

From the
Risale-i Nur Collection 1

The Words

On the Nature and Purposes
of Man, Life, and All Things

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SAID NURSI

Translated from the Turkish 'Sozler'
by Őukran Vahide

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GLEAMS: Pieces written in "semi-verse" during Ramadan 1337 (1921), which "form a sort of Mathnawi and collection on the subject of belief for the Risale-i Nur Students," and are "a sort of forerunner of the Risale-i Nur, giving the good tidings of its major parts." The work was later added by the Author to The Words Collection. 724

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**IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE**

**And from Him do we seek help.
All praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds,
and blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad,
and on all his Family and Companions.**

[Brother! You wanted a few words of advice from me, so listen to a few truths included in eight short stories, which since you are a soldier, are in the form of comparisons of a military nature. I consider my own soul to need advice more than anyone, and at one time I addressed my soul at some length with Eight Words inspired by eight verses of the Qur'an from which I had benefited. Now I shall address my soul with these same Words, but briefly and in the language of ordinary people. Whoever wishes may listen together with me.]

The First Word

Bismillah, "In the Name of God," is the start of all things good. We too shall start with it. Know, O my soul! Just as this blessed phrase is a mark of Islam, so too it is constantly recited by all beings through their tongues of disposition. If you want to know what an inexhaustible strength, what an unending source of bounty is *Bismillah*, listen to the following story, which is in the form of a comparison. It goes like this:

Someone who makes a journey through the deserts of Arabia has to travel in the name of a tribal chief and enter under his protection, for in this way he may be saved from the assaults of bandits and secure his needs. On his own

he will perish in the face of innumerable enemies and needs. And so, two men went on such a journey and entered the desert. One of them was modest and humble, the other proud and conceited. The humble man assumed the name of a tribal chief, while the proud man did not. The first travelled safely wherever he went. If he encountered bandits, he said: "I am travelling in the name of such-and-such tribal leader," and they did not molest him. If he came to some tents, he was treated respectfully due to the name. But the proud man suffered indescribable calamities throughout his journey. He both trembled before everything and begged from everything. He was abased and became an object of scorn.

My proud soul! You are the traveller, and this world is a desert. Your impotence and poverty have no limit, and your enemies and needs are endless. Since it is thus, take the name of the Pre-Eternal Ruler and Post-Eternal Lord of the desert and be saved from begging before the whole universe and trembling before every event.

Yes, this phrase is a treasury so blessed that your infinite impotence and poverty bind you to an infinite power and mercy; it makes your impotence and poverty a most acceptable intercessor at the Court of One All-Powerful and Compassionate. The person who acts saying, "In the Name of God," resembles someone who enrolls in the army. He acts in the name of the government; he has fear of no one; he speaks, performs every matter, and withstands everything in the name of the law and the name of the government.

At the beginning we said that all beings say "In the Name of God" through the tongue of disposition. Is that so?

Indeed, it is so. If you were to see that a single person had come and had driven all the inhabitants of a town to a place by force and compelled them to work, you would be certain that he had not acted in his own name and through his own power, but was a soldier, acting in the name of the government and relying on the power of the king.

In the same way, all things act in the name of Almighty God, for minute things like seeds and grains bear huge trees on their heads; they raise loads like mountains. That means all trees say: "In the Name of God," fill their hands from the treasury of mercy, and offer them to us. All gardens say: "In the Name of God," and become cauldrons from the kitchens of Divine power in which are cooked numerous varieties of different foods. All blessed animals like cows, camels, sheep, and goats, say: "In the Name of God," and produce springs of milk from the abundance of mercy, offering us a most delicate and pure food like the water of life in the name of the Provider. The roots and rootlets, soft as silk, of plants, trees, and grasses say: "In the Name of God," and pierce and pass through hard rock and earth.

Mentioning the name of God, the name of the Most Merciful, everything becomes subjected to them.

The roots spreading through hard rock and earth and producing fruits as easily as the branches spread through the air and produce fruits, and the delicate green leaves retaining their moisture for months in the face of extreme heat, deal a slap in the mouths of Naturalists and jab a finger in their blind eyes, saying: “Even heat and hardness, in which you most trust, are under a command. For like the Staff of Moses, each of those silken rootlets conforms to the command of, *And We said, O Moses, strike the rock with your staff,*¹ and splits the rock. And the delicate leaves fine as cigarette paper recite the verse, *O fire be coolness and peace*² against the heat of the fire, each like the members of Abraham (UWP).

Since all things say: “In the Name of God,” and bearing God’s bounties in God’s name, give them to us, we too should say: “In the Name of God.” We should give in the name of God, and take in the name of God. And we should not take from heedless people who neglect to give in God’s name.

Question: We give a price to people, who are like tray-bearers. So what price does God want, Who is the true owner?

The Answer: Yes, the price the True Bestower of Bounties wants in return for those valuable bounties and goods is three things: one is **remembrance**, another is **thanks**, and the other is **reflection**. Saying, “In the Name of God” at the start is remembrance, and, “All praise be to God” at the end is thanks. And perceiving and thinking of those bounties, which are priceless wonders of art, being miracles of power of the Unique and Eternally Besought One and gifts of His mercy, is reflection. However foolish it is to kiss the foot of a lowly man who conveys to you the precious gift of a king and not to recognize the gift’s owner, it is a thousand times more foolish to praise and love the apparent source of bounties and forget the True Bestower of Bounties.

O my soul! If you do not wish to be foolish in that way, give in God’s name, take in God’s name, begin in God’s name, and act in God’s name. And that’s the matter in a nutshell!

¹ Qur’an, 2:60.

² Qur’an, 21:69.

The Second Station of the Fourteenth Flash

This, which is included here because of its relevance, 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. While this lesson is directed particularly to my own soul, 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 regards 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.”*¹

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.

¹ Qur’an, 27:29-30.

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 [and receive that manifestation].

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”² – but let there be no mistake in the comparison – just as divine oneness and eternal besoughtness 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

² Qur’an, 16:60.

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 being purposively gathered around man, and being made to hasten to meet all his needs with the utmost order and wisdom 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 being acquainted with him and knowing 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 is 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.”

FOURTH MYSTERY

In the face of the manifestation of divine unity within boundless multiplicity, declaring: *“You alone do we worship”* 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.”*³ 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,

³ Qur’an, 1:5.

*“And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and in your colours.”*⁴

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. It is because of this that there has to be the stamp of divine oneness behind unity, 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.”*⁵

It has been interpreted by some Sufis in an extraordinary way, unfitting for the tenets of belief. Some of them who were ecstatics even considered man’s spiritual nature to be in the form of the All-Merciful. Since ecstatics 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

⁴ Qur’an, 30:22.

⁵ “Indeed, Allah created Adam in the form of the Most Merciful.” *Bukhari*, Isti’dhan, 1; *Muslim*, Birr, 115; *Musnad*, Janna, ii, 22, 244, 251, 315, 323, 434, 463, 519.

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 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],”*⁶

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,”*⁷

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 face of the earth and the face of the 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.

⁶ Qur’an, 42:11.

⁷ Qur’an, 30:27.

SIXTH MYSTERY

O unhappy man afflicted by a 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 (Peace and blessings be upon him), 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. 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 proves in brilliant fashion what a precious gift is divine mercy, and how broad is its sphere.

To Conclude: Just as the most precious jewel in the treasury of mercy is the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), 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.

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.⁸

⁸ Qur'an, 2:32.

The Second Word

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Those who believe in the Unseen.¹*

If you want to understand what great happiness and bounty, what great pleasure and ease are to be found in belief in God, listen to this story which is in the form of a comparison:

One time, two men went on a journey for both pleasure and business. One set off in a selfish, inauspicious direction, and the other on a godly, propitious way.

Since the selfish man was both conceited, self-centred, and pessimistic, he ended up in what seemed to him to be a most wicked country due to his pessimism. He looked around and everywhere saw the powerless and the unfortunate lamenting in the grasp of fearsome bullying tyrants, weeping at their destruction. He saw the same grievous, painful situation in all the places he travelled. The whole country took on the form of a house of mourning. Apart from becoming drunk, he could find no way of not noticing this grievous and sombre situation. For everyone seemed to him to be an enemy and foreign. And all around he saw horrible corpses and despairing, weeping orphans. His conscience was in a state of torment.

The other man was godly, devout, fair-minded, and with fine morals so that the country he came to was most excellent in his view. This good man saw universal rejoicing in the land he had entered. Everywhere was a joyful festival, a place for the remembrance of God overflowing with rapture and happiness; everyone seemed to him a friend and relation. Throughout the country he saw the festive celebrations of a general discharge from duties accompanied by cries of good wishes and thanks. He also heard the sound of a drum and band for the enlistment of soldiers with happy calls of “God is Most Great!” and “There is no god but God!” Rather than being grieved at the suffering of both himself and all the people like the first miserable man, this fortunate man was pleased and happy at both his own joy and that of all the inhabitants. Furthermore, he was able to do some profitable trade. He offered thanks to God.

¹ Qur'an, 2:3.

After some while he returned and came across the other man. He understood his condition, and said to him: “You were out of your mind. The ugliness within you must have been reflected on the outer world so that you imagined laughter to be weeping, and the discharge from duties to be sack and pillage. Come to your senses and purify your heart so that this calamitous veil is raised from your eyes and you can see the truth. For the country of an utterly just, compassionate, beneficent, powerful, order-loving, and kind king could not be as you imagined, nor could a country which demonstrated this number of clear signs of progress and achievement.” The unhappy man later came to his senses and repented. He said, “Yes, I was crazy through drink. May God be pleased with you, you have saved me from a hellish state.”

O my soul! Know that the first man represents an unbeliever, or someone depraved and heedless. In his view the world is a house of universal mourning. All living creature are orphans weeping at the blows of death and separation. Man and the animals are alone and without ties being ripped apart by the talons of the appointed hour. Mighty beings like the mountains and oceans are like horrendous, lifeless corpses. Many grievous, crushing, terrifying delusions like these arise from his unbelief and misguidance, and torment him.

As for the other man, he is a believer. He recognizes and affirms Almighty God. In his view this world is an abode where the Names of the All-Merciful One are constantly recited, a place of instruction for man and the animals, and a field of examination for man and jinn. All animal and human deaths are a demobilization. Those who have completed their duties of life depart from this transient world for another, happy and trouble-free, world so that place may be made for new officials to come and work. The birth of animals and humans marks their enlistment into the army, their being taken under arms, and the start of their duties. Each living being is a joyful regular soldier, an honest, contented official. And all voices are either glorification of God and the recitation of His Names at the outset of their duties, and the thanks and rejoicing at their ceasing work, or the songs arising from their joy at working. In the view of the believer, all beings are the friendly servants, amicable officials, and agreeable books of his Most Generous Lord and All-Compassionate Owner. Very many more subtle, exalted, pleasurable, and sweet truths like these become manifest and appear from his belief.

That is to say, belief in God bears the seed of what is in effect a Tuba-Tree of Paradise, while unbelief conceals the seed of a Zakkum-Tree of Hell.

That means that salvation and security are only to be found in Islam and belief. In which case, we should continually say, “Praise be to God for the religion of Islam and perfect belief.”

The Third Word

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
O you people, worship...¹*

If you want to understand what great profit and happiness lie in worship, and what great loss and ruin lie in vice and dissipation listen to and take heed of the following story which is in the form of a comparison:

One time, two soldiers received orders to proceed to a distant city. They set off and travelled together until the road forked. At the fork was a man who said to them, “The road on the right causes no loss at all, and nine out of ten of those who take it receive a high profit and experience great ease. While the road on the left provides no advantages, and nine out of ten of its travellers make a loss. But they are the same as regards distance. Only there is one difference: those who take the left-hand road, which has no rules and no one in authority, travel without baggage and arms. They feel an apparent lightness and deceptive ease. Whereas those travelling on the right-hand road, which is under military order, are compelled to carry a kit-bag full of nutritious rations four *okkas* or so in weight and a superb army rifle of about two *kıyyes*² which will overpower and rout every enemy...”

After the two soldiers had listened to what this instructive man had to say, the fortunate one took the road to the right. He loaded the weight of one *batman* onto his back, but his heart and spirit were saved from thousands of *batmans* of fear and feeling obliged to others. As for the other, luckless, soldier, he left the army. He did not want to conform to the order, and he went off to the left. He was released from bearing a load of one *batman*, but his heart was constricted by thousands of *batmans* of indebtedness, and his spirit crushed by innumerable fears. He proceeded on his way both begging from everyone and trembling before every object and every event until he reached his destination. And there he was punished as a mutineer and a deserter.

¹ Qur'an, 2:21.

² 1 *okka* = approx. 2.8 lbs. or 1,300 grams. *Kıyye*, another name for *okka*. 1 *batman* = 2 - 8 *okkas* or 5 - 30 lbs. [Tr.]

As for the soldier who loved the order of the army, had guarded his kit-bag and rifle, and taken the right-hand road, he had gone on his way being obliged to no one, fearing no one, and with an easy heart and conscience until he reached the city he was seeking. There he received a reward worthy of an honourable soldier who had carried out his duty faithfully.

O rebellious soul, know that one of those two travellers represents those who submit to the Divine Law, while the other represents the rebellious and those who follow their own desires. The road is the road of life, which comes from the Spirit World, passes through the grave, and carries on to the hereafter. As for the kit-bag and rifle, they are worship and fear of God. There is an apparent burden in worship, but there is an ease and lightness in its meaning that defies description. For in the prescribed prayers the worshipper declares, "I bear witness that there is no god but God." That is to say, he finds the door of a treasury of mercy in everything because he is believing and saying, "There is no Creator and Provider other than Him. Harm and benefit are in His hand. He is both All-Wise; He does nothing in vain, and He is All-Compassionate; His bounty and mercy are abundant." And he knocks on the door with his supplication. Moreover, he sees that everything is subjugated to the command of his own Sustainer, so he takes refuge in Him. He places his trust in Him and relies on Him, and is fortified against every disaster; his belief gives him complete confidence.

Indeed, like with every true virtue, the source of courage is belief in God, and worship. And as with every iniquity, the source of cowardice is misguidance.

In fact, for a worshipper with a truly illuminated heart, it is possible that even if the globe of the earth became a bomb and exploded, it would not frighten him. He would watch it with pleasurable wonder as a marvel of the Eternally Besought One's power. But when a famous degenerate philosopher with a so-called enlightened mind but no heart saw a comet in the sky, he trembled on the ground, and exclaimed anxiously: "Isn't that comet going to hit the earth?" (On one occasion, America was quaking with fear at such a comet, and many people left their homes in the middle of the night.)

Yes, although man is in need of numberless things, his capital is as nothing, and although he is subject to endless calamities, his power too is as nothing. Simply, his capital and power extend only as far as his hand can reach. However, his hopes, desires, pains, and tribulations reach as far as the eye and the imagination can stretch. Anyone who is not totally blind can see and understand then what a great profit, happiness, and bounty for the human spirit, which is thus impotent and weak, and needy and wanting, are worship, affirmation of God's unity, and reliance on God and submission to Him.

It is obvious that a safe way is preferable to a harmful way, even if the possibility of its safety is only one in ten. But on the way of worship, which our matter here, there is a nine out of ten possibility of it leading to the treasury of eternal happiness, as well as its being safe. While it is established by the testimony –which is at the degree of consensus– of innumerable experts and witnesses that besides being without benefit, and the dissolute even confess to this, the way of vice and dissipation ends in eternal misery. According to the reports of those who have uncovered the mysteries of creation this is absolutely certain.

In Short: Like that of the hereafter, happiness in this world lies in worship and being a soldier for Almighty God. In which case, we should constantly say: “Praise be to God for obedience to him and success,” and we should thank Him that we are Muslims.

The Fourth Word

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
The prescribed prayers are the pillar of religion.¹*

If you want to understand with the certainty that two plus two equals four just how valuable and important are the prescribed prayers, and with what little expense they are gained, and how crazy and harmful is the person who neglects them, pay attention to the following story which is in the form of a comparison:

One time, a mighty ruler gave each of two of his servants twenty-four gold pieces and sent them to settle on one of his rich, royal farms two months' distance away. "Use this money for your tickets," he commanded them, "and buy whatever is necessary for your house there with it. There is a station one day's distance from the farm. And there is both road-transport, and a railway, and boats, and aeroplanes. They can be benefited from according to your capital."

The two servants set off after receiving these instructions. One of them was fortunate so that he spent a small amount of money on the way to the station. And included in that expense was some business so profitable and pleasing to his master that his capital increased a thousandfold. As for the other servant, since he was luckless and a layabout, he spent twenty-three pieces of gold on the way to the station, wasting it on gambling and amusements. A single gold piece remained. His friend said to him: "Spend this last gold piece on a ticket so that you will not have to walk the long journey and starve. Moreover, our master is generous; perhaps he will take pity on you and forgive you your faults, and put you on an aeroplane as well. Then we shall reach where we are going to live in one day. Otherwise you will be compelled to walk alone and hungry across a desert which takes two months to cross." The most unintelligent person can understand how foolish, harmful, and senseless he would be if out of obstinacy he did not spend that single remaining gold piece on a ticket, which is like the key to a treasury, and instead spent it on vice for passing pleasure. Is that not so?

¹ *Tirmidhi*, Iman, 8; *Ibn Maja*, Fitan, 12; *Musnad*, v, 231; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, ii, 76.

O you who do not perform the prescribed prayers! And O my own soul, which does not like to pray! The ruler in the comparison is our Sustainer, our Creator. Of the two travelling servants, one represents the devout who perform their prayers with fervour, and the other, the heedless who neglect their prayers. The twenty-four pieces of gold are life in every twenty-four-hour day. And the royal domain is Paradise. As for the station, it is the grave. And the journey is man's passage to the grave, and on to the resurrection and the hereafter. Men cover that long journey to different degrees according to their actions and the strength of their fear of God. Some of the truly devout have crossed a thousand-year distance in a day like lightning. And some have traversed a fifty-thousand-year distance in a day with the speed of imagination. The Qur'an of Mighty Stature alludes to this truth with two of its verses.²

The ticket in the comparison represents the prescribed prayers. A single hour a day is sufficient for the five prayers together with taking the ablutions. So what a loss a person makes who spends twenty-three hours on this fleeting worldly life, and fails to spend one hour on the long life of the hereafter; how he wrongs his own self; how unreasonably he behaves. For would not anyone who considers himself to be reasonable understand how contrary to reason and wisdom such a person's conduct is, and how far from reason he has become, if, thinking it reasonable, he gives half of his property to a lottery in which one thousand people are participating and the possibility of winning is one in a thousand, and does not give one twenty-fourth of it to an eternal treasury where the possibility of winning has been verified at ninety-nine out of a hundred?

Moreover, the spirit, the heart, and the mind find great ease in prayer. And it is not trying for the body. Furthermore, with the right intention, all the other acts of someone who performs the prescribed prayers become like worship. He can make over the whole capital of his life to the hereafter in this way. He can make his transient life permanent in one respect.

² See, "Said one of them: 'How long have we stayed there?' 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)

The Fifth Word

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

Indeed, God is with those who fear Him and those who do good.¹

If you want to see what a truly human duty and what a natural, appropriate result of man's creation it is to perform the prescribed prayers and not to commit serious sins, listen to and take heed of the following comparison:

Once, at a time of general mobilization, two soldiers found themselves together in a regiment. One was well-trained and conscientious, the other, a raw recruit and self-centred. The conscientious soldier concentrated on training and the war, and did not give a thought to rations and provisions, for he knew that it was the state's duty to feed and equip him, treat him if he was ill, and even to put the food in his mouth if the need arose. He knew that his essential duty was to train and fight. But he would also attend to some of the rations and equipment as part of his work. He would boil up the saucepans, wash up the mess-tins, and bring them. If it was then asked him: "What are you doing?", he would reply: "I am doing fatigue duty for the state." He would not say: "I am working for my living."

The raw recruit, however, was fond of his stomach and paid no attention to training and the war. "That is the state's business. What is it to me?", he would say. He thought constantly of his livelihood, and pursuing it would leave the regiment and go to the market to do shopping. One day his well-trained friend said to him:

"Your basic duty is training and fighting, brother. You were brought here for that. Trust in the king; he will not let you go hungry. That is his duty. Anyway, you are powerless and wanting; you cannot feed yourself everywhere. And this is a time of mobilization and war; he will tell you that you are mutinous and will punish you. Yes, there are two duties which concern us. One is the king's duty: sometimes we do his fatigue duties and he feeds us for it. The other is our duty: that is training and fighting, and sometimes the king helps us with it."

¹ Qur'an, 16:128.

Of course you will understand in what danger the layabout soldier would be if he did not pay attention to the striving, well-trained one.

O my lazy soul! That turbulent place of war is this stormy worldly life, and the army divided into regiments, human society. The regiment in the comparison is the community of Islam in this century. One of the two soldiers is a devout Muslim who knows the obligations of his religion and performs them, and struggles with Satan and his own soul in order to give up serious misdoings and not to commit sins. While the other is a degenerate wrongdoer who is so immersed in the struggle for livelihood that he casts aspersions on the True Provider, abandons his religious obligations, and commits any sins that come his way as he makes his living. As for the training and instruction, it is foremost the prescribed prayers and worship. And the war is the struggle against the soul and its desires, and against the satans among jinn and men, to deliver them from sin and bad morals, and save the heart and spirit from eternal perdition. And the first of the two duties is to give life and sustain it, while the other is to worship and beseech the Giver and Sustainer of life. It is to trust in Him and rely on Him.

Indeed, whoever made and bestowed life, which is a most brilliant miracle of the Eternally Besought One's art and a wonder of dominical wisdom, is the one who maintains and perpetuates it through sustenance. It cannot be another. Do you want proof? The most impotent and stupid animals are the best nourished; like fish, and worms in fruit. And it is the most helpless and delicate creatures who have the choicest food; like infants and the young of all species.

For sure, it is enough to compare fish with foxes, newly born animals with wild beasts, and trees with animals in order to understand that licit food is obtained not through power and will, but through impotence and helplessness. That is to say, someone who gives up performing the prescribed prayers because of the struggle for livelihood resembles the soldier who abandoned his training and trench and went and begged in the market. But to seek ones rations from the kitchens of the All-Generous Provider's mercy after performing the prayers, and to go oneself so as not to be a burden on others is fine and manly. It too is a sort of worship.

Furthermore, man's nature and spiritual faculties show that he is created for worship. For in respect of the power and actions necessary for the life of this world, he cannot compete with the most inferior sparrow. While in respect of knowledge and need, and worship and supplication, which are necessary for spiritual life and the life of the hereafter, he is like the monarch and commander of the animals.

O my soul! If you make the life of this world the aim of your life and work constantly for that, you will become like the lowest sparrow. But if

you make the life of the hereafter your aim and end, and make this life the means of it and its tillage, and strive in accordance with it, then you will be like a lofty commander of the animals, and a petted and suppliant servant of Almighty God, and His honoured and respected guest.

Those are the two ways open to you! You can choose whichever you wish... So ask for guidance and success from the Most Compassionate of the Compassionate.

The Sixth Word

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

Verily God has purchased from the believers their persons and their property that Paradise might be theirs.¹

If you wish to understand how profitable a trade it is, and how honour-able a rank, to sell one's person and property to God, to be His slave and His soldier, then listen to the following comparison.

Once a king entrusted each of two of his subjects with an estate, including all necessary workshops, machinery, horses, weapons and so forth. But since it was a tempestuous and war-ridden age, nothing enjoyed stability; it was destined either to disappear or to change. The king in his infinite mercy sent a most noble lieutenant to the two men and by means of a compassionate decree conveyed the following to them:

“Sell me the property you now hold in trust, so that I may keep it for you. Let it not be destroyed for no purpose. After the wars are over, I will return it to you in a better condition than before. I will regard the trust as your property and pay you a high price for it. As for the machinery and the tools in the workshop, they will be used in my name and at my workbench. But the price and the fee for their use shall be increased a thousandfold. You will receive all the profit that accrues. You are indigent and resourceless, and unable to provide the cost of these great tasks. So let me assume the provision of all expenses and equipment, and give you all the income and the profit. You shall keep it until the time of demobilization. So see the five ways in which you shall profit! Now if you do not sell me the property, you can see that no one is able to preserve what he possesses, and you too will lose what you now hold. It will go for nothing, and you will lose the high price I offer. The delicate and precious tools and scales, the precious metals waiting to be used, will also lose all value. You will have the trouble and concern of administering and preserving, but at the same time be punished for betraying your trust. So see the five ways in which you may lose! Moreover, if you sell the property to me, you become my soldier and act in my name. Instead of a common prisoner or irregular soldier, you will be the free lieutenant of an exalted monarch.”

¹ Qur'an, 9:111.

After they had listened to this gracious decree, the more intelligent of the two men said:

“By all means, I am proud and happy to sell. I offer thanks a thousandfold.”

But the other was arrogant, selfish and dissipated; his soul had become as proud as the Pharaoh. As if he was to stay eternally on that estate, he ignored the earthquakes and tumults of this world. He said:

“No! Who is the king? I won’t sell my property, nor spoil my enjoyment.”

After a short time, the first man reached so high a rank that everyone envied his state. He received the favour of the king, and lived happily in the king’s own palace. The other by contrast fell into such a state that everyone pitied him, but also said he deserved it. For as a result of his error, his happiness and property departed, and he suffered punishment and torment.

O soul full of caprices! Look at the face of truth through the telescope of this parable. As for the king, he is the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, your Sustainer and Creator. The estates, machinery, tools and scales are your possessions while in life’s fold; your body, spirit and heart within those possessions, and your outward and inward senses such as the eye and the tongue, intelligence and imagination. As for the most noble lieutenant, it is the Noble Messenger of God; and the most wise decree is the Wise Qur’an, which describes the trade we are discussing in this verse:

Verily God has purchased from the believers their persons and property that Paradise might be theirs.

The surging field of battle is the tempestuous surface of the world, which ceaselessly changes, dissolves and reforms and causes every man to think:

“Since everything will leave our hands, will perish and be lost, is there no way in which we can transform it into something eternal and preserve it?”

While engaged in these thoughts, he suddenly hears the heavenly voice of the Qur’an saying:

“Indeed there is, a beautiful and easy way which contains five profits within itself.”

What is that way?

To sell the trust received back to its true owner. Such a sale yields profit fivefold.

The First Profit: Transient property becomes everlasting. For this waning life, when given to the Eternal and Self-Subsistent Lord of Glory and spent for His sake, will be transmuted into eternity. It will yield eternal fruits. The moments of one’s life will apparently vanish and rot like kernels and seeds. But then the flowers of blessedness and auspiciousness will open and bloom in the realm of eternity, and each will also present a luminous and reassuring aspect in the Intermediate Realm.

The Second Profit: The high price of Paradise is given in exchange.

The Third Profit: The value of each limb and each sense is increased a thousandfold. The intelligence is, for example, like a tool. If you do not sell it to God Almighty, but rather employ it for the sake of the soul, it will become an ill-omened, noxious and debilitating tool that will burden your weak person with all the sad sorrows of the past and the terrifying fears of the future; it will descend to the rank of an inauspicious and destructive tool. It is for this reason that a sinful man will frequently resort to drunkenness or frivolous pleasure in order to escape the vexations and injuries of his intelligence. But if you sell your intelligence to its True Owner and employ it on His behalf, then it will become like the key to a talisman, unlocking the infinite treasures of compassion and the vaults of wisdom that creation contains. It will thus rise to being a dominical guide preparing its owner for eternal bliss.

To take another example, the eye is one of the senses, a window through which the spirit looks out on this world. If you do not sell it to God Almighty, but rather employ it on behalf of the soul, by gazing upon a handful of transient, impermanent beauties and scenes, it will sink to the level of being a pander to lust and the concupiscent soul. But if you sell the eye to your All-Seeing Maker, and employ it on His behalf and within limits traced out by Him, then your eye will rise to the rank of a reader of the great book of being, a witness to the miracles of dominical art, a blessed bee sucking on the blossoms of mercy in the garden of this globe.

Yet another example is that of the tongue and the sense of taste. If you do not sell it to your Wise Creator, but employ it instead on behalf of the soul and for the sake of the stomach, it sinks and declines to the level of a gatekeeper at the stable of the stomach, a watchman at its factory. But if you sell it to the Generous Provider, the sense of taste contained in the tongue will rise to the rank of a skilled overseer of the treasures of Divine compassion, a grateful inspector in the kitchens of God's eternal power.

So look well, O intelligence! See the difference between a tool of destruction and the key to all being! And look carefully, O eye! See the difference between an abominable pander and the learned overseer of the Divine library! And taste well, O tongue! See the difference between a stable doorkeeper or a factory watchman and the superintendent of the treasury of God's mercy!

Compare all other tools and limbs to these, and then you will understand that in truth the believer acquires a nature worthy of Paradise and the unbeliever a nature conforming to Hell. The reason for each of them attaining his respective value is that the believer, by virtue of his faith, uses the trust of his Creator on His behalf and within the limits traced out by Him, whereas the unbeliever betrays the trust and employs it for the sake of the instinctual soul.

The Fourth Profit: Man is helpless and exposed to numerous misfortunes. He is indigent, and his needs are numerous. He is weak, and the

burden of life is most heavy. If he does not rely on the Omnipotent One of Glory, place his trust in Him and confidently submit to Him, his conscience will always be troubled. Fruitless torments, pains and regrets will suffocate him and intoxicate him, or turn him into a beast.

The Fifth Profit: Those who have experienced illumination and had unveiled to them the true nature of things, the elect who have witnessed the truth, are all agreed that the exalted reward for all the worship and glorification of God performed by your members and instruments will be given to you at the time of greatest need, in the form of the fruits of Paradise.

If you spurn this trade with its fivefold profit, in addition to being deprived of its profit, you will suffer fivefold loss.

The First Loss: The property and offspring to which you are so attached, the soul and its caprice that you worship, the youth and life with which you are infatuated, all will vanish and be lost; your hands will be empty. But they will leave behind them sin and pain, fastened on your neck like a yoke.

The Second Loss: You will suffer the penalty for betrayal of trust. For you will have wronged your own self by using the most precious tools on the most worthless objects.

The Third Loss: By casting down all the precious faculties of man to a level much inferior to the animals, you will have insulted and transgressed against God's wisdom.

The Fourth Loss: In your weakness and poverty, you will have placed the heavy burden of life on your weak shoulders, and will constantly groan and lament beneath the blows of transience and separation.

The Fifth Loss: You will have clothed in an ugly form, fit to open the gates of Hell in front of you, the fair gifts of the Compassionate One such as the intelligence, the heart, the eye and the tongue, given to you to make preparation for the foundations of everlasting life and eternal happiness in the hereafter.

Now is it so difficult to sell the trust? Is it so burdensome that many people shun the transaction? By no means! It is not in the least burdensome. For the limits of the permissible are broad, and are quite adequate for man's desire; there is no need to trespass on the forbidden. The duties imposed by God are light and few in number. To be the slave and soldier of God is an indescribably pleasurable honour. One's duty is simply to act and embark on all things in God's name, like a soldier; to take and to give on God's behalf; to move and be still in accordance with His permission and law. If one falls short, then one should seek His forgiveness, say:

"O Lord! Forgive our faults, and accept us as Your slaves. Make us sure holders of Your trust until the time comes when it is taken from us. Amen!", and make petition unto Him.

