothing in his heart on which to rely, he is an impotent bullying braggart. His whole aim and endeavour is to satisfy the lusts of his soul, to cunningly seek his own personal interests under the screen of patriotism and devotion, and work to satisfy his ambition and pride. He loves seriously nothing at all other than himself and sacrifices everything for his own sake.

As for the sincere, wholehearted student of the Qur'an, he is a worshipping servant. But he is an esteemed servant who does not stoop to bow in worship before even the mightiest of creatures, and does not make the supreme benefit of Paradise the aim of his worship. And he is mild and gentle, but at the same time noble and gracious and lowers himself before none but the All-Glorious Creator, and only stoops before the lowly with His permission and at His command. And he is needy, but due to the reward his All-Generous Owner is storing up for him in the future, he is at the same time self-sufficient. And he is weak, but he is strong in his weakness for he relies on the strength of his Lord whose power is infinite. Would the Qur'an make its true student take this fleeting, transient world as his aim and purpose while not making him have even eternal Paradise as his goal? Thus you can understand how the two students' aims and endeavours differ from one another.

You can further compare the zeal and self-sacrifice of the All-Wise Qur'an's students with the pupils of sick philosophy as follows:

The student of philosophy flees from his brother for his own sake and files a lawsuit against him. Whereas, looking on all the righteous worshippers in the heavens and on the earth as brothers, the Qur'an's student makes supplication for them in sincere fashion. He is happy at their happiness and he feels a powerful connection with them in his spirit, so that praying he says: "Oh God, grant forgiveness to all believing men and women!" Furthermore, he considers the greatest things, the divine throne and the sun, to be subservient officials, and servants and creatures like himself.

Also, compare in the following the loftiness and expansion of spirit of the two students: the Qur'an imparts such a joyous elevation to its students' spirits that instead of the ninety-nine prayer-beads, it places in their hands the minute particles of ninety-nine worlds displaying the manifestations of the ninety-nine divine names, and tells them to recite their invocations with them. Listen to the invocations of such students of the Qur'an as Shah Geylani, Rufa'i, and Shazali (May God be pleased with them)! See, in their fingers are the strings of particles, the droplets of water, the breaths of all

creatures, and recite their invocations with them. They praise and glorify God with them and mention His most beautiful names.

Behold the miraculous instruction of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition and see how man is elevated by it – insignificant man who is stunned and confused at some minor grief or tiny sorrow and is defeated by a microscopic germ. How his inner senses expand so that the beings in the mighty world appear inadequate as prayer-beads for his invocations. He considers Paradise to be insufficient as the aim of his invocations and recitations of the divine names, yet he does not see himself as superior to the lowest of Almighty God's creatures.⁶ He combines the utmost dignity with the utmost humility. You can see from this how abject and base are philosophy's students.

Thus, the guidance of the Qur'an – which looks at the two worlds with two shining eyes familiar with the Unseen and points with two hands to the two happinesses for mankind – says concerning the truths which the one-eyed genius proceeding from the sick philosophy of Europe sees wrongly:

O man! The self and property you hold is not yours; it is in trust to you. The owner of the trust is an All-Compassionate and Munificent One, powerful over all things and with knowledge of all things. He wants to buy from you the property you hold so that He can guard it for you and it will not be lost. He will give you a good price for it in the future. You are a soldier under orders and charged with duties. Work in His name and act on His account, for He sends you the things you need as sustenance and protects you from the things you are unable to bear. The aim and result of this life of yours is to manifest your Owner's names and attributes. When a calamity comes your way, say:

To God we belong, and to Him is our return.(2:156)

That is to say, "I am in the service of my Owner, O calamity! If you have come with His permission and consent, greetings, you are welcome! For anyway some time we shall return to Him and enter His presence, and we yearn for Him. Since He will release us from the responsibilities of life, let the release and discharge be at your hand, O calamity, I consent to it. But if He has decreed your coming as a trial for my dutifulness and loyalty in preserving my trust, then without His permission and consent to surrender it to you, so long as I have the power, I will not surrender my Owner's trust to one not certainly charged to receive it."

Consider this one example out of a thousand and see the degrees in the

⁶ *Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 9; Ibn Maja, Zuhd, 19.*

instruction given by the genius of philosophy and guidance of the Qur'an. In reality, the two sides proceed in the manner described above, but the degrees of people in guidance and misguidance differ, and the degrees of heedlessness differ. Not everyone can perceive completely this truth in every degree, because heedlessness numbs the senses. In the present age it has so deadened them that the civilized do not feel this grievous pain and suffering. However, sensitivity is increasing and rending the veil of heedlessness due to developments in science and the warnings of death which every day displays thirty thousand corpses. Utter abhorrence and a thousand regrets should be felt for those who take the way of misguidance due to the Europeans' idols and the natural sciences, and for those who follow them in blind imitation!

O sons of this land! Do not try to imitate Europeans! How can you reasonably trust in and follow the vice and invalid, worthless thought of Europe after the boundless tyranny and enmity it has shown you? No! No! You who imitate them in dissoluteness, are not following them but unconsciously joining their ranks and putting to death both yourselves and your brothers. Know that the more you follow them in immorality the more you lie in claiming to be patriots! Because to follow them in this way is to hold your nation in contempt, to hold the nation up to ridicule!

God guides us, and you, to the Straight Path.

Sixth Note

O you unhappy person who is alarmed at the great numbers of the unbelievers and their agreement in denying some of the truths of belief, and as a result is shaken in his faith! You should know that value and importance do not lie in quantity and number. For if man is not a true human being, he is transformed into a diabolical animal, and the more he increases in animal greed, the more animal he becomes – like some Europeans and their imitators. You can see that in number, men are extremely few in comparison to the countless animals, and yet they are sovereign rulers over all the animal species and vicegerents of the earth.

The harmful unbelievers and those depraved wretches who follow in their way are a vicious species among Almighty God's animals which the All-Wise Maker has created for the development and prosperity of the world. He has made them a unit of measurement in order to make known to His believing servants the degrees of the bounties He has bestowed on them, and finally will consign those animals to the Hell they deserve.

There is no power in the unbelievers and misguided denying or disputing any truth of belief. Their agreement lacks power; a thousand deniers are equal to one denier. Even if the whole population of Istanbul, for example, denies seeing the new moon at the beginning of Ramadan, the proven testimony of two witnesses invalidates that great multitude's negation and agreement.⁷ In reality unbelief and misguidance are negation and denial, so are ignorance and non-existence, and the agreement of large numbers of unbelievers even has no significance.⁸ Since matters of belief are true and established, and their validity is proven, the judgement of two believers based on certain witnessing takes preference and prevails over the agreement of those vast numbers of the misguided. The reason for this is as follows:

Superficially, the claims of those who deny are the same but in fact they are diverse and cannot unite and so gain strength. While the claims of those who affirm unite and receive strength from each other. This is because a person who does not see the new moon of Ramadan in the sky says: "In my view, there is no moon. It has not appeared that I can see." And another says: "In my view, the moon has not appeared." And so does another. Each says that in his view, there is no moon. Since the view of each is different, and the causes that prevent them seeing it may also be different, their claims are all different as well; each claim cannot reinforce the other claims. But those who are affirming it are not saying: "In my view and opinion the new moon is there," but, "The new moon has actually appeared in the sky." Those who sight it all make the same claim and say: "In actuality..." That is to say, all the claims are the same. But since the views of those who are denying it are all different, their claims also are different. They are not making the judgement according to what actually is. Because a negation of what actually pertains cannot be proved; for that, an all-embracing proof is necessary.

It is an established rule that "absolute non-existence can only be proved with extreme difficulty."⁹ Yes, if you claim that a particular thing exists in the world, it is enough to merely point that thing out. But if you say it does not exist and you deny it, the whole world has to be sifted through in order to demonstrate it so that the denial can be proved. It is in consequence of this that the unbelievers denying a truth is like solving a problem or passing through a narrow hole or jumping over a ditch; it makes no difference

⁷ See, *Abu Da'ud*, Sawm, 14; al-Sarakhsi, *al-Mabsut*, iii, 139-40; al-Kashani, *Bada'i al-Sana'i*, ii, 81-2; al-Marghinani, *al-Hidaya*, i, 121.

⁸ See, Qur'an, 59:14.

⁹ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzi, *al-Sawa'iq al-Mursala*, iv, 1310; Idem., *al-Ruh fi'l-Kalam*, i, 198.

whether there is one man or a thousand, because they cannot help one another. But since those who affirm look at the heart of the matter and reality of the situation, their claims unite and the individual strength of each of them combines and assists all. It resembles lifting a great boulder: the more hands there are, the stronger they are and the easier it becomes.

Seventh Note

O miserable pseudo-patriot who fervently encourages Muslims to embrace this world and forcibly drives them to European industry and progress! Beware, don't let the bonds be broken that tie certain members of this nation to religion! If thus foolishly blindly imitating and crushed under foot, their bonds with religion are broken, those irreligious people will become as harmful for social life as fatal poison. For the apostate's conscience is completely corrupted and he becomes like poison in the life of society. It is because of this that according to the science of the principles of religion, "The apostate forfeits the right to life, whereas if an unbeliever is a member of the protected minorities or he makes peace, he has the right to life;" this is a principle of the Shari'a.¹⁰ Furthermore, according to the Hanafi school, the testimony of such an unbeliever is acceptable,¹¹ whereas the testimony of someone who has strayed from the path of the Shari'a is rejected. For he is perfidious.¹²

O miserable sinner who has deviated from Shari'a! Do not look at the multitude of the dissolute and be deceived; do not say: "Most people think the same as me!" For the depraved do not want to embrace depravity; they rather fall into it and cannot extricate themselves. There is no sinner who does not want to be righteous and who does not want to see his superior and chief as religious. Other than if – I seek refuge with God! – his conscience is corrupted through apostasy and he receives pleasure from poisoning, like a snake.

O crazy head and corrupted heart! Do you suppose that Muslims do not love the world, or that they do not think about the poverty into which they have fallen, and that they are in need of admonishment so that they do not forget their share of the world?

¹⁰ *Bukhari*, Jihad, 149; *Tirmidhi*, Hudud, 2; *Musnad*, i, 217, 282, 322; v, 231.

¹¹ al-Kashani, *Bada'i al-Sana'i*, ii, 254-5; vi, 266.

¹² See, *Tirmidhi*, Shahadat, 2; *Abu Da'ud*, 'Aqdiyya, 16; *Ibn Maja*, Ahkam, 30; *Musnad*, ii, 181, 204, 208.

Your supposition is false, your surmise, wrong. Their greed has increased; that is the reason they are impoverished. Because for Muslims, greed causes loss and indigence. The saying: “The greedy is subject to loss and disappointment”¹³ has become proverbial.

Yes, there are many things calling and driving man to the world, like his soul and its appetites, and need, and his senses and emotions, and the Devil, and the superficial enticement of the world, and false friends like you. While those who call to the hereafter, which lasts for ever, and to long-lasting eternal life, are few. If you are patriotic even to the tiniest degree towards this nation and the high aspirations you brag about are not lies, you should help the few who call to eternal life. For if you silence them and help the many, you will be befriending Satan!

Do you suppose this nation’s poverty is the result of a sort of religious asceticism or of laziness arising from abandoning the world? You are wrong to suppose that. Do you not see that the nations dominated by Europe, such as China and the Brahmins and Zoroastrians of India, and the blacks of Africa are poorer than we are? And do you not see that nothing apart from the most basic subsistence is left in the hands of Muslims? The rest is either stolen or seized by the European infidel tyrants or the dissemblers of Asia.

You should be certain that if your intention in forcibly driving the people of belief to degenerate civilization in this way is the country’s law and order and easy administration, you are mistaken and you are driving them down the wrong path. For it is more difficult to govern a hundred degenerates whose belief is shaken and morals corrupted, and to maintain public security among them, than to govern thousands of the righteous.

Thus, according to these principles, the people of Islam are not in need of being encouraged and driven to the world and to greed. Progress and public order cannot be secured in that way. They are rather in need of having their working conditions set in order, of security being established among them, and of having the principle of co-operation encouraged. And these needs can be brought about through the sacred commands of religion, and fear of God, and firm adherence to religion.

¹³ See, Ibn Qays, *Qura al-Dayf*, iv., 301; al-Maydani, *Majma’ al-Amthal*, i, 24.

Eighth Note

O idle man who is unaware of the pleasure of effort and happiness of work! Know that out of His perfect munificence, Almighty God placed the reward for work within it. He included the wage for work within the work itself. It is for this reason that in their particular duties, which are called creative commands, animate beings, and even from one point of view inanimate creatures, conform to the dominical commands with complete eagerness and a sort of pleasure. Everything from bees, flies, and chickens to the sun and the moon carry out their duties with perfect pleasure. This means there is an enjoyment in their work so that they perform it perfectly, although they do not think of the results since they do not possess intelligence.

If you ask: “Living creatures have the ability to receive pleasure, but how can inanimate beings experience eagerness and enjoyment?”

The Answer: Inanimate beings desire and seek a position, a rank, perfection, beauty, and order, not on their own accounts but on account of the divine names manifested on them. They become illumined and progress because in performing their natural duties, they become like mirrors and places of reflection of the names of the Light of Lights.

For example, if, although they are unimportant and of themselves without light, a droplet of water or fragment of glass are turned with their pure hearts to the sun, they become thrones to the sun and smile at you. Similarly, by being mirrors in respect of their duties towards the names of the All-Glorious One, who possesses absolute beauty and perfection, particles and beings rise from a very lowly position to a most elevated degree of manifestation and illumination like the droplet and fragment of glass. Since they rise to a luminous and exalted rank by virtue of their duties, it may be said that if it is possible and they have the capacity to receive pleasure, that is, if they receive a share of general life, they perform their duties with perfect pleasure.

For clear evidence of the pleasure to be found in the performance of duties consider your own members and emotions. Each receives different pleasures in performing the duties connected to your personal survival and the survival of the human race. The duties themselves are a means of enjoyment for them, and to give up a duty is a sort of torment for a member.

Further clear evidence is the self-sacrifice and courage which such animals as cocks and hens with chicks display in performing their duties: even

if hungry, the cock prefers the hens to itself, summoning them to feed. It does not peck up the food itself but allows them to do so. And it is clear that it feels pleasure, pride and enjoyment in carrying out this duty. This means it receives greater pleasure from carrying out the duty than from feeding. The hen too will sacrifice its life for its chicks, throwing itself at a dog. It will also remain hungry and give them grain. That is to say, it receives such pleasure in its duty that it makes preferable the pains of hunger and pangs of death.

Animal mothers receive pleasure in trying to protect their young, it is their duty when the young are small. When the young are grown, the duty ceases and so does the pleasure. The mothers beat their offspring and take the grains of feed from them. Only, for human mothers the duties continue for some time, for due to their weakness and impotence, humans are always children in one respect, and are all the time in need of compassion.

Consider the males and females of the animal species, like the mother hen and the cock, which acts as shepherd, and understand that they do not perform these duties on their own account, in their own names, or for their own perfections. For if they have to sacrifice their lives in the course of their duties, they do so. They rather perform them on account of the Munificent Bestower of Bounties, the All-Glorious Creator, who employs them in their duties, in which, through His mercy, He includes pleasure.

Evidence that the wage is present in the duty itself is this: plants and trees conform to the Glorious Creator's commands in a manner that implies eagerness and pleasure. For the fragrant scents they disperse, and their being adorned with decorations that attract the glances of their customers, and their sacrificing themselves for their shoots and fruits until they rot, shows to the attentive that they receive such pleasure in conforming to the divine commands that it rots and destroys them.

Look, fruit-bearing trees like the coconut, which bears so many cans of milk on its head, and the fig, request through the tongue of disposition the finest food like milk from the treasury of mercy; they receive it and give it to their fruits to eat, while they content themselves with muddy water.

In seeds also a longing is clearly apparent in their duty of germinating and sending out shoots. Like someone imprisoned in a constricted place longs to go out into a garden or open space, such a longing, such a joyful state, is also apparent in seeds, in their duty of sprouting.

It is because of this long and mysterious principle, which is in force in the universe and is called a divine practice, that those idle, lazy people who live in ease and affluence for the most part suffer more distress than those who strive and work. For the idle always complain about their lives and

want to pass them quickly by indulging in amusements. Whereas the one who works and strives is thankful and offers praise and does not want his life to pass quickly. “The person who lives in idleness and ease complains about his life, while the industrious striver is thankful” is a universal principle. It is also for this reason that the saying “Ease lies in hardship, and hardship in ease” has become proverbial.

Indeed, if inanimate creatures are studied carefully, it will be seen that on their undeveloped innate capacities and abilities expanding from the potential to the actual through great effort and exertion, a state similar to the above-mentioned divine practice comes about. This shows that the natural duty produces an eagerness and pleasure. If the inanimate creature partakes of general life, the eagerness is its own; otherwise it pertains to the thing which represents and supervises the creature. It may even be said that when subtle, delicate water receives the command to freeze, it conforms with such intense eagerness that it may split iron, breaking it into pieces. That is to say, in conveying the dominical command of “Expand!” with the tongue of freezing sub-zero temperature to the water in a closed iron container, it breaks the container with its intense eagerness. It splits the iron and itself becomes ice.

You can make analogies with this for everything. From the rotations of the suns and their peregrinations to the Mevlevi-like spinning and turning and vibrations of minute particles, all striving and motion in the universe turns on the law of divine determining and proceeds from the hand of divine power and is manifested through the creative command which comprises divine will, knowledge, and command.

Each particle, each creature, each living being, even, resembles a soldier who has different relations with all the sections of the army and different duties that look to each; all particles and living beings are similar to this. For example, a particle in your eye has a relation with the cells of the eye, with the eye itself, the facial nerves, and the blood vessels of the body; and it has duties arising from those relations, and yields benefits in accordance with those duties. And so on, you can compare everything with this. Thus, everything testifies to the Necessary Existence of the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One in two respects:

The First: By carrying out duties far exceeding its own power, everything testifies to the All-Powerful One’s existence.

The Second: By acting in conformity with the laws that form the order of the world and principles that perpetuate the balance of beings, everything testifies to that All-Knowing and All-Powerful One. For lifeless things like particles, and tiny animals like bees cannot know order and balance,

which are the subtle matters of the Clear Book. How can a lifeless particle and tiny bee read the subtle, significant matters of the Clear Book, which is in the hand of the All-Glorious One, who opens and closes and gathers up the levels of the heavens as though they were the pages of a notebook? If you crazily suppose the particle possesses an eye capable of reading the fine letters of that book, you can try to refute the particle's testimony!

Yes, the All-Wise Creator summarizes the principles of the Clear Book in most beautiful form and abbreviated fashion and with a particular pleasure and through a special need, and includes them in beings. If everything acts thus with a particular pleasure out of a particular need, it unknowingly conforms to the principles of the Clear Book. For example, the minute the mosquito with its proboscis comes into the world, it emerges from its house, and without hesitation attacks man's face; it strikes it with its long staff causing the water of life to spurt out, and it drinks it. It shows the skill of a practised warrior in dodging the blows directed at it. Who taught the tiny, inexperienced, newly-born creature the science of war and art of extracting water? Where did it learn it? I, that is, this unfortunate Said, confess that if I had been in the place of that mosquito with its proboscis, I could only have learnt this art, this warfare of attack and retreat, this extracting of water, only after lengthy instruction and much experience.

Compare with the mosquito animals like the bee, who receives inspiration, the spider, and the nightingale, who weaves his nest like a stocking, then compare plants to these animals in just the same way. Yes, the Absolutely Generous One (May His glory be exalted) has given each living being a memorandum written with the pen of pleasure and ink of need, and with it has deposited in the being the programme of His creative commands and index of its duties. See how the All-Wise One of Glory has written on a receipt the amount concerning the bee's duties, from the principles of the Clear Book, and placed it in the coffer in the bee's head. And the key to the coffer is the pleasure particular to the diligent bee. With it, it opens the coffer, reads the programme, understands the command, and acts. It proclaims the meaning of the verse,

And your Sustainer has inspired the bee.(16:68)

If you have listened to the whole of this Eighth Note and understood it completely, through the intuition of belief you will understand one meaning of,

And His mercy embraces all things,(7:156)

and one truth of the verse,

And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise,(17:44)

and one principle of the verse,

Verily when He intends a thing, His command is "Be!" and it is,(36:82)

and one point of the verse,

So glory to Him in Whose hands is the dominion of all things; and to Him will you all be brought back.(36:83)

Ninth Note

Know that among mankind prophethood is the summary and foundation of human good and perfections; True Religion is the index of prosperity and happiness; belief is sheer, transcendent good. Since apparent in this world are a shining beauty, an extensive and exalted good, an evident truth, and superior perfection, self-evidently truth and reality lie in prophethood and in the hands of prophets. While evil, misguidance, and loss are with those who oppose them.

Of the thousands of merits of worship, consider only the following: the Prophet (UWBP) unites the hearts of the affirmers of divine unity in the prayers of the Festivals and of Friday, and worship performed in congregation. He brings together their tongues in a single phrase so that one man responds to the sublime address of the Pre-Eternal Worshipped One with the voices, supplications, and invocations uttered by innumerable hearts and tongues. Strengthening one other, assisting one other and uniting, those voices, supplications, and invocations display so expansive a worship before the Godhead of the Pre-Eternal All-Worshipped One that the globe of the earth as though recites the invocations, offers the supplications, and performs the prayers with its regions, and conforms with its climes to the command of

And be steadfast in prayer,(2:43, etc.)

which was revealed with glory and tremendousness from beyond the heavens. Through this mystery of unity, man, a miniscule, powerless creature in the universe like a particle, by virtue of the vastness of worship becomes a beloved servant of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, vicegerent of the earth, the earth's ruler and chief of the animals, and the result and aim of the universe's creation.

Yes, if the voices of hundreds of millions of people proclaiming "God is Most Great!" after the five daily prayers, and particularly in the Festival Prayers, unite in the Manifest World as they do in the World of the Unseen,

the globe in its entirety becomes a huge human being. Since the “God is Most Great!” it proclaims with a mighty voice is equal to its own greatness, the believers in divine unity proclaiming “God is Most Great!” at the same instant in unison becomes a mighty “God is Most Great!” uttered by the earth. The earth is as though shaken with a great tremor with the invocations and glorifications of the World of Islam at the Festival Prayers. Proclaiming “God is Most Great!” with all its regions and climes, it forms its intention with the pure heart of the Ka‘ba, its qibla, and on its uttering “God is Most Great!” with the tongue of Mount Arafat in the mouth of Mecca, that single phrase assumes a form in the air in the cave-like mouths of the believers in all parts of the earth. Just as through the echo of the words “God is Most Great!” innumerable “God is Most Great’s” come into being, so too that acceptable recitation and invocation causes the heavens to ring out and resounds rising and falling in the Intermediate Realms.

We praise and glorify and exalt to the number of the particles of the earth the All-Glorious One, who made the earth thus prostrate to Him in worship, glorifying and exalting Him, and made it a mosque for His servants and cradle for His creatures. And we offer praise to Him to the number of beings that He made us members of the community of His Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), who taught us worship of this kind.

Tenth Note

Know, O heedless, confused Said! If you are to attain to the light of knowledge of God and look on it, and are to see its manifestations in the mirrors of signs and witnesses, and behold its proofs and evidences, you should not examine it with the fingers of criticism. You should not examine critically every light that passes over you or occurs to your heart or appears to your mind, or criticize it with the hand of hesitation. Do not stretch out your hand to catch hold of a light that appears to you! Rather withdraw from the things that cause heedlessness, be turned to the light, and wait. For I have observed that the witnesses and proofs of knowledge of God are of three sorts:

One Sort is like water. It is visible and palpable, but cannot be held with the fingers. For this sort, one has to detach oneself from illusions and submerge oneself in it as a whole. It cannot be spied on with the fingers of criticism; if it is, it flows away and is lost. The water of life cannot make the finger its dwelling!

The Second Sort is like air. It may be perceived, but it is neither visible nor may it be held. You should turn towards it with your face, your mouth, your spirit, and hold yourself before that breeze of mercy. But do not stretch out the hand of criticism towards it, for you will be unable to hold it. Breathe it with your spirit. If you look on it with the eye of hesitation and lay hands on it by criticizing it, it will escape you and depart. It will not make your hand its dwelling; it would never be content with it!

As for the Third Sort, it is like light. It is visible, but is neither palpable nor may it be held. So you should hold yourself before it with the heart's eye and spirit's vision; you should direct your gaze towards it and wait. Perhaps it will come of its own accord. For light cannot be held in the hand or hunted with the fingers; it can be chased only with the light of insight and intuition. If you stretch out a grasping, physical hand and weigh it on material scales, even if it is not extinguished, it will hide itself. For just as such light will not be consent to be imprisoned in matter, so it cannot be restricted, nor will it accept dense things as its lord and master.

Eleventh Note

Know that there is much kindness and compassion in the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition's manner of expression, for the majority of those it addresses are ordinary people. Their minds are simple so to flatter them it repeats the signs inscribed on the face of the heavens and earth, since their vision does not penetrate to fine things. It facilitates the reading of those large letters. For example, it teaches signs that are clearly apparent and easily read, like the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the rain being made to fall from the sky, and the raising to life of the earth. It rarely directs attention to the subtle signs written in small letters among the large ones lest ordinary people experience difficulty in reading them.

There is an eloquence, fluency, and naturalness in the Qur'an's styles whereby it is like a hafiz; it recites the verses inscribed with the pen of power on the pages of the universe. It is as though the Qur'an is the recitation of the book of the universe and the verbal expression of its order, and reads out the Pre-Eternal Insciber's attributes and writes His acts and deeds. If you want to see this eloquence of expression, listen with an aware and attentive heart to decrees like Sura 'Amma¹⁴ and the verse,

Say: O God! Lord of All Dominion.(3:26)

¹⁴ Sura 78, The Great News.

Twelfth Note

O my friends who are listening to these notes! You should know that the reason I sometimes write down my heart's prayers, entreaties, and supplications to my Sustainer, which ought to be secret, is to request divine mercy to accept the words of my writing when death has silenced the words of my tongue. Yes, my short-lived tongue's repentance and regret is insufficient to atone for my numberless sins. The tongue of writing is permanent to an extent, and more effectual. Thus, thirteen years ago,¹⁵ when as the result of a tumultuous storm of the spirit the laughter of the Old Said was being transformed into the weeping of the New Said – at a time I awoke from the heedless sleep of youth in the morning of old age – I wrote these entreaties and supplications in Arabic. The Turkish meaning of a part of them is as follows:

O my Compassionate Sustainer and Munificent Creator! Due to my mistaken choices my life and youth are lost and gone, and all that remains to me as their fruits are grievous sins, abasing sorrows, and misguiding doubts and scruples. I draw close to the grave shame-faced with this heavy load and sick heart. Like my departed friends, peers, and relations, without deviating to left or right I am involuntarily approaching the door of the grave.

The grave is the first stopping-place on the road leading from this fleeting realm to everlasting separation and all eternity; it is the first door opening onto it.¹⁶ But I am attached to the realm of this world and am captivated by it, and I have understood with absolute certainty that it is transient and will die, will perish and depart. The beings within it travel on convoy after convoy and disappear, as is to be observed. This world is exceedingly cruel and treacherous, especially for those like me with evil-commanding souls. For one pleasure, it inflicts a thousand pains. For a single grape, it deals a hundred slaps.

O my Compassionate Sustainer and Munificent Creator! As with the saying “All that is coming is close,”¹⁷ I see now that soon I will have donned my shroud, mounted the bier, bade farewell to my friends. Approaching my grave I call out to the court of Your mercy through the mute tongue of my corpse and the articulate tongue of my spirit: “Mercy! Mercy! Most Kind, Most Clement! Deliver me from the shame of my sins!”

¹⁵ Thirteen years before this treatise was written. (That is, 1920 or 1921 – Tr.)

¹⁶ See, *Tirmidhi*, Zuhd, 5; *Ibn Maja*, Zuhd, 32; *Musnad*, i, 63.

¹⁷ *Ibn Maja*, Muqaddima, 7; *Darimi*, Muqaddima, 23.

Now I have reached the brink of my grave. I am standing at the head of my corpse stretched out beside it. Raising my head to the court of Your mercy, I cry out beseechingly with all my strength: “Mercy! Mercy! Most Clement! Most Kind! Deliver me from the heavy burden of my sins!”

Now I have entered my grave, I am wrapped in my shroud. Those who came to send me on my way have left me alone and departed. I await Your forgiveness and mercy. I see clearly that other than You there is no place of refuge or succour. I cry out with all my strength at the ugly face of sin, the savage form of rebellion against God, at the narrowness of the place:

“Mercy! Mercy! Most Merciful One! Most Clement! Most Kind! Just Judge! Deliver me from the companionship of my ugly sins! Broaden my place! My God! Your mercy is my recourse. Your Beloved, the Mercy to All the Worlds, the means to Your mercy. I complain, not about You, but about my soul and my state.

“O my Munificent Creator and Compassionate Sustainer! Your creature and servant called Said is both rebellious, and impotent, and heedless, and ignorant, and sick, and base, and a sinner, and aged, and a wrong-doer, and like a runaway slave; but forty years late he has repented and wants to return to Your court. He seeks refuge in Your mercy. He confesses his countless sins and errors. Suffering from doubts and every sort of affliction, he beseeches and entreats You. If out of Your perfect mercy You accept him, if You forgive and have mercy on him, that befits you. For You are the Most Merciful of the Merciful. If You do not accept me, whose door can I approach? What other door is there? Other than You there is no sustainer to whose court recourse may be made. Other than You there is nothing fit to be worshipped with whom refuge may be sought.”

There is no god but You, You are One, You have no partner; the last word in this world and the first word in the hereafter, and in the grave, is: I testify that there is no god but God and I testify that Muhammad is His Messenger, may God Almighty grant him blessings and peace!

Thirteenth Note

This consists of five matters that have been the cause of confusion.

The First Matter

Although those who strive on the way of Truth should think only of their own duties, they think of those that pertain to Almighty God, base

their actions on them, and fall into error. It is written in the work *Adab al-Din wa'l-Dunya*, that one time Satan tempted Jesus (Upon whom be peace) saying: "The appointed hour of death and all things are specified by divine determining, so throw yourself down from this high place, and see, you'll die." Jesus (Upon whom be peace) replied: "God tries his servants, but His servants may not try their Sustainer."¹⁸ That is, "Almighty God tests his servant, saying to him: If you do that I shall do this. Let's see, are you able to do it? But the servant does not have the right and power to test Almighty God and say: If I do that, will You do this? To assume such a stance, as though subjecting Almighty God's dominicality to test and examination, is bad conduct and contrary to worship and man's being God's slave." Since this is the case, man should do his own duty and not interfere in Almighty God's business.

It is well-known that when one of the heroes of Islam who many times defeated Jenghis Khan's army, Jalaluddin Khwarazmshah, was going to the war, his ministers and followers told him: "You will be victorious; Almighty God will make you victor." He replied: "I am charged by God's command to act on the way of jihad, I do not interfere in God's concerns. To make us victor or vanquished is His business." Because he thus understood the mystery of submission, he was wondrously victorious on numerous occasions.

In his voluntary actions man should not think of the results which pertain to Almighty God. For example, for some of our brothers, when people join the Risale-i Nur it fires their enthusiasm and makes them increase their efforts. Then when others do not listen, the weak ones among them become demoralized and their enthusiasm wanes somewhat. Whereas God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace), who was the Absolute Master, Universal Leader, and Perfect Guide, took as his absolute guide the divine decree,

No more is the Messenger bound to do than deliver the message,(5:99)

and when people held back and did not listen, conveyed the message with greater effort, endeavour, and earnestness. For in accordance with the verse,

It is true you will not be able to guide everyone whom you love; but God guides those whom He will,(28:56)

¹⁸ Mawardi, *Adab al-Dunya wa'l-Din*, 12; Ma'mar ibn Rashid, *al-Jami'*, xi, 113; Abu Nu'aym, *Hilya al-Awliya'*, iv, 12; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Talbis Iblis*, i, 344; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba*, iv, 764.

he understood that making people listen and guiding them was Almighty God's concern. And he did not interfere in God's concerns.

And so, my brothers! You shouldn't be officious either by basing your actions on what is not your business, or take up a position testing your Creator!

The Second Matter

Worship and servitude of God look to the divine command and divine pleasure. The reason for worship is the divine command and its result is divine pleasure. Its fruits and benefits look to the hereafter. But so long as they are not the ultimate reason and not intentionally sought, benefits looking to this world and fruits which come about themselves and are given are not contrary to worship. They are rather to encourage the weak and make them incline to worship. If those fruits and benefits are made the reason for the invocation or recitation, or a part of the reason, it in part invalidates the worship. Indeed, it renders the meritorious invocation fruitless, and produces no results.

Thus, those who do not understand this mystery, recite for example the *Awrad Qudsiya Shah Naqshband*, which yields a hundred benefits and merits, or *Jawshan al-Kabir*, which yields a thousand, making some of those benefits their prime intention. Then they do not receive the benefits, and shall not receive them, and do not deserve to receive them. For the benefits may not be the reason for the invocation and may not themselves be intended and sought. For they are obtained when unsought, in consequence of the sincere invocation, as a favour. If they are intended, it damages the sincerity to an extent. Indeed, it ceases being worship and loses all value. But there is one matter, which is that weak people need something to encourage them to recite meritorious invocations. If they think of the benefits and eagerly recite them purely for God's sake and for the hereafter, it causes no harm and is acceptable even. But because this instance of wisdom has not been understood, many of them come to doubt or even to deny the benefits narrated from the spiritual poles and righteous ones of former generations when they do not receive them.

The Third Matter

“Happy is the man who knows his limits and does not exceed them.”¹⁹ The sun has manifestations from a fragment of glass and a droplet of water to a pool, the ocean, the moon, and the planets. Each contains the sun's

¹⁹ Bukhari, *al-Tarikh al-Kabir*, iii, 338; Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, v, 71; Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, iv, 182.

reflection and image in accordance with its capacity, and knows its limits. In accordance with its capacity, a drop of water says: “There is a reflection of the sun on me.” But it cannot say: “I am a mirror like the ocean.” In just the same way, the ranks of the saints have degrees, in accordance with the variety of the divine names’ manifestations. Each of the divine names has manifestations like a sun, from the heart to the divine throne. The heart too is a throne, but it cannot say: “I am like the divine throne.”

Thus, those who proceed reluctantly and with pride instead of knowing their impotence, poverty, faults, and defects, and prostrating entreatingly before the divine court, which form the basis of worship, hold their miniscule hearts equal to the divine throne. They confuse their droplet-like stations with the ocean-like stations of the saints. They stoop to artificiality, false display, and meaningless self-advertisement in order to make themselves fitting for those high ranks, and cause themselves many difficulties.

I n S h o r t : There is a Hadith which says: “All will perish save those who know, and those who know will perish save those who act, and those who act will perish save the sincere, and the sincere are in grave danger.”²⁰ That is to say, the only means of salvation and deliverance is sincerity. It is of the greatest importance to gain sincerity. The tiniest act performed with sincerity is preferable to tons performed without sincerity.²¹ A person should understand that what gains sincerity for his actions is his doing them purely because they are a divine command and that their result is divine pleasure, and he should not interfere in God’s business.

There is sincerity in everything. A jot of love, even, with sincerity is superior to tons of official love for which return is wanted. Someone described this sincere love as follows: “I do not want a bribe, recompense, return or reward for love, for love which seeks recompense is weak and short-lived.”²² Sincere love has been lodged in human nature and in all mothers. The compassion of mothers manifests this sincere love in its true meaning. Evidence that through the mystery of this compassion mothers do not want or seek a reward or bribe for their love of their children, is their readiness to sacrifice their lives and even their eternal happiness for them. All a hen’s capital is its life, and one hen sacrificed its head in order to save its chick’s head from the jaws of a dog – as Hüsrev witnessed.

²⁰ See, al-‘Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, ii, 415; al-Ghazali, *Ihya ‘Ulum al-Din*, iii, 414; iv, 179, 362.

²¹ al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iv, 341; Abu Nu’aym, *al-Hilya al-Awliya*, i, 244.

²² See, Ibn Qays, *Qura al-Dayf*, i, 95, 207; al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam*, 103.

The Fourth Matter

One should not accept bounties which arrive at the hands of apparent causes on account of the causes. If a cause like an animal or a tree does not possess will, it gives the bounty directly on account of Almighty God. It says: “In the Name of God” through the tongue of disposition and gives it to you. So you too should say: “In the Name of God,” and take it for God’s sake. If the cause possesses will, he should say: “In the Name of God,” and you may accept it, otherwise you should refuse it. Apart from its explicit meaning, the verse,

Eat not of [meats] on which God’s name has not been pronounced,(6:121)

has an implicit meaning: Do not partake of bounties that do not recall the True Bestower of Bounties and are not given in His name.

Since this is so, both the one who gives and the one who receives should say “In the name of God.” If the giver does not say it and you are in need, you say, “In the Name of God,” and seeing the hand of divine mercy upon him, kiss it in thanks, and take the bounty from him. That is to say, look from the bounty to the bestowal, and from the bestowal think of the True Bestower. To reflect in this way is a sort of thanks. Then if you wish, offer a prayer for the apparent means, since it was by his hand that the bounty was sent to you.

What deceives those who worship apparent causes is the two things coming together or being together, which is called ‘association;’ they suppose the two things cause one another. Also, since the non-existence of one thing is the cause of a bounty’s non-existence, they suppose that the thing’s existence is also the cause of the bounty’s existence. They offer their thanks and gratitude to the thing and fall into error. For a bounty’s existence results from all the bounty’s conditions and preliminaries. Whereas the bounty’s non-existence occurs through the non-existence of only a single condition.

For example, someone who does not open the canal to water the garden is the reason and cause of the garden drying up and the non-existence of bounties. But the existence of the garden’s bounties is dependent on hundreds of conditions besides the man’s duty and the bounties come into being through dominical will and power, which are the true cause. So understand just how clear is the error of this sophistry and how mistaken are those who worship causes!

Yes, ‘association’ is one thing and the cause is another. You receive a bounty, but the intention of a person to bestow it on you was the ‘associate’

of the bounty, not the cause. The cause was divine mercy. If the man had not intended to give you the bounty, you would not have received it and it would have been the cause of the bounty's non-existence. But in consequence of the above rule, the desire to bestow cannot be the cause of the bounty; it can only be one out of hundreds of conditions.

For example, some of the Risale-i Nur students (like Hüsrev and Re'fet) who have received Almighty God's bounties have confused the 'association' and the cause, and have been over-grateful to their Master. However, Almighty God put together the bounty of benefiting from the Qur'anic instruction which He bestowed on them, and the bounty of instructing which He had bestowed on their Master; He 'associated' the two. They say: "If our Master had not come here, we would not have received this instruction, so his instruction is the cause of our benefiting." However, I say:

"Brothers! The bounties Almighty God bestowed on you and on me arrived together. The cause of both bounties is divine mercy. Like you, I at one time confused the association with the cause, and felt much gratitude towards the hundreds of Risale-i Nur students with diamond pens like yourselves. I would say: 'If it had not been for them, how could have a semi-literate unfortunate like myself have performed this service?' Then I understood that after bestowing on you the sacred bounty by means of the pen, He bestowed on me success in this service. He associated the two; they were not the cause of each other. I do not thank you, but congratulate you. You too pray for me and congratulate me, rather than being grateful to me."

It may be understood from this Fourth Matter just how many degrees there are in heedlessness.

The Fifth Matter

Just as if the property of a community is given to one man, it is wrong; or if one man lays hands on charitable foundations which belong to the community, he does wrong; so too to ascribe to the leader or master of a community the results of that community's labours or the honour and merits resulting from its good works, is wrong both for the community and for the leader or master. Because to do so flatters his egotism and encourages pride. While being the door-keeper, he supposes himself to be the king. He also does wrong to himself. Indeed, he opens the way to a sort of concealed association of partners with God.

Yes, the colonel cannot claim for himself the booty, victory, and glory belonging to a regiment which conquers a citadel. The master and spiritual guide should not be considered to be the source and origin, but known to be

the place of reflection and manifestation. For example, heat and light reach you by means of a mirror. It would be crazy if you forget the sun, and considering the mirror to be the source, are grateful to it instead of being grateful to the sun. The mirror should be preserved because it is the place of manifestation. Thus, the guide's spirit and heart are a mirror; they are the place for reflecting the effulgence emanating from Almighty God. He is the means of its being reflected to his followers. He should not be ascribed a station higher with regard to the effulgence than that of being the means. It sometimes even happens that a master considered to be the source is neither the place of manifestation nor the source. The follower supposes the effulgences he receives due to the purity of his sincerity, or his strength of attachment, or his concentration on his master, or in other ways, to have come from the mirror of his master's spirit. Like by means of mesmerism, some people open up a window onto the World of Similitudes by gazing attentively at a mirror, and observe strange and wonderful things in the mirror. But they are not in the mirror; by focussing their attention on the mirror, a window opens up in their imaginations outside the mirror and they see those things. It is for this reason that sometimes the sincere student may be more advanced than a deficient shaykh. He returns, guides his shaykh and becomes the shaykh's shaykh.

Fourteenth Note

This consists of four short signs alluding to divine unity.

F i r s t S i g n

O worshipper of causes! You see a wondrous palace fashioned of rare jewels which is being made. Some of the jewels used in its construction are found only in China; others in Andalusia; others in Yemen; while others are found nowhere but Siberia. If you see that as it is being made, the precious stones are summoned that same day from north, south, east, and west, would you have any doubt that the master builder making the palace was a miracle-worker who ruled the whole earth?

Thus, every animal is a divine palace, and man is the finest and most wondrous of the palaces. Some of the jewels in the palace called man come from the World of Spirits, others from the World of Similitudes and the Preserved Tablet, and others from the world of the air, the world of light, and the world of the elements. He is also a wondrous palace whose needs stretch to eternity, whose hopes have spread to all the regions of the heavens

and the earth, and who has relations and ties with all the epochs of this world and the hereafter.

O you who considers yourself to be a true man! Since your true nature is thus, you can only be made by One for whom this world and the hereafter are each a dwelling, the earth and the skies each a page, and who has disposal over pre-eternity and post-eternity as though they were yesterday and tomorrow. In which case, the only being fit to be worshipped by man, and his place of recourse and saviour, can be one who rules the earth and the heavens, and holds the reins of this world and the next.

Second Sign

There are certain foolish people who because they do not recognize the sun, if they see it in a mirror, start to love the mirror. With intense emotion they try to preserve the mirror so that the sun within it will not be lost. Whenever the foolish person realizes that the sun does not die on the mirror's dying and is not lost on its being broken, he turns all his love to the sun in the sky. He understands then that the sun appearing in the mirror is not dependent on the mirror, and its continued existence does not depend on it. It is rather the sun that holds the mirror and supplies its shining light. The sun's continuance is not dependent on the mirror; the continuance of the mirror's living brilliance is dependent on the sun's manifestation.

O man! Your heart, identity, and nature are a mirror. The intense love of immortality in your nature and heart should be not for the mirror, nor for your heart and nature, but for the manifestation of the Enduring One of Glory whose manifestation is reflected in the mirror according to the mirror's capacity. However, out of stupidity that love of yours is directed to other places. Since it is thus, say: "O Enduring One! You alone are Enduring!" That is, "Since You exist and are enduring, whatever transience and non-existence want to inflict on us, let them, it is of no importance!"

Third Sign

O man! The strangest state the All-Wise Creator has included in your nature is your inability to settle in the whole world; like someone suffocating in prison, you gasp for somewhere wider than the world. Yet you enter the minutest matter, a memory, a moment, and settle in it. Your heart and mind which cannot settle in the vast world settle in that jot. You wander about with your intensest emotions in that brief moment, that tiny memory.

And He lodged in your nature such immaterial powers and subtle faculties that if some of them devoured the world, they would not be satisfied; and some of them cannot sustain even a minute particle within themselves. Like the eye cannot bear a hair although the head can bear heavy stones,

those faculties cannot bear the weight of even a hair, that is, some insignificant state arising from heedlessness and misguidance. They are sometimes extinguished and die even.

Since it is thus, be careful, tread with caution, be frightened of sinking! Do not drown in a mouthful, a word, a seed, a flash, a sign, a kiss! Do not plunge your extensive faculties, which can swallow the world, in such a thing. For there are things which are very small that can in one respect swallow things which are very large. The sky together with its stars can enter a small fragment of glass and be drowned. And most of the pages of your actions and leaves of your life enter your faculty of memory, tiny as a mustard-seed. So too there are tiny things that swallow things thus large, and contain them.

Fourth Sign

O world-worshipping man! You conceive of your world as very broad, yet it resembles a narrow grave. But since the walls of that narrow grave-like dwelling are of glass, they are reflected one within the other and stretch as far as the eye can see. While being narrow as the grave, your world appears to be as large as a town. For despite both the right wall, which is the past, and the left wall, which is the future, being non-existent, they are reflected one within the other, unfolding the wings of present time, which is extremely brief and narrow. Reality mixes with imagination, and you suppose a non-existent world to be existent.

On being spun round at speed, a line appears to be broad like a surface, despite in reality being a fine line. Your world too is in reality narrow, but due to your heedlessness, delusions, and imagination, its walls have drawn far apart. If driven by a calamity you stir in that narrow world, you will hit your head on the wall, which you supposed to be distant. It will dispel the illusions in your head and banish your sleep. Then you will see that that broad world of yours is narrower than the grave, finer than the Bridge of Sirat. Your life passes faster than lightning, it pours away more swiftly than tea.

Since worldly life and the life of the flesh and animal life are thus, shake free of animality, leave behind corporeality, enter the level of life of the heart and spirit! You will find a sphere of life, a world of light, far broader than the world you imagined was broad. The key to that world is to make the heart utter the sacred words "There is no god but God," which express the mysteries of divine unity and knowledge of God, and to make the spirit work them.

Fifteenth Note

This consists of three matters.²³

The First Matter

This is the verse

*And whoever has done an atom's weight of good shall see it, * And whoever has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it.(99:7-8)*

which indicates the fullest manifestation of the name of Preserver. If you want proof of this truth of the All-Wise Qur'an, look at the pages of the book of the universe, which is written on the pattern of the Clear Book; you will see the maximum manifestation of the divine name of Preserver and many things similar in many ways to the supreme truth of this verse.

For instance, take a handful of seeds of various trees, flowers, and plants, which are like the small coffer and are themselves all different and various, then bury them in the darkness of simple and lifeless earth. Then water them with simple water, which lacks balance, cannot distinguish things, and runs wherever you pour it.

Now come back in the spring, the arena of the annual resurrection, and look! Note carefully the time in the spring when the Israfil-like angel of thunder calls out to the rain as though sounding his trumpet, giving the good news of the breath of life being breathed into the seeds buried beneath the ground; you will see that under the manifestation of the divine name of Preserver, those seeds that resemble each other and are all mixed up and confused, conform perfectly and without error to the creative commands proceeding from the All-Wise Creator. They conform so exactly that in their growth a brilliant consciousness, insight, purpose, will, knowledge, perfection, and wisdom are apparent. For you see that those seeds which all resemble each other separate out and are distinguished from one another.

For example, this tiny seed has become a fig-tree, it has started to spread the All-Wise Creator's bounties over our heads. It distributes them, stretching them out to us with its hands. And these two seeds which are superficially the same have produced the flowers called sun-flowers and pansies. They have adorned themselves for us. They smile in our faces, making us love them. And this sort of seed has produced fine fruits; they became shoots, then trees. Whetting our appetites with their delectable

²³ The second and third matters of the Fifteenth Note are parts of the Twenty-Fourth Flash. The second is included in the Twenty-Fourth Flash, and the third in *Barla Lahikasi*.

tastes, scents, and forms, they invite us to themselves. They sacrifice themselves for their customers so that they may rise from the level of vegetable life to that of animal life. And so on. You can make further examples in the same way. The seeds developed in such a way that the single handful became a garden filled with multifarious trees and flowers. There was no fault, no error among them. They demonstrated the meaning of the verse,

So turn your vision again; do you see any flaw?(67:3)

Through the manifestation and bestowal of the name of Preserver, each of the seeds preserves and shows without confusion or defect the legacy inherited from its parent and origins.

This is a certain indication that the Preserver who carries out this wondrous work will demonstrate the supreme manifestation of His preservation at the resurrection of the dead and Last Judgement.

Yes, the manifestation of preservation that is thus faultless and without defect in insignificant, fleeting, transient states is a decisive proof that the actions, works, words, and good deeds and bad deeds of man, the holder of the Supreme Trust and vicegerent of the earth – deeds which have an eternal effect and supreme importance – are precisely preserved and will be subject to account.

Does man suppose he will be left to his own devices? God forbid! He is destined for eternity, and for everlasting happiness and perpetual misery. He will be called to account for all his actions, small and great, many and few. He will receive either reward or punishment.

Witnesses to the maximum manifestation of preservation and to the truth of the first-mentioned verse are beyond count or calculation. Those we have shown in this Matter are a mere drop from the ocean, an atom from a mountain.

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

* * *

The Eighteenth Flash

This has been published in *Sikke-i Tasdik-i Gaybî* (The Ratifying Stamp of the Unseen) and in hand-duplicated editions of *Lem'alar* (The Flashes Collection).

* * *

The Nineteenth Flash

On Frugality

[This treatise is about frugality and contentment, and wastefulness and extravagance.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Eat and drink, but waste not by excess.(7:31)*

This verse gives most important and wise instruction in the form of categorically commanding frugality and clearly prohibiting wastefulness. The matter contains seven points.

FIRST POINT

The All-Compassionate Creator desires THANKS in return for the bounties He bestows on mankind, while wastefulness is contrary to thanks, and slights the bounty and causes loss. Frugality, however, shows respect for the bounty and is profitable. Yes, frugality is both a sort of thanks, and shows respect towards the divine mercy manifested in the bounties, and most definitely is the cause of plenty. So too, like abstinence, it is health-giving for the body, and since it saves a person from the degradation of what is in effect begging, is a cause of self-respect. It is also a powerful means of experiencing the pleasure to be found in bounties, and tasting that pleasure in bounties which apparently afford no pleasure. As for wastefulness, since it is opposed to these instances of wisdom, it has grave consequences.

SECOND POINT

The All-Wise Maker created the human body in the form of a wonderful palace and resembling a well-ordered city. The sense of taste in the mouth is like a door-keeper, and the nerves and blood vessels like telephone and telegraph wires; they are the means by which the sense of taste communi

cates with the stomach, which is at the centre of the body, and informs it of the food that enters the mouth. If the body and stomach have no use for it, it says: "Forbidden!", and expels it. And sometimes the food is harmful and bitter as well as not being beneficial for the body, and it spits it out immediately.

Thus, since the sense of taste is a doorkeeper, from the point of view of administering the body, the stomach is a master and a ruler. If the gifts arriving at the palace or city and those given to the palace's ruler are worth one hundred liras, only five liras' worth is appropriate for the doorkeeper in the form of a tip, lest he becomes conceited and is corrupted, then forgetting his duty he lets revolutionaries into the palace who will give him a bigger tip.

In consequence of this mystery we shall now imagine two mouthfuls. One consists of nutritious food like cheese and egg and costs forty para,¹ and the other is of the choicest pastries and costs ten kurush. Before entering the mouth, there is no difference in these two mouthfuls with respect to the body, they are equal. And after passing down the throat, they are still equal in nourishing the body. Indeed, forty paras' worth of cheese is sometimes more nutritious. Only, in regard to pampering the sense of taste in the mouth, there is a half-minute difference. You can see from this what a meaningless and harmful waste it is to increase the cost from forty para to ten kurush for the sake of half a minute.

Now, although the gift arriving for the palace's ruler is worth one lira, to give the doorkeeper a tip nine times bigger than his due will corrupt him. He will declare: "I am the ruler," and will allow to enter whoever gives him the biggest tip and most pleasure; he will cause a revolution and conflagration to break out. Then he will compel them to cry out: "Oh! Call the doctor and get him to put out this fire in my stomach and bring down my temperature!"

Thus, frugality and contentment are in conformity with divine wisdom; they treat the sense of taste as a doorkeeper and give it its remuneration accordingly. As for wastefulness, since it is to act contrarily to wisdom, it swiftly receives its punishment, upsets the stomach, and causes real appetite to be lost. Producing from the unnecessary variety of foods a false and artificial appetite, it causes indigestion and illness.

¹ There were forty *para* to a *kurush*, and a hundred *kurush* to a *lira*. (Tr.)

THIRD POINT

We said in the Second Point that the sense of taste is a doorkeeper, and indeed, for the heedless and those who have not progressed spiritually or advanced in the way of thanks, it is like a doorkeeper. Wastefulness should not be indulged in or the sense of taste's price be raised from one to ten for the sake of giving it pleasure.

However, the sense of taste of those truly on the way of thanks, those seeking reality, and those who approach reality with their hearts is like a supervisor and inspector in the kitchens of divine mercy, as is explained in the comparison in the Sixth Word. Its duty is to recognize and weigh up the varieties of divine bounties on the tiny scales present in it to the number of foods, and to send the body and stomach news of the food in the form of thanks. In this respect the sense of taste does not only look to the physical stomach; since it looks also to the heart, spirit, and mind, it holds a position and importance superior to the stomach. It can follow its pleasure on condition it is not wasteful or extravagant, and is purely to carry out its duty of thanks and recognize and perceive the varieties of divine bounty, and on condition it is licit and does not lead to degradation and begging. In fact, delicious foods may be preferred in order to employ the tongue which bears the sense of taste in giving thanks. The following is an instance of Shaykh Geylani's wonder-working which alludes to this truth:

At one time, being instructed by Ghawth al-A'zam, Shaykh Geylani (May his mystery be sanctified), was the only son of an aged and anxious woman. This esteemed lady had gone to her son's cell and seen that he had nothing to eat but a piece of dry, black bread. Her maternal compassion was aroused by his emaciated condition resulting from his asceticism. She felt sorry for him. Later she went to Ghawth al-A'zam in order to complain, and saw the Shaykh was tucking into roast chicken. Out of her concern, she declared: "O Master! My son is dying of hunger while you are eating chicken!" Whereupon Ghawth al-A'zam said to the chicken: "Rise up, with God's permission!" At this, the cooked chicken bones assembled and were thrown out of the dish as an entire live chicken. This has been related unanimously through many reliable and documented channels as a marvel of someone whose extraordinary wonder-working is world-famous. Ghawth al-A'zam said to her: "When your son reaches this level, then he too can eat chicken."² Thus, the meaning of Ghawth al-A'zam's words is this: whenever your son's spirit rules his body, and his heart rules the

² See, Gilani, *Ghunya al-Talibin*, 502; Nabhani, *Jami' Karamat al-Awliya'*, ii, 203.

desires of his soul, and his reason rules his stomach, and he wants pleasure for the sake of offering thanks, then he may eat delicious things.

FOURTH POINT

According to the Hadith the meaning of which is: “The thrifty will suffer no family difficulties as regards livelihood,”³ the frugal and economical person will not suffer undue trouble and hardship in supporting his family.

There are countless proofs that frugality yields plenty and good living. For instance, I have seen myself and I can say according to the testimony of those who have befriended and assisted me that by being frugal I have sometimes seen a tenfold increase, and so have my friends. Even, nine years ago – and now it is thirty, a number of the tribal leaders who were exiled to Burdur together with me did their best to make me accept their *zakat* so that I would not suffer privation and humiliation due to lack of money. I said to those rich leaders: “I have very little money, but I am frugal and economical and I am accustomed to being content with little. I am richer than you.” I refused their repeated and insistent offers. It is worth noting that two years later some of those who had offered me their *zakat* were in debt because they had not been frugal. Praise be to God, seven years on from that, thanks to the plenty resulting from frugality that small amount of money was still sufficient for me; it did not degrade me, nor compel me to present my needs to the people, nor make me deviate from my way of self-sufficiency and being independent of people, which is one of the principles of my life.

The person who is not frugal is certain to be abased and reduced to poverty and in effect to begging. At the present time, money, the means of wastefulness and extravagance, is extremely expensive. Sometimes a person sells his honour and self-respect and bribes are taken to obtain it. Sometimes the sacred things of religion are sold, then some inauspicious money received in return. That is to say, material goods worth ten kurush are procured in return for an immaterial loss of a hundred lira.

However, according to the implied meaning of the verse,

Indeed, it is God Who gives all sustenance, Lord of all power and strength,(51:58)

and the explicit meaning of the verse,

And there is no moving creature on the earth but its sustenance is provided by God,(11:6)

³ *Musnad*, i, 447; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, v, 454, no: 7939; al-Hindi, *Kanz al-'Ummal*, iii, 36; vi, 49, 56, 57.

if a person is frugal and restricts his needs to the essential, he will find enough sustenance to live on in unexpected ways. The verse guarantees it. Yes, there are two sorts of sustenance:⁴

One is true sustenance, which is enough to subsist on. As the verse decrees, this is guaranteed by the Sustainer. So long as man's inclination towards evil does not interfere, he will find this essential sustenance under any circumstances. He will be compelled to sacrifice neither his religion, nor his honour, nor his self-respect.

The second sort is metaphorical sustenance, due to which and its abuse, inessential needs become like essential ones, and owing to the calamity of custom and tradition, people become addicted to them and cannot give them up. Such sustenance is not guaranteed by the Sustainer, so the obtaining of it is extremely expensive – especially at the present time. These unfruitful, inauspicious goods are obtained by first of all sacrificing one's self-respect and accepting degradation, and sometimes stooping to what is in effect begging, kissing the feet of the vile, and sometimes sacrificing the sacred things of religion, which are the light of eternal life.

Also, at this time of poverty and hardship, the distress people with consciences feel at the anguish of the hungry and needy sours any pleasure to be had from unlawfully acquired money. As far as doubtful goods are concerned, one has to make do with them to the minimum degree necessary during strange times such as these. For according to the rule, "Necessity is determined according to its extent," if compelled, illicit goods may be taken to the minimum degree necessary, not more. Someone in dire need may eat prohibited meat, but he may not eat his fill. He may eat enough only to remain alive. Also, one could not fully enjoy more than this in the presence of a hundred people who are hungry.

The following is a story showing that frugality is the cause of dignity and distinction:

One time, Khatim Tay, who was world-famous for his generosity, was giving a large banquet. Having given his guests a superfluity of presents, he went out to walk in the desert. There he saw a poor old man carrying a load of thorny bushes and plants on his back. The thorns were piercing his skin and making him bleed. Khatim said to him: "Khatim Tay is giving a large banquet and giving away gifts. Go there and you will be given five hundred kurush in return for your load worth five kurush." The frugal old man replied: "I raise and carry this thorny load with my self-respect; I am not going to become obliged to Khatim Tay." Later, they asked Khatim

⁴ See, al-Jurjani, *Tarikh Jurjan*, 366; al-Ghazali, *al-Maqsad al-Asna*, 85-6.

Tay: “Have you come across anyone more generous and estimable than yourself?” He replied: “The frugal old man I met in the desert was more estimable, elevated, and generous than me.”⁵

FIFTH POINT

Out of His perfect generosity, Almighty God makes a poor man understand the pleasure of His bounty the same as a rich man, and a beggar the same as a king. Indeed, the pleasure a poor man obtains from a dry piece of black bread because of hunger and being frugal is greater than the pleasure a king or a rich man obtains from the choicest pastries consumed with the weariness and lack of appetite resulting from excess.

It is surprising but some dissolute, extravagant people accuse the frugal and economical of being mean and stingy. God forbid! Frugality is dignity and generosity. Stinginess and meanness are the inner face of the apparently noble qualities of the wasteful and extravagant. There is an event corroborating this which occurred in my room in Isparta the year this treatise was written. It was as follows:

One of my students insisted on my accepting – contrary to my rule and life-long principle – a present of nearly two and a half okkas⁶ of honey. However much I reiterated my rule, he was not to be persuaded. So I told the three brothers who were with me to take it, saying that by being economical they would eat the honey for thirty to forty days in the months of Sha‘ban and Ramadan, and not lack something sweet to eat, and the one who brought it would earn the reward. I myself had an okka of honey as well. Although my three friends were moderate and appreciated frugality, because they offered the honey to each other, and flattered each others’ souls, and each preferred the others to himself, which in one respect is a good quality, they forgot about being economical. They finished the two and a half okkas of honey in three nights. Laughing, I said: “I would have given you the taste of that honey for thirty to forty days, but you have reduced the thirty days to three. I hope you enjoyed it!” I consumed my one okka of honey frugally. For the whole of Sha‘ban and Ramadan both I ate it, and, Praise be to God, every evening while breaking the fast I gave each of those brothers a spoonful,⁷ and it became the means of significant reward. Perhaps anyone who saw my doing this thought it was stinginess and what my brothers did for three nights was generosity. But in point of

⁵ See, *Bukhari*, *Musaqat*, 13; *Zakat*, 50; *Buyu’*, 15; *Ibn Maja*, *Zakat*, 25; *Musnad*, i, 167.

⁶ One *okka* equalled 2.8 lbs. (Tr.)

⁷ That is, a fairly large teaspoon.

fact I perceived that concealed beneath the apparent stinginess lay an elevated dignity, increase and plenty, and great reward. If they had not stopped, it would have led to something much worse than stinginess beneath the generosity and excess, like beggarliness and watching another's hand greedily and expectantly.

SIXTH POINT

There is a great difference between frugality and stinginess. Just as humility is a praiseworthy quality superficially resembling but different to the bad quality of servility, and dignity is a laudable virtue superficially similar to but different from the bad quality of haughtiness, so too frugality, which was one of the Prophet's (UWBP) elevated qualities and indeed is one of the things on which the divine wisdom in the order of the universe depends,⁸ bears no relation to stinginess, which is a mixture of baseness, avarice, miserliness, and greed. There is merely a superficial resemblance. The following is an event corroborating this fact:

'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, who was one of the famous Companions of the Prophet known as the seven 'Abdullahs,⁹ was the greatest and most important of the Caliph 'Umar, Faruq al-A'zam's sons, and one of the most distinguished and learned of the Companions. One day while shopping in the market, in order to be economical and to preserve the confidence and integrity on which trade depends,¹⁰ he disputed hotly over something worth a few kurush. One of the Companions saw him, and imagining the Illustrious Successor of the Prophet on Earth, the Caliph 'Umar's son's wrangling over a few kurush to be an extraordinary stinginess, he followed him in order to understand his conduct. Next he saw that 'Abdullah was entering his blessed house and had spotted a poor man at the door. He chatted with him for a bit, and the man left. Then he came out of the second door of the house and saw another poor man. He chatted with him for a while too, and the man left. The Companion, who was watching from the distance, was curious. He went and asked the poor men: "Abdullah paused a while with you. What did he do?" Each of them replied: "He gave me a gold piece." "Glory be to God!" exclaimed the Companion, and thought to himself: "How is it that he wrangled like that over a few kurush in the market, then was completely happy to give away two hundred kurush in his house without letting anyone know?"

⁸ *Abu Da'ud*, Adab, 2; *Musnad*, i, 296.

⁹ The seven 'Abdullah's (al-'Abadila al-Sab'a): 'Abdullah b. 'Abbas, 'Abdullah b. 'Umar, 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud, 'Abdullah b. Rawaha, 'Abdullah b. Salam, 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-'As, 'Abdullah b. Abi Awfa (R. A.). (Tr.)

¹⁰ See, *Tirmidhi*, Buyu', 3; *Ibn Maja*, Tijarat, 1; *Darimi*, Buyu', 98.

He went to ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar and said: “O Imam! Solve this difficulty for me! In the market you did that, while in your house you did this.” ‘Abdullah replied to him saying: “What I did in the market was not stinginess, but arose from frugality; it was perfectly reasonable, and to preserve confidence and honesty, which are the basis and spirit of commerce. And what I did by my house arose from the heart’s compassion and the spirit’s perfection. Neither was the first stinginess, nor the second immoderateness.”

Alluding to this, Imam Abu Hanifa said: “There can be no excess in good, just as there is no good in excess.”¹¹ That is to say, just as in good works and benevolence there can no excess or wastefulness – on condition they are for the deserving, so there is no good at all in wastefulness and immoderateness.

SEVENTH POINT

Excess and wastefulness lead to greed, and greed has three consequences:

The First is dissatisfaction, and as for dissatisfaction, it destroys endeavour and enthusiasm for work, and causes the dissatisfied person to complain instead of giving thanks, and makes him lazy. Such a person abandons possessions which though few in number are licit,¹² and seeks possessions which are illicit and trouble-free. He sacrifices his self-respect on the way, and even his honour.