The Seventh Word

If you want to understand what valuable, difficulty-resolving talismans are the two parts of the phrase “I believe in God and the Last Day,” which solve both the enigmatical riddle of creation and open the door of happiness for the human spirit, and what beneficial and curative medicines are reliance on your Creator and taking refuge in Him through patience and entreaty, and supplicating your Provider through thanks, and what important, precious, shining tickets for the journey to eternity – and provisions for the hereafter and lights for the grave – are listening to the Qur’an, obeying its commands, performing the prescribed prayers, and giving up serious sins, then listen and pay attention to this comparison:

One time a soldier fell into a most grave situation in the field of battle and examination, and the round of profit and loss. It was as follows:

The soldier was wounded with two deep and terrible wounds on his right and left sides and behind him stood a huge lion as though waiting to attack him. Before him stood a gallows which was putting to death and annihilating all those he loved. It was awaiting him too. Besides this, he had a long journey before him: he was being exiled. As the unfortunate soldier pondered over his fearsome plight in despair, a kindly person shining with light like Khidr appeared. He said to him: “Do not despair. I shall give you two talismans and teach you them. If you use them properly, the lion will become a docile horse for you, and the gallows will turn into a swing for your pleasure and enjoyment. Also I shall give you two medicines. If you follow the instructions, those two suppurating wounds will be transformed into two sweet-scented flowers called the Rose of Muhammad (PBUH). Also, I shall give you a ticket; with it, you will be able to make a year’s journey in a day as though flying. If you do not believe me, experiment a bit, so that you can see it is true.” The soldier did experiment a bit, and affirmed that it was true. Yes, I, that is, this unfortunate Said, affirm it too. For I experimented and saw it was absolutely true.

Some time later he saw a sly, debauched-looking man, cunning as the Devil, coming from the left bringing with him much ornamented finery, decorated pictures and fantasies, and many intoxicants. He stopped before the soldier, and said:

“Hey, come on, my friend! Let’s go and drink and make merry. We can look at these pictures of beautiful girls, listen to the music, and eat this tasty food.” Then he asked him: “What is it you are reciting under your breath?”

“A talisman,” came the reply.

“Stop that incomprehensible nonsense! Let’s not spoil our present fun!” And he asked a second question: “What is that you have in your hand?”

“Some medicine,” the soldier replied.

“Throw it away! You are healthy, there is nothing wrong with you. It is the time of cheer.” And he asked: “What is that piece of paper with five marks on it?”

“It is a ticket and a rations card.”

“Oh, tear them up!”, the man said. “What need do we have of a journey this beautiful spring?” He tried to persuade him with every sort of wile, and the poor soldier was even a bit persuaded. Yes, man can be deceived. I was deceived by just such cunning deceptions.

Suddenly from the right came a voice like thunder. “Beware!”, it said. “Do not be deceived! Say to that trickster: ‘If you have the means to kill the lion behind me, remove the gallows from before me, repulse the things wounding my right and my left, and prevent the journey in front of me, then come on and do so! Show that you can and let us see it! Then say, come on, let’s go and enjoy ourselves. Otherwise be silent!’ Speak in the same way as that Khidr-like God-inspired man.”

O my soul, which laughed in its youth and now weeps at its laughter! Know that the unfortunate soldier is you, and man. The lion is the appointed hour. As for the gallows, it is death, decline, and separation, through which, in the alternation of night and day, all friends bid farewell and are lost. Of the two wounds, one is man’s infinite and troublesome impotence, while the other is his grievous and boundless poverty. The exile and journey is the long journey of examination which passes from the world of spirits through the womb and childhood to old age; through the world and the grave and the intermediate realm, to the resurrection and the Bridge of Sirat. As for the two talismans, they are belief in Almighty God and the hereafter.

Yes, through the second sacred talisman, death takes on the form of a mastered horse, a steed to take believing man from the prison of this world to the gardens of Paradise and the presence of the Most Merciful One. It is because of this that the wise who have seen death’s reality have loved it. They have wanted it before it came. And through the talisman of belief in God, the passage of time, which is decline and separation, death and decease and the gallows, takes on the form of the means to observe and contemplate with perfect pleasure the miracles of the All-Glorious Maker’s various, mul

ticaloured, ever-renewed embroideries, the wonders of His power, and the manifestations of His mercy. Yes, when mirrors reflecting the colours of the sun's light are changed and renewed, and the images of the cinema changed, better, more beautiful scenes are formed.

As for the two medicines, one is trusting in God and patience, and the other is relying on the power of one's Creator and having confidence in His wisdom. Is that the case? Indeed it is. What fear can a man have, who, through the certificate of his impotence, relies on a Monarch of the World with the power to command: "Be!" and it is."¹ For in the face of the worst calamity, he says: "Verily, to God do we belong, and verily to Him is our return,"² and places his trust in his Most Compassionate Sustainer. A person with knowledge of God takes pleasure from impotence, from fear of God. Yes, there is pleasure in fear. If a twelve-month baby were sufficiently intelligent to be asked: "What is most pleasurable and sweetest for you?", he might well say: "To realize my powerlessness and helplessness, and fearing my mother's gentle smack to at the same time take refuge in her tender breast." But the compassion of all mothers is but a flash of the manifestation of Divine mercy. It is for this reason that the wise have found such pleasure in impotence and fear of God, vehemently declaring themselves to be free of any strength and power, and have taken refuge in God through their powerlessness. They have made powerlessness and fear an intercessor for themselves.

The second medicine is thanks and contentment, and entreaty and supplication, and relying on the mercy of the All-Compassionate Provider. Is that so? Yes, for how can poverty, want and need be painful and burdensome for a guest of an All-Generous and Munificent One Who makes the whole face of the earth a table of bounties and the spring a bunch of flowers, and Who places the flowers on the table and scatters them over it? Poverty and need take on the form of a pleasant appetite. The guest tries to increase his poverty in the same way he does his appetite. It is because of this that the wise have taken pride in want and poverty. But beware, do not misunderstand this! It means to be aware of one's poverty before God and to beseech Him, not to parade poverty before the people and assume the air of a beggar.

As for the ticket and voucher, it is to perform the religious duties, and foremost the prescribed prayers, and to give up serious sins. Is that so? Yes, it is, for according to the consensus of those who observe and have knowledge of the Unseen and those who uncover the mysteries of creation, the provisions, light, and steed for the long, dark road to post-eternity may only be obtained through complying with the commands of the Qur'an and

¹ Qur'an, 2:117, etc.

² Qur'an, 2:156.

avoiding what it prohibits. Science, philosophy, and art are worth nothing on that road. Their light reaches only as far as the door of the grave.

O my lazy soul! How little and light and easy it is to perform the five daily prayers and give up the seven deadly sins! If you have the faculty of reason and it is not corrupted, understand how important and extensive are their results, fruits, and benefits! Say to the Devil and that man who were encouraging you to indulge in vice and dissipation: "If you have the means to kill death, and cause decline and transience to disappear from the world, and remove poverty and impotence from man, and close the door of the grave, then tell us and let us hear it! Otherwise, be silent! The Qur'an reads the universe in the vast mosque of creation. Let us listen to it. Let us be illuminated with that light. Let us act according to its guidance. And let us recite it constantly. Yes, the Qur'an is the word. That is what they say of it. It is the Qur'an which is the truth and comes from the Truth and says the truth and shows the truth and spreads luminous wisdom..."

O God! Illuminate our hearts with the light of belief and the Qur'an.

O God! Enrich us with the need of You and do not impoverish us with the lack of need of You. Make us free of our own strength and power, and cause us to take refuge in Your strength and power. Appoint us among those who place their trust in You, and do not entrust us to ourselves. Protect us with Your protection. Have mercy on us and have mercy on all believing men and women. And grant blessings and peace to our Master Muhammad, Your Servant and Prophet, Your Friend and Beloved, the Beauty of Your Dominion and the Sovereign of Your Art, the Essence of Your Favour and the Sun of Your Guidance, the Tongue of Your Proof and the Exemplar of Your Mercy, the Light of Your Creation and the Glory of Your Creatures, the Lamp of Your Unity in the Multiplicity of Your Creatures and the Discloser of the Talisman of Your Beings, the Herald of the Sovereignty of Your Dominicality and the Announcer of those things pleasing to You, the Proclaimer of the Treasuries of Your Names and the Instructor of Your Servants, the Interpreter of Your Signs and the Mirror of the Beauty of Your Dominicality, the Means of witnessing You and bearing witness to You, Your Beloved and Your Messenger whom You sent as a Mercy to All the Worlds, and to all his Family and Companions, and to his brothers among the prophets and messengers, and to Your angels and to the righteous among Your servants. AMEN.

The Eighth Word

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
God, there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsistent.¹
Verily, the religion before God is Islam.²*

If you want to understand this world, and man's spirit within the world, and the nature and value of religion for man, and how the world is a prison if there is no True Religion, and that without religion man becomes the most miserable of creatures, and that it is "O God!" and, "There is no god but God" that solve this world's talisman and deliver the human spirit from darkness, then listen to and consider this comparison:

Long ago, two brothers set off on a long journey. They continued on their way until the road forked. At the fork they saw a serious-looking man and asked him: "Which road is good?" He told them: "On the road to the right one is compelled to comply with the law and order, but within that hardship is security and happiness. However, on the left-hand road there is freedom and no restraint, but within its freedom lie danger and wretchedness. Now, the choice is yours!"

After listening to this, saying, "I place my trust in God,"³ the brother with a good character took the right road and conformed to the order and regulations. The other brother, who was immoral and a layabout, chose the road to the left just for the lack of restrictions. With our imaginations, we shall follow this man in his situation, which was apparently easy but in reality burdensome.

Thus, this man went up hill and down dale until he found himself in a desolate wilderness. He suddenly heard a terrifying sound and saw that a great lion had come out of the forest and was about to attack him. He fled. He came across a waterless well sixty yards deep, and in his fear jumped into it. He fell half-way down it where his hands met a tree. He clung on to it. The tree, which was growing out of the walls of the well, had two roots.

¹ Qur'an, 3:2; 2:255.

² Qur'an, 3:19.

³ Qur'an, 11:56.

Two rats, one white and one black, were attacking and gnawing through them. He looked up and saw that the lion was waiting at the top of the well like a sentry. He looked down and saw a ghastly dragon. It raised its head and drew it close to his foot thirty yards above. Its mouth was as big as the mouth of the well. Then he looked at the well's walls and saw that stinging, poisonous vermin had gathered round him. He looked up at the mouth of the well and saw a fig-tree. But it was not an ordinary tree; it bore the fruit of many different trees, from walnuts to pomegranates.

Thus, due to his lack of thought and foolishness, the man did not understand that this was not just some ordinary matter, these things were not here by chance, and that there were mysterious secrets concealed in these strange beings. And he did not grasp that there was someone very powerful directing them. Now, although his heart, spirit, and mind were secretly weeping and wailing at this grievous situation, his evil-commanding soul pretended that it was nothing; it closed its ears to the weeping of his heart and spirit, and deceiving itself, started to eat the tree's fruit as though it was in a garden. But some of the fruit were poisonous and harmful. Almighty God says in a Divine Hadith: "I am according to how my servants think of Me."⁴

Thus, through his foolishness and lack of understanding, this unhappy man thought what he saw to be ordinary and the actual truth. So that is the way he was treated, and is treated, and will be treated. He neither dies so that he is saved from it, nor does he live – he is in such torment. Now we shall leave this ill-omened man in his torment and return, so that we may consider the situation of the other brother.

This fortunate and intelligent person went on his way, but he suffered no distress like his brother. For, due to his fine morals, he thought of good things and imagined good things. Everything was friendly and familiar to him. And he did not suffer any difficulty and hardship like his brother, for he knew the order and followed it. He found it easy. He went on his way freely and in peace and security. Then he came across a garden in which were both lovely flowers and fruits, and, since it was not looked after, rotting and filthy things. His brother had also entered such a garden, but he had noticed and occupied himself with the filthy things and they had turned his stomach, so he had left it and moved on without being able to rest himself. But this man acted according to the rule, 'look on the good side of everything,' and had paid no attention to the rotting things. He had benefited a lot from the good things, and taking a good rest, he had left and gone on his way.

Later, also like the first brother, he had entered a vast desert, and had suddenly heard the roar of a lion which was attacking him. He was frightened,

⁴ *Bukhari*, Tawhid, 15, 35; *Muslim*, Tawba, 1; Dhikr, 2, 19; *Tirmidhi*, Zuhd, 51; Da'wat, 131; *Ibn Maja*, Adab, 58; *Darimi*, Riqaq, 33; *Musnad*, ii, 251, 315, 391, 412, 445, 482, 516.

but not as much as his brother. For, because of his good thoughts and positive attitude, he thought to himself: "This desert has a ruler, and it is possible that this lion is a servant under the ruler's command," and found consolation. But he still fled until he came across an empty well sixty yards deep. He threw himself into it. Like his brother, his hand clasped a tree half-way down and he remained suspended in the air. He looked and saw two animals gnawing through the tree's two roots. He looked up and saw the lion, and looked down and saw the dragon. Just like his brother he was seeing a most strange situation. He was terrified like him, but his terror was a thousand times less than his brother's. For his good morals had given him good thoughts, and good thoughts show the good side of everything. So, because of this, he thought as follows:

"These strange happenings are connected to someone. Also it seems that they are acting in accordance with a command. In which case, these matters contain a talisman. Yes, everything is happening at the command of a hidden ruler. Therefore, I am not alone; the hidden ruler is watching me, he is testing me, he is impelling me somewhere for some purpose, and inviting me there. A curiosity arising from this pleasant fear and these agreeable thoughts prompt me to say: I wonder who it is that is testing me, wants to make himself known, and is impelling me for some purpose on this strange road."

Then, love for the owner of the talisman arose out of the desire to know him, and from that love arose the desire to solve the talisman. And from that desire arose the will to acquire good qualities which would please and gratify the talisman's owner. Then he looked at the tree and saw it was a fig-tree, but it was bearing the fruits of thousands of trees. So then all his fear left him, for he understood that for certain the fig-tree was a list, an index, an exhibition. The hidden ruler must have attached samples of the fruits in the garden to the tree through a miracle and with a talisman, and must have adorned the tree in a way that would point to each of the foods he had prepared for his guests. For there is no other way a single tree could produce the fruits of thousands of different trees. Then he began to entreat that he would be inspired with the key to the talisman. He called out:

"O ruler of this place! I have happened upon you and I take refuge with you. I am your servant and I want to please you. I am searching for you." After he had made this supplication, the walls of the well suddenly parted, and a door opened onto a wonderful, pleasant, quiet garden. Indeed, the dragon's mouth was transformed into the door, and both it and the lion took on the forms of two servants; they invited him to enter. The lion even became a docile horse for him.

O my lazy soul! And O my imaginary friend! Come! Let us compare the position of these two brothers so that we can see how good comes of good and evil comes of evil. Let us find out.

Look, the unhappy traveller on the left road is all the time trembling with fear waiting to enter the dragon's mouth, while the fortunate one is invited into a blooming, splendid garden full of fruit. And the unfortunate one's heart is being pounded by an awful terror and grievous fear, while the fortunate one is gazing at and observing strange things as a delightful lesson, with a pleasant fear and loving knowledge. Also the miserable one is suffering torments in desolation, despair, and loneliness, while the fortunate one is enjoying himself, full of hope, longing, and a sense of belonging. Furthermore, the unfortunate one sees himself as a prisoner subject to the attacks of wild beasts, while the fortunate one is an honoured guest who is on friendly terms and enjoying himself with the strange servants of his generous host. Also the unhappy one is hastening his torments by indulging in fruits which are apparently delicious but in fact poisonous. For the fruits are samples; there is permission to taste them so as to seek the originals and become customers for them, but there is no permission to devour them like an animal. But the fortunate one tastes them and understands the matter; he postpones eating them and takes pleasure in waiting. Moreover, the unfortunate one is wronging himself. Through his lack of discernment, he is making a truth and a situation which are as clear and bright as daylight into a dark and oppressive fear, into a hellish delusion. He does not deserve pity, nor does he have the right to complain to anyone.

For example, if a person at a pleasant banquet in a beautiful garden in summer among his friends makes himself drunk through filthy intoxicants, then imagines himself hungry and naked in the middle of winter among wild animals and starts shouting out and crying, he does not deserve to be pitied; he is wronging himself, and he is insulting his friends by imagining them to be wild beasts. Thus, the unfortunate brother is like this. But the fortunate one sees the truth. And the truth is good. Through perceiving the beauty of the truth, the fortunate brother is being respectful towards the truth's owner. So he deserves his mercy. Thus, the meaning of the Qur'anic decree: "Know that evil is from yourself, and good is from God"⁵ becomes clear. If you make a comparison of other differences in the same way, you will understand that the evil-commanding soul of the first brother has prepared a sort of hell for him, while the good intention, good will, good character, and good thoughts of the other have allowed him to receive abundant bounty, experience true happiness and prosperity, and display shining virtue.

O my soul! And O you who is listening to this story together with my soul! If you do not want to be the unfortunate brother and want to be the fortunate one, listen to the Qur'an, obey its decrees, adhere to them, and act according to them.

⁵ See, Qur'an, 4:79.

If you have understood the truths in this comparison, you will be able to make them correspond to the truths of religion, the world, man, and belief in God. I shall say the important ones, then you deduce the finer points yourself.

So, look! Of the two brothers, one is a believing spirit and a righteous heart. The other is an unbelieving spirit and a depraved heart. Of the two roads, the one to the right is the way of the Qur'an and belief in God, while the left one is the road of rebellion and denial. The garden on the road is man's fleeting life in human society and civilization, where good and evil, and things good and bad and clean and dirty are found side by side. The sensible person is he who acts according to the rule: 'Take what is pleasant and clear, and leave what is distressing and turbid,' and goes on his way with tranquillity of heart. As for the desert, it is the earth and this world. And the lion is death and the appointed hour. The well is man's body and the time of his life, while its sixty-yard depth points to the normal life-span of sixty years. And the tree is the period of life and the substance of life. The two animals, one white and one black, are night and day. The dragon is the road to the Intermediate Realm and pavilion of the hereafter, whose mouth is the grave. But for the believer, that mouth is a door opening from a prison onto a garden. As for the poisonous vermin, they are the calamities of this world. But for the believer they are like gentle Divine warnings and favours of the Most Merciful One to prevent him slipping off into the sleep of heedlessness. The fruits on the tree are the bounties of this world which the Absolutely Generous One has made in the form of a list of the bounties of the hereafter, and both as examples of them, and warnings, and samples inviting customers to the fruits of Paradise. And the tree producing numerous different fruits despite being a single tree indicates the seal of the Eternally Besought One's power, the stamp of Divine dominicality, and the signet of the sovereignty of the Godhead. For 'to make everything from one thing,' that is, to make all plants and fruits from earth, and create all animals from a fluid, and to create all the limbs and organs of animals from a simple food, together with 'making everything one thing,' that is, arts like weaving a simple skin and making flesh particular to each animal from the great variety of foods that animals eat, is an inimitable stamp and seal peculiar to the Ruler of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, Who is the Single, Eternally-Besought One. For sure, to make one thing everything, and everything one thing is a sign, a mark, peculiar to the Creator of all things, the One Powerful over all things.

As for the talisman, it is the mystery of the purpose of creation which is solved through the mystery of belief. And the key is "There is no god but God," and, "God, there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsistent." The dragon's mouth being transformed into the door into the garden is a sign that, although for the people of misguidance and rebellion the grave is a door opening, in desolation and oblivion, onto a grave distressing as a dungeon

and narrow as a dragon's stomach, for the people of the Qur'an and belief, it is a door which opens from the prison of this world onto the fields of immortality, from the arena of examination onto the gardens of Paradise, and from the hardships of life onto the mercy of the All-Merciful One. The savage lion turning into a friendly servant and a docile mount is a sign that, although for the people of misguidance, death is a bitter, eternal parting from all their loved ones, and the expulsion from the deceptive paradise of this world and the entry in desolation and loneliness into the dungeon of the grave, for the people of guidance and the Qur'an it is the means of joining all their old friends and beloved ones who have already departed for the next world, and the means of entering their true homeland and abode of everlasting happiness. It is an invitation to the meadows of Paradise from the prison of this world, and a time to receive the wage bestowed out of the generosity of the Most Merciful and Compassionate One for services rendered to Him, and a discharge from the hardship of the duties of life, and a rest from the drill and instruction of worship and examination.

In Short: Whoever makes this fleeting life his purpose and aim is in fact in Hell even if apparently in Paradise. And whoever is turned in all seriousness towards eternal life receives the happiness of both worlds. However difficult and distressing this world is for him, since he sees it as the waiting-room for Paradise, he endures it and offers thanks in patience.

O God! Appoint us among the people of happiness, safety, the Qur'an, and belief. Amen. O God! Grant peace and blessings to our Master Muhammad, and to his Family and Companions, to the number of all the letters of the Qur'an formed in all its words, represented with the permission of the Most Merciful One in the mirrors of the air waves on the recital of each of those words by all the Qur'an's reciters from its first revelation to the end of time, and have mercy on us and on our parents, and have mercy on all believing men and women to the number of those words, through Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful. Amen. And all praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds.

The Ninth Word

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
So glorify God when you reach evening and when you rise in the morning; for all praise is His in the heavens and on earth, and towards the end of the day and when you have reached noon.¹*

Brother! You ask me concerning the wisdom in the specified times of the five daily prayers. I shall point out only one of the many instances of wisdom in the times.

Yes, like each of the times of prayer marks the start of an important revolution, so also is each a mirror to Divine disposal of power and to the universal Divine bounties within that disposal. Thus, more glorification and extolling of the All-Powerful One of Glory have been ordered at those times, and more praise and thanks for all the innumerable bounties accumulated between each of the times, which is the meaning of the prescribed prayers. In order to understand a little this subtle and profound meaning, you should listen together with my own soul to the following five 'Points'.

FIRST POINT

The meaning of the prayers is the offering of glorification, praise, and thanks to Almighty God. That is to say, uttering "Glory be to God" by word and action before God's glory and sublimity, it is to hallow and worship Him. And declaring "God is Most Great" through word and act before His sheer perfection, it is to exalt and magnify Him. And saying "All praise be to God" with the heart, tongue, and body, it is to offer thanks before His utter beauty. That is to say, glorification, exaltation, and praise are like the seeds of the prayers. That is why these three things are present in every part of the prayers, in all the actions and words. It is also why these blessed words are each repeated thirty-three times after the prayers, in order to strengthen and reiterate the prayers' meaning. The meaning of the prayers is confirmed through these concise summaries.

¹ Qur'an, 30:17-18.

SECOND POINT

The meaning of worship is this, that the servant sees his own faults, impotence, and poverty, and in the Divine Court prostrates in love and wonderment before dominical perfection, Divine mercy, and the power of the Eternally Besought One. That is to say, just as the sovereignty of dominicality demands worship and obedience, so also does the holiness of dominicality require that the servant sees his faults through seeking forgiveness, and through his glorifications and declaring “Glory be to God” proclaims that his Sustainer is pure and free of all defects, and exalted above and far from the false ideas of the people of misguidance, and hallowed and exempt from all the faults in the universe.

Also, the perfect power of dominicality requires that through understanding his own weakness and the impotence of other creatures, the servant proclaims “God is Most Great” in admiration and wonder before the majesty of the works of the Eternally Besought One’s power, and bowing in deep humility seeks refuge in Him and places his trust in Him.

Also, the infinite treasury of dominicality’s mercy requires that the servant makes known his own need and the needs and poverty of all creatures through the tongue of entreaty and supplication, and proclaims his Sustainer’s bounties and gifts through thanks and laudation and uttering “All praise be to God.” That is to say, the words and actions of the prayers comprise these meanings, and have been laid down from the side of Divinity.

THIRD POINT

Just as man is an example in miniature of the greater world and Sura al-Fatiha a shining sample of the Qur’an of Mighty Stature, so are the prescribed prayers a comprehensive, luminous index of all varieties of worship, and a sacred map pointing to all the shades of worship of all the classes of creatures.

FOURTH POINT

The second-hand, minute-hand, hour-hand, and day-hand of a clock which tells the weeks look to one another, are examples of one another, and follow one another. Similarly, the alternations of day and night, which are like the seconds of this world –a vast clock of Almighty God– and the years which tell its minutes, and the stages of man’s life-span which tell the hours, and the epochs of the world’s life-span which tell the days look to one another, are examples of one another, resemble one another, and recall one another. For example:

*The time of **Fajr**, the early morning:* This time until sunrise resembles and calls to mind the early spring, the moment of conception in the mother’s womb, and the first of the six days of the creation of the heavens and earth; it recalls the Divine acts present in them.

*The time of **Zuhr**, just past midday:* This resembles and points to midsummer, and the prime of youth, and the period of man's creation in the lifetime of the world, and calls to mind the manifestations of mercy and the abundant bounties they contain.

*The time of **'Asr**, afternoon:* This is like autumn, and old age, and the time of the Final Prophet (PBUH), known as the Era of Bliss, and recalls the Divine acts and favours of the All-Merciful One present in them.

*The time of **Maghrib**, sunset:* Through recalling the departure of many creatures at the end of autumn, and man's death, and the destruction of the world at the commencement of the resurrection, this time puts in mind the manifestations of Divine glory and sublimity, and rouses man from his slumbers of heedlessness.

*The time of **'Isha**, nightfall.* As for this time, by calling to mind the world of darkness veiling all the objects of the daytime world with a black shroud, and winter hiding the face of the dead earth with its white cerement, and even the remaining works of departed men dying and passing beneath the veil of oblivion, and this world, the arena of examination, being shut up and closed down for ever, it proclaims the awesome and mighty disposals of the All-Glorious and Compelling Subduer.

As for *the nighttime*, through putting in mind both the winter, and the grave, and the Intermediate Realm, it reminds man how needy is the human spirit for the Most Merciful One's mercy. And the *tahajjud* prayer informs him what a necessary light it is for the night of the grave and darkness of the Intermediate Realm; it warns him of this, and through recalling the infinite bounties of the True Bestower, proclaims how deserving He is of praise and thanks.

And *the second morning* calls to mind the Morning of the Resurrection. For sure, however reasonable and necessary and certain the morning of this night is, the Morning of the Resurrection and the spring following the Intermediate Realm are certain to the same degree.

That is, just as each of these five times marks the start of an important revolution and recalls other great revolutions, so through the awesome daily disposals of the Eternally Besought One's power, each calls to mind the miracles of Divine power and gifts of Divine mercy of both every year, and every age, and every epoch. That is to say, the prescribed prayers, which are an innate duty and the basis of worship and an incontestable debt, are most appropriate and fitting for these times.

FIFTH POINT

By nature man is extremely weak, yet everything touches him, and saddens and grieves him. Also he is utterly lacking in power, yet the calamities and enemies that afflict him are extremely numerous. Also he is extremely wanting, yet his needs are indeed many. Also he is lazy and incapable, yet life's responsibilities are most burdensome. Also his humanity has connected him to the rest of the universe, yet the decline and disappearance of the things he loves and with which he is familiar continually pains him. Also his reason shows him exalted aims and lasting fruits, yet his hand is short, his life brief, his power slight, and his patience little.

It can be clearly understood from this how essential it is for a spirit in this state at the time of *Fajr* in the early morning to have recourse to and present a petition to the Court of an All-Powerful One of Glory, an All-Compassionate All-Beauteous One through prayer and supplication, to seek success and help from Him, and what a necessary point of support it is so that he can face the things that will happen to him in the coming day and bear the duties that will be loaded on him.

The time of *Zuhr* just past midday is the time of the day's zenith and the start of its decline, the time when daily labours approach their achievement, the time of a short rest from the pressures of work, when the spirit needs a pause from the heedlessness and insensibility caused by toil, and a time Divine bounties are manifested. Anyone may understand then how fine and agreeable, how necessary and appropriate it is for the human spirit to perform the midday prayer, which means to be released from the pressure, shake off the heedlessness, and leave behind those meaningless, transient things, and clasping one's hands at the Court of the True Bestower of Bounties, the Eternally Self-Subsistent One, to offer praise and thanks for all His gifts, and seek help from Him, and through bowing to display one's impotence before His glory and tremendousness, and to prostrate and proclaim one's wonder, love, and humility. One who does not understand this is not a true human being.

As for the time of *Asr* in the afternoon, it calls to mind the melancholy season of autumn and the mournful state of old age and the sombre period at the end of time. It is also when the matters of the day reach their conclusion, and the time the Divine bounties which have been received that day like health, well-being, and beneficial duties have accumulated to form a great total, and the time that proclaims through the mighty sun hinting by starting to sink that man is a guest-official and that everything is transient and inconstant. Now, the human spirit desires eternity and was created for it; it worships benevolence, and is pained by separation. Thus, anyone who is truly a human being may understand what an exalted duty, what an appropriate

service, what a fitting way to repay a debt of human nature, indeed, what an agreeable pleasure it is to perform the afternoon prayer. For by offering supplications at the Eternal Court of the Everlasting Pre-Eternal One, the Eternally Self-Subsistent One, it has the meaning of taking refuge in the grace of unending, infinite mercy, and by offering thanks and praise in the face of innumerable bounties, of humbly bowing before the mightiness of His dominicality, and by prostrating in utter humility before the everlastingness of His Godhead, of finding true consolation of heart and ease of spirit, and being girded ready for worship in the presence of His grandeur.

The time of *Maghrib* at sunset recalls the disappearance amid sad farewells of the delicate, lovely creatures of the worlds of summer and autumn at the start of winter. It calls to mind the time when through his death, man will leave all those he loves in sorrowful departure and enter the grave. It brings to mind when at the death of this world amid the convulsions of its death-agonies, all its inhabitants will migrate to other worlds and the lamp of this place of examination will be extinguished. It is a time which gives stern warning to those who worship transient, ephemeral beloveds.

Thus, at such a time, for the *Maghrib* prayer, man's spirit, which by its nature is a mirror desirous for an Eternal Beauty, turns its face towards the throne of mightiness of the Eternal Undying One, the Enduring Everlasting One, Who performs these mighty works and turns and transforms these huge worlds, and declaring "God is Most Great" over these transient beings, withdraws from them. Man clasps his hands in service of his Lord and rises in the presence of the Enduring Eternal One, and through saying: All praise be to God, he praises and extols His faultless perfection, His peerless beauty, His infinite mercy. Through declaring: "You alone do we worship and from You alone we seek help,"² he proclaims his worship for and seeks help from His unassisted dominicality, His unpartnered Godhead, His unshared sovereignty. Then he bows, and through declaring together with all the universe his weakness and impotence, his poverty and baseness before the infinite majesty, the limitless power, and utter mightiness of the Enduring Eternal One, he says: "All glory to My Mighty Sustainer," and glorifies his Sublime Sustainer. And prostrating before the undying Beauty of His Essence, His unchanging sacred attributes, His constant everlasting perfection, through abandoning all things other than Him, man proclaims his love and worship in wonder and self-abasement. He finds an All-Compassionate Eternal One. And through saying, "All glory to my Exalted Sustainer," he declares his Most High Sustainer to be free of decline and exalted above any fault.

Then, he testifies to God's unity and the prophethood of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him). He sits, and on his own account offers as

² Qur'an, 1:5.

a gift to the Undying All-Beauteous One, the Enduring All-Glorious One the blessed salutations and benedictions of all creatures. And through greeting God's Most Noble Messenger, he renews his allegiance to him and proclaims his obedience to his commands. In order to renew and illuminate his faith, he observes the wise order in this palace of the universe and testifies to the unity of the All-Glorious Maker. And he testifies to the Messengership of Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him), who is the herald of the sovereignty of God's dominicality, the proclaimer of those things pleasing to Him, and the interpreter of the signs and verses of the book of the universe. To perform the *Maghrib* prayer is this. So how can someone be considered a human being who does not understand what a fine and pure duty is the prayer at sunset, what an exalted and pleasurable act of service, what an agreeable and pleasing act of worship, what a serious matter, and what an unending conversation and permanent happiness it is in this transient guesthouse?