The Second Consequence of Greed is disappointment and loss. The greedy person drives away what he wishes for, is found disagreeable, and is deprived of assistance and help. He even confirms the saying: “The greedy person is unsuccessful and suffers loss.”¹³

Greed and contentment have their effects in the animal kingdom in accordance with an extensive law. For instance, the natural contentment of trees needy for sustenance makes their sustenance hasten to them; this shows the huge benefits of contentment. While animals’ running after their sustenance greedily and with difficulty and deficiency demonstrates the great loss of greed.

¹¹ See, al-Ghazali, *Ihya ‘Ulum al-Din*, i, 262; Qurtubi, *al-Jami‘ li-Ahkam al-Qur’an*, vii, 110; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, v, 454.

¹² Consumers increase and producers decrease as a result of wastefulness and lack of economy. Everyone fixes his eye on the government’s door, and industry, trade, and agriculture, on which social life depend, decrease. And the nation declines and is impoverished.

¹³ See, Ibn Qays, *Qura al-Dayf*, iv, 301; al-Maydani, *Majma‘ al-Amthal*, i, 214

Also, the contentment apparent through their tongues of disposition of the helpless young and a pleasant food like milk flowing out to them from an unexpected place, while wild animals greedily attack their deficient and dirty sustenance, prove our claim in clear fashion.

Also, the contented attitude of fat fish being the means of their perfect sustenance, and intelligent animals like foxes and monkeys remaining puny and weak because they cannot find sufficient sustenance although they pursue it with greed, again show the degree to which greed is the cause of hardship and contentment the cause of ease.

Also, certain people finding through greed, usury, and trickery their degrading, miserable, illicit sustenance only at subsistence level, and the contented attitude of nomads and their living with dignity and finding sufficient sustenance, proves decisively what we say once more.

Also, many scholars¹⁴ and literary figures¹⁵ being reduced to poverty because of the greed arising from their intelligence, and many stupid and incapable people becoming rich due to their innate contentedness¹⁶ proves decisively that licit sustenance comes because of impotence and want, not by virtue of ability and will. Indeed, licit sustenance is in inverse proportion to ability and will. For the more children increase in ability and will, the more their sustenance decreases, the further it is from them and the more difficult to digest. According to the Hadith, "Contentment is an unfailing treasure,"¹⁷ contentment is a treasury of good living and ease of life, while greed is a mine of loss and abasement.

The Third Consequence: Greed destroys sincerity and damages actions in regard to the hereafter. For if a God-fearing person suffers from greed, he will desire the regard of others, and someone who considers the

¹⁴ It was asked of Bozorgmehr, the Wazir of the Persian Shah Nushirvan the Just and scholar famous for his intelligence, "Why are the learned to be seen at the doors of rulers and rulers not to be seen at the doors of the learned, whereas learning is superior to rulership?" He replied: "Because of the knowledge of the learned and the ignorance of the rulers." That is to say, due to their ignorance, rulers do not know the value of learning so that they approach the doors of the learned to seek it. But because of their knowledge, the learned know the value of their rulers' goods and possessions and seek them at the rulers' doors. Explaining thus wittily the greed resulting from the cleverness of the learned, which causes some of them to be impecunious and in want, Bozorgmehr replied in a refined manner.

Signed: Hüsrev

¹⁵ An event corroborating this: in France, a beggar's licence was given to literary figures because they were so proficient at begging.

Signed: Süleyman Rüştü

¹⁶ See, al-Daylami, *al-Musnad*, iv, 385.

¹⁷ See, Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, vii, 84; Bayhaqi, *al-Zuhd*, ii, 88; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, ii, 133.

attention of others cannot have complete sincerity. This consequence is extremely important and worth noticing.

I n S h o r t : Excess and wastefulness lead to lack of contentment. And lack of contentment destroys enthusiasm for work; it causes laziness, opens the door to complaining about life, and makes the dissatisfied person grumble continuously.¹⁸ Also, it destroys sincerity, and opens the door to hypocrisy. And it destroys self-respect, and points the way to begging.

As for frugality and economy, these result in contentment. According to the Hadith, “The contented person is respected, and the greedy person despised,”¹⁹ contentment gives rise to self-esteem. It also encourages effort and work. It increases enthusiasm, and induces striving. For example, a person worked for one day. Because he was content with the petty wage he received in the evening, he worked again the second day. But because the wasteful and immoderate person was not content, he did not work the following day, or if he did, he did so without enthusiasm.

Also, the contentment arising from frugality opens the door of thanks and closes the door of complaint. Throughout his life, the contented person is thankful. And in so far as he is independent of others due to his contentment, he does not seek their regard. The door of sincerity is opened and the door of hypocrisy closed.

I observed the fearsome harm of wastefulness and excess on a broad scale. It was as follows: nine years ago I visited a fortunate town. It was winter and I could not see its sources of wealth. Several times the town’s Mufti, may God have mercy on him, said to me, “Our people are poor.” His words touched me. The next five or six years I felt continual pity for the people of the town. Eight years later I again visited it, in the summer. I looked at the gardens and recalled the words of the late Mufti. “Glory be to God!”, I exclaimed, “These gardens’ crops are far greater than the needs of the town. Its people should be very rich.” I was amazed. Then remembering a truth that has never deceived me and is my guide in understanding other truths, I understood that the abundance and plenty had disappeared due to wastefulness and excess, so that although the town possessed such sources of wealth, the late Mufti used to say: “Our people are poor.”

Indeed, just as giving *zakat* and being frugal and economical is proven by experience to be the cause of increase and plenty in goods and

¹⁸ Whenever you meet a wasteful, immoderate person, you hear complaints. No matter how rich he is, his tongue still complains. But when you meet even the poorest, but contented, person, you hear only thanks.

¹⁹ See, Ibn al-Athir, *al-Nihaya fi Ghara'ib al-Hadith*, iv, 114; al-Zabidi, *Taj al-'Arus*, xxii, 90.

possessions,²⁰ so too innumerable events show that wastefulness and the failure to give *zakat* cause increase and plenty to be taken away.

The Plato of Islamic sages, the shaykh of physicians, and master of philosophers, the famous genius Abu ‘Ali Ibn Sina explained the verse,

Eat and drink, but waste not in excess(7:31)

just from the point of view of medicine, as follows: “I concentrate the science of medicine in two lines, the best word is the shortest; when you eat, eat little, and do not eat again for four or five hours. Health lies in digestion. That is to say, eat so much as you can digest easily. The heaviest and most tiring thing for your stomach and yourself is to eat many things one on top of the other.”²¹

An Extraordinary and Instructive ‘Coincidence’.²² In all the copies of the Treatise on Frugality written by five or six scribes – three of whom were inexperienced, who were in different places far from one another, were writing it out from different copies, whose handwriting was all different, and who did not take the Alifs²³ into consideration at all, the Alifs which ‘coincided’ numbered fifty-one, or with a prayer, fifty-three. These numbers coinciding with the date the Treatise on Frugality was written and copied, which was [13]51 according to the Rumi calendar and [13]53 according to the Hijri calendar, undoubtedly cannot be chance. It is an indication that the blessing of plenty resulting from frugality has risen to the degree of wondrousness, and that this year is fit to be named Frugality Year.

Indeed, this wonder of frugality was proved two years later, during the Second World War, by the widespread hunger, destruction, and waste, and mankind and everyone being compelled to be frugal.

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

²⁰ See, al-Tabarani, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, x, 128; Idem., *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsat*, ii, 161, 274; al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, iii, 382; iv, 84.

²¹ That is to say, the most harmful thing for the body is to eat without having had a break of four to five hours, or to fill the stomach with a variety of foods one on top of the other just for the pleasure of it.

²² ‘Coincidence’ (T. *tevâfik*; Ar. *tawafuq*): the correspondence of letters or words in lines or patterns on one or several pages. (Tr.)

The Twentieth Flash

On Sincerity

[While being the first of the five Points which form the Second of the seven Matters of the Seventeenth Flash, this became the Twentieth Flash because of its importance.]

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

The verse:

Verily We sent the Book down to you in truth, so worship God in sincerity, for God's is sincerely practised religion,(39:2)

and the noble saying of the Prophet (UWBP):

"All men will perish, except the scholars, and all scholars will perish except those who act in accordance with their knowledge, and all of them will perish except the sincere, and even the sincere are in great danger,"¹

demonstrate together how important a principle of Islam is sincerity. From among the innumerable points concerning sincerity, we will briefly expound only five.

Note: An auspicious sign of blessed Isparta which causes one to offer thanks is that compared with other places, there is no visible rivalry and dispute between the pious, those who follow the Sufi path, and the religious scholars. Even if the required true love and union is not present, comparatively speaking, there is no harmful rivalry and conflict.

¹ See, al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, ii, 415; al-Ghazali, *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din*, iii, 414.

First Point

An Important and Awesome Question: Why is it that while the worldly and the neglectful, and even the misguided and hypocrites, co-operate without rivalry, the people of religion, the religious scholars, and those who follow the Sufi path, oppose each other in rivalry, although they are the people of truth and concord? Agreement belongs in reality to the people of concord and dispute to the hypocrites; how is it that these two have changed places?

The Answer: We will set forth seven of the extremely numerous causes of this painful, disgraceful and awesome situation, one that causes the zealous to weep.

THE FIRST

Just as dispute among the people of the truth does not arise from lack of the truth, so too the agreement prevailing among the people of neglect does not arise from any possession of truth. Rather it is that a specific duty and particular function has been assigned to the classes in society, like ‘the worldly,’² those engaged in politics, and those who have received a secular education, and thus the functions of the various groups, societies, and communities have been defined and become distinguished from one another. Similarly, the material reward they are to receive for their functions in order to maintain a livelihood, as well as the moral reward that consists in the attention they receive from men for the sake of their ambition and pride – this too is established and specified.³ There is therefore nothing held in common to the degree that it might produce conflict, dissension and rivalry. However evil be the path that they tread, they will be able to preserve unity and agreement.

But as for the people of religion, the scholars, and those who follow the path, the duty of each is concerned with all men; their material reward is

² ‘The worldly’ (*ehl-i dūnya*): those people whose view is restricted to the life of this world and who disregard the hereafter, or those who sell religion for this world. (Tr.)

³ Be aware that the attention of men cannot be demanded, but only given. If it is given, one should not delight in it. If one delights in it, sincerity is lost and hypocrisy takes its place. The attention of men, if accompanied by the desire for honour and fame, is not a reward and a prize, but a reproach and chastisement for lack of sincerity. Such attention of men, such honour and fame, harm sincerity, the source of vitality for all good deeds, and even though they yield a slight pleasure as far as the gate of the tomb, on the other side of that gate they take on the form of torment. One should not therefore desire the attention of men, but flee and shy away from it. Be warned, all you who worship fame and run after honour and rank!

not set and specified; and their share in social esteem and acceptance and public attention is not predetermined. Many may be candidates for the same position; many hands may stretch out for each moral and material reward that is offered. Hence it is that conflict and rivalry arise; concord is changed into discord, and agreement into dispute.

Now the cure and remedy for this appalling disease is sincerity. Sincerity may be attained by preferring the worship of God to the worship of one's own soul, by causing God's pleasure to vanquish the pleasure of the soul and the ego, and thus manifesting the meaning of the verse:

Verily my reward is from God alone;(11:29)

by renouncing the material and moral reward to be had from men⁴ and thus manifesting the meaning of the verse:

Naught is incumbent on the Messenger but conveying the message;(5:99)

and by knowing that such matters as goodly acceptance, and making a favourable impression, and gaining the attention of men are God's concern and a favour from Him, and that they play no part in conveying the message, which is one's own duty, nor are they necessary for it, nor is one charged with gaining them – by knowing this a person will be successful in gaining sincerity, otherwise it will vanish.

SECOND CAUSE

The agreement among the people of misguidance is on account of their abasement, and the dispute among the people of guidance is on account of their dignity. That is to say that the people of neglect – those misguided ones sunk in worldly concerns – are weak and abased because they do not rely on truth and reality. On account of their abasement, they need to augment their strength, and because of this need they wholeheartedly embrace the aid and co-operation of others. Even though the path they follow is

⁴ One should also take as one's guide the quality of preferring others to oneself, the same quality of the Companions that is praised in the Qur'an. For example, when giving a present or performing an act of charity, one should always prefer the recipient to oneself, and without demanding or inwardly desiring any material reward for religious service, know one's act to be purely God's grace and not impose a sense of obligation on men. Nothing worldly should be sought in return for religious service, for otherwise sincerity will be lost. Men have many rights and claims, and may even deserve *zakat*. But it cannot be demanded. When one receives something, it cannot be said: "This is the reward for my service." Rather in perfect contentment one should always prefer to oneself others who are more deserving. Thus manifesting the meaning of "They prefer others to themselves, though poverty be their lot" (Qur'an, 59:9), one may be saved from this terrible danger and gain sincerity.

misguidance, they preserve their agreement. It is as if they were making their godlessness into a form of worship of the truth, their misguidance into a form of sincerity, their irreligion into a form of solidarity, and their hypocrisy into concord, and thus attaining success. For genuine sincerity, even for the sake of evil, cannot fail to yield results, and whatever man seeks with sincerity, God will grant him it.⁵

But as for the people of guidance and religion, the religious scholars and those who follow the Sufi path, since they rely upon truth and reality, and each of them on the road of truth thinks only of his Sustainer and trusts in His succour, they derive dignity from their belief. When they feel weakness, they turn not toward men, but toward God and seek help from Him. On account of difference in outlook, they feel no real need for the aid of the one whose outlook apparently opposes their own, and see no need for agreement and unity. Indeed, if obstinacy and egoism are present, one will imagine himself to be right and the other to be wrong; discord and rivalry take the place of concord and love. Thus sincerity is chased away and its function disrupted.

Now the only remedy for the critical consequences of this awesome state consists of nine commands:

1. To act positively, that is, out of love for one's own outlook, avoiding enmity for other outlooks, not criticizing them, interfering in their beliefs and sciences, or in any way concerning oneself with them.

2. To unite within the fold of Islam, irrespective of particular outlook, remembering those numerous ties of unity that evoke love, brotherhood and concord.

3. To adopt the just rule of conduct that the follower of any right outlook has the right to say, "My outlook is true, or the best," but not that "My outlook alone is true," or that "My outlook alone is good," thus implying the falsity or repugnance of all other outlooks.

4. To consider that union with the people of truth is a cause of divine succour and the high dignity of religion.

5. To realize that the individual resistance of the most powerful person against the attacks through its genius of the mighty collective force of the people of misguidance and falsehood, which arises from their solidarity, will inevitably be defeated, and through the union of the people of truth, to create a joint and collective force also, in order to preserve justice and right in the face of that fearsome collective force of misguidance.

⁵ Yes, "Whoever seeks earnestly shall find" is a rule of truth. Its scope is comprehensive and includes the matter under discussion.

6. In order to preserve truth from the assaults of falsehood,
7. To abandon the self and its egoism,
8. And give up the mistaken concept of self-pride,
9. And cease from all insignificant feelings aroused by rivalry.

If this ninefold rule is adhered to, sincerity will be preserved and its function perfectly performed.⁶

THIRD CAUSE

Disagreement among the people of truth does not arise from lack of zeal and aspiration, nor does union among the people of misguidance arise from loftiness of aspiration. That which impels the people of guidance to the misuse of their high aspiration and hence to disagreement and rivalry is the desire for heavenly reward that is counted as a praiseworthy quality in respect of the hereafter, and extreme eagerness with respect to duties pertaining to the hereafter. Thinking to oneself, "Let me gain this reward, let me guide these people, let them listen to me," he takes up a position of rivalry towards the true brother who faces him and who stands in real need of his love, assistance, brotherhood and aid. Saying to oneself, "Why are my pupils going to him? Why don't I have as many pupils as him?" he falls prey to egoism, inclines to the chronic disease of ambition, loses all sincerity, and opens the door to hypocrisy.

The cure for this error, this wound, this awesome sickness of the spirit, is the principle that "God's pleasure is won by sincerity alone," and not by a large following or great success. For these latter are a function of God's will; they cannot be demanded, although they are sometimes given. Sometimes a single word will result in someone's salvation and hence the pleasure of God. Quantity should not receive too much attention, for sometimes to guide one man to the truth may be as pleasing to God as guiding a thousand. Moreover sincerity and adherence to the truth require that one should desire the Muslims to benefit from anyone and at any place they can. To think "Let them take lessons from me so that I gain the reward" is a trick of the soul and the ego.

O man greedy for reward in the hereafter and the performance of deeds

⁶ It is even recorded in authentic traditions of the Prophet that at the end of time the truly pious among the Christians will unite with the People of the Qur'an and fight their common enemy, irreligion. And at this time, too, the people of religion and truth need to unite sincerely not only with their own brothers and fellow believers, but also with the truly pious and spiritual ones among the Christians, temporarily refraining from the discussion and debate of points of difference in order to combat their joint enemy – aggressive atheism.

entitling you to that reward! There have been certain prophets who had only a limited following but received the infinite reward of the sacred duty of prophethood. The true achievement lies, then, not in gaining a vast following, but in gaining God's pleasure. What do you imagine yourself to be, that saying, "Let everyone listen to me," you forget your function, and interfere in what is strictly God's concern? To gain acceptance for you and to have people gather round you is God's concern. So look to your own duty and concern, and do not meddle with God's concerns.

Moreover, it is not only men who earn reward for those who hear and speak the truth. The sentient and spiritual beings of God and His angels have filled the universe and adorned its every part. If you want plentiful reward, take sincerity as your foundation and think only of God's pleasure. Then every syllable of the blessed words that issue forth from your mouth will be brought to life by your sincerity and truthful intention, and going to the ears of innumerable sentient beings, they will illumine them and earn you reward. For when, for example, you say, "Praise and thanks be to God," millions of these words, great and small, are written on the page of the air by God's leave. Since the All-Wise Inscraper did nothing prodigally or in vain, He created innumerable ears, as many as were needed to hear those multiple blessed words. If those words are brought to life in the air by sincerity and truthful intent, they will enter the ears of the spirit beings like some tasty fruit in the mouth. But if God's pleasure and sincerity do not bring those words to life, they will not be heard, and reward will be had only for the single utterance made by the mouth. Pay good attention to this, you Qur'an reciters who are sad that your voices are not more beautiful and that more people do not listen to you!

FOURTH CAUSE

In just the same way that rivalry and disagreement among the people of guidance do not arise from failure to foresee consequences or from shortsightedness, so too wholehearted agreement among the people of misguidance does not result from farsightedness or loftiness of vision. Rather the people of guidance, through the influence of truth and reality, do not succumb to the blind emotions of the soul, and follow instead the farsighted inclinations of the heart and the intellect. Since, however, they fail to preserve their sense of direction and their sincerity, they are unable to maintain their high station and fall into dispute.

As for the people of misguidance, under the influence of the soul and caprice, and the dominance of sense-perception, which is blind to all consequences and always prefers an ounce of immediate pleasure to a ton of

future pleasure, they come together in eager concord for the sake of instant benefit and immediate pleasure. Indeed, lowly and heartless worshippers of the ego are bound to congregate around worldly and immediate pleasures and benefits. It is true that the people of guidance have set their faces to the rewards of the hereafter and its perfections, in accordance with the lofty instructions of the heart and the intellect, but even though a proper sense of direction, a complete sincerity and self-sacrificing union and concord are possible, because they have failed to rid themselves of egoism, and on account of deficiency and excess, they lose their union, that lofty source of power, and permit their sincerity to be shattered. Their duty in regard to the hereafter is also harmed. God's pleasure is not had easily.

The cure and remedy for this serious disease is to be proud of the company of all those travelling the path of truth, in accordance with the principle of love for God's sake; to follow them and defer leadership to them; and to consider whoever is walking on God's path to be probably better than oneself, thereby breaking the ego and regaining sincerity. Salvation is also to be had from that disease by knowing that an ounce of deeds performed in sincerity is preferable to a ton performed without sincerity, and by preferring the status of a follower to that of a leader, with all the danger and responsibility that it involves. Thus sincerity is to be had, and one's duties of preparation for the hereafter may be correctly performed.

FIFTH CAUSE

Dispute and disagreement among the people of guidance are not the result of weakness, and the powerful union of the people of misguidance is not the result of strength. Rather the lack of union of the people of guidance comes from the power that results from the support provided by perfect belief, and the union of the people of neglect and misguidance comes from the weakness and impotence they experience as a result of their lack of any inward support. The weak form powerful unions precisely because of their need for union.⁷ Since the strong do not feel a similar need, their unions are weak. Lions do not need union like foxes and therefore live as individuals, whereas wild goats form a herd to protect themselves against wolves. The community and collective personality of the weak is strong, and the community and collective personality of the strong is weak. There

⁷ Among the most powerful and effective organizations in the West is the American Organization for Women's Rights and Liberty, even though women are called the fair sex, and are weak and delicate. Similarly, the organization of the Armenians, despite their weakness and small numbers when compared to other peoples, with its strong, self-sacrificing behaviour, provides another proof of our observation.

is a subtle allusion to this in the Qur'an in the words, "*And women in the city said,*"(12:30) the verb "*said*" being in the masculine form, although it should be feminine for two reasons [women is a feminine noun, and also a plural – so-called "broken" plurals in Arabic are always regarded as feminine]. But by contrast see the words, "*the desert Arabs said,*"(49:14) the verb *said* in this case being in the feminine, even though its subject designates a community of men. Herein lies an indication, that an association of weak, meek and soft women gains strength, toughness and force, and even acquires a certain kind of virility. The use of the masculine form of the verb is therefore most appropriate. Strong men, by contrast, and in particular Beduin Arabs, trust in their own strength; therefore their associations are weak, for they assume a stance of softness and caution and take on a kind of femininity, for which the use of the feminine form of the verb is most suitable. Similarly the people of truth submit to and place their reliance in the firm source of support that is belief in God; hence they do not present their needs to others or request aid and assistance from them. If they do sometimes make the request, they will not adhere to the persons concerned at all cost. But the worldly ignore in their worldly affairs the true source of support; they fall into weakness and impotence, and experiencing an acute need of assistance, come together sacrificing themselves wholeheartedly.

The people of truth do not recognize and seek the true strength that is to be found in union; hence they fall into dispute, as an evil and harmful consequence of this failure. By contrast, the people of misguidance and falsehood perceive the strength to be found in union, by virtue of their very weakness, and thus acquire union, that most important means for the attainment of all goals.

The cure and remedy for this disease of discord among the people of truth is to make one's rule of conduct the divine prohibition contained in this verse:

Do not fall into dispute, lest you lose heart and your power depart,(8:46)

and the wise divine command for social life contained in this verse:

Work together for the sake of virtue and piety.(5:3)

One must further realize how harmful to Islam dispute is, and how it helps the people of misguidance to triumph over the people of truth, and then, wholeheartedly and self-sacrificingly, join the caravan of the people of truth, with a sense of his own utter weakness and impotence. Finally, one

must forget his own person, abandon hypocrisy and pretension, and lay hold of sincerity.

SIXTH CAUSE

Discord among the people of truth does not arise from lack of manliness, aspiration and zeal; similarly, the wholehearted union among the misguided, neglectful and worldly with respect to their worldly affairs does not result from manliness, aspiration and zeal. It is rather that the people of truth are generally concerned with benefits to be had in the hereafter and hence direct their zeal, aspiration and manliness to those important and numerous matters. Since they do not devote time – the true capital of man – to a single concern, their union with their fellows can never become firm. Their concerns are numerous and of a wide scope. As for the neglectful and worldly, they think only of the life of this world, and they firmly embrace the concerns of the life of this world with all their senses, their spirit and heart, and cling firmly to whoever aids them in those concerns. Like a mad diamond merchant who gives an exorbitant price for a piece of glass worth virtually nothing, they devote time, which is of the highest value, to matters which in reality and in the view of the people of truth are worth nothing. Paying such a high price and offering oneself with the devotion of all the senses will naturally result in a wholehearted sincerity that yields success in the matter at hand, so that the people of truth are defeated. As a result of this defeat, the people of truth decline into a state of abasement, humiliation, hypocrisy and ostentation, and sincerity is lost. Thus the people of truth are obliged to flatter and cringe before a handful of vile and lowly men of the world.

O people of truth! O people of the law, people of reality and people of the path, all worshipping God! Confronted by this awesome disease of discord, overlook each other's faults, close your eyes to each other's shortcomings! Behave according to the rule of courtesy established by the criterion that is the Qur'an in the verse:

When they pass by error, they pass by it with honourable avoidance.(25:72)

Regard it as your primary duty – one on which your state in the hereafter depends – to abandon internal dissension when attacked by an enemy from the outside, and thereby to deliver the people of truth from their abasement and humiliation! Practise the brotherhood, love and co-operation insistently enjoined by hundreds of Qur'anic verses and traditions of the Prophet (UWBP)! Establish with all of your powers a union with your fellows and

brothers in religion that is stronger than the union of the worldly! Do not fall into dispute! Do not say to yourself, "Instead of spending my valuable time on such petty matters, let me spend it on more valuable things such as the invocation of God and meditation;" then withdrawing and weakening unity. For precisely what you imagine to be a matter of slight importance in this moral jihad may in fact be very great. In just the same way that under certain special and unusual conditions the watch kept for one hour by a soldier may be equal to a whole year's worship, in this age when the people of truth have been defeated, the precious day that you spend on some apparently minor matter concerning the moral struggle may be worth a thousand days, just like the hour of that soldier. Whatever is undertaken for the sake of God cannot be divided into small and great, valuable and valueless. An atom expended in sincerity and for the sake of God's pleasure becomes like a star. What is important is not the nature of the means employed, but the result that it yields. As long as the result is God's pleasure and the substance employed is sincerity, any means to which recourse is had will be great, not small.

SEVENTH CAUSE

Dispute and rivalry among the people of truth do not arise from jealousy and greed for the world, and conversely union among the worldly and neglectful does not arise from generosity and magnanimity. It is rather that the people of truth are unable to preserve fully the magnanimity and high aspiration that proceed from the truth, or the laudable form of competition that exists on God's path. Infiltrated by the unworthy, they partially misuse that laudable form of competition and fall into rivalry and dispute, causing grave harm both to themselves and to the Islamic community. As for the people of neglect and misguidance, in order not to lose the benefits with which they are infatuated and not to offend the leaders and companions they worship for the sake of benefit, in their utter humiliation, abasement and lack of manliness, they practise union at all costs with their companions, however abominable, treacherous and harmful they be, and wholeheartedly agree with their partners in whatever form may be dictated by their common interest. As a result of this wholeheartedness, they indeed attain the benefits desired.

So O people of truth given to dispute and afflicted with disaster! It is through your loss of sincerity and your failure to make God's pleasure your sole aim in this age of disaster that you have caused the people of truth to undergo this humiliation and defeat. In matters relating to religion and the hereafter there should be no rivalry, envy or jealousy; indeed there can be

none of these in truth. The reason for envy and jealousy is that when several hands reach out after a single object, when several eyes are fixed on a single position, when several stomachs hunger for a single loaf of bread, first envy arises as a result of conflict, dispute and rivalry, and then jealousy. Since many people desire the same thing in the world, and because the world, narrow and transitory as it is, cannot satisfy the limitless desires of man, people become rivals of each other. However, in the hereafter a five-hundred-year paradise will be given to a single individual; seventy thousand palaces and houris will be granted to him; and every one of the people of Paradise will be perfectly satisfied with his share.⁸ It is thus clear that there is no cause for rivalry in the hereafter, nor can there be rivalry. In that case, neither should there be any rivalry with respect to those good deeds that entail reward in the hereafter; there is no room for jealousy here. The one jealous here is either a hypocrite, seeking worldly result through the performance of good deeds, or a sincere but ignorant devotee, not knowing the true purpose of good deeds and not comprehending that sincerity is the spirit and foundation of all good deeds. By cultivating a kind of rivalry and hostility toward God's saints, he is in fact placing in doubt the breadth of God's compassion.

An instance supporting this truth: One of my former companions nurtured hostility to someone. His enemy's good deeds and sanctity were once

⁸ An important question raised by a significant person: According to tradition a five-hundred-year paradise will be given to everyone in Paradise. How can worldly intelligence comprehend this truth?

The Answer: In this world everyone has his private and temporally limited world as broad as the world, the pillar of which is his life. He makes use of his world through his inner and outer senses. He says to himself, "The sun is my lamp, the stars are my candles." The existence of other creatures and animate beings in no way negates his ownership of these; on the contrary, they brighten and illumine his world. In the same way, although on an infinitely higher plane, in addition to the garden of each believer that contains thousands of palaces and houris, there is a private five-hundred-year paradise for everyone, apart from the general Paradise. He will benefit from this paradise and eternity through his senses and feelings, according to the degree of development they have reached. The fact that others share in the general Paradise in no way harms his ownership or benefit, but on the contrary strengthens these, and adorns that vast Paradise. Man in this world benefits from a garden lasting an hour, a spectacle lasting a day, a country lasting a month and a journey lasting a year, with his mouth, his ear, his eye, his taste and all his other senses. So too, in that realm of eternity, his sense of smell and touch, which in this transient world barely profit from a garden lasting an hour, will benefit as if from a garden lasting a year. The sense of sight and hearing which here barely profit from an excursion lasting a year, will there be able to benefit from a five-hundred-year excursion in a manner fitting that realm, adorned from end to end. Every believer will benefit there according to his spiritual rank, and gain delight and pleasure through his senses that will expand and develop in relation to the reward he has earned in this world and the good deeds he has performed.

favourably described in his presence. He was not jealous or upset. Then someone said, "That enemy of yours is courageous and strong." We saw a strong vein of jealousy and rivalry suddenly appearing in that man. We said to him:

"Sanctity and righteousness bestow a strength and exaltation like a jewel of eternal life, yet you were not jealous of them. Now worldly strength is to be found in oxen, and courage in wild beasts; in comparison with sanctity and righteousness they are like a piece of glass compared to a diamond."

The man replied:

"We have both fixed our eyes in this world on a single object. The steps that lead to it are provided by things such as courage and strength. It is for this reason that I was jealous of him. The objects and stations of the hereafter are without number. Although he is my enemy here, there he can be my beloved and intimate brother."

O people of the truth and the path! The service of the truth is like carrying and preserving a great and weighty treasure. Those who carry that trust on their shoulders will be happy and grateful whenever powerful hands rush to their aid. Far from being jealous, one should proudly applaud the superior strength, effectiveness and capacity of those who in upright love come forward to offer their help. Why then look on true brothers and self-sacrificing helpers in a spirit of rivalry, thus losing sincerity? You will be exposed to fearsome accusations in the eyes of the people of misguidance, such as pursuing worldly interest through religion, even though it is something a hundred times lower than you and your belief, earning your livelihood through the knowledge of truth and rivalling others in greed and acquisitiveness.

The sole remedy for this disease is to accuse your own soul before others raise these charges, and always to take the side of your fellow, not your own soul. The rule of truth and equity established by the scholars of the art of debate is this: "Whoever desires, in debate on any subject, that his own word should turn out to be true, whoever is happy that he turns out to be right and his enemy to be wrong and mistaken – such a person has acted unjustly." Not only that, such a person loses, for when he emerges the victor in such a debate, he has not learned anything previously unknown to him, and his probable pride will cause him loss. But if his adversary turns out to be right, he will have learned something previously unknown to him and thereby gained something without any loss, as well as being saved from pride. In other words, one fair in his dealings and enamoured of the truth will subject the desire of his own soul to the demands of the truth. If

he sees his adversary to be right, he will accept it willingly and support it happily.

If then the people of religion, the people of truth, the people of the path, and the people of learning take this principle as their guide, they will attain sincerity, and be successful in those duties that prepare them for the hereafter. Through God's mercy, they will be delivered from this appalling wretchedness and misfortune from which they presently suffer.

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

The Twenty-First Flash

On Sincerity

[Although originally the Fourth of the Seven Matters of the Seventeenth Note of the Seventeenth Flash, because of its connection with sincerity, it became the Second Point of the Twentieth Flash. Finally, due to its luminous character, it was included in the Flashes as the Twenty-First Flash.]

This Flash should be read at least once a fortnight

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

*Do not fall into dispute, lest you lose heart and your power depart.(8:46) *
And stand before God in a devout [frame of mind].(2:238) * Truly he
succeeds that purifies it, * And he fails that corrupts it.(91:9-10) * Nor sell
my signs for a small price.(2:41. etc.)*

O my brothers of the hereafter! And O my companions in the service of the Qur'an! You should know – and you do know – that in this world sincerity is the most important principle in works pertaining to the hereafter; it is the greatest strength, the most acceptable intercessor, the firmest point of support, the shortest way to reality, the most acceptable prayer, the most wondrous means of achieving one's goal, the highest quality, and the purest worship. Since sincerity comprises much strength and many lights like those mentioned above; and since at this dreadful time, despite our small number and weak, impoverished, and powerless state and our being confronted by terrible enemies and suffering severe oppression in the midst of aggressive innovations and misguidance, the extremely heavy, important, general, and sacred duty of serving belief and the Qur'an has been placed on our shoulders by divine grace, we are certainly compelled more than anyone to work with all our strength to gain sincerity. We need more than anything to instil sincerity in ourselves. Otherwise what we have achieved

so far in our sacred service will in part be lost and will not persist; and we shall be held responsible; we shall manifest the severe threat contained in the divine prohibition,

Nor sell my signs for a small price.(2:41, etc.)

We shall otherwise destroy sincerity, thus harming eternal happiness for the sake of meaningless, unnecessary, harmful, sad, self-centred, tedious, hypocritical base feelings and insignificant benefits. And if we were to do that, we would violate all our brothers' rights, transgress against the duty of service to the Qur'an, and be disrespectful towards the sacredness of the truths of belief.

My brothers! There are many obstacles before significant good works. Satans put up a powerful struggle against those who assist in them. In the face of those obstacles and satans you have to rely on the strength of sincerity. You should avoid things that harm sincerity as you avoid snakes and scorpions. In accordance with the words of Joseph (Upon whom be peace),

Nor do I absolve my own self [of blame]; the [human] soul is certainly prone to evil, unless my Sustainer do bestow His mercy,(12:53)

the evil-commanding soul cannot be relied upon. Do not let egotism and the soul deceive you! To gain sincerity and preserve it you should take as your guide the following rules:

YOUR FIRST RULE

You should seek divine pleasure in your actions. If Almighty God is pleased, it is of no importance if the whole world even is displeased. If He accepts an action and everyone else rejects it, their rejection has no effect. Once His pleasure has been gained and He has accepted an action, even if you do not ask it of Him, should He wish it and His wisdom requires it, He will make others accept it. He will make them consent to it too. For this reason, to seek divine pleasure should be the sole aim in this service.

YOUR SECOND RULE

This is not to criticize your brothers who are employed in this service of the Qur'an, and not to excite their envy by displaying superior virtues. For just as one hand cannot compete with the other, so one eye cannot criticize the other, nor the tongue object to the ear, nor the heart see the spirit's faults. Each of a person's members completes the deficiencies of the others, veils their faults, assists their needs, and helps them out in their duties. Otherwise his life would be extinguished, his spirit flee, and his body fall apart.

Similarly, the components of a factory's machinery cannot compete with one another in rivalry, take precedence over each other, or dominate each other. They cannot spy out one another's faults and criticize each other, destroy the other's eagerness for work, and cause him to become idle. They rather assist each other's motions with all their capacity in order to achieve the common goal; they march towards the aim of their creation in true solidarity and unity. If even the slightest aggression or desire to dominate were to interfere, it would throw the factory into confusion, cancelling its products and results. The factory's owner would then demolish the factory entirely.

O Risale-i Nur students and servants of the Qur'an! You and I are members of such a collective personality, worthy of the title of the perfect man. We are like the components of a factory's machinery which produces eternal happiness within eternal life. We are hands working on a dominical boat which will disembark the community of Muhammad (UWBP) at the realm of peace, the shore of salvation. So we are surely in need of solidarity and true union, obtained through gaining sincerity – for the mystery of sincerity secures through four individuals the moral strength of one thousand one hundred and eleven – indeed, we are compelled to obtain it.

Yes, if three alifs do not unite, they have the value of three, but on uniting, through the mystery of numbers they acquire the value of one hundred and eleven. If four times four remain apart, they have a value of sixteen. But if, through the mystery of brotherhood and having a common goal and joint duty, they unite coming together shoulder to shoulder on a line, they acquire the strength and value of four thousand four hundred and forty-four. Indeed, numerous historical events testify that the moral strength and value of sixteen self-sacrificing brothers have exceeded that of four thousand.

The underlying reason for this mystery is this: each member of a true, sincere union may see with the eyes of the other brothers, and hear with their ears, as if each person of a true union of ten acquires the value and strength to see with twenty eyes, think with ten minds, hear with twenty ears, and work with twenty hands.¹

¹ Yes, through the mystery of sincerity heartfelt solidarity and union produce innumerable benefits, and are also an effective shield and point of support against fear, and even death. For if death comes, it takes one spirit. But since through the mystery of true brotherhood on the way of divine pleasure in works connected with the hereafter there are spirits to the number of brothers, if one of them dies, he meets death happily, saying: "My other spirits remain alive, for they in effect make life continue for me by constantly earning me reward, so I am not dying. I live in respect of merit through their spirits; I am only dying in respect of sin." And he lays down in peace.

YOUR THIRD RULE

You should know that all your strength lies in sincerity and truth. Yes, strength lies in truth and sincerity. Even those who do wrong gain strength from their sincerity in their wrongdoing.

Evidence that strength lies in truth and sincerity is this service of ours. A small amount of sincerity in our work proves this claim and is evidence for itself. For seven or eight years of service to learning and religion here has surpassed a hundredfold the twenty years of service I performed in my native region and in Istanbul. And in these places the people assisting me were a hundred or even a thousand times more numerous than my brothers who work together with me here, where I am alone, with no one, a stranger, semi-literate, under the surveillance of unfair officials and persecuted by them. I have absolutely no doubt that the service I have carried out with you these seven or eight years and the moral strength which has resulted in success a hundred times greater than formerly, has arisen from your sincerity. I have also to confess that by your heartfelt sincerity, you have saved me to an extent from the hypocrisy which used to flatter my soul under the veil of fame and renown. God willing, you will be successful in gaining absolute sincerity, and you will cause me to gain it too.

You should be aware that it is because of this mystery of sincerity that ‘Ali² (May God be pleased with him) and Ghawth al-A‘zam³ (May his mystery be sanctified) honour you with their miraculous wonder-working and wondrous vision of the Unseen. They offer you consolation in protecting manner and applaud your service. Yes, you should have no doubt that this attention of theirs is because of sincerity. If you knowingly harm it, it is from them that you will receive punishment. You should bear in mind “the blows of compassion” in the Tenth Flash.

If you want to be backed by the support of such spiritual heroes, and have them as masters at your head, gain complete sincerity in accordance with the verse,

But give them preference over themselves.(59:9)

Prefer your brothers’ souls to your own soul in honour, rank, acclaim, and in the things your soul enjoys like material benefits, and even in such

² ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib: the son of the Prophet Muhammad’s (UWBP) uncle, who from a young age was brought up by the Prophet (UWBP), who later married him to his daughter, Fatima. ‘Ali was one of the first to believe in the Qur’anic revelation, and was famous for his heroism in battle. He became the fourth caliph.

³ Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qadir Gilani (Geylanî), known as the Gawth al-A‘zam, was the eponym of the Qadiri Order and a towering spiritual figure in the history of Islam. He lived 470/1077-561/1166 and is buried in Baghdad.

innocent, harmless benefits as informing a needy believer about one of the fine truths of belief. If possible, encourage one of your disinclined companions to inform him, so that your soul does not become conceited. If you have the desire to tell him the edifying matter to gain the reward, it surely is not a sin and there is no harm in it, but the essence of sincerity between you might be damaged.

YOUR FOURTH RULE

This is to imagine your brothers' virtues and merits in your own selves, and to thankfully take pride at their glory. The Sufis have terms they use among themselves, "annihilation in the shaykh," "annihilation in the Prophet;" I am not a Sufi, but these principles of theirs make a good rule in our way, in the form of "annihilation in the brothers." Among brothers this is called "tefâni;" that is, "annihilation in one another." That is to say, to forget the feelings of one's own carnal soul, and live in one's mind with one's brothers' virtues and feelings. In any event, the basis of our way is brotherhood; it is not the relationship (lit. means) between father and son, or shaykh and follower; it is that of true brotherhood. At the very most a Master [Ustad] intervenes. Our way is the closest friendship. This friendship necessitates being the closest friend, the most sacrificing companion, the most appreciative comrade, the noblest brother. The essence of such friendship is true sincerity. The person who spoils this true sincerity falls from the high pinnacle of this friendship, possibly to the bottom of a deep depression. There is nothing onto which he may cling in between.

Yes, the way is seen to be two. There is the possibility that those who part now from this way of ours, the great highway of the Qur'an, are unknowingly helping the forces of irreligion, who are hostile to us. God willing, those who enter the sacred bounds of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition by way of the Risale-i Nur will always add strength to light, sincerity, and belief, and will avoid such pitfalls.

O my companions in the service of the Qur'an! One of the most effective means of attaining and preserving sincerity is "contemplation of death." Yes, just as worldly ambition damages sincerity and drives a person to hypocrisy and the world, so the contemplation of death causes disgust at hypocrisy and gains sincerity. That is, to think of death and grasp that this world is transient, and so be saved from the tricks of the soul. Yes, the instruction the Sufis and people of truth received from such verses of the All-Wise Qur'an as,

*Every soul shall taste death.(3:185) * Truly you will die [one day], and truly they [too] will die [one day],(39:30)*

led them to make the contemplation of death fundamental to their spiritual journeyings; it dispelled the illusion of eternity, the source of worldly ambition. They imagined themselves to be dead and being placed in the grave. With prolonged thought the evil-commanding soul becomes saddened and affected by such imagining and gives up its far-reaching ambitions and hopes to an extent. There are numerous advantages in this contemplation. It is taught by the Hadith which says something like, “Frequently mention death which dispels pleasure and makes it bitter.”⁴

However, since our way is not that of the Sufis but of reality, we are not compelled to perform this contemplation in an imaginary and hypothetical form like they do. To do so is anyway not in conformity with the way of reality. Our way is not to bring the future to the present by thinking of the end, but to travel in the mind to the future from the present in respect of reality, and to gaze on it. Yes, dispensing with the need to imagine, one may look on one’s own corpse, the single fruit on the tree of this brief life. One may look on one’s own death, and if one goes a bit further, see the death of this century, and going further still, observe the death of this world, opening up the way to complete sincerity.

The Second Means : By attaining a sense of the divine presence through the strength of certain, affirmative belief and through the lights proceeding from reflective thought on creatures which leads to knowledge of the Maker; by thinking that the Compassionate Creator is all-present and seeing; and by not seeking the attention of any other than He, and realizing that looking to others in His presence or seeking help from them is contrary to right conduct in His presence, one may be saved from such hypocrisy and gain sincerity. However, this comprises many degrees and stages. Whichever degree a person reaches, he will profit to that extent. There are numerous truths in the *Risale-i Nur* that will save a person from hypocrisy and gain him sincerity, so referring him to those, we cut short the discussion here.

Of the very many things that destroy sincerity and drive one to hypocrisy, we shall briefly explain two or three.

The First: Rivalry towards material advantages slowly destroys sincerity. It is also detrimental to the results of our service. So too it causes the material benefits to be lost. This nation has always nurtured respect for those who work for reality and the hereafter, and has assisted them. With the intention of actively sharing in their genuine sincerity and in the works

⁴ *Tirmidhi*, Zuhd, 4; *Qiyama*, 26; *Nasa’i*, Jana’iz, 3; *Ibn Maja*, Zuhd, 31; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iv, 321.

they carry out devotedly, it has always showed respect by assisting them with material benefits like alms and gifts to save them from preoccupation with securing their material needs and wasting their time. But such assistance and benefit may not be sought; it is given. It may not even be sought through the tongue of disposition by inwardly desiring it or awaiting it. It should rather be given unexpectedly, otherwise sincerity will be harmed. It would otherwise bring a person close to the prohibition stated by the verse,

Nor sell my signs for a small price,(2:41, etc.)

and in part destroys the action.

The evil-commanding soul selfishly excites a feeling of rivalry towards a true brother and companion in that particular service by first desiring and expecting such a material benefit, then not allowing it to go to someone else. Sincerity is damaged, and the sacredness of the service is lost, and the person becomes disagreeable in the eyes of the people of reality. He also loses the material benefit. This subject needs much discussion, but I shall curtail it and only mention two examples which will strengthen sincerity and true union between my true brothers.

First Example: ‘The worldly,’ and even certain politicians and secret societies and manipulators of society, have adopted as their guiding principle, that of shared property, in order to procure wealth and power. They do acquire an extraordinary strength and advantage, despite all their exploitation and losses. However, the nature of common property does not change with sharing, despite its many harms. Although each partner is as though the owner and supervisor of the rest in one respect, he is unable to profit from it.

Nevertheless, if the principle of shared property is applied to the works of the hereafter, it accumulates vast benefits and produces no loss. For it means that all the property passes to the hands of each partner. For example, there are four or five men. With the idea of sharing, one of them brings paraffin, another a wick, another the lamp, another the mantle, and the fifth matches; they assemble the lamp and light it. Each of them becomes the owner of a complete lamp. If each of those partners has a full-length mirror on a wall, he will be reflected in it together with the lamp and room, without deficiency or being split up.

Just the same are mutual participation in the goods of the hereafter through the mystery of sincerity, and co-operation through the mystery of brotherhood, and joint enterprise through the mystery of unity: the total obtained by those joint acts, and all the light, enters the book of good deeds of each person taking part. This is a fact and has been witnessed by the

people of reality. It is required also by the breadth of divine mercy and munificence.

My brothers! God willing, material benefits will not provoke rivalry among you. You may possibly be deceived in regard to the benefits of the hereafter like some of those who follow the Sufi path. But how can some personal, minor merit be compared with the merit and light manifested in respect of the shared actions mentioned in the above example?

Second Example: Craftsmen are obtaining significant wealth by co-operating so as to profit more from the products of their crafts. Formerly ten manufacturers of sewing needles all worked on their own, and the fruit of their individual labour was three needles a day. Then following the rule of joint enterprise the ten men united. One brought the iron, one lit the furnace, one pierced the needles, one placed them in the furnace, and another sharpened the points, and so on; each was occupied with only part of the process of needle-making. Since the work in which one man was employed was simple, he did not waste time; he acquired skill and performed the work with considerable speed. The manufacturers divided up the work performed in accordance with the rule of joint enterprise and the division of labour: they saw that instead of three needles a day for each man, it worked out at three hundred. This event was widely published among the craftsmen of ‘the worldly’ in order to encourage them to pool their labour.

My brothers! Since union and accord in worldly matters and in dense materials yield such results and advantages, you can compare how vastly profitable it is for each to reflect in his own mirror through divine grace the light of all, which is luminous and pertains to the hereafter and does not need to be divided up and fragmented, and to gain the equivalent reward of all of them. This huge profit should not be lost through rivalry and insincerity.

The Second Obstacle Destroying Sincerity: This is to flatter the ego and give high status to the evil-commanding soul by attracting attention to oneself and public acclaim, driven by the desire for fame, renown, and position. This is a serious spiritual sickness that also opens the door to the hypocrisy and self-centredness called the hidden association of partners with God, and damages sincerity.

My brothers! Our way in the service of the Qur’an is reality and brotherhood, and the true meaning of brotherhood is to annihilate one’s personality among one’s brothers⁵ and to prefer their souls to one’s own. Rivalry of

⁵ Yes, happy is he who, in order to gain access to a large pool of fresh water filtered from the spring of the Qur’an, casts his personality and egotism – which are like blocks of ice – into the pool and melts them.

this sort arising from desire for rank and position should not therefore be provoked. It is altogether opposed to our way. The brothers' honour may be all the individuals' generally; so I am hopeful that sacrificing that great collective honour for personal, selfish, competitive, minor fame and renown is far from being something the Risale-i Nur students would do. Yes, the heart, mind, and spirit of the Risale-i Nur students would not stoop to such lowly, harmful, inferior things. But everyone has an evil-commanding soul, and sometimes the soul's emotions affect certain veins of character, and predominate to an extent in spite of the heart, mind, and spirit; I am not accusing your hearts, minds, and spirits. I have confidence in you because of the effect of the Risale-i Nur. But the soul, desires, emotions, and imagination sometimes deceive. For this reason you sometimes receive severe warnings. The severity looks to the soul, emotions, desires, and imagination; act cautiously.

Yes, if our way had been subjection to a shaykh, there would have been a single rank, or limited ranks, and numerous capacities would have been appointed to them. There could have been envy and selfishness. But our way is brotherhood. Among brothers there is no position of father among them, nor can they assume the position of spiritual guide. In brotherhood ranks are broad and cannot be the cause of envious jostling. At the most brother helps and supports brother; he completes his service. Evidence that much harm and many mistakes have resulted from the envy, greed for spiritual reward, and high aspirations of the paths of spiritual guides are the conflict and rivalry among those who follow them despite their vast attainments, perfections and benefits, which have had the disastrous consequence of their vast and sacred power being unable to withstand the gales of innovation.

The Third Obstacle: This is fear and greed. This obstacle has been explained comprehensively in *The Six Attacks*⁶ together with other obstacles. We therefore refer you to that, and making all the most beautiful names of the Most Merciful of the Merciful our intercessor, we beseech that He will grant us success in attaining complete sincerity.

O God! For the sake of Sura al-Ikhlās, place us among Your servants who attain sincerity. Amen. Amen.

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

⁶ See, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *Letters 1928-1932* (Istanbul: Sözlür Neşriyat, new edn. 2009) the Sixth Section of the Twenty-Ninth Letter, pp. 474-90. (Tr.)

A Confidential Letter to Some of my Brothers

I shall mention a point concerning two Hadiths to my brothers who become bored of writing, and prefer other recitations during the Three Months, the months of worship, to writing out the Risale-i Nur, although to do this is worship in five respects.¹ The two Hadiths are these:

The First: “At the Last Judgement, the ink spent by the scholars of religion will weigh equally to the blood of the martyrs.”²

The Second: “Whoever adheres to my Sunna when my community is corrupted shall earn the reward of a hundred martyrs.”³ That is, those who adhere to and serve the Prophet’s (UWBP) practices and the Qur’an’s truths when innovations and misguidance are rife may gain the reward of a hundred martyrs.

O my brothers who weary of writing out of laziness! And O my brothers who lean to Sufism! These two Hadiths show that the black light flowing from your blessed, pure pens serving the truths of belief and mysteries of the Shari’a and practices of the Prophet (UWBP) at a time such as this – even a drop of their water-of-life-like ink – may win for you on the Day of Judgement reward equal to a hundred drops of martyrs’ blood. So try to win it!

If you say: It says scholars in the Hadith and some of us are only scribes.

The Answer: Anyone who reads these treatises for a year and comprehends and accepts them, may become a valuable, exacting scholar at this time. Even if he does not understand them, since the Risale-i Nur students have a collective personality, doubtless it is learned. As for your pens, they are the immaterial fingers of that collective personality. With your good opinion of me, you have afforded me the position of Master (Ustad) and religious scholar, and attached yourselves to me although in my view I am unworthy. I am unlettered and have difficulty in writing, so your pens may be thought of as mine; you will receive the reward indicated in the Hadith.

Said Nursi

¹ We asked for an explanation of the five sorts of worship which our Master indicates in this valuable letter. The explanation we received is below:

- i. To strive against the people of misguidance, the most important struggle.
 - ii. To serve our Master in the form of helping him spread the truth.
 - iii. To serve *Muslims* in respect of belief.
 - iv. To obtain knowledge by means of the pen.
 - v. To perform worship in the form of reflective thought, one hour of which may sometimes be equal to a year’s worship.
- Signed: Rüştü, Hüsrev, Re’fet

² al-Ghazali, *Ihya’ Ulum al-Din*, i, 6; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, vi, 466; al-‘Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa’*, ii, 561; al-Suyuti, *Jami’ al-Saghir*, No: 10026.

³ Ibn ‘Adiyy, *al-Kamil fi’l-Du’afa’*, ii, 739; al-Mundhiri, *al-Tarhib wa’l-Tarhib*, i, 41; Tabarani, *al-Majma’ al-Kabir*, 1394; ‘Ali ibn Husamuddin, *Muntakhabat Kanz al-‘Ummal*, i, 100; al-Haythami, *Majma’ al-Zawa’id*, vii, 282.

The Twenty-Second Flash

In His Name, be He glorified!

This highly confidential short treatise, which I wrote twenty-two years ago specifically for my closest and most select and sincere brothers while in the village of Barla in the Province of Isparta, I am dedicating to Isparta's just Governor, judiciary, and police. This is because of the concern shown by both the people and the authorities of Isparta. If appropriate, several copies should be written by typewriter in either the old or new letters so that those who have been holding me under surveillance and searching out my secrets these twenty-five years may know that I have no hidden secrets whatsoever. They should know that my most hidden secret is this treatise!

S a i d N u r s i

Three Indications

[While being the Third Matter of the Seventeenth Note of the Seventeenth Flash, because of the harshness and comprehensiveness of the questions and strength and brilliance of the answers, this was incorporated in the Flashes as the Twenty-Second Flash of the Thirty-First Letter. The Flashes had to give it a place. It is confidential and special to my most select, sincere, and loyal brothers.]

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

And if anyone puts his trust in God, sufficient is [God] for him. For God will surely accomplish His purpose. Verily for all things has God appointed a due proportion.(65:3)

This matter consists of three indications.

FIRST INDICATION

An important question about my person and the Risale-i Nur: many people ask, “Although you have not meddled in ‘the worldly’s’ world, why do they meddle in your hereafter at every opportunity? Whereas no government’s laws interfere with recluses and people who have abandoned the world?”

T h e A n s w e r : The New Said’s reply to this question is silence. The New Said says: “Let divine determining give the answer for me.” Nevertheless, since I’m compelled to, the Old Said’s head, which the New Said has borrowed on trust, says: those who should give the answer to this question are the authorities of Isparta Province, and its people. For they are much more concerned with the meaning underlying this question than I am. Since the administration, which consists of thousands of people, and the people, who number hundreds of thousands, are obliged to consider it and defend it in my place, why should I speak with the prosecutors unnecessarily, and defend myself?

I have been in this province for nine years, and I am gradually turning my back more and more on their world. No aspect of my life has remained hidden. Even my most secret and confidential treatises have come into the hands of the government and some of the deputies. If I had meddled at all in worldly matters, which would have caused ‘the worldly’ alarm and anxiety, or if I had made any attempt to meddle, or if I had had any idea of doing so, this province and the local government in the towns would have known. But although I have been under their scrutiny and surveillance for nine years, and I too have not hesitated to divulge my secrets to those who have visited me, the authorities have remained silent and have not bothered me. If I had displayed any fault that could have been harmful to this country’s happiness and future, and to its people, over this nine years everyone from the Governor to the village police chief would have been responsible. So to save themselves from such responsibility they are obliged to defend me in the face of those who make molehills into mountains concerning me, and make the mountains into molehills. In which case, I refer this question to them to answer.

The reason the people of this province are mostly obliged to defend me more than I do myself is that with hundreds of treatises that have demonstrated their effectiveness materially and in fact, I have worked these nine years for their eternal life and strength of belief and happiness in life, for they are both brothers, and friends, and blessed; and no upset or harm at all has been suffered by anyone on account of the treatises; and not the slightest

sign of anything political or worldly has been encountered; and, praise be to God, by means of the Risale-i Nur, this province of Isparta has gained in respect of strength of belief and firmness in religion a degree of blessedness resembling the blessedness of Damascus in former times and of al-Azhar in Egypt; and the Risale-i Nur has made the power of belief prevail over indifference and the desire to worship prevail over vice in the province, and has made it more religious than any other province. Since this is the case, all its people, even supposing they are irreligious, are obliged to defend me and the Risale-i Nur. While they have such important rights of defence, my unimportant right does not drive me to defend myself now that I, lacking all power, have completed my duty and, thanks be to God, thousands of students have worked and are working in my place. Someone with so many thousands of advocates does not defend his own case.

SECOND INDICATION

The answer to a critical question.

'The worldly' ask: "Why are you angry with us? You have not made application to us even once, and are silent. You complain about us bitterly, saying that we are unjust towards you. But we have our principles, we have our particular rules as demanded by the times, and you do not accept that they should be applied to you. The person who applies the law is not a tyrant, and the person who does not accept the law is rebellious. For instance, in this age of freedom and new republican era which we have inaugurated, the principle – on the basis of equality – of abolishing oppression and subjugation of others is as though our fundamental law. However, it is understood from your open behaviour and your adventurous life in the former period that whether by assuming the position of hoja or of being an ascetic, you try to draw the public gaze on yourself and attract attention, so to secure a power and social position outside the government's influence. This may appear desirable within – according to current terminology – the despotic tyranny of the bourgeoisie. But since the principles of pure socialism and bolshevism, which have emerged with the awakening and ascendancy of the common people, are more conformable with our interests, we have accepted them, and your position is disagreeable to us; it opposes our principles. For this reason you do not have the right to complain about or be angry at the distress we cause you."

The Answer: If someone who opens up a new way in the life of human society does not act in conformity with the natural laws in force in the universe, he cannot be successful in beneficial works and in progress. All his acts come to serve the interests of evil and destruction. Since

actions have to be in conformity with the natural laws, absolute equality can be applied only by changing human nature and removing the fundamental wisdom in the mankind's creation. Yes, by birth and the way I have lived I am from the class of common people, and I am one of those who by temperament and intellectually have accepted the way of equality of rights. And due to compassion and the justice proceeding from Islam, I am a person who for a long time has opposed and worked against the despotism and oppression of the elite class called the bourgeoisie. I therefore support total justice with all my strength, and oppose tyranny, oppression, arbitrary power, and despotism.

However, human nature and the underlying wisdom in humankind are contrary to the law of absolute equality. For to demonstrate His perfect power and wisdom, the All-Wise Creator produces many crops from a single thing, causes many books to be written on a single page, and causes many functions to be performed by a single thing; and in the same way, He causes the duties of thousands of species to be carried out by humankind. It is because of this great mystery that Almighty God created man with a nature that would produce the shoots of thousands of species and display the levels of the thousands of other species of living creatures. No limit was placed on his powers, subtle faculties, and senses like the other animals; since He left him free and gave him a capacity whereby his senses could roam through endless degrees, although only one species, mankind became like thousands of species. For this reason, man became vicegerent of the earth, the result of the universe, and monarch of animate beings.

The most important leaven and mechanism giving rise to the variety in mankind is competition and the true virtue resulting from belief. Virtue can only be removed through changing human nature, extinguishing the reason, killing the heart, and annihilating the spirit. Yes, this age with its awesome tyranny under the veil of freedom deserves to be struck in the face with the following masterly lines, which, written by a most important person,¹ have been wrongly brandished in his face, although he deserved no slap:

*It is not possible through tyranny and injustice to destroy freedom;
Try to remove consciousness, if you can, from humankind.*

In place of these lines, I say, in order to strike this age in the face:

*It is not possible through tyranny and injustice to destroy reality;
Try to annihilate the heart, if you can, in humankind.*

Or,

¹ Namik Kemal (1840-1888) in his famous *kaside* ...

It is not possible through tyranny and injustice to destroy virtue;

Try to annihilate the conscience, if you can, in humankind.

Yes, just as the virtue arising from belief cannot be the cause of oppression, so it cannot be the cause of despotism. Oppression and arbitrary despotism indicate the absence of virtue. The chief way the people of virtue in particular interfere in the life of society is through impotence, poverty, and humility. All praise be to God, my life has passed on this way, and is passing on it. I do not claim this out of pride, saying that I possess some virtue. I say the following as thanks and to make known a divine bounty:

Through His grace and munificence, Almighty God bestowed on me the virtue of working for the sciences of belief and the Qur'an. All praise be to God, throughout my life I have spent this divine bounty for the benefit and happiness of this Muslim nation, and just as at no time have I used it to dominate and oppress people, so for an important reason I detest public attention and being fêted by people, which is sought after by the neglectful; I flee from it. Twenty years of my former life were lost because of it, so I look on it as harmful for me. But since I know that public attention is a sign that the people like the Risale-i Nur, I do not put them off.

O you whose view is restricted to the life of this world! In no way have I meddled in your world, nor have I had anything to do with your principles, nor as is testified to by my life these nine years of captivity, have I had any intention or desire to meddle in the world again. So according to what law have you inflicted all this surveillance and oppression on me as though I were an old oppressor who was ever ready to seize an opportunity and supported the idea of tyranny and despotism? No government in the world permits such treatment over and above the law, nor is it recommended by anyone. It is not only me who is sick of the ill-treatment I have had meted out to me so far, if they knew of it all mankind would be disgusted, and even the universe!

THIRD INDICATION

A fallacious, crazy question.

Some members of the judiciary say: "Since you reside in this country, you should abide by its republican laws. So why do you elude those laws under the cloak of being a recluse? For instance, according to the present laws of the government, it is opposed to one of the principles of the republic, which is based on equality, to assume some virtue, some merit, outside one's duty, and through it to dominate some of the nation and exercise power and influence. Why do you have your hand kissed, though you hold

no position? Why do you assume a position advertising yourself and wanting the people to listen to you?"

The Answer: Those who apply the law, may apply it to others after first applying it to themselves. If you apply a principle to others which you have not applied to yourselves, you are infringing and opposing your own principle and law before anyone. You want to apply this law of absolute equality to me. So I say this:

Whenever a common soldier rises to the social rank of a field marshal and shares in the respect and acclaim the nation shows to the field marshal and is the object of acclaim and respect the same as him; or whenever the field marshal becomes as common as the soldier and assumes the soldier's lowly position and he retains no value whatsoever outside his duty; and whenever the most brilliant military commander who leads the army to victories receives public acclaim, respect and affection equal to that of the dimmest common soldier; then as required by this law of equality of yours, you can tell me: "Don't call yourself a hoja! Don't accept respect! Deny your virtue! Serve the servants, and take beggars as your friends!"

If you say: "Respect, social position, and public attention are in regard to functions and particular to those who perform them when they are performing them. But you have no function, so you may not accept the people's respect as though you did have one."

The Answer: If man consisted only of a body, and he were going to live in this world for ever, and if the door of the grave were closed and death had been killed, then his duties and functions would have been limited to those of the army and government officials, and what you say would have had some meaning. But since man does not consist only of a body, and his heart, tongue, mind, and brain cannot be plucked out to feed his body; they cannot be annihilated; they too have to be administered.

And since the door of the grave does not close, and since anxiety for the future beyond the grave is the most pressing question for everyone, then the duties based on the respect and obedience of the nation are not restricted to the social, political, and military duties looking to its worldly life. Yes, just as it is a duty to give a passport to those travelling abroad, so is it a duty to give a passport to those travelling to post-eternity and to give them a light for that dark way, and there is no other duty so important. It is a duty that can be denied only by denying death and giving the lie to the testimony of the thirty thousand witnesses who every day set their signatures with the seals of their corpses on the claim "Death is a reality," affirming it.

Since there are moral and spiritual duties based on moral and spiritual

needs, and the most important of those duties are the passport for the journey to post-eternity, and the pocket-torch of the heart in the darkness of the Intermediate Realm, and belief, the key to eternal happiness, and instruction in belief and its strengthening, for sure, the learned who perform those duties will not with ingratitude count as nothing the divine bounties bestowed on them and the virtues arising from belief, and descend to the level of sinners and the dissolute. They will not soil themselves with the innovations and vices of the inferior. Thus, the solitude which you do not like and suppose to be inequality is because of this.

In addition to this truth I say the following, not to those like you who torment and pester me and who in egotism and contempt of the law of equality are as overweening as the Pharaoh – for the arrogant suppose humility to be abasement, so one should not be humble before them – I say rather to the fair-minded, the modest, and the just:

All praise be to God, I know my faults and impotence. I do not arrogantly want any position superior to Muslims which demands respect. I am always aware of my endless faults and utter insignificance. Finding consolation by seeking divine forgiveness, I want not respect from the people, but their prayers. I reckon all my friends know of this way of mine. However, while serving the All-Wise Qur'an and teaching the truths of belief, in order to preserve the dignity and pride of learning that such a rank requires, on account of those truths and in honour of the Qur'an and in order not to bow before the people of misguidance, I temporarily assume that dignified stance. I do not think 'the worldly's' laws can oppose these points!

Some Astonishing Treatment

It is well-known that everywhere teachers judge in accordance with knowledge and learning. Out of love of their profession, in whomever and wherever they encounter knowledge and learning, they will nurture friendship and respect for the person concerned. If a professor from an enemy country visits this country even, teachers will visit him out of respect for his knowledge and learning, and offer him respect.

However, when the highest learned council of the English asked for a six-hundred-word answer to six questions they asked the Shaykh al-Islam's Office, a scholar and teacher who has met with the disrespect of the education authorities here, answered those six questions with six words which met with approval, and answered with true knowledge and learning the most basic principles of the Europeans and their philosophers, and defeated them. Through the strength he received from the Qur'an, he challenged

those European philosophers. And in Istanbul six months before the proclamation of the Second Constitution, he invited both the religious scholars and scholars of modern science to debate, and himself asking no questions answered completely correctly without exception all questions posed to him.² Those who have caused most distress to this scholar and teacher – who has devoted all his life to the happiness of this nation, and publishing hundreds of treatises in the people's own language of Turkish has illuminated them, and is both a fellow-citizen and a co-religionist and friend and brother – those who have nurtured enmity towards him, and indeed been disrespectful towards him, have been certain members of the educational establishment as well as a few official hojas.

What have you got to say to this? Is this civilization? Is it encouraging education? Is it patriotism? Is it love of the nation? Is it republicanism? God forbid! It is nothing at all! It is rather that divine determining showed hostility where this scholar and teacher hoped for friendship so that hypocrisy would not become mixed with his learning due to respect, and he might gain sincerity.

Conclusion

An assault which in my view was astonishing, but was the cause of thanks

'The worldly,' who are extraordinarily egotistical, are so sensitive in their egotism that if it had been conscious, it would have reached the degree of wonder-working or of great genius. The matter in question was this:

With the sensitive balance of their egotism, they perceive in me a little hypocritical egotism which I had not perceived with my soul and mind, and in violent fashion confront it. This eight or nine years I have experienced the following eight or nine times: after they have treated me wrongfully and unjustly, I have considered divine determining and searched out the tricks of my soul, asking why they been set to pester me. Each time I have understood that my soul has unconsciously and naturally inclined to egotism, or else has knowingly deceived me. So then I have said that divine determining has acted justly towards me within those tyrants' injustice.

² The New Said says: I do not concur with the words uttered here proudly by the Old Said, but I cannot silence him since I gave him say in this treatise. Thinking, Let him display a bit of egotism before the egotists, I am silent.

For instance, this summer my friends mounted me on a fine horse and I rode out into the countryside. A selfish desire for pleasure awakened in me without my being aware of it, and ‘the worldly’ opposed that hidden desire of mine so violently that they destroyed both it, and my appetite for many other things. Even, for example, after Ramadan and learning of the allusions made to us by one of the great, holy imams of former times through his wonder-working which penetrated the Unseen, and being faced with the piety and sincerity of my brothers and the respect and good opinion of visitors, without my realizing it my soul wanted proudly to assume a hypocritical position under the veil of being thankful. Suddenly with their infinite sensitivity and in a way in which the very particles of hypocrisy could be felt, ‘the worldly’ attacked me. I thank Almighty God that their tyranny was a means of my gaining sincerity.

*And say: “O my Sustainer! I seek refuge with you from the suggestions of the Evil Ones. * And I seek refuge with You lest they should come near me.”(23:97)*

O God! O Protector! O Preserver! O Best of Protectors! Preserve me and preserve my companions from the evil of the soul and of Satan, and from the evil of people of misguidance and of rebellion. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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

The Twenty-Third Flash

On Nature

[First written as the Sixteenth Note of the Seventeenth Flash, this part of the *Risale-i Nur* was later designated the Twenty-Third Flash because of its importance. For it 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*, 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 blatantly obvious superstition, and continue to pursue that way. Well, the fact is they cannot 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.¹

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. Their 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?"(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.

A point to be mentioned before our discussion:

When I went to Ankara in 1922, the morale of the people of belief was extremely high as a result of the victory of the army of Islam over the Greeks. But I saw that an abominable current of atheism was treacherously trying to subvert, poison and destroy their minds. "O God!" I said, "this monster is going to harm the fundamentals of belief." At that point, since the above-mentioned verse makes self-evidently plain God's existence and unity, I sought assistance from it and wrote a treatise in Arabic consisting of a proof taken from the All-Wise Qur'an that was powerful enough to disperse and destroy that atheistic current. I had it printed in Ankara at the Yeni Gün Press. But, alas, those who knew Arabic were few and those who considered it seriously were rare. Also, its argument was in an extremely concise and abbreviated form. As a result, the treatise did not have the effect it should have done and sadly, the current of atheism both swelled and gained strength. Now, I feel compelled to explain a part of the proof in Turkish. Since certain parts of it have been fully explained in other sections of the Risale-i Nur, it will be written in summary form here. Those numerous proofs in part unite in this proof; so each may be seen as an element of this proof.

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 causes in the universe. We shall mention only three of its numerous impossibilities.

First Impossibility

Imagine there is a pharmacy in which are found 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.

I n S h o r t : 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, and 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 such a well-ordered and well-balanced being which has unity 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 resemble 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 intelligence 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 officials dependent on the command of the master architect of the universe, then each 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 intelligence 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. For if this book, for example, 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 for 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, there has 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, consists 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.

So 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!

I f y o u a s k : 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?

T h e A n s w e r : 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 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 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 becomes necessary to suppose that, with a hundred thousand difficulties and obstacles that reach the degree of impossibility, blind nature possesses within it the power and wisdom 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.

I n S h o r t : 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 the king by being a soldier or an official, by reason of the strength of the connection he may perform duties far exceeding his 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.²

If the connection is severed and the man discharged from his duties as an official, he will be compelled to carry the equipment and sources of strength necessary for his work himself. He will then only be able to perform duties commensurate with the sources of strength and ammunition he is able to carry. If he is required in this situation to carry out his duties with the extreme ease of the first situation, it will 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.

² Yes, through this connection, the seed receives an order from divine determining and displays those wonderful duties. If the connection were to 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.

I n S h o r t : 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-proportioned and artistically fashioned objects. Out 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 he started to investigate. But it did not appear possible even to his untaught intelligence that anything he had looked at could have 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 the 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 that 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:

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 to whom they point 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 well-disciplined 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 mosque as magnificent as 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. 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.

I n S h o r t : 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 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?

demonstrates clearly so that there can be no doubt or hesitation the Divinity of the Necessarily Existing 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 tell 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 a means of 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 its essential organs, each face has a distinguishing mark in relation to all the others; 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 the 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 intelligence 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 its rejection of 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.

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, 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, does this cause any deficiency 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 daytime.”

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 so a fearsome a 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. You can understand how absurd it would be if an ill person responds to a kindly 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?”

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 subjects’ 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 its Sustainer’s names. 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 and so transgresses their rights.

Furthermore, since the person 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.

I n S h o r t : 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. Our narrow minds cannot comprehend this because of its vastness. 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,(31:28)

and,

The matter of the Hour shall be but as the twinkling of the eye, or even closer(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?"

T h e A n s w e r : 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. And 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.

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 them and here only explain an 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, 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 were 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 together 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.

Those 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, such as 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.(2:32)

The Twenty-Fourth Flash

On Islamic Dress for Women

[While being the Second and Third Matters of the Fifteenth Note, this treatise was made the Twenty-Fourth Flash because of its importance.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons [when abroad] [to the end of the verse].(33:59)*

This verse enjoins the veiling of women. However, dissolute civilization opposes this command of the Qur'an; it does not consider the veiling of women to be natural and says it is slavery of a sort.¹

The Answer: We shall explain only four of the many instances of wisdom in this injunction of the Qur'an, showing that it is entirely natural and those who oppose it are opposing the innate disposition of women.

FIRST INSTANCE OF WISDOM

To veil themselves is natural for women and their innate dispositions demand it. For women are weak and delicate, and since they are in need of a man's protection and help for themselves and for their children whom

¹ Part of my defence for the Appeal Court, which opposed the [Eskişehir] Court and silenced it: "I say to this court of law that if there is justice on the face of the earth, it will surely quash the decision to convict a person who has expounded a most sacred, true, and right divine principle which has been in force in the social life of three hundred and fifty million people every century for one thousand three hundred and fifty years, relying on the confirmation and unanimity of three hundred and fifty thousand Qur'anic commentaries and following the beliefs of our forefathers for one thousand three hundred and fifty years; it will surely quash such a ruling!"

they love more than their own lives, they have a natural desire to make themselves loved and not loathed, and not to be rebuffed.

Also, seven out of ten women are either old or ugly and they do not want to show their age or unsightliness to everyone. Or they are jealous, and they do not want to appear ugly in relation to others who are more beautiful. Or they are frightened of assault or aspersions, and want by nature to cover themselves so as not to suffer assault, nor to be accused of unfaithfulness by their husbands. If noted carefully, it is seen that it is the elderly who hide themselves most. While only two or three out of ten women are both young and beautiful and do not feel uncomfortable at displaying themselves.

It is clear that people are discomforted at being looked at by people they do not like or find tedious; they are upset by it. If a beautiful immodestly dressed woman takes pleasure at two or three out of ten men who are canonically strangers looking at her, she is bored by the seven or eight. Also, since a woman with uncorrupted morals is sensitive and easily affected, she will certainly be distressed at dirty looks whose effects have been physically experienced, indeed, are poisonous. We even hear that in Europe, the place of open dress, many women are fed up at being the object of attention, and complain to the police, saying: "These brutes keep staring at us and disturbing us." This means that present-day civilization's unveiling women is contrary to their natures, while the Qur'an's command to veil themselves is both inconformity with women's natures, and saves them – those mines of compassion who may be worthy companions for all eternity – from degeneration, degradation, what is in effect slavery and wretchedness.

Furthermore, by nature women are fearful of men who are strangers, and are anxious at them. Fear naturally demands the veiling of women. For in addition to suffering the difficulty of bearing the load of a child for eight or nine months, which certainly embitters the eight or nine minutes' pleasure, there is the possibility of suffering the calamity of bringing up a child for eight or nine years without protector. Since this happens frequently, by creation they truly fear strange men and by nature want to hide themselves from them. Being weak, their creation demands that through veiling themselves they do not excite the appetites of men outside the stipulated degrees of kinship, nor allow any opportunity for assault; their weak creation gives powerful warning. It shows that their cloaks and coats are shields and fortresses. The fact that, according to news received, the bare-legged wife of a high-ranking man in the world was accosted in the country's capital, in the market-place in daylight in front of everyone by a common shoe-shiner, deals a slap in the shameless faces of those opposed to the veiling of women!

SECOND INSTANCE OF WISDOM

The genuine, intense relationship, love, and affection between men and women do not arise only from the needs of worldly life. Yes, a woman is a companion to her husband not only in this worldly life, she is his companion in eternal life too. Since she will be her husband's companion in eternal life, she surely should not attract the looks of others besides her husband, her everlasting friend and companion, and should not offend him and make him jealous. In consequence of the mystery of belief, her believing husband's relations with her are not confined to this worldly life and his love is not only animal and temporary, so long as her beauty lasts; he holds true, earnest love and respect for her because she will be his companion in eternal life. And he bears that love and respect for her, not only during her youth when she is beautiful, but also when she is old and unsightly. Certainly in return for this, she should show her beauties to him alone and restrict her love to him; this is demanded by humanity. Otherwise she would gain very little and lose much.

According to the Shari'a, the husband should be a good match for the wife. That is, they should be suitable to one another. The most important aspect of this is with a view to religion.

Happy the husband who sees the wife's firm religion and follows her, and himself becomes pious in order not to lose his companion of eternal life.

Happy the wife who sees her husband's firmness in religion and becomes pious so as not to lose her eternal friend.

Alas for the man who becomes dissolute, which will lose him for ever that righteous woman.

Alas for the woman who does not follow her pious husband and loses her eternal blessed friend.

And a thousand woes on the unhappy husband and wife who imitate each other in sin and vice, helping one another to enter Hell-fire!

THIRD INSTANCE OF WISDOM

Happy family life is perpetuated through mutual confidence between husband and wife, and heartfelt respect and love. Immodest dress and free-and-easy behaviour destroy the confidence, and spoil the mutual respect and love. For out of ten women who favour immodest dress only one will not try to make herself liked by strangers because she does not find other men more attractive than her husband. Nine will find others better than their husbands. And only one out of twenty men will not find other women

more attractive. Then besides the true love and mutual respect disappearing, it may arouse extremely ugly and base feelings, as follows:

By nature, men do not feel any lust towards those within the stipulated degrees of kinship like their sisters, because, since such relatives' faces induce kindness and licit love due to their close kinship, it nullifies any sexual or lusty inclinations. But to leave uncovered parts of the body which according to the Shari'a it is not permissible to expose to close relatives like the legs, may awaken extremely ugly feelings in men of low character. For the face of a close relative reminds the man of their close kinship and does not resemble the face of someone outside the degrees of kinship, but a bare leg is the same as that of canonical strangers. The leg does bear any distinguishing mark to recall the close kinship of its owner, so may arouse carnal feelings in the man. To look on such things is so degenerate as to make one's hair stand on end.

FOURTH INSTANCE OF WISDOM

It is clear that everyone wants lots of children. There is no nation or government that does not support an increase in population. In fact, God's Most Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) said: "Marry and increase, for at the Last Day I shall take pride in your large numbers."² However, the abandoning of Islamic dress for women does not increase marriage, it decreases it significantly. For even the most lay-about and modern youth wants his wife to be chaste. He does not want her to be modern, that is, careless in questions of dress and morals like himself, and so remains single, and even frequents prostitutes.

Women are not like that, they cannot restrict their husbands' behaviour to the same extent. Women's most basic characteristics are loyalty and trustworthiness, since being the director of all the matters to do with the home, the woman is charged with protecting and preserving her husband's property and possessions, and his children. Carelessness in dress and morality destroys that loyalty, and her husband loses confidence in her and makes her suffer pangs of conscience. In fact, if the two qualities of courage and generosity, which are desirable in men, are found in women, it damages this loyalty and confidence and so are undesirable for women and are considered to be bad qualities. But since the husband's duty is not loyalty and stewardship, but protection, kindness, and respect, he cannot be restricted and refined, and may marry other women as well.

² al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iii, 269, No: 3366; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, No: 1021; al-Suyuti, *Jami' al-Saghir*, No: 3366.

Our country cannot be compared with Europe, because there honour may be preserved to a degree by violent means such as the duel, despite immodest dress. The person who makes eyes at the wife of a self-respecting man takes his life in his hands, and then looks. Also the people of Europe are cold and frigid, like the climate. Asia, that is, the lands of Islam, are relatively torrid. It is well-known that the environment has an effect on people's morality. Perhaps in those cold countries immodest dress does not stimulate the animal appetites and carnal desires of those cold people, and lead to abuse. But the carnal lusts of the easily influenced and sensitive people of hot countries are continually excited by immodest dress, which is thus the cause of much abuse and waste and the weakening of the young generation, and the loss of strength. Instead of answering natural needs one a month or every three weeks or so, a person considers it necessary every few days. And then, since he is obliged to avoid his wife for perhaps two weeks out of every month due to contingencies like her monthly period, if he is defeated by his appetites, he will incline to houses of ill-fame.

The veiling of women may not be abolished on the pretext of the women of small towns and villages and nomad women, for innocent working-women and somewhat coarse women being partially unveiled does not excite carnal desires since it is due to their working to secure their livelihoods and their physical, wearying labour. Moreover, since idle, lay-about men are few, and not even one in ten of the immoral men of the large towns can be found among them. Such a comparison should not therefore be made.

In His Name, be He glorified!

A Conversation with the Women, My Believing Sisters of the hereafter

At the time I returned to blessed Isparta, which bears the meaning of the Medresetü'z-Zehra,¹ for the third time, I had seen the sincere and enthusiastic interest shown by women towards the Risale-i Nur in some other provinces, and had realized that in a way far exceeding my due they had confidence in my instruction in it. I heard then that the women in Isparta, my blessed sisters of the hereafter, were waiting to receive instruction from me, as though I were going to instruct them in mosques in the manner of preaching. I was ill with five or so different illnesses, in a wretched state, lacking the strength to speak and think, yet that night the following was imparted to my heart, impellingly: "Fifteen years ago you wrote A Guide for Youth at the request of some youths and it was a source of benefit for many. Women, however, are in even greater need of a guide at this time." Despite my extreme weakness, wretchedness, and powerlessness, in the face of this warning I wrote very concisely in three points a number of necessary matters which I now explain to my blessed sisters and young spiritual offspring.

FIRST POINT

Since one of the fundamental principles of the Risale-i Nur is compassion and women are champions of compassion, they are by nature more closely connected with the Risale-i Nur than others. Praise be to God, this natural sympathy is felt in many places. The self-sacrifice within such compassion seeks nothing in return and expresses true sincerity, and so is of the greatest importance at this time.

Yes, the fact that wanting nothing in return, a mother will sacrifice her life to save her young from danger, as demanded by her nature and with true sincerity, shows that women are capable of great heroism. By developing this heroism, they may save their lives both in this world and in the hereafter. However, this important attribute does not unfold under the influence of certain bad currents of thought, or else it is exploited. A small example out of hundreds is as follows:

¹ For the Medresetü'z-Zehra, See note 21, page 325.

A compassionate mother undertakes every sort of self-sacrifice so that her child should not fall into danger in this worldly life and should receive every sort of benefit and advantage; she brings him up with this in view. Thinking, "My son is going to be a Pasha," she gives him all her property, takes him from the Qur'an school and sends him to Europe. But it does not occur to her that her child's eternal life has fallen into danger. She tries to save him from prison in this world and does not take into consideration his being sentenced to the prison of Hell. Reversing that innate compassion, she makes her innocent child a claimant against her in the hereafter, though he should be her intercessor. He will rebuke her saying: "Why did you not strengthen my belief and so cause me to be lost?" In this world too, since he did not receive a proper Islamic upbringing, he cannot respond to his mother's wondrous compassion in the way it deserves; in fact he does so very deficiently.

If she does not misdirect her true compassion and works to save her unhappy child from everlasting incarceration in Hell and from dying while in misguidance, which will result in eternal extinction, the equivalent of each of the child's good works will pass to the mother's book of good deeds. And after her death he will continuously send lights to her spirit with his good works, and in the hereafter, will be not a claimant but with all his spirit and life an intercessor for her, and a blessed child of her's for all eternity.

Yes, man's first master and most influential teacher is his mother. In connection with this, I shall explain the following to you, which I have always felt strongly in my own self:

I am eighty years old and have received lessons from eighty thousand people. Yet I swear that the truest and most unshakeable lessons I have received are those inculcated in me by my late mother, which have always remained fresh for me. They have been planted in my nature as though they were seeds planted in my physical being. I observe that other instruction has been constructed on those seeds. That is to say, the lessons instilled in my nature and spirit by my mother when I was one year old I now see at the age of eighty to be fundamental seeds amid great truths.

For instance, I consider it certain that I learnt from the compassionate behaviour and acts of my mother and from her teaching, to be compassionate, which is the most important of the four principles of my way, and to be kind and clement, which is the greatest truth of the Risale-i Nur. Yes, the compassion of motherhood comprises true sincerity and true self-sacrifice, but it is a misuse of it to not think of the hereafter – a treasury of diamonds for her innocent child – and to turn his face towards this world, which

resembles temporary, transient fragments of glass, and to be kind to him in that way, is to misuse that compassion.

A proof of this heroism of women in respect of compassion, which wants absolutely no recompense and nothing in return, and of their sacrificing their very spirits, which in no way seeks personal benefit and no show, is that a hen, which bears a tiny sample of that compassion, will attack a lion and sacrifice its life for its chicks.

Now, sincerity is the most valuable and most essential principle in Islamic training and in deeds pertaining to the hereafter. True sincerity is present in the heroism of this kind of compassion. If these two points begin to develop among women, it will lead to considerable happiness within the domain of Islam. When it comes to the heroism of men, it can never be for nothing; they always want recompense in perhaps a hundred ways. At the very least they want glory and renown. But regrettably, unfortunate women practise hypocrisy in another form in order to be saved from the evil and oppression of tyrannical men; this sort arises from weakness and impotence.

SECOND POINT

This year, although I had withdrawn from the life of society and was in seclusion, I looked at the world for the sake of some of my brothers and sisters who were Risale-i Nur students. I heard from most of the friends who visited me complaints about their family lives. "Alas!", I said, "Family life is the refuge of people, and particularly of Muslims, and a sort of Paradise, and a small world. Has this now started to break up as well?" I sought the reason and I understood that one or two covert groups were working to mislead the youth and drive the young to vice by exciting their appetites, so as to cause harm to Islamic social life and thereby to the religion of Islam. I also realized that one or two groups were working covertly and effectively to drive neglectful women down the wrong road. I understood too that a severe blow would be dealt to this Muslim nation from that quarter. I therefore categorically state the following to you my sisters and spiritual children:

The sole means of saving women's happiness in the hereafter, and their happiness in this world, as well as saving their elevated innate qualities from corruption, is the training given by the religion of Islam; there is no other means. You hear about the situation into which the unfortunate women of Russia have fallen. It says in one part of the Risale-i Nur that no sensible man builds love and affection for his wife on her fleeting, superficial beauty of five to ten years; he should build it on her fine conduct, the

most permanent and best of beauty, which is particular to womanhood and its compassion. Then, when the unfortunate advances in years, her husband's love for her will persist. For his wife is not merely a temporary helper and companion in this worldly life, but an eternal, lovable companion in everlasting life, so the older they grow their love for each other should also grow, and their compassion and respect. Under the guise of culture and civilization, family life is now is a temporary animal relationship followed by eternal separation, and is being destroyed at its very foundations.

In another place in the Risale-i Nur it says: "Happy the man who in order not to lose his companion of eternity, copies his righteous wife and so becomes righteous himself. And happy the woman who, seeing her husband to be pious, adheres to religion herself so as not to lose her everlasting friend and companion. Unhappy the man who follows his wife in sin, does not try to make her give it up, but joins her. And unhappy the woman who, seeing her husband's sinfulness, follows him in another way. And alas for the wife and husband who assist one another in throwing each other into the Fire. That is, who encourage one another to embrace the evils of civilization."

These lines have the following meaning: at this time, Islamic conduct within the bounds of the Shari'a is the only means of developing family life and finding happiness in this world and the hereafter, and causing the elevated qualities of women to unfold. Now, the most important matter in family life is this, that if the woman sees bad conduct and disloyalty in her husband and to spite him, stints in her loyalty and faithfulness to him, which is her duty as far as the family is concerned, then the factory of that family life will be thrown into confusion, exactly like discipline in the army being spoilt. The woman should try to reform her husband's faults as far as she can in order to save her companion of eternity. It is harmful in every respect if she starts to show herself to others by unveiling herself and tries to make herself attractive to others. For a woman who gives up complete loyalty pays the penalty in this world too. Because it is her nature to be fearful and upset at the looks of those canonically strangers to her, and to avoid them. She is discomforted at the looks of eighteen out of twenty strangers. As for men, they are discomforted and upset at the looks of only one out of a hundred women who are canonically strangers to them. The woman suffers torment in that respect, and so too may be accused of disloyalty, and due to her weakness, will be unable to defend her rights.

In Short: Just as in respect of compassion women do not resemble men in heroism and sincerity, and men cannot compare with them in that

regard; so too innocent women can in no way compare with men in vice. For this reason by their natures and weakness, they are truly frightened of strangers and feel themselves compelled to conceal themselves beneath their abundant outer garments. For if for eight minutes' pleasure a man commits sin, he only suffers a loss of eight liras. But as the penalty of the pleasure of eight minutes' sin, in this world the woman bears a heavy load for eight months and then has the hardship of rearing the unprotected child for eight years. She therefore cannot compete with men in vice and pays a penalty a hundred times greater.

The not infrequent incidents of this sort show that just as by nature women are the source of elevated morals, so do they virtually lack the capacity for worldly pleasure in vice and dissipation. That is to say, they are a type of blessed creature created to pass happy lives in the family within the bounds laid down by Islam. God damn those covert groups who are corrupting these blessed creatures! And may Almighty God preserve my sisters from the evil of such dissolute wretches.

My sisters! I have this to say to you confidentially: rather than entering under the domination of a dissolute, immoral, Westernized husband due to straitened circumstances, try to economize and obtain your own livelihood like innocent peasant women with the frugality and contentment which is in your natures; do not try to sell yourselves. If it is your fate to have a husband who is unsuitable for you, be content with your fate and resigned to it. God willing, he will be reformed through your contentment and resignation. But to apply to the courts for a divorce, which I have heard of recently; that is not in keeping with the honour of Islam and this nation's good name!

THIRD POINT

My dear sisters, you should be certain that as is demonstrated with powerful proofs and examples in the Risale-i Nur, present in pleasures and enjoyment outside the bounds of the licit are pains and distress ten times greater. You may find detailed expositions of this in the Risale-i Nur. For instance, the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Words from The Short Words and A Guide For Youth will elucidate this truth for you completely in place of me. In which case, make do with licit pleasures and be content with them. Innocent conversation with your innocent children in your home is more pleasurable than a hundred cinemas.

You should also know certainly that true pleasure in the life of this world lies in belief and the sphere of faith. There is an immaterial pleasure to be found in all good works. The Risale-i Nur has proved with hundreds

of decisive evidences that even in this world most bitter and grievous suffering is present in vice and misguidance. I myself have experienced on numerous occasions as certainly as seeing it with my own eyes, that a seed of Paradise is contained in belief, while a seed of Hell is found in vice and misguidance. This truth is repeated many times in the Risale-i Nur. Although the Risale-i Nur has come into the hands of those who oppose it most obstinately and severely, they have been unable to refute this truth; neither have the committees of experts and the courts been able to refute it. Now, my blessed and innocent sisters and your children who are like my spiritual children, foremost the Treatise on Islamic Dress, and A Guide For Youth, and The Short Words should teach you in my place.

I have heard that you want me to teach you in the mosque, but my wretched state and my illness and many other circumstances do not permit it. I have decided to include all my sisters who read and accept this instruction which I have written for you in all my prayers and spiritual gains, like all the students of the Risale-i Nur. If you obtain and read part of the Risale-i Nur in my place, or listen to it, then in accordance with my rule you too will have a share in the prayers and spiritual gains of all the Risale-i Nur students, your brothers.

I was going to write more, but I am very ill and very weak and very old and have many duties like correcting copies of the Risale-i Nur, so for now I have sufficed with this much.

The Eternal One, He is the Eternal One!
Your brother who is in need of your prayers,
S a i d N u r s i

The Twenty-Fifth Flash

Message for the Sick

[This treatise consists of twenty-five remedies. It was written as a salve, a solace, and a prescription for the sick, and in order to visit them and wish them a speedy recovery.]

Warning and Apology

This immaterial prescription was written with a speed greater than all my other writings,¹ and since time could not be found to correct and study it, unlike all the others it was read only once, and that at great speed like its composition. That is to say, it has remained in the disordered state of a first draft. I did not consider it necessary to go over carefully the things which had occurred to me in a natural manner, lest they be spoiled by arranging them and paying them undue attention. Readers and especially the sick should not feel upset and offended at any disagreeable expressions or harsh words and phrases; let them rather pray for me.

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

*Those who say when afflicted by calamity: "To God do we belong and to Him is our return."(2:156) * Who gives me food and drink * And when I am ill it is He Who cures me.(26:79-80)*

In this Flash, we describe briefly twenty-five remedies which may offer true consolation and a beneficial cure for the sick and those struck by disaster, who form one tenth of mankind.

¹ This treatise was written in four and a half hours.

Signed, Rüştü, Re'fet, Hüsrev, Said.

FIRST REMEDY

Unhappy sick person! Do not be anxious, have patience! Your illness is not a malady for you; it is a sort of cure. For life departs like capital; if it yields no fruits, it is wasted; and if it passes in ease and heedlessness, it passes swiftly. Illness makes that capital of yours yield huge profits. Moreover, it does not allow your life to pass quickly, it restrains it and lengthens it, so that it will depart after yielding its fruits. An indication that your life is lengthened through illness is the following much repeated proverb: “The times of calamity are long, the times of happiness, most brief.”

SECOND REMEDY

O ill person who lacks patience! Be patient, indeed, offer thanks! Your illness may transform each of the minutes of your life into the equivalent of an hour’s worship. For worship is of two kinds. One is positive like the well-known worship of supplication and the five daily prayers. The other are negative forms of worship like illness and calamities. By means of these, those afflicted realize their impotence and weakness; they beseech their All-Compassionate Creator and take refuge in Him; they manifest worship which is sincere and without hypocrisy. Yes, there is a sound narration stating that a life passed in illness is counted as worship for the believer – on condition he does not complain about God.² It is even established by sound narrations and by those who uncover the realities of creation that one minute’s illness of some people who are completely patient and thankful becomes the equivalent of an hour’s worship and a minute’s illness of certain perfected men the equivalent of a day’s worship. So you should not complain about an illness which as though transforms one minute of your life into a thousand minutes and gains for you long life; you should offer thanks.

THIRD REMEDY

Impatient sick person! The fact that those who come to this world continuously depart, and the young grow old, and man perpetually revolves amid death and separation testifies that he did not come to this world to enjoy himself and receive pleasure.

Moreover, while man is the most perfect, the most elevated, of living beings and the best endowed in regard to members and faculties, he dwells on past pleasures and future pains, and so passes a grievous, troublesome

² al-Albani, *Sahih Jami’ al-Saghir*, 256. See also, al-Suyuti, *al-Fath al-Kabir*, ii, 148.

life, lower than the animals. This means that man did not come to this world to live in a fine manner and pass his life in ease and pleasure. Rather, he possesses vast capital, and he came here to work and do trade for an eternal, everlasting life.

The capital given to man is his lifetime. Had there been no illness, good health and well-being would have caused heedlessness, for they show the world to be pleasant and make the hereafter forgotten. They do not want death and the grave to be thought of; they cause the capital of life to be wasted on trifles. Whereas illness suddenly opens the eyes, it says to the body: "You are not immortal. You have not been left to your own devices. You have a duty. Give up your pride, think of the One who created you. Know that you will enter the grave, so prepare yourself for it!" From this point of view, illness is an admonishing guide and adviser that never deceives. It should not be complained about in this respect, indeed, should be thanked for. And if it is not too severe, patience should be sought to endure it.

FOURTH REMEDY

Plaintive ill person! You have no right to complain; what is due to you is to offer thanks and be patient. For your body and members and faculties are not your property. You did not make them, nor did you buy them from other workshops. That means they are someone else's property, and their owner has disposal over his property as he wishes.

As is related in the Twenty-Sixth Word, an extremely wealthy and skilful craftsman, for example, employs a poor man as a model in order to show off his fine art and considerable wealth. In return for a wage, for a brief hour he clothes the poor man in a bejewelled and skilfully wrought garment. He works it on him and gives it various states. In order to display the extraordinary varieties of his art, he cuts the garment, alters it, and lengthens and shortens it. Does the poor wage-earner have the right to say to that person: "You are causing me trouble, you are causing me distress with the form you have given it, making me bow down and stand up?" Has he the right to tell him that he is spoiling his fine appearance by trimming and shortening the garment which makes him beautiful? Can he tell him he is being unkind and unfair?

O sick person! Just like in this comparison, in order to display the garment of your body with which He has clothed you, bejewelled with luminous faculties like the eye, the ear, the reason, and the heart, and the embroideries of His most beautiful names, the All-Glorious Maker makes you revolve amid numerous states and changes you in many situations. Just

as you learn of His name of Provider through hunger, so come to know His name of Healer through your illness. Since suffering and calamities show the decrees of some of His names, many instances of good are to be found within those flashes of wisdom and rays of mercy. If the veil of illness, which you fear and loathe, were to be lifted, behind it you would find many agreeable and beautiful meanings.

FIFTH REMEDY

O you who is afflicted with illness! Through experience, I have formed the opinion at this time that for some people sickness is a divine bounty, a gift of the Most Merciful. Although I was not worthy of it, over the past eight or nine years a number of young people have come to me in connection with their illnesses, to request my prayers. I have noticed that all of them have begun to think of the hereafter more than other young people. They lack the drunkenness of youth, and have renounced to an extent animal desires and heedlessness. So I consider them and then remind them that their illnesses are a divine bounty within bearable limits. I tell them: "Brother! I am not opposed to this illness of yours. I don't feel sorry for you because of it that I should pray for you. Try to be patient until the illness awakens you completely, and once it has performed its duty, the Compassionate Creator will restore you to health, God willing."

I also tell them: "Owing to the calamity of good health, some of your fellows become neglectful, give up the five daily prayers, do not think of the grave, and forget God Almighty. The superficial pleasure of a brief hour's worldly life causes them to shake and damage eternal life, and even to destroy it. Whereas because of your illness, you see the grave, which you will in any event enter, and the dwellings of the hereafter beyond it, and you act accordingly. So for you, illness is good health, while for some of your peers good health is a sickness."

SIXTH REMEDY

O sick person who complains about his suffering! I say to you: think of your past life and remember the pleasurable, happy days and the distressing, troublesome times, and you will surely exclaim either "Oh!" or "Ah!" That is, your heart and tongue will either say "All praise and thanks be to God!", or "Alas and alack!" Note carefully, what makes you exclaim "Praise and thanks be to God!" is thinking of the pains and calamities that have befallen you; they induce a sort of pleasure so that your heart offers thanks, for the passing of pain is a pleasure. With the passing of pains and calamities, a legacy of pleasure is left in the spirit, which on being aroused by thinking, pours forth from the spirit in thanks.

What makes you exclaim “Alas and alack!” are the pleasurable and happy times you have experienced in the past, which with their passing leave a legacy in your spirit of constant pain. Whenever you think of them, the pain is again stimulated, causing regret and sorrow to pour forth.

Since one day’s illicit pleasure sometimes causes a year’s suffering in the spirit, and with the pain of a fleeting day’s illness causes many days’ pleasure and recompense in addition to the pleasure at being relieved at its passing, think of the result of this temporary illness with which you are now afflicted, and of the merits of its inner face. Say: “All is from God! This too will pass!”, and offer thanks instead of complaining.

SIXTH REMEDY³

O brother who thinks of the pleasures of this world and suffers distress at illness! If this world were everlasting, and if on our way there were no death, and if the winds of separation and decease did not blow, and if there were no winters of the spirit in the calamitous and stormy future, I would have pitied you together with you. But since one day the world will bid us to leave it and will close its ears to our cries, we must forego our love of it now through the warnings of these illnesses, before it drives us out. We must try to abandon it in our hearts before it abandons us.

Yes, illness utters this warning to us: “Your body is not composed of stone and iron, but of various materials which are ever disposed to parting. Leave off your pride, perceive your impotence, recognize your Owner, know your duties, learn why you came to this world!” It declares this secretly in the heart’s ear.

Moreover, since the pleasures and enjoyment of this world do not continue, and particularly if they are illicit they are both fleeting, and full of pain, and sinful, do not weep on the pretext of illness because you have lost those pleasures. On the contrary, think of the aspects of worship and reward in the hereafter to be found in illness, and try to receive pleasure from those.

SEVENTH REMEDY

O sick person who has lost the pleasures of health! Your illness does not spoil the pleasure of divine bounties, on the contrary, it causes them to be experienced and increases them. For if something is continuous, it loses its effect. The people of reality even say that “Things are known through their

³ This Flash occurred to me in a natural manner, and two remedies have been included in the Sixth Remedy. We have left it thus in order not to spoil the naturalness; indeed, we did not change it thinking there may be some mystery contained in it.

opposites.” For example, if there were no darkness, light would not be known and would produce no pleasure. If there were no cold, heat could not be comprehended. If there were no hunger, food would afford no pleasure. If there were no thirst of the stomach, there would be no pleasure in drinking water. If there were no sickness, no pleasure would be had from good health.

The All-Wise Creator’s decking out man with truly numerous members and faculties, to the extent that he may experience and recognize the innumerable varieties of bounties in the universe, shows that He wants to make him aware of every sort of His bounty and to acquaint him with them and to impel him to offer constant thanks. Since this is so, He will give illness, sickness, and suffering, the same as He bestows good health and well-being. I ask you: If you had not suffered this illness in your head or in your hand or stomach, would you have perceived the pleasurable and enjoyable divine bounty of the good health of your head, hand or stomach, and offered thanks? For sure, you would not have even thought of it, let alone offering thanks for it! You would have unconsciously spent that good health on heedlessness, and perhaps even on dissipation.

EIGHTH REMEDY

O sick person who thinks of the hereafter! Sickness washes away the dirt of sins like soap, and cleanses. It is established in a sound Hadith that illnesses are atonement for sins. And in another Hadith, it says: “As ripe fruits fall on their tree being shaken, so the sins of a believer fall away on his shaking with illness.”⁴

Sins are the chronic illnesses of eternal life, and in this worldly life they are sicknesses of the heart, conscience, and spirit. If you are patient and do not complain, you will be saved through this temporary sickness from numerous perpetual sicknesses. If you do not think of your sins, or do not know the hereafter, or do not recognize God, you suffer from an illness so fearsome it is a million times worse than your present minor illnesses. Cry out at that, for all the beings in the world are connected with your heart, spirit, and soul. Those connections are continuously severed by death and separation, opening up innumerable wounds. Particularly since you do not know the hereafter and imagine death to be eternal non-existence, as though lacerated and bruised, your being suffers illness to the extent of the world.

⁴ *Bukhari*, Marda, 1, 2, 13, 16; *Muslim*, Birr, 45; *Darimi*, Riqaq, 57; *Musnad*, i, 371, 441; ii, 303, 335; iii, 4, 18, 38, 48, 61, 81.

Thus, the first thing you have to do is to search for the cure of belief, which is the certain healing remedy for the innumerable illnesses afflicting that infinitely wounded and sick, extensive immaterial being of yours; you have to correct your beliefs. The shortest way of finding such a cure is to recognize the power and mercy of the All-Powerful One of Glory by means of the window of your weakness and impotence shown you behind the curtain of heedlessness, rent by your physical illness.

Yes, one who does not recognize God is afflicted by a world-full of tribulations. While the world of one who does recognize Him is full of light and spiritual happiness; he perceives these in accordance with the strength of his belief. The suffering resulting from insignificant physical illnesses is dissolved by the immaterial joy, healing, and pleasure that arise from belief; the suffering melts away.

NINTH REMEDY

O sick person who recognizes his Creator! Illness gives rise to pain, fear, and anxiety because it sometimes leads to death. Since superficially and to the heedless death is terrifying, illnesses which may lead to it cause fear and apprehension.

So know firstly and believe firmly that the appointed hour is determined and does not change. Those weeping beside the grievously sick and those in perfect health have died, while the grievously sick have been cured and lived.

Secondly: Death is not terrifying as it appears to be superficially. Through the light afforded by the All-Wise Qur'an, in many parts of the Risale-i Nur we have proved in completely certain and indubitable fashion that for believers death is to be discharged from the burdensome duties of life. For them it is a rest from worship, which forms the instruction and training in the arena of trial of this world. It is also a means of their rejoining friends and relations, ninety-nine out of a hundred of whom have already departed for the next world. It is a means of entering their true homeland and eternal abodes of happiness. It is also an invitation to the gardens of Paradise from the dungeon of this world. And it is the time they receive their wage from the munificence of the Most Compassionate Creator in return for service rendered to Him. Since the reality of death is this, it should be regarded not as terrifying, but on the contrary as the introduction to mercy and happiness.

Moreover, some of the people of God have feared death, not out of terror at it but because they hoped to gain additional merit by performing more good works with the duties of life continuing.

Yes, for the people of belief, death is the door to divine mercy, while for the people of misguidance, it is the pit of everlasting darkness.

TENTH REMEDY

O sick person who worries unnecessarily! You worry at the severity of your illness and that worry exacerbates it. If you want your illness to be less severe, try not to worry. That is, think of the benefits of your illness, the recompense for it, and that it will pass quickly; it will remove the worry and cut the illness at the root.

In fact, worry doubles the illness, for it causes an immaterial illness of the heart underlying the physical illness; the physical illness subsists through that and persists. If the worry ceases through submission, contentment, and comprehension of the reason for the illness, a large part of the illness is eradicated; it becomes less severe and in part disappears. Sometimes a minor physical illness increases tenfold just through anxiety. If the anxiety ceases, nine tenths of the illness disappears.

Worry increases illness. It also an accusation against divine wisdom and a criticism of divine mercy and complaint against the Compassionate Creator. For this reason, the person who worries receives a rebuff and it increases his illness contrary to his intentions. Yes, just as thanks increases bounty, so complaint increases illness and tribulations.

Furthermore, worry is itself an illness. Its cure is to recognize the wisdom in illness and its purpose. Since you have now learnt these, apply the salve to your worry and find relief! Say “Ah!” instead of “Oh!”, and “All praise be to God for every situation” instead of sighing and lamenting.

ELEVENTH REMEDY

O my impatient sick brother! Although illness causes you an immediate suffering, your illness through the past until today produces a spiritual pleasure and happiness arising from the reward received for enduring it. From today forward, from this hour even, the illness does not exist, and certainly no pain is suffered from non-being. And if there is no pain, there can be no distress. You become impatient because you imagine things wrongly. For both the physical illness prior to today, and its pain, have departed; all that remains are its reward and the pleasure at its passing. This should afford you profit and happiness, so to think of past days and feel grieved and impatient is crazy. Future days have not yet arrived. To dwell on them now, and to feel upset and impatient by imagining a day that does not exist and an illness that does not exist and distress that does not exist, is to impart existence to three degrees of non-existence – if that is not crazy, what is?

If the previous hour was one of illness, it produces joy; and since the time subsequent to the present hour is non-existent, and both the illness and the distress are non-existent, do not scatter the power of patience given you by Almighty God to right and left, but muster it in the face of pain of the present hour; say: “O Most Patient One!” and withstand it.

TWELFTH REMEDY

O sick person who due to illness cannot perform his worship and invocations and feels grief at the deprivation! Know that it is stated in a Hadith that “A pious believer who due to illness cannot perform his customary invocations, receives a reward equal to them.”⁵ If an ill person performs his obligatory worship as far as it is possible with patience and relying on God, the illness takes the place of Sunna worship during that time of severe illness – and in sincere form.

Moreover, illness makes the person understand his impotence and weakness; it causes him to offer supplication both verbally and through the tongue of his impotence and weakness. For Almighty God bestowed on man a boundless impotence and infinite weakness so that he would perpetually seek refuge at the divine court and beseech and supplicate. The verse,

Say: Your Sustainer would not concern Himself with you if it was not for your prayers;(25:77)

has the meaning, “what importance would you have if you did not offer prayer and supplication?” According to this, sincere prayer and supplication are the reason for man’s creation and for his value. Since illness is one cause of this, from this point of view it should not be complained about but thanks be offered to God for it, and the tap of supplication which illness opens should not be closed by regaining health.

THIRTEENTH REMEDY

O unhappy person who complains at illness! For some people illness is a rich treasury, a precious divine gift. Every sick person can think of his illness in this way.

The appointed hour is not known: in order to deliver man from absolute despair and absolute heedlessness, and to hold him between hope and fear and so preserve both this world and the hereafter, in His wisdom Almighty God has concealed the appointed hour; it may come at any time. If it captures man in heedlessness, it may cause grievous harm to eternal life.

⁵ Bukhari, Jihad, 134; Musnad, iv, 410, 418.

Illness, however, dispels the heedlessness; it makes a person think of the hereafter; it recalls death, so he may prepare himself. Some illnesses are so profitable as to gain for a person in twenty days a rank they could not otherwise have risen to in twenty years.

For instance, among my friends were two youths, may God have mercy on them. One was Sabri from the village of ‹lema, the other Vezirzâde Mustafa from ‹slâmköy. I used to note with amazement that although these two could not write they were among the foremost in regard to sincerity and the service of belief. I did not know the reason for this. After their deaths I understood that each had suffered from a serious illness. Due to the guidance of the illness, they had considerable fear of God, performed highly valuable service, and attained a state beneficial to the hereafter, unlike other youths who heedlessly gave up obligatory worship. God willing, the distress of two years' illness allowed them to attain the happiness of millions of years of eternal life. I understand now that the prayers I sometimes offered for their health were maledictions in respect of this world. God willing, they were accepted for their well-being in the hereafter.

Thus, according to my belief, the two gained profit equal to that which may be gained through ten years' fear of God. If like some young people, they had relied on their youth and good health and thrown themselves into heedlessness and vice, and stalking them, death had grabbed them right in the midst of the filth of their sins, they would have made their graves into nests of scorpions and snakes, instead of that treasury of lights.

Since illnesses contain such benefits, they should be not complained about but borne with patience, relying on God, indeed, thanking God and having confidence in His mercy.

FOURTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person whose eyes have developed cataracts! If you knew what a light and spiritual eye is to be found beneath the cataract that may cover a believer's eyes, you would exclaim: "A hundred thousand thanks to my Compassionate Sustainer!" I shall recount an incident to explain this salve. It is as follows:

One time, the aunt of Süleyman from Barla, who served me for eight years with complete loyalty and willingness, became blind. Owing to her good opinion of me, which was a hundred times better than I deserved, the righteous woman caught me by the door of the mosque and asked me to pray for her sight to be restored. So I made the blessed woman's righteousness the intercessor for my supplication, and beseeching Almighty God, I

prayed: “O Lord! Restore her sight out of respect for her righteousness.” Two days later, an oculist from Burdur came and removed the cataract. Forty days later she again lost her sight. I was most upset and prayed fervently for her. God willing, the prayer was accepted for her life in the hereafter, otherwise that prayer of mine would have been a mistaken malediction for her. For forty days had remained till her death; forty days later she died – May God have mercy on her.

Thus, rather than gazing sorrowfully at the gardens of Barla with the eye of old age, she profited in her grave by being able to gaze for forty thousand days on the gardens of Paradise. For her belief was strong and she was completely righteous.

Yes, if a believer loses his sight and enters the grave blind, in accordance with his degree he may gaze on the world of light to an extent much greater than other dead in their graves. Just as we see many things in this world that blind believers do not see, if the blind depart with belief, they see to a greater extent than other dead in their graves. They can behold the gardens of Paradise and watch them like the cinema as though looking through the most powerful telescopes, according to their degree.

Thus, through thanks and patience you may find beneath the veil on your present eye an eye which is thus light-filled, and with which while beneath the earth you may see and observe Paradise above the skies. That which will raise the veil from your eye, the eye doctor that will allow you to look with that eye, is the All-Wise Qur’an.

FIFTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person who sighs and laments! Do not look at the outward aspect of illness and sigh, consider its meaning and be pleased. If in meaning illness had not been good, the All-Compassionate Creator would not have given it to the servants He loves most. For there is a Hadith the meaning of which is, “Those afflicted with the severest trials are the prophets, then the saints and those like them.”⁶ That is, “Those most afflicted with tribulations and difficulties are the best of men, the most perfect.” Foremost the Prophet Job (Peace be upon him) and the other prophets, then the saints, then the righteous, have regarded the illnesses they have suffered as sincere worship, as gifts of the Most Merciful; they have offered thanks in patience. They have seen them as surgical operations performed by the All-Compassionate Creator’s mercy.

⁶ al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, i, 519, no: 1056; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iii, 343; *Bukhari*, Marda, 3; *Tirmidhi*, Zuhd, 57; *Ibn Maja*, Fitan, 23; *Darimi*, Riqaa, 67; *Musnad*, i, 172, 174, 180, 185; vi, 369.

O you who cries out and laments! If you want to join this luminous caravan, offer thanks in patience. For if you complain, they will not accept you. You will fall into the pits of the people of misguidance, and travel a dark road.

Yes, there are some illnesses which if they lead to death, are a sort of martyrdom; they result in a similar degree of sainthood. For example, people become martyrs who die from the illnesses accompanying childbirth⁷ and pains of the abdomen, and by drowning, burning, and plague. There are also many blessed illnesses which gain the degree of sainthood for those who die from them. Moreover, since illness lessens love of the world and attachment to it, it lightens parting from the world through death, which for the worldly is extremely grievous and painful, and it sometimes even makes it desirable.

SIXTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person who complains at his distress! Illness prompts respect and compassion, which are most important and good in human social life. For it saves man from self-sufficiency, which drives him to unsociableness and unkindness. For according to the meaning of the verse,

*Indeed man transgresses all bounds * In that he looks upon himself as self-sufficient,(96:6-7)*

an evil-commanding soul which feels self-sufficient due to good health and well-being, does not feel respect towards his brothers in many instances, who are deserving of it. And he does not feel compassion towards the sick and those smitten by disaster, although they deserve kindness and pity. Whenever he is ill, he understands his own powerlessness and want and he has respect towards his brothers who are worthy of it. He feels respect towards his believing brothers who visit him or assist him. He feels human kindness, which arises from fellow-feeling, and compassion for those struck by disaster, a most important Islamic characteristic. And comparing them to himself, he pities them in the true meaning of the word and feels compassion for them. He does what he can to help them, and at the very least prays for them and goes to visit them to ask them how they are, which is Sunna according to the Shari‘a, and thus earns reward.

⁷ The period this martyrdom may be won through illness is around the forty days of ‘lying-in.’

SEVENTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person who complains at not being able to perform good works due to illness! Offer thanks! It is illness that opens to you the door of the sincerest of good works. In addition to continuously gaining reward for the sick person and for those who look after him for God's sake, illness is a most important means for the acceptance of supplications.

Indeed, there is significant reward for believers looking after the sick. Inquiring after their health and visiting the sick – on condition it does not tax them – is Sunna⁸ and also atonement for sins. There is an Hadith which says, “Receive the prayers of the sick, for they are acceptable.”⁹

To look after the sick, especially if they are relations, or parents in particular, is important worship, yielding significant reward. To please a sick person's heart and console him, is a sort of significant alms-giving. Fortunate is the person who pleases the easily touched hearts of father and mother at a time of illness and receives their prayer. Even the angels applaud, exclaiming: “Ma'shallah! Barekallah!” before loyal scenes of those good offspring who respond with perfect respect and filial kindness at the time of their parents' illness showing the exaltedness of humanity – for they are the most worthy of respect in the life of society.

Yes, pleasures are experienced at the time of illness which arise from the kindness, pity, and compassion of those around, and are most pleasant and agreeable and reduce the pains of illness to nothing. The acceptability of the prayers of the sick is an important matter. For the past thirty or forty years, I myself have prayed to be cured from the illness of lumbago from which I suffer. However, I understood that the illness had been given for prayer. Since prayer cannot be removed by prayer; that is, since prayer cannot remove itself, I understood that the results of prayer pertain to the hereafter,¹⁰ and that it is a sort of worship, for through illness one understands one's impotence and seeks refuge at the divine court. Therefore, although for thirty years I have offered supplications to be healed and apparently my prayer has not been accepted, it has not occurred to me to give it up. For illness is the time for supplication. To be cured is not the result of the supplication. If the All-Wise and Compassionate One bestows healing, He bestows it out of His abundant grace.

⁸ al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, ii, 45, No: 1285.

⁹ *Ibn Maja*, Jana'iz, 1; Daylami, *Musnad al-Firdaws*, i, 280.

¹⁰ Yes, while certain illnesses are the reason for the existence of supplication, if the supplication is the cause of the illness' non-existence, the existence of the supplication would be the cause of its own non-existence, and this could not be the case.

Furthermore, if supplications are not accepted in the form we wish, it should not be said that they have not been accepted. The All-Wise Creator knows better than us; He gives whatever is in our interests. Sometimes he directs our prayers for this world towards the hereafter, and accepts them in that way. In any event, a supplication that acquires sincerity due to illness and arises from weakness, impotence, humility and need, is very close to being acceptable. Illness makes supplication sincere. Both the sick who are religious, and believers who look after the sick, should take advantage of this supplication.

EIGHTEENTH REMEDY

O sick person who gives up offering thanks and takes up complaining! Complaint arises from a right, and none of your rights have been lost that you should complain. Indeed, there are numerous thanks which are an obligation for you, a right over you, and these you have not performed. Without Almighty God giving you the right, you are complaining as though demanding rights in a manner which is not rightful. You cannot look at others superior to you in degree who are healthy, and complain. You are rather charged with looking at the sick who from the point of view of health are at a degree lower than yourself, and should offer thanks. If your hand is broken, look at theirs, which is severed. If you have only one eye, look at the blind, who lack both eyes, and offer thanks to God!

For sure, no one has the right to look to those superior to him in regard to bounties and complain. Concerning tribulations, it is everyone's right to look to those above themselves in that regard, so that they should offer thanks. This mystery has been explained in a number of places in the Risale-i Nur with a comparison; a summary of it is as follows:

A person takes a wretched man to the top of a minaret. On every step he gives him a different gift, a different bounty. Right at the top he gives him the largest present. Although he wants thanks and gratitude in return for all those various gifts, the peevish man forgets the presents he has received on each of the stairs, or considers them to be of no importance, and offering no thanks, looks above him and starts to complain, saying, "If only the minaret had been higher, I could have climbed even further. Why isn't it as tall as that mountain over there or that other minaret?" What great ingratitude it would be if he begins to complain like this, what a wrong!

In just the same way, man comes into existence from nothing, not as a rock or a tree or an animal, but as a human being and a Muslim, and most of the time experiences good health and acquires a high level of bounties. Despite all this, to complain and display impatience because he is not

worthy of some bounties, or because he loses them through wrong choices or abuse, or because he could not obtain them, and to criticize divine dominicality saying “What have I done that this has happened to me?”, is a state of mind and spiritual sickness more calamitous than the physical one. Like fighting with a broken hand, complaint makes his illness worse. Sensible is the person who in accordance with the meaning of the verse,

Those who when struck by calamity say: To God do we belong, and to God is our return(2:156)

submits and is patient, so that the illness may complete its duty, then depart.

NINETEENTH REMEDY

As the attribute of the Eternally Besought One, “the most beautiful names” indicates, all the All-Beauteous One of Glory’s names are beautiful. Among beings, life is the most subtle, the most beautiful, and the most comprehensive mirror of Eternal Besoughtedness. The mirror to the beautiful becomes beautiful. The mirror that displays the virtues of beauty becomes beautiful. Just as whatever is done to the mirror by such beauty is good and beautiful, whatever befalls life too, in respect of reality, is good. For it displays the beautiful impresses of the most beautiful names, which are good and beautiful.

Life becomes a deficient mirror if it passes monotonously with permanent health and well-being. In one respect, it suggests non-existence, non-being, and nothingness, and causes weariness. It reduces the life’s value and transforms the pleasure of life into distress. For thinking he will pass his time quickly, out of boredom a person throws himself either into vice or into amusements. He becomes hostile to his valuable life and wants to kill it and make it pass quickly as though it were a prison sentence. But when it revolves in change and action and different states, life makes its value felt, and its importance and pleasure. Such a person does not want his life to pass quickly, even if it is in hardship and tribulation. He does not complain wearily, saying, “Alas! The sun hasn’t set yet,” or, “it is still nighttime.”

Yes, ask a fine gentleman who is rich and idle and living in the lap of luxury, “How are you?” You are bound to hear a pathetic reply like: “The time never passes. Let’s have a game of backgammon. Or let’s find some amusement to pass the time.” Or else you will hear complaints arising from worldly ambition, like: “I haven’t got that; if only I had done such-and-such.”

Then ask someone struck by disaster or a worker or poor man living in

penury: "How are you?" If he is sensible, he will reply: "All thanks be to God, I am working. If only the evening did not come so quickly, I could have finished this work! Time passes so quickly, and so does life; they flash by. For sure things are hard for me, but that will pass too. Everything passes quickly." He in effect says how valuable life is and how regretful he is at its passing. That means he perceives the pleasure and value of life through hardship and labour. As for ease and health, they make life bitter and make one hope for its speedy passing.

My brother who is sick! Know that non-existence is the origin and leaven of calamities and evils, and even of sins, is, as is proved decisively and in detail in other parts of the *Risale-i Nur*. As for non-existence, it is evil. Monotonous states like ease, silence, tranquillity, and arrest are close to non-existence and nothingness, and therefore make felt the darkness of non-existence and cause distress. As for action and change, they are existence and make existence felt. And existence is pure good; it is light.

Since the reality is thus, your illness has been sent to your being as a guest to perform many duties such as purifying your valuable life, and strengthening it and making it progress, and inducing the other human faculties in your being to turn in assistance towards your sick member, and to display various of the All-Wise Maker's names. God willing, it will carry out its duties quickly and depart, and will say to good health: "Come, and stay permanently in my place, and carry out your duties. This house is yours. Remain here in good health."

TWENTIETH REMEDY

O sick person who is searching for a remedy for his ills! Illness is of two sorts. One sort is real, the other, imaginary. As for the real sort, the All-Wise and Glorious Healer has stored up in His mighty pharmacy of the earth a cure for every illness. It is licit to obtain medicines and use them as treatment, but one should know that their effect and the cure are from Almighty God. He both gives the ailment and provides the cure.

Following the recommendations of skilful, God-fearing doctors is an effective medicine. For most illnesses arise from abuses, lack of abstinence, wastefulness, mistakes, dissipation, and lack of care. A religious doctor will certainly give advice and instructions within the bounds of the lawful. He will forbid abuses and excesses, and give consolation. The sick person has confidence in his advice and consolation, and his illness lessens; it produces as easiness for him in place of distress.

But when it comes to imaginary illness, the most effective medicine is to give it no importance. The more importance is given to it, the more it grows

and swells. If it is disregarded, it lessens and disperses. The more bees are upset the more they swarm around a person's head, but they disperse if no attention is paid to them. Similarly, the more importance one pays to a piece of string waving in front of one's eyes in the darkness and to the apprehension it causes one, the more it grows and makes one flee like a madman. While if one pays it no importance, one sees that it is an ordinary bit of string and not a snake, and laughs at one's fright and anxiety.

If hypochondria is chronic, it is transformed into reality. It is a serious illness afflicting the nervous and those given to imaginings; such people make mountains out of molehills and their morale is destroyed. Then if they encounter unkind 'half' doctors or unfair doctors, it further provokes their hypochondria. If they are rich, they lose their wealth, or they lose their wits, or their health.

TWENTY-FIRST REMEDY

My sick brother! Your illness is accompanied by physical pain. However, you are surrounded by a significant spiritual pleasure that will remove its effect. For if your father, mother, and relations are with you, their most pleasurable compassion which you have forgotten since childhood will be reawakened and you will see again the kind looks you received in childhood. In addition, friendships envelop you that had remained secret and hidden; these too look towards you with love through the attraction of illness. In the face of these, your physical pain is reduced to insignificance. Also, you have become a master of the masters since those whom you used to serve proudly now serve you kindly at the decree of illness. Moreover, you have attracted towards yourself the fellow-feeling and human kindness in people, and so have found numerous helpful friends and kind companions. And again, you have received the order from your illness to rest from many taxing duties and are taking a rest. For sure, in the face of these immaterial pleasures, your minor pain should drive you to thanks, not complaint.

TWENTY-SECOND REMEDY

My brother who suffers from a severe illness like apoplexy! Firstly I give you the good news that for believers apoplexy is considered blessed. A long time ago I used to hear this from holy men and I did not know the reason. Now, one reason for it occurs to me, as follows:

In order to attain union with Almighty God, be saved from the spiritual perils of this world, and to win eternal happiness, the people of God have chosen to follow two principles:

The First is contemplation of death. Thinking that both the world is transitory, and they themselves are temporary guests charged with duties, they work for eternal life in this way.

The Second: Through fasting, religious exercises and asceticism, they try to kill the evil-commanding soul and so be saved from its dangers and from the blind emotions.

And you, my brother who has lost the health of half his body! Without choosing it, you have been given these two principles, which are short and easy and the cause of happiness. Thus, the state of your being perpetually warns you of the fleeting nature of the world and that man is transient. The world can no longer drown you, nor heedlessness close your eyes. And for sure, the evil-commanding soul cannot deceive with lowly lust and animal appetites someone in the state of half a man; he is quickly saved from the trials of the soul.

Thus, through the mystery of belief in God and submission to Him and reliance on Him, a believer can benefit in a brief time from a severe illness like apoplexy, resembling the severe trials of the saints. A severe illness such as that thus becomes exceedingly cheap.

TWENTY-THIRD REMEDY

Unhappy ill person who is alone and a stranger! Even if your aloneness and exile together with your illness were to arouse sympathy towards you in the hardest hearts and attract kindness and compassion, could it be a substitute for your All-Compassionate Creator? For He presents Himself to us at the start of all the Qur'an's Suras with the attributes of "the Merciful and the Compassionate," and with one flash of His compassion makes all mothers nurture their young with that wonderful tenderness, and with one manifestation of His mercy every spring fills the face of the earth with bounties. Eternal life in Paradise together with all its wonders is but a single manifestation of His mercy. Then surely your relation to Him through belief, your recognizing Him and beseeching Him through the tongue of impotence, arising from your illness and the affliction of your loneliness in exile, will attract the glance of His mercy towards you, which takes the place of everything. Since He exists and He looks to you, everything exists for you. Those who are truly alone and in exile are those who are not connected with Him through belief and submission, or attach no importance to that relation.

TWENTY-FOURTH REMEDY

O you who look after innocent sick children or the elderly, who resemble innocent children! You have before you important trade for the hereafter. So procure it through your enthusiasm and effort! It is established by the people of reality that the illnesses of innocent children are like training for their delicate bodies, and injections and dominical training to allow them to withstand in the future the upheavals of the world; that in addition to many instances of wisdom pertaining to the child's worldly life, instead of the atonement for sins in adults which looks to spiritual life and is the means to purifying life, illnesses are like injections ensuring the child's spiritual progress in the future or in the hereafter; and that the merits accruing from such illnesses pass to the book of good works of the parents, and particularly of the mother who through the mystery of compassion prefers the health of her child to her own health.

As for looking after the elderly, it is established in sound narrations and many historical events that together with receiving huge reward, to receive the prayers of the elderly and especially of parents, and to make happy their hearts and serve them loyally, leads to happiness in both this world and the next. And it is established by many events that a fortunate child who obeys to the letter his elderly parents will be treated similarly by his children, but if a wretched child wounds his parents he will be punished by means of many disasters in this world and in the hereafter. Yes, Islam requires that one looks after not only relatives who are elderly or innocents, but also elderly believers if one encounters them – through the mystery of the true brotherhood of belief – and that one serves to one's utmost ability the venerable sick elderly if they are in need of it.

TWENTY-FIFTH REMEDY

My sick brothers! If you want a most beneficial and truly pleasurable sacred cure, strengthen and develop your belief! That is, make use of belief, that sacred cure, and of the medicine which arises from belief through repentance and seeking forgiveness, and the five daily prayers and worship.

You as though possess a sick immaterial being as large as the world due to love of this world and attachment to it, like the heedless. We have proved in many parts of the Risale-i Nur that belief at once heals that immaterial being of yours, which is bruised and battered by the blows of death and separation, and saves it from the wounds and truly heals it. But I cut short the discussion here so as not to weary you.

As for the medicine of belief, it shows its effect when you carry out your religious obligations as far as is possible. Heedlessness, vice, the lusts of the soul, and illicit amusements reduce its effectiveness. Illness dispels heedlessness, cuts the appetites, is an obstacle to illicit pleasures, so take advantage of it. Make use of the sacred medicines and lights of belief through repentance and seeking forgiveness, and prayer and supplication.

May Almighty God restore you to health and make your illnesses atonement for your sins. Amen. Amen. Amen.

And they say: All praise be to God Who has guided us to this; never could we have found guidance if it had not for been the guidance of God; indeed, the Messengers of our Sustainer did bring the truth.(7:43)

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

O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad, the medicine for our hearts and their remedy, the good health of our bodies and their healing, the light of our eyes and their radiance, and to his Family and Companions, and grant them peace.

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Addendum to the Twenty-Fifth Flash

This is the Seventeenth Letter, which having been included in the *Mektûbat* (Letters 1928-1932), has not been included here.

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The Twenty-Sixth Flash

Treatise For The Elderly

[This Flash consists of twenty-six hopes, lights, and solaces.¹]

REMINDER: The reason I have described my sorrows and afflictions at the beginning of each Hope in a truly grievous way that will sadden you is in order to show the extraordinary efficaciousness of the remedies proceeding from the All-Wise Qur'an. This Flash, concerning the elderly, has been unable to preserve its beauty of expression in three or four respects:

The First: It is about my life the events of which I revisited in my imagination; it was written in the state of mind of those times. It was not possible, therefore, to preserve an orderly arrangement in the way it is set out.