At the time of *'Isha* at nightfall, the last traces of the day remaining on the horizon disappear, and the world of night enfolds the universe. As the All-Powerful and Glorious One, The Changer of Night and Day, turns the white page of day into the black page of night through the mighty disposals of His dominicality, it recalls the Divine activities of that All-Wise One of Perfection, The Subduer of the Sun and the Moon, turning the green-adorned page of summer into the frigid white page of winter. And with the remaining works of the departed being erased from this world with the passing of time, it recalls the Divine acts of The Creator and Life and Death in their passage to another, quite different world. It is a time that calls to mind the disposals of The Creator of the Heavens and the Earth's awesomeness and the manifestations of His beauty in the utter destruction of this narrow, fleeting, and lowly world, the terrible death-agonies of its decease, and in the unfolding of the broad, eternal, and majestic world of the hereafter. And the universe's Owner, its True Disposer, its True Beloved and Object of Worship can only be the One Who with ease turns night into day, winter into spring, and this world into the hereafter like the pages of a book; Who writes and erases them, and changes them.

Thus, at nightfall, man's spirit, which is infinitely impotent and weak, and infinitely poor and needy, and plunged into the infinite darkness of the future, and tossed around amid innumerable events, performs the *'Isha* prayer, which has this meaning: like Abraham man says: "I love not those that set,"³ and through the prayers seeks refuge at the Court of an Undying Object of Worship, an Eternal Beloved One, and in this transient world and fleeting life and dark world and black future he supplicates an Enduring,

³ Qur'an, 6:76.

Everlasting One, and for a moment of unending conversation, a few seconds of immortal life, he asks to receive the favours of the All-Merciful and Compassionate One's mercy and the light of His guidance, which will strew light on his world and illuminate his future and bind up the wounds resulting from the departure and decline of all creatures and friends.

Temporarily man forgets the hidden world, which has forgotten him, and pours out his woes at the Court of Mercy with his weeping, and whatever happens, before sleeping –which resembles death– he performs his last duty of worship. And in order to close favourably the daily record of his actions, he rises to pray; that is to say, he rises to enter the presence of an Eternal Beloved and Worshipped One in place of all the mortal ones he loves, of an All-Powerful and Generous One in place of all the impotent creatures from which he begs, of an All-Compassionate Protector so as to be saved from the evil of the harmful beings before which he trembles.

He starts with the Sura al-Fatiha, that is, instead of praising and being obliged to defective, wanting creatures, for which they are not suited, he extols and offers praise to The Sustainer of All the Worlds, Who is Absolutely Perfect and Utterly Self-Sufficient and Most Compassionate and All-Generous. Then he progresses to the address: "You alone do we worship." That is, despite his smallness, insignificance, and aloneness, through man's connection with The Owner of the Day of Judgement, Who is the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, he attains to a rank whereat he is an indulged guest in the universe and an important official. Through declaring: "You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek help," he presents to Him in the name of all creatures the worship and calls for assistance of the mighty congregation and huge community of the universe. Then through saying: "Guide us to the Straight Path," he asks to be guided to the Straight Path, which leads to eternal happiness and is the luminous way.

And now, he thinks of the mightiness of the All-Glorious One, of Whom, like the sleeping plants and animals, the hidden suns and sober stars are all soldiers subjugated to His command, and lamps and servants in this guesthouse of the world, and uttering: "God is Most Great," he bows down. Then he thinks of the great prostration of all creatures. That is, when, at the command of "Be!," and it is,⁴ all the varieties of creatures each year and each century – even the earth, and the universe – each like a well-ordered army or an obedient soldier, is discharged from its duty, that is, when each is sent to the World of the Unseen, through the prostration of its decease and death with complete orderliness, it declares: "God is Most Great," and bows down in prostration. Like they are raised to life, some in part and some the same, in the spring at an awakening and life-giving trumpet-blast from the command

⁴ Qur'an, 2:117, etc.

of “Be!” and it is,’ and they rise up and are girded ready to serve their Lord, insignificant man too, following them, declares: “God is Most Great!” in the presence of the All-Merciful One of Perfection, the All-Compassionate One of Beauty in wonderstruck love and eternity-tinged humility and dignified self-effacement, and bows down in prostration; that is to say, he makes a sort of Ascension. For sure you will have understood now how agreeable and fine and pleasant and elevated, how high and pleasurable, how reasonable and appropriate a duty, service, and act of worship, and what a serious matter it is to perform the *‘Isha* prayer.

Thus, since each of these five times points to a mighty revolution, is a sign indicating the tremendous dominical activity, and a token of the universal Divine bounties, it is perfect wisdom that being a debt and an obligation, the prescribed prayers should be specified at those times.

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*⁵

O God! Grant blessings and peace to the one whom You sent as a teacher to Your servants to instruct them in knowledge of You and worship of You, and to make known the treasures of Your Names, and to translate the signs of the book of the universe and as a mirror to its worship of the beauty of Your dominicality, and to all his Family and Companions, and have mercy on us and on all believing men and women. Amen. Through Your Mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!

⁵ Qur’an, 2:32.

The Tenth Word

Resurrection and the Hereafter

NOTE

[The reasons for my writing these treatises in the form of metaphors, comparisons and stories are to facilitate comprehension and to show how rational, appropriate, well-founded and coherent are the truths of Islam. The meaning of the stories is contained in the truths that conclude them; each story is like an allusion pointing to its concluding truth. Therefore, they are not mere fictitious tales, but veritable truths.]

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

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.¹

Brother, if you wish for a discussion of resurrection and the hereafter in simple and common language, in a straightforward style, then listen to the following comparison, together with my own soul.

Once two men were travelling through a land as beautiful as Paradise (by that land, we intend the world). Looking around them, they saw that everyone had left open the door of his home and his shop and was not paying attention to guarding it. Money and property were readily accessible, without anyone to claim them. One of the two travellers grasped hold of all that he fancied, stealing it and usurping it. Following his inclinations, he committed every kind of injustice and abomination. None of the people of that land moved to stop him. But his friend said to him:

“What are you doing? You will be punished, and I will be dragged into misfortune along with you. All this property belongs to the state. The people

¹ Qur'an, 30:50.

NOTE: The main part of this translation of the Tenth Word is by Hamid Algar, Prof. of Middle Eastern Studies in the Univ. of California, Berkeley, USA, and was first published in 1980. It has been slightly amended to fit the present work

of this land, including even the children, are all soldiers or government servants. It is because they are at present civilians that they are not interfering with you. But the laws here are strict. The king has installed telephones everywhere and his agents are everywhere. Go quickly, and try to settle the matter.”

But the empty-headed man said in his obstinacy: “No, it is not state property; it belongs instead to some endowment, and has no clear or obvious owner. Everyone can make use of it as he sees fit. I see no reason to deny myself the use of these fine things. I will not believe they belong to anyone unless I see him with my own eyes.” He continued to speak in this way, with much philosophical sophistry, and an earnest discussion took place between them.

First the empty-headed man said: “Who is the king here? I can’t see him,” and then his friend replied:

“Every village must have its headman; every needle must have its manufacturer and craftsman. And, as you know, every letter must be written by someone. How, then, can it be that so extremely well-ordered a kingdom should have no ruler? And how can so much wealth have no owner, when every hour a train² arrives filled with precious and artful gifts, as if coming from the realm of the unseen? And all the announcements and proclamations, all the seals and stamps, found on all those goods, all the coins and the flags waving in every corner of the kingdom — can they be without an owner? It seems you have studied foreign languages a little, and are unable to read this Islamic script. In addition, you refuse to ask those who are able to read it. Come now, let me read to you the king’s supreme decree.”

The empty-headed man then retorted: “Well, let us suppose there is a king; what harm can he suffer from the minute use I am making of all his wealth? Will his treasury decrease on account of it? In any event, I can see nothing here resembling prison or punishment.”

His friend replied: “This land that you see is a manoeuvring ground. It is, in addition, an exhibition of his wonderful royal arts. Then again it may be regarded as a temporary hospice, one devoid of foundations. Do you not see that every day one caravan arrives as another departs and vanishes? It is being constantly emptied and filled. Soon the whole land will be changed; its inhabitants will depart for another and more lasting realm. There everyone will be either rewarded or punished in accordance with his services.”

That treacherous empty-headed one retorted rebelliously: “I don’t believe it. Is it at all possible that a whole land should perish, and be transferred to another realm?”

² Indicates the cycle of a year. Indeed, every spring is a carload of provisions coming from the realm of the unseen.

His faithful friend then replied: “Since you are so obstinate and rebellious, come, let me demonstrate to you, with twelve out of the innumerable proofs available, that there is a Supreme Tribunal, a realm of reward and generosity and a realm of punishment and incarceration, and that just as this world is partially emptied every day, so too a day shall come when it will be totally emptied and destroyed.

- **First Aspect:** Is it at all possible that in any kingdom, and particularly so splendid a kingdom as this, there should be no reward for those who serve obediently and no punishment for those who rebel? Reward and punishment are virtually non-existent here; there must therefore be a Supreme Tribunal somewhere else.

- **Second Aspect:** Look at the organization and administration of this kingdom! See how everyone, including the poorest and the weakest, is provided with perfect and ornate sustenance. The best care is taken of the sick. Royal and delicious foods, dishes, jewel encrusted decorations, embroidered garments, splendid feasts — all are to be found here. See how everyone pays due attention to his duties, with the exception of empty-headed people such as yourself. No one transgresses his bounds by as much as an inch. The greatest of all men is engaged in modest and obedient service, with an attitude of fear and awe. The ruler of this kingdom must possess, then, great generosity and all-embracing compassion, as well as, at the same time, great dignity, exalted awesomeness and honour. Now generosity requires liberality; compassion cannot dispense with beneficence; and awesomeness and honour make it imperative that the discourteous be chastised. But not even a thousandth part of what that generosity and awesomeness require is to be seen in this realm. The oppressor retains his power, and the oppressed, his humiliation, as they both depart and migrate from this realm. Their affairs are, then, left to the same Supreme Tribunal of which we speak.

- **Third Aspect:** See with what lofty wisdom and ordering affairs are managed, and with what true justice and balance transactions are effected! Now a wise polity requires that those who seek refuge under the protecting wing of the state should receive favour, and justice demands that the rights of subjects be preserved, so that the splendour of the state should not suffer. But here in this land, not a thousandth part of the requirements of such wisdom and justice is fulfilled; for example, empty-headed people such as yourself usually leave this realm unpunished. So again we say, matters are postponed for the consideration of a Supreme Tribunal.

- **Fourth Aspect:** Look at these innumerable and peerless jewels that are displayed here, these unparalleled dishes laid out like a banquet! They demonstrate that the ruler of these lands is possessed of infinite generosity and an inexhaustible treasury. Now such generosity and such a treasury

deserve and require a bounteous display that should be eternal and include all possible objects of desire. They further require that all who come as guests to partake of that display should be there eternally and not suffer the pain of death and separation. For just as the cessation of pain is pleasurable, so too is the cessation of pleasure painful! Look at these displays and the announcements concerning them! And listen to these heralds proclaiming the fine and delicate arts of a miracle-working monarch, and demonstrating his perfections! They are declaring his peerless and invisible beauty, and speaking of the subtle manifestations of his hidden beauteousness; he must be possessed, then, of a great and astounding invisible beauty and perfection. This flawless hidden perfection requires one who will appreciate and admire it, who will gaze on it exclaiming, *Ma'shallah!*, thus displaying it and making it known.

As for concealed and peerless beauty, it too requires to see and be seen, or rather to behold itself in two ways. The first consists of contemplating itself in different mirrors, and the second of contemplating itself by means of the contemplation of enraptured spectators and astounded admirers. Hidden beauty wishes, then, to see and be seen, to contemplate itself eternally and be contemplated without cease. It desires also permanent existence for those who gaze upon it in awe and rapture. For eternal beauty can never be content with a transient admirer; moreover, an admirer destined to perish without hope of return will find his love turning to enmity whenever he imagines his death, and his admiration and respect will yield to contempt. It is in man's nature to hate the unknown and the unaccustomed. Now everyone leaves the hospice of this realm very quickly and vanishes, having seen only a light or a shadow of the perfection and beauty for no more than a moment, without in any way being satiated. Hence, it is necessary that he should go towards an eternal realm where he will contemplate the Divine beauty and perfection.

• **Fifth Aspect:** See, it is evident from all these matters that that peerless Being is possessed of most great mercy. For he causes aid to be swiftly extended to every victim of misfortune, answers every question and petition; and mercifully fulfils even the lowliest need of his lowliest subject. If, for example, the foot of some herdsman's sheep should hurt, he either provides some medicine or sends a veterinarian.

Come now, let us go; there is a great meeting on that island. All the nobles of the land are assembled there. See, a most noble commander, bearing exalted decorations, is pronouncing a discourse, and requesting certain things from that compassionate monarch. All those present say: "Yes, we too desire the same," and affirm and assent to his words. Now listen to the words of that commander favoured by his monarch:

"O monarch that nurtures us with his bounty! Show us the source and origin of these examples and shadows you have shown us! Draw us nigh to

your seat of rule; do not let us perish in these deserts! Take us into your presence and have mercy on us! Feed us there on the delicious bounty you have caused us to taste here! Do not torment us with desperation and banishment! Do not leave your yearning, thankful and obedient subjects to their own devices; do not cause them to be annihilated!” Do you not hear him thus supplicating? Is it at all possible that so merciful and powerful a monarch should not totally fulfil the finest and highest aim of his most beloved and noble commander?

Moreover, the purpose of that commander is the purpose of all men, and its fulfilment is required by the pleasure, the compassion and the justice of the king, and it is a matter of ease for him, not difficulty, causing him less difficulty than the transient places of enjoyment contained in the hospice of the world. Having spent so much effort on these places of witnessing that will last only five or six days, and on the foundation of this kingdom, in order to demonstrate instances of his power, he will, without doubt, display at his seat of rule true treasures, perfections and skills in such a manner, and open before us such spectacles, that our intellects will be astonished.

Those sent to this field of trial will not, then, be left to their own devices; palaces of bliss or dungeons await them.

• **Sixth Aspect:** Come now, look! All these imposing railways, planes, machines, warehouses, exhibitions show that behind the veil an imposing monarch exists and governs.³

³ When a vast army in the present age receives the order, “take up your weapons and fix your bayonets,” in accordance with the rules of war while on manoeuvre, it comes to resemble a forest of upright oaks. Similarly, when the soldiers of a garrison are commanded on festive days to don their parade uniforms and pin on their medals, it will resemble from one end to the other a colourful and ornate garden, where all the flowers have blossomed. Conversely, when on the parade-ground of the world, the various and infinite species of the soldiery of the Pre-Eternal Monarch —angels, jinn, men, animals and even unfeeling plants— receive the order of “Be!” And it is in the struggle for life’s preservation and the command, “take up your weapons and equipment, and prepare to defend yourselves,” when they fix the minute bayonets that are the spiked trees and plants found throughout the world, — then they resemble a magnificent army advancing with bayonets fixed.

Similarly, each day and each week of the spring is like a festival for each class of the vegetable kingdom, and each class presents itself to the witnessing gaze of the Pre-Eternal Monarch with the jewelled decorations He has given them, as if it were on parade in order to display the fine gifts He has bestowed on them. It is as if all the plants and trees were heeding a dominical command, don the bejewelled garments produced by God’s artistry, put on the decorations made by His creative power — flowers and fruit. The face of the earth then comes to represent a parade-ground on a splendid festive day, a magnificent parade brilliant with the uniforms and jewelled decorations of the soldiers.

Such wise and well-ordered arrangement and ornament demonstrates of a certainty, to all who are not blind, that they derive from the command of a monarch infinite in power and unlimited in wisdom.

Such a monarch requires subjects worthy of himself. But now you see all his subjects gathered in a hospice for wayfarers, a hospice that is filled and emptied each day. It can also be said that his subjects are now gathered in a testing-ground for the sake of manoeuvres, and this ground also changes each hour. Again, we may say that all his subjects stay in an exhibition-hall for a few minutes to behold specimens of the monarch's beneficence, valuable products of his miraculous art. But the exhibition itself changes each moment. Now this situation and circumstance conclusively shows that beyond the hospice, the testing-ground, the exhibition, there are permanent palaces, lasting abodes, and gardens and treasuries full of the pure and elevated originals of the samples and shapes we see in this world. It is for the sake of these that we exert ourselves here. Here we labour, and there we receive our reward. A form and degree of felicity suited to everyone's capacity awaits us there.

• **Seventh Aspect:** Come, let us walk a little, and see what is to be found among these civilized people. See, in every place, at every corner, photographers are sitting and taking pictures. Look, everywhere there are scribes sitting and writing things down. Everything is being recorded. They are registering the least significant of deeds, the most commonplace of events. Now look up at the tall mountain; there you see a supreme photographer installed, devoted to the service of the king;⁴ he is taking pictures of all that happens in the area. The king must, then, have issued this order; "Record all the transactions made and deeds performed in the kingdom." In other words, that exalted personage is having all events registered and photographically recorded. The precise record he is keeping must without doubt be for the sake of one day calling his subjects to account.

Now is it at all possible that an All-Wise and All-Preserving Being, who does not neglect the most banal doings of the lowest of his subjects, should not record the most significant deeds of the greatest among his subjects, should not call them to account, should not reward and punish them? After all, it is those foremost among his subjects that perform deeds offensive to his glory, contrary to his pride and unacceptable to his compassion, and those deeds remain unpunished in this world. It must be, therefore, that their judgement is postponed to a Supreme Court.

⁴ Some of the truths indicated in this parable have been set forth in the Seventh Truth. However, let us point out here that the figure of the "supreme photographer devoted to the service of the king" is an indication of the Preserved Tablet. The reality and existence of the Preserved Tablet has been proved in the Twenty-Sixth Word as follows: a little portfolio suggests the existence of a great ledger; a little document points to the existence of a great register; and little drops point to the existence of a great water tank. So too the retentive faculties of men, the fruits of trees, the seeds and kernels of fruit, being each like a little portfolio, a Preserved Tablet in miniature or a drop proceeding from the pen that inscribes the great Preserved Tablet — they point to, indicate and prove the existence of a Supreme Retentive Faculty, a great register, an exalted Preserved Tablet. Indeed, they demonstrate this visibly to the perceptive intellect.

• **Eighth Aspect:** Come, let me read to you the decrees issued by that monarch. See, he repeatedly makes the following promises and dire threats: “I will take you from your present abode and bring you to the seat of my rule. There I shall bestow happiness on the obedient and imprison the disobedient. Destroying that temporary abode, I shall found a different realm containing eternal palaces and dungeons.”

He can easily fulfil the promises that he makes, of such importance for his subjects. It is, moreover, incompatible with his pride and his power that he should break his promise. So look, o confused one! You assent to the claims of your mendacious imagination, your distraught intellect, your deceptive soul, but deny the words of a being who cannot be compelled in any fashion to break his promise, whose high stature does not admit any such faithlessness, and to whose truthfulness all visible deeds bear witness. Certainly you deserve a great punishment. You resemble a traveller who closes his eyes to the light of the sun and looks instead upon his own imagination. His fancy wishes to illuminate his awesomely dark path with the light of his brain, although it is no more than a glow-worm. Once that monarch makes a promise, he will by all means fulfil it. Its fulfilment is most easy for him, and moreover most necessary for us and all things, as well as for him too and his kingdom.

There is therefore, a Supreme Court, and a lofty felicity.

• **Ninth Aspect:** Come now! Look at the heads of these offices and groups.⁵ Each has a private telephone to speak personally with the king. Sometimes too they go directly to his presence. See what they say and unanimously report, that the monarch has prepared a most magnificent and awesome place for reward and punishment. His promises are emphatic and his threats are most stern. His pride and dignity are such that he would in no way stoop to the abjectness inherent in the breaking of a promise. The bearers of this report, who are so numerous as to be universally accepted, further report with the strong unanimity of consensus that “the seat and headquarters of the lofty monarchy, some of whose traces are visible here, is in another realm far distant from here. The buildings existing in this testing-ground are but temporary, and will later be exchanged for eternal palaces. These places will change. For this magnificent and unfading monarchy, the splendour of which is apparent from its works, can in no way be founded or based on so transient, impermanent, unstable, insignificant, changing,

⁵ The meanings indicated in this Aspect can be found in the Eighth Truth. For example, by heads of offices we mean the prophets and the saints. As for the telephone, it is a link and relation with God that goes forth from the heart and is the mirror of revelation and the receptacle of inspiration. The heart is like the earpiece of that telephone.

defective and imperfect matters. It is based rather on matters worthy of it, eternal, stable, permanent and glorious.”

There is, then, another realm, and of a certainty we shall go toward it.

• **Tenth Aspect:** Come, today is the vernal equinox.⁶ Certain changes will take place, and wondrous things will occur. On this fine spring day, let us go for a walk on the green plain adorned with beautiful flowers. See, other people are also coming toward it. There must be some magic at work, for buildings that were mere ruins have suddenly sprung up again here, and this once empty plain has become like a populous city. See, every hour it shows a different scene, just like a cinema screen, and takes on a different shape. But notice, too, that among these complex, swiftly changing and multifarious scenes perfect order exists, so that all things are put in their proper places. The imaginary scenes presented to us on the cinema screen cannot be as well-ordered as this, and millions of skilled magicians would be incapable of this artistry. This monarch whom we cannot see must, then, have performed even greater miracles.

O foolish one! You ask: “How can this vast kingdom be destroyed and re-established somewhere else?”

You see that every hour numerous changes and revolutions occur, just like that transfer from one realm to another that your mind will not accept. From this gathering in and scattering forth it can be deduced that a certain purpose is concealed within these visible and swift joinings and separations, these compoundings and dissolvings. Ten years of effort would not be devoted to a joining together destined to last no longer than an hour. So these circumstances we witness cannot be ends in themselves; they are a kind of parable of something beyond themselves, an imitation of it. That exalted being brings them about in miraculous fashion, so that they take shape and then merge, and the result is preserved and recorded, in just the same way that every aspect of a manoeuvre on the battleground is written down and recorded. This implies that proceedings at some great concourse and meeting will be based on what happens here. Further, the results of all that occurs here will be permanently displayed at some supreme exposition. All the transient and fluctuating phenomena we see here will yield the fruit of eternal and immutable form.

⁶ You will find what this Aspect alludes to in the Ninth Truth. The vernal equinox is equivalent to the beginning of spring. As for the green plain covered with flowers, this is the face of the earth in springtime. The changing scenes and spectacles are an allusion to the different groups of vernal beings, the classes of summer creation, and the sustenance for men and animals, that the All-Powerful and Glorious Maker, the All-Wise and Beauteous Creator, from the beginning of spring to the end of summer, brings forth in orderly succession, renews with the utmost compassion, and despatches uninterruptedly.

All the variations we observe in this world are then, for the sake of a supreme happiness, a lofty tribunal, for the sake of exalted aims as yet unknown to us.

• **Eleventh Aspect:** Come, o obstinate friend! Let us embark on a plane or a train travelling east or west, that is, to the past or the future. Let us see what miraculous works that being has accomplished in other places. Look, there are marvels on every hand like the dwellings, open spaces and exhibitions we see. But they all differ with respect to art and to form. Note well, however, what order betokening manifest wisdom, what indications of evident compassion, what signs of lofty justice, and what fruits of comprehensive mercy, are to be seen in these transient dwellings, these impermanent open spaces, these fleeting exhibitions. Anyone not totally devoid of insight will understand a certainty that no wisdom can be imagined more perfect than his, no providence more beautiful than his, no compassion more comprehensive than his, and no justice more glorious than his.

If, for the sake of argument, as you imagine, no permanent abodes, lofty places, fixed stations, lasting residences, or resident and contented population existed in the sphere of his kingdom; and if the truths of his wisdom, compassion, mercy and justice had no realm in which to manifest themselves fully (for this impermanent kingdom is no place for their full manifestation) — then we would be obliged to deny the wisdom we see, to deny the compassion we observe, to deny the mercy that is in front of our eyes, and to deny the justice the signs of which are evident. This would be as idiotic as denying the sun, the light of which we clearly see at midday. We would also have to regard the one from whom proceed all these wise measures we see, all these generous acts, all these merciful gifts, as a vile gambler or treacherous tyrant (God forbid!). This would be to turn truth on its head. And turning a truth into its opposite is impossible, according to the unanimous testimony of all rational beings, excepting only the idiot sophists who deny everything.

There is, then, a realm apart from the present one. In it, there is a supreme tribunal, a lofty place of justice, an exalted place of reward, where all this compassion, wisdom, mercy and justice will be made fully manifest.

• **Twelfth Aspect:** Come, let us return now. We will speak with the chiefs and officers of these various groups, and looking at their equipment will inquire whether that equipment has been given them only for the sake of subsisting for a brief period in that realm, or whether it has been given for the sake of obtaining a long life of bliss in another realm. Let us see. We cannot look at everyone and his equipment. But by way of example, let us look at the identity card and register of this officer. On his card, his rank, salary, duty, supplies and instructions are recorded. See, this rank has not been awarded him for just a few days; it may be given for a prolonged

period. It says on his card: "You will receive so much salary on such-and-such a day from the treasury." But the date in question will not arrive for a long time to come, after this realm has been vacated. Similarly, the duty mentioned on his card has not been given for this temporary realm, but rather for the sake of earning a permanent felicity in the proximity of the king. Then, too, the supplies awarded him cannot be merely for the sake of subsisting in this hospice of a few days' duration; they can only be for the sake of a long and happy life. The instructions make it quite clear that he is destined for a different place, that he is working for another realm.

Now look at these registers. They contain instructions for the use and disposition of weapons and equipment. If there were no realm other than this, one exalted and eternal, that register with its categorical instructions and that identity card with its clear information, would both be quite meaningless. Further, that respected officer, that noble commander, that honoured chief, would fall to a degree lower than that of all men; he would be more wretched, luckless, abased, afflicted, indigent and weak than everyone. Apply the same principle to everything. Whatever you look upon bears witness that after this transient world another and eternal world exists.

O friend! This temporary world is like a field. It is a place of instruction, a market. Without doubt a supreme tribunal and ultimate happiness will succeed it. If you deny this, you will be obliged also to deny the identity cards of all the officers, their equipment and their orders; in fact, you will have to deny too all the order existing in the country, the existence of a government in it and all the measures that the government takes. Then you will no longer deserve the name of man or the appellation of conscious. You will be more of a fool than the sophists.

Beware, do not imagine that the proofs of the transfer of creation from one realm to another are restricted to these twelve. There are indications and proofs beyond counting and enumeration, all showing that this impermanent, changing kingdom will be transformed into a permanent and immutable realm. There are also innumerable signs and evidences that men will be taken from this temporary hospice and sent to the eternal seat of rule of all creation.

I will show one proof in particular that is stronger than all the twelve aspects taken together.

Come now, look, in the midst of the great assembly visible in the distance the same noble commander whom we previously saw on the island, adorned with numerous decorations, is making an announcement. Let us go and listen. See, that luminous and most noble commander is conveying a supreme edict, beautifully inscribed. He says:

"Prepare yourselves; you will go to another and permanent realm, a realm

such that this one will appear as a dungeon by comparison. You will go to the seat of rule of our king, and there receive his compassion and his bounty, if you heed this edict well and obey it. But if you rebel and disobey it, you will be cast into awesome dungeons.” Such is the message that he conveys. If you look at the decree, you will see that it bears such a miraculous seal that it cannot in any way be imitated. Everyone apart from idiots such as yourself knows of a certainty that the decree is from the king. Moreover, the noble commander bears such bright decorations that everyone except those blind like yourself understands full well that he is the veracious conveyer of the king’s orders.

Is it at all possible that the teaching of transfer from one realm to another, challengingly conveyed by that noble commander in the supreme edict he has received, should at all be open to objection? No, it is not possible, unless we deny all that we have seen.

Now, o friend, it is your turn to speak. Say what you have to say.

“What should I say? What can be said to contradict all of this? Who can speak against the sun at midday? I say only: Praise be to God. A hundred thousand thanks that I have been saved from the dominance of fancy and vain imagination, and delivered from an eternal dungeon and prison. I have come to believe that there is an abode of felicity in the proximity of the monarch, separate from this confused and impermanent hospice.”

Our comparison indicating the truth of resurrection and the hereafter is now complete. Now with God’s grace, we will pass on to the most exalted truth. We shall set forth twelve interrelated Truths, corresponding to the twelve Aspects discussed above, as well as an Introduction.

Introduction

[By means of a few indications, we refer here to several matters explained elsewhere, that is, in the Twenty-Second, Nineteenth and Twenty-Sixth Words.]

• **First Indication**

The foolish man in the previous story and his trustworthy companion correspond to three other pairs:

- The instinctual soul and the heart;
- The students of philosophy and the pupils of the All-Wise Qur'an;
- The people of unbelief and the community of Islam.

The worst error and misguidance of the students of philosophy, the people of unbelief and the instinctual soul, lies in not recognizing God. Just as in the preceding story the trustworthy man said, "there can be no letter without a scribe, no law without a legislator," we too say the following:

A book, particularly one in each word of which a minute pen has inscribed another whole book, and in each letter of which a fine pen has traced a poem, cannot be without a writer; this would be entirely impossible. So too this cosmos cannot be without its inscriber; this is impossible to the utmost degree. For the cosmos is precisely such a book that each of its pages includes many other books, each of its words contains a book, and each of its letters contains a poem. The face of the earth is but a single page in the book of the cosmos. See how many books it contains. Every fruit is a letter, and every seed is a dot. In that dot is contained the index of the whole tree in its vastness. A book such as this can have been inscribed only by the mighty pen of a Possessor of Glory Who enjoys the attributes of splendour and beauty, and Who is the holder of infinite wisdom and power. Faith, then, follows inevitably on the observation of the world, unless one is drunk on misguidance.

Similarly, a house cannot arise without a builder, particularly a house adorned with miraculous works of art, wondrous designs, and amazing ornaments. As much art has been put into one of its stones as into a whole palace. No intelligence will accept that it could arise without a builder; definitely it needs a master architect. Moreover, within the building, veritable

rooms take shape and change each hour with the utmost order and ease, just as if clothes were being changed, or as if scenes were passing across a cinema screen. We can say even that numerous little rooms are constantly being created in each of those scenes.

In like manner, the cosmos also requires an infinitely wise, all-knowing and all-powerful maker. For the magnificent cosmos is a palace that has the sun and the moon as its lamps and the stars as its candles; time is like a rope or ribbon hung within it, on to which the Glorious Creator each year threads a new world. And within the world that He thus threads on the string of time He places three hundred and sixty fresh and orderly forms. He changes them with the utmost orderliness and wisdom. He has made the face of the earth a bounteous spread that He adorns each spring with three hundred thousand species of creation, that He fills with innumerable kinds of generous gifts. This He does in such a fashion that they all stand apart from each other, quite separate and distinct, despite their being at the same time so close and intermingled. Is it possible to overlook the existence of the Maker of such a palace?