The Second: It was written at a time I felt extreme fatigue, after the morning prayers, and I was also compelled to write it at speed; its manner of expression therefore became confused.

The Third: There was not always someone with me to write, and the scribe who generally accompanied me had four or five other duties connected with the Risale-i Nur. We therefore could not find sufficient time to correct it and it remained in a disordered state.

The Fourth: We were both tired after its composition, and not thinking carefully of the meaning, made do with correcting it only superficially; so there are bound to be faults in the manner of expression. I request the generous elderly to look tolerantly on such errors and to include us in their prayers when they raise their hands to the divine court, since divine mercy does not reject the prayers of the blessed elderly.

¹ It is written in a handwritten copy of this Flash corrected by the respected author: "The remaining Hopes, from the Fourteenth to the Twenty-Sixth, have not been written due to the well-known calamity (Eskişehir Prison); the time of writing them having passed now, it has remained without them." (The Fourteenth to the Sixteenth were composed subsequently. Tr.)

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

*Kaf. Ha. Ya. 'Ain. Sad. * [This is] a recital of the mercy of your Sustainer to His servant Zakariya. * Behold! he cried to His Sustainer in secret, * Praying: "O my Sustainer! Infirm indeed are my bones, and the hair of my head glistens with grey; but I am never unblest, O my Sustainer, in my prayer to you."(19:1-4)*

FIRST HOPE

Respected elderly brothers and sisters who have reached maturity! Like you, I am elderly. I am going to write the 'hopes' I have found in my old age and some of the things that have befallen me, out of the desire to share with you the lights of consolation they contain. Of course the lights I have seen and the doors of hope I have encountered have been seen and opened in accordance with my defective and confused abilities. God willing, your pure, sincere dispositions will make those lights shine more brightly and strengthen the hopes I have found.

Thus, the spring, source and fount of the following hopes and lights is belief in God.

SECOND HOPE

One day as I was entering upon old age, in the autumn at the time of the afternoon prayer, I was gazing on the world from a high mountain. Suddenly I was overwhelmed by a plaintive, sorrowful and in one respect dark state of mind. I saw that I had become old. The day too had grown old, and so had the year; so too had the world become old. As the time of departure from the world and separation from those I loved was drawing close within these instances of old age, my own old age shook me severely. Suddenly divine mercy unfolded in such a way that it transformed that plaintive sadness and separation into a powerful hope and shining light of solace. Yes, you who are elderly like myself! The All-Compassionate Creator presents himself to us in a hundred places in the All-Wise Qur'an as the Most Merciful of the Merciful, and always sends His mercy to the assistance of living creatures on the face of the earth who seek it, and every year fills the spring with innumerable bounties and gifts from the Unseen, sending them to us who are needy for sustenance, and manifests His mercy in greater abundance relatively to our weakness and impotence. For us in our old age, therefore, His mercy is our greatest hope and most powerful light. It may be obtained by forming a relation with the Most Merciful One through belief, and performing the five daily prayers, by being obedient to Him.

THIRD HOPE

One time when I awoke in the morning of old age from the sleep of the night of youth I looked at myself and saw that my life was hastening towards the grave as though racing down a slope. As Niyazi Misri said:

*Each day a stone from the building of my life falls to the ground;
Heedless one! You slumber, unaware that the building is in ruins!*

My body, my spirit's dwelling, was becoming dilapidated with every day a stone of it falling away. My hopes and ambitions which bound me strongly to the world had begun to be broken off from it. I felt that the time I would be separated from my innumerable friends and those I loved was drawing near. I searched for a salve for that deep and apparently incurable spiritual wound, but I could not find one. Again like Niyazi Misri I said:

*While my heart desired its immortality, Reality required the passing of my body;
I am afflicted with an incurable ill, which even Luqman could not cure!²*

Then suddenly the light and intercession of the Glorious Prophet (UWBP), the tongue, model, exemplar, herald, and representative of divine compassion, and the gift of guidance he brought to mankind, soothed and healed the wound I had supposed to be incurable and endless.

Yes, respected elderly men and women who feel their old age like I do! We are departing, there is no use in deceiving ourselves. Even if we close our eyes to it, we will not remain here. There is a mobilization. The land of the Intermediate Realm, which appears to us to be dark and full of separation due to the gloomy delusions which arise from heedlessness and in part from the people of misguidance, is the meeting-place of friends. It is the world where we shall meet with foremost God's Beloved (Upon whom be blessings and peace), and with all our friends.

We are going to the world of the one who every year for one thousand three hundred and fifty years has been the ruler of one thousand three hundred and fifty million people, and the trainer of their spirits, the teacher of their minds, and the beloved of their hearts; to whose book of good works, in accordance with the meaning of "the cause is like the doer," is every day added the equivalent of all the good works performed by his community; who is the means by which the elevated divine purposes in the universe are accomplished and the high value of beings are realized. When he came into the world, according to authentic narrations and accurate divining of

² That is to say, although with all its strength my heart wanted my body to be immortal, divine wisdom necessitated its destruction. I was afflicted with an incurable ill for which even Luqman the Wise could find no solution.

reality, he exclaimed: “My community! My community!” So too at the Last Judgement when everyone thinks only of themselves, he will again declare: “My community! My community!”, and with sacred, elevated self-sacrifice hasten with his intercession to its assistance. We are going to such a world, illuminated by the stars of countless saints and purified scholars revolving around that Sun (UWBP).

Thus, the way to share in that Being’s (UWBP) intercession and profit from his light, and be saved from the darkness of the Intermediate Realm, is to follow his glorious practices.

FOURTH HOPE

At the time I approached old age, my physical health, which perpetuates heedlessness, was broken. Old age and illness attacked me in concert. Hitting me over the head, they chased away sleep. I had nothing to bind me to the world like family, children, and possessions. Having wasted the fruits of my life’s the capital on the giddiness of youth, I saw them to consist only of sins and mistakes. Crying out like Niyazi Misri, I said:

I had concluded no trade; the capital of life was all lost;

I came to the road to find the caravan had moved on, unaware.

Lamenting, I continued down the road, all alone, a stranger;

My eyes weeping, my heart in anguish, my mind bewildered, unaware.

I was in exile at the time; I felt a despairing sorrow, a regretful penitence, a longing for assistance. Suddenly, the All-Wise Qur’an came to my aid. It opened a door of hope so powerful and afforded a light of consolation so true that it could have dispelled despair and darkneses a hundred times more intense than mine.

Yes, respected elderly men and women whose attachment to the world has begun to be sundered and the ties binding them to be broken! Is it possible that the All-Glorious Maker who creates this world as a perfectly ordered city or palace would not speak with his most important guests and friends or not meet with them? Since He knowingly made the palace and ordered and adorned it through His will and choice, certainly as one who makes knows, so one who knows will speak. Since He made this palace and city into a fine guesthouse and place of trade for us, He will surely have a book, a file, to explain His relations with us and what He desires from us.

The most holy of such Books is the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition; it is a miracle in forty respects and is every instant on the tongues of at least a hundred million people; it scatters light, and every letter of it affords at

least ten merits and rewards, and fruits of Paradise and lights in the Intermediate Realm, and sometimes ten thousand, and sometimes – through the mystery of the Night of Power – thirty thousand. There is no book in the universe to compete with it in this respect and no one could put one forward. Since this Qur'an which we have is the Word of the All-Glorious Creator of the heavens and earth, proceeding from His absolute dominicality, the tremendousness of His Godhead, and His all-encompassing mercy, and is His decree and a source of His mercy; adhere to it. In it are found a cure for every ill, a light for every darkness, and a hope for all despair. And the key to this eternal treasury is belief and submission to God, and listening to the Qur'an and accepting it, and reciting it.

FIFTH HOPE

One time at the start of my old age when I desired solitude, I retired to Yuşa Tepesi, Mount Joshua, away up the Istanbul Bosphorus. My spirit was seeking ease in loneliness. One day on that high hill, I gazed around me at the broad horizon, and I cast a glance from the high position of the forty-fifth branch, that is, the forty-fifth year of the tree of my life to its lower levels. I saw that down on the lower branches of each year were the countless corpses of those I had known and had loved and with whom I had been connected. I felt a truly piteous sorrow at their parting and separation, I wept like Fuzuli Baghdadi for the friends from whom I was parted:

As I recall their company I weep,

So long as there is breath in this dry body, I cry out.

I sought a solace, a light, a door leading to hope. Suddenly belief in the hereafter came to my assistance, shedding an inextinguishable light, offering an indestructible hope.

Yes, my brothers and sisters who are elderly like me! Since the hereafter exists and it is everlasting, and it is a better world than this; and since the One who created us is both All-Wise and All-Compassionate; we should not complain and regret our old age. On the contrary, we should be happy at it in so far as with age one reaches perfect maturity through worship and belief, and it is a sign one will be released from the duties of life and depart for the world of mercy in order to rest.

According to narrations, some relying on witnessing and some on 'absolute certainty', mankind's most eminent individuals, the one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets,³ have unanimously given news of the

³ *Musnad*, v, 266; Wali al-Din Tabrizi, *Mishkat al-Masabih*, iii, 122; Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzi, *Zad al-Ma'ad* (tahqiq: al-Arnayud) i, 43-4.

existence of the hereafter, and that men will be sent there and the universe's Creator will bring it about in accordance with His certain promise. Similarly, affirming through illumination and witnessing in the form of 'certainty at the degree of knowledge' the reports of the prophets, the one hundred and twenty-four million saints have testified to the hereafter's existence. And through the manifestations they display in this world, all the names of the universe's All-Wise Maker self-evidently necessitate an everlasting realm. So too the infinite pre-eternal power and the boundless eternal wisdom which allowing nothing to be vain and purposeless every year in the spring, raise to life with the command of "'Be!' and it is"(36:83, etc.) the incalculable corpses of the dead trees on the face of the earth, making them manifest life after death, and revivify three hundred thousand species of plants and animals as thousands of samples of the resurrection of the dead. These observedly necessitate the existence of the hereafter, as does the eternal mercy and perpetual favour which with perfect compassion and in wondrous fashion provide the livelihoods of all living beings needy for sustenance and in a brief time in spring display their uncountable sorts of adornment and decoration; they too necessitate the existence of the hereafter. Together with man, the most perfect fruit of the universe and its Creator's most loved creature, who of all beings is the most closely concerned with the beings in the universe, and the clear indications and certain evidence of his intense, unshakeable, constant desire for immortality and his hopes which extend to eternity – all these prove so decisively that after this transient world there will be an eternal world, a realm of the hereafter and everlasting happiness that they self-evidently necessitate acceptance of the hereafter's existence.⁴

Since the most important thing the All-Wise Qur'an teaches us is belief in the hereafter, and since this belief is thus powerful and it yields such hope and solace that if a person was overwhelmed by old age a hundred thousand times over, the consolation arising from this belief would be

⁴ The ease of reporting a definite matter and the difficulty in denying it may be seen in the following comparison: if one person says: "There is a wondrous garden on earth whose trees produce fruits which are cans of milk," and another says: "There isn't," the one claiming it only has to point out where it is or some of its fruits in order to easily prove it. Whereas the one denying can only prove his denial by seeing and showing the whole face of the earth. In just the same way, even if one disregards the hundreds of thousands of signs, fruits, and marks of Paradise which those who give news of it have indicated, the testimony of two truthful witnesses to its certain existence is sufficient; while the one who denies it can only prove his denial after observing the infinite universe and infinite, unending time, and seeing it and investigating it exhaustively; only then can he demonstrate its non-existence. And so, my elderly brothers, you may understand just how powerful is belief in the hereafter.

sufficient to face it; for sure we elderly people should love our old age and say: “All praise be to God for perfect belief!”

SIXTH HOPE

One time during my distressing captivity, I was alone on the top of Çam Dağı, the Pine Mountain, in the mountains of Barla, having withdrawn from the company of men. I was searching for a light in my loneliness. One night on the small platform at the top of a tall pine-tree on the summit of that high mountain, old age recalled to me three or four exiles, one within the other. As is described in the Sixth Letter, the melancholy sound of the rustling, murmuring trees on that lonely, silent, distant night affected me grievously in my old age and exile. Old age gave me the following thought: like the day changed into this black grave and the world donned its black shroud, the daytime of your life, too, will turn into night, and the daytime of the world turn into the night of the Intermediate Realm, and summertime of life will be transformed into the winter nighttime of death. It whispered this in my heart’s ear. My soul was then obliged to say:

Yes, I am far from my native land, but being separated from all those I have loved during my fifty years’ lifetime who have died, and remaining weeping for them, is a far more grievous and sorrowful exile than the exile from my country. Moreover, I am drawing close to a much sadder and more painful exile than the melancholy exile of the night and the mountain: old age informs me that I am approaching the time of separation from the world. I then sought a light, a hope from these sorrowful exiles one within the other. Suddenly belief in God came to my assistance and afforded such a familiarity that even if the compounded desolation in which I found myself increased a thousandfold, its consolation would have been sufficient.

Elderly men and women! Since we have a Compassionate Creator, there can be no exile for us! Since He exists, everything exists for us. Since He exists, the angels exist. The world is not empty. Lonely mountains and empty deserts are full of Almighty God’s servants. Apart from His conscious servants, stones and trees become like familiar friends when seen through His light and on His account. They may converse with us and give us enjoyment.

Yes, evidences and witnesses to the number of beings in the universe and to the number of the letters of this vast book of the world testify to the existence of our All-Compassionate, Munificent, Intimate, Loving Creator, Maker, and Protector; they show us His mercy to the number of living creatures’ members, foods, and bounties, which may be a means of receiving

His compassion, mercy, and favour, and indicate His court. Impotence and weakness are the most acceptable intercessor at His court. And old age is precisely the time of impotence and weakness. So one should not feel resentful at old age, which is thus an acceptable intercessor at a court, but love it.

SEVENTH HOPE

One time at the start of my old age when the laughter of the Old Said was being transformed into the weeping of the New Said, supposing me still to be the Old Said, the worldly in Ankara invited me there, and I went. At the close of autumn I climbed to the top of the citadel, which was far more aged, dilapidated, and worn out than me. It seemed to me to be formed of petrified historical events. The old age of the season of the year together with my old age, the citadel's old age, mankind's old age, the old age of the glorious Ottoman Empire, and the death of the Caliphate's rule, and the world's old age all caused me to look in a most grieved, piteous and melancholy state in that lofty citadel at the valleys of the past and the mountains of the future. As I experienced an utterly black state of mind in Ankara encompassed by four or five layers of the darkneses of old age one within the other,⁵ I sought a light, a solace, a hope.

As I sought consolation looking to the right, that is, to the past, my father and forefathers and the human race appeared in the form of a vast grave and filled me with gloom rather than consoling me. Seeking a remedy I looked to the future, which was to my left. I saw that it appeared as a huge, dark grave for myself, my contemporaries, and future generations; it produced horror in place of familiarity. Feeling desolate in the face of the left and right, I looked at the present day. It appeared to my heedless, historical eye as a coffin bearing my half-dead, suffering and desperately struggling corpse. So despairing of that direction too, I raised my head and looked at the top of the tree of my life, and there was my corpse; it stood at the top of the tree and was watching me. Feeling horror at this direction, too, I bowed my head. I looked to the foot of the tree of my life, to its roots, and saw that the soil there, the earth which was the source of my creation and the dust of my bones mixed together, was being trampled underfoot. That was no remedy, it only added further pain to my affliction.

Then I was forced to look behind me. I saw that this unstable, transient world was tumbling, disappearing, into the valleys of nothingness and the

⁵ My state of mind at that time prompted me to write a supplication in Persian. It was printed in Ankara, in a treatise entitled, *Hubab*.

darkness of non-existence. I was seeking a salve for my pain, but it only added poison. Since I could see no good in that direction I looked in front of me, I sent my view forward to the future. I saw that the door of the grave was open right in the middle of my path; it was watching me with its mouth agape. The highway beyond it which stretched away to eternity, and the convoys travelling that highway, struck the eye from the distance. But apart from a limited will as my support and defensive weapon in the face of the horrors coming from these six directions, I had nothing.

The faculty of will, man's only weapon against those innumerable enemies and endless harmful things, is both defective, and short, and weak, and lacks the power to create, so he is capable of nothing apart from 'acquisition.' It could neither pass to the past in order to silence the sorrows which came to me from there, nor could it penetrate the future to prevent the fears which arose from there. I saw that it was of no benefit for my hopes and pains concerning the past and future.

As I was struggling in the horror, desolation, darkness and despair proceeding from these six directions, the lights of belief which shine in the sky of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition suddenly came to my assistance. They lit up and illuminated those six directions to such a degree that if the terrors and darkness I had seen increased a hundredfold, the light would still have been sufficient to meet them. One by one it transformed all those horrors into solace and the desolation into familiarity. It was as follows:

Belief rent asunder the desolate view of the past as a vast grave, and showed it with utter certainty to be a familiar, enlightened gathering of friends.

And belief showed the future, which had appeared in the form of a huge grave to my heedless eyes, to be most certainly a banquet of the Most Merciful One in delightful palaces of bliss.

And belief rent the view of present time as a coffin, as it had appeared to my heedless view, and showed it with certainty to be a place of trade for the hereafter and a glittering guesthouse of the All-Merciful One.

And belief showed with utter certainty that the only fruit at the top of the tree of life was not a corpse as had appeared to my neglectful eye, but that my spirit, which would manifest eternal life and was designated for eternal happiness, would leave its worn-out home to travel around the stars.

And through its mystery, belief showed that my bones and the earth that was the source of my creation were not valueless pulverized bones trampled underfoot, but that the earth was the door to divine mercy and veil before the halls of Paradise.

And through the mystery of the Qur'an, belief showed that the world

which had appeared to my heedless eye as tumbling behind me into nothingness and non-existence to consist of missives of the Eternally Besought One and pages of decorations and embroideries glorifying God which had completed their duties, stated their meanings, and left their results in existence in their place. It made known with complete certainty the true nature of the world.

And through the light of the Qur'an, belief showed that the grave which would open its eyes and look at me in the future was not the mouth of a well, but that it was the door to the world of light, and that the highway which stretched to eternity beyond it led not to nothingness and non-existence, but to existence, a realm of light, and eternal bliss. Since belief demonstrated this to a degree which afforded utter conviction, it was both a remedy and a salve for my afflictions.

And in place of a very minor ability to receive, belief puts a document into the hand of the limited faculty of will through which it may rely on an infinite power and be connected to a boundless mercy in the face of those innumerable enemies and layers of darkness. Indeed, belief is a document in the hand of man's will, and although this human weapon of will is in itself both short, powerless, and deficient, just as when a soldier utilizes his partial strength on account of the state, he performs duties far exceeding his own strength, so too through the mystery of belief, if the limited faculty of will is used in the name of Almighty God and in His way, it may gain also a paradise as broad as five hundred years.

And belief takes from the hands of the body the reins of the faculty of will, which cannot penetrate to the past and future, and hands them over to the heart and spirit. Since the sphere of their life is not restricted to present time like the body, and included within it are a great many years from the past and a great many years from the future, the will ceases being limited and acquires universality. Through the strength of belief it may enter the deepest valleys of the past and repel the darkness of its sorrows; so too with the light of belief it may rise as far as the farthest mountains of the future, and remove its fears.

My elderly brothers and sisters who are suffering the difficulties of old age like myself! Since, praise be to God, we are believers, and in belief are found this many luminous, pleasurable, agreeable, and gratifying treasures; and since our old age impels us even more to the contents of the treasure, for sure, rather than complaining about old age accompanied by belief, we should offer endless thanks.

EIGHTH HOPE

At a time grey hairs, the sign of old age, were appearing in my hair, the turmoil of the First World War, which made even heavier the deep sleep of youth, the upheaval of my captivity as a prisoner-of-war, the position of great fame and honour accorded to me on my return to Istanbul, and the kind treatment and attention far exceeding my due I received from everyone, from the Caliph, even, Shaykh al-Islam, and Commander-in-Chief of the Army to the students of religion, the intoxication of youth, and the mental state produced by my position all made the sleep of youth so heavy that I quite simply saw the world as permanent and myself in a wonderful undying situation cemented to it.

Then one day in Ramadan I went to Bayezid Mosque to listen to the sincere Qur'an reciters. With their tongues, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition was proclaiming with its exalted heavenly address the decree of:

Every living creature shall taste death,(3:185, etc.)

which powerfully gives news of man's death and that of all animate creatures. It entered my ear, penetrated to the depths of my heart and established itself there; it shattered my profound sleep and heedlessness. I went out of the mosque. Because of the stupor of the sleep which for a long time had settled in my head, for several days a tempest raged in it, and I saw myself as a boat with smoking boilers and compass spinning. Every time I looked at my hair in the mirror, the grey hairs told me: "Take note of us!" And so the situation became clear through the warnings of my grey hairs.

I looked and saw that my youth which so captivated me with its pleasures and in which I so trusted was bidding me farewell, and that this worldly life which I so loved and with which I was so involved was beginning to be extinguished, and that the world with which I was closely connected and of which I was quite simply the lover was saying to me: "Have a good journey!", and was warning me that I would be leaving this guesthouse. It too was saying "Good-bye," and was preparing to depart. The following meaning was unfolding in my heart from the indications of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition's verse,

Every living creature shall taste death:

the human race is a living creature; it shall die in order to be resurrected. The globe of the earth is a living creature; it also will die in order to take on an eternal form. The world too is a living creature; it will die in order to assume the form of the hereafter.

While in this state, I considered my situation. I saw that youth, which is the source of pleasure, was departing; while old age, the source of sorrow,

was approaching; that life, which is so shining and luminous, was taking its leave; while death, which is terrifying and apparently darkness, was preparing to arrive; and that the lovable world, which is thought to be permanent and is the beloved of the heedless, was hastening to its decease.

In order to deceive myself and again plunge my head into heedlessness I considered the pleasures of the social standing I enjoyed in Istanbul, which was far higher than I deserved, but there was no advantage in it at all. All the regard, attention, and consolation of people could only accompany me as far as the looming door of the grave; there it would be extinguished. Since I saw it to be a tedious hypocrisy, cold conceit, and temporary stupefaction under the embellished veil of glory and renown, which is the illusory aim of those who chase fame, I understood that these things which had until then deceived me could provide me with no solace, there was no light to be found in them at all.

I again started to listen to the reciters in Bayezid Mosque in order to hear the Qur'an's heavenly teaching, and to awaken once more. From its sublime instruction I heard good news through sacred decrees of the sort,

And give glad tidings to those who believe.(2:25, etc.)

With its effulgence, I sought consolation, hope, and light, within the points at which I had felt horror, desolation and despair, not outside them. Endless thanks be to Almighty God, I found the cure within the malady itself, I found the light within the darkness itself, I found the solace within the horror itself.

Firstly, I looked in the face of death, which is imagined to be most terrible and terrifies everyone. Through the light of the Qur'an I saw that although its veil is black, dark, and ugly, for believers its true face is luminous and beautiful. We have proved this truth decisively in many parts of the Risale-i Nur. For example, as we explained in the Eighth Word and the Twentieth Letter, death is not annihilation and separation, but the introduction to eternal life, its beginning. It is a rest from the hardships of life's duties, a demobilization. It is a change of residence. It is to meet with the caravan of one's friends who have already migrated to the Intermediate World; and so on. I saw death's true, beautiful face through truths like these. I looked at death's face not with fear, but with a sort of longing. I understood one meaning of the Sufis' contemplation of death.

Then I considered my departed youth – youth, which makes everyone weep on its passing, which infatuates them and fills them with desire, causing them to pass it in sin and heedlessness. I saw that within its beautiful embroidered garb was an ugly, drunken, stupified face. Had I not learnt its

true nature, it would have made me weep for a hundred years if I remained in the world that long, instead of intoxicating and amusing me for a few years. Just as one such person said lamenting:

“If only one day my youth would return, I would tell it of the woes old age has brought me.”

Indeed, elderly people like the above who do not know the true nature of youth, think of their own youth, and weep with regret and longing. But when youth belongs to believers with sound minds and hearts, it is a most powerful, agreeable and pleasant means of securing good works and trade for the hereafter, so long as they spend it on worship, and that trade and those good works. For those who know their religious duties and do not misspend their youth, it is a precious and delightful divine bounty. But when it is not spent in moderation, uprightness, and fear of God, it contains many dangers; it damages eternal happiness and the life of this world. In return for the pleasures of one or two years' youth, in old age it causes many years of grief and sorrow.

Since for most people youth is harmful, we elderly people should thank God that we have been saved from its dangers and harm. Like everything else, the pleasures of youth depart. If they have been spent on worship and good works, the fruits of such a youth remain perpetually in their place and are the means of gaining youth in eternal life.

Next, I considered the world, with which most people are infatuated and to which they are addicted. Through the light of the Qur'an, I saw that it has three faces, one within the other:

The First looks to the divine names; it is a mirror to them

Its Second Face looks to the hereafter, and is its tillage.

Its Third Face looks to the worldly; it is the playground of the heedless.

Moreover, everyone has his own vast world within this world. Simply, there are worlds one within the other to the number of human beings. The pillar of each person's private world is his own life. If his body gives way, his world collapses on his head, it is doomsday for him. Since the heedless and neglectful do not realize that their world will be so quickly destroyed, they suppose it to be permanent like the general world and worship it. I thought to myself: “I too have a private world that will swiftly collapse and be demolished like the worlds of other people. What value is there in this private world, this brief life of mine?”

Then, through the light of the Qur'an, I saw that both for myself and everyone else, this world is a temporary place of trade, a guesthouse which is every day filled and emptied, a market set up on the road for the passers-

by to shop in, an ever-renewed notebook of the Pre-Eternal Inscriber which is constantly written and erased, and every spring is a gilded letter, and every summer a well-composed ode; that it is formed of mirrors reflecting and renewing the manifestations of the All-Glorious Maker's names; is a seed-bed of the hereafter, a flower-bed of divine mercy, and a special, temporary workshop for producing signboards which will be displayed in the world of eternity.

I offered a hundred thousand thanks to the All-Glorious Creator who had made the world in this way. And I understood that while love for the beautiful, inner faces of the world which look to the hereafter and divine names had been given to mankind, since they spent it on its transient, ugly, harmful, heedless face, they manifested the meaning of the Hadith: "Love of this world is the chief of all errors."⁶

Elderly people! I realized this truth through the light of the All-Wise Qur'an, and the warnings of my old age, and belief opening my eyes. And I have demonstrated it with decisive proofs in many places in the Risale-i Nur. I experienced a true solace, powerful hope, and shining light. I was thankful for my old age, and I was happy that my youth had gone. You too do not weep, but offer thanks. Since there is belief and the truth is thus, it should be the heedless who weep and the misguided who lament.

NINTH HOPE

In the First World War, as a prisoner, I was in the distant province of Kosturma in north-eastern Russia. There was a small mosque belonging to the Tatars beside the famous River Volga. I used to become wearied among my friends, the other officers. I craved solitude, yet I could not wander about outside without permission. Then they took me on bail to the Tatar quarter, to that small mosque on the banks of the Volga. I used to sleep there, alone. Spring was close. I used to be very wakeful during the long, long nights of that northern land; the sad plashing of the Volga and the mirthless patter of the rain and the melancholy sighing of the wind of those dark nights in that dark exile had temporarily roused me from a deep sleep of heedlessness. I did not yet consider myself old, but those who had experienced the Great War were old. For those were days that, as though manifesting the verse:

A day that will turn the hair of children grey,(73:17)

made even children old. While I was forty years old, I felt myself to be

⁶ al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, No: 1099; al-Suyuti, *al-Durar al-Muntathira*, 97; Isfahani, *Hilyat al-Awliya'*, vi, 388; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iii, 368, No: 3662.

eighty. In those long, dark nights and sorrowful exile and melancholic state, I despaired of life and of my homeland. I looked at my powerlessness and aloneness, and my hope failed.

Then, while in that state, succour arrived from the All-Wise Qur'an; my tongue said:

God is enough for us; and how excellent a guardian is He.(3:173)

And weeping, my heart cried out: "I am a stranger, I am alone, I am weak, I am powerless: I seek mercy, I seek forgiveness, I seek help from You, O my God!"

And, thinking of my old friends in my homeland, and imagining myself dying in exile there, like Niyazi Misri, my spirit poured forth these lines:

*Fleeing the world's grief,
Taking flight with ardour and longing,
Opening my wings to the void,
Crying with each breath, Friend! Friend!*

It was searching for its friends.

Anyway, my weakness and impotence became such potent intercessors and means at the divine court on that melancholy, pitiful, separation-afflicted, long night in exile that now I still wonder at it. For several days later I escaped in the most unexpected manner, on my own, not knowing Russian, across a distance that would have taken a year on foot. I was saved in a wondrous fashion through divine favour, which was bestowed as a consequence of my weakness and impotence. Then, passing through Warsaw and Austria, I reached Istanbul, so that to be saved in this way so easily was quite extraordinary. I completed the long flight with an ease and facility that even the boldest and most cunning Russian-speakers could not have accomplished.

That night in the mosque on the banks of the Volga made me decide to pass the rest of my life in caves. Enough now of mixing in this social life of people. Since finally I would enter the grave alone, I said that from now on I would chose solitude in order to become accustomed to it. But regretfully, things of no consequence like my many and serious friends in Istanbul, and the glittering worldly life there, and in particular the fame and honour accorded me, which were far greater than my due, made me temporarily forget my decision. It was as though that night in exile was a luminous blackness in my life's eye, and the glittering white daytime of Istanbul, a lightless white in it. It could not see ahead, it still slumbered. Until two years later, Ghawth al-Geylani opened my eyes once more with his book *Futuh al-Ghayb*.

O elderly men and women! Know that the weakness and powerless of old age are means for attracting divine grace and mercy. The manifestation of mercy on the face of the earth demonstrates this truth in the clearest fashion, just as I have observed it in myself on numerous occasions. For the weakest and most powerless of animals are the young. But then it is they who receive the sweetest and most beautiful manifestation of mercy. The powerlessness of a young bird in the nest at the top of a tree attracts the manifestation of mercy to employ its mother like an obedient soldier. Its mother flies all around and brings it its food. When with its wings growing strong the nestling forgets its impotence, its mother tells it to go and find its own food, and no longer listens to it.

Just as this mystery of mercy is in force for the young, so is it in force for the elderly, who resemble young in regard to weakness and impotence. I have had experiences which have led me to form the unshakeable conviction that just as the sustenance of infants is sent to them in wondrous fashion by divine mercy on account of their impotence, being made to flow forth from the springs of breasts; so too the sustenance of believing elderly, who acquire innocence, is sent in the form of plenty. This truth is also proved by the Hadith which says: "If it were not for your elderly folk with their bent backs, calamities would have descended on you in floods."⁷ It states both that a household's source of plenty is its elderly inhabitants, and that it is the elderly that preserve the household from the visitation of calamities.

Since the weakness and impotence of old age are thus the means of attracting divine mercy to this extent; and since with its verses:

*Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. * And out of kindness, lower the wing of humility, and say: "My Sustainer! Bestow on them Your mercy even as they cherished me in childhood,"*(17:23-4)

the All-Wise Qur'an summons children most miraculously in five ways to be kind and respectful towards their elderly parents; and since the religion of Islam commands respect and compassion towards the elderly; and since human nature also requires respect and compassion towards the aged; we elderly people certainly receive significant, constant mercy and respect from divine grace and human feeling in place of the fleeting physical pleasures and appetites of youth, as well as the spiritual pleasures arising from

⁷ al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, ii, 163; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, v, 344, No: 7523; al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, iii, 345.

respect and compassion. Since this is the case, we would not exchange this old age of ours for a hundred youths. Yes, I can tell you certainly that even if they were to give me ten years of the Old Said's youth, I would not give one year of the New Said's old age. I am content with my old age, and you too should be content with yours!

TENTH HOPE

For a year or two in Istanbul after returning from being held as a prisoner-of-war, I was overcome by heedlessness. The politics of the day directed my attention away from myself and scattered it on the outside world. Then one day I was sitting on a high spot overlooking the valley of the Eyüb Sultan graveyard in Istanbul when I was overcome by a state of mind in which, while I was looking down on it, it seemed my private world was dying and my spirit was withdrawing. I said: "I wonder if it's the inscriptions on the gravestones that are giving me such illusions?", and I drew back my gaze. I looked not at the distance, but at the graveyard. Then the following was imparted to my heart: "This graveyard around you holds Istanbul a hundred times over, for Istanbul has been emptied here a hundred times. You cannot escape from the command of the All-Wise and Powerful One who has poured all the people of Istanbul into here; you are no exception; you too will depart."

I left the graveyard and with those awesome thoughts entered a small cell in Sultan Eyüb Mosque where I had stayed many times before. I thought to myself, I am a guest in three respects: I am a guest in this tiny room, I am also a guest in Istanbul, and a guest in this world. A guest has to think of the road. Just as I shall leave this room, so one day I shall leave Istanbul, and yet another day I shall depart from this world.

While in this state of mind, I, my heart, was overwhelmed by a most pitiful, grievous sorrow. I was not losing only one or two friends; I would be parted from the thousands of people I loved in Istanbul, and I would also part from Istanbul, which I also loved much. And just as I would be parted from hundreds of thousands of friends in this world, so I would leave the beautiful world, with which I was captivated and I loved. While pondering over this, I climbed once more to that spot in the graveyard. I had been to the cinema from time to time to take lessons, and just then all the dead of Istanbul appeared to me to be walking around, like the cinema shows in the present the images of the past. And all the people I could see at that time appeared to be corpses walking around. My imagination told me: some of the dead in the graveyard appear to be walking around as though on the cinema-screen, so you should see the people of the present, who are bound

to enter the graveyard in the future, as having entered it; they too are corpses, walking around.

Suddenly through the light of the Qur'an and through the guidance of Ghawth al-A'zam, Shaykh Geylani, my grievous state was transformed into a joyful one. It was like this:

The light proceeding from the Qur'an gave me the following thought: you had one or two officer friends while a prisoner-of-war in exile in Kosturma in the north-east. You knew that they would in any event go to Istanbul. If one of them had asked you: "Do you want to go to Istanbul, or to stay here?" For sure if you had had a jot of intelligence, you would joyfully have chosen to go to Istanbul. For out of a thousand and one friends, nine hundred and ninety-nine were already in Istanbul. Only one or two remained there, and they too would leave. Going to Istanbul for you would not be a sad departure and sorrowful separation. Moreover you have come here and were you not happy to do so? You were delivered from the long, dark nights and cold, stormy winters in that enemy country. You came to Istanbul, a worldly paradise.

In just the same way, from your childhood to your present age, ninety-nine out of a hundred of those you love have migrated to the graveyard, which terrifies you. You have one or two friends still in this world, and they too will depart. Your death in this world is not separation; it is union; it is to be reunited with all those friends. I was reminded that they, that is those immortal spirits, have left behind under the earth their worn-out dwellings, and some of them are travelling about the stars and some in the levels of the Intermediate Realm.

Yes, the Qur'an and belief proved this truth so certainly that you should believe it as though seeing it if you are not entirely lacking heart and spirit, and misguidance has not suffocated your heart. For most certainly and self-evidently the All-Generous Maker who adorns this world with innumerable sorts of gifts and bounties, and demonstrates His dominicality munificently and compassionately, and preserves even the least significant things like seeds, would not annihilate or send to nothingness or waste man as unkindly and purposelessly as it superficially appears, for he is the most perfect, comprehensive, important, and beloved among His creatures. Rather, like the seeds a farmer scatters on the earth, the Compassionate Creator temporarily casts that beloved creature of His under the ground, which is a door of mercy, in order to produce shoots in another life.⁸

⁸ This truth has been proved as clearly as twice two equals four in other parts of the *Risale-i Nur*, and especially in the Tenth and Twenty-Ninth Words.

After receiving this reminder of the Qur'an, the graveyard became more familiar to me than Istanbul. Solitude and retirement became more pleasurable to me than conversation and company, and I found a place of seclusion for myself in Sarıyer on the Bosphorus. There, Ghawth al-A'zam (May God be pleased with him) became a master, doctor, and guide for me with his *Futuh al-Ghayb*, while Imam Rabbani (May God be pleased with him) became a companion, sympathetic friend, and teacher with his *Maktubat* (Letters). Then I was extremely happy I had approached old age, withdrawn from civilization, and slipped free of social life. I thanked God.

O respected persons who have entered upon old age and who frequently recall death through its warnings! In accordance with the light of the teachings of belief taught by the Qur'an, we should look favourably on old age, death, and illness, and even love them in one respect. Since we have an infinitely precious bounty like belief, old age, and illness, and death are all agreeable. If there are things that are disagreeable, they are sin, vice, innovations, and misguidance.

ELEVENTH HOPE

After my return from captivity, I was living together with my nephew Abdurrahman⁹ in a villa on the hill at Çamlıca in Istanbul. From the point of view of worldly life, my situation could have been thought to be the most fortunate for people like us. For I had been saved from being a prisoner-of-war and in the Darü'l-Hikmet we were being successful in propagating knowledge in an elevated way suitably to my profession, the learned profession. The honour and esteem afforded me were far greater than my due. I was living in Çamlıca, the most beautiful place in Istanbul. Everything was perfect for me. I was together with the late Abdurrahman, my nephew, who was extremely intelligent and self-sacrificing, and was both my student, and servant, and scribe, and spiritual son. But then, knowing myself to be more fortunate than anyone else in the world, I looked in the mirror and I saw grey hairs in my hair and beard.

Suddenly, the spiritual awakening I had experienced in the mosque in Kosturma while in captivity recommenced. I began to study the circumstances and causes to which I felt genuine attachment and which I supposed were the source of happiness in this world. But whichever of them I studied, I saw that it was rotten; it was not worth the attachment; it was

⁹ Abdurrahman was the son of Bediuzzaman's elder brother, 'Abdullah. He was born in Nurs in 1903, and was Bediuzzaman's spiritual son, student, and assistant. He joined his uncle in Istanbul after the First World War, and published a short biography of him at that time. He died in Ankara in 1928, where he is buried. (Tr.)

deceptive. Around that time, I suffered an unexpected and unimaginable act of disloyalty and unfaithfulness at the hands of a friend whom I had supposed to be most loyal. I felt disgust at the world. I said to myself: “Have I been altogether deceived? I see that many people look with envy at our situation, which in reality should be pitied. Are all these people crazy, or is it me that has gone crazy so that I see all these worldly people as such?”

Anyway, as a result of this severe awakening caused me by old age, first of all I saw the transitoriness of all the ephemeral things to which I was attached. Then I looked at myself, and I saw myself to be utterly impotent. So then my spirit declared, which desires immortality and was infatuated with ephemeral beings imagining them to be immortal: “Since I am a transient being with regard to my body, what good can come of these ephemeral things? Since I am powerless, what can I await from these powerless things? What I need is one who is Eternal and Enduring, one who is Pre-Eternal and All-Powerful, who will provide a remedy for my ills.” And I began to search.

Then, before everything, I had recourse to the learning I had studied of old, I began to search for a consolation, a hope. But unfortunately, up to that time I had filled my mind with the sciences of philosophy as well as the Islamic sciences, and quite in error had imagined those philosophical sciences to be the source of progress and means of illumination. However, those philosophical matters had greatly dirtied my spirit and been an obstacle to my spiritual development. Suddenly, through Almighty God’s mercy and munificence, the sacred wisdom of the All-Wise Qur’an came to my assistance. As is explained in many parts of the *Risale-i Nur*, it washed away and cleansed the dirt of those philosophical matters.

For instance, the spiritual darkensses arising from science and philosophy plunged my spirit into the universe. Whichever way I looked seeking a light, I could find not a gleam in those matters, I could not breathe. And so it continued until the instruction in divine unity given by the phrase from the All-Wise Qur’an “There is no god but He” dispersed all those layers of darkness with its brilliant light, and I could breathe with ease. But relying on what they had learnt from the people of misguidance and philosophers, my soul and Satan attacked my reason and my heart. All thanks be to God, the ensuing debate with my soul resulted in the victory of my heart. Those exchanges have been described in part in many parts of the *Risale-i Nur*. So deeming them to be sufficient, here I shall explain only one proof out of thousands in order to show one thousandth part of that victory of the heart. In this way it may also cleanse the spirits of certain elderly people which

have been dirtied in their youth, and their hearts sickened and souls spoilt, by matters which though called Western philosophy or the sciences of civilization, are in part misguidance and in part trivia. And through divine unity, they may be saved from evil of Satan and the soul. It is as follows:

My soul said in the name of science and philosophy: “According to the nature of things, the beings in the universe intervene in other beings. Everything looks to a cause. The fruit has to be sought from the tree and seed from the soil. So what does it mean to seek the tiniest and least insignificant thing from God and to beseech Him for it?”

Through the light of the Qur’an, the meaning of divine unity then unfolded in the following way: like the greatest thing, the tiniest and most particular proceeds directly from the power of the Creator of the whole universe and emerges from His treasury. It cannot occur in any other way. As for causes, they are merely a veil. For in regard to art and creation, sometimes the creatures we suppose to be the smallest and least important are greater than the largest creatures. Even if a fly is not of greater art than a chicken, it is not of lesser art. In which case, no difference should be made between great and small. Either all should be divided between material causes, or all should be attributed at once to a single Being. And just as the former is impossible, the latter is necessary and imperative.

For if beings are attributed to a single Being, that is to a Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One, since His knowledge, the existence of which is certain by reason of the order and wisdom in all beings, encompasses everything; and since the measure of all things is determined in His knowledge; and since observedly beings which are infinitely full of art continuously come into existence from nothing with infinite ease; and since in accordance with innumerable powerful evidences that All-Knowing All-Powerful One is able to create anything whatever through the command of “‘Be!’ and it is” as simply as striking a match, and as is explained in many parts of the Risale-i Nur and proved particularly in the Twentieth Letter and at the end of the Twenty-Third Flash, He possesses unlimited power – since this is the case, the extraordinary ease and facility which we observe arises from that all-encompassing knowledge and vast power.

For example, if a special solution is applied to a book written in invisible ink, that huge book suddenly demonstrates its existence visibly and makes itself read. In just the same way, the particular form and appointed measure of everything is determined in the all-encompassing knowledge of the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One. Through the command of “‘Be!’ and it is” and with that limitless power of His and penetrating will, like spreading the solution on the writing, the Absolutely All-Powerful One applies a

manifestation of His power to the being which exists as knowledge and with utter ease and facility gives it external existence; He displays and makes read the embroideries of His wisdom.

If all things are not all together attributed to that Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One, the One Knowing of All Things, then as well as having to gather together in a particular measure from most of the varieties of beings in the world the body of the tiniest thing like a fly, the particles which work in that tiny fly's body will have to know the mysteries of the fly's creation and its perfect art in all its minutest details. For as all the intelligent agree, natural causes and physical causes cannot create out of nothing. In which case, if they do create, they will gather the being together. And since they will gather it together – whatever animate being it is, there are within it samples of most of the elements and most of the varieties of beings, for living creatures are quite simply like a seed or essence of the universe – it will of course be necessary for them to gather together a seed from the whole tree and an animate being from the whole face of the earth sifting them through a fine sieve and measuring them with the most sensitive balance. And since natural causes are ignorant and lifeless, and have no knowledge with which to determine a plan, index, model, or programme according to which they can smelt and pour the particles which enter the immaterial mould of the being in question, so they do not disperse and spoil its order, it is clear how far it is from possibility and reason to suppose that, without mould or measure, they can make the particles of the elements which flow like floods remain one on the other in the form of an orderly mass without dispersing, for everything has a single form and measure amid possibilities without calculation or count. For sure, everyone who does not suffer from blindness in his heart will see it. Yes, in consequence of this truth, according to the meaning of the verse,

Those on whom you call besides God cannot create [even] a fly, if they all met together for the purpose,(22:73)¹⁰

if all material causes were to gather together and if they possessed will, they could not gather together the being of a single fly and its systems and organs with their particular balance. And even if they could gather them together, they could not make them remain in the specified measure of the being. And even if they could make them remain thus, they could not make those minute particles, which are constantly being renewed and coming into existence and working, work regularly and in order. In which case,

¹⁰ That is, “Should all the things you call upon and worship other than God were to gather together, they could not create so much as a fly.”

self-evidently, causes cannot claim ownership of things. That is to say, their True Owner is someone else.

Indeed, their True Owner is such that, according to the verse,

Your creation and your resurrection is as a single soul,(32:28)

He raises to life all the living beings on the face of the earth as easily as He raises to life a single fly. He creates the spring as easily as He creates a single flower. For He has no need to gather things together. Since He is the owner of the command of “Be!’ and it is;” and since every spring He creates from nothing the innumerable attributes, states, and forms of the innumerable beings of spring together with the elements of their physical beings; and since He determines the plan, model, index, and programme of everything in His knowledge; and since all minute particles are in motion within the sphere of His knowledge and power; He therefore creates everything with infinite ease as though striking a match. And nothing at all confuses its motion so much as an iota. And minute particles are like a regular, disciplined army in the same way that the planets are an obedient army.

Since they are in motion relying on that pre-eternal power and function in accordance with the principles of that pre-eternal knowledge, those works come into existence in accordance with the power. They therefore cannot be deemed insignificant by considering their unimportant individualities. For through the strength of being connected to that power, a fly can kill off Nimrod, and an ant can destroy the Pharaoh’s palace, and the minute seed of the pine bears on its shoulder the burden of the pine-tree as tall as a mountain. We have proved this truth in numerous places in the Risale-i Nur: just as through his enlistment in the army and being connected to the king, an ordinary soldier can take another king prisoner, exceeding his own capacity a hundred thousand times; so too, by being connected to pre-eternal power, all things can manifest miracles of art exceeding the capacity of natural causes hundreds of thousands of times.

In Short: The fact that all things come into existence with both infinite art and infinite ease shows that they are the works of a Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One possessing all-encompassing knowledge. Otherwise, let alone coming into existence with a hundred thousand difficulties, leaving the bounds of possibility and entering those of impossibility, nothing could even come into existence, indeed, their coming into existence would be impossible and precluded.

Thus, through this most subtle, powerful, profound, and clear proof, my soul, which had been a temporary student of Satan and the spokesman for the people of misguidance and the philosophers, was silenced, and, all praise be to God, came to believe completely. It said:

Yes, what I need is a Creator and Sustainer who possesses the power to know the least thoughts of my heart and my most secret wishes; and as He will answer the most hidden needs of my spirit, so he will transform the mighty earth into the hereafter in order to give me eternal happiness, and remove this world and put the hereafter in its place; and create the heavens as He creates a fly; and as He fastens the sun as an eye in the face of the sky, so he can situate a particle in the pupil of my eye. For one who cannot create a fly cannot intervene in the thoughts of my heart and cannot hear the pleas of my spirit. One who cannot create the heavens, cannot give me eternal happiness. In which case, my Sustainer is He who both purifies my heart's thoughts, and like He fills and empties the skies with clouds in an hour, so he will transform this world into the hereafter, make Paradise, and open its doors to me, bidding me to enter.

My elderly brothers who as a result of misfortune, like my soul, have spent part of their lives on lightless Western materialist philosophy and science! Understand from the sacred decree of "There is no god but He" perpetually uttered by the tongue of the Qur'an, just how powerful, true, unshakeable, undamageable, unchanging, and sacred a pillar of belief it is, and how it disperses all spiritual darkness and cures all spiritual wounds!

I included this long story among the doors of hope of my old age as though involuntarily. I did not want to include it, indeed, I held back from doing so because I thought it would be tedious. But I have to say that I felt compelled to write it. Anyway, to return to the main topic:

In consequence of grey hairs appearing in my hair and beard and of a loyal friend's unfaithfulness, I felt a disgust at the pleasures of Istanbul's worldly life which was so glittering and superficially agreeable and gilded. My soul searched for spiritual pleasures in place of the pleasures with which it was obsessed. It wanted a light, a solace, in this old age which in the view of the heedless is cold, burdensome, and disagreeable. And all praise be to God and a hundred thousand thanks, just as I found true, lasting, and sweet pleasures of belief in "There is no god but He" and in the light of divine unity in place of all those false, disagreeable, fleeting worldly pleasures, so through the light of divine unity, I saw old age which in the view of the heedless is cold and burdensome to be most light, and warm, and luminous.

O you elderly men and women! Since you have belief and since you pray and offer supplications which illuminate and increase belief, you can regard your old age as eternal youth. For through it you can gain eternal youth. The old age which in truth is cold, burdensome, ugly, dark, and full of pain is the old age of the people of misguidance, indeed, their youth as

well. It is they who should weep with sighs and regrets. While you, respected believing elderly people, should joyfully offer thanks saying: “All praise and thanks be to God for every situation!”

TWELFTH HOPE

One time, I was being held in the district of Barla in the province of Isparta in a distressing captivity called exile, in a truly wretched state suffering both illness, and old age, and absence from home, and in a village alone with no one, barred from all company and communication. Then, in His perfect mercy, Almighty God bestowed a light on me concerning the subtle points and mysteries of the All-Wise Qur’an which was a source of consolation for me. With it, I tried to forget my pitiful, sad state. I was able to forget my native land, my friends and relations, but alas, there was one person I could not forget and that was Abdurrahman, who was both my nephew, and my spiritual son, and my most devoted student, and my bravest friend. He had parted from me six or seven years previously. Neither he knew where I was so that he could hasten to help and console me, nor did I know his situation so that I could correspond with him and we could confide in each other. Now in my old age, I was in need of someone loyal and self-sacrificing like him.

Then out of the blue someone gave me a letter. I opened it and saw it was from Abdurrahman, written in a way which showed his true self. A part of it that clearly shows three instances of wonder-working has been included among the pieces of the Twenty-Seventh Letter. It made me weep, and it still makes me weep. The late Abdurrahman wrote in the letter seriously and sincerely that he was disgusted with the pleasures of the world and that his greatest desire was to reach me and look to my needs in my old age just as I had looked to his when he was young. He also wanted to help me with his capable pen in spreading the mysteries of the Qur’an, my true duty in this world. He even wrote in his letter: “Send me twenty or thirty treatises and I’ll write out twenty or thirty copies of each and get others to write them.”

His letter made me feel very hopeful in respect of the world. With the thought that I had found a bold student who was so intelligent as to be a genius and would assist me more loyally and with greater attachment than a true son, I forgot my torturous captivity, loneliness, exile, and old age.

He had obtained a copy of the Tenth Word about belief in the hereafter before writing the letter. It was as if it had been a remedy for him curing all the spiritual wounds he had received during those six or seven years. He then wrote the letter to me as if he was awaiting his death with a truly

strong and shining belief. Then one or two months later while thinking of once again passing a happy worldly life together with Abdurrahman, alas, I received news of his death. I was so shaken that five years later I am still under its effect. It afflicted me with a grief, sorrow, and sense of separation far exceeding the torturous captivity, aloneness, exile, old age, and illness I was then suffering. Half of my private world had died with the death of my mother, and now with Abdurrahman's death, the other half died. My ties with the world were now completely cut. For if he had lived, he could have been both a powerful help in my duties which looked to the hereafter, and a worthy successor to fill my place completely after me, and a most self-sacrificing friend and consolation. He would have been my cleverest student and companion, and a most trustworthy protector and owner of the Risale-i Nur.

Yes, in regard to humanity, such losses are extremely distressing and painful for people like me. It's true outwardly I was trying to endure it, but a fierce storm was raging in my spirit. If from time to time solace proceeding from the Qur'an's light had not consoled me, I would not have been able to endure it. At the time I used to wander alone in the mountains and valleys of Barla. Sitting in lonely places amid my sorrows, pictures of the happy life I had spent in former times with my loyal students like Abdurrahman passed through my imagination like the cinema; since due to old age and exile I was swiftly affected, they broke my resistance. Suddenly the sacred meaning of the verse,

Everything shall perish save His countenance; His is the command, and to Him shall you return(28:88)

was unfolded to me. It caused me to declare: "O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal! O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!", and truly consoled me.

Then, inspired by this verse's meaning as is described in the treatise, *The Highway of the Practices of the Prophet (UWBP)*, I saw myself while in that lonely valley and sad state, at the head of three vast corpses:

One was the sight of myself as a gravestone on the grave of the fifty-five dead Said's of my fifty-five years who had been buried in the course of my life.

The second corpse was the vast corpse of all my fellow-men who had died since the time of Adam (UWP) and had been buried in the grave of the past. I saw myself as a miniscule ant-like living creature at the head of that corpse, wandering over the face of this century, which was like its gravestone.

The third corpse was the greater world which, like human beings and

the travelling worlds which every year die, would also – in accordance with the above verse – die; this was embodied before my imagination.

Then the verse,

But if they turn away, say: “God suffices me, there is no god but He; in Him do I place my trust—He the Sustainer of the Throne [of Glory] Supreme!”(9:129)

illuminated with its true solace and inextinguishable light that awesome vision arising from my grief at Abdurrahman’s death; it came to my assistance with its allusive meaning, which states: since Almighty God exists, He takes the place of everything. Since He is Eternal, He is surely sufficient. A single manifestation of His grace takes the place of the whole world. One manifestation of His light infuses with life the three vast corpses mentioned above, showing that they are not corpses but having completed their duties, have departed for other worlds. This mystery has been explained in the Third Flash, so that sufficing with the above, here I only say that the two repetitions of the phrase: “O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal! O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!”, which illustrates the meaning of “Everything shall perish save His countenance [to the end of the verse],”(28:88) saved me from that distressing, sad state. It was like this:

The first time I uttered “O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!”, it began to cure me like a surgical operation on the endless spiritual wounds arising from the passing of the world and of the friends in this world to whom I was attached, and from the ties binding me being broken.

The second time, the phrase “O Eternal One, You alone are Eternal!” was both a salve and an antidote for all those innumerable wounds. That is to say: “You are eternal. If the rest depart, let them; You are enough for me. Since You abide for ever, a single manifestation of Your mercy is sufficient in place of all transient things. Since You exist, everything exists for the person who knows of the connection with Your existence established through belief and Islam acts in accordance with that relation. Transience and decline, death and non-existence are a veil, a renewal; like travelling through different domains.” Thinking this, my painful, sad, grievous, dark, awesome, separation-stained state of mind was transformed into a happy, joyful, pleasurable, luminous, lovable, familiar state. My tongue and heart, indeed all the particles of my being through the tongue of disposition, exclaimed: “All praise be to God!”

One thousandth of that manifestation of mercy is this: I returned to Barla from that sorrowful valley and melancholy state of mind, where I saw that a young man called Kuleönlü Mustafa had come to ask me some

questions about the five daily prayers and ablutions. Although I did not accept visitors at that hour, my spirit perceived as though with foresight his sincerity of spirit and the future valuable services he would perform for the *Risale-i Nur*,¹¹ and I did not turn him away, I accepted him.¹² It later became clear that Almighty God sent Mustafa to me as a sample in place of Abdurrahman, who as a worthy successor would carry out completely the duty of a true heir in the work of the *Risale-i Nur*, as though saying: “I took one Abdurrahman from you, but I shall give you thirty like the Mustafa you see in return, who will be both students, and nephews, and spiritual sons, and brothers, and self-sacrificing comrades in this duty for religion.”

Yes, praise be to God, He gave me thirty Abdurrahman’s. So I told myself: “O weeping heart! Since you have seen this sample and through him He has healed the most serious of your spiritual wounds, be assured that He will heal all the rest of them.”

My elderly brothers and sisters who like me have lost at the time of their old age a child or relative they love dearly, and who have to bear the searing sorrows of separation together with the burdens of old age! You have understood from my situation that although it was much harsher than yours, it was cured and healed by a verse of the Qur’an. This being so, there are remedies in that sacred pharmacy to heal all your difficulties. If you have recourse to it through belief and make use of those remedies

¹¹ With his fine pen, Mustafa’s younger brother, Küçük Ali, wrote out more than seven hundred copies of parts of the *Risale-i Nur* and himself became an Abdurrahman. He also trained many other Abdurrahman’s.

¹² He truly showed that he was not only worthy of being accepted, but also worthy of the future.*

* An event confirming that Ustad’s prediction that Mustafa, the first student of the *Risale-i Nur*, was worthy of the future:

The day preceding the eve of ‘Eid al-Adha, the Feast of Sacrifices, Ustad intended to go out to take some air. When he sent me to fetch the horse, I said to him: “Don’t you go down. I’ll lock the door from the back, and go out from the wood-store.” Ustad said: “No. You go out of the door.” And he went down. After I had gone out, he bolted the door after me. I went out and he returned upstairs. He then slept. A while later Kuleönlü Mustafa arrived together with Haji Osman. Ustad was not accepting anyone, and he was not going to accept anyone. He would never have taken in two people together, especially at that hour, and would have turned them away. Nevertheless, when our brother Kuleönlü Mustafa, whom we are talking about here, came with Haji Osman, it was as though the door said to him through the tongue of disposition: “Ustad will not accept you, but I’ll open for you.” And although it was bolted from the inside, the door opened of its own accord for Mustafa. That is to say, just as the future verified what Ustad had said about him: “Mustafa is worthy of the future,” so did the door testify to it.

Signed: Hüsrev

Yes, what Hüsrev has written is correct and I confirm it. The door both greeted this blessed Mustafa in my place, and accepted him.

Said Nursi

through worship, the heavy burdens of your old age and your sorrows will be alleviated considerably.

The reason for writing this long piece was to seek more prayers for Abdurrahman, not to weary you. Also, my purpose in showing my worst wound in an extremely grievous and unpleasant way which may upset you unduly and put you off, is to demonstrate what a wondrous remedy and brilliant light is the sacred antidote of the All-Wise Qur'an.

THIRTEENTH HOPE¹³

In this Hope I shall describe an important scene from my life; it is bound to be somewhat lengthy, so I hope you will not become bored or be offended.

After being saved from captivity in Russia during the Great War, my serving religion in the Darü'l-Hikmet kept me in Istanbul for two or three years. Then through the guidance of the All-Wise Qur'an and spiritual influence of Ghawth al-A'zam and the awakening of old age, I felt a weariness at the civilized life of Istanbul and a disgust at its glittering social life. A feeling of longing for my native land drove me there, I went to Van with the thought that since I am bound to die, I'll die in my own country.

First of all, I went to visit my medrese in Van, the Horhor. The Armenians had razed it during the Russian occupation, like the rest of the buildings. It was right under and adjacent to Van's famous citadel, which is a great monolith like a mountain. My true friends, brothers, and close students of the medrese were embodied before my eyes. Some of those devoted friends had become actual martyrs, while others had died due to that calamity and had in effect become martyrs.

I could not restrain myself from weeping. I climbed to the top of the citadel which overlooking the medrese, towers above it to the height of two minarets, and I sat down. I went back in my imagination seven or eight years. Having a powerful imagination, I wandered all around that time in my mind. There was no one around to distract me and draw me back. For I was alone. As my view of those seven or eight years expanded, I saw enough to fill a century. I saw that the town at the foot of the citadel had been completely burnt and destroyed. It was as though two hundred years had passed from when I had seen it previously to them, it seemed so infinitely sad. Most of the houses' inhabitants had been my friends and

¹³ It is a subtle 'coincidence' that the incident of the medrese* which this Thirteenth Hope describes occurred thirteen years ago. (1921 – Tr.)

* Medrese: school where religious sciences were taught. See also, note 21, page 325. (Tr.)

acquaintances. The majority of them had died in the migrations, may God have mercy on them, or had gone to a wretched exile. Only the Armenian quarter remained, all the Muslim houses of Van had been levelled. My heart was lacerated. I was so affected, if I had had a thousand eyes they would have all wept together. I had returned to my homeland from exile; I had supposed that I had been saved from exile. But alas! the most lamentable exile I experienced was in my homeland. I saw that hundreds of my students and friends to whom I had been closely attached, like Abdurrahman in the Twelfth Hope, had entered the grave and that their places were all ruins.

There were some lines that had long been in my mind but I had not understood their true meaning. Now before that sad scene I gained a full understanding of them. The lines were these: "If there was no separation from friends, death could find no way to our spirits to seize them."¹⁴ That is to say, what kills man most is separation from those he loves. Yes, nothing had caused me as much suffering and sorrow as that situation. If assistance had not come from the Qur'an and from belief, my grief and sorrow and suffering would have made my spirit fly away.

Since early times in their verses, poets have lamented the destruction with time of the places they have been together with their beloveds. I had seen this most painfully with my own eyes. With the sorrow of someone passing by the dwellings of beloved friends after two hundred years, my heart and spirit joined my eyes in weeping. Then one by one the happy scenes of the life I had passed for nearly twenty years in study with my valuable students, when the places which were now in ruins were flourishing and happy, sprang to life before me like pictures at the cinema, then died away and vanished. This continued before the eye of my imagination for some time.

Then I felt astonished at the state of the worldly, how is it that they deceive themselves? For the situation there showed clearly that this world is transitory and that human beings are guests within it. I saw with my own eyes how true are the constantly repeated words of the people of reality: "The world is cruel, treacherous, bad; don't be deceived by it!" I also saw that just as man is connected with his own body and household, so is he connected with his town, his country, and with the world. For while weeping with my two eyes at the pitifulness of old age in respect of my body, I wanted to weep with ten eyes not only at my medrese's old age, but at its death. And I felt the need to weep with a hundred eyes at the half-death of my beautiful homeland.

¹⁴ These lines are in Arabic in the original text, and are by Mutanabi. (Tr.)

It states in a Hadith that every morning an angel calls out: “You are born to die, and construct buildings that they may be destroyed.”¹⁵ I was hearing this truth not with my ears, but with my eyes.

Ten years later I still weep when I think of that situation, as it made me weep then. Yes, the ruins of the houses at the foot of the ancient citadel, thousands of years old, and the town ageing eight hundred years in eight years, and the death of my once-flourishing medrese which had been the gathering-place of friends, all indicated the vastness of the immaterial corpse of all the medreses in the Ottoman Empire, which now had died; the great monolith of Van’s citadel had become a gravestone to all of them. It was as though my students who had been together with me in the medrese eight years previously were weeping in their graves together with me. Indeed, the ruined walls of the town and its scattered stones were weeping with me. I saw them to be weeping.

Then I understood that I could not endure this exile in my native land. I thought that I would either have to join them in the grave, or withdraw into a cave in the mountains and await my death there. I told myself: “These unendurable, searing separations which destroy patience and resistance surely make death preferable to life. The pains of such a life are unbearable.”

I then cast a glance over the six aspects and saw that they were all black. The heedlessness resulting from my intense grief showed me the world as terrifying, empty, desolate, and about to collapse over my head. My spirit sought a point of support in the face of innumerable hostile calamities. Its endless desires which stretch to eternity were seeking out something to satisfy them. While awaiting consolation in the face of the sorrow arising from those endless separations and deaths, that endless devastation, suddenly the truth was manifested of the All-Wise Qur’an’s verses:

*Whatever is in the heavens and on earth—let it declare the praises and glory of God; for He is Exalted in Might, the Wise. * To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: it is He Who gives life and death; and He has power over all things.(57:1-2)*

It saved me from that pitiful, terrible, sad, separation-stained imagining, and opened my eyes. I saw that the fruits at the tops of the fruit-trees were looking at me as though smiling. “Note us as well,” they were saying. “Do not only look at the ruins.” The verses’ truth brought the following thought to mind:

¹⁵ al-‘Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa’*, ii, 128, No: 2041; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, v, 483, No: 8053; al-Haythami, *Majma’ al-Zawa’id*, i, 94.

“Why does an artificial letter written in the form of a town by the hand of man, who is a guest on the page of Van’s plain, being wiped out by a calamitous torrent called the Russian invasion sadden you to this extent? Consider the Pre-Eternal Inscraper, everything’s True Owner and Sustainer, for His missives on this page continue to be written in glittering fashion, in the way you used to see. Your weeping over those desolate ruins arises from the error of forgetting their True Owner, not thinking that men are guests and imagining them to be owner.”

A door to reality opened up from my error, from that searing sight, and my soul was prepared to accept the reality completely. Like iron is plunged in the fire so that it softens and may be profited from, that grievous sight and terrible state were fire which softened my soul. Through the reality of the above verses, the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition showed my soul the effulgence of the truths of belief, causing it to accept it.

Yes, all thanks be to God, as is proved conclusively in such parts of the Risale-i Nur as the Twentieth Letter, through the effulgence of belief in God, the truth of the verses becomes a source of strength for the spirit and heart which unfolds proportionately to the firmness of each person’s belief. This was so powerful it afforded me the strength to confront calamities even a hundred times more dreadful than the situation I beheld. It uttered this reminder: “Everything is subjected to the command of this country’s True Owner, your Creator. He holds the reins of all things. Your relation with Him should be sufficient.”