Again, to deny the existence of the sun, on a cloudless day at noon, when its traces are to be observed and its reflection is to be seen in every bubble on the surface of the ocean, in every shining object on dry land, and in every particle of snow — to make such a denial would be to rave like the deranged. For if one denied and refused to accept the existence of the single, unique sun, he would be compelled to accept the existence of a whole series of minor suns, each real and existent in its own right, as numerous as the drops and bubbles of the ocean, as countless as the particles of snow. It would be necessary to believe that each minute particle contains a huge sun, even though the particle is large enough only to contain itself. It would be an even greater sign of lunacy and misguidance to refuse one's assent to the attributes of perfection of the Glorious Creator, even while beholding the well-ordered cosmos that is constantly changing in wise and regular fashion, that is being ceaselessly renewed in disciplined manner. This, too, would be like the ravings of a lunatic, since it would then become necessary to believe and accept that absolute divinity is present in all things, even a particle. For every particle of air is somehow able to enter and work its effects upon every flower, fruit and leaf, and unless the particle be entrusted with this task by a Creator, it must know of itself the structure and form of all the objects it penetrates and affects. In other words, it must possess all-encompassing power and knowledge.

Every particle of soil is potentially capable of giving rise to all the different seeds that exist. If it is not acting under command, it must contain within itself equipment and instruments corresponding to all the various trees and plants in the world. Or, to put it differently, one must attribute to the particle

such artistry and power that it is aware of the structure of each of them, knows the forms that each of them is caused to assume, and is capable of fashioning those forms. The same is true with respect to the particle and other realms of creation.

From this you can understand that in all things there are numerous and manifest proofs of God's Unity. To create all things from one thing, and to make all things into one thing, is a task possible only for the Creator of all things. Pay heed to the sublime declaration: "There is naught but proclaims His Glory with praise." For if one does not accept God, the One and Unique, one must accept gods as numerous as created beings.

• **Second Indication**

In our story, we made mention of a Most Noble Commander and said that whoever is not blind and sees his decorations and medals will understand that he acts in accordance with the commands of a monarch and is his favoured servant. Now that Most Noble Commander is the Most Noble Messenger of God, may peace and blessings be upon him. The sacred Creator of so ornamented a cosmos must of necessity have a Noble Messenger, just as the sun must of necessity have light. For the sun cannot exist without giving light, and Divinity cannot be without showing itself through the sending of prophets. Is it at all possible that a beauty of utter perfection should not desire to manifest itself by means of one who will demonstrate and display it?

Is it at all possible that a perfection of beauteous artistry should not desire to make itself known by means of a herald that will draw men's gazes upon it?

Is it at all possible that the universal monarchy of all-embracing dominicality should not desire to announce its unity and eternal besoughtness throughout the different levels of multiplicity and particularity by means of an envoy possessing two aspects? By the two aspects, we mean that he is both the envoy of the realm of multiplicity to the Divine Court, by virtue of his universal worship, and also the messenger of the Divine Court to the realm of multiplicity, by virtue of his closeness to God and being entrusted with His message.

Is it at all possible that a possessor of infinite inherent beauty should not wish both to behold himself and to display to others, in numerous mirrors, the charms of his beauty and the allurements of his fairness? God's Messenger is His beloved, making himself beloved of Him by means of his worship and holding up a mirror to Him, and he is also the bearer of His message, making Him beloved of men and demonstrating to them the beauty of His Names.

Is it at all possible that the owner of treasures full of wondrous miracles, rare and valuable items, should not wish and desire to display them to men's

gaze by means of an expert jeweller, and eloquent describer, thereby revealing his hidden perfections?

Is it at all possible that the One Who manifests the perfection of all His Names in the cosmos by means of artful adornment for men to look upon, so that the cosmos comes to resemble a palace decorated with all kinds of wondrous and subtle art, should not also designate a teacher and a guide to the wonders of his creation?

Is it at all possible that the Lord of the cosmos should not solve, by means of a messenger, the complex talisman of the aim and purpose of all the changes that take place in the cosmos, and the riddle contained in the three difficult questions posed by all beings: “What is our origin? What is our destination? What is our purpose?”

Is it at all possible that the Glorious Maker Who makes Himself known to sentient beings by means of His fair creation, and Who makes himself loved by means of His precious bounties, should not also communicate to sentient beings, by means of a messenger, what His pleasure desires of them in exchange?

Is it at all possible that God should create mankind in a form predisposing it to suffer the consciousness of multiplicity but also containing the ability to engage in universal worship, without at the same time wishing to turn it away from multiplicity to unity, by means of a teacher and guide?

There are numerous other functions of prophethood, each of which is a decisive proof that Divinity necessarily implies messengership.

Did anyone ever appear in the world more worthy and more in possession of the abovementioned qualities and functions than Muhammad, the Arabian Prophet, may peace and blessings be upon him? Has time ever shown us one more fitting and suited to the rank of messengerhood and the task of conveying God’s message? No, by no means! He is the master of all messengers, the foremost of all prophets, the leader of all pure ones, the closest to God of all those who have drawn nigh unto Him, the most perfect of all creatures, the monarch of all guides to righteousness.

Quite apart from the countless indications of his prophethood deriving from more than a thousand miracles, such as the splitting of the moon and the flowing of water from his fingers, that all scholars unanimously confirm, the supreme miracle of the Glorious Qur’an—an ocean of truth and a book miraculous in forty different respects—is itself enough to demonstrate his prophethood as clearly as the sun. Since we discuss the forty different aspects of the Qur’an’s miraculousness in other treatises, particularly the Twenty-Fifth Word, we curtail our discussion of the matter here.

• **Third Indication**

Let it not be thought that petty man is too insignificant for this vast world to be brought to an end and another realm to be unfolded simply for the sake of his being brought to account. For apparently petty man bears great importance as the master of all creatures, by virtue of the comprehensiveness of his disposition, as the herald of God's monarchy, and the manifester of universal worship. Also let nobody ask: "How can one earn eternal torment in the course of a very brief life?" For unbelief seeks to drag creation, something as valuable and exalted as a letter written by God, down to the depths of meaninglessness and purposelessness. It is an insult to all being, since it denies and rejects the manifestations and impresses of God's Sacred Names that are visible in all being, and it seeks to negate all the infinite proofs that demonstrate the veracity and truthfulness of God Almighty. Hence, unbelief is a crime of infinite proportions, deserving of infinite punishment.

• **Fourth Indication**

In the story, we saw by means of twelve aspects that a king who had one realm resembling a transient hospice must of a necessity have another realm, one eternal and permanent, manifesting his splendour and the sublimity of his power. In the same way, it is not at all possible that the Eternal Creator of the transient world should not create also an eternal realm. It is not possible that the Everlasting Maker of this fine but unstable cosmos, should not create another cosmos, permanent and lasting. It is not possible that the Wise, Powerful and Merciful Creator of this world, which is like an exhibition, or a testing-ground, or a field, should not create also a hereafter in which the purposes of this world shall be made manifest. Entry is to be had to this truth by means of twelve gates, and the twelve gates are to be unlocked by means of twelve other truths. We will begin with the shortest and simplest of them:

FIRST TRUTH

**The Gate of Dominicality and Sovereignty,
the Manifestation of the Name of Sustainer**

Is it at all possible that the glory of God's dominicality and His Divine sovereignty should create a cosmos such as this, in order to display His perfections, with such lofty aims and elevated purposes, without establishing a reward for those believers who through faith and worship respond to these aims and purposes? Or that He should not punish those misguided ones who treat His purposes with rejection and scorn?

SECOND TRUTH
The Gate of Generosity and Mercy,
the Manifestation of the Names of Generous and Merciful

Is it at all possible that the Lord of this world, Who in His works demonstrates infinite generosity, infinite mercy, infinite splendour and infinite glory, should not give reward in a manner befitting His generosity and mercy, and not punish in a manner befitting His splendour and glory? If one looks at the disposition of affairs in this world, one sees that all animate beings —from the weakest to the most powerful— are given some fitting form of sustenance.⁷ Indeed, the weakest and most powerless are given the best form of sustenance. This largesse and bounty is distributed with such lofty generosity that a hand of infinite generosity is manifestly at work.

For example, in the spring, all the trees are garbed in clothes as fine as silk, just like the houris in Paradise; they are encrusted with flowers and fruits, as if with jewels, and caused to offer us numerous varieties of the choicest fruits, on branches delicately outstretched like the hands of a servant. Similarly, we are given wholesome and sweet honey to eat, from the hand of the bee with its sting; we are clothed in the finest and softest of clothes by means of an insect that has no hands; and within a small seed a great treasure of mercy is preserved for us. It is self-evident that all of this is the effect of a most beautiful generosity, a most delicate sense of mercy.

Then, too, the fact that, with the exception of man and certain wild animals, all things, from the sun, the moon and earth to the smallest of creatures, perform their functions with the utmost exactitude, do not overstep their bounds by an inch, and observe a universal obedience in a spirit of great awe — this shows that they act by the command of a Possessor of great glory and dignity. It is also apparent that the fashion in which all mothers, in the vegetable, animal and human realms, succour their weak and powerless infants with the delicate nurture of milk, in tender compassion, is a manifestation of God's all-embracing mercy.⁸

⁷ All licit nourishment is obtained not through the exercise of strength, but through the existence of need. The decisive proof of this is that powerless infants enjoy the finest of livelihoods, while strong wild beasts suffer from all kinds of deficiency, and that fish, for all their lack of intelligence, wax fat, while the cunning fox and monkey remain thin in their quest for livelihood. There is, therefore, an inverse relationship between sustenance on the one hand and strength and will power on the other. The more one relies on strength and will power the more difficult it will be to sustain one's livelihood.

⁸ The fact that a hungry lion will prefer its offspring to itself, and give to it a piece of meat it would otherwise have eaten; that the cowardly rabbit will attack a lion in order to protect its young; that the fig-tree contents itself with mud while giving pure milk to its offspring, the fruit — this shows to anyone not blind that they act in accordance with the commands of a Being infinitely merciful, generous and solicitous. Again, the fact that even unconscious plants and beasts function in the wisest and most conscious of fashions demonstrates irrefutably that One Utterly Knowing and All-Wise has set them to work, and that they are acting in His name.

Since the master of this world has, then, such infinite generosity, mercy, splendour and glory, it follows that His infinite glory and splendour require the chastisement of the discourteous; that His infinite generosity requires infinite bounty, and His infinite mercy requires a bestowal of favour worthy of itself. Now in this transitory world and brief life, only a millionth part of all this, like one drop from the ocean, establishes and manifests itself. There must therefore be a realm of blessedness appropriate to that generosity and worthy of that mercy. One would otherwise have to deny the existence of the mercy that is visible to us, and this would be like denying the existence of the sun that fills every day with its light. For irrevocable death would transform compassion into disaster, love into affliction, blessing into vengeance, intellect into a tool of misery, and pleasure into pain, so that the very essence of God's mercy would vanish.

There must in addition be a realm of punishment appropriate to God's glory and dignity. For generally the oppressor leaves this world while still in possession of his might, and the oppressed while still subjected to humiliation. These matters are therefore deferred for the attention of a supreme tribunal; it is not that they are neglected. It sometimes happens too that punishment is enacted in this world. The torments suffered by disobedient and rebellious peoples in previous centuries show that man is not left to his own devices, and that he is always subject to the blows that God's splendour and majesty may choose to inflict on him.

Is it at all possible that man should have the most important duty in all of creation and be endowed with the most important capacities; that man's Sustainer should make Himself known to him with all His well-ordered works, and man should then fail to recognize Him in return by way of worship — or that God should make Himself beloved of men through the numerous adorned fruits of His mercy, and man should then fail to make himself beloved of God through worship — or that God should demonstrate His love and mercy to man through His variegated bounties and man should then fail to respect Him with thanks and with praise — is it at all possible that man should remain unpunished, left to his own devices, or that that powerful Possessor of splendour and glory should not make ready for him a realm of requital?

Is it at all possible, on the other hand, that He should not prepare a realm of reward and eternal bliss for those believers who respond to the Merciful and Compassionate One's making Himself known by recognizing Him in faith; to His making Himself beloved by loving Him in worship; and to His mercy by offering thanks and veneration?

THIRD TRUTH
The Gate of Wisdom and Justice,
the Manifestation of the Names of Wise and Just

Is it at all possible⁹ that the Lord of Glory, Who demonstrates His dominical sovereignty in the wisdom and order, the justice and equilibrium that pervade all things, from the atom to the sun, should not bestow favour on those believers who seek refuge beneath the protective wing of His dominicality, who believe in His Wisdom and Justice, and whose acts are for the purpose of worshipping Him?

Again, is it possible that He should not chastise those rude and discourteous men who disbelieve in His wisdom and justice, and rebel against Him in insolence? Now not even a thousandth part of that wisdom and justice is exercised with respect to man, in this transient world; it is rather deferred. Most of the people of misguidance leave this world unpunished, and most of the people of guidance leave it unrewarded. All things are, then, postponed for a supreme tribunal, an ultimate bliss.

Yes, it is apparent that the Being Who controls this world does so in accordance with an infinite wisdom. Do you require a proof? It is the preservation of interest and benefit in all things. Do you not see that numerous wise benefits are intended in all the limbs, bones and veins of man, even in the cells of his brain and in every particle of his body? Do you not see that from certain limbs wise benefits are to be had as numerous as the fruits of a tree? All of this shows that matters are done in accordance with infinite wisdom. The existence of the utmost regularity in the making of all things is a proof of the same truth.

The compression of the exact programme of development of a beautiful flower into a minute seed, the inscription on a small seed by the pen of destiny of the scroll of deeds of a tree, its life-history and list of equipment, show that a pen of utmost wisdom is at work.

The existence of a high degree of fine artistry in all things proves that there exists also the impress of an infinitely Wise Maker. Further, the

⁹ The sentence “is it at all possible?” is indeed repeated many times, because it expresses a most significant mystery. Misguidance and lack of belief generally spring from the habit of imagining things to be impossible, far removed from the realm of reason, and therefore denying them. Now in this discussion of resurrection it has been decisively demonstrated that true impossibility, absurdity and irrationality pertain to the path of misbelief and the road of misguidance, whereas true possibility, facility and rationality are characteristics of the path of faith and highway of Islam.

In short, the philosophers tend to unbelief on account of their regarding things as impossible, whereas the Tenth Word (discussion of resurrection), by means of the repeated sentence, “is it at all possible?” shows where impossibility lies, and thus deals them a blow in the mouth.

inclusion within the minute body of man of an index of all being, of the keys to all the treasures of mercy, and of the mirrors of all the Divine Names, demonstrates the existence of wisdom within that infinitely fine artistry. Now is it at all possible that the wisdom that thus permeates the workings of dominicality should not wish eternally to favour those who seek refuge beneath the wing of dominicality and who offer obedience in faith?

Do you wish for a proof that all things are done with justice and balance? The fact that all things are endowed with being, given shape and put in their appropriate place in accordance with precise equilibrium and in appropriate measure, shows that all matters are done in accordance with infinite justice and balance.

Similarly, the fact that all things are given their rights in accordance with their disposition, that they receive all the necessities of their being and all the requirements of life in the most fitting form — this too is the sign left by a hand of infinite justice.

Again, the fact that answer is always given to every petition and request made by the tongue of disposition, and of natural need or necessity, demonstrates the existence of infinite justice and wisdom.

Now is it at all possible that the justice and wisdom that hasten to relieve the pettiest need of the smallest of creation should fail to provide immortality, the greatest need of man, the greatest of creatures? That it should fail to respond to his greatest plea and cry for assistance? Or that it should not preserve the dignity of God's dominicality by preserving the rights of His servants? Man, whose life is so brief, cannot experience the true essence of justice in this transient world; it is for this reason that matters are postponed for a supreme tribunal. For true justice requires that man, this apparently petty creature, should be rewarded and punished, not in accordance with his pettiness, but in accordance with the magnitude of his crime, the importance of his nature and the greatness of his function. Since this passing and transient world is far from manifesting such wisdom and justice for man, who is created for eternity, of necessity there will be an eternal Hell and everlasting Paradise of that Just and Awesome Possessor of Beauty, that Wise and Beauteous Possessor of Awe.

FOURTH TRUTH

The Gate of Generosity and Beauty, the Manifestation of the Names of Generous and Beautiful

Is it at all possible that infinite generosity and liberality, inexhaustible riches, unending treasures, peerless and eternal beauty, flawless and everlasting perfection, should not require the existence of grateful supplicants,

yearning spectators and astounded onlookers, all destined to stay an eternity in an abode of bliss, a place of repose? Yes, adorning the face of the world with all these objects of beauty, creating the moon and the sun as its lamps, filling the surface of the earth with the finest varieties of sustenance and thus making it a banquet of bounty, making fruit-trees into so many dishes, and renewing them several times each season — all this shows the existence of infinite generosity and liberality. Such unending liberality and generosity, such inexhaustible treasures of mercy, require the existence of an abode of repose, a place of bliss, that shall be everlasting and contain all desirable objects within it. They also require that those who enjoy such bliss should remain in that abode of repose eternally, without suffering the pain of cessation and separation. For just as the cessation of pain is a form of pleasure, so too the cessation of pleasure is a form of pain, one that such infinite generosity is unwilling to countenance. It requires, then, the existence both of an eternal paradise and of supplicants to abide in it eternally.

Infinite generosity and liberality desire to bestow infinite bounty and infinite kindness. The bestowal of infinite bounty and infinite kindness require in turn infinite gratitude. This necessitates the perpetual existence of those who receive all the kindness so that they can demonstrate their thanks and gratitude for that perpetual bestowal and constant bounty. A petty enjoyment, made bitter by cessation, and lasting for only a brief time, is not compatible with the requirements of generosity and liberality.

Look too at the different regions of the world, each like an exhibition where God's crafts are displayed. Pay attention to the dominical proclamations in the hands of all the plants and animals on the face of the earth¹⁰ and listen to the prophets and the saints, the heralds of the beauties of dominicality. They unanimously display the flawless perfections of the Glorious Maker by demonstrating His miraculous arts, and thus invite the gazes of men.

The Maker of this world has, then, most important, astounding and secret perfections. It is these He wishes to display by means of His miraculous arts. For secret, flawless perfection wishes to be manifested to those who will appreciate, admire and wonderingly gaze at it. Eternal perfection requires eternal manifestation. Such eternal manifestation in turn requires the perpetual existence of those who are to appreciate and admire it. The value of perfection will always sink in the view of its admirer if he is devoid of perpetual existence.¹¹ Again, the beauteous, artistic, brilliant and adorned creatures

¹⁰ The existence of a brightly designed and brilliantly adorned flower, a most artfully conceived and bejewelled fruit on a twig as thin as a wire, affixed to a dry, bonelike tree — this is without doubt a proclamation to all animate beings of the fine arts produced by a most skilled, wise and miraculous maker. This holds true not only of the vegetable kingdom, but also of the animal realm.

¹¹ There is a proverbial occurrence pertaining to this point. A celebrated beauty once expelled from her presence a common man who had become infatuated with her. In order to console himself, he said, "how ugly she is!", thus denying her beauty.

Once a bear stood beneath a vine trellis, and wished to eat the grapes. But he was unable to reach out for the grapes, or to climb up the trellis. So he said to himself, by way of consolation, "the grapes must be sour," and growling went on his way.

that cover the face of the globe, bear witness to the fairness of a peerless, transcendent beauty, and indicate the subtle charms of an unparalleled, hidden pulchritude, just as sunlight bears witness to the sun.¹² Each manifestation of that sacred, transcendent beauty, indicates the existence of countless hidden treasures in each of God's Names. Now so exalted, peerless and hidden a beauty, just as it desires to view its own fairness in a mirror and to behold the degrees and measures of its beauty in an animate reflection, desires also to become manifest, in order to look on its own beauty through the eyes of others. That is, it wishes to look at its own beauty in two ways; firstly, by beholding itself in mirrors of variegated colour; secondly, through the gaze of yearning witnesses to itself, of bewildered admirers of its beauty.

In short, beauty and fairness desire to see and be seen. Both of these require the existence of yearning witnesses and bewildered admirers. And since beauty and fairness are eternal and everlasting, their witnesses and admirers must have perpetual life. An eternal beauty can never be satisfied with transient admirers. An admirer condemned to irreversible separation will find his love turning to enmity once he conceives of separation. His admiration will yield to ridicule, his respect to contempt. For just as obstinate man is an enemy to what is unknown to him, so too he is opposed to all that lies beyond his reach, and love that is not infinite will respond to a beauty that deserves unending admiration with implicit enmity, hatred and rejection. From this we understand the profound reason for the unbeliever's enmity to God.

So endless generosity and liberality, peerless fairness and beauty, flawless perfection — all these require the existence of eternally grateful and longing supplicants and admirers. But we see in this hospice of the world that everyone quickly leaves and vanishes, having had only a taste of that generosity, enough to whet his appetite but not to satiate him, and having seen only a dim light coming from the perfection, or rather a faint shadow of its light, without in any way being fully satisfied. It follows, then, that men are going toward a place of eternal joy where all will be bestowed on them in full measure.

In short, just as this world, with all its creatures, decisively demonstrates the existence of the Glorious Maker, so too do His sacred attributes and Names indicate, show and logically require, the existence of the hereafter.

¹² Although all beings that act as mirrors for God's beauty constantly vanish and disappear, those that succeed them display and manifest in their forms and features the same beauty and fairness. This shows that the beauty in question does not belong to them; the visible instances of beauty are rather the signs and indications of a transcendent and sacred beauty.

FIFTH TRUTH
The gate of Compassion and Muhammadan Worship,
the Manifestation of the Names of
Answerer of Prayer and Compassionate

Is it at all possible that a Lord possessing infinite compassion and mercy, Who most compassionately fulfils the smallest need of His lowliest creatures in the most unexpected fashion, Who heeds the muffled plea for help of His most obscure creature, and Who responds to all the petitions He hears, whether vocal or mute — is it at all possible that such a Lord should not pay heed to the greatest petition of the foremost among His servants, the most beloved among his creatures, that He should not hear and grant his most exalted prayer? The kindness and ease manifested in the feeding and nurturing of weak and young animals show that the Monarch of the cosmos exercises his dominicality with infinite mercy.

Is it at all possible that a compassion merciful to this degree in the exercise of dominicality should not accept the prayer of the most virtuous and beautiful of all creation?¹³ This truth is explained in the Nineteenth Word, but let us repeat our statement of the matter here:

O friend listening to these words together with my own soul! We said in the comparison that a meeting took place on a certain island, and a most noble commander delivered a speech there. In order to find out the truth indicated in the comparison, come, let us depart from this age, and in our mind and imagination travel to the Arabian Peninsula in the blessed age of the Prophet, in order to visit and watch him while he is performing his duties and engaging in worship. See, just as he is the means for the attainment of eternal bliss, by means of his messengerhood and guidance, so too he is the cause for the existence of that bliss and the means for the creation of Paradise, by means of his worship and prayer.

Now see! That being is praying for eternal bliss in such supreme supplication, with such sublime worship, that it is as if this island, or even the whole world, were praying and supplicating together with him. For the worship he performs contains within itself not only the worship of the community that

¹³ He whose kingdom has lasted one thousand three hundred and fifty years, who has generally had more than three hundred and fifty million subjects, to whom his subjects daily renew their pledge of allegiance and to whose perfections they continually bear witness, whose commands are obeyed in perfect submission, whose spiritual hue has coloured half of the globe and a fifth of mankind, who is the beloved of men's hearts and the educator of their spirits — such a being is without doubt the greatest servant of the Lord Who holds sway over the universe. Also, since most of the realms of beings applauded that being's function and duty through each bearing the fruit of his miracles, he is for sure the most beloved creature of the Fashioner of the cosmos. Similarly, the desire for perpetuity existing in all men by virtue of their very nature, a desire that lifts men from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, is the greatest of all desires and petitions, fit to be presented to the Provider of all Needs only by the greatest among His servants.

follows him, but also that of all the other prophets, in its essential form, by virtue of the correspondence existing between him and them. Moreover, he performs his supreme prayer and offers his supplications in such a vast congregation that it is as if all luminous and perfect men, from the time of Adam down to the present, were following him in prayer and saying “amen” to his supplications!¹⁴ He is praying for so universal a need — immortality— that not merely the people of this earth, but also the inhabitants of the heavens and the entirety of creation are participating in his supplications and silently proclaiming, “yes, o Lord! Grant his prayer; we too desire it.” He petitions for everlasting bliss with such touching sadness, in so yearning, so longing, and so pleading a fashion, that he causes the whole of the cosmos to weep and thus to share in his prayer.

See, he desires and prays for bliss, for such a purpose and goal that he elevates man and all creatures from captivity in the abysmal state of utter annihilation, from worthlessness, uselessness, and purposelessness to the apex of preciousness, eternity, exalted function, and the rank of being a script penned by God.

See, he makes his petition with such elevated plea for succour, makes his supplication with so sweet a request for mercy, that it is as if he caused all beings, the heavens and God’s throne itself to listen, and to echo his prayer ecstatically with cries of “amen, o Lord, amen!”¹⁵

¹⁴ From the time that the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) first made his supplication down to the present, all the invocations upon him of peace and blessings made by his community are a kind of eternal amen to his prayer, a form of universal participation in it. Every invocation of peace and blessings upon him by every member of the Muslim community in the course of his prayer, as well as the prayer for him uttered after the second call to prayer according to the Shafi’i school — this too is a powerful and universal amen to his supplication for eternal bliss. So the eternity and everlasting bliss desired by all men with all of their strength, in accordance with their primordial disposition, is requested in the name of humanity by the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him), and the luminous segment of humanity says “amen” after him. Is it at all possible that such a prayer should not be accepted?

¹⁵ Indeed, it is not at all possible that the Master of this world, all of Whose doings are self-evidently inspired by consciousness, knowledge and wisdom, should be unaware and uninformed of the acts of the foremost among all of His creatures. Again, it is not at all possible that the All-Knowing Master should remain indifferent to the deeds and prayers of that foremost among His creatures, and deem them unimportant despite being aware of them. It is further impossible that the Powerful and Merciful Master of the World should not accept his prayers, having not remained indifferent to them. Yes, through the light of the Muhammadan Being the form of the world has changed. The true essence of men and all beings in the cosmos became apparent through that light; it became clear that they are each missives of the Eternally Besought One proclaiming the Divine Names, precious and profound beings with God-given functions and destined to manifest eternity. Were it not for that light, beings would be condemned to utter annihilation, they would be valueless, meaningless, useless, confused, the result of blind chance, sunk in the darkness of illusion. It is for this reason that just as men say “amen” to the prayer of the Prophet, so too all other beings, from the face of the earth up to God’s throne, from the soil to the stars, all take pride in his light, and proclaim their connection with him. The very spirit of the worship of the Prophet is indeed none other than this prayer. Again, all the motions and workings of the cosmos are in their essence prayer. For example, the progress of a seed until it becomes a tree is a form of prayer to the Creator.

See, he requests bliss and eternity from a Being, One so All-Hearing, Generous and Powerful, so All-Seeing, Merciful and Knowledgeable that He sees, hears, accepts and takes pity upon the most secret wish, the slightest desire of the most obscure of his creatures, this, in observable form. He answers all pleas even if they are silently proffered. He bestows all things and answers all pleas in so wise, percipient and merciful a fashion that no doubt remains that all that nurturing and regulating can derive only from One All-Hearing and All-Seeing, One Generous and Merciful.

Let us listen to what the Pride of All Being is requesting, that source of honour for all of mankind, that one unique in all of creation, who bears on his back the burden of all men, who standing on this earth lifts up his hands towards God's throne and offers up a prayer which in its reality contains the essence of the worship of all of mankind. See, he is asking for eternal bliss for himself and for his community. He is asking for eternity and Paradise. He is making his plea together with all the Divine Sacred Names that display their beauty in the mirrors of all created being. You can see, indeed, that he is seeking intercession from those Names.

If there were not countless reasons and causes for the existence of the hereafter, a single prayer of that exalted being would be enough for the creation of Paradise, a task as easy for the power of the Merciful Creator as the creation of spring.¹⁶

Indeed, how could the creation of spring be difficult for the Possessor of Absolute Power Who each spring makes the face of the world into a plain of resurrection, and brings forth there a hundred thousand examples of resurrection? In just the same way that the messengerhood of the Prophet was the reason for the foundation of this realm of trial—the saying “were it not for thee, were it not for thee, I would not have created the spheres”¹⁷ being an indication of this— so too the worship he performed was the cause for the foundation of the abode of bliss.

Is it at all possible that the flawless perfection of artistry, the peerless beauty of dominicality expressed in the order of the world and the comprehensive mercy that reduce all to bewilderment, should not answer his prayer, and thus tolerate an extreme form of ugliness, cruelty and disorder? Is it possible that it would listen to the most petty and insignificant desires and grant them, but dismiss significant and important desires as worthless, and fail to

¹⁶ To display wondrous samples of art, and examples of resurrection on the face of the earth that, compared with the hereafter is like a narrow page, to inscribe and include on that single page, in perfect order, all the different species of creation, that resemble three hundred thousand separate books, is certainly more difficult than building and creating the delicate and symmetrical structure of Paradise in the broad realm of eternity. Indeed, it may be said that to whatever degree Paradise is more elevated than the spring, to that degree the creation of the gardens of spring is more difficult and wondrous than the creation of Paradise.

¹⁷ ‘Ali al-Qari, *Sharh al-Shifa*, i, 16; al-‘Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, ii, 164.

fulfil them? No, a thousand times no! Such beauty can never accept such ugliness and itself become ugly.¹⁸

So just as the Prophet opened the gates of this world with his messengerhood, he opens the gates of the hereafter with his worship.

May the blessings of the Compassionate One be upon him, to the extent of all that this world and paradise contain. O God, grant blessings and peace to Your servant and Messenger, that Beloved One who is the Master of both Realms, the Pride of all the Worlds, the source of life in both spheres, the means for the attainment of happiness here and in the hereafter, he who flies on two wings, who is the messenger to both men and jinn — to him, and to his Family, and all of his Companions, as well as his brethren from among the prophets and messengers. Amen.

SIXTH TRUTH

The Gate of Splendour and Eternity, the Manifestation of the Names of Glorious and Eternal

Is it at all possible that the splendour of dominicality that subdues and commands all beings, from suns and trees down to particles, just like obedient soldiers, should concentrate its entire attention on the wretched and transient beings that pass a temporary life in the hospice of this world, and not create an eternal and everlasting sphere of splendour, an unending manifestation of dominicality? The display of Divine splendour in the changing of the seasons, the sublime motions of the planets in the heavens as if they were aeroplanes, the subjugation of all things and the creation of the earth as man's cradle and the sun as his lamp, vast transformations such as the reviving and adornment of the dead and dry globe — all of this shows that behind the veil a sublime dominicality exists, that a splendid monarchy is at work.

Now such a dominical kingdom requires subjects worthy of itself, as well as an appropriate mode of manifestation. But look at this hospice of the world, and you will see that the most significant class of its subjects, endowed with the most comprehensive of functions, are gathered together only temporarily and that, in the most wretched of states. The hospice fills and empties each day. All of the subjects stay only temporarily in this abode of trial for the sake

¹⁸ It is unanimously agreed the total reversal of truths is impossible. It is quite impossible that something should become the very opposite and reverse of itself, and impossible to the thousandth degree that something should retain its own nature, and yet at the same time become identical with its opposite. Thus infinite beauty cannot become ugliness, while yet remaining beauty, and, in our example, it is not possible that the beauty of dominicality, a beauty perceptible and manifest in its existence, should retain its quiddity as the beauty of dominicality, but become the very essence of ugliness. This would be the strangest of all impossible and false notions in the world.

of being tested in service. The abode itself changes each hour. Again, all of the monarch's subjects stay only for a few brief minutes in order to behold the samples of the precious bounty of the Glorious Maker, to look on His miraculous works of art in the exhibition of the world with the eye of a buyer. Then they disappear. The exhibition itself changes every minute. Whoever leaves it, never returns, and whoever comes to it, will ultimately depart.

Now this state and circumstance definitively shows that behind and beyond this hospice, this testing-ground, this exhibition, there are permanent palaces and eternal abodes that fully manifest and support God's everlasting sovereignty; there are gardens and treasure houses full of the pure and exalted originals of the forms and copies we see in this world. If we strive here in this world, it is for the sake of what awaits us there. We work here, and are rewarded there. Bliss awaits everyone there, in accordance with his capacity, as long as he does not squander his share. Yes, it is impossible that such eternal kingship should concentrate exclusively on these wretched transient beings.

Consider this truth through the telescope of the following comparison. You are travelling along a road. You see a caravanserai ahead of you on the road, built by a great personage for people coming to visit him. Millions are spent on the decoration of the caravanserai so that guests should enjoy their one night's stay there, and for their instruction. But the guests see very little of those decorations, look at them for a very short time; briefly tasting the joys of what is offered them, they go on their way without being satiated. But each guest takes a photograph of the objects in the caravanserai by means of his special camera. Also, the servants of that great personage record with great care the conduct of all the guests and preserve the record. You see, too, that he destroys every day most of the valuable decorations, and replaces them with fresh decorations for the newly arriving guests. After seeing all this, will any doubt remain that the personage who has constructed this caravanserai on the road has permanent and exalted dwellings, inexhaustible and precious treasures, an uninterrupted flow of great generosity? By means of the generosity displayed in the caravanserai, he intends merely to whet the appetite of his guests for those things he keeps in his immediate presence; to awaken their desire for the gifts he has prepared for them. So too, if you look upon the state of the hospice of this world without falling into drunkenness, you will understand the following nine principles:

- **First Principle:** You will understand that this world does not exist for its own sake, any more than does the caravanserai. It is impossible that it should assume this shape by itself. Rather, it is a well-constructed hospice, wisely designed to receive the caravan of beings that constantly arrive to alight before departing again.

• **Second Principle:** You will understand, too, that those living within this hospice are guests. They are invited by their Generous Sustainer to the Abode of Peace.

• **Third Principle:** You will understand, further, that the adornments of this world are not simply for the sake of enjoyment or admiration. For if they yield pleasure for a time, they cause pain for a longer time with their cessation. They give you a taste and whet your appetite, but never satiate you. For either the life of the pleasure is short, or your life is short, too brief for you to become satiated. These adornments of high value and brief duration must, then, be for the sake of instruction in wisdom,¹⁹ for arousing gratitude, and for encouraging men to seek out the perpetual originals of which they are copies. They are, then, for other exalted goals beyond themselves.

• **Fourth Principle:** You will understand also that the adornments of this world²⁰ are like samples and forms of the blessings stored up in Paradise by the mercy of the Compassionate One for the people of faith.

¹⁹ Now the lifespan of everything is short, although its value is high and the subtleties of its artistry are most exalted and beautiful. This implies that everything is only a sample, a form of something else, that it has the function of drawing the gaze of the customer to the authentic and original object. This being the case, it may be said that the variegated adornments of this world are the samples of the bounties of Paradise, prepared by the Compassionate and Merciful One for His beloved servants.

²⁰ There are numerous purposes for the existence of everything, and numerous results flow from its being. These are not restricted to this world and to the souls of men, as the people of misguidance imagine, being thus lost in vanity and purposelessness. On the contrary, the purposes for the existence and the results of the lives of all things relate to the following three categories.

The first and the most exalted pertains to the Creator. It consists of presenting to the gaze of the Pre-Eternal Witness the bejewelled and miraculous wonders He has affixed to the object in question, as if in a military parade. To live for a fleeting second is enough to attain that glance. Indeed, the potentiality and intent for existence is enough, without ever emerging into life. This purpose is fully realized, for example, by delicate creatures that vanish swiftly and by seeds and kernels, each a work of art, that never come to life, that is, never bear fruit or flower. They all remain untouched by vanity and purposelessness. Thus the first purpose of all things is to proclaim, by means of their life and existence, the miracles of power and the traces of artistry of the Maker and display them to the gaze of the Glorious Monarch.

The second purpose of all existence and the result of all being pertains to conscious creation. Everything is like a truth-displaying missive, an artistic poem, or a wise word of the Glorious Maker, offered to the gaze of angels and jinn, of men and animals, and desiring to be read by them. It is an object for the contemplation and instruction of every conscious being that looks upon it.

The third purpose of all existence and result of all being pertains to the soul of the thing itself, and consists of such minor consequences as the experience of pleasure and joy, and living with some degree of permanence and comfort. If we consider the purpose of a servant employed as a steersman on some royal ship, we see that only one hundredth of that purpose relates to the steersman himself, the wage he receives; ninety-nine hundredths of the purpose relate to the king who owns the ship. A similar relation exists between the purpose of a thing related to its own self and its worldly existence, and its purpose related to its Maker. In the light of this multiplicity of purposes we can now explain the ultimate compatibility between divine wisdom and economy on the one hand, and divine liberality and generosity—in fact, infinite generosity—on the other hand, even though they appear to be opposites and contradictory. In the individual purposes of things, liberality and generosity predominate, and the Name of Most Generous is manifested. From the point of view of individual purpose, fruits and grains are indeed beyond computation, and they demonstrate infinite generosity. But in universal purposes, wisdom predominates, and the name of All-Wise is manifested. However many purposes a tree has, each of its fruits contains that many purposes, and these can be divided into the three categories we have established. Their universal purposes demonstrate an infinite wisdom and economy. Infinite wisdom and infinite generosity and liberality are thus combined, despite their apparent opposition. For example, one of the purposes for raising an army is the maintenance of order. Whatever troops are available for the purpose will suffice or be more than enough. But the whole army will be barely enough for other purposes such as protecting the national frontiers and repelling

• **Fifth Principle:** You will understand, too, that all of these transient objects have not been created for the sake of annihilation, in order to appear briefly and then vanish. The purpose for their creation is rather briefly to be assembled in existence and acquire the desired form, so that these may be noted, their images preserved, their meanings known, and their results recorded. This is so that, for example, everlasting spectacles might be wrought for the people of eternity, and that they might serve other purposes in the realm of eternity. You will understand that things have been created for eternity, not for annihilation; and as for apparent annihilation, it has the sense of a completion of duty and a release from service, for every transient thing advances to annihilation with one aspect, but remains eternally with numerous other aspects.

Look, for example, at the flower, a word of God's power; for a short time it smiles and looks at us, and then hides behind the veil of annihilation. It departs just like a word leaving your mouth. But it does so entrusting thousands of its fellows to men's ears. It leaves behind meanings in men's minds as numerous as those minds. The flower, too, expressing its meaning and thus fulfilling its function, goes and departs. But it goes leaving its apparent form in the memory of everything that sees it, its inner essence in every seed. It is as if each memory and seed were a camera to record the adornment of the flower, or a means for its perpetuation. If such be the case with an object at the simplest level of life, it can be readily understood how closely tied to eternity is man, the highest form of life and the possessor of an eternal soul. Again, from the fact that the laws —each resembling a spirit— according to which large flowering and fruit bearing plants are formed and the representations of their forms are preserved and perpetuated in most regular fashion in tiny seeds throughout tempestuous changes — from this fact it can be easily understood how closely tied and related to

enemies; its size will be in perfect balance with utter wisdom. Thus the wisdom of the state will be joined to its splendour, and it can be said that there is no excess in the army.

eternity is the spirit of man, which possesses an extremely exalted and comprehensive nature, and which although clothed in a body, is a conscious and luminous law issuing from the divine command.

- **Sixth Principle:** You will also understand that man has not been left to graze at will, with a halter loosely tied around his neck; on the contrary, the forms of all his deeds are recorded and registered, and the results of all his acts are preserved for the day when he shall be called to account.

- **Seventh Principle:** You will understand, further, that the destruction visited upon the beautiful creatures of summer and spring in the autumn is not for the sake of annihilation. Instead, it is a form of dismissal after the completion of service.²¹ It is also a form of emptying in order to clear a space for the new creation that is to come in the following spring, of preparing the ground and making ready for the beings that are to come and assume their functions. Finally, it is a form of Divine warning to conscious beings to awake from the neglect that causes them to forget their duties, from the drunken torpor that causes them to forget their obligation of offering thanks.

- **Eighth Principle:** You will understand this, too, that the eternal Maker of this transient world has another, everlasting world; it is to this that He urges and impels His servants.

- **Ninth Principle:** You will understand, also, that so Compassionate a Being will bestow upon His choice servants in that world such gifts as no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, nor has their image crossed the heart of any man.²² In this we believe.

SEVENTH TRUTH

The Gate of Protection and Preservation, the Manifestation of the Names of Preserver and Guardian

Is it at all possible that God's attribute of Preserver, which protects all things with the utmost order and balance, —things in the heavens and on the earth, on dry land and in the ocean, dry and wet, large and small, commonplace and exalted— and as it were, sifts their results by way of accounting

²¹ Yes, it is fitting that the fruits, flowers and leaves on the tips and branches of a tree, proceeding from the treasuries of sustenance provided by Divine mercy, should depart when they become old and their duties are at an end. Otherwise the gate will remain closed to those that come after them, and a barrier will be erected against the expansion of God's mercy and the services to be performed by their brethren (i.e., other members of the species). Moreover, with the passing of youth, they will become wretched and distraught. Spring is like a fruit-bearing tree that in turn is an indication of the plain of resurrection. Similarly, the world of humanity in every age is like a tree inviting contemplation, and the world as a whole is like an amazing tree the fruits of which are despatched to the market of the hereafter.

²² *Bukhari*, Bad'u'l-Khalq, 8; Tafsir al-Sura xxxii, 1; Tawhid, 35; *Muslim*, Iman, 312.

— is it at all possible that this attribute should permit the deeds and acts of man, man who has been given the lofty disposition of humanity, the rank of the supreme vicegerency, and the duty of bearing the Supreme Trust, not to be recorded, not to be passed through the sieve of accounting, not to be weighed in the balance of justice, not to be punished or rewarded fittingly, even though his acts and deeds closely pertain to God's universal dominicality? No, it is not in any way possible!

Yes, the Being that administers this cosmos preserves all things in order and balance. Order and balance are the manifestation of knowledge and wisdom, of will and power. For we see that the substance of every created object is fashioned in well-ordered and symmetrical fashion. Not only is each of the forms it changes throughout its life well-ordered, but the totality of these forms is also marked by the same orderliness. We see, too, that the Glorious Preserver preserves many forms of all things the life of which comes to an end when they have performed their function and which depart from the manifest world, in the memories of men, that are like a kind of preserved tablet,²³ or in a form of archetypal mirror. He also writes and inscribes a brief history of their life in a seed, that is like the result and outcome of the whole. Thus He causes all things to be preserved in mirrors pertaining to both the outer and inner worlds. The memory of man, the fruit of the tree, the kernel of the fruit, the seed of the flower — all of these demonstrate the universality and comprehensiveness of the law of preservation.

Do you not see that all the flowers and fruits of the vast spring, the records of their deeds in appropriate form, the laws of their formation, and the images of their forms, are all inscribed into the finite space of a minute seed and are there preserved? The following spring, their record of deeds is set forth, in a form of accounting appropriate to them, and another vast world of spring is brought forth, with the utmost order and wisdom. This demonstrates with what powerful comprehensiveness God's attribute of Preserver exercises itself. Considering that the results of such transient, commonplace, impermanent and insignificant things are preserved, is it at all possible that men's deeds, that yield important fruit in the world of the unseen, the world of the hereafter, and the world of spirits, from the point of view of universal dominicality, is it at all possible that they should not be guarded and preserved, should not be recorded as a matter of importance? No, by no means!

Yes, from this manifestation of God's attribute of Preserver it can be deduced that the Master of all creation devotes great care to the orderliness of all things that come to pass in His realm. He pays great attention to the function of sovereignty, and lavishes extreme care on the dominicality of kingship. Thus He records, or causes to be recorded, the pettiest of happen

²³ See, the footnote to the Seventh Aspect above.

ings, the smallest of services, and preserves in numerous things the form of everything that happens in His realm. This attribute of Preserver indicates that an important register of deeds will be subjected to a precise examination and weighing: the records of men's deeds will stand revealed.

Now is it at all possible that man should be ennobled with the vicegerency and the Trust, that, as a witness to the universality of dominicality, he should proclaim God's unity in the realm of multiplicity, and thus act as a controller and witness by having some share in the glorification of God and worship of most beings — is it at all possible that he should do all of this and then go to his grave and sleep peacefully without ever being awakened? Without ever being asked concerning his deeds, small and great? That he should not go to the plain of resurrection and be tried at the Supreme Tribunal? No, by no means!

Or is it possible for man to flee and hide himself in annihilation, for him to enter the earth and conceal himself from that Powerful and Glorious One to Whose Power over all contingencies in the future,²⁴ the occurrences of past time — each a miracle of His power— bear witness, and Who visibly creates winter and spring, that, taken together, resemble resurrection? Since

²⁴ The entirety of the past, extending from the present back to the beginning of creation, consists of occurrences. Every day, year and century that came into being is like a line, a page, a book, written by the pen of destiny; the hand of God's power has inscribed His miraculous signs there with the utmost wisdom and order.

Similarly, time from the present until resurrection, Paradise and eternity, consists entirely of contingencies. The past consists of occurrences, the future of contingencies. Now if these two chains of time be compared with each other, it will be seen to be true of a certainty that the Being That created yesterday and brought into being the creatures peculiar to it, is capable, too, of creating tomorrow together with its creatures. Again, there is no doubt that the beings and wonders of past time, that wondrous display, are the miraculous works of a Powerful and Glorious One. They bear decisive witness that that Powerful One is capable of creating all of the future and its contingencies, and manifesting all of its wonders.

The one who creates an apple must of a certainty be able to create all the apples in the world and to bring the vast spring into being. Conversely, the one who cannot create a spring cannot create a single apple either, for the apple is made at the same workbench. But the one who makes an apple can make the spring. Each apple is an example in miniature of a tree, even of a garden or a cosmos. The apple seed that carries within itself the life-story of the huge tree is, from the point of view of artistry, such a miracle that the one who creates it thus is incapable of nothing. So too, the one that creates today is able also to create the day of resurrection, and it is only the one capable of creating the spring that is able, too, to create resurrection. The one who affixes all the worlds of past time to the ribbon of time and displays them there in utmost wisdom and order, is without doubt capable of attaching other beings to the ribbon of the future and displaying them there. In several of the Words, particularly the Twenty-Second Word, we proved with utter certainty that: "the one who cannot create everything cannot create anything, and the one who can fashion one thing, can fashion everything. Also, if the creation of everything is entrusted to a single being, the creation of all things becomes as easy as the creation of a single thing; thus facility arises. If, on the contrary, it is entrusted to numerous causes, and ascribed to multiplicity, the creation of a single thing becomes as difficult as the creation of everything, and such difficulty arises as borders on impossibility."

man is not called to account and judged in fitting fashion while in this world, it follows that he must proceed to a Supreme Tribunal and a final felicity.

EIGHTH TRUTH
The Gate of Promise and Threat,
the Manifestation of the Names of Beautiful and Glorious.

Is it at all possible that the Maker of this world, the Possessor of Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Power, should not fulfil the oft-repeated promise and threat that has been proclaimed unanimously by all the prophets and been witnessed in unison by all the veracious and the saints, and thus display weakness and ignorance? God forbid! All that is implied by His promise and threat is not at all difficult for His power to fulfil; it is extremely simple and easy. It is as easy for Him as bringing back next spring the countless beings of last spring, in part identically,²⁵ in part in simile.²⁶ It is our need, the need of everything, His own need and the need of His dominical sovereignty, that He should fulfil His promise. For Him to break His promise would be contrary to the dignity of His power, and it would contradict the comprehensiveness of His knowledge. For the breaking of a promise can arise only from ignorance or impotence.

O denier! Do you know how foolish a crime you are committing with your unbelief and denial? Paying heed to your own lying fancy, your delirious intellect, your deceptive soul, you reject as a liar One Who in no way can be compelled to the breaking of His promise, Whose glory and stature can in no way admit the breaking of His word, and Whose truthfulness and veracity are attested by all visible matters and objects! Despite your infinite pettiness, you are committing a crime of infinitely great proportions. Without doubt you deserve great and eternal punishment. According to certain narrations, the fact that the teeth of some of the people of Hell will be as big as a mountain²⁷ will serve as an indication of the magnitude of their crime. O denier, you are like a traveller who closes his eyes to the sunlight and looks instead at the fantasy in his own mind. His imagination wishes to illumine the awesome path in front of him with the light proceeding from his mind's lamp that in reality is no stronger than a glow-worm. Whatever has been promised by God Almighty, Whose veracious words are these beings we see and Whose truthful, eloquent signs are the processes of nature, He will of a surety fulfil. He will establish a Supreme Tribunal, and bestow an ultimate bliss.

²⁵ Like trees and the roots of grasses.

²⁶ Like leaves and fruits.

²⁷ *Muslim*, Janna, 44; *Tirmidhi*, Jahannam, 3; *Ibn Maja*, Zuhd, 38; *Musnad*, ii, 26, 328, 334.

NINTH TRUTH
The Gate of God's bestowal of life and death,
the Manifestation of the Names of Eternally Living
and Self-Subsistent, and Giver of Life and Giver of Death.

Is it at all possible that the One Who gives life to this vast dead and dry earth; Who in so doing demonstrates His power by deploying more than three hundred thousand different forms of creation, each of them as remarkable as man; Who further demonstrates in this deployment His all-embracing knowledge by the infinite distinctions and differentiations He makes in the complex intermingling of all of those forms; Who directs the gaze of all His slaves to everlasting bliss by promising them resurrection in all of His heavenly decrees; Who demonstrates the splendour of His dominicality by causing all of His creation to collaborate with one another, to revolve within the circle of His command and His will, to aid one another and be submitted to Him; Who shows the importance He has given to man by creating him as the most comprehensive, the most precious and delicate, the most valued and valuable fruit on the tree of creation by addressing him without intermediary and subjugating all things to him; — is it at all possible that so Compassionate and Powerful a One, so Wise and All-Knowing a One, should not bring about resurrection; should not gather His creatures together or be unable to do so; should not restore man to life, or be unable to do so; should not be able to inaugurate His Supreme Court; should not be able to create Heaven and Hell? Nay, indeed, by no means is any of this possible.

Indeed, the Almighty Disposer of this world's affairs creates in every century, every year and every day, on the narrow and transient face of the globe, numerous signs, examples and indications of the Supreme Gathering and the Plain of Resurrection.

Thus in the gathering that takes place every spring we see that in the course of five or six days more than three hundred thousand different kinds of animal and plant are first gathered together and then dispersed. The roots of all the trees and plants, as well as some animals, are revived and restored exactly as they were. The other animals are recreated in a form so similar as to be almost identical. The seeds which appear, in their outward form, to be so close to each other, nonetheless, in the course of six days or six weeks, become distinct and differentiated from each other, and then with extreme speed, ease and facility, are brought to life in the utmost order and equilibrium. Is it at all possible that for the One Who does all of this anything should be difficult; that He should be unable to create the heavens and the earth in six days; that He should be unable to resurrect men with a single blast? No, by no means is it possible!

Let us suppose there were to be some gifted writer who could write out in a single hour the confused and obliterated letters of three hundred thousand books on a single sheet without any error, omission or defect, complete and in the best form. If someone were then to say to you that that writer could write out again from memory a book written by him that had fallen into the water and become obliterated, would you then say that he is unable, and would you not believe in his ability? Or think of some talented king who, in order to demonstrate his power or for the sake of providing a warning example, removes whole mountains with a single command, turns his realm upside down, and transforms the sea into dry land. Then you see that a great rock rolls down into a valley, so that the path is blocked for guests travelling to attend the king's reception and they are unable to pass. If someone should say to you: "that exalted one will remove or dissolve the stone, however great it may be, with a single command; he will not leave his guests stranded," would you then say that he will not remove the stone, or be unable to do so? Or if someone one day should gather together a great army, and you are then informed that he will summon its battalions together with a blast of the trumpet after they had dispersed to rest, and the battalions will form up in disciplined shape, would you respond by saying, "I don't believe it?" Were you to say any of these things your behaviour would truly be madness.

If you have understood these three parables, now look further and see how the Pre-Eternal Designer turns over in front of our eyes the white page of winter and opens the green pages of spring and summer. Then He inscribes on the page of the earth's surface, with the pen of power and destiny, in the most beautiful form, more than three hundred thousand species of creation. Not one encroaches upon another. He writes them all together, but none blocks the path of another. In their formation and shape, each is kept separate from the other without any confusion. There is no error in the writing. That Wise and Preserving One, Who preserves and inserts the spirit of a great tree in the smallest seed, no bigger than a dot — is it permissible even to ask how He preserves the spirits of those who die? That Powerful One Who causes the globe to revolve like a pebble in a sling — is it permissible even to ask how He will remove this globe from the path of His guests who are travelling to meet Him in the Hereafter?

Again, the One of Glorious Essence Who from non-being recruits anew and inscribes into His battalions, with the command of "Be, and behold it is," and with utmost discipline, the troops of all living things, the very particles of all of their bodies, and thus creates highly disciplined armies — is it permissible even to ask how He can make bodies submit to His discipline like a battalion, how He can gather together their mutually acquainted fundamental particles, and their component members?

You can, moreover, behold with your own eyes, the numerous designs made by God as signs, similes and indications of resurrection, designs placed by Him in every age and epoch of the world, in the alternation of day and night, even in the appearance and disappearance of clouds in the sky. If you imagine yourself to have been living a thousand years ago, and then compare with each other the two wings of time that are the past and the future, then you will behold similes of the gathering and indications of resurrection as numerous as the centuries and days. If, then, after witnessing so many similes and indications, you regard corporeal resurrection as improbable and rationally unacceptable, know your behaviour to be pure lunacy.

See what the Supreme Decree says concerning the truth we are discussing:

*Look upon the signs of God's mercy, and see how He restores life to the earth after its death. Verily He it is Who shall bring to life the dead, and He is powerful over all things.*²⁸

In short: There is nothing that makes impossible the gathering of resurrection, and much that necessitates it. The glorious and eternal dominicality, the almighty and all embracing sovereignty of the One Who gives life and death to this vast and wondrous earth as if it were a mere animal; Who has made of this earth a pleasing cradle, a fine ship, for man and the animals; Who has made of the sun a lamp furnishing light and heat to the hostelry of the world; Who has made of the planets vehicles for the conveyance of His angels — the dominicality and sovereignty of such a One cannot rest upon and be restricted to the transitory, impermanent, unstable, insignificant, changeable, unlasting, deficient and imperfect affairs of this world. He must, therefore, have another realm, one worthy of Him, permanent, stable, immutable and glorious. Indeed, He does have another kingdom, and it is for the sake of this that He causes us to labour, and to this that He summons us. All those of illumined spirit who have penetrated from outer appearances to truth, and have been ennobled with proximity to the Divine Presence, all the spiritual poles endowed with luminous hearts, all the possessors of lucent intelligence, all bear witness that He will transfer us to that other kingdom. They inform us unanimously that He has prepared for us there reward and requital, and relate that He is repeatedly giving us firm promises and stern warnings.

As for the breaking of a promise, it is baseless and utter humiliation. It cannot in any way be reconciled with the glory of His sanctity. Similarly, failure to fulfil a threat arises either from forgiveness or powerlessness.

²⁸ Qur'an, 30:50.

Now unbelief is extreme crime, and cannot be forgiven.²⁹ The Absolutely Omnipotent One is exempt of and exalted above all powerlessness. Those who bring us their testimony and report, despite all the differences in their methods, temperaments and paths, are totally unanimous and agreed on this basic matter. By their number, they have the authority of unanimity. By their quality, they have the authority of learned consensus. By their rank, each one is a guiding star of mankind, the cherished eye of a people, the object of a nation's veneration. By their importance, each one is an expert and an authority in the matter. In any art or science, two experts are preferred to thousands of non-experts, and two positive affirmers are preferred to thousands of negators in the transmission of a report. For example, the testimony of two men affirming the sighting of the crescent moon at the beginning of Ramadan totally nullifies the negation of thousands of deniers.

In short: In the whole world there is no truer report, no firmer claim, no more apparent truth than this. The world is without doubt a field, and the resurrection a threshing-floor, a harvest. Paradise and Hell are each storehouses for the grain.

TENTH TRUTH

The Gate of Wisdom, Grace, Mercy and Justice; the Manifestation of the Names of All-Wise, Generous, Just and Merciful.

Is it at all possible that the Glorious Possessor of all Dominion in this impermanent hospice of the world, in this transient place of testing, in this unstable showplace of the earth so manifest a wisdom, so evident a grace, so overwhelming a justice, so comprehensive a mercy, — is it at all possible that in His realm, in the worlds of the outer and inner dimensions of things, there should not exist permanent abodes with eternal inhabitants, everlasting stations with immortal residents, and that as a result all the truths of wisdom, grace, mercy and justice that we now see should decline into nothingness.

²⁹ Unbelief denounces creation for alleged worthlessness and meaninglessness. It is an insult to all of creation, a denial of the manifestation of the Divine Names in the mirror of beings. It is disrespect to all the Divine Names, and rejection of the witness borne to the Divine Unity by all beings. It is a denial of all creation. It corrupts man's potentialities in such a way that they are incapable of reform and unreceptive to good. Unbelief is also an act of utter injustice, a transgression against all of creation and the rights of God's Names. The preservation of those rights, as well as the unredeemable nature of the unbeliever's soul, make it necessary that unbelief should be unpardonable. The words, "to assign partners to God is verily a great transgression," (Qur'an, 31:13) express this meaning.

Again, is it at all possible that that All-Wise Being should choose man, among all His creation, to receive direct and universal address from Him, should make him a comprehensive mirror to Himself, should permit him to taste, weigh, and become acquainted with, all the contents of His treasuries of mercy, should make Himself known to him with all His Names, should love him and make Himself beloved of him — that He should do all this and then fail to despatch wretched man to that eternal realm, to invite him to that abode of permanent bliss and make him happy there?

Is it at all reasonable that He should impose on every being, even the seed, a task as heavy as a tree, mount in it instances of His wisdom as numerous as the flowers, and beneficial aspects as numerous as the fruits, but assign to that task, to those instances of His wisdom and those beneficial aspects, a purpose pertaining only to this world, one as small as a seed? That He should make that purpose nothing more than the life of this world, something less valuable than a grain of mustard-seed? That He should not make of beings seeds for the world of meaning and tillage for the realm of the hereafter, for them to yield there their true and worthy results? That He should permit such significant alternations to remain without purpose, to be empty and vain? That He should not turn their faces towards the world of meaning and the hereafter, so that they might there reveal their true purposes and fitting results?

Again, is it at all possible that by thus causing things to controvert their own nature He should present His own veracious Names, All-Wise, Generous, Just, Merciful, as being characterized by their opposites —God forbid!— that He should deny the true essences of all those beings that indicate His wisdom and generosity, His justice and mercy, that He should reject the testimony of all creatures, that He should negate the indications made by all things?

Can intelligence at all accept that God should impose on man and his senses duties as numerous as the hair on his head, but give him no more than an earthly reward, something no more valuable than a hair? That He should act meaninglessly, in a fashion contrary to His true justice and opposed to His true wisdom?

Again, is it at all possible that God Who proves and shows Himself to be a possessor of absolute wisdom, by attaching to every animate being, or even to every member like the tongue, indeed to every creature, instances of His wisdom and sources of benefit as numerous as the results and the fruits He has attached to a tree — is it at all possible that He should fail to bestow of Himself the greatest of all instances of His wisdom, the most significant of all sources of benefit, the most necessary of all results, that which makes His wisdom into wisdom, His blessings into blessings, His mercy into mercy, the

source and aim of all of His wisdom, bounty, mercy and beneficence — eternity, the meeting with Him in the hereafter and everlasting bliss? Were He to abandon these, He would plunge all of His doings unto utter pointlessness and cause Himself to resemble a being who constructed a palace, each stone of which contained thousands of designs, in each corner of which thousands of adornments were to be found, and in each part of which thousands of precious household instruments and tools were provided, but failed to build a roof over it, so that everything rotted and was needlessly destroyed. No, by no means can this be true! From absolute goodness comes forth goodness, and from the Possessor of Absolute Beauty comes forth beauty. So too nothing devoid of purpose can emerge from the Possessor of Absolute Wisdom.

Whoever in his imagination embarks on the ship of history and sets sail for the past, will see dead stages, places, gatherings and worlds, as numerous as the years, and each like the stopping-place that is the world, the field of trial, the gathering of creation, that we now see. In form and quality they are different from each other, but they resemble each other with respect to their orderliness, their wondrousness and the fashion in which they display the power and wisdom of the Maker.

In those impermanent stopping-places, those transient fields, those fleeting gatherings, he will also see the orderly workings of so manifest a wisdom, the indications of so evident a beneficence, the signs of so imperious a justice, the fruits of so comprehensive a mercy, that he will know of a certainty — unless totally devoid of perception— that a more perfect wisdom than that which he beholds is inconceivable, that a beneficence more beautiful than that the signs of which he observes is impossible, that a justice more glorious than that the indications of which he sees cannot exist, and a mercy more comprehensive than that the fruits of which he sees is unimaginable.

If, to suppose the impossible, there were no permanent abodes, lofty mansions, everlasting stations and eternal abodes, with their eternal residents, God's joyous servants, in the realm of that Eternal Monarch Who disposes all affairs and Who constantly is changing the hospice and its inmates, then it would be necessary to reject the true essences of wisdom, justice, beneficence and compassion, those four powerful and universal spiritual elements that are like light, air, water and earth, and to deny their existence, even though they are as apparent as that of the external elements. For it is plain that this impermanent world and its contents cannot be a complete manifestation of their true essences. If there is no other place, somewhere else, where they can be manifested fully, it then becomes necessary, with a lunacy like that of the man who denies the existence of the sun even though

he sees its light filling the day, to deny the wisdom that we can see in everything in front of our eyes; to deny the beneficence that we can observe in our own souls and in most other things; to deny the justice the signs of which appear so strongly;³⁰ and to deny the compassion we see everywhere in operation. It follows in turn that we must regard as a foolish prankster, a treacherous tyrant, the one from whom proceed all the wise processes, the generous deeds and the merciful gifts we perceive in the universe. God forbid that this should be so; it is a totally impossible reversal of the truth. Even the foolish sophists, who denied the existence of everything and even that of their own selves, would not readily contemplate such a proposition.

In short: Considering the utter disparity between —on the one hand— this state of affairs which we see together with the universal fusions of life and the swift separations of death, the imposing gatherings and the rapid dispersions, the magnificent revolutions and the great manifestations, and —on the other hand— the petty fruits we see briefly attained in this transient world, the temporary and insignificant purposes of beings that pertain to this world, we conclude that the non-existence of the hereafter would mean attaching to a little stone wise purposes as great as a mountain, and to a great mountain, a purpose as petty as a small stone. No intelligence or wisdom can find this acceptable.