On recognizing my Creator and relying on Him, all the things that had appeared hostile gave up their enmity, and the grievous things that had made me weep started to make me happy. As we have demonstrated with certain proofs in many places in the Risale-i Nur, through the light proceeding from belief in the hereafter, that recognition and reliance afforded such assistance in the face of my endless desires that it was sufficient not only for my attachment to and desire for insignificant, temporary, brief worldly friendships, but for my innumerable far-reaching desires in the world of permanence, for everlasting happiness through all eternity. For through one manifestation of His mercy, the All-Merciful and Compassionate One every spring lays on the table of that season incalculable numbers of delightful, artful bounties in order to please His guests of one or two hours. Then after providing them with these, which are a sort of snack or appetizer, He prepares for His servants innumerable varieties of bounties, and for an unending time fills eight permanent Paradises with them from among His everlasting dwelling-places. The person who relies on the mercy of such an All-Merciful and Compassionate One through belief and

knows his relation surely finds such a source of assistance that even its least degree provides for innumerable hopes reaching to eternity, and causes them to continue.

Furthermore, through the reality of the verses, the light proceeding from the effulgence of belief was manifested in such brilliant fashion that it lit up those six dark aspects like daytime. It illuminated the grief I felt for my students and friends in my medrese and in the town with this reminder: “The world your friends have gone to is not dark. They have merely gone somewhere else; you will meet again.” It put an end to my tears entirely, and made me understand that I would find others resembling them in this world who would take their place.

Yes, all praise be to God, He both raised to life the dead Van medrese with the medrese of Isparta, and He in meaning raised my friends there to life with the more numerous and valuable students and friends here. It also made known that the world is not empty and meaningless and that my thinking of it as a ravaged country had been wrong: as required by His wisdom, the True Owner changes the artificial scenes made by man and renews His missives. The more the fruits of some trees are plucked, the more others grow in their places; so too death and separation among mankind constitute renewal and change. In respect of belief, they are a renewal that produces not the grievous sorrow arising from the lack of friends, but the sweet sorrow born of parting in the hope of meeting again in another, better place.

The verses also illuminated the face of the beings in the universe which had appeared dark in the former ghastly situation. I wanted to offer thanks for this, and the following Arabic lines occurred to me, which described that reality exactly. I said:

“All praise be to God for the light of belief, which dispels the illusion of beings as hostile strangers, moribund and savage, as weeping orphans, and shows them to be loving brothers, living and familiar, joyfully employed in mentioning God’s names and glorifying Him.”

That is to say, due to the heedlessness resulting from my grievous state of mind, some of the beings in the universe appeared to my neglectful soul as hostile and strange,¹⁶ others as awesome corpses, and yet others as orphans weeping in their loneliness. In the light of belief I saw that they were all friends and brothers. As for the awesome corpses, some were living and friendly while others had been released from their duties. Seeing through the light of belief the wailing of the orphans to be the murmuring

¹⁶ Like earthquake, storm, tempest, plague, and fire.

of remembrance and glorification of God, I offered endless praise and thanks to the Glorious Creator, for He had given me belief, the source of these innumerable bounties. And seeing that it is incumbent on me to think of all the beings in my personal world, which is as vast as the world, as being engaged in the praise and glorification of God, and through intention to make use of them, it means that I say “All praise and thanks to God for the light of belief” together with all those beings, who utter it singly and as a whole through the tongue of disposition.

Moreover, the pleasures of life, which had been reduced to nothing by my heedless and dreadful state of mind, and my hopes, which had withered up entirely, and my personal enjoyment and bounties, which had been constricted within the narrowest bounds, indeed, destroyed, suddenly so expanded through the light of belief that narrow sphere around my heart that it contained the whole universe – as has been proved clearly in other parts of the Risale-i Nur – and in place of the bounties which had withered up in the garden of the Horhor Medrese and lost their taste, it made the realms of this world and the hereafter each a merciful table of bounties. It showed that not only the ten or so human members like the eyes, ears, and heart, but also the hundred members were an extremely long arm which believers might extend each according to his degree, to those two tables of the Most Merciful, to gather in the bounties from all sides. At that time, I uttered the following words both to express this elevated truth, and as thanks for those endless bounties:

“I offer praise and thanks to my Creator for the light and bounty of belief to my very utmost, with all the particles of my being, for it shows me that this world and the hereafter are overflowing with bounties and mercy, and allows me and all true believers to benefit from those two vast tables with the hands of all their senses, which develop and unfold through the light of belief and Islam.”

Since belief is so tremendously effective in this world, certainly in the Eternal Realm it will have such fruits and effulgences that they cannot be comprehended with the mind in this world, nor described.

O you elderly people who like me experience the pains of separation from numerous friends due to old age! However much older than me in years the oldest of you is, my guess is that in meaning I am older than him. For since by nature I feel excessive pity and compassion for my fellow beings, I have experienced the sufferings of thousands of my brothers in addition to my own pains and feel as though I have lived for hundreds of years. However much you have suffered the calamity of separation, you have not suffered it as I have. For I have no son that I should think only of

him. I feel pain and sympathy towards thousands of Muslim sons and their sorrows, and even innocent animals, due to the excessive pity and compassion in my nature. I do not have a house of my own that I should think only of it; I am bound through Islamic zeal to this country and even the Islamic world, as though they were my house. I am saddened at the pains of my fellow Muslims in those two great houses, and am sorrowful at being parted from them!

Thus, the light of belief was sufficient for me and all my sorrows arising from old age and the pains of separation; it gave me an inextinguishable hope, an unassailable faith, an unquenchable light, unending solace. Belief then is certainly more than enough for you in the face of the darkness, heedlessness, sorrows, and griefs of old age. In fact, the old age that is utterly black and lacking in light and solace, and is the most grievous and terrible separation, is the old age and separation suffered by the people of misguidance and the dissipated. It is possible to experience the belief that affords hope, light, and solace, and its effects by adopting a consciously worshipful attitude, worthy of old age and appropriate to Islam. It is not possible by trying to imitate the young, and plunging one's head into heedlessness and forgetting old age.

Dwell on the Hadith, the meaning of which is: "The best of the youths among you are those who imitate those of mature years, while the worst of your elderly are those who imitate the young."¹⁷ That is to say, "The best youths are those who resemble the elderly in self-restraint and abstaining from vice, while the worst elderly people are those who resemble the young in plunging themselves into dissipation and heedlessness.

My elderly brothers and sisters! There is a Hadith which says: "Divine mercy is ashamed to leave unanswered the prayers offered to the divine court by elderly believers of sixty or seventy years."¹⁸ Seeing that divine mercy holds you in such respect, be respectful towards this respect by performing your worship!

FOURTEENTH HOPE

The summary at the start of the Fourth Ray, on the luminous verse "For us God suffices,"(3:173) describes how having been isolated from everything by 'the worldly', I was afflicted with five sorts of exile. The heedlessness arising from distress led me to look not to the consoling lights of the

¹⁷ 'Ali Mawardi, *Adab al-Dunya wa'l-Din*, 27; al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, i, 142; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iii, 487; al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, x, 270.

¹⁸ al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, i, 244; al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, x, 149.

Risale-i Nur which would have aided me, but directly to my heart and my spirit. I saw that governing in me were an overpowering desire for immortality, an intense love of existence, a great yearning for life, together with an infinite impotence and endless want. But an awesome transience was extinguishing the immortality. Suffering this state of mind, I exclaimed like the poet:

*Reality wanted the passing of my body, though my heart
desired its immortality;*

I was afflicted with an incurable ill that not even Luqman could cure!

I bowed my head in despair. Suddenly the verse, “For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs” came to my assistance, summoning me to read it with attention. So I recited it five hundred times every day. The more I recited it, nine levels of meaning were unfolded to me out of its many lights, at the level of ‘certainty at the degree of knowledge,’ and even of ‘certainty at the degree of witnessing.’

The First Level of the Luminous Verse “For us God suffices”

By virtue of a shadow in my essential being of a manifestation of a name of the One of Glory and Perfection, who, possessing absolute perfection, is of Himself and for no other reason worthy of love, I had an innate desire for immortality, directed not to my own immortality but to the existence, perfection, and immortality of that Absolutely Perfect One. But due to heedlessness that innate love had lost its way, become attached to the shadow and enamoured of the mirror of immortality. Then the verse, “For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs” raised the veil. I saw and felt and experienced at the degree of ‘absolute certainty’ that the pleasure and happiness of my immortality lay exactly and in more perfect form in the immortality of the Enduring One of Perfection and in affirming my Sustainer and God, and in believing in Him, and submitting to Him. The evidence for this has been explained in the Fourth Ray, the treatise on the verse “For us God suffices,” in twelve sections which are extremely profound and subtle and will fill with wonder anyone with fine sensibilities.

The Second Level of the Luminous Verse “For us God suffices”

At a time when, in my old age, exile, aloneness, and isolation, ‘the worldly’ were attacking me with their spies and stratagems despite my boundless innate impotence, I told my heart: “Whole armies are attacking a single man whose hands are tied and is ill and weak. Is there nothing from which he can seek help?” I had recourse to the verse “For us God suffices and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs,” and it informed me of the following:

Through the document of belief, you become connected to a Ruler of

Absolute Power who every spring equips in perfect order all the plant and animal armies on the face of the earth composed of four hundred thousand different nations. In addition, He places in the ‘extracts’ of the Most Merciful known as seeds and grains, which are like the meat, sugar and other food extracts discovered recently by the people of civilization but a hundred times more perfect, all the sustenance of the huge armies of foremost man, and of all the animals. He folds up inside those extracts the instructions of divine determining concerning their cooking and development, and places them in their tiny protective cases. The creation of those tiny coffers is with such ease, speed, and abundance from the “Ka’f. Nu’n” factory, which is governed by the command of “‘Be!’ and it is,” that the Qur’an states: “The Creator merely commands and it comes into being.” Gaining such support with the document of the relationship of belief, you can rely on an infinite strength and power. As I assimilated this lesson from the verse, I found such a moral strength arising from belief that through its power I could have challenged not only my present enemies, but the whole world. With all my spirit I declared: “For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs!”

The Third Level of the Luminous Verse “For us God suffices”

At a time when, finding my attachment to the world to be broken due to suffering the oppression of those exiles and illnesses, belief recalled to me that I was destined for perpetual happiness in an eternal world, an everlasting realm, I gave up sighing regretfully, which caused further grief and yearning, and became cheerful and happy. However, this goal of the imagination and spirit and result of man’s nature could only be realized through the infinite power of an Absolutely Omnipotent One who knows and records the action and rest and conduct and states, in word and deed, of all creatures, and takes as His friend and addressee insignificant and absolutely impotent man, giving him a rank superior to all beings; it could only be realized through His infinite favours to man and the importance He gives him. While thinking of these two points, that is, the activity of such a power and the importance of apparently insignificant man, I wanted an explanation which would deepen belief and satisfy the heart. Again I had recourse to the verse, and it told me to note the “na\,” “For us,” and to heed who is saying “For us God suffices” together with me.

I at once looked and saw that innumerable birds and flies, which are miniature birds, and uncountable animals, and boundless plants and trees were, like me, reciting through the tongue of disposition “For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs.” They recall to everyone the

immensity and majesty of a power which before our eyes particularly in the spring creates in most abundant plenitude, with the greatest ease and on a vast scale, from eggs, seeds, grains, and droplets of fluid, which all resemble each other and whose substance is the same, the hundred thousand species of birds, the hundreds of thousands of sorts of animals, the hundred thousand types of plants, and the hundred thousand varieties of trees, without error, defect, or confusion, in adorned, balanced, well-ordered fashion, and in forms all different from one another. They demonstrate to us His unity and oneness by being made in this way together, one within the other and resembling each other. I understood that any interference or participation in the dominical, creative act of disposal which displays thus incalculable miracles was not possible. Those who want to understand my personality and human character, which is like that of all believers, and those who want to be like me, should look at the explanation of the ‘I’ in the first person plural ‘us’ in “For us God suffices,” that is, the explanation of myself. What is my apparently insignificant, wanting being – like that of all believers? What is life? What is humanity? What is Islam? What is certain, affirmative belief? What is knowledge of God? How should love be? They should understand and take a lesson!

The Fourth Level of the Luminous Verse “For us God suffices”

A time I was being shaken by old age, exile, illness, and defeat coincided with a period of heedlessness. I was grievously anxious that my being, to which I was intensely attached and by which I was captivated, indeed all creatures, were departing for non-existence, then again I had recourse to the verse. It told me: “Note my meaning carefully and look through the telescope of belief!”

So I looked and with the eye of belief and saw that like all believers, my miniscule being was the mirror of a limitless being, and through infinite expansion, the means of gaining innumerable existences, and was a word of wisdom producing the fruits of numerous permanent existences far more valuable than itself. I knew with ‘certainty at the degree of knowledge’ that to live for an instant in this respect was as valuable as an eternal existence. For I understood through the consciousness of belief that this being of mine was the work of art, artefact, and manifestation of the Necessarily Existent One. So being saved from the anxiety of loneliness and from innumerable separations and their pains, I formed relations and bonds of brotherhood with beings to the number of divine acts and names connected with beings and especially living beings, and I knew that there was a permanent union with all the beings I loved, and only a temporary separation. And so, through belief and the relations of belief, like all beings, my being gained

the lights of innumerable existences untouched by separation. Even if it departed, they would remain behind and it would be happy as though it had remained itself.

In short, death is not separation, it is union; it is a change of abode; it is the producing of an eternal fruit.

The Fifth Level of the Luminous Verse “For us God suffices”

Another time my life was being shaken by harsh conditions, they directed my attention towards life. I saw that my life was departing at speed; the hereafter was drawing close; due to the oppression I was suffering my life had started to be extinguished. As is explained in the section of the Risale-i Nur on the divine name of Ever-Living, I thought sorrowfully of how with its important functions, and great benefits and virtues, life did not deserve to be so swiftly extinguished but to last a long time. I again had recourse to my master, the verse, “For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs.” This time it told me: “Consider life from the point of view of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, who gives you life!”

So I looked and I saw that if only one aspect of my life looked to me, a hundred looked to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One. And if, of its results, one looked to me, a thousand looked to my Creator. Since this is the case, to live for one instant within the bounds of divine pleasure is sufficient; a long time is not required. This truth may be explained in four matters. Anyone who is not dead or who wants to be alive should seek the nature and reality of life and its true rights in those four matters; they will find them and be raised to life!

A summary is this: the more life looks to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, and the more belief becomes the life and spirit of life, the more it becomes perpetual and produces enduring fruits. It also becomes so elevated that it receives the manifestation of eternity; it no longer looks to the brevity or length of a lifetime.

The Sixth Level of the Luminous Verse “For us God suffices”

At a time when my advancing years and old age were giving warning of my particular parting amid the events of the end of time, which tell of the destruction of the world, the time of general parting, the feelings in my nature of love of beauty and passion for loveliness and fascination by perfection were unfolding in an extraordinarily sensitive manner. I saw with extraordinary clarity and sorrow that transience and decline, which are always destructive, and death and non-existence, which perpetually cause separations, were tearing apart this beautiful world and these beautiful creatures in terrible fashion, and destroying their beauty. The metaphorical love

in my nature boiled up and rebelled against this situation. In order to find consolation, I again had recourse to the verse “For us God suffices.” It told me: “Recite me and consider my meaning carefully!”

So I entered the observatory of the verse in Sura al-Nur,

God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth [to the end of the verse], (24:35)

and looked through the telescope of belief to the most distant levels of the verse “For us God suffices,” then through the microscope of the insight of belief at its most subtle mysteries, and saw the following:

Mirrors, pieces of glass, transparent things, and even bubbles, show the various hidden beauties of the sun’s light and of the seven colours in its light; and through their disappearance and renewal, and different capacities and refractions, they renew that beauty; and with their reflections, they display the hidden beauties and loveliness of the sun and its light. In exactly the same way, in order to act as mirrors to the sacred beauty of the All-Beauteous One of Glory, the Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal Sun, and to the everlasting loveliness of His most beautiful names, and to renew their manifestations, these beautiful creatures, these lovely artefacts, these exquisite beings, arrive and depart without stopping. Powerful proofs are expounded in detail in the *Risale-i Nur* that demonstrate that the beauties apparent on them belong not to them, but are signs, indications, flashes, and manifestations of a transcendent, sacred beauty which wants to become manifest. The explanation begins by saying that three of those proofs have been mentioned briefly and most reasonably. The treatise leaves in amazement everyone of fine perception who sees it so that in addition to benefiting from it themselves, they find it necessary to try to allow others to benefit from it. Anyone whose mind is not rotten and heart not corrupted, will appreciate, admire, and recommend the five points explained in the second proof, and exclaiming: “Ma’shallah! Barakallah!” will perceive and affirm that it is a wondrous marvel which will exalt his apparently lowly, wanting being.

FIFTEENTH HOPE¹⁹

One time when I was in compulsory residence in Emirdağ,²⁰ in what

¹⁹ This Fifteenth Hope was written by a Nurju to complete in the future the *Treatise for the Elderly*, and as a source for its composition, since the period of the *Risale-i Nur*’s writing had come to an end three years’ previously.

²⁰ The small town in central Anatolia where Bediuzzaman was exiled in 1944, following his release from Denizli Prison. He remained in compulsory residence here until 1951, with a break of twenty months in Afyon Prison, from January 1948 to September 1949. (Tr.)

was virtually solitary confinement, I became wearied of life due to the torments they inflicted on me with their surveillance and arbitrary treatment, which I found hard to bear, and I regretted having been released from prison. I longed for Denizli Prison with all my spirit, and wanted to enter the grave. But while thinking, prison and the grave are preferable to such a life, and deciding to enter one or the other, divine grace came to my assistance: it bestowed on the students of the Medresetü'z-Zehra,²¹ whose pens were like duplicating machines, one of the machines, which had just appeared. All at once, five hundred copies each of the valuable collections of the *Risale-i Nur* appeared from a single pen. Their presaging new victories made me love that distressing life, and caused me to offer unending thanks.

A while later, unable to endure the *Risale-i Nur*'s victories, its covert enemies prompted the government to act against us. Again life became difficult for me. Then suddenly dominical grace was manifested: the officials connected with the case, who were those most in need of the *Risale-i Nur*, studied the confiscated copies in the course of their duties most curiously and carefully, and its treatises gave their hearts a sense of bias towards it. As they began to appreciate it rather than criticize it, the *Risale-i Nur*'s circle of study greatly expanded. It produced profits a hundred times greater than our material losses, reducing to nothing our anxiety and distress.

Then, secret, hostile dissemblers directed the government's attention towards my person. They recalled my former political activities. They aroused suspicions about me in both the judiciary, and the education authorities, and the police, and the Home Affairs Office. These spread at the hand of the different parties and the incitement of concealed communist anarchists. They started to pressure us and arrest us, and confiscate the parts of the *Risale-i Nur* that fell into their hands. The activities of the *Risale-i Nur* students came to a standstill. A number of officials made false accusations which no one at all could believe. They tried to spread around the most extraordinary slander, but they could make no one believe it.

Then they arrested me during the coldest days of winter on some trite

²¹ The name of the university Bediuzzaman strove throughout his life to found in eastern Anatolia, where the religious sciences would be taught together with the modern sciences. He received funds from Sultan Reşad and laid the foundations on the shores of Lake Van in 1911, but it was not completed due to the outbreak of World War I. With the spread of the *Risale-i Nur* in the first decades of the republic, *Risale-i Nur* Medreses, or places where the *Risale-i Nur* was studied or copies of it were written, opened throughout Turkey. Bediuzzaman then called the *Risale-i Nur* students, students of the Medresetü'z-Zehra. (Tr.)

pretext, and put me into solitary confinement in prison in a large and extremely cold ward, leaving me two days without a stove. I was accustomed to light my stove several times a day in my small room and always had live coals in the brazier, so with my illness and weakness I could endure it only with difficulty. While struggling in this situation suffering from both a fever and the cold, and dreadful distress and anger, a truth unfolded in my heart through divine grace. It uttered the following warning to my spirit:

“You called prison the Medrese-i Yûsufiye – the School of the Prophet Joseph, and while in Denizli, things like relief a thousand times greater than your distress, and spiritual profit, and the other prisoners benefiting from the Risale-i Nur, and its widespread triumphs, all made you offer endless thanks instead of complaining. They made each hour of your imprisonment and hardship the equivalent of ten hours’ worship, and made those passing hours eternal. God willing, the calamity-stricken in this third School of Joseph benefiting from the Risale-i Nur and finding consolation will heat this cold, severe distress of yours and transform it into joy. If the people you are angry at are being deceived and are ill-treating you without realizing it, they are not worth being angry at. And if they are tormenting you and causing you suffering knowingly, out of spite and on account of misguidance, they will in a short time enter the solitary confinement of the grave due to the eternal execution of death, to suffer everlasting torment and torture. Their oppression is earning for you both merit and spiritual pleasures, and is making transient hours eternal, and is allowing you to perform scholarly and religious duties with sincerity.”

With all my strength I exclaimed: “All praise be to God!” Out of humanity, I pitied those tyrants and prayed: “O my Sustainer, reform them!” As I wrote in my statement to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in this new incident the truly guilty are those tyrants who in ten respects act unlawfully in the name of the law. They found extraordinary pretexts showing to anyone fair-minded with their slanders and fabrications, which would have made those who heard them laugh and lovers of the truth weep, that they can find no way to attack the Risale-i Nur and its students in respect of the law and right, so deviate into lunacy.

For instance, the officials who spied on us for a month could find nothing incriminating, so they wrote out a memorandum saying: “Said’s servants bought rak from a shop and took it to him.” They could find no one to sign the memo, but finally arrested a drunken stranger and got him to sign it under threat. Even he said: “God forgive us! Who would sign this extraordinary lie?” So they were compelled to tear it up.

A S e c o n d E x a m p l e : Someone I did not know and still do not know, lent his horse so that I could go out for a ride. I used to go out most days for a couple of hours in the summer, for my illness and to take some air. I had given my word that I would give the owner of the horse and phaeton books worth fifty liras, so as not to break my rule and become indebted to him. Could any harm come of such a thing? But then both the Governor, and the court officials, and the police questioned us fifty times about the horse's owner. As though it were some important political event affecting public security! One person even said loyally that the horse was his and another, that the phaeton was his, in order to put a stop to this meaningless questioning, and they were both arrested together with me. We watched numerous childish escapades like these two examples and laughed till we cried. And we understood that those who attack the Risale-i Nur and its students make fools of themselves.

An amusing incident from among those examples: the reason given on the paper authorizing my arrest was "disturbing public order." Not having seen the document, I told the public prosecutor: "I slandered you last night. I said to a police officer who was questioning me for the Police Chief: 'If I haven't served this country's public security as much as a thousand public prosecutors and a thousand police chiefs – three times – may God damn me!'"

Just at that point, when in those freezing conditions I was in most need of rest and not catching cold and not thinking of the world, I was overcome with anger and vexation at those who had sent me into this intolerable exile, isolation, imprisonment, and oppression, in a way that spelt out their hatred and ill-intentions. Divine grace came to my assistance, and the following was imparted to my heart:

"Divine determining, which is pure justice, has a large part in the wrongful oppression which these people are inflicting on you. You have food to eat in this prison; that sustenance of yours called you here. It should be met with contentment and resignation. Dominical wisdom and mercy have a large part, which is to illuminate those in this prison and console them, and to gain you reward. This share should be met with endless thanks and patience. Your soul has a part in it, due to its faults which you did not know about. In the face of this, you should tell your soul by repenting and seeking forgiveness that it deserved this blow. Some of your secret enemies have a part in it, with their intrigues and deceiving certain ingenuous and suspicious officials and inciting them to such oppression. In the face of this share, the terrible immaterial blows dealt by the Risale-i Nur on those dissemblers have avenged you completely. That is enough for them. The final

part is the officials who were the actual means. In the face of this share, it is an act of magnanimity to forgive them in accordance with the rule,

Those who suppress their anger and forgive people—verily God loves those who do good,(3:134)

for whether they wanted to or not they may have benefited from the Risale-i Nur in respect of belief, although they looked at with the intention of criticizing it.

I felt such happiness and gratitude at this veracious warning that I decided to commit some harmless offence and incur a prison sentence, so that I might remain in this new School of Joseph and perhaps even help those who were opposed to me. For someone like me who was seventy-five years old, without attachment, and only five out of the seventy people he loved in this world remained alive, the grave was a hundred times preferable to this prison. For seventy thousand copies of the treatises of the Risale-i Nur were in free circulation and would perform my duties connected with the Risale-i Nur, and I had brothers and heirs who would continue to serve belief with thousands of tongues in place of my one tongue. This prison too was a hundred times more comfortable and more beneficial than the unfree liberty outside subject to that tyranny and oppression. For in place of having to suffer all alone outside the arbitrary treatment of hundreds of officials, in prison, together with hundreds of other prisoners one only has to suffer the slight arbitrariness of one or two people like the prison governor and chief warder, which will yield benefits. And in the face of this, one receives the brotherly kindness and consolation of many fellow-prisoners. With the thought that the compassion of Islam and human nature are shown as kindness to the elderly in such a position, thus turning the hardship of prison into mercy, I became resigned to prison.

At the time I attended this third trial, because of my difficulty in remaining on my feet due to weakness, old age, and illness, I sat on a chair outside the door of the court. The judge suddenly appeared and angrily asked in insulting manner: “Why isn’t he waiting on his feet?” I was angry at this unkindness in the face of my old age. Then I looked and saw that a large number of Muslims had gathered around us and were watching in most kind and brotherly fashion, and not dispersing. I was suddenly warned of the following two truths:

T h e F i r s t : The covert enemies of myself and the Risale-i Nur had deceived certain ingenuous officials with the intention of putting a stop to the Risale-i Nur’s conquests by destroying the public’s good opinion of me, which in any event I did not want, and of destroying my character in

the people's view; they had prompted those officials to act contemptuously towards me in that way. See these hundred people in place of that one man's insults! In return for the Risale-i Nur's service to belief – as a divine favour – they are kindly offering their sympathy by appreciating your service, and both welcoming you and seeing you off. Even, while I was in the examining magistrate's office on the second day of the trial answering the public prosecutor's questions, around a thousand people gathered in the courtyard opposite the court windows and showed their concern; they appeared to be telling them through the tongue of disposition not to pressurize us. The police could not make them disperse. It was imparted to my heart that in this dangerous age these people want a true solace, an inextinguishable light, powerful belief, and certain good news about eternal happiness, and that they search for these by nature. They must have heard that what they are searching for is to be found in the Risale-i Nur so that they show my unimportant person much more attention than I deserve because I have performed some small services for belief.

S e c o n d T r u t h : I was reminded that in return for the ill-treatment a few contemptuous, deceived individuals inflicted on us with the intention of insulting us and destroying public regard for us, due to their unfounded suspicions of our disturbing public order, was the applause and appreciation of innumerable people of reality and forthcoming generations.

Yes, through the strength of certain, affirmative belief, in every part of this country the Risale-i Nur and its students halt the awesome corruption and efforts of anarchy to destroy public order under the veil of communism. They work to maintain public order and security so that these twenty years three or four related courts and the police of ten provinces have not been able to find or record any incidents involving the infringement of public order connected with the Risale-i Nur students, who are very numerous and found in every part of the country. And the fair-minded police of three provinces stated: "The Risale-i Nur students are moral police. They assist us in preserving public order. Through certain, affirmative belief, they leave in everyone's head who reads the Risale-i Nur something that restrains them from committing misdemeanours. They work to maintain public order."

An example of this was Denizli Prison. When the Risale-i Nur entered there and *Fruits of Belief* was written for the prisoners, within a space of three or four months more than two hundred of those prisoners became so extraordinarily obedient and acquired such religious and righteous conduct that a man who had murdered three or four people refrained from killing bedbugs even. They became completely compassionate, harmless members

of the nation. The officials were astonished at this situation and looked on in appreciation. Some youths even said before receiving their sentences: “If the Nurjūs remain in prison, we shall try to have ourselves convicted so that we can be taught by them and become like them. We shall reform ourselves through their instruction.”

So those who accuse the Risale-i Nur students, who are thus, of disturbing public order are surely seriously deceived, or have been fooled, or knowingly or unknowingly are deceiving the government on account of anarchy, and try to crush and repress us. We say this to them:

Since death is not to be killed, and the grave is not to be closed, and the travellers in this guesthouse of the world, convoy after convoy enter the earth with great speed and ado, and vanish; for sure we shall part from one another very soon. You shall receive the penalty for your tyranny in awful fashion. At the very least you shall mount the gallows of death and eternal extinction, which form the discharge papers of the oppressed people of belief. The fleeting pleasures you have received in this world imagining them to be everlasting, will be transformed into everlasting, grievous pains.

Regretfully, our secret dissembling enemies sometimes attach the name of Sufism to the reality of Islam, which has been gained and preserved through the swords and blood of the hundred million martyrs at the rank of saints, and heroic war veterans of this religious nation. While the way of Sufism is only a single ray of that sun, they show it to be the sun and deceive certain lax government officials. Calling the Risale-i Nur students “Sufis” and “members of a political society” – because they work effectively for the truths of the Qur’an and belief – they want to incite them against us. We say to them, and to those who listen to them against us, what we told the just court at Denizli:

“Let us too be sacrificed for this sacred truth for which hundreds of millions of people have been sacrificed! Even if you set fire to the world around us, we who sacrifice ourselves for the truths of the Qur’an will not lay down our arms before atheism; we shall not abandon our sacred duty, God willing!”

Thanks to the sacred solace arising from belief and the Qur’an for the pains and despair at the adventures of my old age, I would not exchange this most distressing year of my old age for ten of the happiest years of my youth – especially since for those who repent and perform the obligatory prayers each hour in prison is the equivalent of ten hours’ worship, and with respect to merit, each transient day spent in illness and under oppression gains ten days of perpetual life. I thus understood from those warnings just how deserving of thanks are these days for someone like me awaiting his

turn at the door of the grave. I exclaimed: “Endless thanks be to my Sustainer!”, and was happy at my old age and pleased with my imprisonment. For life does not stop, it passes swiftly. If it passes in pleasure and happiness, since the passing of pleasure is pain, it becomes transient, passing without thanks and in heedlessness; leaving sins in the place of pleasures, it departs. Whereas if it passes in prison and hardship, since the passing of pain is a sort of pleasure, and since it is considered to be a sort of worship, it becomes perpetual in one respect, and through its good fruits gains everlasting life. It becomes atonement for the mistakes that were the cause of past sins and imprisonment, and purifies them. From this point of view, the prisoners who perform the compulsory parts of the obligatory prayers should offer thanks in patience.

SIXTEENTH HOPE

One time in my old age, I was released from Eskişehir Prison after serving a years' sentence. They exiled me to Kastamonu,²² where I stayed for two or three months as a guest in the police station. It may be understood how much torment someone like me suffered in a place like that, who was a recluse, wearied by seeing even his loyal friends, and could not endure the changes in dress.²³ While suffering this despair, divine grace suddenly came to the assistance of my old age. The inspector and police in the police station became like firm friends. They not once warned me about not wearing a peaked cap, and like my servants, used to take me for trips around the town.

Then I took up residence in Kastamonu's Risale-i Nur Medrese, opposite the police station, and started to write further parts of the Risale-i Nur. Heroic Risale-i Nur students like Feyzi, Emin, Hilmi, Sâdık, Nazif, and Salâhaddin, attended the medrese in order to duplicate the treatises and disseminate them. We held scholarly debates even more brilliant than those I had held in my youth with my old students.

Then our hidden enemies aroused the suspicions of some officials and some egotistical hojas and shaykhs concerning us. They caused us and Risale-i Nur students from five or six provinces to be gathered together in the School of Joseph of Denizli Prison. The details of this Sixteenth Hope are described clearly in the brief letters I sent secretly to my brothers while

²² A provincial centre in the İlgaz Mountains to the north of Turkey. Bediuzzaman was exiled here in March 1936, after being released from Eskişehir Prison. He remained in Kastamonu for seven years, until 1943, when he was sent to Denizli Prison. (Tr.)

²³ This refers to the compulsory adoption of European dress following the Dress Laws passed in the first years of the Republic. The Hat Act of 1925 banned the wearing of all headgear other than European-style hats. (Tr.)

in Denizli Prison, in those sent from Kastamonu, and in the collection containing the court defence speeches. So referring the details to those letters and to my defence speech, I shall allude to it only very briefly here:

I hid the confidential and important collections, and particularly those about the Sufyan and the Risale-i Nur's wonder-working, under the coal and fire-wood so that they might be published after my death or after the authorities had come to their senses and listened to the truth. Then, when feeling easy at this, some detectives and the assistant public prosecutor suddenly raided my house. They pulled out those secret and important treatises from under the wood then arrested me and sent me to Isparta Prison, although I was in bad health. While greatly upset and sad at the harm that had come to the Risale-i Nur, divine grace came to our aid. The authorities carefully and curiously began to read those important treatises which had been hidden, of which they were in much need, and the government offices became like Risale-i Nur study centres. Although they began to read with the idea of criticizing, they appreciated them. In Denizli even, although we were unaware of it, numerous people read the printed edition of Ayetü'l-Kübra (The Supreme Sign), officially and unofficially, and strengthened their belief. This reduced to nothing the calamity of prison we were suffering.

Later they took us to Denizli Prison and put me into solitary confinement in a stinking, cold, damp ward. I was most unhappy at my old age and illness and the difficulties visited on my friends because of me. I was feeling most distressed at the confiscations of the Risale-i Nur and the cessation in its activities when divine grace suddenly came to my aid. It transformed that huge prison into a Risale-i Nur medrese, proving it was a School of Joseph. The Risale-i Nur started to spread through the diamond pens of the heroes of the Medresetü'z-Zehra.²⁴ The great hero of the Risale-i Nur even, in those severe conditions, wrote out more than twenty copies of *The Fruits of Belief* and the *Defence Speeches Collection* in the space of three or four months. The conquests began both within the prison and outside. It transformed our losses in that calamity into significant gains and our distress into joy. It once again showed the meaning of the verse,

But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you.(2:216)

Then we were subject to severe criticisms because of the incorrect and superficial statements of the first experts' committee, and the Education Minister's savage attacks. A statement was published against us. Then just when according to some reports they were even trying to secure the execu

²⁴ See note 21, page 325.

tion of some of us, divine grace came to our assistance. Chiefly, while expecting a severely critical report from the Experts Committee in Ankara, they sent a commendatory one. And although they found less than ten errors in five chests of copies of the Risale-i Nur, we proved in court that the points they had shown to be errors were completely correct and that they themselves had been in error in the matters they said were wrong; we showed between five and ten errors and mistakes in their five-page report. And while awaiting severe reprisals in the face of The Fruits of Belief and Defences Collection, which we had sent to seven government offices, and the entire Risale-i Nur which had been sent to the Ministry of Justice, and especially in return for the effective, stinging slaps dealt by the confidential treatises, they responded extremely leniently, and like the even consoling letter sent to us by the Prime Minister, they were most conciliatory and did not attack us. This proved decisively that as a miracle of divine grace, the truths of the Risale-i Nur had defeated them, making them study its treatises as though it were a guide. It made those broad circles into a sort of study circle and saved the belief of numerous hesitating and bewildered people, causing us spiritual joy and profit far exceeding our distress.

Then our hidden enemies poisoned me; and the late Hafız Ali, the martyr hero of the Risale-i Nur, went to hospital instead of me, travelled to the Intermediate Realm in my place, and made us weep despairingly. Before this calamity, on many occasions I had insisted on the mountain at Kastamonu: "My brothers, don't give meat to the horse and grass to the lion!" That is to say: "Don't give all the treatises to everyone, lest they use them to attack us." Although Hafız Ali (May God have mercy on him) was around seven days away on foot, as though he heard with his spiritual telephone, that same time he was writing to me: "Yes, Ustad, it is a wonder of the Risale-i Nur that horses should not be given meat, nor lions, grass. Rather, since horses should be given hay, and lions meat, he gave that lion-like Hoja the treatise on sincerity." I received his letter seven days later. We worked it out, and at the same time I was shouting it out on the mountain, he was writing the strange words in his letter.

Thus, just at the time that hero of the Risale-i Nur died, and we were being pressurized by the secret dissemblers who were trying to have us punished through their intrigues against us, and we were anxious that I would be sent to hospital on official orders because I was ill from poison, divine grace came to our assistance. Thanks to the sincere prayers of my blessed brothers the danger to my life from the poison passed; and according to powerful signs our martyr was occupied in his grave with the Risale-i Nur, and replied with the Risale-i Nur to the questioning angels; and the

Denizli hero, Hasan Feyzi (May God have mercy on him), who would work according to Hafiz Ali's system, and his friends were secretly serving the Risale-i Nur effectively; and because the other prisoners were being reformed by the Risale-i Nur, even our enemies supported our being released from prison; and like the Companions of the Cave, the Risale-i Nur students turned that place of ordeal into an ascetic's cave of olden times; all this, together with their endeavours in writing out and disseminating the Risale-i Nur with easy hearts, proved that divine grace had come to our aid.

It also occurred to my heart that since a great interpreter of the law like Imam A'zam suffered imprisonment; and a supreme mujahid like Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was severely tortured in prison for the sake of a single matter of the Qur'an and endured it in perfect patience, yet not remain silent about the matter in question; and numerous religious leaders and scholars were completely patient and unshaken, offering thanks, despite suffering torments far greater than yours; for sure you are obliged to offer endless thanks for the very few difficulties you suffer, although the reward you receive is great for those many truths of the Qur'an. Yes, I shall describe briefly a manifestation of divine grace in the midst of man's wrongful tyranny:

When I was twenty years old I used to say repeatedly: "Towards the end of my life I shall withdraw from the life of society into a cave or onto a mountain like the people of olden times who abandoned the world and withdrew into caves." Then when in the Great War I was being held as a prisoner in the north-east, I took this decision: "After this I shall spend my life in caves. I shall slip away from political and social life. Enough now of mixing in them." At that point both dominical grace and the justice of divine determining were manifested. It transformed the caves I had imagined into prisons, places of seclusion, loneliness in places of ordeal and solitary confinement in a way far better than my decision and wish, compassionately for my old age. It bestowed on me Schools of Joseph and places of solitary confinement where my time would not be wasted that were far superior to the mountain caves of ascetics and recluses. It gave both the benefits pertaining to the hereafter of the cave, and strenuous service of the truths of belief and the Qur'an. I had even determined to show myself guilty of some crime and remain in prison after my friends had been released. Solitaries like Husrev and Feyzi would have remained with me, and on some pretext I would have remained in the solitary confinement ward so as not to meet with people and waste my time on unnecessary conversation and egotistical artificiality. But then divine determining and our

fate sent us to another place of ordeal. Out of compassion for my old age and in order to make us work harder in the service of belief, duties were given us outside our will and power in this third School of Joseph, in accordance with the verse, “But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you,” and the saying: “Good lies in what God chooses.”

Yes, there are three instances of wisdom and important benefits in respect of the service of the Risale-i Nur in divine grace turning – out of compassion for my old age – the caves of my youth, when I had no powerful, hidden enemies, into the solitary confinement of prison:

First Instance of Wisdom and Benefit: It is only in the School of Joseph that the Risale-i Nur students can gather together without harm. Outside it is expensive and causes suspicion if they meet together. Some who came to visit me would spend forty or fifty liras, then see me for only twenty minutes or not at all, and would have to return. I would have willingly chosen the hardship of prison to be closer to some of my brothers. This means that for us prison is a bounty and instance of mercy.

Second Instance of Wisdom and Benefit: The service to belief at this time through the Risale-i Nur has to be through advertising it everywhere and attracting the attention of those in need. Attention is drawn to the Risale-i Nur by our imprisonment; it is like an advertisement. The most stubborn or most needy find it and save their belief; their obduracy is broken and they are saved from danger, and the Risale-i Nur’s study-circle is widened.

Third Instance of Wisdom and Benefit: The Risale-i Nur students who are sent to prison learn from one another’s conduct, qualities, sincerity, and self-sacrifice, and they no longer seek worldly benefits in their service. Yes, since in the School of Joseph they have seen with their own eyes the ten and perhaps a hundred benefits gained for every hardship and difficulty, and the good results, and the extensive and sincere service to belief, they are successful in attaining pure sincerity and no longer lower themselves by seeking minor, personal benefits.

A subtle but sad, yet at the same time agreeable, point concerning these places of ordeal that concerns myself only is this: I observe the same situation here that I saw in the old medreses in my native region in my youth. For traditionally in the eastern provinces, some of the medrese students’ needs were met from outside, and in some medreses their food was cooked in the medrese. There were other ways they resembled this place of ordeal. As I watch the prison here, I feel a pleasurable regret and longing, and travel in my imagination to those enjoyable times of youth, and forget the difficulties of old age.

The Addendum to the Twenty-Sixth Flash

This is the Twenty-First Letter, which, having been included in *Mektûbat* (Letters 1928-1932), has not been added here.

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The Twenty-Seventh Flash

This consists of the defence speeches from the Eskişehir trials, which have been published in the hand-duplicated editions of *The Flashes Collection*, and in part in biography.

* * *

The Twenty-Eighth Flash

[This Flash comprises some of the short pieces I wrote as consolation for my brothers who were (in the ward) opposite me in Eskişehir Prison, at a time I was forbidden to mix with them or speak with them.]

*An amusing and absorbing conversation with Süleyman Rüştü,¹
famous for his fidelity and distinguished by his sincerity of heart*

A Small Point Concerning an Important Verse

It was autumn and approaching the time flies are discharged from their duties, and because of their minor annoyance, selfish humans were employing chemicals in my prison cell in order to eliminate them. It aroused a sharp pity in me. There was a washing-line in my cell. In order to thwart the humans the flies multiplied even more. In the evening those miniature birds would line themselves up in most orderly fashion on the line. When he wanted to hang up the washing, I said to Rüftü: “Don’t disturb those little birds; hang it somewhere else.” To which he replied, completely seriously: “We need the line; let the flies find somewhere else for themselves.”

Anyhow... In the early morning a discussion started up in connection with this exchange, about the very numerous small creatures like flies and ants. I said the following to him:

¹ Süleyman Rüştü Çakın, 1899-1974. He was born in Isparta where he was the Director of the Tax Assessment Office. He became one of Bediuzzaman’s close students and was imprisoned together with him in Eskişehir and Denizli.

The species whose copies are thus numerous have important duties and great value, like the copies of a book are multiplied in relation to the book's importance. That is to say, the species of flies have important duties and high value so that the All-Wise Creator has greatly multiplied those tiny missives of divine determining and copies of the words of divine power. The All-Wise Qur'an states:

O men! Here is a parable set forth; listen to it! Those on whom you call besides God cannot create [even] a fly, if they all met together for the purpose! And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they would have no power to release it from the fly. Feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition!(22:73)

That is to say, if those things claimed to be gods by the people of misguidance were to gather together all causes and false gods apart from God Almighty, they would be unable to create even a fly. That is, the creation of a fly is such a dominical miracle and clear sign of the creative act that even if all causes were to assemble they would be unable to make anything like it or to duplicate it, and would be unable to dispute that dominical sign.

Flies, the significant subject of the above verse, defeated Nimrod, and when Moses (Upon whom be peace) complained about their bothering him, saying: "O my Sustainer! Why have You made these irritating creatures so very numerous?", the following answer came to him by way of inspiration:

"You have objected about the flies once while the flies have asked many times: 'O our Sustainer! This man has a huge head, yet he praises You with only one tongue, and sometimes he neglects to do that. If you had created us out of only his head, there would have been creatures like us praising You with thousands of tongues!'"

Moreover the flies, which thus defended the wisdom in their creation against Moses' complaint sufficiently powerfully to withstand a thousand such objections, also pursue great cleanliness. These insects continually wash their faces, eyes, and wings as though taking ablutions, and have important duties. The common view is short-sighted; it is still unable to comprehend those duties.

Indeed, Almighty God has created an orderly group of carnivorous beings as public health officials of a sort; they cleanse the seas by gathering up the corpses of other sea-creatures² that die every day in their millions,

² One fish produces thousands of eggs and thousands of young. So to maintain the balance, from a roe consisting of a million eggs the young fish that hatch and survive will equal the fish that die. Also, the mother fish cannot always superintend her young because of the great difference in size between them, and she cannot enter the places they hide. So as a manifestation of divine compassion, the All-Wise and Compassionate promotes one of the young to supervise the others, and employs the tiny creature in the mother's duties.

and prevent the sea from becoming polluted and disgusting with their corpses. If those public health officials of the sea did not carry out their extremely regular duties, the sea would not sparkle like a mirror; it would rather display a sad and touching turbidity.

Also, Almighty God has created carnivorous and carrion-eating birds, and wild animals to be like cleansing and public health officials which collect the corpses of the wild animals and birds that die every day in their millions, cleanse the face of the earth of those putrid remains, and save other animate beings from such sad, discomfoting sights. Some, like eagles for example, through a divine impulse, wonderfully perceive the location of a corpse from a distance of five or six hours, though hidden and distant, and hasten to remove it. If those health officials of the land were not extremely efficient and orderly in carrying out their official duties, the face of the earth would become such so as to make all weep.

The licit food of carnivorous animals is the flesh of dead animals. The flesh of living animals is unlawful for them. If they eat it, they receive punishment. The Hadith which states: "Retaliation shall be made for the hornless sheep on the horned on Resurrection Day"³ points out that although the bodies of animals with immortal spirits perish, they will receive reward and punishment in a manner appropriate for them in an eternal realm. In consequence, it may be said that the flesh of live animals is unlawful for wild animals.

Furthermore, ants are employed as cleansing officials to collect the corpses of tiny creatures and small particles and fragments of bounty. They are given duties as public health officials to preserve tiny particles of divine bounty from waste, from being trodden underfoot, contempt and futility, and to gather up the corpses of other small creatures.

Similarly, flies are charged with duties of cleaning away poisonous substances and microbes which breed disease and are invisible to the human eye. They do not transmit microbes, on the contrary, through sucking up and imbibing harmful microbes they destroy them and cause them to be transformed into a different state; they prevent the spread of many contagious diseases. A sign that they are both health workers and cleansing officials and chemists and that they exhibit extensive wisdom is the fact that

³ *Musnad*, ii, 235.

they are extremely numerous. For valuable and beneficial things are multiplied.⁴

O you self-centred human being! Apart from the thousands of instances of wisdom in the creation of flies, consider the following small benefit that concerns you and leave off your hostility towards them. For just as they offer you some familiarity in your exile, solitude and loneliness, so do they warn you against sliding into heedlessness and your thought wandering. You see flies that through their delicate manner and their washing their faces and eyes as though taking ablutions are giving you a lesson and reminding you of human duties like action and cleanliness.

Moreover, bees, which may be thought of as a sort of fly, give you honey to eat, the sweetest and most delicate of bounties. And as is stated by the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, they are distinguished by receiving divine inspiration. So to be hostile towards them although they should be loved; indeed, to be hostile towards creatures that suffer all sorts of difficulties in hastening in friendship to assist man, is wrongful and unjust. We may combat harmful creatures only to repel their harm. We fight wolves to protect sheep from their attack, for example.

Mosquitoes and fleas fall upon the turbid blood flowing in the veins polluted by harmful substances, indeed they are charged with consuming the polluted blood. So in hot weather when there is blood surplus to the body's needs, why should they not be natural cuppers? It is possible...

Glory be to Him whose art bewilders the mind!

At one time when I was struggling with my evil-commanding soul, it was imagining that the bounties it saw in itself to be its own property, and it became conceited, proud and boastful. I told it: "This property is not yours; it is on trust." So it gave up its conceit and pride but became lazy, it said: "Why should I bother about someone who is not mine? Let him perish, what is it to me?" Suddenly I saw that a fly had alighted on my hand and had started to thoroughly clean its eyes, face, and wings, which were its trust from God. The fly was washing itself just like a soldier cleans his rifle and uniform thoroughly, which belong to the state. I said to my soul: "You look at that!" It looked and learned a good lesson. As for the fly, it became my conceited and lazy soul's teacher and instructor.

Fly excretion is not harmful medically; in fact, sometimes it is a sweet

⁴ How beautifully and subtly the following lines by the celebrated Yunus Emre allude to the wonderful works of dominical art that are the fly's wings and body: "I loaded a single fly's wing onto forty ox carts; Forty of them could not haul it; it remained thus decreed."

syrup. For it is not distant from dominical wisdom, it is indeed a function of that wisdom, that while flies contain thousands of harmful substances, microbes, and poisons from what they have eaten, they are like tiny transformation and purification machines. Apart from bees, there are other species of flying insects⁵ that eat various putrid substances and then continuously excrete droplets of syrup in place of the filth. By transforming those rotten, poisonous substances into a sweet and healing syrup, a confection of divine power, that rains onto the leaves of trees, they prove that they are machines for transmuting one substance into another. They demonstrate before one's eyes what a mighty nation and group these tiny individuals form. Through the tongues of their beings they say: "Don't look at our smallness, consider the vastness of our species, and declare, 'All Glory be to God!'"

⁵ At the end of spring there is one species of small fly which is created in the form of a black mass that becomes stuck to the branches of almond and wild apricot trees, and remains there. In place of waste matter, droplets continuously flow from the flies. These drops are like honey and other species of flies gather round them suck them up.

Another species is employed in the pollination of the flowers of plants and some trees, like the fig. Just as the fire-fly is worthy of observation, since it is a sort of fly that flashes, sparkles, and is luminous; so do other species that are gilded and glisten like gold deserve notice. Also, we must not forget flies armed with lances, and wild bees, which are like brigands. If the All-Merciful Creator had not pulled in their reins, if they attacked human beings like fleas, in the same way that those armed species killed Nimrod, they would have assailed the human race and expounded the implicit meaning of the verse, "And if the fly should snatch away anything from them." Thus, the hundred famous species of flies like these bearing special qualities are of great importance so that this mighty verse makes them its subject:

O men! Here is a parable set forth; listen to it! Those on whom you call besides God cannot create [even] a fly, if they all met together for the purpose! And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they would have no power to release it from the fly. Feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition!

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

Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is "Be!" and it is.(36:82)

As this verse indicates, creation is through a command. The treasures of divine power are in the *Kaf*. and *Nun*.¹ Several of the many aspects of this subtle mystery have been mentioned in various places of the *Risale-i Nur*. Here, in order to make more comprehensible in this century's materialist view Hadiths about the characteristics, qualities, and material effects of the Qur'an's letters, and particularly the disjointed letters at the start of some Suras, we shall illustrate this mystery with a material example.

The All-Glorious One, the Owner of the sublime throne, has four thrones by which He directs the creatures on the earth, which is like a centre of the world and a heart and qibla of the universe:

One is the throne of preservation and life, which is earth. This is the manifestation of the divine names of Preserver and Giver of Life.

The Second Throne is the throne of bounty and mercy, which is the element of water.

The Third is the throne of knowledge and wisdom, which is the element of light.

The Fourth is the throne of will and command, which is the element of air.

We see with our eyes that the minerals and innumerable various plants are formed from simple earth, through which are met the innumerable needs of animals and human beings – boundless multiplicity from unity with perfect order, an infinite variety of species from a simple element, innumerable regular embroideries on a plain page. And although water, and especially the sperm of animals, is a simple fluid, innumerable miracles of art become manifest through it in the many animate creatures. This shows that similarly to these two thrones, light and air are the places of manifestation of the wondrous miracles of the pen of knowledge, command, and will of the Pre-Eternal Inscraper, the All-Knowing One of Glory, despite their simple nature.

For now we shall leave aside the element of light, and in connection with our question here, try to unveil a little the marvels of command and will within the element of air, which for the globe of the earth is the throne of the divine command and will.

With the air in our mouths we sow letters and words which at once

¹ The two letters of the Arabic alphabet in the word "Kun!", that is, "Be!" (Tr.)

sprout and send forth shoots. That is to say, in a instant, in no time at all, a word becomes a seed in the air, sprouting in the surrounding air and producing the shoots of innumerable instances of the same word, great and small, in the air all around. We consider the element of air and we see that it is so obedient and subjugated to the command of “‘Be!’ and it is” that it is as if like a soldier in a regular army, each of its particles is as though ever awaiting its orders, demonstrating its compliance with and submission to commands manifested from the command of “‘Be!’”, arriving instantaneously from another particle far off.

For example, the fact that human speech may be heard anywhere in the air by means of radio transmitters and receivers – on condition there is a receiver – everywhere on earth, at the same moment, instantaneously, demonstrates how perfectly each particle of air obediently conforms to the manifestation of the command of “‘Be!’ and it is.” In respect of sacredness and in accordance with the mystery of compliance, the letters, which have an unstable existence in the air, may manifest many external effects and material qualities.

Innumerable signs like these show that letters, which are the beings of the air, and especially sacred and Qur’anic letters, and in particular the letters of the divine cyphers at the beginning of some Suras, are orderly and infinitely sensitive, and as though listening to the instantaneous commands and acting accordingly They therefore surely make the particles of air submit to their material qualities and wondrous properties, which reflect the manifestation of the command of “‘Be!’ and it is” and of pre-eternal will.

In consequence of this mystery, sometimes the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition describes the works of divine power as though they proceed from the attributes of will and speech, meaning that they govern like power apart from utter speed of creation, submission of things and subjugation of beings. That is to say, the letters proceeding from the creative command govern in the existence of beings like a physical force, and the creative command is manifested identically with power and will.

Yes, the works of will and the creative command appear to be identical with power in beings of this sort whose physical existence is invisible, like the air, which is semi-material and semi-immaterial; indeed, they are identical with power. It is as though the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition decrees, “Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is ‘Be!’ and it is” in order to attract attention to beings which are an isthmus between the material and the immaterial.

It is thus in keeping with the sacred letters of the divine cyphers like *Ha*.

Mim. Ta. Sin., and *Alif. Lam. Mim.* that they should each be switches among the particles of the air for causing the wires of the hidden, subtle relations to vibrate and so be the means of the immaterial sacred wireless and telecommunications between the earth and divine throne; it is entirely reasonable that this should be their function.

In addition to the duties of all particles of the air dispersed throughout the world, their conforming to the commands in connection with such things as wirelasses, radios, telephones, and telegraphs, and acting as receivers and conductors of subtle forces such as electricity – I conjectured and observed even a further duty in the blossom of my almond-tree. The state the tree acquired through the touch of the air in the blowing breeze – with its particles like receivers conforming to the same command at the same instant – and all the trees on the face of the earth like a disciplined army, afforded me a conviction as certain as two plus two equals four.

That is to say, the air is a swift and agile servant on the face of the earth, tending the guests of the Most Merciful and Compassionate One. Resembling radio and telephone receivers and soldiers under orders, all its particles deliver the sacred commands of that Most Merciful One to the plants and animals. At the command of “‘Be!’ and it is,” they carry out numerous orderly duties such as acting as fans for those creatures, aiding their respiration; that is, after performing the duty of purifying their blood, the water of life, and kindling their bodily heat, the fire of life, they emerge from them and are the means of forming words in their mouths.

As a result of this quality of the air, when letters, the beings of the air, acquire sacredness; that is, when they take up the position of being receivers; that is, they take up the position of receivers because they are letters of the Qur’an, and become like switches, and even more so when the letters at the start of some Suras become the sensitive central switches of those hidden relations, just as their existences in the air possess this quality, so their existences in the mind and even as inscriptions have a share in it. That is to say, like physical medicines, healing cures and other purposes may be achieved by reading and writing those letters.

Said Nursi

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

Say: "If the ocean were ink [wherewith to write out] the words of my Sustainer, sooner would the ocean be exhausted than would the words of my Sustainer, even if we added another ocean like it, for its aid.(18:109)

[This mighty verse is a vast, elevated ocean. A large volume in order to describe all its jewels. So postponing those precious jewels to another time, for now I shall explain a few rays of a subtle point in order to recall those truths. They appeared faintly to me a few days ago during the tesbihat, recited following the five daily prayers, which is an important time for me, and struck my attention. I did not write them down at the time and they gradually grew fainter. So before they are lost altogether so as to hunt down a manifestation of those points, I shall say a few words as though encircling them.]

F i r s t W o r d : In respect of being a divine attribute like knowledge and power, pre-eternal speech is infinite. Certainly, if the seas were ink for something infinite, they would never get to the end of them.

S e c o n d W o r d : Speech is the clearest and most powerful thing that makes known someone's existence. Hearing someone's speech proves that he exists as clearly as a thousand proofs, indeed, as clearly as seeing him. Thus through its allusive meaning, this verse says:

"If the seas were ink to the extent of divine speech, which demonstrates the All-Glorious Sustainer's existence, and the trees were pens, and they were to write His speech, they would never come to the end of them. That is to say, just as any speech points to its own extent and at the degree of witnessing to the existence of the one who spoke it, so the extent that the above speech points to and tells of the One who spoke it – the Single and Eternally Besought One – is beyond measure, so that if all the seas were ink they would still be insufficient for writing it."

T h i r d W o r d : When teaching the truths of belief to all classes of men, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition apparently repeats the same truth, which is in accordance with the wisdom of establishing, verifying, and convincing them of a truth. This verse is in effect an answer to the entirely unjustifiable attacks of the Jewish scholars, who were the learned People of the Book of the time, on the Illustrious Prophet (UWBP) concerning this, because he was unlettered and not learned. It is as follows:

The verse says: "The repetition of a truth containing numerous benefits

and results in different and miraculous ways for numerous instances of wisdom, such as verification and persuasion, does not arise from restricted speech or intellectual deficiency or lack of capital. Nor does the repetition of such matters as the pillars of belief comprising thousands of truths each of which is infinitely valuable, in order to establish them in the hearts of the mass of people in particular. For the Qur'an proceeds from the endless, infinite pre-eternal treasury of divine speech, and being turned to the Manifest World on account of the World of the Unseen, speaks with man and the jinn, spirits, and the angels, resounding in the ears of each person. If the seas were ink, sentient beings scribes, plants pens, and particles the pens' nibs for counting the words of pre-eternal speech, the source of the Qur'an, they would still never come to the end of them. For they are finite, while divine speech is infinite."

F o u r t h W o r d : It is clear that the issuing of speech from something unexpected increases the speech's effectiveness and makes it heeded. The speech-like voices of large bodies like the clouds and the atmosphere in particular make everyone listen to them. The sounds of a gramophone the size of a mountain would attract attention even more. The heavenly voice of the Qur'an, which takes the levels of the heavens as gramophone records, issues forth to make the head of the globe of the earth listen to it. And with the power of the radio, the molecules of air become like the receivers and transmitters of its letters. The verse alludes to the fact that the air molecules each become mirrors, tongues, needle points, and ears for the All-Wise Qur'an's letters, and indicates how important, valuable, significant, and living those letters are, saying: "The Qur'an, which is divine speech, is so living and valuable that if all the seas were to become ink, and the angels scribes, and minute particles points, and plants and hairs pens to the number of the ears that listen to it and hear it, and to the number of the sacred words that enter those ears, they could still never come to the end of them."

No, they could never come to the end of them, because if Almighty God multiplies man's weak, lifeless speech millions of times in the air, for sure each word of the speech of that Peerless Sovereign of the heavens and earth, which looks to all the earth and the heavens and addresses all the conscious beings within them, will comprise words to the numbers of particles of air.

F i f t h W o r d : This consists of two letters.

The First Letter: Just as the divine attribute of speech has words, so does power have embodied words, and knowledge too has wise words of divine determining; these consist of all beings. Living beings, and small

creatures in particular, are each dominical words which point to the Pre-Eternal Speaker in a way more powerfully than speech. If the seas were ink they could never come to the end of them. That is, the verse looks to this meaning too in allusive fashion.

The Second Letter: All the inspiration received by angels and men, and even by animals, are divine speech of a sort. Its words are certainly infinite. It means that the verse is telling us how numerous and infinite are the inspirations and words of divine command which the innumerable cohorts of absolute sovereignty continually receive.

*The knowledge is with God alone. * None knows the Unseen save God.*

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
And We sent down iron, in which is [material for] mighty war, as well as
many benefits for mankind.(57:25)*

[A brief reply to a question about the above verse, which has come to have great importance, for with it a prominent person with knowledge of modern science silenced a number of hojas.]

Q u e s t i o n : It is normally said that iron is mined from the earth, so why is it said in this verse “We sent down” or “revealed” rather than We excavated or extracted; this appears to be inappropriate?

T h e A n s w e r : With the phrase “We sent down,” the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition recalls the vast and important bounty of iron. For it does not consider iron only for itself so that it should say extracted, but recalls the tremendous divine bounty in iron and how needy mankind is for it. Its aspect of being a bounty does not come upwards from below, but down from the treasury of mercy. The treasury of mercy is certainly elevated, above, and at a high level, so the bounty descends from above; and needy mankind’s level is surely below. The bestowal of bounty is superior to need, so the correct way to express the fact that bounty comes from the treasury of mercy to meet mankind’s need is “We sent down;” it is not We extracted.

Also, since the gradual extraction of iron is at man’s hand, the word extract does not alert the heedless person to its aspects of bounty. If what is meant is iron’s material substance, it is extracted in respect of its physical situation. But iron’s quality of being a bounty, which is the intended meaning here, is immaterial. This meaning looks not to physical situation, but to immaterial degree or level. Bounties proceeding from the treasury of mercy, which is a manifestation of the infinitely exalted degree of the Most Merciful, are certainly sent down from the highest level to the lowest. Thus, the correct expression is “We sent down;” it recalls to mankind that iron is one of the greatest divine bounties.

Yes, iron is the source of all mankind’s industries, and of its advancement and progress, and the means of its power and strength. So in order to call to mind this tremendous bounty and bestowal of favour, in lofty style the Qur’an states:

*And We sent down iron, in which is [material for] mighty war, as well as
many benefits for mankind.*

In a similar way it declares about David’s important miracle:

And We made the iron soft for him.(34:10)

That is to say, it points out the softening of iron, a great miracle and great bounty for a great prophet.

Secondly: Above and below are relative. They are above and below in relation to the earth's centre. In fact, something which is below in relation to us is above from the point of view of the American continent. This means the situation of substances coming from the earth's centre to its surface changes according to the position of people on the surface.

With the tongue of miraculousness, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition states that iron contains so many benefits and has such extensive uses that it is not some common substance to be extracted from the store of the globe, and that it is not some natural substance to be used for any chance need. Rather, in order to express iron's general uses it states that it is a bounty stored up by the Creator of the Universe in the treasury of mercy and huge workshop of the universe which He sent down through His majestic title of Sustainer of the Heavens and Earth to meet the needs of the earth's inhabitants. It is as if, like rain, heat, and light, which descend from the skies, it contains such all-embracing advantages that it was sent from the workshop of the universe, not from the narrow store of the earth. It was sent having been prepared in the great treasury of mercy in the palace of the universe, and situated in the store of the globe, from which it is extracted little by little over the centuries in proportion to need.

The Qur'an of Mighty Stature does not want to express the iron which is extracted bit by bit from this small store only as being utilized, but as being sent down together with the globe of the earth from the supreme treasury, as a tremendous bounty. That is to say, the thing most necessary for the house of the earth is iron, for when the All-Glorious Creator separated the earth from the sun and sent it down for mankind, He sent down iron together with it, and met most of mankind's needs with it. The All-Wise Qur'an decrees in miraculous fashion: "Use this iron in your works and try to excavate it and take advantage of it."

The verse describes two bounties; both the repulsion of enemies and the attraction of benefits. Iron was put to important human uses before the revelation of the Qur'an, but with the phrase, "in which is [material for] mighty war" it points out that in the future, it would be used for travelling through the sea, air, and land, and would subjugate the globe wondrously and astonishingly, and demonstrate a wondrous death-tainted strength. Thus of its various sorts of miraculousness, it displays a flash of miraculousness in its predicting the future.

While discussing the above point, the subject of Solomon's Hoopoe came up. A persistent questioner from among our brothers¹ asked: "What is the reason for the Hoopoe describing Almighty God with a relatively insignificant attribute in the sentence, "Who brings to light what is hidden in the heavens and the earth,"(27:25) while there are more significant divine attributes?"

T h e A n s w e r : One aspect of eloquence is to make understood the occupation or craft with which the speaker is mostly employed. Like the nomad diviners who intuitively discover the places where water is to be found in the Arabian Peninsula, Solomon's Hoopoe, a diviner from among birds and animals, was a blessed bird who was employed in various duties and also found water for Solomon (Upon whom be peace), so it could be used. It is stating through the measure of its own art that Almighty God proves His fitness to be worshipped and prostrated before by making known the things hidden in the heavens and earth.

Yes, the Hoopoe understood it well, for the natural inclination of the incalculable numbers of seeds and minerals under the earth is not to emerge upwards from below. Because since such beings lack life and will, they cannot go upwards of their own accord; on their own, they can only tumble downwards. A body concealed under the heaviness of the earth certainly could not shake that heavy load off its shoulders on its own and emerge upwards. It means that it does so through a wondrous power.

The Hoopoe understood through his divining this most hidden and important of the proofs of divine fitness to be worshipped, so that the All-Wise Qur'an imparted a miraculousness to its statement concerning it.

¹ This refers to Re'fet, who is diligent in asking questions but lazy when it comes to writing!

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

And He sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs: He makes you in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after the other.(39:6)

This verse comprises the same point we explained in the discussion of the verse, “And We sent down iron;”(57:25) it both corroborates it and is corroborated by it.

By saying in Sura al-Zumar, “And He sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs,” and not saying: And He created for you eight head of cattle in pairs, the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition is stating: “Eight sorts of blessed animals have been sent down to you from the treasury of mercy, as though they were bounties of Paradise.” Yes, those blessed animals are a gift for mankind with all their parts, for their wool or hair is made into the mobile homes and clothes of nomads, good food is made from their flesh, delicious sustenance is had from their milk, shoes and so on are made from their hides, cultivated land is nourished by their manure and men make fuel from it. It is as though those blessed animals are pure bounty and embodied mercy.

It is because of this that like rain is called “mercy” (*rahma*), these blessed beasts are called “bounty” (*an’am*). As though just as embodied mercy becomes rain, so too embodied bounty takes on the form of goats, sheep, cattle, water-buffalo, and camels. For sure their physical bodies are created on the earth, but since the attribute of being bounties and the meaning of mercy have totally predominated over their physical beings, in accordance with the phrase “And He sent down,” the All-Compassionate Creator sent down these blessed animals directly from the exalted degree of His mercy and His elevated, immaterial Paradise, as gifts from the treasury of mercy.

Sometimes art of high worth is present in material worth virtually nothing. It is given value in respect of the art, not of the material’s value, like the tiny material being of a fly and the sublime dominical art within it. Sometimes valuable material worth five lira contains art worth nothing; then the material predominates.

In just the same way, sometimes in some physical material the meaning of bounty and mercy is found to such a degree that it is a hundred times more important than the material. The physical matter is quite simply hidden and its aspect of bounty predominates. Thus, just as the vast benefits of iron and the many products it yields conceal its material aspect, so too bounty being present in every member of the blessed animals mentioned

above has transformed their physical matter into bounty. It is because of this that their immaterial attributes have been considered, and their physical beings disregarded, and this is expressed with the phrases, “And He sent down,” and, “And We sent down.”

These two phrases state the above-mentioned point both in regard to reality, and they miraculously express an important meaning in respect of eloquence. It is as follows:

Together with its extremely tough nature, and its being hidden, frequently deep underground, iron is found everywhere, bestowed with the quality of being easily softened. Everyone can therefore obtain it easily everywhere for everything. In order to express this, it states through the phrase “And We sent down iron,” that iron tools are obtained so easily they are as though sent down from a workbench above as natural, heavenly bounties, and placed in man’s hand.

Furthermore, although some animal species, from the mosquito to snakes, scorpions, wolves, and lions are harmful to human beings, large beasts like the water-buffalo, ox, and camel, who are important among animals, are extremely docile and submissive. So much so they may be led by even a child. To express the idea of their submissiveness, the verse “And He sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs” states that being neither wild nor dangerous, these blessed beasts do not resemble worldly animals. They are rather useful and harmless like paradisaical animals. They have been sent down from above, that is, from the treasury of mercy.

Perhaps this is why some Qur’anic commentators have said that these animals have been sent down from Paradise. It is hardly prolix to write a whole page about a single letter of the All-Wise Qur’an,¹ for it is God’s Word. It has therefore not been wasteful to write two or three pages on the expression “And We sent down.” Sometimes one letter of the Qur’an is the key to a treasury.

¹ What some Qur’anic commentators intended by saying “Their origins were the heavens” was this: the continued existence of the animals known as “an’am” is through sustenance, and their sustenance is fodder. The fodder’s sustenance is rain. Rain is the water of life and mercy; so sustenance also comes from the heavens. The verse, “And in the heavens is our sustenance”(51:22) alludes to this. Since those animals’ continually renewed existences lie in the rain which comes from the skies, the expression “And He sent down” is apt, for it expresses the meaning of having been sent down from the sky.

Pieces Written in Eskişehir Prison as a True Solace for the Risale-i Nur Students

My Dear Brothers!

I was exceedingly unhappy for you; I was crushed by grief. But it was imparted to me that divine determining and your fate have given you this prison's water to drink and bread to eat, all together. I saw that as a mark of divine mercy and manifestation of dominical favour, your eating this bread together and drinking this water was the easiest, lightest, best, and most meritorious of ways; that this prison was a most beneficial place of instruction for the Risale-i Nur students, and a most effulgent place of ordeal; that it was a most exacting place of examination teaching just how essential it is to act prudently in the face of one's enemies. I saw it in the form of a luminous place of study and tekke for learning and benefiting from the elevated qualities and fine characteristics of our friends here, which are all different, and to establish and renew the brotherhood between them. I did not complain about this situation therefore, but offered thanks with all my spirit. Yes, our way is thanks. And it is to see an aspect of mercy, an aspect of bounty, in everything.

From your brother who is grieved at the pains of all of you,

Said Nursi

* * *

A Rule

Risale-i Nur students should not seek light outside the circle of the Risale-i Nur, and they cannot seek it. If they do so, they will find a lamp in place of the immaterial sun giving light through the window of the Risale-i Nur, and perhaps lose the sun.

Also, the pure and powerful way of friendship and brotherhood within the circle of the Risale-i Nur, which gains numerous spirits for each person and through the mystery of the legacy of prophethood depicts the Companions' way of brotherhood, leaves no need for seeking a spiritual guide or father outside that sphere, in a way that is harmful to them in three respects; it provides many a€abeys that is, elder brothers, in place of a single father. The joint compassion of elder brothers reduces a father's compassion to nothing.

Someone who has a shaykh before entering the Risale-i Nur circle may keep him after entering it. But the person who does not, may only seek a guide within the circle. Moreover, the knowledge of reality taught within the circle of the Risale-i Nur, which offers the effulgence of the legacy of prophethood, the greater sainthood, leaves no need for the Sufi orders outside that circle – unless of course they are self-indulgent people who misunderstand the way of Sufism, are addicted to pleasant dreams and imaginings, lights and spiritual pleasures, and desire worldly, fanciful pleasures which are different to the virtues of the hereafter, and want a rank where people have recourse to them.

This world is the abode of labour and service; recompense is commensurate with hardship and difficulty; it is not a place of reward. The people of reality attach no importance, therefore, to the pleasures and lights of illuminations and wonder-working. Indeed, they sometimes flee them and want to conceal them.

Furthermore, the Risale-i Nur's circle is very broad, and its students, very numerous. It does not seek anyone who depart from it. It gives them no importance and perhaps will not again admit them. Everyone has only one heart, and a single heart cannot be both within the circle and outside it.

Also, those desirous for guidance outside should not busy themselves with the Risale-i Nur students. For they may receive harm in three respects. Those people who are within the bounds of fear of God do not need guidance, but outside it there are abundant people who do not perform the five daily prayers. To leave aside the latter and busy oneself with the former is not guidance. If such a person loves the students, let him firstly enter the circle and be not a father, but a brother, and if he is very virtuous, an elder brother.

It has also become apparent from this incident that attachment to the Risale-i Nur holds much importance and has a high price. If he is sensible, the person who gives this price and takes up a position striving against irreligion in the name of the Islamic world, will not abandon this way which is as valuable as diamonds, and embrace other ways.

S a i d

A Short Piece Written in Eskişehir Prison

My Brothers!

On numerous occasions I have defended the Risale-i Nur students in the manner of which they are worthy. God willing, I shall shout it out in court. I shall make the world hear both of the Risale-i Nur, and of its students' value. However, I remind you of the following: the condition of my retaining this mention of your value in my defence is your not feeling offended at the Risale-i Nur due to your painful experiences in this affair, nor at your Master, nor to feel disgust at your brothers on the pretext of the difficulties you suffer, nor to find fault with or accuse one another. You will recall that in the treatise on divine determining we have proved that there are two aspects to the wrongs that are visited on us: one is man's aspect, the other, divine determining's. In the same event, man does wrong, but divine determining is fair and acts in justice. In this matter of ours, we should think more of the justice of divine determining and mystery of divine wisdom than man's tyranny and wrongdoing.

Yes, divine determining summoned the Risale-i Nur students to this gathering. And the wisdom in this was the unfolding of their striving and struggle, which drove them to this truly very distressing School of Joseph. Man's tyranny and pretexts were the means. So beware, do not say to one another: "If I had not done such-and-such I would not have been arrested."

Said Nursi

* * *

*Part of My Defence Speech,
which was included here and not later removed*

I seek an important right from the Chief and Members of the Court, as follows:

In this matter it is not only my person which is under scrutiny so that with your exonerating me and becoming aware of the reality of the case, the case would be solved. For the collective personality of the pious and the people of learning has been incriminated in the eyes of the nation, and a lack of confidence has been engendered in the government towards the pious and religious scholars, and they need to know how they will avoid dangerous and harmful attempts against them. I therefore request that this

last part of my defence be printed in the new letters and distributed. Then the pious and the scholars will not be deceived by the intrigues, or embark on any dangerous and damaging enterprises. Their collective personality will be saved from being suspect in the eyes of the nation. The government too will have confidence in the scholars and an end will be put to this misunderstanding. Incidents and misunderstandings like this, which are extremely harmful for the government and the nation and the country, will not then be repeated.

Said Nursi

* * *

My Brothers!

If everyone, and even I, withdraw from defending and preserving the Risale-i Nur, five of our brothers should not withdraw. These are Hüseyin Usta, Halil (brahim, Re'fet Bey, Hüsrev, and Hakk) Efendi. The involuntary lack of caution of the first three... because of the personal grudges of the open enemies of the latter two – the intention was to cause excessive harm to the Risale-i Nur. If it had not resulted in a great bounty like the Risale-i Nur being spread and made known to a significant degree, these brothers would have been greatly upset at having caused the unhappiness of so many innocent Risale-i Nur students. Thus, more than everyone, these five brothers should be cautious and united.

Said Nursi

* * *

My Brothers!

It was imparted to my heart that just as the Mathnawi was the mirror to one of seven truths appearing from the Sun of the Qur'an, thus acquiring a sacred illustriousness and becoming the undying guide of numerous people of the heart besides the Mevlevis; so too represented together in the mirror of the Risale-i Nur are the seven colours of the Qur'anic sun's light and its various, multicoloured effulgences. God willing, it will be an eternal guide and teacher for the people of reality, illustrious and sacred in seven respects, as much as seven Mathnawi's.

* * *

My Brothers!

Look at the protection of the All-Glorious Preserver! As a coincidence with the number of treatises of the Risale-i Nur, one hundred and twenty people were questioned together with their confidential documents. Yet despite the intrigues of the foreigners and the stratagems of the secret societies, nothing was found to connect any Risale-i Nur student with any of the many existent associations. This was a most clear and brilliant instance of dominical protection and divine preservation, and was a favour of the Most Merciful corroborating the wondrous predictions concerning the Risale-i Nur of Imam ‘Ali (May God be pleased with him) and Ghawth al-A‘zam (May God be pleased with him). The hands of forty-two of our innocent, wronged brothers raised in supplication to the divine court halted a missile directed at them, turned it back and in effect exploded it over the heads of those who had fired it. Our losses amount to only a few minor cuts and bruises which will gain us reward. It is a marvel to be saved with such minor injury from a gun that was being charged for the past year. One should respond with thanks and joy to such a great bounty. After this our lives will not be our own, for according to the plans of the spreaders of corruption, we were to be completely wiped out. That means after this we should pledge our lives not to ourselves, but to truth and reality. We should try to always see the trace, face, and essence of mercy in things, which will cause us not to complain, but to offer thanks.

Said Nursi

* * *

I request of my brothers that they are not offended at one another due to discomfort, or distress of the spirit, or fastidiousness, or being deceived by Satan’s wiles, or at the offensive language uttered by some of them. They should not say that their honour has been insulted. I take upon myself any bad words that are spoken. They should not be offended. If I had a hundred honours, I would sacrifice all of them for love and cordiality among my brothers.

Said Nursi

* * *

My Brothers!

I have understood certainly the last two or three days that unfortunately we suffered a blow from divine mercy. I understood even that one of the many indications of a verse concerning the people of rebellion looks to us. It is this:

But when they forgot the warning they had received.... on a sudden We called them to account.(6:44; 7:165)

That is, “When they forgot the instruction and advice with which we have warned them and did not act in accordance with it, We took hold of them and afflicted them with disaster.”

Yes, recently we were prompted to write a treatise on the meaning of sincerity. In truth, it was a most luminous and exalted rule of brotherhood, a sacred principle which allows ten men to withstand calamities and events which normally could only be withstood with the strength of tens of thousands. But unfortunately we, and foremost myself, did not act in accordance with the warning. In accordance with the allusive meaning of the verse, according to the science of jafr, the value of “We called them to account” is one thousand three hundred and fifty-two. We were arrested on the same date. Some of us suffered a slap dealt by divine compassion. Others suffered, not such a blow, but were included in these tribulations in order to be a solace to our brothers who did suffer it, so that it might be a means of earning reward and profit.

For three months I was barred from mixing with others, but for the past three days I have been able to learn my brothers’ states of mind. An unimaginable incident had occurred opposed to the meaning of sincerity involving brothers whom I had supposed to be the most sincere. I understood from this that an allusive meaning of the verse, “But when they forgot the warning they had received.... on a sudden We called them to account” looked to us from afar. For the people of misguidance, for whom the verse was revealed, it is punishment, but for us it is a blow from divine compassion in order to train our souls, as atonement for sins, and so that we may raise our spiritual degrees. Evidence that we suffered this blow because we did not completely appreciate the value of the divine bounty we had received is that we were not contented with our sacred service of the Qur’an through the Risale-i Nur, a most sacred striving in God’s way which receives the effulgence of ‘greater sainthood’ through the mystery of the legacy of prophethood and is a means to attaining the essence of the way of the Companions. Through my severe warnings on several occasions, the wish to join a Sufi order was forestalled, the advantages of which are very few for us at the moment and could possibly have caused us much

harm in this situation. Otherwise, both our unity would have been destroyed, and it would have caused both differences in ideas which would have reduced the value of four alifs – which through solidarity is one thousand one hundred and eleven – to four, and mutual antipathy, which would have reduced our strength to nothing.

The author of the Gulistan, Shaykh Sa‘di Shirazi, relates: “I saw one of the people of the heart in a tekke while occupied with his spiritual journeying. Several days later I saw him among students in the medrese. I asked him why he had left the effulgent tekke and come to the religious school. He replied that there everyone could save themselves, if they were successful, whereas here in the religious school persons of high aspiration were trying to save many others besides themselves. Nobility and high endeavour were theirs; virtue and exertion were theirs; that was why he went there.

Shaykh Sa‘di wrote a summary of this in his Gulistan.

So if the small matter of students parsing verbs is superior to the recitations in the tekkes, since the Risale-i Nur teaches in the clearest and most certain manner the sacred truths of belief of the confession of faith: “I believe in God, and His angels, and His Books, and His prophets, and in the Last Day” and silences the most obdurate atheists and obstinate philosophers, to abandon it, or cause its activities to come to a standstill, or not to be content with it, and desiring the Sufi way to enter the dissolved Sufi tekkes without asking permission of the Risale-i Nur, is entirely wrong and shows how much we deserve this blow of divine compassion.

S a i d N u r s i

* * *

A Warning

[Two short stories]

The First: Fifteen years ago when a prisoner-of-war in the north of Russia I was being held together with ninety other officers in a large factory. Numerous arguments and disturbances arose due to the discomfort and oppressive conditions. I used to pacify them, since they all had great respect for me. I appointed four or five officers to keep the peace, telling them: “Whenever you hear an uproar, go there and help whichever side is in the wrong.” It is a fact that with this precaution a stop was put to the noise. They asked me why I helped those who were in the wrong. In reply I told them:

People in the wrong are unfair. They do not give up a single benefit for

the sake of public peace forty times greater. Whereas the person who is in the right is fair. He sacrifices and waives his own right, worth little, for the advantage of his friend, which is part of the public peace and worth much. The disturbance ceases and peace is restored. The ninety people in this ward can be comfortable. If the person in the right is helped, the noise would increase even more. In communal life of this sort, the general good takes precedence.

And so, my brothers! In this communal life of ours, do not say: "I am fed up with my brother, for he's been unfair to me." To do so is a great error. If such a friend of yours has caused you a little harm, your being angry with him causes us harm of high cost. It is possible it would even cause excessive harm to the Risale-i Nur. But, praise be to God, with our friends being prevented from repeatedly going to be questioned, no harm came to our powerful and rightful defences. Otherwise like getting something as tiny a fly's wing in one's eye or a spark falling into gunpowder, due to a little pique brothers who are vexed with one another can cause a great deal of harm.

S e c o n d S t o r y : There was once an elderly women who had eight sons. She gave each of them a loaf of bread from the loaves she had, but none remained for herself. So each of them gave her half his loaf. She then had four loaves, while theirs was reduced to half a loaf.

My brothers! I feel in myself half the pains of the share in this calamity of each of the forty of you. I take no notice of my own hardships. One day I felt excessively afflicted and studied my previous position wondering if I was paying the penalty for some error I had committed. I saw that I had no part at all in the fomenting and incitement of this calamity; on the contrary I had employed every possible means to avoid it. That means it is a divine decree. It has been planned against us by intriguers over the past year, and made inevitable. It was not possible to avoid it. It was inevitable that we should be embroiled in it. A hundred thousand thanks to Almighty God that He reduced the calamity from a hundred to one.

In consequence of this fact therefore, do not blame me saying "We are suffering this disaster because of you!" Forgive me rather, and pray for me. And do not criticize each other, saying: "If you had not done such-and-such, this would not have happened." For example, with one of our brothers mentioning two or three signatures, the plan the mischief-makers were hatching in order embroil numerous people in a calamity, was restricted and many were saved from it. It was the cause not of harm, but of great advantage. It resulted in many innocent people being saved from this disaster.

S a i d N u r s i

[This piece is very valuable. Everyone may benefit from it as far as the Second Point.]

In connection with certain unpleasant situations which come about in Eskişehir Prison, not through bad morality but because of the distress, this is about one fine point of a well-known verse that has remained undisclosed, and a point concerning good behaviour.

FIRST POINT

Out of His perfect munificence, compassion, and justice, Almighty God has included in good works an immediate reward and in bad actions an immediate punishment. He has included in good works spiritual pleasures that recall the rewards of the hereafter, while in bad works are spiritual penalties which recall the torments of Hell.

For example, love between believers is a praiseworthy action for the people of faith. Included in that good work are a spiritual pleasure, a gratification, an ease of mind that recall the physical rewards of the hereafter. Anyone who refers to his heart will feel this pleasure.

And for example, enmity and hostility between believers are an evil that cause noble spirits to feel torment of the conscience enough to overwhelm the heart and spirit. I myself have experienced it perhaps more than a hundred times: when I have felt enmity towards a believing brother I have suffered such torment that it has left me in no doubt that it was the immediate punishment for my evil deed.

And for example, to be respectful towards those worthy of respect, and compassionate to those worthy of compassion, and to assist them, are good works, good deeds. They hold a pleasure and gratification so great they make felt the rewards of the hereafter. And they so increase the respect and compassion they make the person ready to sacrifice his very life. The pleasure and reward a mother receives through the compassion she feels for her child may be so great she will sacrifice her life due to it. The hen who attacks a lion in order to save her chick is an example of this truth in the animal kingdom. This means that there is an immediate reward in compassion and respect. Magnanimous people of high aspiration feel it, and for this reason assume their heroic attitude.

And for example, in greed and wastefulness is such a punishment that, afflicting his heart and spirit, it makes man complaining and anxious, and bewilders him. And in jealousy and envy is such an immediate punishment that it scorches the one who feels them. While in contentment and reliance

on God is such an immediate, pleasurable reward that it dispels all the pains and tribulations of poverty and indigence.

And for example, in pride and conceit is a heavy burden, for the proud man wants respect from everyone. And because he is despised due to this desire, he suffers constant torment. Yes, respect is given, it may not be sought.

And for example, in humility and the giving up of egotism is a pleasurable reward by which a person is saved from the heavy burden of trying to make himself liked.

And for example, in pessimism and always interpreting things unfavourably is an immediate punishment in this world. In accordance with the rule, "Whoever strikes is struck," those who think unfavourably of others are also thought of unfavourably. The actions of those who misinterpret the actions of their believing brothers are also misinterpreted, and they suffer the punishment for it.

And so on, all good and bad deeds should be measured according to this yardstick. I beseech divine mercy that those who witness the Qur'anic miraculousness manifested at this time in the Risale-i Nur, experience these spiritual pleasures; they will not suffer from bad morals, God willing.

* * *

SECOND POINT

[The Second of Twenty-Two Points]

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

*I created not jinn and mankind except that they might worship me. * No sustenance do I require of them, nor do I require that they should feed me. * For God is He Who gives [all] sustenance—Lord of Power—Steadfast [for ever].(51:56-8)*

For a long time these verses worried my mind, since according to many Qur'anic commentaries their apparent meaning did not reflect the Qur'an's elevated miraculousness. I shall now explain briefly three aspects of their extremely beautiful and exalted meanings, which proceed from the effulgence of the Qur'an.

The First: Sometimes Almighty God attributes to Himself certain states that could pertain to His Messenger, so as to honour and exalt him. Here too, the verses, "I created you for worship; not to give Me sustenance and feed me," have this meaning: "My Messenger does not want a wage, recompense, or reward, or to be fed in return for his duty of messengership and conveying to you the obligations of worship;" they refer to the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) being given food and

sustenance. Otherwise it would be making known something self-evident and clear, and would be incompatible with the Qur'an's miraculous eloquence.

The Second Aspect: Man is excessively preoccupied with his sustenance. So lest he is deluded into making his winning it a pretext for neglecting worship, or making it an excuse, the verse says: "You were created for worship. The result of your creation is worship. Winning sustenance is worship of a sort, from the point of view of its being a divine command. I have undertaken to provide your sustenance and that of your families and animals, my creatures; it pertains to me; you were not created to procure food and sustenance, for I am the Provider. I provide the sustenance of my servants, your dependants. So do not make it an excuse and give up worship!"

If its meaning is not this, it becomes a statement of the obvious, for to provide Almighty God with food and sustenance is self-evidently impossible. It is an established rule of rhetoric that if the meaning of a sentence is clear and obvious, it is not that meaning which is intended, but a meaning necessitated by it and dependent on it. For example, if you say to someone: "You are a hafiz," it is stating the obvious. The intended meaning is "I know that you are a hafiz." You are informing him because he did not know that you knew.

Thus, in consequence of this rule, the meaning of the verse, in which the prohibition of giving food to Almighty God is a metaphor, is this: "You were not created in order to produce food for My creatures, which are Mine and the providing of whose sustenance I have undertaken. Your fundamental duty is worship. But to strive to procure sustenance in accordance with My commands is also a sort of worship."

The Third Aspect: In Sura al-Ikhlās the apparent meaning of,

He begets not, nor is He begotten(112:3)

is self-evident and obvious, hence another meaning is intended which is necessitated by it. That is to say, Almighty God states extremely clearly and self-evidently "He begets not, nor is He begotten," meaning: "Anyone who has a father and mother cannot be a god," and, "pre-eternal and post-eternal," to deny the divinity of Jesus (UWP), and of Uzayr, and the angels, and stars, and other false gods. It is just the same with our example, the verse, "The All-Glorious Provider, your object of worship, does not require sustenance for Himself, you were not created to provide Him with food" means: "Things with the ability to receive sustenance and food cannot be gods and objects of worship," meaning: "Beings that are in need of sustenance and being provided for are not worthy of worship."

Said Nursi

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Or while they slept for their afternoon rest.(7:4)*

This was written in connection with Re'fet being curious and asking about the word '*qa'ilun* – slept for their afternoon rest – in the verse, “Or while they slept for their afternoon rest” and to prevent his diamond-like pen becoming idle in prison, and lethargic, as a result of sleeping after the morning prayer like the others.

Sleep is of three sorts:

The First is *Ghaylula*. This is from pre-dawn to forty minutes or so after the sun has risen, the time when prayer is lawful but reprehensible. Sleep at this time is contrary to the Practices of the Prophet (UWBP), since according to Hadiths, it leads to a decrease in livelihood and its being unfruitful. The most appropriate time for preparing to earn one's living is when it is cool. One is overcome by lethargy when this has passed. It has been established by many experiences that this is both detrimental to the day's labour and indirectly to one's livelihood, and is the cause of unfruitfulness.

The Second is *Faylula*. This is from the afternoon prayer till sunset. Sleep at this time leads to a diminution of life, that is, it makes life that day shorter and pass in a state of semi-sleep and drowsiness, thus causing a physical deficiency to life. Moreover, immaterially, since most of the day's results, material and immaterial, become apparent after the afternoon prayer, to pass that time in sleep as though prevents the results being reaped and the day becomes as though un-lived.

The Third is *Qaylula*, which is in accord with the Prophet's (UWBP) practices.¹ It is from mid-morning to just past noon. Such sleep is Sunna since it allows a person to rise at night to pray. So too it is the custom in the Arabian Peninsula to rest from work at noon when it is intensely hot, corroborating this practice of the Prophet (UWBP). This sleep augments both life and sustenance. For half an hour's Qaylula sleep is the equivalent of two hours' sleep at night. This means it adds one and a half hours' to a person's life every day. It saves one and a half hours from the hand of sleep, the brother of death, and gives it life, increasing the time of working for one's livelihood.

¹ *Ibn Maja*, Siyam, 22; al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iv, 531; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, 330; al-Albani, *Sahih Jami' al-Saghir*, No: 4307.

“This is good as well”

While reciting, “Endless blessings and endless peace be upon you, O Messenger of God!” in the tesbihat following the prayers, I saw from afar a subtle point which gradually unfolded. I was unable to grasp all of it, and shall recount one or two sentences by way of alluding to it.

I saw that the world of the night is like a newly opened dwelling of the world. I entered it during ‘Isha, the prayer at nightfall. Since man is connected to all the world, through an extraordinary expansion of the imagination I saw the mighty world that night as a dwelling. Living creatures and men became so tiny they were invisible. I observed with the imagination that the only thing that inhabited the dwelling and made it familiar, and filled it with light, was the collective personality of Muhammad (UWBP). As a person greets those present when he enters a house, I was overwhelmed with the desire to say: “Endless peace be upon you, O Messenger of God!”¹ It was as though I was greeting him to the number of all men and jinn. That is to say, I offered greetings, meaning: I renew my allegiance to you, accept your mission, submit to the laws and commands you brought, and state through the greetings that they will be safe from our assaults, and making speak all the parts of my world and all jinn and men, all conscious beings, I offer greetings in their name.

As he illuminated my world through the light and gift he brought, so he illuminates and fills with bounties the worlds of everyone in this world. In grateful response for the gift, I exclaimed: “Endless blessings be upon you!” That is, “We cannot respond to this goodness of yours, so we show our gratitude to you by beseeching that mercy be bestowed upon you from our Creator’s treasury of mercy, to the number of the inhabitants of the heavens.” I perceived this meaning in my imagination.

In respect of his worship and on account of his being turned from creation to Creator, the person of Muhammad (UWBP) requires blessings which have the meaning of mercy. While in respect of his messengership and

¹ The divine mercy received by Muhammad (UWBP) looks to the needs of all his community through all eternity. For which reason, endless greetings are appropriate. If someone enters a vast house like the world, desolate and empty and dark due to heedlessness, how frightened and dismayed he will be. Then suddenly the house is lit up and a familiar, friendly, lovable and beloved Lieutenant appears in the forefront. If he describes and makes known the house’s Compassionate and Generous Owner through all its fittings and furnishings, you can understand what joy, familiarity, happiness, light, and ease it will give. From this you may appreciate the value and pleasure of the greetings for the Messenger (UWBP).

being the envoy sent from Creator to creation, he requires peace. He is worthy of peace to the number of jinn and men, and we offer a general renewal of our allegiance to their number. So too he is worthy of blessings from the treasury of mercy to the number of the inhabitants of the heavens and in the name of all of them. For it was through the Light he brought that the perfections of all things became apparent, and the value of beings was made manifest, and the dominical duties of creatures could be observed, and the divine purposes in creatures were made known. Therefore, if all things uttered verbally what they express through their tongues of disposition, it is certain that they would declare: "Blessings and peace be upon you, O Messenger of God!", and we say in the name of all of them: "Endless blessings and endless peace be upon you O Prophet of God, to the number of jinn and men, and of angels and stars!"

*It is enough that Allah grants him blessings,
And assigns him peace and benedictions.*

Said Nursi

* * *

My Dear Brother!

You want an explanation of the Unity of Existence. In one of the Flashes of the Thirty-First Letter there is a very powerful and elucidating answer to Muhyiddin's ideas concerning this matter. For now we just say the following:

Teaching this question of the Unity of Existence to people at the present time causes serious harm. Like when metaphors and similes pass from the hands of the learned to those of the common people and knowledge passes from scholars to the ignorant, they are thought to be literally true,¹ so when elevated truths such as the Unity of Existence pass to the heedless and to the common people submerged in causes, they are thought to be Nature, and cause three significant instances of harm.

T h e F i r s t : The way of the Unity of Existence is quite simply to deny the universe on account of Almighty God. Despite this, when it is adopted by the heedless common people and enters their ideas which are tainted by materialist thought in particular, it leads to denial of the Godhead on account of the universe and materiality.

¹ Just like the two angels, called the Bull and the Fish in connection with certain metaphors, were supposed by the common people to be a vast bull and enormous fish.

The Second: The way of the Unity of Existence rejects the dominicality of anything other than God so vehemently that it denies everything other than God and removes duality. Since it does not recognize the independent existence of anything, let alone that of evil-commanding souls, with the predominance of the idea of nature at this time and pride and egotism inflating the evil-commanding soul and causing the hereafter and the Creator to be forgotten, to inculcate the Unity of Existence in people whose evil-commanding souls are small pharaohs and quite simply are disposed to taking their own selves as their objects of worship, so inflates the evil-commanding soul that – I seek refuge with God – it can no longer be contained.

The Third: While the All-Glorious One is free and exempt from, pure of and exalted above all change, alteration, division, and being comprehended in time or place, the Unity of Existence gives rise to conceptions that are not fitting for His necessary existence, holiness, and being free of all defect, and leads to false teachings. Yes, if one who speaks of the Unity of Existence rises in the mind from the ground to the Pleiades, leaves the universe behind and fixes his gaze on the sublime throne, ecstatically reckoning the universe to be non-existent, through the strength of his belief he may see everything to be directly from the Single One of Unity. But the person who stands behind the universe and looks at it, and sees causes before him and looks from the ground may possibly become submerged in causes and immersed in the swamp of nature. The person who rises in the mind to the divine throne may say like Jalaluddin Rumi: “Listen! The words you hear uttered by everyone, you may hear as uttered by Almighty God, like natural gramophones.” But if you say to the one who cannot rise as high as Jalaluddin, nor see all beings from the ground to the divine throne in the form of mirrors: “Listen! You will hear the divine speech from everything,” he will in effect fall from the throne to the ground, and will also be afflicted by false imaginings contrary to the truth!

*Say: “God [sent it down]”: then leave them to plunge in vain discourse and trifling.(6:91) * Glory be to the One whose Essence is holy above anything similar to It and whose attributes are free of anything resembling them, and whose signs testify to His dominicality, may His glory be exalted, for there is no god but He.*

S a i d N u r s i

* * *

The Answer to a Question

I do not have the time to weigh up the ideas of Mustafa Sabri¹ and those of Musa Bekûf.² I shall only say this much, that the one went to one extreme and the other, to the other extreme. Mustafa Sabri was right relatively to Musa Bekuf, but it is not right to denigrate someone like Muhyiddin who was a miracle of the Islamic sciences.

Yes, Muhyiddin was himself rightly-guided and acceptable, but should not be the guide and instructor with all his works. Since he very often proceeded in the realities without balance, he opposed the rules of the Sunnis and some of the things he said apparently denote misguidance. However, he himself was free of misguidance. A word may sometimes appear to be unbelief, but the one who speaks it is not an unbeliever. Mustafa Sabri did not take these points into consideration; he was extreme concerning certain points of Sunni law, due to bigotry.

As for Musa Bekûf, he was excessively in favour of renewal; because of this and the concessions he made to modernity in respect of his ideas, he was very much in error. He corrupted some of the truths of Islam with his false interpretations. He went far to excess by maintaining that someone rejected like Abu'l-A'la al-Ma'arrê was superior to authoritative scholars, and favouring disproportionately matters stated by Muhyiddin which oppose the Sunnis because they suited his own ideas.

Muhyiddin said: "Other people who are not one of us and do not know our station should not read our books, for it may be damaging for them." Yes, it is harmful to read Muhyiddin's books at the present time, especially the matters related to the Unity of Existence.

Said Nursi

* * *

¹ Mustafa Sabri (1869-1954). A leading religious scholar and public figure in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, he was publisher of the journal *Beyanu'l-Hak*, and *Shaykh al-Islam* 1919-1920. He left Turkey in 1922 and remained in exile in Egypt till his death.

² Mûsa Jarullah Bigi(yef) was a native of Turkestan and a reformist Islamic scholar and prominent figure. He was sent into exile by the Russians in 1904 together with Abdurrashid Ibrahim, and was the author of many works.

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

I shall explain a matter that unfolded before the gaze of my imagination one glittering night of the festival, while watching from my prison window through the lens of prudence and foresight the laughter of mankind that would turn into tears. As the lives of people of previous ages who lie in the graveyard may be seen in the cinema, so I as though saw the moving corpses of people who would inhabit it in the near future. I wept for those merry-makers. All of a sudden a feeling of desolation and pity came over me. I turned to my intellect and asked of reality: "What is this imagining?" Reality replied, saying:

In fifty years time, out of the fifty who are now laughing and enjoying themselves with such joy five will be bent and stooping seventy-year-olds, while forty-five will have rotted in the graveyard. Those beautiful features and joyful smiles will have been transformed into their opposites. According to the rule of "All that is coming is close," since it is to some degree true that things that are going to happen in the near future are seen to have already arrived, then surely what you see is not imagination.

Furthermore, since the heedless laughter of this world veils bitter facts that thus turn it into tears, and is temporary and subject to decline, most certainly it is only thankful, innocent enjoyment within the bounds of the licit, which leads to awareness of God's presence and dispels heedlessness, and pleasures that will be permanent by reason of their reward that will cause joy to wretched man's eternity-worshipping heart and his spirit, which has an irresistible desire for immortality, and make them smile.

It is because of this that there are among the narrations many that strongly encourage thanks and remembrance of God at festival times, in order to prevent heedlessness from prevailing and deviation into the illicit. To do this at such times may transform the bounties of joy and happiness into thanks and make the bounty continue and increase it. For thanks increases bounty and dispels heedlessness.

Said Nursi

* * *

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

This¹ concerns one point contained in the verse,

The [human] soul is certainly prone to evil,(12:53)

and in the Hadith the meaning of which is, “Your worst enemy is your soul.”²

The person who loves himself – if his evil-commanding soul has not been purified – will love no one else. Even if he does apparently, he does not do so sincerely, but only for the pleasure of it or for some good he receives. He always tries to make himself liked. Also, he never ascribes faults to himself; he defends and exonerates himself like a lawyer. He praises himself, exaggerating and even lying, showing himself to be free of fault, as though sanctifying himself, and according to his degree receives a slap from the verse,

Who takes as his god his desires.(25:43; 45:23)

His self-praise and efforts to make himself liked have the reverse effect, for he attracts contempt and is treated coldly. He also loses sincerity in his actions that look to the hereafter and they become mixed with hypocrisy. He is defeated by the emotions and desires of the soul, which are blind to the consequences, do not think of results, and are obsessed with present pleasure; he serves a year’s prison sentence due to one hour’s pleasure demanded by his emotions, which have gone astray. He pays ten years’ penalty on account of one minute’s pride or revenge. Quite simply like a silly child who sells the portion of the Qur’an he is learning to buy a single sweet, in order to flatter his emotions, gratify his senses, and satisfy his appetites, he makes his diamond-like good deeds the means to egotistical pleasures as insignificant as fragments of glass, and he loses out in profitable works.

O God! Preserve us from the evil of the soul and of Satan, and from the evil of jinn and men.

* * *

¹ This piece is beneficial for everyone.

² al-‘Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, i, 143; al-Ghazali, *Ihya ‘Ulum al-Din*, iii, 4.

A Question

How can incarceration in Hell for an infinite duration in return for unbelief for a short duration be justice?

The Answer: Reckoning a year to be three hundred and sixty-five days, the law of justice requires for a one-minute murder, seven million eight hundred and eighty-four thousand minutes' imprisonment. So, since one minute's unbelief is like a thousand murders, according to the law of human justice, someone who lives a life of twenty years in unbelief and dies in that state deserves imprisonment for fifty-seven billion, two hundred and one thousand two hundred million years. It may be understood from this how conformable with divine justice is the verse,

They will dwell therein for ever.(33:65, etc.)

The reason for the connection between these two numbers, so far from one another, is this: since murder and unbelief are destruction and aggression, they have an effect on others. A murder which takes one minute negates on average at least fifteen years of the victim's life, so the murderer is imprisoned in their place. While since one minute of unbelief denies a thousand and one divine names and denigrates their inscriptions, violates the rights of the universe and denies its perfections, and gives the lie to innumerable evidences of divine unity and rejects their testimony, the unbeliever is cast down to the lowest of the low for more than a thousand years, and "dwells" in imprisonment.

Said Nursi

* * *

A Meaningful and Subtle ‘Coincidence’

The ‘coincidence’¹ of Article 163,² under which the Risale-i Nur students were charged and sentenced, and the number of deputies, one hundred and sixty-three out of two hundred, who allotted one hundred and fifty thousand liras for the medrese³ of the Risale-i Nur’s author in effect says this: the appreciative signatures of one hundred and sixty-three deputies of the government of the republic quashes the ruling of Article 163 of the Criminal Code concerning him.

Another subtle and meaningful ‘coincidence’ is this: the one hundred and twenty-eight parts of the Risale-i Nur are put together in one hundred and fifteen booklets. The number of days from when the Risale-i Nur students and its author were first arrested on 27th April, 1935 to the date on which the court passed judgement on 19th August, 1935 was one hundred and fifteen coinciding with the number of books of the Risale-i Nur. In addition, the one hundred and fifteen people found guilty coincides with the number exactly, showing that the calamity visited on the Risale-i Nur students and its author is being regulated by a Hand of Favour.⁴

* * *

¹ For ‘coincidence’ (*tevâfik*), see, note 22, page 199. (Tr.)

² Article 163 of the Turkish Criminal Code. (Tr.)

³ This refers to the Medresetü’z-Zehra. See, note 21, page 325. (Tr.)

⁴ It is worth noting that the arrests of some of the *Risale-i Nur* students started on 25 April 1935. Thus, because in the indictment one hundred and seventeen people were cited as guilty – the names of two of them had been repeated – the number shown for the students was one hundred and seventeen, this coincided with the one hundred and seventeen days from the date that group were arrested to the date of the court’s judgement, adding a further subtlety to the former ‘coincidence.’

*The Twenty-Eighth Point
of the Twenty-Eighth Flash*

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

*[So] they should not strain their ears in the direction of the Exalted Assembly, but be cast away from every side * Repulsed, for they are under a perpetual penalty, * Except such as snatch away something by stealth, and they are pursued by a flaming fire, of piercing brightness.(37:8-10) * And We have adorned the lowest heaven with lamps, and We have made them missiles to drive away the evil ones.(67:5)*

An important point concerning verses like these will be explained in connection with criticisms made by the people of misguidance. It is as follows:

Spies from among the jinn and satans eavesdrop on events in the heavens, and like soothsayers, mediums, and some spiritualists, convey news from the World of the Unseen. So that their giving information about the Unseen should not give rise to any doubts when the Qur'an was first revealed, their continual espionage was prevented to a greater extent and they were repulsed by shooting stars. The following is a brief reply to an extremely important question in three parts concerning the above verses, which are about this subject.

Question: It is understood from verses like these that spying satans infiltrate the distant lands of the heavens in order to learn of some minor and even personal event in the Unseen. Rumours of such minor events as though spread everywhere in those vast lands, and any satan anywhere may hear a confused version of them and pass it on. However, reason and science cannot accept such a thing.

Also, it is said that some of the people of prophethood and some wonder-workers as though pluck the fruits of Paradise from nearby, which according to definite verses of the Qur'an, is above the heavens, and they sometimes gaze on Paradise from near at hand. This matter, which concerns infinite distance within infinite proximity, is not conformable with the understanding of the present age.

Also, the unimportant situation of an unimportant person being the subject of discussion in the Sublime Assembly in the universal, vast land of the heavens is not conformable with the wisdom of the utterly wise administration of the universe. Nevertheless, these three matters are considered to be among the truths of Islam.

The Answer :

Firstly: In the seven ‘Steps’ of the treatise called the Fifteenth Word, the repulsion and ejection with stars of diabolical spies from the heavens, expressed by the verse,

And We have adorned the lowest heaven with lamps, and We have made them missiles to drive away the evil ones,

is proved so certainly with seven premises that it convinces the obdurate materialist, silencing him and forcing him to accept it.

Secondly: We shall allude to those three truths which are supposed to be far from the reason with a comparison that will bring them close to narrow minds.

For example, if a state’s Army Office is in the east of the country, its Ministry of Justice in the west, its Education Ministry in the north, its Religious Affairs Department in the south, and its Civil Service in the centre, and each department and ministry communicates and is connected with the others by means of radio, telephone, and telegraph in most regular and orderly fashion, the whole country will quite simply be its Army Office the same as it is its Ministry of Justice, and will be its learned establishment as it is its Civil Service.

And for example, it sometimes happens that numerous countries and states whose capitals are different have sovereignty over a single country in different ways, through colonies, or concessions, or trade. Although the country’s subjects and nation are one, through its concessions, each state has connections with them. The affairs of those states, which are distant from one another, touch on each other; they come close to each other in all the houses of the country, and they share in each of its people. Its minor matters are seen in a minor sphere in its points of contact. For each minor matter is not taken from the universal sphere. But when those minor matters are discussed, they are mentioned as though they are taken from the universal sphere, since they are directly in accordance with the universal sphere’s laws; they are given the form of a matter discussed in that sphere.

Like these two comparisons, although the land of the heavens is extremely distant in respect of its centre and capital, it has immaterial telephones reaching the hearts of men in the land of the earth. Furthermore, it does not only look to the corporeal world, but in one respect encompasses the Manifest World since it comprises the Spirit World and World of the Inner Dimension of Things.

The sphere of influence of Paradise too, which is from the world of eternity and everlasting realm, stretches out and spreads in luminous fashion

beneath the veil of the manifest, despite its infinite distance. Just as although, through the wisdom and power of the All-Wise and Glorious Maker, the centres of the senses in man's head are all different, each governs the body taking it under its disposal; so the universe, the macroanthropos, comprises thousands of worlds one within the other like concentric circles. Sometimes the situations and events that occur in them are the object of attention in respect of their universality and particularity and insignificance and immensity; that is to say, those particulars are to be seen in particular, near places, while the universals and immense matters are seen in universal, vast stations.

However, sometimes a minor, particular event occupies a vast world. In whichever corner of the world you listen, you will hear about it. And sometimes some vast mobilization is not against the enemy's forces, but for a show of pomp and majesty. For example, the event of Muhammad (UWBP) and sacred occurrence of the Qur'an's revelation were the most important events in the land of the heavens and were bruited in every corner of it. Then there were more falling stars, which was a dominical sign proclaiming the degree of splendour of the Qur'anic revelation and its glittering sovereignty and the degree of its truthfulness, which could be penetrated by no doubt, and was expressed and illustrated by the sentries posted on the distant, towering bastions of the vast heavens raining down missiles to drive off and repulse the devils. The Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition expounds and proclaims that cosmic proclamation, and alludes to those heavenly signs.

Yes, such a tremendous heavenly sign, and the spying satans, who being made to do battle with the angels although they could have been blown away at the puffing of an angel, was surely to show the majesty of the Qur'anic Revelation's sovereignty. Also, this splendid exposition of the Qur'an and vast heavenly mobilization indicate that there was nowhere the jinns and devils could interfere on the long way from the heart of Muhammad (UWBP) to the world of the heavens and the Sublime Throne, not that the jinns and satans possess some power which drove the inhabitants of the heavens to fight them and defend against them. The Qur'anic Revelation was a truth discussed by all the angels in the heavens; in order, the satans were compelled to rise to the heavens to draw close to it a little, but were not successful and were repulsed. This shows that the Revelation that came to the heart of Muhammad (UWBP), and Gabriel who came to his presence, and the truths of the Unseen which appeared to his gaze, were sound and straight and could be pierced by no doubts. The Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition tells this in miraculous fashion.

As for Paradise being seen from very close despite its great distance and being part of the World of Eternity, and sometimes fruits being plucked from it, this transient world and Manifest Realm is a veil to the World of the Unseen and Everlasting Realm as may be understood from the above two comparisons. Paradise may be seen everywhere by means of the mirror of the World of Similitudes, despite the distance of its supreme centre. So too, where there is belief at the degree of ‘absolute certainty’, Paradise may have sorts of colonies and ministries in this transient world – if there is no mistake in the comparison – and by means of the telephone of the heart, may communicate with elevated spirits, and its gifts may come to them.

As for a universal sphere being preoccupied with particular, personal matters; that is to say, satans rising to the heavens and eavesdropping in order to bring reports of the Unseen to soothsayers, and their bringing false, confused news, as is described in Qur’anic commentaries, it must be as follows: it is not a question of their going as far as the capital of the land of the heavens and gathering particular news; but of there being certain places resembling police outposts – if the metaphor is not mistaken – in the country of the heavens, which encompasses the atmosphere. In these they have relations with the country of the earth. The satans eavesdrop on particular events in those particular places. The human heart even is one such place, where the angel of inspiration and personal devil do battle.

Also, however particular the truths of belief and the Qur’an and the events connected with Muhammad (UWBP), they are as though the greatest and most universal and important events and are published at the sublime throne and in the sphere of the heavens, the most universal sphere, in – if the comparison is not mistaken – the newspapers of the appointed events of the universe. They are discussed on every corner. Since from the heart of Muhammad (UWBP) to the sphere of the throne there is no way the satans can interfere, they do nothing apart from listening to the heavens. Thus, the verse proclaims and shows most eloquently, indeed, miraculously, how elevated and true are the Qur’anic revelation and prophethood of Muhammad (UWBP), and that it is in no way possible to oppose them or draw close to them with subterfuge or falsehood.

Said Nursi

The Twenty-Ninth Flash

Preface

Thirteen years ago, my heart combined with my mind and urged me to the way of reflective thought which the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition commands with such verses as,

*That you may consider.(2:219; 2:266) * Perchance they may reflect.(7:176, etc.) * Do they not reflect in their own minds, did God create the heavens and the earth?(30:8) * There are signs for those who consider.(13:3, etc.)*

The Hadith the meaning of which is "An hour's reflective thought is better than a year's [supererogatory] worship"¹ states that on occasion an hour's reflection may be equivalent to a year's worship. It also offers powerful encouragement for reflective thought. For myself, in order to preserve the extensive lights and lengthy truths which appeared to my mind and heart during the thirteen years I have followed this way, I recorded a number of phrases by way of indications, not to point out those lights but to indicate their existence, facilitate reflection, and preserve the order. I used to recite the phrases to myself verbally in varying Arabic terms when I embarked on the reflection. Although repeated thousands of times over this long period, I never became wearied, nor did the pleasure they afforded diminish, nor the spirit's need of them lessen. For since the reflection all consisted of flashes from Qur'anic verses, the qualities of not causing weariness and preserving their sweetness, which are qualities of the verses, were represented in the mirror of that reflective thought.

I realized recently that the powerful source of life and brilliant lights in the various parts of the Risale-i Nur are flashes of those sequences of

¹ al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, i, 143; al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, iv, 409 (Kitab al-Tafakkur); al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, i, 78.

thought. Thinking that they would affect others as they had affected me, I formed the intention to set them all down in writing towards the end of my life. For sure, important parts of them have been included in the Risale-i Nur but a further power and value will be found in them in their totality.

Since the end of life is not clear, and since the conditions here of my imprisonment have taken on a form worse than death, not waiting for my life to end, on the insistence and importunity of my brothers I have written those sequences of thought without changing them, as seven chapters.

[The remaining six chapters of this Flash have been published in hand-duplicated editions of *The Flashes*, and not included here.]

THE THIRD CHAPTER **On the Degrees of ‘God is Most Great!’**

We shall mention seven of its thirty-three degrees. An important part of those degrees have been expounded in the Second Station of the Twentieth Letter, at the end of the Second Stopping-Place of the Thirty-Second Word, and at the beginning of the Third Stopping-Place. Those who want to understand the reality of those degrees should refer to those two parts of the Risale-i Nur.

THE FIRST DEGREE

Say: “Praise be to God who begets no son and has no partner in [His] dominion: nor [needs] He any to protect Him from humiliation: yes, magnify Him for His greatness and glory!”(17:111)

God is Most Great, may His Glory be exalted! In power and knowledge, greater is He than everything. For He is the Creator, the Maker, the Giver of Form, who through His power fashions man like the universe; He writes the universe with the pen of His determining as He writes man with the same pen. For the macrocosm is like the microcosm: both are fashioned by His power, inscribed by His pen; He creates the macrocosm as a place of prostration, while He gives existence to the microcosm as prostrating; He brings the former into being as a property, while He gives existence to the latter as owned and needy for the property; His art in the former displays it as a book, while His colouring in the latter shines through speech; His power in the former reveals His majesty, while His mercy in the latter arrays His bounty; His majesty in the former testifies that He is One, while His bounty in the latter proclaims that He is Single, Undivided; His stamp

on the former is on all things, universal and particular, whether at rest or in motion, while His seal on the latter is on the body and on the limbs, and on their cells and particles.

Now consider His works as a whole: you will see as clearly as daylight absolute profusion within absolute order and regularity; with absolute speed yet absolute balance; with absolute ease yet with absolute skill; on a vast scale yet with absolute beauty of art; over infinite distances yet with complete unity of kind; with absolute intermingling, yet absolute differentiation; with absolute lack of expense together with absolute value. This situation testifies to the mind, as it compels the foolish dissembler to accept, that this art and unity is the work of a possessor of absolute power, a possessor of absolute knowledge.

In unity lies absolute ease, while in multiplicity and associating partners with God are incomprehensible difficulties.

If all things are attributed to one, the universe's creation is as easy as the creation of a palm-tree, and the palm-tree as the fruit. But when ascribed to multiplicity, to create a palm-tree is as difficult as creating the universe and each fruit as difficult as the tree – so difficult as to be impossible. For with a single act, a single person may obtain a single result and situation for many things without difficulty and without having recourse to other means. Whereas if the situation and result are referred to many, they could be obtained only with great trouble and dispute and pursuing other means. It would be like an officer referring his duty to the soldiers, the master builder to the stones of a building, the earth to the planets, the waterfall to the drops of water, and the central point of a circle to all the points on the circumference.

Through the mystery of relations an unlimited power is present in unity. A thing or cause is not compelled to carry the sources of its strength, and the work resulting from the cause acquires greatness in relation to the thing on which it relies. But when partners are associated with God, all causes are obliged to carry their own sources of strength, and the resulting works diminish to their extent. It is because of this that an ant and a fly defeated tyrants, and a tiny seed bears upon it a huge tree.

If all things are ascribed to one person, there is no need for creation from absolute non-existence, for it consists of transferring a being which has existence in knowledge to external existence, like transferring the image on the mirror at the back of a camera onto photographic paper, thus establishing its external existence with complete ease, or like revealing words written in invisible ink by spreading a special substance on the writing.

When things are ascribed to causes and multiplicity, it necessitates their

creation from absolute non-existence and this is impossible, the most difficult of things. In unity is an ease; it is so easy as to be necessary. While in multiplicity is great difficulty; such difficulty as to be impossible.

With unity, it is possible to create a being from absolute non-existence. That is, to create a being out of pure non-being instantaneously, without matter, and to pour particles into a mould that exists as knowledge without difficulty or confusion. While as all the intelligent agree, with multiplicity and associating partners with God, original creation is not possible from non-existence. Because for the existence of a living creature, particles and elements dispersed throughout the earth have to be gathered together. And when there is no mould existent in knowledge, all the particles have to possess all-encompassing knowledge and absolute will so as to preserve the particles in the body of the animate creature.

In addition, there is no need at all for those things assumed to be partners to God, just as it is impossible that they should be. To make such a claim, therefore, is purely arbitrary; there is nothing in beings to suggest that they have any role in their creation, no sign. For the creation of the heavens and the earth necessitates perfect, infinite power, which is in no need of partners. If there were partners, it would necessitate their limiting that infinite and utterly perfect power and bringing it to an end in infinite time, although there is no necessity for this, indeed, although the reverse is necessitated; and this is impossible in five respects. Such partners are therefore impossible and precluded. Moreover, beings in no way suggest or point to their existence.

We have expounded this matter in the First Stopping-Place of the Thirty-Second Word, showing how all things from minute particles to planets, and from the planets to individual facial features in the Second Stopping-Place, reject the ascribing of partners to God, and pointing out the stamp of divine unity on each of them.

Just as He has no partners, so He has no assistants or ministers. Causes are merely fine veils to the disposals of pre-eternal power; in reality they have no creative effect. For man is the highest of causes and the one with the most extensive will, and out of a hundred parts of the most obvious volitional acts such as eating, speaking, and thinking, he has only one dubious part. If the true power of disposal of the highest of causes and the one with the most extensive will is thus restricted, how is it possible for the animals and inanimate creatures to have a part in the creation and dominicality of the Creator of the heavens and the earth? Just as the envelope in which a king sends a gift, or the handkerchief in which he wraps a present, or the retainer who brings the gift to you, cannot be partners in the king's

sovereignty, so the causes by which bounties are sent, or the coffers containing the bounties stored up for us, or the causes wrapped up as divine gifts and sent to us as presents, cannot be partners to or assistants of God, or intermediaries which have any effect.

THE SECOND DEGREE

God is Most Great, may His glory be exalted; He is greater than everything in power and knowledge. He is the Creator, All-Knowing, the Maker, All-Wise, Most Merciful, All-Compassionate. For the beings of the earth and the lofty celestial bodies in the garden of the universe are self-evidently miracles of an All-Knowing Creator's power; and the adorned, multicoloured plants laid out in the park of the face of the earth and the many varieties of animals displayed and dispersed through the park are necessarily the wonders of art of an All-Wise Maker; and the smiling flowers and decorated fruits in the gardens of this park are clearly the gifts of One Most Merciful and Compassionate. These miracles of power and wonders of art and gifts of mercy testify, call out, and proclaim that their Creator, Fashioner, and Bestower is powerful over all things, and knowing of all things, that His mercy and knowledge encompass all things. In relation to His power particles and stars are equal; few and many are equal; small and great, finite and infinite are equal. All the events of the past and its strange happenings, which are miracles of an All-Wise Maker's art, testify that the Maker is powerful over all the possibilities of the future and its strange events, for He is an All-Knowing Creator, Exalted, All-Wise.

Glory be to the One who made the earth the exhibition of His art, the gathering place of His creatures, the manifestation of His power, the means of His wisdom, the garden of His mercy, the arable field of His Paradise, the place of passage of creatures, the river-bed through which beings flow, the measure of His artefacts.

The embellished animals, the decorated birds, the fruitful trees, the flower-adorned plants are all miracles of His knowledge, marvels of His fashioning, gifts of His munificence, proofs of His grace.

Blossoms smiling with the adornment of fruits, birds singing in the early morning breeze, rain pattering on the petals of flowers, mothers tenderly embracing their young, all make known One All-Loving, make loved One Most Merciful, Most Kind and Generous to jinn and man, to spirit beings, the angels, and to animals.

Grains and fruits, seeds and flowers are miracles of wisdom, marvels of art, gifts of mercy, proofs of unity; they testify to His grace in the realm of the hereafter. They are truthful witnesses testifying that their Creator is

powerful over all things, and knowing of all things; that with His mercy and knowledge and creativity, planning, art, and fashioning He encompasses all things. In relation to His creation, planning, art, and fashioning, the sun is a tiny seed; a star, a flower; the earth, a grain.

For seeds and fruits are mirrors of unity in every part of multiplicity; they point to divine determining; they are signs of power showing the unity of the multiplicity's source. Proceeding from it they testify to the unity of their Creator's art and fashioning. Then on their coming to an end in unity they recount the wisdom of their Maker's creativity and planning.

Seeds and fruits are also allusions of wisdom indicating that the universe's Creator looks with His all-encompassing view to the particular, then to the parts. For the fruits are clearly the aim of the tree's creation. Thus, man is the aim of the universe, and the chief aim of the Creator of beings. Man's heart is like a seed, and the most luminous mirror to the Maker of creatures. It is due to this wisdom that in the universe, insignificant man is the chief means to and reason for the resurrection of beings, and the destruction, transformation, change and renewal of the universe.

*God is Most Great! O Mighty One! The mind cannot penetrate the essence of
Your tremendousness!*

All beings recite together "There is no god but He!"

Perpetually seeking their needs, they declare "O Truth!"

Altogether they recite "O Living One!"

THE THIRD DEGREE²

This is explained at the beginning of the Third Stopping-Place of the Thirty-Second Word.

God is Most Great, may His glory be exalted! – in respect of power and knowledge greater than all things. For He is All-Powerful, the Determiner, All-Knowing, All-Wise, the Giver of Form, Munificent, Gracious, the Adorner, the Bestower of Bounties, Loving, who makes Himself known, Most Merciful, All-Compassionate, Kind, the Beauteous One of Absolute Beauty and Perfection, the Pre-Eternal Inscraper. The reality of the universe as a whole and with its parts, and with its levels and pages, and the reality of beings as a whole and as individuals, in regard to existence and permanence consist of:—

² This third degree considers a flower and a beautiful woman. The huge spring is a flower, and so is Paradise. They are the places of manifestation of this degree. The world is a vast, beautiful human being. Houris, and spirit beings, animals, and men, all as realms of being, bear the meaning of a human being; through their pages, they display the divine names this degree depicts.

The orderly, measured writings of the pen of His determining and decree, according to knowledge and wisdom;

The depictions of the compasses of His knowledge and wisdom, traced with art;

The adornments of the shining hand of His art and bestowal of form, His embellishing and illuminating, with grace and munificence;

The flowers of the subtleties of His grace and munificence, His making Himself known and loved, bountifully, with mercy;

The fruits of the superabundance of the fount of His mercy and bounty, His pity and tenderness, with beauty and perfection;

The flashes of an eternal beauty, a perpetual perfection, testified to by the transience of the mirrors and flowing on of the places of reflection together with the continuance of the beauty's manifestation throughout the passage of the seasons, the centuries, and epochs, together with the perpetual bestowal of bounty throughout the passage of creatures, time, and beings.

Yes, the fleeting nature of the mirrors and the passing of beings together with the constant manifestations and effulgences shows with the utmost clarity that the evident beauty and shining perfection do not belong to the places of manifestation; they prove most clearly and eloquently that they belong to a transcendent Beauty, a transcendent Bestower, to the Necessary Existent, the Enduring One, the Loving One.

For a perfect work self-evidently points to a perfect act. A perfect act necessarily points to a perfect name and a perfect performer of the act. And a perfect name doubtlessly points to a perfect attribute. A perfect attribute indubitably points to a perfect quality. And a perfect quality certainly points in a way worthy of such a one, to the perfection of his essence. This is absolutely certain.

THE FOURTH DEGREE

God is Most Great, may His glory be exalted! For He is All-Just, the Pre-Eternal All-Wise Arbiter and Sovereign, who established the body of the tree of the universe in six days in accordance with the principles of His wisdom and will. He divided it into sections in accordance with the rules of His determining and decree. He set it in order through the laws of His practices. He adorned and embellished it according to the laws of His mercy and favour. He illumined it through the manifestations of His names and attributes. All this is testified to by the order and regularity of His artefacts, the adorning of His beings, and their mutual resemblance and harmony, their mutual assistance and co-operation, their embracing one another, and

the conscious, skilful art in all things in accordance with the measure of their capacities, specified by divine determining.

The universal wisdom in the order of the universe,
 the perfect favour in its adornment,
 the all-encompassing mercy in the grace bestowed in it,
 the sustenance and provisions nurturing its beings,
 through its manifesting the essential attributes of its Creator, the wondrous life
 and art it displays,

the intended beauties of its embellishment,
 despite its transience, the constant manifestation of reflected beauty within it,
 the true love in its heart for the One it worships,
 the attraction evident in its ecstasy,
 the agreement of all perfected ones in it concerning its Creator's unity,
 the benefits followed in all its parts,
 its results achieved through wise planning,
 the generous nurturing of its living beings,
 the perfect order in the changes undergone by its chief elements,
 the vast aims followed in the order of its totality,
 its instantaneous creation with utterly perfect art, without need for either time or
 matter,

the wise individualities given to its beings, hesitant amid limitless possibilities,
 the numerous, various needs of its beings being met at the most appropriate times
 in unexpected ways, together with their smallest wishes, which they themselves
 cannot answer,

the absolute strength manifested in its weakness,
 the absolute power manifested in its impotence,
 the life apparent in its lifelessness,
 the encompassing consciousness apparent in its ignorance,
 the perfect order within its changes, necessitating the existence of another who is
 unchanging,

its glorifications like concentric circles centred on one point,
 the acceptance of its three sorts of supplications, offered through the tongue of
 latent ability, the tongue of innate need, and the tongue of exigency,
 the invocations, and witnessings, and effulgences in its worship,
 the order in its determining,
 the peace found in the remembrance of its Creator,

the worship in it being a means of bringing together its beginning and its end, and the cause of its perfections becoming apparent and the purposes of its Maker being realized,

together with these, all the rest of the universe's attributes, states, and circumstances testify that all its beings are under the direction of a Single Wise Planner, and sustained by a Single Munificent Provider; that they are all the servants of a Single Master; under the disposal of a Single Disposer, and that their source is the power of a Single One the many seals of whose unity are apparent on all the missives of all the pages of His beings.

Yes, all flowers and fruits, and plants and trees, and animals and stones, and even particles and clods, in all valleys and on all mountains, and deserts and wildernesses, are seals on the inscriptions and the works. To those who look with care, they show that whoever fashioned the work, wrote the inscription that comprises the place it is found. He is also the Inscraper of the face of the earth and beneath the seas. He also inscribed the sun and the moon on the face of the heavens, which contains many such missives. May the glory of their Inscraper be exalted, God is Most Great!

The world and all in it recite together "There is no god but He!"

THE FIFTH DEGREE³

God is Most Great! For He is the All-Powerful Creator, the Giver of Form, All-Seeing, proofs of whose divinity and tremendousness are the heavenly bodies and brilliant glittering stars; they are rays testifying to His dominicality and splendour. They testify to and proclaim His glittering sovereignty and dominicality; they proclaim the vast extent of His rule and His wisdom, and the majestic vastness of His power.

Listen to the verse:

Do they not look at the sky above them? How We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it? (50:6)

Then look at the face of the heavens, you see how it is silent in its tranquillity, in motion with wisdom, radiant with majesty, how it smiles with its adornment, within the order of its creation, the symmetry of its art.

The shining of its lamp, the sun, for the changing of the seasons, the stages of its candle, the moon, to illuminate the tracks, the glittering of its stars to adorn the worlds, proclaim to those who think an infinite, unending sovereignty that regulates this world.