In other words, this lack of proportion between beings and these matters on the one hand, and their purposes pertaining to this world on the other, demonstrates with certainty that all beings have their faces turned to the world of meaning. It is there that they will yield their appropriate fruits, and their eyes are fixed on the Sacred Names. Their ultimate aims pertain to that world alone. While their substance is hidden beneath the soil of this world, their flowers will unfold in the World of Similitudes. Man sows and is sown in this world, in accordance with his capacity; the harvest is gathered in the hereafter. If you look at the aspect of things that is turned towards the Divine Names and the hereafter you will see that each seed, a miracle of

³⁰ There are two varieties of justice, one affirmative, the other negative. The positive variety consists in giving the deserving his right. This form of justice exists throughout the world in the most obvious fashion, because, as proven in the Third Truth, it observably bestows, in accordance with special balances and particular criteria, all the objects of desire requested by everything from its Glorious Creator with the tongue of innate capacity, the language of natural need, the speech of necessity, and all the requirements of life and existence. This variety of justice is, then, as certain as life and existence itself. The other variety of justice, the negative, consists in chastising the unjust; it gives wrongdoers their due by way of requital and punishment. This type of justice is not fully manifest in this world, even though there are countless signs and indications that permit us to sense its true nature. For example, all the chastising blows and punitive lashes that have descended on all rebellious peoples, from the 'Ad and Thamud to those of the present age, show definitely that an exalted justice dominates the world.

power, has an aim as vast as a tree. Each flower, which is like a word of Divine wisdom, has meanings as numerous as the flowers on a tree, and each fruit, a wonder of God's workmanship and a poem dictated by His mercy, has wise purposes as numerous as the fruits of a tree. As for the fruit serving us as sustenance, it is merely one out of those many thousand wise purposes; it fulfils its purpose, expresses its meanings, and dies, being buried in our stomach.³¹ Since these transient beings yield eternal fruits in another place, leave there permanent forms of themselves, and express there everlasting meanings; since they engage in ceaseless glorification of the Maker; and since man becomes man by perceiving these aspects of things that are oriented to the hereafter, thus finding his way to eternity by means of the transient — since all of this is true, there must be some other purpose for all these beings that are cast around between life and death, that are first gathered and then dispersed.

There is no error in this comparison: the above-mentioned state of affairs resembles circumstances formed and arranged by way of imitation and representation. Brief gatherings and dispersions are arranged at great expense merely for the sake of taking pictures that can thereafter be shown in the cinema. So too, one of the reasons for our passage through individual and social life in this life, for a brief time, is to enable pictures to be taken and images formed, to enable the result of our deeds to be registered and recorded, for display on a day of accounting, for being shown at a vast gathering, and to yield the fruit of supreme happiness. The noble saying of the Prophet (Peace and blessing be upon him) "This world is the tillage for the hereafter,"³² indicates this meaning.

Since the world exists, and within this world wisdom, beneficence, compassion and justice also exist, with their numerous evidences, of a certainty the hereafter also exists, just as surely as does this world. Since one aspect of everything in this world is turned to that world and is proceeding toward it, to deny that world would be denying this world with all it contains. Just as the allotted hour and the grave await man, so too do Paradise and Hell, anxiously watching for his arrival.

³¹ If it be asked, "why do your parables consist chiefly of flowers, seeds and fruits," our answer is that they are the most wondrous, remarkable and delicate of the miracles of God's power. Moreover, since naturalists, philosophers and the people of misguidance have been unable to read the subtle script written upon them by the pen of destiny and power, they have choked on them, and fallen into the swamp of nature.

³² al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, i, 320.

ELEVENTH TRUTH
The Gate of Humanity, and
the Manifestation of the Name of Truth

Is it at all possible that God Almighty, He Who is worshipped by right, should create man within creation as the most significant of all of His servants with respect to His absolute dominicality and with respect to His universal dominicality in all of His realms; that He should make him the most thoughtful recipient of His glorious address, the most comprehensive mirror to the manifestation of His Names; that He should create him as the most beautiful miracle of His power in the fairest of forms, in order to receive the manifestation of the Greatest Name, as well as that quality of the Greatest Name inherent in the other Names, in order for him to assess and perceive the contents of His treasures of mercy; that He should make him an investigator of secrets equipped more than any other creature with balances and instruments; and He should make him the most needy of all creatures with respect to His infinite gifts, the one suffering most from annihilation and the one most desirous of immortality; that He should make him the most delicate, the poorest and neediest of animals, most wretched and subject to pain in his worldly life but most sublime in disposition, in the highest of forms and characters — is it possible that God Almighty should do all this with man and not send him to the Eternal Realm for which he is suited and fitted and for which he is longing? Is it possible that He should thus negate the whole essence of humanity, act in a manner totally contrary to His own veracity, and perform an act of injustice that the eye of truth must deem ugly?

Again, is it at all possible that He Who rules justly, Whose mercy is absolute, should bestow on man such a disposition that he took up the Supreme Trust, from which the heavens and mountains both shrank, in order to measure and know, with his slight and petty measures and crafts, the all encompassing attributes, the universal workings, and the infinite manifestations of the Creator; that He should create him as the most delicate, vulnerable, weak and powerless of beings, while yet entrusting him with the regulation of all the vegetal and animal life upon earth, and causing him to intervene in their modes of worship and glorification of God; that He should cause him to be a representation in miniature of His cosmic processes; that He should cause him to proclaim His glorious dominicality to all beings, in word and deed; that He should prefer him to the angels and give him the rank of vicegerent — is it at all possible that God should bestow all of this on man and not give him eternal bliss, the purpose, result and fruit of all of these duties? That He should cast him down to low degree, as the most wretched, ill-fortuned, humiliated and suffering of all His creatures; or that He should make of intelligence, a gift from His own wisdom and a most blessed and luminous tool for the attainment of happiness, an inauspicious and sombre tool of torment

for that wretch, thus acting in total contradiction to His absolute wisdom and in opposition to His absolute mercy? No, it is by no means possible!

In short: Just as we saw by looking at the identity papers of an officer in our comparison that his rank, duty, wage, instructions and equipment prove that he exists not for the sake of some temporary battlefield, but rather that he is proceeding to some permanent kingdom, for the sake of which he is exerting himself — so too those to whom truth and certainty have been unveiled are unanimously agreed that the subtleties inscribed in the book of man’s heart, the senses written down in the notebook of his intellect, the equipment contained in his essential character, are all turned towards Eternal Bliss; they have been given to man and fashioned in accordance with this ultimate goal.

For example, if one servant and illustrator of the intellect called “the imaginative power,” is told that “you can have a million years of life and rule over the world, but in the end you shall become nothing,” it will react with sorrow instead of pleasure, unless deceived by vain fancy and the interference of the soul. The greatest of transient things cannot, then, satisfy the smallest faculty of man.

It is, then, this disposition of man — his desires extending to eternity, his thoughts that embrace all of creation and his wishes that embrace the different varieties of eternal bliss— that demonstrates he has been created for eternity and will indeed proceed to eternity. This world is like a hospice for him, a waiting-room for the hereafter.

TWELFTH TRUTH

The Gate of Messengerhood and Revelation, and the Manifestation of

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

Is it at all possible that errant doubts, no stronger than the wing of a fly, could close the path to the hereafter and the gate to Paradise that have been definitively opened by the Most Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him), with all of his might, relying upon the power of his thousand certified miracles as well as the thousands of decisive verses of the All-Wise Qur’an, a book miraculous in forty different ways — that Messenger whose words are affirmed by all of the other prophets, relying upon their own miracles, whose claim is affirmed by all of the saints, relying upon their visionary and charismatic experiences, and to whose veracity all of the purified scholars bear witness, relying upon their investigations of truth?

* * *

From the previous truths it has become apparent that resurrection is so firmly rooted a truth that not even a power capable of lifting up the globe, breaking it and casting it aside, could shake it. For God Almighty Himself affirms this truth in accordance with the meaning of all His Names and attributes; His Noble Messenger confirms it with all of his miracles and evidences; the All-Wise Qur'an establishes it with all of its truths and verses; and the cosmos itself bears witness to it with all the creational signs it contains and all the wise processes that take place within it. Is it at all possible that the Necessary Being should unite with all of His creation (excepting only the unbelievers) on this question of resurrection, and doubts feebler than a whisker and satanic insinuations should shake and uproot that exalted and firmly-rooted truth which resembles a mountain? No, by no means!

Beware, do not imagine that the proofs of resurrection are restricted to the Twelve Truths we have mentioned. The All-Wise Qur'an alone, that instructed us in these Twelve Truths, indicates thousands of other aspects of the matter as well, each aspect being a sign that our Creator will transfer us from this transient realm to an eternal one.

Again, do not imagine that the Divine Names which logically require the existence of resurrection are only those we have discussed — Wise, Generous, Merciful, Just, Preserver. On the contrary, all the Divine Names manifest in the ordering of the cosmos logically require the existence of resurrection, indeed make it imperative.

Do not imagine, either, that the creational signs indicating resurrection are confined to those we have mentioned above. On the contrary, in the majority of beings, there exist different aspects and qualities that are like curtains opening to the right and the left: one aspect bears witness to the Maker, and the other aspect indicates resurrection. For example, the beauty of man's being, fashioned as he is in the fairest of forms, demonstrates the existence of the Maker, while at the same time the fact that together with his comprehensive abilities, lodged in that fairest of forms, he soon declines and dies, demonstrates the existence of resurrection. Sometimes, if one looks at the same aspect in two different ways, one sees that it demonstrates the existence both of the Maker and of resurrection. For example, if one looks at the wise ordering, the just balance, the gracious adornment and the merciful favour inherent in most things, they are seen to demonstrate that they proceed from the powerful hand of a Wise, Generous, Just and Merciful Maker. So too, if one looks at the brief and insignificant life of the transient beings that are the manifestations of these qualities, despite their power and infinitude, the hereafter appears before one. In other words, all things silently recite and cause others to recite "I believe in God and the Last Day."

Conclusion

The preceding Twelve Truths confirm, supplement and support each other. Coming together in union, they demonstrate the required result. Does it lie in the capacity of any doubt to penetrate those twelve firm walls, each like steel or diamonds, in order to shake the belief in resurrection housed within their closed citadel?

The verse, *Your creation and resurrection is but like a single soul*,³³ indicates the following meaning: “The creation and resurrection of all men is as easy for God’s power as the creation and resurrection of a single man.” Yes indeed. In a treatise entitled *Nokta* (Point), I explained in detail the truth expressed by this verse. Here we will indicate only a summary by means of a few comparisons. If you want more detail, then refer to *Nokta*.

For example, *And God’s is the highest similitude*,³⁴ and there is no error in the comparison, if the manifestation of the sun were in accordance with its own will, it could be said that the sun bestows its mystery of manifestation on numerous transparent objects with the same ease as on a single particle.

In accordance with the mystery of transparency, the little pupil of a transparent particle is equal to the vast face of the ocean in receiving the reflection of the sun.

In accordance with the mystery of order, it overturns a huge battleship with the same ease as a child turning over his toy boat with his finger.

In accordance with the mystery of obedience, it causes a vast army to move with the same word that a commander uses to make a single infantryman move.

In accordance with the mystery of equilibrium, let us imagine there to exist in space a balance so sensitive and at the same time so large that were two walnuts to be placed in its pans it would feel them, and be equally able to hold and to weigh two suns. If two suns of equal weight were placed in the pans of the scale; the same power, which causes one of the walnuts to be lifted up to the heavens and the other walnut to descend to the ground, will move these heavenly bodies with the same ease. Since in this lowly, deficient and transient world of contingency, the greatest and smallest things are

³³ Qur’an, 31:28.

³⁴ Qur’an, 16:60.

equal, and numerous, infinite things appear equal to a single thing, through the mystery of luminosity, transparency, order, obedience and balance, then of a certainty little and much, small and great, will be equal in the sight of the possessor of absolute power, and He will be able to summon all men to resurrection with a single blast on the trumpet, just as if they were one man — this, by virtue of the mysteries of the luminous manifestations of the infinite and utterly perfect power of His essence, the transparency of the inner dimension of things, the order decreed by wisdom and destiny, the complete obedience of all things to His creational commands, and the equilibrium existing in contingent being, that consists of the equivalence of the being and non-being of the contingent.

Furthermore, the degrees of strength and weakness that a thing possesses are determined by the intervention in that thing of its opposite. For example, degrees of heat are determined by the intervention of cold; degrees of beauty, by the intervention of ugliness; stages of light, by the intervention of darkness. But if something exists of itself, and is not accidental, then its opposite cannot interfere with it, for then a union of opposites would logically have to occur, and that is impossible. In something that exists of itself, there can then be no gradation. Now the power of the Possessor of Absolute Power pertains to His essence; it enjoys absolute perfection and is not accidental like contingent being. It is therefore impossible that its opposite, impotence, should intervene in it. Hence it is as easy for the Lord of Glory to create a spring as it is to create a flower. But if creation were ascribed to causality, then the creation of a single flower would be as difficult as that of a whole spring. For God it is as easy to resurrect and gather all men as it is to resurrect and gather one man.

All that we have expounded so far with regard to resurrection, the comparisons indicating it and its truths, is derived from the effulgence of the All-Wise Qur'an. Its sole purpose has been bringing the soul to surrender and the heart to acceptance. It is to the Qur'an that the right to speak belongs. It is true speech, and all speech is subordinate to it. Let us listen, then, to the Qur'an:

Say: "With God is the argument that reaches home: if it had been His will, He could indeed have guided you all."³⁵

Look upon the signs of God's mercy, and see how He restores life to the earth after its death. Verily He it is Who shall bring to life the dead, and He is powerful over all things.³⁶

And he makes comparisons for Us, and forgets his own [Origin and]

³⁵ Qur'an, 6:149.

³⁶ Qur'an, 30:50.

Creation: he says, “Who can give life to [dry] bones and decomposed ones [at that]?”³⁷

O mankind! Fear your Lord! For the convulsion of the Hour [of Judgement] will be a thing terrible!

The Day ye shall see it, every mother giving suck shall forget her suckling-babe, and every pregnant female shall drop her load [unformed]: thou shalt see mankind as in a drunken riot, yet not drunk: but dreadful will be the Wrath of God.³⁸

God! There is no god but He: of a surety He will gather you together against the Day of Judgement, about which there is no doubt. And whose word can be truer than God’s?³⁹

*As for the righteous, they will be in bliss;
And the wicked — they will be in the fire.⁴⁰*

*When the Earth is shaken to her [utmost] convulsion,
And the Earth throws up her burdens [from within],
And man cries [distressed]: “What is the matter with her!” —
On that Day will she declare her tidings:
For that thy Lord will have given her inspiration.
On that Day will men proceed in companies sorted out, to be shown the deeds that they [had done].
Then shall anyone who has done an atom’s weight of good, see it.
And anyone who has done an atom’s weight of evil, shall see it.⁴¹*

*The [Day] of Noise and Clamour:
What is the [Day] of Noise and Clamour?
And what will explain to thee what the [Day] of Noise and Clamour is?
[It is] a Day whereon men will be like moths scattered about,
And the mountains will be like carded wool.
Then, he whose balance [of good deeds] will be [found] heavy,
Will be in a life of good pleasure and satisfaction.
But he whose balance [of good deeds] will be [found] light,—
Will have his home in a [bottomless] Pit.
And what will explain to thee what this is?
[It is] a Fire blazing fiercely!⁴²*

To God belongs the mystery of the heavens and the earth. And the

³⁷ Qur’an, 36:78.

³⁸ Qur’an, 22:1-2.

³⁹ Qur’an, 4:87.

⁴⁰ Qur’an, 82:13-14.

⁴¹ Qur’an, 99:1-8.

⁴² Qur’an, 101:1-11.

*decision of the Hour is as the twinkling of an eye or even quicker: for God has power over all things.*⁴³

Listening to these and other clear verses of the Qur'an, let us say, "yes, we believe and give our assent."

I believe in God, His angels, His books, His messengers and in the Last Day. I believe that both the good and evil of destiny are from God Almighty; that resurrection after death is a reality; that Paradise is a reality; that Hell-fire is a reality; that intercession is a reality; that Munkar and Nakir are reality; and that God will resurrect those who are in the tombs. I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

O God, grant blessings to the most delicate, the most noble, the most perfect, the most beautiful fruit of the Tuba of Your mercy, him whom You sent as a mercy to all the worlds, and as a means for our attaining unto the most beautiful, the fairest, purest and most exalted of the fruits of that Tuba, the branches of which are outspread over the hereafter and paradise; o God, protect us and our parents against the fire, and cause us and our parents to enter Paradise with the pious, for the sake of Thy chosen Prophet. Amen.

O brother studying this treatise with an open mind! Do not say, "why cannot I immediately understand this 'Tenth Word' in all its details?" and do not be saddened by your failure to understand it completely. For even a master of philosophy such as Ibn Sina said that "resurrection cannot be understood by rational criteria." His judgement was that we must believe in resurrection, but reason cannot aid our belief. Similarly, all the scholars of Islam unanimously have held that resurrection rests entirely on traditional proofs; it cannot be rationally examined. Naturally, so profound, and at the same time, so exalted a path cannot suddenly become a public highway for the exercise of the reason. But we would offer a thousand thanks that the Merciful Creator has bestowed upon us this much of the path, by means of the effulgence of the All-Wise Qur'an and His own mercy, in an age when belief by imitation is past and meek acceptance has disappeared. For the amount vouchsafed to each of us is enough for the salvation of our faith. Being content with the amount that we have been able to understand, we should reread the treatise and seek to increase our comprehension.

One of the reasons that it is impossible to approach a rational understanding of resurrection is that since the supreme gathering, resurrection, is

⁴³ Qur'an, 16:77.

through the manifestation of the Greatest Name, only through beholding and demonstrating the great deeds evident in the maximum manifestation of the Greatest Name of God as well as His other Names, is it possible to prove it as certain; and unshakeably believe that resurrection is as simple as the spring. Thus do matters appear and thus they are demonstrated in this 'Tenth Word' (Resurrection and the Hereafter), by means of the effulgence of the Qur'an. Were it not for this effulgence, and were our intelligence to be left to its own petty devices, it would be powerless, and condemned to believing in resurrection by way of imitation.

The First Part of an Important Supplement and Addendum to the Tenth Word

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

So [give] glory to God, when you reach eventide and when you rise in the morning; Yea, to Him be praise, in the heavens and on earth; and in the late afternoon and when the day begins to decline.

It is He Who brings out the living from the dead, and brings out the dead from the living, and Who Gives life to the earth after it is dead: and thus shall you be brought out [from the dead].

Among His Signs is this, that He created you from dust; and then,— behold, you are men scattered [far and wide]!

And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your [hearts]: Verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.

And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know.

And among His Signs is the sleep that you take by night and by day, and the quest that you [make for livelihood] out of His Bounty: verily in that are Signs for those who hearken.

And among His Signs, He shows you the lightning, by way both of fear and of hope, and He sends down rain from the sky and with it gives life to the earth after it is dead: verily in that are Signs for those who are wise.

And among His Signs is this, that heaven and earth stand by His Command: then when He calls you, by a single call, from the earth, behold, you [straightway] come forth.

To Him belongs every being that is in the heavens and on earth: all are devoutly obedient to Him.

It is He Who begins [the process of] creation; then repeats it; and for Him it is most easy. To Him belongs the loftiest similitude [we can think of] in the heavens and the earth: For He is Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Qur'an, 30:17-27.

In this Ninth Ray will be expounded a supreme point of these sublime heavenly verses, which demonstrate one of the ‘poles’ of belief; these mighty sacred proofs of the resurrection of the dead will be explained. It is a subtle instance of dominical grace that thirty years ago at the end of his work entitled *Muhâkemat* (Reasonings), which was an introduction to Qur’anic commentaries, the Old Said wrote: “Second Aim: Two Qur’anic verses alluding to the resurrection of the dead will be expounded and explained. *In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*” There he stopped and could write no further. Now, praise and thanks to my Compassionate Creator to the number of signs and indications of the resurrection, that after thirty years He has given me success. Yes, nine or ten years ago, He bestowed the Tenth and Twenty-Ninth Words, two brilliant and powerful proofs expounding the Divine decree of:

*So look to the signs of God’s mercy, how He raises to life the earth after its death; He it is who will raise the dead to life, for He is Powerful Over All Things*⁴⁵

which was the first of the two verses. They silenced the deniers of resurrection. Now, nine or ten years after those two impregnable bastions of belief in the resurrection of the dead, He bestowed with the present treatise a commentary on the second of the above two sublime verses. This Ninth Ray, then, consists of Nine Elevated Stations, indicated by the above-mentioned verses, and an important Introduction.

Introduction

[This consists of two Points comprising a concise explanation of one comprehensive result of the numerous spiritual benefits of belief in resurrection and of its vital consequences; a demonstration of how essential it is for human life and especially for the life of society; a summary of one universal proof out of numerous proofs of the tenet of belief in the resurrection; and a statement of how indubitable and self-evident is that tenet of belief.]

FIRST POINT

We shall indicate, as a measure, only four out of hundreds of proofs that belief in the hereafter is fundamental to the life of society and to man’s personal life, and is the basis of his happiness, prosperity, and achievement.

The First: It is only with the thought of Paradise that children, who

⁴⁵ Qur’an, 30:50.

form almost a half of mankind, can endure all the deaths around them, which appear to them to be grievous and frightening, and strengthen the morale of their weak and delicate beings. Through Paradise they find hope in their vulnerable spirits, prone to weeping, and may live happily. For example, with the thought of Paradise, one may say: "My little brother or friend has died and become a bird in Paradise. He is flying around Paradise and living more happily than us." The frequent deaths before their unhappy eyes of other children like themselves or of grown-ups will otherwise destroy all their resistance and morale, making their subtle faculties like their spirits, hearts, and minds weep in addition to their eyes; they will either decline utterly or become crazy, wretched animals.

Second Proof: It is only through the life of the hereafter that the elderly, who form half of mankind, can endure the proximity of the grave, and be consoled at the thought that their lives, to which they are firmly attached, will soon be extinguished and their fine worlds come to an end. It is only at the hope of eternal life that they can respond to the grievous despair they feel in their emotional child-like spirits at the thought of death. Those worthy, anxious fathers and mothers, so deserving of compassion and in need of tranquillity and peace of mind, will otherwise feel a terrible spiritual turmoil and distress in their hearts, and this world will become a dark prison for them, and life even, grievous torment.

Third Proof: It is only the thought of Hell-fire that checks the turbulent emotions of youths, the most vigorous element in the life of society, and their violent excesses, restraining them from aggression, oppression, and destruction, and ensuring that the life of society continues tranquilly. If not for fear of Hell, in accordance with the rule 'might is right,' in pursuing their desires, those drunken youths would turn the worlds of the wretched weak and powerless into Hell, and elevated humanity into base animality.

Fourth Proof: The most comprehensive centre of man's worldly life, and its mainspring, and a paradise, refuge, and fortress of worldly happiness, is the life of the family. Everyone's home is a small world for him. And the life and happiness of his home and family are possible through genuine, earnest, and loyal respect and true, tender, and self-sacrificing compassion. This true respect and genuine kindness may be achieved with the idea of the members of the family having an everlasting companionship and friendship and togetherness, and their parental, filial, brotherly, and friendly relations continuing for all eternity in a limitless life, and their believing this. One says, for example: "My wife will be my constant companion in an everlasting world and eternal life. It does not matter if she is now old and ugly, for she will have an immortal beauty." He will tell himself that he will be as kind and devoted as he can for the sake of that permanent companionship, and treat his elderly wife lovingly and kindly as though she were a

beautiful houri. A companionship that was to end in eternal separation after an hour or two of brief, apparent friendship would otherwise afford only superficial, temporary, feigned, animal-like feelings, and false compassion and artificial respect. As with animals, self-interest and other overpowering emotions would prevail over the respect and compassion, transforming that worldly paradise into Hell.

Thus, one of the hundreds of results of belief in resurrection is connected with the life of society. If a comparison is made between the above four proofs out of the hundreds of aspects and benefits of this single consequence and the rest, it will be understood that the realization of the truth of resurrection, and its occurrence, are as certain as the elevated reality of humanity and its universal need. It is clearer even than the evidence for the existence of food offered by the existence of need in man's stomach, and tells of its existence even more clearly. And it proves that if the consequences of the truth of resurrection were to quit humanity, whose nature is extremely significant, lofty, and living, it would descend to being a corrupt corpse fed on by microbes.

The sociologists, politicians, and moralists, who govern mankind and are concerned with its social and moral questions should be aware of this! How do they propose to fill this vacuum? With what can they cure these deep wounds?

SECOND POINT

This explains in summary form a proof—one of many—proceeding from the testimony to the truth of resurrection of the other pillars of belief. It is as follows:

All the miracles indicating the Messengership of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) and the evidences for his prophethood, and all the proofs of his veracity, together testify to the occurrence of the resurrection, and prove it. For after Divine unity, everything he claimed throughout his life was centred on the resurrection of the dead. Also, all his miracles and proofs affirming, and making affirmed, all the previous prophets attest to the same truth. Also, the testimony of the phrase “and in His Scriptures,” which makes completely clear the testimony of the phrase “and in His Prophets,” testifies to the same truth. Like this:

All the miracles, truths, and proofs proving foremost the veracity of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, testify to and prove the realization and occurrence of resurrection. For almost a third of the Qur'an is about resurrection, and at the beginning of most of its short suras are powerful verses about it. It expresses the same truth explicitly and implicitly with thousands of its verses, and proves and demonstrates it. For example:

*When the sun is folded up.*⁴⁶

*O men, fear your Sustainer; the trembling of the Hour
is an awesome event;*⁴⁷

*When the earth is convulsed;*⁴⁸

*When the heavens are torn asunder;*⁴⁹

*When the heavens are torn apart;*⁵⁰

*Concerning what they dispute;*⁵¹

*Has the story reached you, of the overwhelming event?*⁵²

Besides demonstrating with complete certainty at the beginning of thirty or forty suras that resurrection is the most important and necessary truth in the universe, it sets forth various persuasive evidences for that truth in others of its verses.

Is there any possibility that belief in the hereafter should be false, which emerges like the sun from the thousands of declarations and statements of a Book a single indication of one of the verses of which has yielded before our eyes the fruits of numerous learned and cosmic truths in the Islamic sciences? Is there any possibility of denying the sun, or the existence of the universe? Would it not be impossible and absurd? Is it at all possible that although an army may sometimes be plunged into battle so that a mere sign of the king should not be given the lie, to show as false the thousands of words, promises, and threats of that most serious, proud monarch? Is it possible that they should be false?

Although a single sign of that glorious spiritual monarch who for thirteen centuries without break has ruled over innumerable spirits, minds, hearts, and souls within the bounds of truth and reality, and trained and raised them, would be sufficient to prove the truth of resurrection, it has demonstrated it with thousands of explicit statements. Is the torment of Hell-fire not necessary then for the compounded idiot who does not recognize this fact? Is it not pure justice?

Moreover, by their definite acceptance of the truth of resurrection, which the Qur'an—prevailing over the future and all times—repeatedly proves in detail and elucidates, all the revealed scriptures and sacred books, each of which dominated a particular period, proved it according to their own times

⁴⁶ Qur'an, 81:1.

⁴⁷ Qur'an, 22:1.

⁴⁸ Qur'an, 99:1.

⁴⁹ Qur'an, 82:1.

⁵⁰ Qur'an, 84:1.

⁵¹ Qur'an, 78:1.

⁵² Qur'an, 88:1.

and centuries, but in undetailed, veiled, and summary manner, confirming with a thousand signatures what the Qur'an teaches.

Included here since it is related to this discussion is the testimony at the end of the Third Ray of the other pillars of faith and particularly "the Prophets" and "Holy Scriptures" to "belief in the Last Day." It forms a convincing proof of resurrection, and is in the form of a powerful yet succinct supplication, which dispels all doubts. It says in the supplication:

"O My Compassionate Sustainer!

"I have understood from the instruction of Your Noble Messenger (PBUH) and the teaching of the Qur'an, that foremost the Qur'an and the Messenger, and all the sacred scriptures and prophets, have unanimously testified and pointed out that the manifestations of the Names related to Your beauty and glory, examples of which are to be seen in this world, will continue even more radiantly for all eternity, and that Your bounties, samples of which are to be observed in this transitory world, will continue in the abode of bliss in more glittering fashion, and that those who long for them in this world will accompany them for all eternity.

"Also, relying on hundreds of evident miracles and decisive signs, foremost Your Most Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him) and the All-Wise Qur'an, and the prophets with their luminous spirits, and the saints, who are spiritual poles with their light-filled hearts, and the purified scholars with their enlightened intellects, relying on Your repeated threats and promises in all the sacred scriptures, and trusting in Your sacred attributes like power, mercy, favour, wisdom, glory, and beauty, and on Your functions, and the dignity of Your glory, and the sovereignty of Your dominicality, and in consequence of their illuminations and visions and beliefs at 'the knowledge of certainty,' give the glad tidings to men and jinn of eternal happiness and inform them of Hell for the people of misguidance; they firmly believe this and testify to it.

"O All-Powerful and Wise One! O Most Merciful and Compassionate! O Munificent One True to His Promise! O All-Compelling One of Glory, One of Dignity, Grandeur, and Wrath!

"You are utterly exempt from and exalted above giving the lie to so many loyal friends, and so many promises, and attributes and functions, and denying the certain demands of the sovereignty of Your dominicality and the endless prayers and supplications of Your innumerable acceptable servants, whom You love and who attract Your love by assenting to You and obeying You; and You are exempt from confirming the denial of resurrection by the people of misguidance and unbelief, who through their disbelief and rebellion and denial of Your promises, offend the magnificence of Your grandeur and affront Your dignity and glory and the

honour of Your Godhead, and sadden the compassion of Your dominicality. We declare Your justice, beauty, and mercy to be exempt from such infinite tyranny, such ugliness. We believe with all our strength that the testimony of the prophets, purified scholars, and saints, who are those truthful envoys of Yours, those heralds of Your sovereignty, at the degrees of 'absolute certainty,' 'knowledge of certainty,' and 'the vision of certainty,' to the treasuries of Your mercy in the hereafter and the stores of Your bounties in the everlasting realm, and to the wondrously beautiful manifestations of Your Beautiful Names, which will be manifested totally in the abode of bliss, are absolutely true and veracious, and what they have indicated conforms absolutely with reality, and that what they have given glad tidings of is true and will occur. Believing that the supreme ray of Your Name of Truth, which is the source, sun, and protector of all realities, is this truth of the resurrection and Great Gathering, they teach it to Your servants.

“O God! For the sake of what they teach and in veneration of it, grant us and all students of the Risale-i Nur perfect belief and a happy death. And allow us to receive their intercession. Amen!”

Moreover, just as all the proofs demonstrating the veracity of the revealed scriptures, and all the miracles and evidences proving the prophethood of God's Beloved (PBUH) and of all the prophets, indirectly prove the reality of the hereafter, which is what they teach above all else; so most of the evidences for the existence and unity of the Necessary Existent testify indirectly to the existence and opening up of an eternal realm of bliss, which will be the supreme manifestation of dominicality and divinity. For as is explained and proved in the following paragraphs, both the existence of the Necessarily Existent One, and most of His attributes, functions and Names, like dominicality, Godhead, mercy, grace, wisdom, and justice, necessitate the hereafter with the utmost certainty, and demand an eternal realm and the resurrection of the dead and Last Judgement for the granting of reward and punishment.

Since there is a pre-eternal and post-eternal God, most certainly there is the hereafter, the everlasting means of the sovereignty of His Godhead.