Thus, the All-Powerful Creator is Knowing of all things, His will is all-

³ This is explained and illustrated in the Addendum to the First Stopping-Place of the Thirty-Second Word and in the Second Station of the Twentieth Word.

encompassing; what He wills is, and what He does not will is not. He is Powerful over all things through His essential, all-embracing, absolute power. Neither is it possible or imaginable for the sun today to exist without light or heat, nor is it possible or imaginable for a god and creator of the heavens to exist without all-embracing knowledge and absolute power. Of necessity He is Knowing of all things with all-encompassing knowledge essential to His being. Of necessity such knowledge is connected with all things; by virtue of the mystery of presence, witnessing, penetration, and luminous all-comprehension, nothing can be separate from or outside of such knowledge.

The balance and order to be observed in beings, and the ordered proportionateness, and universal wisdom, and perfect bestowal, and measured regularity, and determined fruitfulness, and the appointed hour of death, and regular sustenance, the utter excellence and precision as established by science, and the solicitous adornment, and the utterly perfect differentiation, balance, order, and skill, and the absolute ease, all testify to the all-encompassing knowledge of the One All-Knowing of the Unseen and all things.

As is indicated by the verse,

Should He not know – He that created? And He is the One that understands the finest mysteries [and] is well-acquainted [with them](67:14)

the existence of a thing necessitates knowledge, and the light of existence of things necessitates the light of knowledge.

In comparison with the evidence of man's creation to His Creator's knowledge, man's fine art, which points to his intelligence is like the infinitesimal light of a fire-fly on a dark night in comparison with the splendid brilliance of the noon-day sun on the face of the earth.

And if He is knowing of all things, so He wills all things. For something cannot be realized without being willed. And just as power is effectual and knowledge distinguishes, so will specifies; then the existence of things is realized.

There are evidences to the existence of the divine will and choice to the number of states, stages, and attributes of things.

Yes, all beings being given order and particular attributes from among limitless possibilities, amid fruitless ways from among confused floods of incongruous elements, with such fine and sensitive order, and their being given balance with such fine and sensitive balance, as is to be observed; and the creation of the various well-ordered living beings from simple life

less matter – like man and his physical systems from sperm, and birds and their limbs from eggs, and trees and their various members from seeds – show that all things are specified and determined through His will, choice, and volition. Just as things of the same sort corresponding to one another and members of the same species resembling each other in regard to basic members shows that of necessity their Maker is One, Single; so too each member having a wise individuality marked by orderly distinguishing features indicates that that One, Single Maker is an Agent with Will and Choice who acts as He wishes and commands as He wills.

Just as that All-Knowing and Willing Creator has knowledge of all things and is willing of all things, and has all-embracing knowledge and all-encompassing will and total choice; so too He has necessary, essential perfect power, proceeding from His Essence and necessary to it. The intervention of its opposite is impossible, as all are agreed. So there are no degrees in His power. Particles and stars are equal in relation to it, as are many and few, small and great, particulars and universals, parts and the whole, man and the universe, and the seed and the tree.

Through the mystery of luminosity, transparency, reciprocity, balance, order, and conformity;

According to the testimony of absolute order, absolute balance, and absolute differentiation, together with absolute speed, ease, and multiplicity;

Through the mystery of the assistance of unity, the facility of unity, and the manifestation of oneness;

Through the wisdom of necessity, total detachment and disengagedness, and complete otherness of essence;

Through the mystery of unrestrictedness, not being bound by space, and indivisibility;

Through the wisdom of the transformation of obstructions and difficulties into means of facilitation – if there were need, though there is none – like veins in human beings and metal wires for conducting electricity and subtle forces;

Through the wisdom of particles being of no less eloquence than the stars, nor particulars of less eloquence than universals, nor parts less than wholes, nor the few less than the many, nor the small less than the great, nor man less than the world, nor seeds being of less eloquence than the tree;

According to all these, particles are equal to the stars before that power, few are equal to many, small are equal to great, the parts are equal to the whole, particulars are equal to universals, man is equal to the world,

and the seed equal to the tree; it cannot be deemed unlikely that whoever creates the former creates the latter. For the beings that are encompassed are miniature samples of the universal, encompassing beings, and like tiny missives, or points distilled from them. That is to say, the thing that is encompassed has to be in the grasp of power of the Creator of the encompassing being so that the miniature sample of the encompassing being may be contained within the encompassed thing through the principles of His knowledge, and the summary of the encompassing being may be pressed out of it in accordance with the balance of His wisdom.

A Qur'an of Wisdom written on an atom in particles of ether is of no less eloquence than a Qur'an of Grandeur written on the pages of the heavens with the ink of the sun and stars. Similarly, the creation of a bee or an ant is of no less eloquence than the creation of a date-palm or an elephant, and the art in a rose is of no less eloquence than a shining star. And so on, further examples may be made in the same way.

Furthermore, the complete ease in the creation of things has led the people of misguidance to confuse the formation of things with self-formation, which necessitates superstitious impossibilities that not only the reason rejects, but from which even fancy flees in disgust, while for the people of truth and reality it proves certainly and necessarily that before the power of the Creator of the universe, stars and particles are equal.

May His glory be exalted and name be magnified; there is no god but He!

THE SIXTH DEGREE⁴

May His glory be exalted and sublimity extolled, God is Most Great! In regard to power and knowledge He is greater than all things. For He is All-Just, All-Wise, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, One, Single, the Pre-Eternal Sovereign. All the worlds are within the grasp of His order and balance, and ordering and balancing; of His justice, and wisdom, and knowledge, and power, and under their sway. They manifest His unity and oneness, as may be surmised certainly, indeed, may be observed. For there is nothing in existence which is outside the bounds of the order and balance and ordering and balancing. They are the two domains of the Clear Record and the Clear Book. These are two titles, the former of the knowledge and command of the All-Knowing and Wise One, the latter of the power and will of

⁴ If this sixth degree had been written similarly to the other degrees, it would have been extremely lengthy, for the Clear Book and the Clear Record cannot be explained in concise terms. However, there is a brief discussion of it in the Thirtieth Word, so we have cut short the discussion here, and left detailed explanation of it to the study session [*ders*].

that Mighty and All-Compassionate One. For the order and balance in this Book and Record are two shining proofs for people of reason who have two eyes in their head, that nothing at all in existence and time is outside the grasp of power of a Most Merciful One, the ordering of One Most Kind, the adorning of One Most Clement, the balancing of a Requirer.

I n S h o r t : The manifestations of the names of First and Last in creation look to the beginnings and ends of beings, and their origin and progeny, and the past and the future, and to the divine command and knowledge; they point to the Clear Record. While the manifestation of the names of Outward and Inward in the creation of things indicate the Clear Book.

For the universe is like a vast tree, and all the worlds within it also are like trees. You may therefore draw a comparison between the creation of a single tree and that of the universe together with all its worlds and realms. The tree has an origin and source, which is the seed from which it sprang, and it has a progeny which continues its functions after its death, which is the seed in its fruit.

Thus its beginning and end are the manifestations of the names of First and Last. Through order and wisdom, its beginning and original seed are an index and timetable comprising all the laws of the tree's formation. The seeds in its fruits, which are its end, are the place of manifestation of the name of Last.

The seeds in its fruit created with perfect wisdom are like small coffers in which have been placed an index and timetable for the formation of a similar tree. Inscribed in them with the pen of divine determining are the laws of the formation of future trees.

The tree's outer aspect is the manifestation of the name of Outward. For its outer appearance displays perfect order and balancing and wisdom, like an ornate and decorated garment with which the tree has been clothed with perfect wisdom and grace in accordance with the measure of its stature.

The tree's inner aspect is the manifestation of the name of Inward. It displays perfect order and planning and astounds minds. It distributes the substances necessary for the tree's life to its various members with complete regularity, as though this inner aspect were a wondrous machine working with the utmost orderly balance.

Thus, its origin is a wondrous timetable and its end an astonishing index, both indicating the Clear Record. While its outer aspect is a gorgeous robe full of art, and its inner aspect, a machine of the utmost regularity; both pointing to the Clear Book.

Just as man's faculty of memory points to the Preserved Tablet and is a proof it, so the original seeds of trees and their fruits point to the Clear

Record. While their outer and inner aspects allude to the Clear Book. Comparisons may therefore be drawn between this particular tree and the tree of the earth and its past and its future, and the tree of the universe and its beginnings and its future, and the tree of man and his forebears and progeny. And so on.

May their Creator's glory be exalted, there is no god but He!

Oh One Sublime! You guide not the mind to the true essence of Your grandeur nor lead it to the substance of Your tremendousness, for it is powerless to comprehend them!

THE SEVENTH DEGREE

God is Most Great, may His glory be exalted! In respect of power and knowledge He is greater than all things. For He is the Creator,⁵ the Opener, the Doer, Most Knowing, the Bestower, Most Effulgent, the Pre-Eternal Sun. The universe together with its realms and beings is a shadow thrown by His lights; they are the works of His acts, and the colours of the impresses of the various manifestations of His names, and the lines inscribed by the pen of His determining and decree, and mirrors to the manifestations of His attributes, beauty, glory, and perfection.

According to the consensus of the Pre-Eternal Witness, known through all His Books and Scriptures, and His Qur'anic verses, and creational signs;

And the consensus of the earth with all its worlds, together with their total essential want and need, and the absolute wealth and riches displayed on them;

And the consensus of all the prophets, saints, and purified scholars, the people of witnessing with luminous spirits, light-filled hearts, and illumined minds, through all their researches, uncoverings, effulgences, and invocations;

All from the earth to the lofty and lowly bodies with their endless certain testimony and certain affirmation, agree in accepting the testimony of the creational signs and Qur'anic verses, and the revealed Books and Scriptures, the very testimony of the Necessary Existent One, that all beings are the works of His power, the missives of His determining, the mirrors to His names, and the representations of His Lights.

May His glory be exalted, there is no god but He!

⁵ If one looks through the telescopes of these divine names at the divine acts and works beneath their manifestations in beings, the mind is transposed to the Glorious One whom the names signify.

The Thirtieth Flash

This, the Thirtieth Flash of the Thirty-First Letter and a fruit of Eskişehir Prison, consists of six points

[Just as *Meyve Risalesi* (The Fruits of Belief) was the supreme lesson of the Denizli School of Joseph, and *El-Hüccetü'z-Zehrâ* (The Shining Proof) was a most valuable lesson of the Afyon School of Joseph, so too this Thirtieth Flash, which expounds six points about the six divine names bearing the greatest name was a powerful lesson of the greatest importance of the Eskişehir School of Joseph.

Everyone will not immediately understand and appreciate the profound, extensive matters in the pieces about the names of Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent from the greatest name, but they will not remain without a share of them either.]

THE FIRST POINT

The Divine Name Most Holy

[This point concerns one aspect of the divine name of Most Holy. It is appropriate that it should form an addendum to the Addendum of the Thirtieth Word.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
And the earth We have spread wide; and how well have We ordered it.(51:48)*

One manifestation of the divine name Most Holy, which is one meaning of the above verse and is a greatest name or one of the six lights contained in the greatest name, became clear to me in the month of Sha‘ban in Eskişehir Prison. It demonstrated with complete clarity both the divine existence and divine unity. I saw it as follows:

The universe is a vast, constantly working factory and the globe of the earth a hostel and guesthouse which is continually filled and emptied. Generally, factories, hostels and guesthouses which are thus used become much dirtied and soiled with filth, debris and rubbish, and putrid matter accumulates in all parts of them. They cannot be occupied unless they are kept with care and cleaned and swept; human beings are overwhelmed by the dirt. The factory of the universe and guesthouse of the earth, however, are totally pure, clean and spotless, and completely unsoiled, untainted and fresh; there is nothing unnecessary, nothing without benefit, not a random piece of dirt to be found. Even if there is apparently, it is quickly thrown into a transformation machine and cleaned.

This means that the One who looks after this factory does so very well. Its Owner is such that He sweeps and cleans and orders the vast factory and extensive palace as though they were small rooms. Considering the size of the huge factory, there is no dirt or rubbish remaining from its filth and debris. Indeed, its cleanness and tidiness are remarkable.

If someone does not wash himself and clean his small room for a month, they will become extremely dirty and soiled. That is to say, the cleanliness, purity, and luminosity in this palace of the world arise from a continuous, wise, and diligent cleaning. If it were not for this cleaning, sweeping and careful tending, in one year all the hundred thousand animal species would have been choked on the face of the earth.

Also, the debris of the globes in space and the heavens, which manifest life and death, and of satellites and stars, would have smashed not only our heads and those of the other animals, but also the head of the earth itself and of our world. They would have rained down on our heads rocks the size of mountains and driven us away from our homeland in this world. However, for a long time past, if as a warning a few meteorites have fallen as a result of destruction and reconstruction in those lofty worlds, they have not broken any heads.

Furthermore, the corpses of a hundred thousand animal species and the debris of two hundred thousand plant species each year on the face of the earth resulting from the alternation and struggles of life and death would have so utterly filthied the land and the sea that conscious creatures, rather than loving and delighting in the face of the earth, would have felt disgust and aversion at such ugliness and fled to death and non-existence.

Just as a bird cleans its wings with ease and a scribe his pages, so too the wings of the aircraft of the earth and the birds of the heavenly bodies and the pages of the book of the universe are cleaned and made beautiful. So much so that people who do not consider the infinite beauty of the hereafter

and think with belief become lovers of this cleanliness and beauty of the world, they worship it.

That is to say, this palace of the world and factory of the universe display a greatest manifestation of the divine name Most Holy whereby it is not only the carnivorous cleaners of the seas and the eagles of the land which obey the commands proceeding from that sacred cleansing, but also its cleansing officials which gather up corpses, like worms and ants. Like the red and white blood-corpuscles flowing in the body obey those sacred commands and do the cleaning in the body's cells, so does breathing purify and clean the blood.

And as eyelids obey the command to clean the eye and flies to brush their wings, so the extensive atmosphere and the clouds obey it. The air blows upon the pieces of dust and soil settled on the surface of the earth and cleans it. The sponges of the clouds sprinkle water on the garden of the earth and dampen the dust and soil. Then, so as not to dirty the sky, the air quickly collects the earth's rubbish and withdraws and hides itself with perfect orderliness. It displays the beautiful face and eye of the skies as swept and polished, all sparkling and shining.

And as the stars, elements, minerals, and plants obey the command to clean, all particles and atoms obey it: they pay attention to cleanliness within the astonishing upheavals of change and transformation. They never congregate anywhere unnecessarily and get in the way. If they do become soiled, they are quickly cleaned. They are impelled by a hand of wisdom to acquire the cleanest, neatest, and most shining states and the most beautiful, pure and subtle forms.

Thus, this single act, that is, making clean, which is a single truth, is a greatest manifestation of a greatest name, the name of Most Holy, which shows itself in the maximum sphere, that is, throughout the universe. Like the sun, it shows directly to eyes that are far-seeing and broad-sighted the divine existence and unity together with the most beautiful divine names.

It has been established with decisive proofs in many parts of the Risale-i Nur that the act of ordering and order, which are a manifestation of the names of Sapient and All-Wise; and the act of weighing and balance, which are a manifestation of the names of Justice and All-Just; and the act of adorning and munificence, which are a manifestation of the names of Beauteous and All-Generous; and the act of sustaining and bestowal, which are a manifestation of the names of Sustainer and Most Compassionate are each a single truth and a single act, they therefore demonstrate the necessary existence and unity of a Single Being. In exactly the same way, the act of purifying and making clean, which is a manifestation and display of the

name Most Holy, demonstrates like the sun both the existence of the Necessarily Existent One, and like daylight, His unity.

And as the wise acts of ordering, balancing, adorning and making clean mentioned above point to a Single Maker by reason of their unity of kind in the maximum sphere, so most of the beautiful names, indeed, the thousand and one names, each have such a greatest manifestation in the maximum sphere. And the act proceeding from that manifestation points to the Single Unique One with clarity and decisiveness in relation to its extensiveness.

The self-evident truths and single acts that illuminate the face of the universe and make it smile, such as the universal wisdom that causes all things to conform to its law and order, the comprehensive munificence that adorns all things and causes them to smile, the all-embracing mercy that makes all things pleased and happy, the universal providing of sustenance which nurtures and gives pleasure to all things, and the life and giving of life which connects each thing with all things and makes each thing benefit from, and to some extent own, all things – these self-evident truths and single acts point as plainly as light points to the sun to a single All-Wise, All-Generous, and All-Compassionate One, a single Sustainer, a single Ever-Living Giver of Life.

If those hundreds of extensive acts, each of which is a clear proof of God's unity, are not attributed to the Single Unique One, each necessarily becomes impossible in hundreds of respects. For example, let alone such self-evident truths and single evidences as wisdom, providence, mercy, sustaining and giving of life, if only the act of making clean is not attributed to the Creator of the universe, then the following becomes necessary in the unbelieving way of the people of misguidance:

Either all the creatures connected to cleansing from particles and flies to the elements and the stars would have to have the ability to know and consider the adorning, balancing, and cleansing of the vast universe and would act accordingly, or each would have to possess the sacred attributes of the world's Creator, or each would have to be present at a consultative meeting the size of the universe in order to regulate the equilibrium of the adorning and cleansing of the universe and its incomings and outgoings, and innumerable particles, flies, and stars would have to be participants in the meeting; and so on. Hundreds of superstitious, nonsensical and sophistical impossibilities like these would have to occur so that the universal, comprehensive, and exalted adorning, purifying and cleansing that is to be seen and observed everywhere could come about. As for this, it is not impossible once, but a hundred thousand times over.

If daylight and the imaginary miniature suns represented in the shining

objects on the earth are not attributed to the sun and they are not said to be the manifestation of the sun's reflection, it would be necessary for the actual sun to be present in all fragments of glass, drops of water and snow-flakes glistening on the face of the earth, and even in all particles of air, so that the universal light could exist.

Thus, wisdom is a light; all-embracing mercy is a light; adorning, balancing, ordering, and cleansing are each an encompassing light: they are all the rays of the Pre-Eternal Sun. So see how misguidance and unbelief have entered a bog from which there is no escape! See just how idiotic is the ignorance of misguidance! Say: "Praise be to God for the religion of Islam and complete and perfect belief!"

For sure, this exalted, universal cleansing which keeps the palace of the universe clean is the manifestation and requirement of the divine name Most Holy. Yes, just as the glorification of all creatures looks to the name Most Holy, so does the name of Most Holy require their cleanliness.¹

It is because of this sacred connection of cleanliness that the Hadith, "Cleanliness is a part of belief"² deems it to be a light of belief. And the verse,

Indeed, God loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean(2:222)

shows that cleanliness is a means of attracting God's love.

¹ We must not forget that bad qualities, false beliefs, sins and innovation are all instances of moral and spiritual dirt.

² *Muslim*, Tahara, 1; *Darimi*, Vudu', 2; *Musnad*, v, 342, 344; al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, 291.

THE SECOND POINT The Divine Name All-Just

And there is not a thing but its [sources and] treasures [inexhaustible] are with Us; but We only send down thereof in due and ascertainable measures.(15:21)

One point concerning this verse and one manifestation of the name All-Just, which is a greatest name or one of the six lights comprising the Greatest Name, like the First Point, appeared to me from afar while in Eskişehir Prison. In order to bring it closer to the understanding, we say the following; again by means of a comparison:

The universe is a palace, but it is such a palace that within it is a city that suffers the upheavals of constant destruction and reconstruction. Within the city is a country that is being continuously agitated by war and emigration. Within the country is a world which is unceasingly revolving amid death and life. But such an astonishing balance, equilibrium and equilibration prevail in the palace, city, country and world that it self-evidently proves that the transformations, and incomings and outgoings apparent in their innumerable beings are being measured and weighed every moment on the scales of a Single Being who sees and supervises the whole universe.

For if it had been otherwise, if causes had been free and unrestrained, which try to destroy the balance and overrun everything, with a single fish laying a thousand eggs and a single flower like the poppy producing twenty thousand seeds, and with the onslaught and violence of change and the elements flowing in floods, or if it had been referred to aimless, purposeless chance, anarchic blind forces, and unconscious dark nature, the equilibrium of beings and balance of the universe would have been so utterly destroyed that within a year, indeed within a day, there would have been chaos. That is to say, the seas would have been filled with wreckage in total disorder and confusion and would have become fetid; the atmosphere would have been poisoned with noxious gases; and as for the earth, it would have turned into a refuse-heap, slaughter-house, and swamp. The world would have suffocated.

Thus, everything from the cells of an animate body, the red and white corpuscles in the blood, the transformations of minute particles, and the

mutual proportion and relation of the body's organs, to the incomings and outgoings of the seas, the income and expenditure of springs under the earth, the birth and death of animals and plants, the destruction of autumn and the reconstruction of spring, the duties and motion of the elements and the stars, and the alternations, struggles and clashes of death and life, light and darkness, and heat and cold, are ordered and weighed with so sensitive a balance, so fine a measure, that the human mind can nowhere see any waste or futility, just as human science and philosophy observe everywhere and demonstrate the most perfect order and beautiful symmetry. Indeed, human science and philosophy are a manifestation and interpreter of that order and symmetry.

So, come and consider the balance and equilibrium of the sun and its twelve planets. Does it not point as clearly as the sun to the All-Glorious One who is All-Just and All-Powerful? Especially our ship, that is, the globe of the earth, which is one of the planets; it travels an orbit of twenty-four thousand years in one year, not scattering or shaking the things stored up and stacked on its face, despite its extraordinary speed, nor throwing them off into space. If its speed had been increased or reduced just a little, it would have thrown its inhabitants off into the atmosphere, and scattered them through space. And if its balance was to be destroyed for a minute, or even a second, it would destroy the world. Indeed, it would clash with another body and doomsday would break forth.

Especially the compassionate balance on the face of the earth of the births, deaths, livelihoods, and lives of the four hundred thousand plant and animal species; it shows a single Just and Compassionate One, as clearly as light shows the sun.

Especially the members, faculties, and senses of a single of the innumerable members of those species; they are related to each other with so fine a balance and equilibrium that their balance and mutual proportion show an All-Wise and Just Maker so clearly as to be self-evident.

Especially the cells and blood-vessels in the bodies of animals, and the corpuscles in the blood and particles in the corpuscles; they have such a fine, sensitive, and wondrous balance that it self-evidently proves that they are being nurtured and administered through the balance, law, and order of a single All-Just and Wise Creator who holds the reins of all things, has the key to all things, for whom nothing is an obstacle to anything else, and directs all things as easily as a single thing.

If someone who does not believe or deems it unlikely that the deeds of jinn and men will be weighed up on the supreme scales of justice at the Last Judgement notes carefully this vast balance, which he can observe in

this world with his own eyes, he will surely no longer consider it unlikely.

O wasteful, prodigal.. wrongful, unjust.. dirty, unclean.. wretched man! You have not acted in accordance with the economy, cleanliness, and justice that are the principles by which the whole universe and all beings act, and are therefore in effect the object of their anger and disgust. On what do you rely that through your wrongdoing and disequilibrium, your wastefulness and uncleanness, you make all beings angry? Yes, the universal wisdom of the universe, which is the greatest manifestation of the divine name of All-Wise, turns on economy and lack of waste. It commands frugality. And the total justice in the universe proceeding from the greatest manifestation of the Name All-Just, administers the balance of all things and enjoins justice on man. Mentioning the word balance four times, the verses in Sura al-Rahman,

*And the firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the balance [of justice], * In order that you may not transgress [due] balance. * So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance,(35:7-9)*

indicate four degrees and four sorts of balance, showing its immensity and supreme importance in the universe. Yes, just as there is no wastefulness in anything, so in nothing is there true injustice or imbalance.

The cleanliness and purification proceeding from the name Most Holy cleans and makes beautiful all the beings in the universe. So long as man's dirty hand does not interfere, there is no true uncleanness or ugliness in anything.

So you may understand how basic to human life are the principles of justice, frugality, and cleanliness, which are truths of the Qur'an and Islamic principles. And know how closely connected with the universe are the injunctions of the Qur'an, having spread their firm roots everywhere, and that it is as impossible to destroy those truths as it is to destroy the universe and change its form.

Is it at all possible that although hundreds of comprehensive truths like these three vast lights, such as mercy, grace, and preservation, require and necessitate the resurrection of the dead and the hereafter, such powerful and all-encompassing truths as mercy, favour, justice, wisdom, frugality, and cleanliness, which govern in the universe and all beings, should be transformed into unkindness, tyranny, lack of wisdom, wastefulness, uncleanness, and futility, by there being no hereafter and the resurrection not occurring?

God forbid, a hundred thousand times, God forbid! Would a mercy and

wisdom which compassionately preserve the rights of life of a fly violate the countless rights of life of all conscious beings and the numberless rights of numberless beings, by not bringing about the resurrection? And if one may say so, would a splendid dominicality which displays infinite sensitivity and care in its mercy and compassion and justice and wisdom, and a divine sovereignty which adorns the universe with His endless wondrous arts and bounties in order to display His perfections and make himself known and loved, permit there to be no resurrection, which would reduce to nothing the value of creatures and all their perfections, and make them denied? God forbid! Such an absolute beauty clearly would not permit such absolute ugliness.

Yes, the person who wants to deny the hereafter must first deny all the world and all its truths. Otherwise the world together with all its truths will give him the lie with a hundred thousand tongues, proving the compounded nature of his lie. The Tenth Word proves with certain evidences that the existence of the hereafter is as definite and indubitable as the existence of this world.

THE THIRD POINT

Which alludes to the Third of the Six Lights
of the Greatest Name,
The Divine Name Sapient

Invite [all] to the way of your Sustainer with wisdom.(16:125)

[One manifestation of the divine name Sapient, which is a greatest name or one of the six lights of the greatest name, and a fine point of the above verse, appeared to me in the month of Ramadan while in Eskişehir Prison. This Third Point consists of five matters, and forms only an allusion to it. It was written in haste and has remained in its original form.]

FIRST MATTER

As is indicated in the Tenth Word, the greatest manifestation of the divine name of Sapient has made the universe like a book in every page of which hundreds of books have been written, and in every line of which hundreds of pages have been included, and in every word of which are hundreds of lines, and in each letter of which are a hundred words, and in every point of which is found a short index of the book. The book's pages and lines down to the very points show its Inscraper and Writer with such clarity that that book of the universe testifies to and proves the existence and unity of its Scribe to a degree far greater than it shows its own existence. For if a single letter shows its own existence to the extent of a letter, it shows its Scribe to the extent of a line.

Yes, one page of this mighty book is the face of the earth. Books to the number of the plant and animal species are to be observed on this page in the spring, one within the other, together, at the same time, without error, in the most perfect form.

A single line of the page is a garden. We see that written on this line are well-composed odes to the number of flowers, trees, and animals, together, one within the other, without error.

One word of the line is a tree which has opened its blossom and put forth its leaves in order to produce its fruit. This word consists of meaningful passages lauding and praising the All-Glorious Sapient One to the number of orderly, well-proportioned, adorned leaves, flowers, and fruits. It is

as though like all trees, this tree is a well-composed ode singing the praises of its Inscraper.

It is also as if the All-Glorious Sapient One wants to look with thousands of eyes on His wonderful antique works displayed in the exhibition of the earth.

And it is as if the bejewelled gifts, decorations and uniforms given to the tree by that Pre-Eternal Monarch have been given such adorned, well-proportioned, orderly, meaningful and wise forms in order to present them to His view in the spring, its particular festival and parade, that each of its flowers and fruits testifies in numerous ways and with many evidences one within the other to its Inscraper's existence and Names.

For example, in all its blossoms and fruits is a balance. The balance is within an order, and the order is within an ordering and balancing which is being constantly renewed. The ordering and balancing is within an art and adornment, and the adornment and art are within meaningful scents and wise tastes. Thus, each flower points to the All-Glorious Sapient One to the number of the tree's blossoms.

And in the tree, which is a word, the point of a seed in a fruit, which is like a letter, is a small coffer containing the index and programme of the whole tree. And so on. To continue the same analogy, through the manifestation of the name of Sapient and Wise, all the lines and pages of the book of the universe – and not only its lines, but all its words, letters, and points – have been made as miracles so that if all causes were to gather together, they could not make the like of a single point, nor could they dispute it.

Yes, since each of the creational signs of this mighty Qur'an of the universe displays miracles to the number of points and letters of those signs, in no way could confused chance, blind force, aimless, anarchic, unconscious nature interfere in that wise, percipient particular balance and most sensitive order. If they had interfered, some traces of confusion would certainly have been apparent. Whereas no disorder of any sort is to be seen anywhere.

SECOND MATTER

First Topic : As is explained in the Tenth Word, it is a fundamental rule that infinitely perfect beauty and infinitely beautiful perfection want to behold themselves and show and exhibit themselves. In consequence of this, in order to make Himself and His perfections known, and to display His beauty and make Himself loved the Pre-Eternal Inscraper of the mighty book of the universe makes known and loved the beauty of His perfection and perfection of His beauty with the universe and all its pages,

lines and even letters and points, with the innumerable tongues of all beings from the most particular to the most universal.

O heedless man! Come to your senses! Know just what a compounded ignorance it is and what a loss if in the face of the Sapiient and All-Wise Ruler of Glory and Beauty's making Himself known to you and loved by you by means of all His creatures in this brilliant, endless fashion you do not recognize Him with belief and you do not make yourself loved by Him with your worship.

T h e S e c o n d T o p i c o f t h e S e c o n d M a t t e r: There is no place for partnership in the dominions of the universe's All-Powerful and Wise Maker. For the infinitely perfect order present in everything does not accept partners. Many hands intervening in a single matter confuses it. If there are two kings in a country, two governors of a town, or two headmen in a village, disorder will occur in all their affairs. Similarly, the lowest official does not accept interference in his duties, which shows that the fundamental characteristic of rulership is independence and singleness. That is to say, order necessitates unity, and rulership necessitates independence.

If a temporary shadow of rulership in impotent man needy for assistance rejects interference in this way, the true, absolute rulership at the degree of dominicality of the One who possesses absolute power will certainly reject interference with all its strength. Even the tiniest interference would spoil the order.

However, the universe has been created in such a way that to create a seed, the power to create a tree is necessary. And to create a tree, the power to create the universe is necessary. If any partner interfered in the universe, he would have to share in the tiniest seed. For the seed is a sample of the universe. So then two dominicalities which cannot reside together in the vast universe, would have to reside in a seed, and even in a minute particle. This is the most precluded and meaningless of impossibilities and false delusions. Know that unbelief and associating partners with God are an infinitely compounded contradiction, error, and falsehood, for they necessitate the impotence – even if only in a seed – of the Absolutely Powerful One who holds in the balance of His justice and order of His wisdom all the states and attributes of the vast universe; and know that divine unity is an infinitely compounded truth, reality and verity, and say: “All praise and thanks be to God for belief!”

THIRD MATTER

With His names Sapient and All-Wise, the All-Powerful Maker has included thousands of well-ordered worlds in this world. Within those worlds, He created man as a centre and pivot who of all creatures manifests the wisdom and purposes in the universe. The most important of the instances of wisdom and beneficial things in the sphere of the universe look to man. And in the human sphere, He made sustenance a centre; in the human world most of the instances of wisdom and benefits look to sustenance and are manifest through it. The manifestation of the name of All-Wise is apparent in brilliant form in man through his intelligence and the pleasure he receives from sustenance. Each one of the hundreds of sciences discovered by human intelligence describes a manifestation of the name of Sapient in a realm of creation.

For example, if the science of medicine were to be asked: "What is the universe?", it would be bound to reply: "It is an exceedingly vast, orderly and perfect pharmacy. All remedies are prepared and stored up in it in the best way."

If the science of chemistry were asked: "What is the earth?", it would reply: "It is a perfectly ordered chemist's shop."

The science of engineering would reply: "It is totally faultless, perfect factory."

The science of agriculture would reply: "It is an infinitely productive, regular and well-laid-out field and garden which produces all kinds of seeds at the required time."

The science of commerce would reply: "It is an extremely well-set-out exhibition, orderly market, and shop stocked with most artistic wares."

The science of economics would reply: "It is an exceedingly well-arranged warehouse containing every sort and kind of food."

The science of dietetics would reply: "It is a dominical kitchen and cauldron of the Most Merciful in which are cooked most regularly hundreds of thousands of the most delicious foods."

The science of soldiering would reply: "The earth is a military camp. Although there are four hundred thousand different nations in that army, newly taken under arms with their tents pitched on the face of the earth, they are given their rations, uniforms, weapons, training, and discharges, which are different for each nation, in perfect order, with no confusion and none being forgotten, through the command, power, compassion of a single Commander-in-Chief, from His treasury; they are all administered in the most regular fashion."

And if the science of electricity were to be asked: “What is this world?”, it would certainly reply: “The roof of this magnificent palace of the universe has been adorned with innumerable orderly and balanced electric lamps, and the order and balance are so wondrous that foremost the sun, and those heavenly lamps which are a thousand times larger than the earth, do not spoil their balance, although they burn continuously; they do not explode or burst into flames. Their expenditure is endless, so where do their income and fuel and combustible material come from? Why are they not exhausted? Why is the balance not spoiled with their burning? A small lamp goes out if it is not tended regularly. See the wisdom and power of the All-Wise One of Glory, who makes the sun, which according to astronomy is a million times larger than the earth and a million years older,¹ burn without coal or oil, without being extinguished; say: ‘All Glory be to God!’ Say: ‘What wonders God has willed! Blessed be God! There is no god but He!’ to the number of seconds of the sun’s existence.

“This means there is a wondrous order in these heavenly lamps, and they are tended with the greatest care. It is as if the boiler of those huge, numerous fiery masses, those light-shedding lamps, is a Hell whose heat is never exhausted; it provides them with lightless heat. While the machinery and central factory of those electric lamps is a perpetual Paradise; it provides them with light and luminosity; through the greatest manifestation of the names of Sapient and All-Wise, they continue to burn in orderly fashion.”

And so on; through the certain testimony of hundreds of sciences like these, the universe has been adorned with innumerable instances of wisdom, purposes, and beneficial things within a faultless, perfect order. And the order and wisdom given through that wondrous, all-encompassing wisdom to the totality of the universe have been included in small measure in seeds and the tiniest living creatures. It is clear and self-evident that aims, purposes, instances of wisdom, and benefits can only be followed through choice, will, intention, and volition, not in any other way. Neither could they be the work of unconscious causes and nature, which lack will, choice, and purpose, nor could they interfere in them.

¹ You can reckon just how much wood, coal, and oil would be necessary for the stove or lamp of the sun, which heats the palace of the world. According to the reckoning of astronomy, piles of wood equal to a million earths and thousands of oceans of oil would be necessary for it to burn each day. Now think! And say: “Glory be to God! What wonders God has willed! Blessed be God!” to the number of the sun’s particles in the face of the majesty, wisdom, and power of the All-Powerful One of Glory, who makes it give light continuously without firewood or oil.

That is to say, it is extraordinary ignorance and foolishness not to recognize or to deny the All-Wise Maker, the Agent with Choice, whom the universe and all its beings necessitate and demonstrate through their infinite order and the instances of wisdom they contain. Yes, if there is anything astonishing in the world, it is such denial. For the endless aspects of order and instances of wisdom in the beings in the universe testify to His existence and unity, so that even the most profoundly ignorant can understand what blindness and ignorance it is not to see or not to recognize Him. I might even say that among the people of unbelief, the Sophists, who are supposed to be stupid because they denied the universe's existence, are the most intelligent. For since on accepting its existence, it was not possible not to believe in God and its Creator, they started to deny the universe's existence. They denied themselves as well. Saying, "There is nothing," they abdicated their intelligences, and being saved from the boundless unreasonableness – under the guise of reason – of the other deniers, they in one sense drew close to reason.

FOURTH MATTER

As is indicated in the Tenth Word, for a Wise Maker, a most wise master builder, to follow carefully hundreds of instances of wisdom in each stone of a palace, then not to construct the palace's roof so it falls into ruin and all the innumerable purposes and instances of wisdom are lost, is something no conscious being could accept. Similarly, it is in no way possible that having followed out of his perfect wisdom tons of benefits, aims, and purposes in a tiny seed, a possessor of absolute wisdom should go to the great expense of the mighty tree as tall as a mountain so it should produce a single benefit, a single small aim, a single fruit worth virtually nothing, and so to be wastefully prodigal in a way entirely opposed and contrary to his wisdom.

In just the same way, the All-Wise Maker attaches hundreds of instances of wisdom to each of the beings in the palace of the universe and equips them to perform hundreds of duties, and to all trees bestows instances of wisdom to the number of its fruits and gives duties to the number of its flowers. For Him not to bring about the resurrection of the dead and the Great Gathering and for all those incalculable numbers of purposes and instances of wisdom and infinite duties to be meaningless, futile, pointless, and without purpose or benefit, would impute absolute impotence to that Absolutely Powerful One's perfect power, just as it would impute futility and purposelessness to that Absolutely Wise One's perfect wisdom, and utter ugliness to the beauty of that Absolutely Compassionate One's mercy,

and boundless tyranny to that Absolutely Just One's perfect justice. It would be quite simply to deny the wisdom, mercy, and justice in the universe, which may be seen by everyone. It would be an extraordinary impossibility comprising innumerable absurdities. Let the people of misguidance come and see just what a terrifying darkness, obscurity, there is in their misguidance, just as there is in their graves; and how they are the nests of scorpions. They should know that belief in the hereafter is a way as beautiful and luminous as Paradise, and should embrace belief.

FOURTH MATTER

This consists of two topics.

F i r s t T o p i c : Necessitated by His name All-Wise, the All-Glorious Maker follows the lightest way, the shortest path, the easiest fashion, the most beneficial form, which shows that there is no wastefulness, futility, or absence of benefits in the nature of things. Wastefulness is the opposite of the name Wise, just as frugality is necessitated by it and is its fundamental principle.

O prodigal, wasteful man! Know that by not practising frugality, the most basic principle in the universe, you have acted in a way entirely contrary to reality! You should understand what an essential, encompassing principle is taught by the verse,

Eat and drink, but waste not in excess.(7:31)

S e c o n d T o p i c : It may be said that the names Sapient and All-Wise point to and necessitate the messengership of God's Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) to the degree of being self-evident.

Yes, since a meaningful book requires a teacher to explain it; and an exquisite beauty requires a mirror to show itself and see itself; and a perfect work of art requires a herald to announce it; for sure among mankind, who is addressed by the mighty book of the universe, in every letter of which are hundreds of meanings and instances of wisdom, will be a perfect guide, a supreme teacher. For he will teach the sacred, true wisdom in the book; that is, make known the existence of the wisdom and purposes in the universe; indeed, be the means of the appearance, and even existence, of the dominical purposes in the universe's creation; and make known and act as a mirror to the perfect art of the Creator, and the beauty of His names, which He willed to display throughout the universe, showing their importance.

And since the Creator wants to make Himself loved through all His

beings and to be responded to by all His intelligent creatures, one of them will respond with comprehensive worship in the name of all of them in the face of those comprehensive dominical manifestations; he will bring the land and sea to ecstasy, and with a tumultuous announcement and exaltation that will cause the heavens and earth to reverberate turn the gazes of those conscious creatures to the One who made the art; and with sacred instruction and teaching and a Qur'an of Mighty Stature that will draw the attention of all reasonable people, will demonstrate in the best way the divine purposes of that Sapient and All-Wise Maker; and who will respond most completely and perfectly to the manifestations of all His instances of wisdom and of His beauty and glory; the existence of such a being is as necessary, as essential for the universe as the existence of the sun. And the one who did this and performed those functions most perfectly was self-evidently the Most Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace). In which case, all the wisdom in the universe necessitates the messengership of Muhammad (UWBP) as the sun necessitates light, and light, the day.

Yes, just as through their greatest manifestation, the names of Sapient and All-Wise necessitate the messengership of Muhammad (UWBP) at the maximum degree, so too numerous most beautiful names like Allah, Most Merciful, All-Compassionate, Loving, Bestower, Munificent, Beauteous, and Sustainer necessitate through their greatest manifestation apparent in the universe, at the maximum degree and with absolute certainty, the messengership of Muhammad (UWBP).

For example, the all-embracing mercy which is the manifestation of the name of Most Merciful is apparent through the being sent as a Mercy to All the Worlds. Almighty God's making Himself known and loved, which is the manifestation of the name of Loving, yields the fruit of that Beloved of the Sustainer of All the Worlds and finds response in him. All instances of beauty, which are the manifestation of the name of Beauteous, that is, the beauty of the divine essence, the beauty of the divine names, beauty of art, and the beauty of creatures, are seen and displayed in the mirror of Muhammad (UWBP). The manifestations of the splendour of dominicality and sovereignty of divinity are known, become apparent and understood, and are confirmed through the messengership of Muhammad (UWBP), the herald of the dominion of dominicality. And so on, like these examples, most of the most beautiful names are shining proofs of the messengership of Muhammad (UWBP).

In Short: Since the universe exists and cannot be denied, neither can such observable truths as wisdom, grace, mercy, beauty, order, balance, and adornment, which are like the colours, embellishments, lights,

rays, arts, lives, and bonds of the universe be denied. Since it is impossible to deny these attributes and acts, certainly the Necessarily Existent, All-Wise, Munificent, Compassionate, Beauteous, Sapient, and Just One also, who is the One signified by those attributes, and is the Doer of those deeds, and the Sun and Source of those lights, can in no way be denied. And certainly the messengership of Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace), who is the supreme guide, most perfect teacher, pre-eminent herald, solver of the talisman of the universe, mirror of the Eternally Besought One, beloved of the Most Merciful, and the means of those attributes and acts being known, indeed of their perfection, and even of their being realized, can in no way be denied. His messengership is the universe's most brilliant light, like the lights of the world of reality and of the reality of the universe.

Blessings and peace be upon him to the number of seconds of the days and of the particles of creatures.

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

THE FOURTH POINT

The Divine Name Single

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Say: He is God, the One and Only.(112:1)*

[One fine point of this verse and a manifestation of the divine name of Single, which is a greatest name comprising the names of One and Unique, or one of the six lights comprising the greatest name, appeared to me in Eskişehir Prison in the month of Shawwal. Referring the details of that greatest manifestation to the Risale-i Nur, we shall here explain extremely briefly in seven short Indications the true affirmation of divine unity which the name of Single demonstrates through its maximum manifestation.]

FIRST INDICATION

The Twenty-Second Word and Thirty-Third Letter have shown in detail that through a greatest manifestation, the greatest name Single has placed a seal, a stamp, of divine unity on the universe as a whole and on each realm of beings in it, and on each individual being. Here, we shall point out only three stamps.

F i r s t S t a m p : The manifestation of divine singleness has placed a seal of unity on the face of the universe whereby it has made it an indivisible whole. One who does not have power of disposal over the whole universe cannot be the true owner of any part of it. The seal is this:

Like the finest machinery in a factory, the beings and realms of beings in the universe assist one another and work to complete each other's functions. With their solidarity and co-operation, their answering each other's requests and hastening to assist to each other, their embracing each other and being one within the other, they form a unity of existence according to which, like the members of the human body, they cannot be separated from each other. A person who controls one of its members yet does not have control over all of them, will not have true mastery over the single member.

Thus, this co-operation, solidarity, mutual response, and embracing one another forms a most brilliant supreme seal of divine unity.

S e c o n d S t a m p : Through the manifestation of the name Single, so brilliant a seal of divine oneness and stamp of unity has been placed on

the face of the earth and face of the spring that it proves that one who does not administer all the living creatures on the face of the globe together with all their members and attributes and states, and who does not know and see them all together, and cannot create them, cannot interfere in anything in respect of creation. The stamp is this:

Disregarding the truly orderly, yet hidden, stamps of the mineral substances, the elements, and inanimate creatures of the earth, consider the following stamp consisting of the woven threads of the two hundred thousand animal species and two hundred thousand plant species: we see with our own eyes in the spring on the earth that all things with their different duties, different forms, different sustenance, different members are given everything they need, without confusion and without error, with complete distinction and differentiation, with extremely sensitive balance, without difficulty, at exactly the right time, from unexpected places despite their being one within the other and all mixed up together. This situation, this planning, this administration forms such a seal of divine unity and stamp of oneness that one who cannot create all those creatures at once from nothing, cannot interfere in anything at all in respect of dominicality and creation. For if something had interfered, the equilibrium of that utterly vast administration would have been spoilt. However, man apparently serves the smooth application of those laws of dominicality, at the divine command.

Third Stamp: This stamp of divine oneness is on man's face, indeed, is man's face: one who does not hold in his gaze all the human beings who have come and will come from the time of Adam till the end of the world, and cannot place a distinguishing mark on each of their faces, indeed, hundreds of distinguishing marks, can have no part in respect of creation in the stamp of unity on the face of any single one of them. Yes, the one who places that stamp on man's face must surely hold within his view and encompass with his knowledge all the members of the human race, for although the basic members of the human face resemble one another, each face possesses points of difference. All the members of the face, such as the eye and ear, resembling each other forms a stamp of unity testifying that humankind's Maker is One; similarly, the many wise differences – unlike other species – distinguishing one from the other so they are not confused and to preserve the rights of all of them, are both subtle stamps of divine oneness, and denote the Maker of unity's will, choice, and volition. They show that one who cannot create all men and animals, indeed, the universe, cannot apply that stamp.

SECOND INDICATION

The worlds, species, and elements of the universe are so intertwined and interwoven that any cause that does not possess the universe as a whole cannot have true disposal over any of its elements. The manifestation of unity proceeding from the name of Single has included the whole universe within a unity so that everything proclaims it. For example, the universe's lamp, the sun, being one indicates that the whole universe belongs to one, so too, the sponges of clouds which water the garden of the earth being the same, and the rain which comes to aid of all living creatures being the same and falling everywhere, and most of the animal and plant species spreading freely over the earth and their species and habitats being the same, are most certain signs and testimonies indicating that all those beings, as well the places they are found, are the property of a single being.

Following this analogy, the realms of beings in the universe are so interwoven they have made the universe into a totality which is indivisible in respect of creation. A cause that does not have rule over the whole universe can govern nothing at all in respect of dominicality and creativity; it cannot make a single particle heed it.

THIRD INDICATION

Through its greatest manifestation, the name Single has made the universe into innumerable missives of the Eternally Besought One whereby each displays seals of divine oneness and stamps of unity to the number of its words – as though printed – and points to its Scribe to the number of those seals.

Yes, all flowers, all fruits, all grasses, and all animals even, and all trees are seals of divine oneness and stamps of divine unity, which, together with the places they are found, which take the form of missives, are like signatures showing the one who wrote the place. For example, a buttercup in a garden is like a seal of the garden's inscriber. Whosever seal the flower is, all flowers of the same sort on the face of the earth indicate clearly that they are his words and that the garden too is his writing. This means that all things ascribe everything to the One who created them, pointing to a maximum affirmation of divine unity.

FOURTH INDICATION

In addition to being clear as the sun, the greatest manifestation of the name Single is so reasonable as to be necessary and can be accepted with infinite ease. Numerous proofs demonstrating that the association of partners with God, the opposite and opponent of that manifestation, is

infinitely difficult and infinitely far from reason, indeed, impossible and precluded, have been explained in various parts of the Risale-i Nur. For the present referring the details of the points of those proofs to those treatises, we shall here expound only three Points.

The First: We have demonstrated with certain proofs, briefly at the end of the Tenth and Twenty-Ninth Words and in detail at the end of the Twentieth Letter, that in relation to the power of the Single and Unique One, the creation of the greatest thing is as easy as the smallest. It administers a large tree as comfortably as a small fruit. Whereas if referred to numerous causes, each fruit becomes as difficult and expensive as a tree, and a flower as difficult and troublesome as the spring.

Yes, if the equipment of an army is made on the orders of a single commander in a single factory, it is as easy as making the equipment of a single soldier, whereas if the equipment of all the soldiers is made in different factories and the army's administration passes from a single officer to many, then each soldier will require factories to the number of the army's soldiers. In just the same way, if everything is ascribed to the Single and Unique One, the innumerable members of an entire species become as easy as a single member. While if attributed to causes each becomes as difficult as the whole species.

Yes, both unity and singleness come about through everything being connected with the One of Unity, and through reliance on Him. And this reliance and connection may become a boundless power and strength for the thing. Through the strength of the reliance and connection, that small thing may perform works far exceeding its individual strength, and produce results. While something very powerful that does not rely on the Single Unique One and is not connected to Him can perform small works in accordance with its individual strength, and the results diminish accordingly.

For example, a strong, bold man who is not a regular soldier is compelled to carry his own ammunition and provisions himself, and so can hold out only temporarily against ten enemy. For his individual strength is limited. But a soldier who by belonging to the army is connected to and relies on the commander-in-chief, is not compelled to carry his own sources of strength and provisions; his connection and reliance become an inexhaustible strength for him, like a treasury. Through the strength of his connection, he may capture a field marshal of the defeated enemy army, together with thousands of others.

That is to say, in divine unity and divine singleness, through the strength of the connection, an ant may defeat a Pharaoh and a fly defeat a Nimrod

and a microbe a tyrant, and a seed as tiny as a chickpea may bear on its shoulders a pine-tree as majestic as a mountain. Yes, a commander-in-chief may send an army to the assistance of one soldier and assemble an army behind the soldier so that he has the moral support of the army behind him and through that strength may perform great works in the commander's name. Similarly, since the Pre-Eternal Monarch is Single and One, He has no need of any sort. If to suppose that He did have need, He would send all things to the assistance of everything and assemble the army of the universe behind one thing and everything could rely on a strength as great as the universe and in the face of everything, all things – to suppose that He did have the need – could become like the Single Commander's strength. If there were no divine singleness, everything would lose all this strength and become as nothing; their results too would dwindle to nothing.

Thus, the appearance of these truly wondrous works out of most insignificant unimportant things which we all the time observe with our eyes self-evidently demonstrates divine singleness and divine oneness. If it were not for them, the results, fruits, and works of everything would decrease to the substance and strength of each thing; they would be reduced to nothing. Nothing of the infinite abundance and infinite inexpensiveness of the extremely valuable things we see around us would remain. A melon or pomegranate that we now buy for a small sum, we would not be able to procure for a fortune. Yes, all the ease, all the abundance, all the inexpensiveness in the world arise from divine unity and testify to divine singleness.

S e c o n d P o i n t : Beings are created in two ways; one is creation from nothing called origination and invention, and other is the giving of existence through bringing together existent elements and things, called composition and assembling. When in accordance with the manifestation of divine singleness and mystery of divine oneness, this occurs with an infinite ease, indeed, such ease as to be necessary. If not ascribed to divine singleness, it would be infinitely difficult and irrational, difficult to the degree of impossibility. However, the fact that the beings in the universe come into existence with infinite ease and facility and no difficulty at all, and in perfect form, self-evidently shows the manifestation of divine singleness and proves that everything is directly the art of the Single One of Glory.

Yes, if things are ascribed to the Single One of Unity, they are created from nothing through His infinite power, the immensity of which is perceived through its works, like striking a match. And through His all-embracing, infinite knowledge everything is appointed a measure like an immaterial mould. The particles of all things are situated easily in the

mould existent in knowledge, in accordance with the form and plan of everything in the mirror of knowledge and they preserve their positions in good order.

If it is necessary to gather together particles from round about, the particles are bound together in regular fashion like the soldiers of an obedient army in accordance with the comprehensive principles of power and laws of knowledge. Driven by power in accordance with knowledge, they come, enter the mould existent in knowledge in accordance with the measure of divine determining, which encompasses the thing's existence, and with ease form its being. Like the reflection in a mirror being clothed in external existence on paper by means of a camera, or the invisible writing of a letter appearing when it is spread with a special substance, with the greatest ease power clothes with external existence the essences of things and forms of beings present in the mirror of the Single One of Unity's pre-eternal knowledge; it brings them from the World of Meaning to the Apparent World, and shows them to us.

If beings are not ascribed to the Single One of Unity, it would be necessary to gather together the being of a fly from all round the earth and from the elements, quite simply sifting the face of the earth and the elements and bringing from everywhere the particles particular to its being. And in order to situate them in proper order in its being so full of art, a physical mould, indeed moulds to the number of its members would be necessary. Then too the senses in its being, and its fine, subtle immaterial faculties like spirit, would have to be drawn from the immaterial worlds in a particular measure.

Thus, the creation of a fly in this way would be as difficult as that of the universe. The difficulties would be multiplied a hundred times, indeed, would be a compounded impossibility. For as all the people of religion and scientists are agreed, nothing apart from the Single One can create from nothing and non-existence. In which case, if referred to causes and nature, everything may be given existence only through being gathered together from most things.

Third Point: We shall explain briefly two or three comparisons which are elucidated in other parts of the Risale-i Nur, showing how, if ascribed to a Single One of Unity, all things become as easy as a single thing, whereas if referred to causes and nature, the existence of a single thing becomes as difficult as that of all things.

For example: If the positions and administration of a thousand soldiers are referred to one officer, and that of one soldier to ten officers, to command the one soldier will be ten times more difficult than commanding a battalion. For those who command him will form obstacles to one another,

and in the resulting disorder, the soldier will have no peace. Whereas if to obtain the desired result and situation a battalion is referred to a single officer, he can achieve the result easily, without difficulty, and give it that situation. If to obtain the result and situation, it is referred to the soldiers without a chief, leader, or sergeant, they will only be achieved with much dispute and difficulty, in great disorder, and deficiently.

Second Comparison: For example, if a master builder is appointed to give the stones in the dome of a mosque like Aya Sophia their suspended position, he may do so easily. But if it is referred to the stones themselves, they will all have to be both absolutely dominant and absolutely subject to each other in order to support each other in that suspended position. For the work the master builder performs easily to be carried out, work a hundred times greater, of a hundred builders, will have to be carried out, only then may such a position be achieved.

Third Comparison: For example, since the globe of the earth is an official, a soldier, of the Single One of Unity which heeds that single One's single command, such results are obtained as the change of the seasons, the alternation of day and night, the lofty, majestic motions of the heavens, and the changes in the cinema-like celestial scenes. On receiving the single command of that Single One, in rapturous joy at its duty, a single soldier like the earth rises to revolve in two motions like an ecstatic Mevlevi dervish, and is the means to those splendid results being achieved. It is as if the single soldier is commanding magnificent manoeuvres on the face of the universe.

If not ascribed to a Single One whose rule of divinity and sovereignty of dominicality encompass the whole universe, and whose command and rule cover all beings, those results, heavenly manoeuvres, and earthly seasons could only be obtained by millions of stars and globes a thousand times larger than the earth travelling the long distance of millions of years every twenty-four hours and every year.

Thus, those results being obtained through the two motions – in its orbit and on its axis like an ecstatic Mevlevi dervish – of a single official like the globe of the earth, is an example of the infinite ease there is in divine unity. While their being obtained through endlessly long ways millions of times more difficult than the motion described above is an example of just how difficult, indeed, impossible is the way of associating partners with God and unbelief, and just what impossible, absurd things are found on it.

Consider the ignorance of those who worship causes and nature through the following example: you can understand how far from reason it is and how ignorant to suppose that after preparing in orderly fashion through his

wondrous art the parts or machinery of a wonderful factory, or marvellous clock, or splendid palace, or fine book, a person does not himself assemble the parts easily and work them, but with protracted and high expense makes each part, each mechanism, and even each sheet of paper and pen into extraordinary machines in order to make the parts themselves construct and work the factory, palace, and clock, and write the book instead of the craftsman. And he refers to them the art and craft, which is the means of displaying all his arts and skills, which he has great desire to exhibit.

In just the same way, those who attribute creation to causes and nature fall into compounded ignorance. For above nature and causes are extremely well-ordered works of art, and they too are artefacts like other creatures. The one who makes them thus, makes their results too and displays them together. The one who makes the seed, also makes the tree above it. And the one who makes the tree, is the one who makes the fruits above it. Otherwise further well-ordered natures and causes would be necessary for other, different natures and causes to come into existence. And so on, ad infinitum. One would have to accept the existence of an infinite, meaningless, impossible chain of illusory fancies. This would be the most extraordinary ignorance.

FIFTH INDICATION

We have demonstrated with decisive proofs in many places that the most fundamental characteristic of rulership is independence and separateness. Even the weak shadow of rulership in impotent men vehemently rejects the interference of others and does not permit others to meddle in its duty, and in this way preserves its independence. Many kings have mercilessly put to death their innocent children and loved brothers on account of this rejection of interference. That is to say, independence, separateness, and the rejection of the interference of others are the most basic characteristics of true rulership, and are its inseparable necessities and perpetual essentials.

It is because of this characteristic that divine rulership, which is at the degree of absolute dominicality, most vehemently rejects the association of any partners and the participation and interference of others. The Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition too, insistently, repeatedly, and sternly, indicates divine unity and rejects with severe threats the association of partners with God.

Thus, the divine rulership in dominicality necessitates divine unity and indicates a most powerful motive and necessitating cause for it. So too the

infinitely perfect order and harmony on the face of the universe, apparent from the totality of the universe and the stars, and the plants, animals and minerals to particulars, individuals, and minute particles, form an indubitably veracious witness to and clear proof of that singleness and unity. For if others had interfered, this most sensitive balance, order, and regularity of the universe would have been spoilt and signs of disorder would have been apparent. In accordance with the meaning of the verse,

If there were in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides God, there would have been confusion in both!,(21:22)

this wondrous, perfect order of the universe would have been thrown into confusion and been spoilt. Whereas, according to the verse,

So turn your vision again; do you see any flaw?,(67:3)

from minute particles to the planets, from the ground to the divine throne, there is no sign of fault, defect, or confusion. Thus the order of the universe and of creatures and the balance of beings, demonstrate most brilliantly the greatest manifestation of the name of Single and testify to divine unity.

Moreover, since, through the mystery of the manifestation of divine oneness, the tiniest living creature is a miniature sample of the universe and a small index of it, only the One who holds the whole universe in the grasp of His power can lay claim to it. And since, in regard to creation, a seed is not inferior to a tree, and a tree is a small universe, and all living beings are like small universes and small worlds, this mystery of divine oneness has made the association of partners with God impossible.

By virtue of this mystery, the universe is not only an indivisible whole, but is also by its nature, a universal whose division and being broken up into parts is impossible and which does not accept participation and numerous hands in its creation. Thus, since each part of it is a particular and individual part, and the whole also is a universal, it precludes the participation of others in it. It proves to the degree of being self-evident the greatest manifestation of the name of Single, the reality of divine unity, and this mystery of divine oneness.

Yes, since the realms of beings in the universe are interwoven and interbonded and the functions of each look to all, it has made the universe, in respect of dominicality and creation, like an indivisible whole. So too, the all-encompassing general acts in the universe are interwoven and interpenetrated. For example, the acts of nurturing and giving of sustenance are apparent at the same instant within the act of giving life. And the acts of ordering and decking out the living creature's body are observed at the same time within those acts of nurturing and giving of life. And at the same

time the acts of giving of form, raising, and regulating strike the eye within those acts of nurturing, giving life, ordering, and decking out. And so on, since such all-encompassing and general acts are interpenetrated and one within the other and blended together like the seven colours in light, indeed, are united; and since each of those acts encompasses and embraces most beings and are a single act and by nature are the same; and since the one who performs the acts must be the same; and since each of them pervades the whole universe and unites with the other acts in co-operation and assistance; it has made the universe into an indivisible whole. Similarly, since all living creatures are like seeds, indexes, and samples of the universe, it has made the universe from the point of view of dominicality like a universal whose division and breaking into parts is impossible. That is to say, the universe is a totality so that to be Lord and Sustainer of a part of it is only possible by being Lord and Sustainer of the whole. And it is a universal so that each part of it has become like a single member; to make any one single member submit to His dominicality is only possible by subjugating the universal.

SIXTH INDICATION

Dominical singleness and divine unity are the means and basis of all perfections,¹ and the source and origin of the purposes and wisdom in the universe's creation. They are also the source and sole means of attaining the wishes and desires of conscious beings and rational beings, and particularly of man. If not for divine singleness, all man's wishes and demands would be extinguished. The results of the universe's creation would also decline to nothing, and the majority of existent, certain perfections would be annihilated.

For example, man has an intense, unshakeable, passionate desire for immortality. Only One who through the mystery of singleness holds the whole universe in His grasp and can close down this world and open up the hereafter as easily as shutting up one house and opening another can satisfy this desire. And like this one, man's thousands of desires which stretch to eternity and are spread throughout the universe are tied to the mystery of

¹ In fact, divine unity is the clearest proof and most powerful evidence for the existence of endless divine perfections and beauty. For if the universe's Maker is known to be the Unique One of Unity, all the perfections and beauty of the universe are known to be the shadows, manifestations, signs, and distillations of the sacred perfections and beauty present in that Maker of Unity. Otherwise the universe's perfections and beauties would have pertained to creatures and causes, and the eternal treasury of divine perfections would have remained unknown for the human mind, and without a key.

singleness and the reality of divine unity. If not for divine singleness, they would not be, they would be fruitless. And if not for the Single One who through divine unity has disposal over the entire universe, those desires could not be satisfied. And even supposing they were, they would be so very deficiently.

It is because of this mighty mystery that the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition repeatedly and fervently and with elevated eloquence teaches divine unity and singleness. Similarly, all the prophets, purified scholars, and saints found their greatest pleasure and happiness in the profession of divine unity, "There is no god but God."

SEVENTH INDICATION

Just as Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace) taught, proved, and proclaimed most perfectly the true affirmation of divine unity in all its degrees, so his messengership was established as surely and certainly as divine unity. For since he taught divine unity, the greatest reality in the sphere of existence, together with all its truths, it may be said that all the arguments proving divine unity indirectly though decisively prove his messengership, the authenticity of his duty, and the rightness of his cause. Yes, a messengership that discovered and truly taught divine singleness and unity, which bring together those thousands of elevated truths, is most definitely necessitated and required by that singleness and unity; they certainly require it.

Thus, Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace) carried out that duty to the letter. Now, we shall explain by way of example, three out of numerous evidences and causes that testify to the importance and elevatedness of his collective personality, attesting that it is a sun in the universe.

The First: In accordance with the rule "The cause is like the doer," the equivalent of all the good deeds performed throughout the centuries by all his community has passed to the book of good deeds of Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace). So too, by thinking of the certain acceptance of the salawa't prayers for the Prophet (UWBP), which every day all his community recite for him, and the station and degree that those endless prayers necessitate, it may be understood that the collective personality of Muhammad (UWBP) is a sun in the universe.

The Second: Think of Muhammad's (Upon whom be blessings and peace) spiritual progress: his essential being was the source, seed, life, and means of the mighty tree of the world of Islam: it arose from his performing with his extraordinary capacity and faculties the sacred worship and glorifications which form the spiritual aspects of the world of Islam,

perceiving all their meaning; so understand how much more elevated than other sainthoods was the sainthood of Muhammadan (UWBP) worship, by which he rose to the rank of God's beloved.

At one time, a single glorification was unfolded to me in one of the prayers in a manner close to how the Companions of the Prophet perceived them, and it appeared to me as important as a month's worship. I understood the Companions' high worth. It meant that in the early days of Islam, the effulgence and light proceeding from the sacred words had a different quality. Their newness imparted a different flavour, subtlety, and freshness that with the passage of time have become obscured and have diminished through neglect. With his wondrous capacity Muhammad (UWBP) received them new and fresh from their original source, the Most Pure and Holy Essence, and absorbed and assimilated them. He could therefore receive the effulgence from a single glorification that others could receive only from a year's worship.

From this you may understand the degree Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace) progressed through the degrees of perfections, which are without bound or limit.

T h e T h i r d : Since mankind is the pivot of all the Creator's purposes in the universe; and since with his superior understanding man has received the addresses of that Glorious One; and since Muhammad (UWBP) was the most famous and renowned of mankind, and as his works and achievements testify, its most perfect and magnificent individual; that Single One of Glory took Muhammad (UWBP) as His addressee in the name of mankind, indeed, on account of the whole universe; He made manifest in him boundless effulgences and endless perfections.

There are numerous points like these three that prove conclusively that just as the collective personality of Muhammad (UWBP) is the spiritual sun of the universe, so is it the supreme sign of the mighty Qur'an known as the universe, and the greatest name of that Supreme Distinguisher between Truth and Falsehood, and the mirror of the greatest manifestation of the name Single. We beseech the Single, Unique, Eternally Besought One that blessings and peace to the number of particles of the universe multiplied by the seconds of the minutes of all time descend on Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace) from the infinite treasury of His mercy.

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

THE FIFTH POINT

The Divine Name Ever-Living

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

Look, then, to the signs of God's mercy – how He restores life to the earth after its death – verily He it is Who quickens the dead, for He is powerful over all things.(30:50)

There appeared to my mind in the distance in the month of Shawwal in Eskişehir Prison a fine point concerning this mighty verse, and another about the following mighty verse,

God! There is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep,(2:255)

together with a manifestation of the name Ever-Living, which is the greatest name or one of the two lights of the greatest name or one light of its six lights. I did not record them, for at the time I was unable to swiftly capture that sacred bird. Now after it has drawn away, I shall at least indicate briefly by means of a number of signs a few rays of that supreme truth and sublime light.

FIRST SIGN

The index-like answer to the questions “What is life?” and “What is its true nature and purpose?”, which are a greatest manifestation of the names of Ever-Living and Giver of Life, is this:

Life is:

The most important aim of the universe;

Its greatest result;

Its most brilliant light;

Its subtlest leaven;

Its distilled essence;

Its most perfect fruit;

Its most elevated perfection;

Its finest beauty;

Its most beautiful adornment;

The secret of its undividedness;

The bond of its unity;

The source of its perfections;

In regard to art and nature, a most wondrous being endowed with spirit;

A miraculous reality which makes the tiniest creature into a universe;

A most extraordinary miracle of divine power that connects the animate creature to most beings and makes it a tiny universe as well as being the means whereby the universe is situated in a tiny animate creature and displays a sort of index of the huge universe in the creature;

A wondrous divine art that makes a tiny part the greatest whole, and makes a particular a universal or world, and shows that in regard to dominicality the universe is an indivisible whole or universal that cannot be broken into parts and which accepts no participation;

The most brilliant, the most decisive, and the most perfect of proofs testifying to the necessary existence of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One; and among divine artefacts is the lightest and most apparent, and the most valuable and abundant, and the purest, most shining, and most meaningful embroidery of dominical art;

A graceful, refined, delicate manifestation of divine mercy which makes other beings serve itself;

A comprehensive mirror of the divine attributes;

A wonder of dominical creation comprising the manifestations of such numerous most beautiful names as Merciful, Provider, Compassionate, Munificent, and All-Wise, that subjects to itself many truths like sustenance, wisdom, grace, and mercy, and is the source and origin of all the senses, like sight, hearing, and touch;

A transformation-machine in the vast workshop of the universe that continuously cleanses everywhere, purifies, allows progress, and illuminates, while living bodies, the dwellings of life, are guesthouses, schools, and barracks for instructing and illuminating the caravans of particles, enabling them to perform their duties. Quite simply the Ever-Living Self-Subsistent One makes subtle this dark, transient, lowly world, illuminates it and gives it a sort of permanence, preparing it to go to another, everlasting world;

Life's two faces, that is, its inner and outer faces, are both shining, elevated, and without dirt or defect. It is an exceptional creature on which apparent causes have not been placed, veiling the disposal of power, in order to show clearly that it has emerged directly without veil or means from the hand of dominical power;

The reality of life looks to the six pillars of belief, proving them in meaning and indirectly. That is to say, it is a luminous truth which looks to and proves both the necessary existence of the Necessarily Existent One

and His eternal life, and the realm of the hereafter and everlasting life, and the existence of the angels, and the other pillars of belief.

Also, just as life is the purest essence of the universe, distilled from of it, so it is a mighty mystery producing thanks, worship, praise, and love, the most important divine purposes in the universe and most important results of the world's creation.

So consider these twenty-nine significant, valuable characteristics of life, and elevated, general duties. Then look and see the tremendousness of the name of Ever-Living behind the name of Giver of Life. Understand too how with these immense characteristics and fruits of life, the name of Ever-Living is a greatest name.

Also understand that since life is the most important result of the universe, and its greatest aim and most valuable fruit, it must have an aim and result as vast as the universe. For the tree's result is its fruit, so the fruit's result is the future tree by means of the seed. Yes, just as the aim and result of this life is eternal life, so one of its fruits is thanks to the Ever-Living Giver of Life, and worship and praise of Him and love for Him. And just as this thanks, love, praise and worship are the fruit of life, so are they the aim of the universe.

Understand also from this, the ugly ignorance and denial, indeed, unbelief, of those who say that the purpose of life is to live comfortably, enjoy oneself heedlessly, and indulge oneself in pleasure, and how they denigrate and insult the precious bounty of life, gift of consciousness, and bounty of reason, and what ghastly ingratitude they display.

SECOND SIGN

One would have to write treatises to the number of life's attributes to explain all its degrees, attributes, and duties, which is a maximum manifestation of the names Ever-Living and Giver of Life, mentioned in the index in the First Sign. So since some of them have been elucidated in various parts of the Risale-i Nur, we refer you to them for some of the details, and here point out only a few others.

It was said in the twenty-third of the twenty-nine properties of life that since life's two faces are transparent and unsullied, apparent causes have not been made a veil to the disposals of dominical power.

Yes, the meaning of this is as follows: for sure everything in the universe contains good and beauty, while evil and ugliness are minor, and have the function of being units of measurement to show the degrees of good and beauty and to augment and multiply their realities. In this way the evil becomes good and the ugliness, beauty. And apparent causes have

been made a veil to the disposals of power so that the complaints and anger arising from what are to the superficial view of conscious beings apparently ugliness, badness, disasters, and calamities, should not be directed to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, and so that the contact of sacred, pure divine power with apparently vile and filthy things should not offend the dignity of power. The causes cannot create, but have been placed to be the target of unjust complaints and objections and to preserve the dignity, sacredness, and unblemished nature of divine power.

As is explained in the Introduction to the Second Station of the Twenty-Second Word, Azra'il (Upon whom be peace) supplicated Almighty God concerning his duty of seizing the spirits of the dying, saying: "Your servants will be angry with me." He was told in reply: "I shall place the veil of illness and calamity between your duty and the dying, then they shall fling their arrows of complaint and objection, not at you, but at those veils."

According to this supplication, Azra'il's (Upon whom be peace) duty is a veil as other causes are apparent veils, so that the anger and complaints of those who do not see the true, beautiful face of death – beautiful for the people of belief – and do not know the manifestation of mercy on it, are not directed to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One. Yes, dignity and grandeur require that causes are curtain-holders to the Hand of Power in the mind's view, while divine unity and glory demand that causes withdraw their hands and have no true effect.

However, since both the outer and inner faces of life are without dirt, defect, or fault, there is nothing to invite complaints and objections; they hold no filth or ugliness contrary to the dignity and sacredness of power. The faces of life, therefore, have been surrendered directly, without veil, to the hand of the life-giving, restoring, resurrecting name of the Ever-Living Self-Subsistent One. Light is the same, and so are existence and the giving of existence. For this reason, creation and the giving of existence look directly without veil to the power of the All-Glorious One. Moreover, since rain is a sort of life and mercy, the time of its precipitation has not been made subject to a regular law, so that at all times of need hands will be raised to the divine court to seek it. If like the rising of the sun, rain had been subject to a law, that vital bounty would not have been sought and asked for at times of need.

THIRD SIGN

It was said in the twenty-ninth property of life that just as the result of the universe is life, so are thanks and worship the result of life, and the cause and ultimate reason for the universe's creation, and its desired result.

Yes, the universe's Ever-Living Self-Subsistent Maker certainly wants thanks from living creatures in return for His making Himself known and loved through so many sorts of bounties, and He wants their praise and laudation in return for His precious arts, and for His creatures to respond with worship and obedience to His dominical commands.

In accordance with this mystery of dominicality, it is because thanks and worship are the most important purpose of every sort of life and therefore of the whole universe that the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition urges thanks and worship with fervour, intensity, and sweetness. It states repeatedly that worship is for God alone, thanks is due only to Him, and praise is particular to Him. To state that thanks and praise should go directly to its True Owner, verses like,

*It is He Who gives life and death, and to Him [is due] the alternation of night and day.(23:80) * It is He Who gives life and death; and when He decides upon an affair, He says to it: "Be!", and it is.(40:68) * And gives life to the earth after its death,(30:24)*

point out that He holds life together with all its attributes, without veil, in the grasp of His power, and they reject intermediaries explicitly, and ascribe life directly to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One's hand of power, restricting it to Him. The verses,

*For God is He Who gives [all] sustenance – Lord of Power – Steadfast for ever.(51:58) * And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me.(26:80) * He is the One that sends down rain [even] after [men] have given up all hope,(42:28)*

show that things which provoke thanks such as sustenance, healing and rain, which also invite gratitude and thanks and stimulate a feeling of love and praise, also pertain directly to the Healing Provider, and that causes and intermediaries are a veil; that is, that sustenance, healing, and rain are particular to and restricted to the power of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One. To express this in accordance with the rules of grammar, the restrictive pronoun, "For God is He Who" [*Hu ar-Razzaq*] and "He is the One that" [*Hu aladhi*] has been used. The True Healer is the one who gives medicines their properties and creates their effects.

FOURTH SIGN

It was explained concerning the twenty-eighth property of life, that life looks to the six pillars of belief and proves them; it points to their truth.

Yes, since life is the most important result and fruit of the universe, and the purpose of its creation, certainly that elevated reality is not restricted to this fleeting, brief, deficient, painful worldly life. The aim and result of the

tree of life, the immensity of which is understood through its twenty-nine properties, is eternal life and the life of the hereafter; it is life in the realm of bliss, the very stones, trees, and earth of which are alive. The tree of life, decked out with this many significant members, would otherwise remain without fruit, benefit, purpose, and reality for intelligent beings and especially for man. Then man, whose capital and faculties are twenty times greater and more numerous than those of a sparrow and is the most exalted and important creature in the universe, and the highest living being, would fall lower than a sparrow in respect of the happiness of life, and become the most unhappy, the most debased of wretches.

Furthermore, by dwelling on the pains of the past and fears of the future, the intelligence, the most precious of bounties, would continuously wound the human heart; because it mixes nine pains with a single pleasure, it would become a calamitous affliction. This would be false to the hundredth degree. That is to say, the life of this world proves the pillar of belief in the hereafter decisively and in the spring, lays before our eyes more than three hundred thousand examples of the resurrection of the dead.

Is it at all possible that the All-Powerful Disposer of Affairs, who prepares with wisdom, grace, and mercy in your garden and country all the things and members necessary for your life; who makes them reach you at the appropriate time; who knows and hears even the tiny, particular prayer for food offered by your stomach through its desire for continued existence; and gratifies it, showing with innumerable delicious foods that He accepts its prayer – is it at all possible He does not see you and know you; would not prepare everything necessary for eternal life, mankind's greatest goal; and would not accept mankind's most urgent, important, universal prayer for immortality, of which it is worthy, through constructing the hereafter and creating Paradise; that He would not hear man's most powerful, general prayer, which rings out from the ground to the divine throne, although he is the ruler and result of the earth, nor hold him as important as a stomach, would not gratify him, so make him deny His perfect wisdom and endless mercy? God forbid, a hundred thousand times!

Is it at all possible that He should hear the most secret voice of the tiniest particular of life, heed its plaint, supply its cure, answer its want, nourish it solicitously, cause others to serve it attentively, and make His large creatures assist it; then not hear the thunderous voice of the largest and most valuable, immortal, most delicate life; and not take into consideration its powerful plea and prayer for immortality? That He should equip and superintend a common soldier with the greatest care and disregard a magnificent, obedient army? That He should see an atom and not see the sun?

That He should hear the buzzing of a mosquito and not hear the roar of thunder? God forbid! A hundred thousand times, God forbid!

Could the reason in any way accept that an All-Powerful and All-Wise One who is infinitely merciful, loving, and compassionate, who greatly loves His own art, makes Himself much loved, and loves greatly those who love Him, would condemn to everlasting death the life that loves Himself more than anything, is lovable and loved and by nature loves its Maker, condemn to death the spirit, the essence and substance of life; would He offend and make angry with Himself for all eternity that beloved friend of His, and wounding him in terrible fashion deny the mystery of His mercy and light of His love, and make him deny it? A hundred thousand times, God forbid! The absolute beauty which adorns the universe with its manifestation, the absolute mercy which makes happy all creatures, is most certainly exempt from such infinite ugliness, far elevated above such absolute tyranny, such unkindness.

C o n c l u s i o n : Since there is life in this world, those who understand the secret of life and do not misuse their lives will manifest eternal life in the realm of eternity and everlasting Paradise. In this we believe!

Shining objects on the face of the earth glistening with the sun's reflection, and bubbles on the surface of the sea sparkling and dying away with flashes of light and the bubbles that follow on after them again acting as mirrors to the imaginary miniature suns, self-evidently show that those flashes are the reflections and manifestations of a single, elevated sun. They recall the sun's existence with various tongues, and point to it with their fingers of light.

In just the same way, through the greatest manifestation of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One's name of Giver of Life, the living creatures on the earth and in the sea shine through divine power, and in order to make way for those that follow after them, utter "O Living One!" and vanish behind the veil of the Unseen, thus indicating and testifying to the life and necessary existence of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, who possesses eternal life.

Furthermore, all the evidences testifying to divine knowledge, the effect of which is apparent in the ordering of all creatures; and all the proofs demonstrating the power which has disposal over the universe; and all the evidences proving the will and volition which governs and directs the universe; and all the signs and miracles proving the missions of the prophets, the channels of divine revelation and dominical speech; and all the evidences attesting to the seven divine attributes – all these unanimously indicate, denote, and testify to the life of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One.

For if a thing has sight, it also has life; and if it has hearing, it is a sign of life; and if it has speech, it points to the existence of life; and if it has will and choice, it shows life. Thus, attributes such as absolute power, comprehensive will, and all-embracing knowledge, the existence of which is clear and certain due to their works and effects in the universe, testify, through all their evidences, to the life and necessary existence of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, the eternal life which illuminates the whole universe with a single of its shadows, and, through a single of its manifestations gives life to the realm of the hereafter, even its very particles.

Life looks also to the pillar of belief in the angels and proves it indirectly. For since the most important result of the universe is life; and it is living beings that are most widely spread, and because of their value, their copies are most duplicated, and who populate the guesthouse of the earth with their travelling caravans; and since the globe of the earth has been filled with so many living creatures, and for the purpose of renewing and multiplying the animate species is continuously emptied and refilled; and since life is created on it in even rotting and corrupt matter and it has become a mass of micro-organisms; and since consciousness and intelligence, the purest distilled essence of life, and spirit, its most subtle and stable substance, are created in great profusion on the earth, and quite simply the earth has been infused with life through life, intelligence, consciousness, and spirits, and inhabited in that way; since this is so, surely the heavenly bodies, which are subtler, more luminous, larger and more important than the earth, could not be dead, inanimate, lacking life and consciousness; it would be beyond the bounds of possibility. That is to say, in accordance with the mystery of life, there will surely be living, conscious inhabitants of the skies, the suns, and the stars suitable to the heavens, who will endow them with their living state, demonstrate the result of the creation of the heavens, and receive the divine addresses; and they are the angels.

The essential nature of life also looks to the pillar of belief in the messengers, and proves it indirectly. Yes, since the universe was created for life, and life is a greatest manifestation of the Pre-Eternal Self-Subsistent One, a perfect inscription of His, a most beautiful work of His art; and since the Eternal Life shows Itself through the sending of messengers and revealing of scriptures, for if there were no Books or messengers, that Pre-Eternal Life would not be known – just as it is through his speech that it is understood that a person is alive, so too it is messengers and the scriptures they bring that make known the words and speech of the One who speaks from beyond the World of the Unseen, beneath the veil of the universe,

who commands and prohibits and utters His address – then certainly just as the life in the universe testifies decisively to the necessary existence of the Pre-Eternal Ever-Living One, it looks also to the pillars of belief the sending of messengers and revelation of scriptures, which are the rays, manifestations, and communications of that Pre-Eternal Life. And since the messengership of Muhammad (UWBP) and the Qur’anic revelation are like the spirit and intelligence of life, it may be said that their truth is as certain as the existence of life.

Yes, just as life is the distilled essence of the universe; and consciousness and sense perception are distilled from life and are the essence of life; and intelligence too is distilled from consciousness and sense perception and is the essence of consciousness; and spirit is the pure, unsullied substance of life, its stable and autonomous essence; so too, the physical and spiritual life of Muhammad (UWBP) is the distilled quintessence of the life and spirit of the universe; and the messengership of Muhammad (UWBP) is the very purest essence distilled from the senses, consciousness, and intelligence of the universe. Indeed, the physical and spiritual life of Muhammad (UWBP), is, through the testimony of its works, the very life of the universe’s life. And Muhammad’s (UWBP) messengership is the consciousness and light of the universe’s consciousness. While the Qur’anic revelation, according to the testimony of its living truths, is the spirit of the universe’s life and the intelligence of its consciousness.

Yes, yes, yes! If the light of Muhammad’s (UWBP) messengership were to depart from the universe, the universe would die. If the Qur’an were to depart, the universe would go mad, the earth would lose its head and its reason; it would even strike its now unconscious head on a planet and Doomsday would occur.

Life also looks to the pillar of belief in divine determining and proves it indirectly. Because, since life is the light of the Manifest World, and it dominates it, and is the result and aim of existence, and since it is the most comprehensive mirror of the Creator of the universe and the most perfect sample and index of dominical activity, and – let there be no mistake in the comparison – is like a sort of programme; for sure, the mystery of life necessitates that the creatures in the World of the Unseen, that is, the past and the future, that is, that have been and will come, are predisposed to conform to order, regularity, being known and observed, specific individual existence, and the creative commands, which are their lives in one respect.

The original seed of a tree and its root, as well as the seeds contained in its fruit and final outcome, all manifest a sort of life no less than the tree

itself; indeed, they bear within themselves laws of life more subtle than those of the tree. Similarly, the seeds and roots left by last autumn, before the present spring, as well as the seeds and roots that will be left to subsequent springs after this spring has departed – they all bear the manifestations of life, just like this spring, and are subject to the laws of life. In just the same way, all the branches and twigs of the cosmic tree each have a past and a future. They have a chain consisting of past and future stages and circumstances. The multiple existences and stages of each species and each member of each species, existing in divine knowledge, forms a chain of being in God's knowledge, and like its external existence, its existence in God's knowledge is a manifestation of universal life that draws all the aspects of its life from these meaningful and vital Tablets of divine determining.

The fact that the World of Spirits – which is one form of the World of the Unseen – is full of the essence of life, the matter of life, and the spirits, which are the substances and essence of life, of a certainty demands and requires that the past and future – which are another form of the World of the Unseen and its second segment – should also receive the manifestation of life.

In addition, the perfect order, the meaningful circumstances and vital fruits and stages inherent in the existence of a thing within God's knowledge, also demonstrate the manifestation of a sort of life. Such a manifestation of life, which is the light emitted by the sun of eternal life, cannot be limited to this Manifest World, this present time, this external existence. On the contrary, each world receives the manifestation of that light in accordance with its capacity, and the cosmos together with all its worlds is alive and illumined through it. Otherwise, as the misguided imagine, beneath a temporary and apparent life, each world would be a vast and terrible corpse, a dark ruin.

One broad aspect of the pillar of belief in divine determining and decree is, then, understood through the mystery of life and is established by it. Just as the life and vitality of the Manifest World and existent, visible objects become apparent from their orderliness and the consequences of their existence, so too past and future creatures – regarded as belonging to the World of the Unseen – have an immaterial existence and sort of life, and a spiritual presence in God's knowledge. The trace of this life and presence is made manifest and known by means of the Tablet of divine determining and decree and through all the stages and circumstances of their external lives and existences.

FIFTH SIGN

Also, it was said concerning the sixteenth property of life that when life enters a thing, it makes it into a world; if a part, it affords it the comprehensiveness of a whole; if a particular, the extensiveness of a universal.

Yes, life possesses such extensiveness it is simply a comprehensive mirror of divine oneness, showing in itself most of the divine names manifested throughout the universe. When life enters a body, it makes it a small world; like a sort of seed of the tree of the universe, containing an index of it. In the same way that a seed can only be the work of a power capable of making the tree that bears it, the one who creates the tiniest living beings has to be the Creator of all the universe.

Thus, through this comprehensiveness, life demonstrates in itself a most obscure mystery of divine oneness. That is, like the mighty sun is present with its light, reflection, and seven colours in every drop of water and fragment of glass facing it, so the divine names and attributes which encompass the universe are manifested together in all living beings. From this point of view, in regard to creation and dominicality, life makes the universe into an indivisible whole, a universal whose being broken into parts and in which others can share is outside the bounds of possibility.

Yes, the stamp on your face shows self-evidently that the One who creates you is the One who creates all humankind. For the nature of man's creation is the same; it cannot be split up. Also, by means of life the parts of the universe are like the individual members of mankind, and the universe, like the species. It shows the seal of divine oneness and stamp of eternal besoughtness on every individual, the same as it shows them on the whole, thus in every way repulsing the associating of partners with God.

Also, there are such extraordinarily wondrous miracles of dominical art in life that one, a power, that cannot create the whole universe cannot create the tiniest animate creature. Yes, a pen that inscribes in a tiny seed the index of the huge pine-tree, and the programme of its life, like writing the whole Qur'an in a chickpea, can surely be none other than the pen that writes the heavens together with the stars. And the one who places in the tiny head of a bee the ability and faculties to know the flowers in the garden of the universe, be connected with most of its realms, convey a gift of divine mercy like honey, and know on the day it comes into the world the conditions of life, can surely be none other than the Creator of the entire universe.

I n S h o r t : Life is a shining seal of divine unity on the face of the

universe; and in respect of life all beings with spirits are stamps of divine oneness; and the embroideries and art in every living being form a seal of eternal besoughtedness; and living creatures set their signatures with their lives on the missive of the universe in the name of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One to their number, and are seals of divine unity, stamps of divine oneness, and signets of divine eternal besoughtedness. Similarly, just as all living beings are seals of divine unity in this book of the universe, like life; so a seal of divine oneness has been placed of the faces and features of each.

Furthermore, just as life forms signatures and seals testifying to the unity of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One to the number of its particulars and of animate beings, the act of raising and restoring to life also puts signatures to divine unity to the number of beings. For example, the raising to life of the earth, which is a single individual, testifies to divine unity as brilliantly as the sun. For in the raising to life of the earth in spring, three hundred thousand species and the species' innumerable individual members are restored to life one within the other, without fault or defect, in perfect, regular order. The one who performs a single act such as that together with innumerable other orderly acts must surely be the Creator of all beings and the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, and the Single One of Unity any partnership in whose dominicality is impossible.

For now, this small number of life's properties has been described briefly, and we refer the explanation and detailed discussion of its other properties to the Risale-i Nur and to another time.

Conclusion

The greatest name is not the same for everyone; it differs. For example, for Imam ‘Ali (May God be pleased with him) it was the six names Single, Ever-Living, Self-Subsistent, Sapient, All-Just, and Most Holy. For Imam al-A‘zam, it was two names; Sapient and All-Just. While for Ghawth al-A‘zam it was Ever-Living. For Imam Rabbani, the greatest name was Self-Subsistent, and so on; many other people held different names to be the greatest name.

In connection with this Fifth Point being about the name Ever-Living, as both a blessing, and a witness, and an evidence, and as a sacred proof, and as a prayer for ourselves, and as a happy conclusion to this treatise, we include the following, uttered by God’s Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) in the supreme supplication called *al-Jaushan al-Kabir*, which shows the extremely elevated and comprehensive degree of his knowledge of God. We shall travel in the imagination to that time and saying “Amen” to what the Noble Messenger (Upon whom be blessings and peace) said, shall utter the same supplication with his voice as though saying it ourselves:

O He who was living before all living beings;

O He who shall live after all living beings;

O Living One whom no living being resembles;

O Living One whom nothing is like;

O Living One who needs no other living being;

O Living One who takes no living being as partner;

O Living One who causes all living beings to die;

O Living One who provides the sustenance of all living beings;

O Living One who restores to life the dead;

O Living One whom death touches not —

Glory be unto You! There is no god but You! Mercy! Mercy! Deliver us from Hell-fire! Amen!

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

THE FIFTH POINT

The Divine Name Self-Subsistent

[This point discusses the divine name Self-Subsistent. It is a summary of the Fifth Point about the name Ever-Living, is an addendum to *Nur Çeşmesi* (The Fountainhead of Light), and is also considered appropriate to be an Addendum to the Thirtieth Word.]

An Apology

These important matters concerning the profound, comprehensive greatest manifestation of the name of Self-Subsistent occurred to me as separate flashes and are therefore not well-arranged. They have moreover remained in the form of an ill-arranged, speedily written uncorrected rough copy. For these reasons many deficiencies and much disorderliness are bound to be apparent in the phraseology and manner of expression. You must forgive my defects for the sake of the beauties of the matters discussed.

A Reminder

The points concerning the greatest name are comprehensive to the utmost degree and also extremely profound, especially the matters concerned with the name of Self-Subsistent, as are those of the First Ray in particular.¹ Furthermore since these latter look to the materialists and have penetrated the subject to an even greater degree, everyone will not be able to understand every matter in all its aspects. They will, however, be able to grasp a part of each matter. According to the rule of “A thing should not be abandoned completely even if it is not wholly obtained,” it is not reasonable to leave aside such a matter altogether, saying: “I cannot pick all the fruits in this immaterial garden.” Whatever the amount of fruit a person can pick, it will be of benefit. For just as the matters connected with the greatest name are extensive to a degree beyond comprehension, so are they also subtle to the degree the mind cannot distinguish them. Not everyone’s mind will reach the Fifth and Sixth Points concerning the names of Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent, in particular the allusions of life to the pillars of belief and particularly to the pillar of divine determining and decree in the Fifth Point, but

¹ If the person reading this treatise does not have a knowledge of science, he should not begin with the First Ray, but with the Second and should read the First at the end.

they will not remain without some share of them and in any event these matters will strengthen their belief. The importance of strengthening belief, the key to eternal happiness, is truly tremendous. Even an iota's increase is a treasure. Imam Rabbani, Ahmad al-Faruqi, said: "In my view, increase in only a small aspect of belief is preferable to hundreds of illuminations and spiritual delights."

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

*In Whose hand is the dominion of all things.(36:83) * To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth.(39:63; 42:12) * And there is nothing but with Us are its treasures.(15:21) * There is not a moving creature but He has grasp of its forelock.(11:56)*

Imparted to my mind during the month of Dhi'l-Qa'da was a point concerning verses like these that allude to divine Self-Subsistence, a greatest manifestation of the name Self-Subsistent, which is either the greatest name, or the second of the two lights of the greatest name, or the sixth of its six lights. My situation in Eskişehir Prison does not allow me to explain that greatest light fully. However, Imam 'Ali (May God be pleased with him) expounded the greatest name in his ode *Arjuza* under the exalted name of *Sakina*, and in his ode *Jaljalutiyya* he considered these six names contained within the greatest name together with some other sublime names, and said they were the greatest and most important. I have received extraordinary consolation from his discussion of them. And so, similarly to the preceding five names, we shall allude to the name Self-Subsistent, to that greatest light, with five rays in what is at the very least an abbreviated form.

FIRST RAY

The universe's Glorious Creator is Self-Subsistent, that is, He subsists, continues, endures of Himself. All things subsist and continue through Him, they remain in existence and have permanence. If the relationship of Self-Subsistence were cut off from the universe for even the fraction of a second, the universe would be annihilated.

Furthermore, as the Qur'an of Mighty Stature decrees, together with the All-Glorious One's Self-Subsistence,

There is nothing that is like unto Him.(42:11)

That is, He has no like, equal, peer, or partner in either His essence, or His attributes, or His actions. Indeed, it is not possible for the Most and Holy One who holds the universe with its circumstances and functions in the

grasp of His dominicality and regulates, administers, sustains and nurtures it with perfect order as though it were a house or a palace to have any like, equal, partner, or peer; it is impossible.

Yes, it is indeed impossible that the All-Glorious Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One for whom the creation of the stars is as easy as that of particles; to whose power the greatest thing is subjugated as is the most minute; for whom nothing is an obstacle to any other thing and no action obstructs any other action; in whose view innumerable individuals are present in the same way that a single individual is present; who hears all voices simultaneously and is able to answer the limitless needs of all simultaneously; outside the sphere of whose will and volition is nothing, no state, as is testified to by the order and balance of the beings in the universe; who although He is in no place, is present everywhere through His power and knowledge; and although everything is utterly distant from Him, is utterly close to them – that He should have any like, equal, partner, deputy, opposite or peer is not possible; it is impossible. His sacred qualities and attributes can be considered only through allegory and comparison. All the comparisons and allegories in the Risale-i Nur are of this sort.

Yes, the Most Pure and Holy One is without like, necessarily existent, utterly remote from matter, and beyond space; His fragmentation and division are impossible in every respect as is any sort of change or alteration; His being needy or impotent is beyond the bounds of possibility. And yet, a group of the people of misguidance suppose certain manifestations of the Most Pure and Holy Essence which are manifested in the pages of the universe and in the levels of beings to be the Most Pure and Holy One Himself and ascribe the decrees of the divinity to certain creatures; they attribute some of the All-Glorious One's works to nature.

However, it is demonstrated with conclusive proofs in numerous places in the Risale-i Nur that nature is a divine art, and cannot be the artist. It is a dominical book, and cannot be the scribe. It is an embroidery, and cannot be the embroiderer. It is a register, and cannot be the accountant. It is a law, and cannot be the power. It is a pattern, and cannot be the source. It is a recipient and is passive, and cannot be the author. It is an order, and cannot be the orderer. It is a code of creation, and cannot be the establisher of the code.

If, to suppose the impossible, the tiniest animate creature was referred to nature and it was told: "You made this;" as is demonstrated in many places in the Risale-i Nur with decisive proofs, it would be necessary to provide moulds, or rather machines, to the number of the tiny creature's members and bodily systems so that nature could carry out the work.

Moreover, although a group of the people of misguidance called materialists perceived a greatest manifestation of divine creativity and dominical power within the orderly transformations of minute particles, since they did not know from where the manifestation came and could not understand from where that universal force was being directed, which originated from the manifestation of the Eternally Besought One's power, they supposed matter and force were pre-eternal and began to attribute the divine works to particles and their motion. Glory be to God! Could human beings be so ignorant as to attribute actions and works that can only be carried out by one who is both beyond space and present in such a way as to see, know, and direct all things in the creation of all things everywhere, to particles and their motion, which are tossed around in the storms of lifeless, blind, unconscious chance that lacks will and balance? Anyone who possesses even a jot of intelligence must see just what an ignorant and superstitious idea this is.

Indeed, because those wretches have abandoned absolute unity, they have fallen into a limitless, endless absolute multiplicity. That is, since they do not accept one single God, they are compelled to accept endless gods. Which means that since they are unable to squeeze into their corrupted minds the idea of one single Most Pure and Holy Essence and the pre-eternity and creativity that are necessary and essential to Him, they are compelled by their opinions to accept the pre-eternity, indeed the divinity, of those limitless, endless, lifeless particles.

So, come and consider this complete and utter ignorance! For certainly, the manifestation on particles has made that mass of particles into an orderly and magnificent army through the strength, power, and command of the Necessarily Existent One. If the Commander-in-Chief's command and power were withdrawn even for a second, that numerous, lifeless, unconscious mass would degenerate into irregular soldiers, it would altogether cease to exist.

Furthermore, it is as if another group of people see even further, that is, they are even more ignorantly misguided. They imagine the matter known as ether, which is an extremely subtle, fine, obedient and subjugated page of the Glorious Maker's activities, a means for the transmitting of His commands, a flimsy veil for the exercise of His power, a refined ink for His writing, a fine raiment for His creating, a leaven of His artefacts and a tillage for His seeds, to be the origin and the author because it acts as a mirror to the manifestation of His dominicality.

This extraordinary ignorance requires endless impossibilities because ether is matter that is unconscious, lifeless and without will and is finer

than the matter of which particles consist, which drowns the materialists, and is denser than the index of primordial matter into which the ancient philosophers thrust themselves. To attribute to this matter, which may be fragmented and divided without limit and is equipped with the qualities and duties of being passive and the ability to transmit – to attribute to its minute particles, which are far minuter than particles of other matter, the actions and works that exist through a will and power that sees, knows, and directs all things in all things is mistaken to the number of particles of ether.

The act of creation apparent in beings is such that it demonstrates it proceeds from a power and will which sees and knows most things, the whole universe even, in each thing particularly if it is animate, and which recognizes and secures the animate creature's relationship with the universe; it thus demonstrates that it cannot be the act of causes, which are material and are not all-encompassing. Through the meaning of Self-Subsistence, a particular creative act bears a mighty meaning that points to its being directly the act of the Creator of the universe. For example, an act pertaining to the creation of a bee demonstrates that it is peculiar to the Creator of the universe in two respects.

First Respect: The fact that all the other bees throughout the world resembling that particular bee manifest the same act at the same time demonstrates that the particular and individual act is the tip of a comprehensive act which embraces the face of the earth. In which case, whoever the author and owner of that vast act is, he must be the author of the particular act.

Second Respect: In order to be the author of the action directed towards the creation of the bee in question, a power and will are necessary that are vast enough to know and secure the conditions for the life of the bee, and its members, and its relationship with the universe. Therefore, the one who performs the particular action can only perform it thus perfectly by having authority over most of the universe.

Hence the most particular and insignificant action demonstrates in two respects that it is peculiar to the Creator of all things.

The most remarkable and surprising thing is this: the Necessarily Existent One possesses necessity, which is the firmest level of existence; absolute isolation from matter, which is the most immutable degree of existence; absolute freedom from space, which is the state of existence furthest from cessation; and unity, which is the soundest quality of existence and the one remotest from change and non-existence. And yet they attribute pre-eternity and everlastingness, which are the Necessarily Existent One's most particular qualities and are necessary and essential to Him, to things like ether and particles, which are matter that is material, unbounded and

numerous, is the least stable level of existence and the least tangible, the most changing and the most varying and the most dispersed through space; they ascribe pre-eternity to them and fancy them to be pre-eternal; and some of them even suppose that it is out of them that the divine works arise. It has been demonstrated through cogent arguments in many places in the Risale-i Nur how contrary to truth and reality, how unreasonable and absurd, is this idea.

SECOND RAY

This consists of two matters.

First Matter:

*Neither sleep overcomes Him nor slumber.(2:255) * There is not a moving creature but He has grasp of its forelock.(11:56) * To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth.(39:63; 42:12)*

These verses point to a greatest manifestation of the name Self-Subsistent. One aspect of the mighty truth that these and verses like them indicate is as follows:

The existence, continuance, and perpetuation of the heavenly bodies in the universe are tied to the mystery of Self-Subsistence. If the manifestation of Self-Subsistence were to avert its face for a moment, millions of globes, some of them a thousand times larger than the earth, would be scattered into the infinite void of space, and colliding with one another would crash into nothingness.

For example, the power of the Self-Subsistence of the One who keeps thousands of stately palaces in place in perfect order and makes them travel like aircraft through space is measured through the stability, order, and continuance of those palaces in space. So too a measure of the greatest manifestation of the name Self-Subsistent are the facts that the All-Glorious and Self-Subsistent One bestows on the innumerable heavenly bodies within ethereal matter a stability, permanence, and continuance within the utmost order and balance through the mystery of Self-Subsistence; and together with upholding without prop or support in the void millions of mighty globes, some a thousand and some even a million times larger than the earth, entrusts them all with duties and causes them to submit in perfect obedience like a majestic army to the decrees proceeding from the command of “‘Be!’ and it is.” The particles of all beings also exist, like the stars, through the mystery of Self-Subsistence, and are permanent and continue through it.

The particles in an animate creature’s body do not disperse but are assembled in groups and systems peculiar to each limb, and without

scattering, preserve their position within the storms of the elements, which flow like floods, and remain regular and in order. Since this self-evidently does not occur through themselves but through the mystery of Self-Subsistence, and since each body is like a well-ordered regiment and each species like a regular army, these particles proclaim the mystery of Self-Subsistence with innumerable tongues in the same way that the continuance and motion of animate creatures and their assemblages on the earth and that of the stars in the world of space proclaim it.

S e c o n d M a t t e r : This station requires that some of the benefits and instances of wisdom in things connected with the mystery of Self-Subsistence are pointed out.

The wisdom in the existence of things, and the aims of their natures, the benefits in their creation, and the results of their lives are of three sorts.

The First Sort looks to each thing itself and to man and to man's affairs.

The Second Sort is more important. It is the meanings of all things being set out for innumerable readers, for each is a sign, a missive, a book, an ode for conscious beings to study, an indication making known the manifestation of the Glorious Creator's names.

The Third Sort: This concerns the Glorious Maker and looks to Him. While one of the benefits and results of things look to the things themselves, countless look to the Glorious Maker. For the Glorious Maker beholds the wonders of His art Himself, He observes the manifestation of His names in the beings which He Himself has fashioned. In regard to this mighty third sort, it is sufficient if beings live only for a second.

Another mystery of Self-Subsistence that requires the existence of all things will be explained in the Third Ray.

At one time I was investigating the talisman of the universe and riddle of creation, which lies in its being a manifestation, together with the instances of wisdom and benefits in beings, and I asked: "I wonder why these things display themselves in this way, then swiftly vanish and are lost? I look at their individual features; they have been attired, decked out and adorned in an orderly, purposeful fashion and sent to this display and exhibition. But then they disappear in a day or two, and some of them within a few minutes; uselessly and in vain they vanish. What is the purpose in their being seen by us for this brief time?" I was most curious.

Then, through divine favour, I discovered an important instance of wisdom in the fact that beings, in particular animate beings, come into the place of instruction that is this world. It was as follows: each being, and especially if it is animate, is an extremely meaningful word, missive, dominical ode

and divine proclamation. After it has been studied by intelligent beings and has stated its meaning to innumerable readers, its corporeal form, which is like a letter or a word, disappears.

For about a year this instance of wisdom was sufficient for me. Then the truly wonderful and subtle miracles of art to be found in creatures, in particular in animate beings, were disclosed. I understood that these subtleties of art which are so fine and wonderful are not only to set forth meanings for the gazes of intelligent beings. For although innumerable such creatures may study each being, their studying is both limited, and not all of them will be able to penetrate all the subtleties of art in those animate beings. That is to say, the most important result of the creation of animate beings and the most significant purpose of their natures is to present to the Pre-Eternal Self-Subsistent One's own gaze the marvels of His art and the compassionate gifts and bounties He has bestowed.

As for this purpose, it satisfied me for a long time and from it I understood the following: the wisdom and purpose of creation, which is to present the endless subtleties of art in beings, particularly in animate beings, to the gaze of the Pre-Eternally Self-Subsistent One, that is, for He Himself to behold His own art, was sufficient for that vast outlay.

Some time later I realized that the subtleties of art in the individual features and forms of beings did not continue; they were being renewed and were undergoing change at great speed; they were being transformed within an endless activity and creativity. I started to ponder over it, saying: "The wisdom in this creativity and activity must necessarily be as extensive as the activity itself." Then, the two instances of wisdom mentioned above began to seem insufficient; they lacked something. With extreme curiosity I began to search and seek for a further purpose and instance of wisdom.

All praise be to God, through the effulgence of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, after some time a vast, limitless wisdom and purpose became apparent at the level of the mystery of Self-Subsistence. And through it, the divine mystery called the talisman of the universe and riddle of creation was understood. It is explained in detail in the Twenty-Fourth Letter, so here in the Third Ray we shall briefly mention only two or three points.

Look from this point to the manifestation of the mystery of Self-Subsistence: it has plucked all beings out of non-existence, and according to the meaning of the verse,

It is God who has raised the heavens without any supports that you can see,(13:2)

has caused each one of them to remain in infinite space. It has bestowed stability and permanence on them, and caused them all to display the manifestation of the mystery of Self-Subsistence. If not for this support, nothing at all could continue to exist of its own accord. Everything would topple over into the infinite void and tumble into non-existence.

Furthermore, just as all beings rely on the All-Glorious Self-Subsistent One for their existence, stability, and permanence, they continue in existence through Him, so according to the meaning of the verse,

And to Him goes back every affair,(11:123)

the tips of thousands of chains or lines in the states and conditions of beings are fastened to the mystery of Self-Subsistence, which, if the comparison is not mistaken, is like the centre or central pole of telephone and telegraph lines. If they did not rely on that luminous point of support, thousands of unending sequences of causes would be necessary, which according to scholars is an impossible and false notion; in fact, there would have to be as many of these absurd unending sequences of causes as there are beings. For example, one thing – protection or light or existence or sustenance, for instance – in one respect relies on the next thing, and that on the next, and that on the next, until finally since it cannot be infinite, it has to come to an end.

Thus, the end of all such lines and sequences lies in the mystery of Self-Subsistence. But when this mystery has been understood, the links and the meaning of each thing relying on the next in those imaginary sequences do not remain, they disappear and everything is seen to look directly to the mystery of Self-Subsistence.

THIRD RAY

By means of one or two introductory points, we shall point out to a small degree the disclosure of the mystery of Self-Subsistence within divine creativity and dominical activity, which verses like the following allude to:

*Every day He manifests Himself in yet another way.(55:29) * A sovereign doer of whatever He wills.(11:107) * He creates whatever he wishes.(30:34, etc.) * In Whose hand is the dominion of all things.(36:83) * So look to the signs of God's mercy, how He restores the earth to life after its death.(30:50)*

The First: When we look at the universe, we see that one group of creatures, which are tossed around in the flood of time and follow on one after the other convoy after convoy, come for a second and then immediately

vanish. Another group comes for a minute and then passes on. One species stops by in the Manifest World for an hour, then enters the World of the Unseen. Some of them come and alight in the Manifest World for a day, some of them for a year, some for a century, and some for an age; they perform their duties and then depart.

This astonishing travelling and passage of beings and flow and flux of creatures is driven and directed with such order, balance and wisdom, and the one who commands them and those convoys does so with such insight, purpose and planning that even if all minds were to unite and become one mind, it would be unable to comprehend the essence of this wise direction; it would be unable to find any fault in it and so could not criticize it.

Thus, within this dominical activity, not allowing any of those pleasing creatures that it loves, especially animate creatures, to open their eyes, the pen of divine determining and decree despatches them to the World of the Unseen; not permitting them even to draw a breath, it discharges them from the life of this world. It continuously fills the guesthouse of the world and empties it without the guests' consent. Making the globe of the earth like a slate for writing and erasing, through the manifestation of

He grants life and deals death,(2:258)

the pen of divine determining and decree ceaselessly inscribes writings on it, and renews and replaces them.

One meaning of the wisdom in this dominical activity and divine creativity and a fundamental requirement and a motive cause of them is a limitless, endless instance of wisdom that may be divided into three important branches.

The First Branch of that wisdom is this: Every sort of activity, whether particular or universal, yields pleasure. There is a pleasure in all activity. Indeed, activity is pure pleasure. Yes, activity is the manifestation of existence, which is pure pleasure and is the shaking off and becoming distant from non-existence, which is pure suffering.

Everyone with ability follows with pleasure the unfolding of his ability through activity. The revealing of innate talents through activity arises from a pleasure and results in a pleasure. Everyone who possesses some perfections follows with pleasure their disclosure through activity.

Since there is present in every activity a perfection and pleasure which is thus loved and sought after, and activity too is a perfection; and since there are apparent in the world of animate creatures the manifestations of a boundless love and infinite compassion which arise from a perpetual and pre-eternal life; those manifestations show that as the requirement of that

eternal Life which is fitting for the necessary existence of the One who thus loves and is compassionate and makes Himself loved, and is worthy of His holiness, there are – if the terms are not mistaken – at the utmost level such sacred qualities in that Most Pure and Holy Life as divine passion, hallowed love, and sheer pleasure. And it is these qualities that continuously renew, agitate, and change the universe through endless activity and infinite creativity.

The Second Branch of the wisdom in the limitless divine activity which looks to the mystery of Self-Subsistence: This looks to the divine names. It is well-known that everyone who possesses beauty wants to both see and display his beauty; that everyone who possesses some skills desires and loves to attract attention to his skills by exhibiting and proclaiming them; he desires and loves his skill, which is a beautiful truth and meaning that has remained concealed, to be revealed and to find ardent admirers.

These fundamental rules are in force in all things according to the degree of each. According to the testimony of the universe and the evidence of the manifestations and embroideries of the thousand and one most beautiful names of the All-Glorious Self-Subsistent One, who possesses absolute beauty, there are in every degree of each of those names a true loveliness, a true perfection, a true beauty and a most exquisite truth. Indeed, in every degree there are endless different sorts of loveliness and innumerable beautiful truths.

Since the beings of the universe are mirrors reflecting the sacred beauties of those names and the tableaux displaying their beautiful embroideries and the pages setting forth their beautiful truths, those constant and eternal names will entirely and unceasingly renew and change the universe through their manifestations as a consequence of that sacred divine love and due to the mystery of Self-Subsistence. In this way they will display their endless manifestations and infinite, meaningful embroideries and books both to the witnessing gaze of the All-Glorious Self-Subsistent One, whom they signify, and to the studying gaze of uncountable numbers of intelligent creatures and creatures endowed with spirits, and will display countless tableaux out of a finite and limited thing and numerous individuals out of a single individual and multiple truths out of a single truth.

FOURTH RAY

The Third Branch of the wisdom in the constant and astonishing activity in the universe: Everyone who is compassionate is happy at giving pleasure to others; and everyone who is kind is gratified at making others happy; everyone who is loving is gladdened by pleasing others who are

worthy of being pleased; and everyone who is noble-hearted takes pleasure at making others happy; everyone who is just rejoices at upholding justice and at winning the gratitude of those whose rights are vindicated by punishing the deserving; and every skilful craftsman takes pride in exhibiting his work, at its functioning as he hoped it would function, and at its giving the desired results.

Thus, each of the above-mentioned principles is a fundamental rule which is in force throughout the universe and the world of mankind. Three examples demonstrating that these rules function in the divine names have been explained in the Third Stopping Place of the Thirty-Second Word. It is appropriate to write a summary of them at this point, so we say the following:

For example, an extremely kind, generous, munificent, noble-hearted person who embarks the poor and needy on a large ship, gratifies them with banquets and bounties and sails it in the seas around the world, will watch them happily since he is superior to them, take pleasure at those needy people's gratitude, rejoice and be pleased at their taking pleasure, and feel proud.

If someone who is merely a distribution official takes such pleasure and delight at holding an insignificant banquet, consider the following: the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One embarks all animals and men and countless angels, jinn and spirit beings on the ship of the earth, which is a vessel of that All-Merciful One; He spreads the face of the earth before them as a dominical table laden with varieties of foods, and with delights and sustenance for all the senses; he causes those needy, thankful, grateful and happy creatures to sail the regions of the universe, and not only makes them happy in this world with all these bounties but also makes the bounties tables in the unending banquets in the Paradises of the Eternal Realm. It is therefore the meaning of dominicality alluded to by the divine qualities resulting from the thanks, gratitude, joy and delight of those creatures which look to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, which we are powerless and not permitted to express, like holy pleasure, sacred pride, and hallowed delight that necessitate this constant activity and ceaseless creativity.

And for example, if a skilful craftsman builds a gramophone that requires no records and it plays just as he wishes, how proud and delighted he will be; he will say to himself: "What wonders God willed!" Seeing that an insignificant piece of art in which there is no true creation engenders a feeling of such pride and pleasure in the craftsman's spirit, then consider the following:

The All-Wise Maker creates the totality of the universe as a divine orchestra and wondrous workshop which strikes up and gives forth countless sorts of songs and hymns praises and glorification; He displays all the species, all the worlds, in the universe through a different craft and different miracles of art; and not only does He fashion many machines in the heads of animate creatures, each like a gramophone, camera or telegraph, He also fashions in the heads of human beings, both a gramophone without records, a camera without a film, a telegraph without wires, and a machine twenty times more wonderful. It is therefore meanings like sacred pride and holy pleasure and the exalted qualities of this sort which proceed from dominicality and arise from creating such machines, and their functioning in the required way and producing the desired results that necessitate this unceasing activity.

And for example, a just ruler takes pleasure and is gratified and feels proud at taking the part of the oppressed against tyrants in order to uphold justice, at protecting the poor against the wrongdoing of the powerful, and at giving to everyone his due. Since this is a fundamental rule of rulership and justice, consider the following:

The Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, who is the All-Wise Ruler and is Absolutely Just, bestows on creatures and especially on animate ones the necessary conditions for life, which are known as the rights of life; and to preserve their lives, He grants them the necessary abilities and members; and He compassionately protects the weak from the evil of the powerful. Therefore, the dominical qualities and sacred meanings, which we are powerless to express, that arise from this and from the execution of the mystery of justice, which in this world is total with regard to establishing justice for all animate beings and partial with regard to punishing wrongdoers, and especially that arise from the manifestation of supreme justice at the supreme tribunal of the resurrection, necessitate the constant activity in the universe.

Thus, as these three examples show, since each of the most beautiful names give rise to certain sacred divine qualities in this unceasing activity, they require unceasing creativity. And since the development, unfolding and blossoming of abilities and faculties yield a joy, expansiveness and pleasure; and since on the performance and completion of a duty and on being released from it, everyone entrusted with such a duty experiences a feeling of relief and gratitude; and since to receive many fruits from a single seed and to gain a hundredfold profit from a single thing is a most pleasurable trade, then most certainly the One who causes the innumerable abilities of creatures to unfold, after employing the creatures in valuable duties,

will discharge them, but to a higher state. That is to say, He raises elements to the level of minerals; minerals to plant life; plants to the level of animal life by means of sustenance; and animals to the high level of human life, which is conscious.

It may be understood then just how important are the sacred meanings and divine dominicality arising from the constant activity and dominical creativity which, on the demise of their external existences, cause all animate creatures to leave behind them multiple existences taken from them, like their spirits, essences, identities, forms, existences in the Worlds of Similitudes, Knowledge, and the Unseen, the sheaths of their spirits, and astral bodies, all of which are charged with duties in their places. This is explained in the Twenty-Fourth Letter.

A Decisive Answer to an Important Question

One group of the people of misguidance says that the being who changes and transforms the universe with this constant activity must himself be subject to change and alteration.

The Answer: God forbid! A hundred thousand times, God forbid! The fact that mirrors on the ground change demonstrates not that the sun in the sky changes, but on the contrary that its manifestations are being renewed. Moreover, change and alteration are impossible in the Most Pure and Holy Essence, who is pre-eternal, post-eternal, sempiternal, in every respect absolutely perfect and absolutely self-sufficient, totally free of, detached from, and beyond matter, space, restriction, and contingency. Change in the universe points to his lack of change and alteration, not to His changing. For one who causes constant change and causes numerous things to move must himself be unchanging and not move.

For example, if you spin a large number of globes and balls which have each been tied to a piece of string and cause them all to move unceasingly within an order, you have to remain in one place and not change or move, for if you did, it would spoil the order. It is clear that one who causes objects to move within an order must himself not move, and one who causes objects to change ceaselessly must himself be unchanging so that these actions may continue in an orderly fashion.

Secondly: Change and alteration arise from createdness, from being renewed in order to be perfected, from need, materiality, and contingency. Since the Most Pure and Holy Essence is both eternal, and in every respect absolutely perfect and absolutely self-sufficient, and totally detached from matter, and necessarily existent, most certainly His changing and altering is not possible; it is impossible.

FIFTH RAY

F i r s t M a t t e r

If we wish to see the greatest manifestation of the name Self-Subsistent, we shall set up two telescopes in order to observe the whole universe with our imaginations. One of them will show the most distant objects, the other minute particles. So if we look through the first telescope, we see that through the manifestation of the name of Self-Subsistent and without support, of millions of globes and stars thousands of times larger than the earth, some have been made apparently stationary in the matter known as ether, which is subtler than air, while others have been made to travel apparently as their duty.

Then we look through the second telescope, which is the microscope of the imagination, to observe minute particles. Through the mystery of Self-Subsistence, taking up orderly positions like the stars, the particles of the bodies of animate creatures on the earth are all in motion and performing their duties. We see that especially the miniscule agglomerations forming the particles known as red corpuscles and white corpuscles in the blood of animate beings, like the planets, move with two orderly motions like Mevlevi dervishes.

A Summary²

A summary is appropriate here in order to examine the sacred light the six names of the greatest name form, blending together like the seven colours in light. It is as follows:

Look beyond the greatest manifestation of the name Self-Subsistent which thus upholds and gives permanence and continuity to all the beings in the universe: the greatest manifestation of the name Ever-Living has set aflame all animate beings with its manifestation. It has illuminated the universe. It gilds all animate beings with its manifestation.

Now look again: beyond the name Ever-Living, the greatest manifestation of the name Single confers a unity on the universe with all its elements and parts. It puts a stamp of unity on each being's forehead. It places a seal of oneness on each being's face. It causes them to proclaim its manifestation with endless, countless tongues.

Now consider the greatest manifestation of the name Sapient beyond

² This is a brief summary of the six sacred names which bear the greatest name and are the basis and subject of the six main sections of the Thirtieth Flash.

the name Single: it incorporates in a fruitful order, wise regularity and purposeful harmony appropriate to each all the beings we observe through the two telescopes of the imagination, from stars to particles, whether universal or particular, from the greatest sphere to the most minute. It adorns and gilds all beings.

Then look beyond the greatest manifestation of the name Sapient: in regard to its aspect that was examined in the Second Point, through the greatest manifestation of the name All-Just, the universe with all its beings is administered with such balance, equilibrium and measure within unceasing activity, that if just one of the heavenly bodies were to lose its balance even for a second, that is, if it were to break free of the manifestation of the name All-Just, it would cause chaos among the stars; it would be like Doomsday.

Thus, all beings and all the different realms of beings from the army of the stars to the army of minute particles, that is, from the largest sphere that is the vast belt known as the Milky Way to the sphere of the motion of red and white corpuscles, stand shoulder to shoulder in a manner gauged with the finest balance and measure, so demonstrating that all those beings are obedient and totally subjugated to the commands proceeding from the command of “‘Be!’ and it is.”

Now look beyond the greatest manifestation of the Name All-Just to the greatest manifestation of the name Most Holy, which was explained in the First Point: the fact that it renders all the beings in the universe so pure, clean, clear, beautiful, adorned and shining demonstrates that it has bestowed on the universe and on all beings the form of beautiful mirrors worthy of reflecting the utter essential beauty of the Absolutely Beautiful One and the sheer loveliness of His most beautiful names.

In Short: These six names and six lights of the greatest name have enwrapped the universe and all beings in ever-differing, multifarious colours, embroideries and adornment.

Second Matter of the Fifth Ray

Just as the manifestation of Self-Subsistence in the universe is at the level of unity and glory, so in man, who is the centre, pivot, and conscious fruit of the universe, it is at the level of oneness and beauty. That is to say, just as the universe subsists through the mystery of Self-Subsistence, so it in one respect subsists through man, who is the most complete place of manifestation of the name of Self-Subsistent. For since most of the wisdom, aims, purposes, and benefits in the universe look to man, the manifestation of Self-Subsistence in him is as though a support for the universe. It

may be said that the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One willed man to be in the universe and created it for him. For with the comprehensiveness of his nature, man can understand and take pleasure in all the divine names. He can understand many of names through the pleasure to be found in sustenance in particular. Whereas the angels cannot know them through that pleasure.

Because of this important comprehensiveness, the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One has given man a stomach and appetite with which He allows him to understand all His names and to taste all the varieties of His bounty, and He has generously laden the table with endless varieties of foods for man's stomach. He has also made life a stomach, like the physical one, and has spread an extensive table of bounties before the senses, which are like the hands of the stomach of life. With its senses, life offers a sort of thanks for all the ways it benefits from the table of bounties.

After the stomach of life, He has bestowed on man the stomach of humanity, which requires sustenance and bounties in a wider sphere than life. Intelligence, mind, and imagination, the hands of this stomach, benefit from the table of mercy, which is as broad as the heavens and the earth, and give thanks.

After the stomach of humanity, He has spread before man another table of bounties which is infinitely vast. He has made the beliefs of Islam like an immaterial stomach requiring extensive sustenance and has extended its table outside the sphere of contingency and included in it the divine names. With this stomach and the great pleasure of sustenance, man perceives the names of All-Merciful and All-Wise and exclaims: "All praise be to God for His mercifulness and His wisdom!" And so on. Man is able to benefit from limitless divine bounties with this vast immaterial stomach. And there is a further sphere in this stomach, which is the pleasure of divine love.

Thus, the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One has made man a centre and pivot of the whole universe; He has spread before him a table of bounties as broad as the universe, and subjugated the universe to him. The reasons for this and for the universe in one respect subsisting through the mystery of Self-Subsistence manifested through man are man's three important duties:

His First Duty

All the varieties of bounties dispersed throughout the universe are put into order through man. All those things beneficial to man are strung like prayer-beads on a string and the ends of the strings of those bounties are tied to man's head. Man is thus made a list of all the various contents of the treasuries of mercy.

His Second Duty

By reason of his comprehensiveness, this is for man to be the most perfect addressee of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One; by appreciating and admiring His astonishing arts, to be His loudest herald; and by offering every kind of conscious thanks, to give praise, glory, and thanks for all the varieties of His bounties and the limitless different sorts of His gifts.

His Third Duty

Through his life, this is to act in three respects as a mirror to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One and His qualities and all-embracing attributes.

First Aspect: This is to perceive through his own absolute impotence the absolute power of his Creator and its levels, and through the degrees of his impotence, the degrees of His power. It is to understand through his own absolute poverty, His mercy and the degrees of His mercy, and through his weakness, His strength; and so on. It is to be a mirror and measuring instrument for his Creator's attributes of perfection through his own defective attributes. Just as darkness is a perfect mirror for displaying electric light, the brilliance of the light being proportionate to the darkness of the night, so man acts as a mirror to the divine perfections through his own defective attributes.

Second Aspect: Using the universe as a yardstick and with his own partial will, tiny knowledge, minute power, and apparent ownership, and by building his own house, man understands and acts as a mirror to the ownership, art, will, power, and knowledge of the universe's Fashioner.

Third Aspect: Man's acting as a mirror in this respect has two faces:

First: It is to display in himself the ever-differing embroideries of the divine names. To put it simply, by reason of his comprehensiveness, man is like a tiny index and miniature specimen of the universe and so displays the embroideries of all the names.

Second Face: This face acts as a mirror to the divine attributes. That is to say, just as man points to the life of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One through his own life, so he acts as a mirror to and makes known such attributes of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One as hearing and sight, by means of his own sense of hearing and sense of sight that develop during his life-time.

Furthermore, man acts as a mirror to the sacred attributes of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One through the very numerous and responsive senses, meanings, and emotions that are present with his life, which do not develop but which boil up in the form of feelings and emotions. For example,

as a result of such emotions, through meanings like loving and feeling proud, pleased, happy and cheerful he acts as a mirror to attributes of that sort, on condition they are suitable and worthy for the sacredness and absolute self-sufficiency of the Most Pure and Holy Essence.

Also, through his comprehensive life, man is an instrument that recognizes and measures the attributes and qualities of the All-Glorious One, and is an index of the manifestation of His names, and a conscious mirror, and so on, he acts as a mirror to the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One in many respects. Man is also a unit of measurement, an index, a scale, and a balance to the truths of the universe.

For example, extremely decisive evidence for the existence of the Preserved Tablet in the universe and an example of it is man's faculty of memory. And a decisive evidence of the existence of the World of Similitudes and an example of it is man's faculty of imagination. And evidence for the existence of spirit beings in the universe and an example of them are the powers and subtle faculties in man.³ And so on. In small measure man may display almost visibly the truths of belief present in the universe.

Man performs many important functions like those mentioned above. He is a mirror to enduring beauty. He is the place of manifestation announcing sempiternal perfection. He is one needy and thankful for eternal mercy. Since beauty, perfection, and mercy are everlasting and eternal, it is surely necessary and inevitable that man, who is the desirous mirror to enduring beauty, the enraptured herald of everlasting perfection, and thankful and needy for eternal mercy, will go to an everlasting realm to remain there permanently, that he will go to eternity to accompany those eternal qualities, and will accompany that eternal Beauty, everlasting Perfection, and ever-enduring Mercy for all eternity.

For an eternal beauty cannot be content with an impermanent admirer, a mortal lover. Since beauty loves itself, it desires love in return for its love. Transience and impermanence transform such love into enmity. If man was not going to go to eternity and remain there permanently, he would feel enmity rather than innate love for eternal beauty.

As is described in a footnote in the Tenth Word, one time a celebrated

³ The elements in man point to the elements in the universe, and his bones to its stones and rocks, his hair to its plants and trees, and the blood which flows in his body and the fluids which issue from his eyes, ears, nose and mouth to the spring and mineral waters of the earth. Similarly, man's spirit points to the spirit world, his faculty of memory to the Preserved Tablet, and his power of imagination to the World of Similitudes, and so on. Each of his members and faculties points to a different world and bears decisive witness to their existence.

beauty expelled a lover from her presence, whereupon his love turned into enmity and in order to console himself, he said: “Ugh! How ugly she is!”, thus insulting and denying her beauty.

Indeed, man is hostile to what is unfamiliar to him, just as he quite simply wishes to be hostile to and find fault in things he cannot obtain or possess. Since, as the whole universe testifies, the True Beloved and Absolutely Beautiful One causes man to love Himself through His most beautiful names, which are altogether exquisite, and desires man to love Him, then most certainly He would not endow man who is both His beloved and His lover with an innate enmity and cause him to be vexed with Himself from afar; He would not endow man’s spirit with a hidden enmity, which would be altogether contrary to man’s nature, who is by his nature the most lovable and loving creature and the most exceptional that He has created for worship. For man would only be able to cure the deep wounds caused by eternal separation from an Absolute Beauty that he loves and whose value he appreciates by enmity towards it, being vexed with it, and denying it.

It is from this point that the unbelievers’ enmity towards God Almighty arises. In which case, the Pre-Eternal Beauty will surely make manifest in man a perpetual life in a permanent realm in order to be present together with him who is an enraptured mirror to Himself on the journey to post-eternity.

Since man has been created in such a way that by his very nature he longs for and loves an Ever-Enduring Beauty; and since an Ever-Enduring Beauty cannot be content with an impermanent lover; and since, in order to find consolation from the pain and sorrow arising from some aim that he does not know or cannot attain or possess, man pacifies himself through discovering the faults of such an aim, rather, through nurturing a hidden enmity towards it; and since the universe was created for man, and man was created to know and love God; and since the Creator of the universe, together with His names, is eternal; and since the manifestation of His names will be perpetual, everlasting, and post-eternal; then man will most certainly go to an everlasting realm and will manifest an everlasting life.

Furthermore Muhammad the Arabian (Upon whom be blessings and peace), who is the supreme guide and perfect man, made known and demonstrated most perfectly in himself and in his religion the value and all the perfections and duties we have explained above concerning man. This demonstrates that the universe was created for mankind and its aim and object is mankind. So too the aim and object of mankind, and its choicest and

most valuable member, and its most brilliant mirror to the Single and Eternally Besought One is Ahmad Muhammad (Upon whom be blessings and peace).

Upon whom and upon whose family be blessings and peace to the number of good deeds of his community. O God! O Most Merciful! O Most Compassionate! O Single One! O Ever-Living! O Self-Subsistent! O Sapient! O All-Just! O Most Holy! We beseech You through the truth of Your All-Wise Criterion of Truth and Falsehood, the Qur'an, and through veneration for Your Most Noble Beloved, and through the truth of Your Most Beautiful Names, and through veneration for Your Greatest Name, to preserve us from the evil of the instinctual soul and of Satan and from the evil of jinn and of men. Amen.

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

The Thirty-First Flash

This has been assigned to *The Rays Collection*. The Fourteenth Ray consists of the defence speeches and letters of Afyon Court and Prison, while the Fifteenth Ray has been named *Elhüccetü 'z-Zehrâ* (The Shining Proof), and published.¹

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The Thirty-Second Flash

This consists of *Lemeât*, the last work of the Old Said, which itself assumed a poetic form and was composed in twenty days during the month of Ramadan. It has been included in *Sözler* (The Words).

* * *

The Thirty-Third Flash

This consists of the works called in Arabic *Katre*, *Habbe*, *Şemme*, *Zerre*, *Hubab*, *Zühre*, and *Şüle*, and their appendices, the first works of the New Said, inspired in his heart by reality. Turkish translations of them having been included in *Mesnevi-i Nûriye*, part of the Risale-i Nur Collection, and published.

¹ As designated by our Master, Üstad, the Fourteenth Ray was finally called *The Defence Speeches and Letters of Afyon Court*, while the Fifteenth Ray was named *El-Hüccetü 'z-Zehrâ*, and published.

Signed: Bediuzzaman's Assistants