And since there is in the universe and in living beings a most majestic, wise, and compassionate absolute dominicality, and it is apparent; there is certain to be an eternal realm of happiness which will save the majesty of that dominicality from abasement, its wisdom from purposelessness, and its compassion from cruelty; and that realm shall be entered.

And since the unlimited bestowals, bounties, favours, gifts, and instances of grace and mercy which are to be seen, show to minds that are not extinguished and hearts that are not dead that behind the veil of the Unseen is

One All-Merciful and Compassionate; surely there is an immortal life in an eternal realm which will save the bestowal from mockery, the bounties from deception, the favours from enmity, the mercy from torment, the grace and gifts from treachery, and will make the bounties bounty and the bestowal bestowal.

And since in the springtime on the narrow page of the earth, a pen of power writes a hundred thousand books without error tirelessly before our eyes; and since the Holder of the pen has promised a hundred thousand times: "I am going to write a fine, immortal book in a broad realm, easier than this book of the spring, which is written in this narrow realm, confused and intermingled, and I shall allow you to read it;" He mentions the book in all his decrees; certainly, the main part of the book has been written, and with the resurrection and Last Judgement its footnotes shall be added, and all the notebooks of people's actions shall be recorded in it.

And since, with its multiplicity of creatures, and its being the dwelling, source, factory, exhibition, and gathering place of hundreds of thousands of constantly changing species of living beings and beings with spirits, and the heart, centre, summary, and result of the universe, and the reason for its creation, the earth has supreme importance, and is held equal to the mighty heavens despite its smallness; in the heavenly decrees, it is always said: Sustainer of the Heavens and Earth...

And since there is man, who rules over the earth, which is thus, has disposal over most creatures, and subjects most living beings gathering them around himself; and so orders, displays, and gathers each remarkable species together in one place like a list, adorning them, that he attracts not only the attention and admiration of men and jinn, but of the dwellers of the heavens and the universe, and the appreciative gaze of the universe's Owner, thus gaining great importance and high worth; and who shows through his sciences and arts that he is the purpose of the universe's creation, and its most important result, and most precious fruit, and the vicegerent of the earth; and who because with respect to this world, he has ordered and displayed excellently the miraculous arts of the world's Maker, is left in this world despite his rebellion and disbelief, and whose punishment is postponed, and because of this work of his, whose term is prolonged and is allowed success...

And since there is an extremely powerful, wise, and compassionate Disposer, Who makes the mighty globe into a treasury of every sort of metal and mineral that man needs in a way entirely beyond his strength and will—who despite being weak, impotent, and wanting by nature and creation, has innumerable needs and is subject to innumerable pains—and a store of every sort of food, and a shop stocking goods of every kind that pleases

man, and looks to man in this way, and nurtures him, and gives him what he wants...

And since there is a Sustainer Who is thus, Who both loves man, and causes man to love Him, and Who is enduring, and has eternal worlds, and Who performs every work with justice, and carries out everything with wisdom; and since the splendour of that Pre-Eternal Sovereign's rule and His eternal rule cannot be contained in this brief worldly life, and in man's fleeting span, and in the temporary and transient earth; and since the excessive wrongdoing and rebellion that occur among men, which are contrary to and opposed to the universe's order, justice, balance, and beauty, and their denial, treachery, and disbelief towards their Benefactor, Who nurtures them tenderly, are not punished in this world, and the cruel oppressor passes his life in ease, while the unhappy oppressed live in hardship; and since the absolute justice whose traces are to be seen throughout the universe is entirely opposed to the cruel tyrant and despairing oppressed being equal in death, and would in no way permit it...

And since just as the universe's Owner has chosen the earth from the universe, and man from the earth, and bestowed on him a high rank and importance; so out of mankind He has chosen the prophets, saints, and purified ones, true human beings who conform to the aims of His dominicality and through their belief and submission make Him love them; He has taken them as friends and addressees, and bestowed miracles and success on them and punished their enemies with heavenly blows. And out of these worthy and lovable friends He has chosen their leader and source of pride, Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), and for long centuries has illuminated with his Light half the globe and a fifth of humanity; as though the universe was created for him, all its purposes become apparent through him and his religion and the Qur'an. And although he deserved to live for an infinite time in recompense for his infinitely valuable service, for millions of years, he only lived a brief sixty-three years of great hardship and striving. Is there any possibility then that he should not be resurrected together with all his peers and friends? That they should not now be living in the spirit? That they should have been annihilated eternally? God forbid, a hundred thousand times! Yes, all the universe and the reality of the world demand that he should be resurrected and they beseech the universe's Owner that he should be living...

And since in the Seventh Ray, The Supreme Sign, each with the strength of a mountain, the thirty-three powerful consensuses have proved that the universe emerged from a single hand and is the property of a single being; and have demonstrated self-evidently His unity and oneness, the means of the Divine perfections; and through unity and oneness all beings become like soldiers under orders and subservient officials; and with the coming of

the hereafter, perfections are saved from decline, absolute justice from mocking cruelty, universal wisdom from foolish absurdity, all-embracing mercy from jeering torment, and the dignity of power from abased impotence, and they are exonerated from this...

Certainly and without any doubt, as necessitated by the truths in these six ‘sinces’ — six out of hundreds of points of belief in God— the end of the world shall come and the resurrection of the dead occur. Abodes of reward and punishment shall be thrown open so that the above-mentioned importance of the earth, and its centrality, and man’s importance and value shall be realized, and the above-mentioned justice, wisdom, mercy, and sovereignty of the All-Wise Disposer, Who is the Creator of the earth and of man, and their Sustainer, shall be established; and the true and yearning friends of that eternal Sustainer shall be saved from eternal annihilation; and the most eminent and worthy of those friends receive the recompense for his sacred services, which have made all beings pleased and indebted; and the perfections of the Eternal Sovereign should be exempted and exonerated from all fault and deficiency, and His power from impotence, and His wisdom from foolishness, and His justice from tyranny.

In Short: Since God exists, so does the hereafter certainly exist.

Moreover, just as with all the evidences that prove them, the above three pillars of belief testify to and indicate resurrection; so do the two pillars “and in the angels, and in Divine Determining, that both the good of it and the evil of it are from God Almighty,” also necessitate resurrection and testify in powerful fashion to the eternal realm. It is like this:

All the evidences proving the existence of the angels and their duties of worship, and innumerable observations of them and conversations with them, prove indirectly the existence of the Spirit World, and the World of the Unseen, and the eternal realm and world of the hereafter, and the existence of an abode of happiness and Paradise and Hell, which in the future shall be populated with men and jinn. For with Divine permission, the angels can see these worlds and enter them. And all the high-ranking angels who meet with humans, like Gabriel, tell unanimously of the existence of these worlds and of their travelling round them. Just as we are certain, due to the information of those coming from there, that the continent of America exists, although we have not seen it, so due to information about the angels, which has the strength of a hundredfold consensus, we should believe in the existence of the world of eternity, the realm of the hereafter, and Paradise and Hell with the same certainty. And thus we do believe in it.

Furthermore, all the evidences proving the pillar of “belief in Divine Determining,” included in the Treatise on Divine Determining, the Twenty-Sixth Word, prove indirectly the resurrection of the dead, the balancing of

deeds on the supreme scales, and the publishing of the pages of deeds. For the recording before our eyes of the appointed courses of all things on the tablets of order and balance, and the inscribing of the life-stories of all living beings in their faculties of memory, and the transcribing of the notebooks of deeds of all beings with spirits, and especially men, on the Preserved Tablet, such a comprehensive determining and wise apportioning and precise recording and preserving inscription could surely only be the result of a general judgement in a supreme tribunal set up to mete out permanent reward and punishment. That comprehensive and precise recording and preservation would otherwise be completely meaningless and purposeless, and contrary to wisdom and reality.

Also, if there was no resurrection, all the certain meanings of the book of the universe, written with the pen of Divine Determining, would be nullified, which is completely impossible. It is as impossible as denying the universe's existence, indeed, is a delirium.

In Short: The five pillars of belief demand with all their evidences the occurrence of the resurrection and Last Judgement, and their existence, and the existence and opening up of the realm of the hereafter, and they testify to these and necessitate them.

Thus, it is because there are such vast and unshakeable supports and proofs of the resurrection, completely in conformity with its vastness, that almost one third of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition is formed by resurrection and the hereafter, and it makes it the basis and foundation stone of all its truths, and constructs everything on it.

(The end of the Introduction)

Second Part of the Addendum

The first of nine stations comprising the nine levels of proofs of resurrection miraculously indicated in the following verse:

*Glory be to God in the evening and at daybreak, and praise is His in the heavens and earth, at nightfall and when the day begins to decline. It is He Who brings forth the living from the dead, and brings forth the dead from the living, and gives life to the earth after its death; thus, too, will you be brought forth.*⁵³

The manifest proof and brilliant evidence of God's decree concerning resurrection contained in this verse will now be expounded and set forth, God willing.⁵⁴

In connection with the twenty-eighth property of life it was explained that life looks upon the six pillars of faith and proves them; it contains a series of indications of their truth.

Now the most important result, substance and reason for the creation of the cosmos is none other than life, and life, that exalted verity, can in no way be restricted to this transient, brief, defective and painful worldly life. Rather the purpose and result of the tree of life, the splendour of which can be deduced from its twenty-nine properties, the fruit of that tree worthy of its splendour, is the eternal life of the hereafter; it is life in the eternal realm where even stones, trees and the soil will be endowed with life. Otherwise, it will follow that the tree of life, so plentifully decked out with significant instruments, yields no fruit, benefit or truth for animate beings, especially man; and man who in his substance and faculties is twenty times superior to the sparrow and is indeed the most important and elevated of all creation, will fall to a degree twenty times lower than that of the sparrow; with respect to the felicity of his life, he will be the most unfortunate and humiliated of wretches.

Similarly, intelligence, the most precious of gifts for man, will wound his heart through constant reflection of the pains of the past and the fears of the

⁵³ Qur'an, 30:17-19.

⁵⁴ The whole station has not yet been written and has been included here because of the relevance of the topic of life to resurrection. In addition, it contains a subtle and profound allusion to the pillar of Divine Determining at the end of the topic of life.

future; it will mix nine pains with every pleasure and thus become a disaster to man. Now this is false to the hundredth degree. The life of this world thus proves decisively the pillar of faith that is belief in the hereafter and displays to our eyes every spring more than three hundred thousand specimens of resurrection.

Is it at all possible that an All-Powerful Agent Who promptly supplies and provides, with wisdom, solicitude and mercy, all the instruments and tools needed for your life, in your body, your garden and your homeland, Who hears and answers the private and particular prayer made for sustenance by your stomach, for the sake of its life and survival, Who shows His acceptance of that prayer by means of numerous delicious foods — is it at all possible that such a Being should not be aware of you or hear you, that He should not provide you with the means of life eternal, the greatest purpose of the human species? Is it possible that He should not accept the greatest, most significant, most worthy and most universal prayer for eternity of the human species by establishing eternal life and creating paradise? Is it possible that He should not heed the universal and insistent prayer of the human species, the most important creature in the cosmos, the monarch of the earth, a prayer that resounds throughout heaven and earth, and not pay it the same attention, or grant it the same gratification, as a little stomach? Is it possible that He should thus cause His perfect wisdom and infinite mercy to be denied? No, a hundred thousand times no!

Again, is it at all possible that He should hear the most secret voice of the most minute of beings, remedy its pain and succour its plaint; that He should nourish it with the utmost care and consideration and cause creatures greater than itself to serve it — is it at all possible that He should do all of this and not hear the thunderous cry of life, the greatest, most precious, most eternal and most delicate form of life? That He should pay no heed to its powerful prayer and supplications for eternity? It would be like equipping a single soldier with the utmost care and totally ignoring a vast and obedient army! Like seeing a speck and overlooking the sun! Like hearing the buzz of a fly and not hearing the roar of the thunder! No, a hundred thousand times no!

Again, can the intelligence at all accept that an All-Powerful and All-Wise Being, Whose mercy, love and solicitude are infinite, Who loves His own artistry, Who causes Himself to be loved, and Who greatly loves those that love Him — can it accept that such a Being would annihilate through permanent death a life that loves Him greatly, that is itself lovable and that instinctively worships its Maker; and, the essence and jewel of that life, the spirit? That He would offend and insult His lover and beloved for all eternity, that He would injure his feelings and deny Himself, and cause others to deny, the mystery of His mercy and the light of His love? No, a hundred thousand times no! An absolute beauty that adorns creation with its

manifestation and the absolute mercy that makes all creatures rejoice are without doubt exempt and purified from such infinite ugliness, such utter abomination and pitilessness.

The result, then, is that considering the existence of life, those men who understand the purpose of life and who do not misuse their lives will become manifestations of eternal life in the realm of eternity and eternal Paradise. In this we believe. So, too, the shining of brilliant objects found on the earth through the reflection of sunlight, the brief glinting on the surface of the ocean of little bubbles through flashes of light, and the coming in their place of further bubbles that like them hold up a mirror to a whole series of imaginary suns — this demonstrates tangibly that those flashes are the reflectory manifestation of the one supreme sun. With their manifold tongues, they make mention of that one sun and they point toward it with their luminous fingers.

So, too, the fashion in which, through the supreme manifestation of the Name ‘Giver of Life’ of the Living and Self-Subsistent Being, all the animate beings on the face of the earth and in the depths of the sea shine through God’s power, and then disappear behind the veil of the unseen, saying, “O Eternally Living One!”, in order to make room for those that follow them — this represents a series of testimonies to and indications of the life and necessary existence of the Living and Self-Subsistent Being.

Similarly, all the proofs that bear witness to the Divine knowledge the traces of which are visible in the ordering of all beings; all the evidences that establish the existence of a power working its will throughout creation; all the arguments that point to a volition and purposefulness dominating the ordering and administering of the cosmos; all the signs and miracles that attest the messengerhood of the prophets, the means of dominical speech and Divine revelation, and the indications bearing witness to the seven attributes of Divinity — all of them point to, testify to, and indicate unanimously the life of the Living and Self-Subsistent Being. For if the faculty of vision is present in a thing, there must also be life. If there is hearing, this too is a sign of life. If there is speech, this also points to the existence of life.

Similarly, attributes the existence of which is proven and self-evident by virtue of their traces throughout the cosmos, attributes such as Absolute power, all-embracing will, and comprehensive knowledge, bear witness with all of their proofs to the life and necessary existence of the Living and Self-Subsistent Being. They attest His everlasting life, one shadow of which is enough to illumine the whole of the cosmos, and one manifestation of which suffices to give life to the hereafter, together with all of its particles.

The Divine attribute of life is also connected with the pillar of belief in the angels, and proves it by way of indication. For the most important of all

goals of the cosmos is life, and animate beings constitute the most widespread form of creation, with its specimens multiplied on account of their value; they constantly animate the hospice of this world with the coming and going of their caravans. Further, the globe, which is filled with so many species of animate beings, is being constantly emptied and refilled as these various species are renewed and multiplied, and animate beings are created in multiplicity even in the vilest and most corrupt substances, so that there is—as it were—a constant resurrection of microbes. Finally, consciousness and intellect, which are the distilled essence of life, and the spirit, which is its subtle and stable substance, are also created everywhere on the globe in the utmost multiplicity, so that it is as if the globe were animated and caused to rejoice by life, intellect, consciousness and spirit. If we take into consideration all of the foregoing, it is totally impossible that the heavenly bodies, which are subtler, more luminous, greater and more significant than the globe, should be dead, rigid, lifeless, and dumb.

There must, then, exist and be provided with the property of life, conscious and animate beings that animate the skies, the suns, and the stars, bestow upon them their vitality, manifest the result of the purpose for the creation of the heavens, and receive address from the Glorious Creator. These creatures, of a nature suited to the heavens, are none other than the angels.

Similarly, the innermost essence of life symbolically proves the pillar of belief in the prophets. For the cosmos was created for the sake of life, and life is in turn one of the supreme manifestations of the Living, Self-Subsistent and Eternal One. It is one of His most perfect designs, one of His most beautiful arts. Further, the eternal life of God shows itself only through the sending of messengers and the revelation of books. If there were no books or prophets, then eternal life would remain unknown. When a man speaks, he is recognized to be alive. Similarly, it is the prophets and revealed books that make manifest the words and decrees of the Being Who, from behind the world of the unseen that is veiled by the cosmos, speaks, talks, and emits His commands and prohibitions. Just as the life existent in the cosmos bears decisive witness to the necessary existence of the Living and Eternal One, so too does it point to and indirectly confirm the pillars of belief in the sending of messengers and the revelation of scriptures, for these are the rays, the manifestations, and the relations of that eternal life. And especially the messengership of Muhammad—Peace and blessings be upon him—and the Qur’anic revelation, since they are like the very spirit and intellect of life, their veracity is as indisputable as the existence of this life.

Life is, then, the distilled essence of the cosmos; consciousness and feeling are the distilled essence of life; the intellect is the distilled essence of consciousness; and the spirit, finally, is the pure and unsullied substance, the

stable and autonomous essence, that lies at the heart of life. So, too, the life of the Prophet Muhammad —Peace and blessings be upon him— in both its outer and its inner aspects is the distilled quintessence of life and the spirit of the cosmos, and the messengership of Muhammad —Peace and blessings be upon him— is the pure and distilled essence of the feeling, the consciousness and the intellect of the cosmos. Rather, the life of the Prophet Muhammad —Peace and blessings be upon him— in its outer and inner aspects is, as the centuries have borne witness, the very essence of the life of the cosmos, and the prophethood of Muhammad —Peace and blessings be upon him— is the very light and essence of the consciousness of the cosmos. The Qur’anic revelation is also the spirit of the life of the cosmos and the intellect of its consciousness.

If the light of the messengership of Muhammad —Peace and blessings be upon him— were to depart from the cosmos and vanish, the cosmos would die. If the Qur’an were to depart, the cosmos would lose its sanity, and the globe would lose its sense and its head. Its dizzy, uncomprehending head would collide with a planet, and the end of the world would result.

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 both its external existence, and 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, demands and requires of a certainty that 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 faith 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 becomes 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.

Third Part of the Addendum

A question related to the resurrection of the dead:

The frequently repeated verse, *It will be naught but a single cry*,⁵⁵ and the verse, *The command of the Hour will be like the glance of the eye*,⁵⁶ show that the resurrection of the dead and Great Gathering will occur instantaneously, in a flash. But man's narrow reason requires some tangible example so that it can conceive of this wondrous, extraordinary, and unparalleled event, and accept it.

The Answer: At the resurrection there will be the return of spirits to their bodies, the revivification of the bodies, and the remaking of the bodies. It consists of three matters.

THE FIRST MATTER: An example for the return of spirits to their bodies is the mustering, at a loud bugle call, of the members of a well-disciplined army after they have dispersed to rest. Yes, the Sur of the Angel Israfil is no less powerful than an army bugle. The spirits, too, who, while in post-eternity, reply with "Yes, we accept" to the question "Am I not your Sustainer?",⁵⁷ which comes from pre-eternity, are infinitely more subjugated, disciplined, and obedient than the soldiers of an army. The Thirtieth Word has demonstrated with decisive proofs that not only spirits, but all particles, form a Divine army and are its soldiers under command.

SECOND MATTER: An example for the revivification of bodies is the springing to life in an instant of the hundred thousand electric lights of a large city on a festival night, switched on from one centre. It would be possible to light up in the same way a hundred million lamps scattered over the face of the earth from one centre. Since through the training and instruction in regularity and order it has received from its Creator, a creature of Almighty God like electricity—a servant and candleholder in His guest-house—possesses this quality, surely the resurrection of the dead could occur in the twinkling of an eye within the bounds of the regular laws of Divine wisdom which thousands of luminous servants represent, like electricity.

⁵⁵ Qur'an, 36:29, 49, 53; 38:15; 54:31.

⁵⁶ Qur'an, 16:77.

⁵⁷ Qur'an, 7:172.

THIRD MATTER: An example for the remaking of bodies instantaneously is the perfect remaking within a few days of all the trees in the spring, which are far more numerous than all humanity, together with all their leaves, in exactly the same way as those of the previous spring; and the bringing into being, again like those of previous springs, all the blossoms, fruits and leaves of the trees with the speed of lightning; and the sudden awakening of the uncountable numbers of seeds, grains, and roots, which are the source of the spring, and their unfolding and being raised to life; and reflecting the meaning of “resurrection after death,” the sudden raising to life at a command of the upright skeleton-like corpses of the trees; and the reanimation of the innumerable members of all species of small animals; and the revivification of all the sorts of flying insects, particularly those which, continually cleaning their faces, eyes, and wings, remind us of our ablutions and cleanliness, and caress our faces —the resurrection and remaking of all the members of this tribe within a few days every spring before our very eyes together with all the other species, despite being greater in number than all mankind since the time of Adam, provides not one example of the remaking of all human bodies at the resurrection, but thousands.

Yes, since this world is the realm of wisdom and the hereafter the realm of power, numerous Divine Names like All-Wise, Arranger, Disposer, and Nurturer, and dominical wisdom, require that the creation of things in this world is gradual and in the course of time. In the hereafter, however, power and mercy will be manifested more than wisdom, and there being no need for matter, time, and waiting, things will be made instantaneously. Alluding to the fact that things which are made here in a day or in a year will be made in the hereafter in an instant or a flash, the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition states:

*The command of the Hour will be like the glance of the eye, or briefer.*⁵⁸

If you want to be as certain about the occurrence of the resurrection of the dead as you are about the arrival of next spring, study the Tenth and Twenty-Ninth Words carefully, which are about this, and you will see! If you do not then believe that it will occur as you believe the coming of spring, come and stick your finger in my eye!

A FOURTH MATTER: The death of the world and Doomsday. The sudden collision with this globe, our guest-house, at a dominical command, of a planet or comet, could wipe out this dwelling-place of ours. Like the destruction in a minute of a palace the building of which had taken ten years.

⁵⁸ Qur’an, 16:77.

Fourth Part of the Addendum

He said: “Who shall give life to decaying bones?” Say: “He shall give them life who first gave them life, and He is All-Knowing concerning all creation.”⁵⁹

As was illustrated in the third comparison in the Ninth Truth of the Tenth Word, some personage may one day summon together before your eyes a great army. If someone were then to say, “that personage is able to call together the troops in his army, who had dispersed to take rest, and assemble them again in battalions,” and you were to say, “I don’t believe it,” you know well how lunatic would be your denial. So too, an All-Powerful and All-Knowing Being Who out of nothing recorded and put in place, with the command of, “*Be!*”, and it is, all the particles and subtle aspects of the bodies of all animals and other animate beings, as if they were an army with the utmost orderliness and wise equilibrium, and Who creates each century, or rather each spring, the hundreds of thousands of different species and groups of animate beings that populate the face of the earth, each like an army — such a Being can gather together, with one blow on the trump of Israfil, all the fundamental particles and original components that enjoy mutual acquaintance through joint submission to the order of the body that corresponds to a battalion. Were you to say, “how can this be?” or consider it unlikely, it would be idiotic lunacy.

It sometimes happens in the Qur’an that, in order to impress upon the heart the wondrous deeds He will perform in the hereafter and to prepare the mind for acceptance of them, God Almighty mentions the wondrous deeds He performs in this world as a kind of preparation. Alternatively, He may sometimes mention the wondrous deeds He will perform in the future and the hereafter in such a fashion that we are convinced of them by analogy with the similar deeds we observe in this world. One example is furnished by the verse,

*Has not man seen that We created him from a drop of sperm?
And then he becomes an open disputer.⁶⁰*

⁵⁹ Qur’an, 36:78.

⁶⁰ Qur’an, 16:4.

and the remaining verses of the same sura. The All-Wise Qur'an thus proves the question of resurrection in seven or eight different forms.

It first directs man's attention to his own origins. It says "you see how you advanced from a drop of sperm to a drop of blood, from a drop of blood to a formless lump of flesh, and from a formless lump of flesh to human form. How, then, can you deny your second creation? It is just the same as the first, or even easier of accomplishment for God." God Almighty also refers to the great bounties He has bestowed on man with phrases such as:

*He Who made fire for you from the green tree*⁶¹

and says to man: "Will the Being Who thus bestowed bounty upon you leave you to your own devices, in such fashion that you enter the grave to sleep without rising again?" He also hints at the following: "You see how dead trees come to life and grow green again. Refusing to regard as a parallel the reanimation of your bones, that resemble dry wood, you dismiss the whole matter as improbable. Now is it at all possible that the One Who creates the heavens and earth should not be empowered over the life and death of man, the fruit of heaven and earth? Do you imagine that He would make fruitless and vain the tree of creation that He has moulded with wisdom in all its parts, by abandoning the supreme result of that tree?"

The Qur'an says further: "The Being That will restore you to life at resurrection is such that the whole cosmos is like an obedient soldier of His. It bows its head submissively whenever it hears the command,

*"Be!", and it is.*⁶²

To create a spring is easier for Him than the creation of a flower. To create the whole of the animal realm is as easy for His power as creating a fly. None may belittlingly challenge His power by saying to Him:

*Who will give life to the bones?*⁶³

Then, from the verse,

*Glory be to Him in Whose hand lies the sovereignty of all things,*⁶⁴

we see that the index of all things is in His hand, the key to all things is in His possession; He rotates night and day, winter and summer, with as much ease as if He were turning the pages of a book. He is an All-Powerful, Glorious Being Who closes the door on this world and opens it on the hereafter as if they were two stations. This being the case, as the result of the mentioned evidences,

⁶¹ Qur'an, 36:80.

⁶² Qur'an, 2:117.

⁶³ Qur'an, 36:78.

⁶⁴ Qur'an, 36:83.

*To Him you shall return,*⁶⁵

that is, He will bring you back to life from your graves, take you to the plain of resurrection, and judge you in His majestic presence.

Now these verses prepare the mind and make ready the heart to accept the reality of resurrection, for they have demonstrated parallels to resurrection in worldly processes. Sometimes it also happens that He mentions the deeds He will perform in the hereafter in such a way as to draw attention to their worldly parallels, so that no room should be left for doubt and denial. Examples are the Suras introduced by these verses:

*When the sun is rolled up,*⁶⁶

*When the heavens are torn asunder.*⁶⁷

In these Suras, God Almighty mentions resurrection and the vast revolutions and dominical deeds that shall take place at that time, in such a fashion that man thinks of their worldly parallels that he has seen in autumn and spring, and then, with awe in his heart, easily accepts what the intellect would otherwise refuse. Even to indicate the general meaning of the three suras just mentioned would take very long. Let us, then, take simply one word as a specimen of the whole. With the words,

*When the pages are spread out,*⁶⁸

God Almighty expresses the following: “Upon resurrection, everyone’s deeds will be revealed on a written page. This appears to be very strange, and totally beyond the reach of reason. But as the Sura indicates, just as the resurrection of the spring is a parallel to other matters, so too the ‘spreading out of pages’ has a very clear parallel. Every fruit-bearing tree, every flowering plant has its deeds, actions and functions. It performs a certain kind of worship, depending on the fashion in which it glorifies God through the manifestations of His Names. Now all of its deeds and the record of its life are inscribed in all the seeds that are to emerge next spring in another plot of soil. With the tongue of shape and form, the seeds make eloquent mention of the origins of those deeds, and spread out the page of deeds together with branch, twig, leaf, flower and fruit. He Who says: “*When the pages are spread out*” is the same Being That performs, before our eyes, these wise, preserving, nurturing and subtle acts.

Compare other matters with this by analogy, and deduce the truth if you have the capacity. Let us aid you with the following. The verse, *When the sun is folded up*, refers to a brilliant similitude and hints at its parallel:

First: God Almighty has cast aside the curtains of non-being, the ether

⁶⁵ Qur’an, 10:56.

⁶⁶ Qur’an, 81:1.

⁶⁷ Qur’an, 82:1.

⁶⁸ Qur’an, 81:10.

and the heavens to bring forth from His treasury of mercy and show to the world a jewel-like lamp illumining the world — the sun. After closing the world, He will wrap that jewel again in His veils and remove it.

Second: The sun may be depicted as an official entrusted with the task of distributing the commodity of light over the globe, and causing it and darkness to succeed each other. Every evening the official is ordered to gather up the light. It may sometimes happen also that his trade may be slackened when he is hidden by the veil of a cloud. At other times it may be that the moon will also form a veil, and hinder his task. Now just as that official has his goods and ledgers gathered up for inspection, so too he will one day be relieved of his duties. Even if there be no cause for his dismissal, there are two dark spots on the sun—now small, but liable to grow—that one day will grow to the point that the sun will take back, by dominical command, the light it now wraps around the head of the earth, and wrap it around its own head. It will then be told: “Come, your task on earth is now complete. Go to Hell, and burn there those who have worshipped you and thus mocked with faithlessness an obedient servant like you.” With its own dark and scarred face, it will read out the decree, “*When the sun is rolled up.*”

Fifth Part of the Addendum

The hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets,⁶⁹ who are according to explicit prophetic tradition the choice part of humanity, have unanimously and with one accord reported, partly on the basis of direct vision and partly on the basis of absolute certainty, that the hereafter exists and that all beings will be taken to the hereafter as the Creator has firmly promised.

Similarly, the one hundred and twenty-four million saints who confirm the reports of the prophets through unveiling and witnessing, give testimony to the existence of the hereafter in the form of certain knowledge, and also bear testimony to the existence of the hereafter. All the Names of the All-Wise Maker of the cosmos also necessitate the existence of an eternal realm through the manifestations they display in this world.

The existence of the hereafter is furthermore necessitated by the infinite eternal power, the unlimited and exact everlasting wisdom, that revives every spring the countless dead trees scattered all over the earth with the command of “*Be!*”, and it is, thus making of them manifestations of “resurrection after death,” and that resurrects three hundred thousand different species of the various groups of plant and nations of animals, as hundreds of thousands of specimens of the supreme resurrection.

The existence of the hereafter is also necessitated by an eternal mercy and permanent grace that sustains in wondrous and solicitous fashion all animate beings that stand in need of nurture, and that display each spring, in the briefest of periods, infinite different varieties of adornment and beauty. Finally, there is the self-evident proof and indication given by the intense, unshakeable, and permanent love of eternity, yearning for immortality and hope of permanence that are lodged in man, the most beloved creation of the Maker of the cosmos, and whose concern with all the beings in the cosmos is the greatest.

⁶⁹ *Musnad*, v, 266; Tabrizi, *Mishkat al-Masabih*, iii, 122; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzi, *Zad al-Ma’ad* (Tahqiq: al-Arnawut), i, 43-4.

All of the foregoing so firmly prove that after this transient world there will be an eternal world, a hereafter, a realm of felicity, that we are compelled to accept the existence of a hereafter as indisputably as we accept the existence of this world.⁷⁰

One of the most important lessons taught us by the All-Wise Qur'an, is, then, belief in the hereafter. This belief is so firm and contains within itself so powerful a hope and a consolation that if a person be assailed by old age hundred thousandfold, the consolation derived from this belief will be fully enough. Saying, "Praise be to God for the perfection of belief," we old people should rejoice in old age.

⁷⁰ It can be realized from this comparison how easy it is to make a positive affirmation and how difficult to make a denial and negation. If, for example, someone should say, "there exists somewhere on this earth a wondrous garden containing canned milk," and someone else should say, "there is not," the affirmer need only point to the place of that garden or show some of its fruits in order to prove his claim. The denier, by contrast, will have to inspect and display the whole world in order to justify his negation. So too the testimony of two veracious witnesses will be enough to establish the existence of Paradise, quite apart from the hundreds of thousands of traces, fruits and indications demonstrated by those who assert its existence. Those who deny it must examine, explore and sift the infinite cosmos and infinite time before they can prove their denial and demonstrate the non-existence of Paradise. So, o aged brothers of mine, understand how firm is belief in the hereafter.

The Eleventh Word

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

*By the sun and its glorious splendour; * By the moon as it follows it; * By the day as it shows [the sun's] glory; * By the night as it conceals it; * By the firmament and its wonderful structure; * By the earth and its wide expanse; * By the soul and the order and proportion given it.¹*

Brother! If you want to understand a little about the talisman of the wisdom of the world and the riddle of man's creation and the mystery of the reality of the prescribed prayers, then consider this short comparison together with my own soul.

One time there was a king. As wealth he had numerous treasuries containing diamonds and emeralds and jewels of every kind. Besides these he had other, hidden, wondrous treasuries. By way of attainment he had consummate skill in strange arts, and encompassing knowledge of innumerable wondrous sciences, and great erudition in endless branches of abstruse learning. Now, like every possessor of beauty and perfection wants to see and display his own beauty and perfection, that glorious king wanted to open up an exhibition and set out displays within it in order to make manifest and display in the view of the people the majesty of his rule, his glittering wealth, the wonders of his art, and the marvels of his knowledge, and so that he could behold his beauty and perfection in two respects:

The First Respect: so that he himself could behold them with his own discerning eye.

The Other: so that he could look through the view of others.

With this purpose in mind, the king started to construct a vast and majestic palace. He divided it into magnificent apartments and dwellings, and decorated it with every sort of jewel from his treasuries, and with his own hand so full of art adorned it with the finest and most beautiful works. He ordered it with the subtlest of the arts of his wisdom, and decked it out with the miraculous works of his knowledge. Then after completing it, he set up in the palace broad tables containing the most delicious of every kind of food

¹ Qur'an, 91:1-7.

and every sort of bounty. He specified an appropriate table for each group. He set out such a munificent and artful banquet that it was as though the boundless priceless bounties he spread out had come into existence through the works of a hundred subtle arts. Then he invited his people and subjects from all the regions of his lands to feast and behold the spectacle.

Later the king appointed a Supreme Commander (PBUH) as teacher, to make known the purposes of the palace and the meanings of its contents; to describe its Maker and its contents to the people, make known the secrets of the palace's embellishments, teach what the arts within it were pointing to, and to explain what the well-set jewels were, and the harmonious embroideries; and to explain to those who entered the palace the way in which they indicated the perfections and arts of the palace's owner, and to inform them of the correct conduct in beholding them, and to explain the official ceremonies as the king, who did not appear, wished them to be. The teacher and instructor had an assistant in each area of the palace, while he himself remained in the largest apartment among his students, making the following announcement to all the spectators. He told them:

“O people! By making this palace and displaying these things our lord, who is the king of the palace, wants to make himself known to you. You therefore should recognize Him and try to get to know Him. And with these adornments He wants to make Himself loved by you. Also, He shows His love for you through these bounties that you see, so you should love Him too by obeying Him. And through these bounties and gifts which are to be seen He shows His compassion and kindness for you, so you should show your respect for Him by offering thanks. And through these works of His perfection He wants to display His transcendent beauty to you, so you should show your eagerness to see Him and gain His regard. And through placing a particular stamp and special seal and an inimitable signet on every one of these adorned works of art that you see, He wants to show that everything is particular to Him, and is the work of His own hand, and that He is single and unique and independent and removed. You therefore should recognize that He is single and alone, and without peer or like or match, and accept that He is such.” He spoke further fitting words to the spectators like these concerning the King and this station. Then the people who had entered the palace separated into two groups.

The First Group: Since these people had self-knowledge, were intelligent, and their hearts were in the right place, when they looked at the wonders inside the palace, they declared: “There are great matters afoot here!” They understood that it was not in vain or some trifling plaything. They were curious, and while wondering: “I wonder what the talisman to this is and what it contains,” they suddenly heard the speech the Master and Instructor was giving, and they realized that the keys to all the mysteries were with

him. So they approached him and said: “Peace be upon you, O Master! By rights, a truthful and exact instructor like you is necessary for a magnificent palace such as this. Please tell us what our Lord has made known to you!” First of all the Master repeated the speech to them. They listened carefully, and accepting it, profited greatly. They acted as the King wished. And because the King was pleased at their becoming conduct and manners, he invited them to another special, elevated, ineffable palace. And he bestowed it on them in a way worthy of such a munificent king, and fitting for such obedient subjects, and suitable for such well-mannered guests, and appropriate to such an elevated palace. He made them permanently happy.

As for the Second Group, because their minds were corrupted and their hearts extinguished, when they entered the palace, they were defeated by their evil-commanding souls and took notice of nothing apart from the delicious foods; they closed their eyes to all the virtues and stopped up their ears to the guidance of the Master (PBUH) and the warnings of his students. They stuffed themselves like animals then sank into sleep. They quaffed elixirs which had been prepared for certain other matters and were not to have been consumed. Then they became drunk and started shouting so much they greatly upset the other spectating guests. They were ill-mannered in the face of the Glorious Maker’s rules. So the soldiers of the palace’s owner arrested them, and cast them into a prison appropriate to such unmannerly people.

O friend who is listening to this story with me! Of course you have understood that the Glorious Creator built this palace for the above-mentioned aims. The achievement of these aims is dependent on two things:

The First: The existence of the Master (PBUH) whom we saw and whose speech we heard. Because if not for him, all the aims would have been futile. For an incomprehensible book with no author consists only of meaningless paper.

The Second is the people listening the Master’s words and accepting them. That is to say, the Master’s existence is the cause of the palace’s existence, and the people’s listening to him is the cause of the continuation of the palace’s existence. In which case, it may be said that if it had not been for the Master (PBUH), the Glorious King would not have built the palace. And again it may be said that when the people do not heed the Master’s (PBUH) instructions, the palace will of a certainty be transformed and changed.

Friend! The story ends here. If you have understood the meaning of the comparison, come and behold its reality.

The palace is this world. Its roof is the heavens illuminated with smiling stars, and its floor, the face of the earth adorned from east to west with multifarious flowers. As for the King, he is the Most Holy One, the Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal Monarch, Whom all things in the seven heavens and the

earth glorify and extol, each with its particular tongue. He is a king so powerful He created the heavens and earth in six days, then abided on the Throne. One of Power and Majesty, Who, alternating night and day like two threads, one white and one black, writes His signs of the page of the universe; One to Whose command the sun, moon, and stars are subjugated. The apartments of the palace are the eighteen thousand worlds, each of which has been set in order and decorated in a fashion suitable to it. The strange arts you saw in the palace are the miracles of Divine power you see in this world, and the foods you saw there allude to the wonderful fruits of Divine mercy in this world, especially in summer, and above all in the gardens of Barla. The stove and kitchen there is the earth here, which has fire in its heart, and the face of the earth. While the jewels of the hidden treasures you saw in the comparison are the similitudes of the manifestations of the sacred Divine Names. And the embroideries there, and the signs of the embroideries, are the well-ordered and finely worked beings and the harmonious impresses of the pen of power which adorn this world and point to the Names of the All-Powerful One of Glory.

As for the Master, he is our Master Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him). His assistants are the prophets (Peace be upon them), and his students, the saints and purified scholars. The ruler's servants in the palace indicate the angels (Peace be upon them) in this world. And the guests invited to the banquet to spectate in the comparison are the jinn and mankind in this guest-house of the world, and the animals, who are the servants of mankind. As for the two groups, one of them here consists of the people of belief, who are the students of the All-Wise Qur'an, the interpreter of the verses and signs of the book of the universe. The other group consists of the people of unbelief and rebellion, who follow Satan and their evil-commanding souls; deaf and dumb, like animals, or even lower, they form the group of the misguided, who recognize the life of this world only.

FIRST GROUP: These are the felicitous and the good, who listened to the Master, 'the Possessor of Two Wings.' He is both the worshipping servant of God; in regard to worship he describes his Sustainer so that he is like the envoy of his community at the Court of Almighty God. He is also God's Messenger; with regard to Messengership he conveys his Sustainer's decrees to men and the jinn by means of the Qur'an.

This happy community heeded the Messenger and listened to the Qur'an. They saw themselves invested with the prescribed prayers, which are the index of all the varieties of worship, and numerous subtle duties within elevated stations. Indeed, they saw in detail the duties and stations which the prayers point to with their various formulas and actions. It was like this:

Firstly: Since they observed the Divine works, and in the form of a transaction in the absence of the person concerned, saw themselves in the station

of observing the wonders of the sovereignty of dominicality, they performed the duty of extolling and glorifying God, declaring: “God is Most Great!”

Secondly: Through being seen in the station of herald of His brilliant and wonderful works, which are the manifestations of the sacred Divine Names, exclaiming: “Glory be to God! All Praise be to God!”, they performed the duty of hallowing and praising God.

Thirdly: In the station of perceiving and understanding with their inner and outer senses the bounties stored up in the treasuries of Divine mercy, they started to carry out the duty of thanks and praise.

Fourthly: In the station of weighing up with the scales of their spiritual faculties the jewels in the treasuries of the Divine Names, they began the duty of praise and declaring God to be free of all fault.

Fifthly: In the station of studying the Sustainer’s missives, written with the pen of power on the plan of Divine Determining, they began the duty of contemplation and appreciation.

Sixthly: With beholding the subtle, delicate, fine beauties in the creation of things and in the art in beings, in the station of declaring God to be free of all defect, they took up the duty of love and yearning for their All-Glorious Creator, their All-Beauteous Maker. That is to say, after looking at the universe and works and performing the duties in the above-mentioned stations through transactions in the object of worship’s absence, they rose to the degree of also beholding the transactions and acts of the All-Wise Maker, whereby, in the form of a transaction in the presence of the person concerned, they responded with knowledge and wonder in the face of the All-Glorious Creator’s making Himself known to conscious beings through the miracles of His art, and declared: “Glory be unto You! How can we truly know you? What makes You known are the miracles of the works of Your art!”

Then, they responded with love and passion to that Most Merciful One’s making Himself loved through the beautiful fruits of His mercy. “You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek help!”, they declared.

Then they responded with thanks and praise to the True Bestower’s showing His mercy and compassion through His sweet bounties, and exclaimed: “Glory be unto You! All praise is Yours! How can we thank You as is Your due? You are utterly worthy of thanks! For all Your bounties spread through all the universe hymn Your praises and thanks through the clear tongues of their beings. All Your bounties lined up in the market of the world and scattered over the face of the earth proclaim Your praises and extol You. Through testifying to Your munificence and generosity, all the well-ordered and well-proportioned fruits of Your mercy and bounty offer You thanks before the gazes of Your creatures.”

Then they responded, saying: “God is Most Great!” before the manifestation of Divine beauty, glory, perfection, and majesty in the mirrors of beings, ever changing on the face of the universe; they bowed reverently in their impotence, and prostrated in humility with love and wonder.

Then announcing their poverty and need, they responded with supplication and beseeching to the Possessor of Absolute Riches’ displaying the abundance of His wealth and breadth of His mercy, and declared: “From You alone do we seek help!”

Then they responded appreciatively to the All-Glorious Maker’s displaying the subtleties and wonders of His antique art in the exhibition of creatures, exclaiming: “What wonders God has willed!” Observing and applauding them, they declared, “How beautifully they have been made! What blessings God has bestowed!” Holding everyone witness, they said in wonder: “Come! Look at these! Hasten to the prayers and to prosperity!”

And they responded with submission and obedience to the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity’s proclamation of the sovereignty of His dominicality in every corner of the universe and the manifestation of His unity. Declaring: “We hear and we obey!”, they affirmed His unity.

Then, before the manifestation of the Godhead of that Sustainer of All the Worlds, they responded with worship and humble veneration, which consists of proclaiming their poverty within need, and with the prescribed prayers, which are the summary of worship. Thus, through performing their various duties of worship in the mighty mosque known as the abode of this world, they carried out the obligations and duties of their lives, and assumed ‘the finest of forms.’ They ascended to a rank above all creatures by which, through the auspiciousness of belief and assurance and ‘the Trust,’ they became trustworthy Vicegerents of God on the Earth. And after this field of trial and place of examination, their Munificent Sustainer invited them to eternal happiness in recompense for their belief, and to the Abode of Peace in reward for their adhering to His religion of Islam. There, He bestowed on them out of His mercy bounties so dazzling that no eye has seen them, nor ear heard them, nor have they occurred to the heart of man² – and so He does bestow these on them, and He gave them eternity and everlasting life. For the desirous, mirror-bearing lovers of an eternal, abiding beauty who gaze upon it will certainly not perish, but will go to eternity. The final state of the Qur’an’s students is thus. May Almighty God include us among them, Amen!

As for the other group, the sinners and the wicked, when they entered the palace of this world at the age of discretion, they responded with unbelief to

² See page 88, footnote 22.

all the evidences of Divine unity, and with ingratitude towards all the bounties, and by accusing all creatures of being valueless, insulted them in an unbelieving manner. And since they rejected and denied all the manifestations of the Divine Names, they committed a boundless crime in a short time and became deserving of endless punishment. For the capital of life and man's faculties were given him for the duties mentioned above.

O my senseless soul and foolish friend! Do you suppose your life's duty is restricted to following the good life according to the requisites of civilization, and, if you will excuse the expression, to gratifying the physical appetites? Do you suppose the sole aim of the delicate and subtle senses, the sensitive faculties and members, the well-ordered limbs and systems, the inquisitive feelings and senses included in the machine of your life is restricted to satisfying the low desires of the base soul in this fleeting life? God forbid! There are two main aims in their creation and inclusion in your essential being:

The First consists of making known to you all the varieties of the True Bestower's bounties, and causing you to offer Him thanks. You should be aware of this, and offer Him thanks and worship.

The Second is to make known to you by means of your faculties all the sorts of the manifestations of the sacred Divine Names manifested in the world and to cause you to experience them. And you, by recognizing them through experiencing them, should come to believe in them.

Thus, man develops and is perfected through the achievement of these two basic aims. Through them, man becomes a true human being.

Look through the meaning of the following comparison, and see that the human faculties were not given in order to gain worldly life like an animal.

For example, someone gave one of his servants twenty gold pieces, telling him to have a suit of clothes made out of a particular cloth. The servant went and got himself a fine suit out of the highest grade of the cloth, and put it on. Then he saw that his employer had given another of his servants a thousand gold pieces, and putting in the servant's pocket a piece of paper with some things written on it, had sent him to conclude some business. Now, anyone with any sense would know that the capital was not for getting a suit of clothes, for, since the first servant had bought a suit of the finest cloth with twenty gold pieces, the thousand gold pieces were certainly not to be spent on that. Since the second servant had not read the paper in his pocket, and looking at the first servant, had given all the money to a shopkeeper for a suit of clothes, and then received the very lowest grade of cloth and a suit fifty times worse than his friend's, his employer was bound to reprimand him severely for his utter stupidity, and punish him angrily.

O my soul and my friend! Come to your senses! Do not spend the capital

and potentialities of your life on pleasures of the flesh and this fleeting life like an animal, or even lower. Otherwise, although you are fifty times superior with regard to capital than the highest animal, you will fall fifty times lower than the lowest.

O my heedless soul! If you want to understand to a degree both the aim of your life and its nature, and the form of your life, and the true meaning of your life, and its perfect happiness, then look! The summary of the aims of your life consists of nine matters:

The First is this: To weigh up on the scales of the senses put in your being the bounties stored up in the treasuries of Divine mercy, and to offer universal thanks.

The Second: To open with the keys of the faculties placed in your nature the hidden treasuries of the sacred Divine Names.

The Third: To consciously display and make known through your life in the view of the creatures in this exhibition of the world the wondrous arts and subtle manifestations which the Divine Names have attached to you.

The Fourth: To proclaim your worship to the Court of the Creator's dominicality verbally and through the tongue of your disposition.

The Fifth: Like on ceremonial occasions a soldier wears all the decorations he has received from his king, and through appearing before the him, displays the marks of his favour towards him, this is to consciously adorn yourself in the jewels of the subtle senses which the manifestations of the Divine Names have given you, and to appear in the observant view of the Pre-Eternal Witness.

The Sixth: To consciously observe the salutations of living beings to their Creator, known as the manifestations of life, and their glorifications of their Maker, known as the signs of life, and their worship of the Bestower of Life, known as the aims of life, and by reflecting on them to see them, and through testifying to them to display them.

The Seventh: Through taking as units of measurement the small samples of attributes like the partial knowledge, power, and will given to your life, it is to know through those measures the absolute attributes and sacred qualities of the All-Glorious Creator. For example, since, through your partial power, knowledge, and will, you have made your house in well-ordered fashion, you should know that the Maker of the palace of the world is its Disposer, and Powerful, Knowing, and Wise to the degree it is greater than your house.

The Eighth: To understand the words concerning the Creator's unity and Maker's dominicality uttered by each of the beings in the world in its particular tongue.

The Ninth: To understand through your impotence and weakness, your poverty and need, the degrees of the Divine power and dominical riches. Just as the pleasure and degrees and varieties of food are understood through the degrees of hunger and the sorts of need, so you should understand the degrees of the infinite Divine power and riches through your infinite impotence and poverty. The aims of your life, then, briefly, are matters like these. Now consider the nature of your life; its summary is this:

It is an index of wonders pertaining to the Divine Names; a scale for measuring the Divine attributes; a balance of the worlds within the universe; a list of the mighty world; a map of the cosmos; a summary of the vast book of the universe; a bunch of keys with which to open the hidden treasuries of Divine power; and a most excellent pattern of the perfections scattered over beings and attached to time. The nature of your life consists of matters like these.

Now, the form of your life and the manner of its duty is this: your life is an inscribed word, a wisdom-displaying word written by the pen of power. Seen and heard, it points to the Divine Names. The form of your life consists of matters like these.

Now the true meaning of your life is this: its acting as a mirror to the manifestation of Divine oneness and the manifestation of the Eternally Besought One. That is to say, through a comprehensiveness as though being the point of focus for all the Divine Names manifested in the world, it is its being a mirror to the Single and Eternally Besought One.

Now, as for the perfection of your life, it is to perceive the lights of the Pre-Eternal Sun which are depicted in the mirror of your life, and to love them. It is to display ardour for Him as a conscious being. It is to pass beyond yourself with love of Him. It is to establish the reflection of His light in the centre of your heart. It is due to this mystery that the Hadith Qudsi was uttered, which is expressed by the following lines, and will raise you to the highest of the high:

*The heavens and the earth contain me not;
Yet, how strange! I am contained in the hearts of believers.*³

And so, my soul! Since your life is turned towards such elevated aims and gathers together such priceless treasures, is it at all worthy of reason and fairness that you should spend it on temporary gratification of the instinctual soul and fleeting worldly pleasures, and waste it? If you do not want to fritter away your life, ponder over the oaths in this Sura of the Qur'an, which allude to the above comparison and truths, and act accordingly:

*By the sun and its [glorious] splendour; * By the moon as it*

³ See, al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa'*, ii, 165; al-Ghazzali, *Ihya' l-'Ulum al-Din*, iii, 14.

*follows it; * By the day as it shows up [the sun's] glory; * By the night as it conceals it; * By the firmament and its [wonderful] structure; * By the earth and its [wide] expanse; * By the soul and the order and proportion given it; * And its enlightenment to its wrong and its right. * Truly he succeeds that purifies it, * And he fails that corrupts it.⁴*

O God, grant blessings and peace to the Sun of the Skies of Messengership, the Moon of the Constellation of Prophethood, and to his Family and Companions, the stars of guidance, and grant mercy to us and to all believing men and all believing women. Amen. Amen. Amen.

⁴ Qur'an, 91:1-10.

The Twelfth Word

[This Word consists of a brief comparison between the sacred wisdom of the All-Wise Qur'an and the wisdom of philosophy and science, and a concise summary of the instruction and training which Qur'anic wisdom gives to man in his personal life and social life, and an indication of the Qur'an's superiority to other Divine words, and to all speech. There are Four Principles in this Word.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
And he who has been given wisdom has been given great good.¹*

FIRST PRINCIPLE

Look through the telescope of the following story which is in the form of a comparison, and see the differences between Qur'anic wisdom and that of philosophy and science:

One time, a renowned Ruler who was both religious and a fine craftsman wanted to write the All-Wise Qur'an in a script worthy of the sacredness in its meaning and the miraculousness in its words, so that its marvel-displaying stature would be arrayed in wondrous apparel. The artist-King therefore wrote the Qur'an in a truly wonderful fashion. He used all his precious jewels in its writing. In order to indicate the great variety of its truths, he wrote some of its embodied letters in diamonds and emeralds, and some in rubies and agate, and other sorts in brilliants and coral, while others he inscribed with silver and gold. He adorned and decorated it in such a way that everyone, those who knew how to read and those who did not, were full of admiration and astonishment when they beheld it. Especially in the view of the people of truth, since the outer beauty was an indication of the brilliant beauty and striking adornment in its meaning, it became a truly precious antique.

¹ Qur'an, 2:269.

Then the Ruler showed the artistically wrought and bejewelled Qur'an to a European philosopher and to a Muslim scholar. In order to test them and for reward, he commanded them: "Each of you write a work about the wisdom and purposes of this!" First the philosopher, then the scholar composed a book about it. However, the philosopher's book discussed only the decorations of the letters and their relationships and conditions, and the properties of the jewels, and described them. It did not touch on their meaning at all, for the European had no knowledge of the Arabic script. He did not even know that the embellished Qur'an was a book, a written piece, expressing a meaning. He rather looked on it as an ornamented antique. He did not know any Arabic, but he was a very good engineer, and he described things very aptly, and he was a skilful chemist, and an ingenious jeweller. So this man wrote his work according to those crafts.

As for the Muslim scholar, when he looked at the Qur'an, he understood that it was the Perspicuous Book, the All-Wise Qur'an. This truth-loving person neither attached importance to the external adornments, nor busied himself with the ornamented letters. He became preoccupied with something that was a million times higher, more elevated, more subtle, more noble, more beneficial, and more comprehensive than the matters with which the other man had busied himself. For discussing the sacred truths and lights of the mysteries beneath the veil of the decorations, he wrote a truly fine commentary. Then the two of them took their works and presented them to the Illustrious Ruler. The Ruler first took the philosopher's work. He looked at it and saw that the self-centred and nature-worshipping man had worked very hard, but had written nothing of true wisdom. He had understood nothing of its meaning. Indeed, he had confused it and been disrespectful towards it, and ill-mannered even. For supposing that source of truths, the Qur'an, to be meaningless decoration, he had insulted it as being valueless in regard to meaning. So the Wise Ruler hit him over the head with his work and expelled him from his presence.

Then he looked at the work of the other, the truth-loving, scrupulous scholar, and saw that it was an extremely fine and beneficial commentary, a most wise composition full of guidance. "Congratulations! May God bless you!", he said. Thus, wisdom is this and they call those who possess it knowledgeable and wise. As for the other man, he was a craftsman who had exceeded his mark. Then in reward for the scholar's work, he commanded that in return for each letter ten gold pieces should be given him from his inexhaustible treasury.

If you have understood the comparison, now look and see the reality:

The ornamented Qur'an is this artistically fashioned universe, and the Ruler is the Pre-Eternal All-Wise One. As for the two men, one –the European– represents philosophy and its philosophers, and the other, the Qur'an

and its students. Yes, the All-Wise Qur'an is a most elevated expounder, a most eloquent translator of the Mighty Qur'an of the Universe. Yes, it is the Criterion which instructs man and the jinn concerning the signs of creation inscribed by the pen of power on the pages of the universe and on the leaves of time. It regards beings, each of which is a meaningful letter, as bearing the meaning of another, that is, it looks at them on account of their Maker. It says, "How beautifully they have been made! How exquisitely they point to their Maker's beauty!", thus showing the universe's true beauty. But the philosophy they call natural philosophy or science has plunged into the decorations of the letters of beings and into their relationships, and has become bewildered; it has confused the way of reality. While the letters of this mighty book should be looked at as bearing the meaning of another, that is, on account of God, they have not done this; they have looked at beings as signifying themselves. That is, they have looked at beings on account of beings, and have discussed them in that way. Instead of saying, "How beautifully they have been made," they say "How beautiful they are," and have made them ugly. In doing this they have insulted the universe, and made it complain about them. Indeed, philosophy without religion is a sophistry divorced from reality and an insult to the universe.

SECOND PRINCIPLE

A comparison between the moral training the wisdom of the All-Wise Qur'an gives to personal life and what philosophy and science teach:

The sincere student of philosophy is a pharaoh, but he is a contemptible pharaoh who worships the basest thing for the sake of benefit; he recognizes everything from which he can profit as his 'Lord'. And that irreligious student is obstinate and refractory, but he is wretched together with his obstinacy and accepts endless abasement for the sake of one pleasure. And he is abject together with his recalcitrance and shows his abasement by kissing the feet of satanic individuals for the sake of some base benefit. And that irreligious student is conceited and domineering, but since he can find no point of support in his heart, he is an utterly impotent blustering tyrant. And that student is a self-centered seeker of benefit whose aim and endeavour is to gratify his animal appetites; a crafty egotist who seeks his personal interests within certain nationalist interests.

However, the sincere student of Qur'anic wisdom is a servant, but he does not stoop to worship even the greatest of creatures; he is an esteemed slave who does not take a supreme benefit like Paradise as the aim of his worship. And its student is humble; he is righteous and mild, yet outside the limits of his Maker's leave, he would not voluntarily lower and abase himself before anything other than his Maker. And he is weak and in want, and he knows his weakness and poverty, but he is self-sufficient due to the

wealth which his All-Generous Lord has stored up for him in the hereafter, and he is strong since he relies on his Master's infinite power. And he acts and strives only for God's sake, for God's pleasure, and for virtue.

Thus, the training the two give may be understood from the comparison of the two students.

THIRD PRINCIPLE

The training philosophy and science and Qur'anic wisdom give to human social life is this:

Philosophy accepts 'force' as its point of support in the life of society. It considers its aim to be 'benefits'. The principle of its life it recognizes to be 'conflict'. It holds the bond between communities to be 'racialism and negative nationalism'. Its fruits are 'gratifying the appetites of the soul and increasing human needs'. However, the mark of force is 'aggression'. The mark of benefit – since they are insufficient for every desire – is 'jostling and tussling'. While the mark of conflict is 'strife'. And the mark of racialism –since it is nourished by devouring others– is 'aggression'. It is for these reasons that it has negated the happiness of mankind.

As for the Qur'anic wisdom, its point of support is 'truth' instead of force. It takes 'virtue and God's pleasure' as its aims in place of benefits. It takes the principle of 'mutual assistance' as the principle of life in place of the principle of conflict. And it takes 'the ties of religion, class, and country' to be the ties bonding communities. Its aim is to form a barrier against the lusts of the soul, urge the spirit to sublime matters, satisfy the high emotions, and urging man to the human perfections, make him a true human being. And the mark of 'the truth' is accord. The mark of virtue is 'solidarity'. The mark of mutual assistance is 'hastening to assist one another'. The mark of religion is 'brotherhood' and 'attraction'. And the mark of reining in and tethering the soul and leaving the spirit free and urging it towards perfections is 'happiness in this world and the next'.

FOURTH PRINCIPLE

If you want to understand the Qur'an's superiority among all the Divine scriptures and its supremacy over all speech and writings, then consider the following two comparisons:

The First: A king has two forms of speech, two forms of address. One is to speak on his private telephone with a common subject concerning some minor matter, some private need. The other, under the title of sublime sovereignty, supreme vicegerent, and universal rulership, is to speak with an envoy or high official for the purpose of making known and promulgating his commands, to make an utterance through an elevated decree proclaiming his majesty.

The Second: One man holds the mirror he is holding up to the sun. He receives light containing the seven colours according to the capacity of the mirror. He becomes connected to the sun through that relation and converses with it, and if he directs the light-filled mirror towards his dark house or his garden covered by a roof, he will benefit, not in relation to the sun's value, but in accordance with the capacity of the mirror. Another man, however, opens up broad windows out of his house or out of the roof over his garden. He opens up ways to the sun in the sky. He converses with the perpetual light of the actual sun and speaks with it, and says in gratitude through the tongue of his disposition: "O you beauty of the world who gilds the face of the earth with your light and makes the faces of the flowers smile! O beauty of the skies, fine sun! You have furnished my little house and garden with light and heat the same as you have them." Whereas the man with the mirror cannot say that. The reflection and works of the sun under that restriction are limited; they are in accordance with the restriction. Look at the Qur'an through the telescope of these two comparisons and see its miraculousness and understand its sacredness.

The Qur'an says: "If all the trees on the land were to become pens and all the seas ink, and if they were to write the words of Almighty God, they would never come to the end of them." Now, the reason the Qur'an has been given the highest rank among the infinite words of God is this: the Qur'an has come from the Greatest Divine Name and from the greatest level of every Name. It is God's Word in respect of His being Sustainer of All the Worlds; it is His decree through His title of God of All Beings; an address in regard to His being Creator of the Heavens and the Earth; a conversation in regard to absolute dominicality; a pre-eternal address on account of universal Divine sovereignty; a note-book of the favours of the Most Merciful One from the point of view of His all-embracing, comprehensive mercy; a collection of communications at the beginnings of which are sometimes ciphers related to the sublime majesty of the Godhead; a wisdom-scattering holy scripture which, descending from the reaches of the Greatest Name, looks to and inspects the all-comprehensive domain of the Supreme Throne. It is for these reasons that the title of Word of God has been given with complete worthiness to the Qur'an.

In respect to the other Divine Words, they are speech which has become evident through a particular regard, a minor title, through the partial manifestation of a particular Name; through a particular dominicality, special sovereignty, a private mercy. Their degrees vary in regard to particularity and universality. Most inspiration is of this sort, but its degrees vary greatly. For example, the most particular and simple is the inspiration of the animals. Then there is the inspiration of the ordinary people; then the inspiration of ordinary angels; then the inspiration of the saints, then the inspiration of the

higher angels. Thus, it is for this reason that a saint who offers supplications directly without means by the telephone of the heart says: “My heart tells me news of my Sustainer.” He does not say, “It tells me of the Sustainer of All the Worlds.” And he says: “My heart is the mirror, the throne, of my Sustainer.” He does not say, “It is the throne of the Sustainer of All the Worlds.” For he can manifest the address to the extent of its capacity and to the degree nearly seventy thousand veils have been raised. Thus, however much higher and more elevated is the decree of a king promulgated in respect of his supreme sovereignty than the insignificant speech of a common man, and however much more abundantly the effulgence of the sun in the sky may be benefited from than the manifestation of its reflection in the mirror, and however greater is its superiority, to that degree the Qur’an of Mighty Stature is superior to all other speech and all other books.

After the Qur’an, at the second level, the Holy Books and Revealed Scriptures have superiority according to their degree. They have their share from the mystery of that superiority. If all the fine words of all men and jinn which do not issue from the Qur’an were to be gathered together, they still could not attain to the sacred rank of the Qur’an and imitate it. If you want to understand a little of how the Qur’an comes from the Greatest Name and from the greatest level of every Name, consider the universal, elevated statements of Ayat al-Kursi and the following verses:

And with Him are the keys of the Unseen.²

O God! Lord of All Dominion.³

He draws the night as a veil over day, each seeking the other in rapid succession; He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, [all] subject to His command.⁴

O Earth, swallow up your water! And O Sky, withhold your rain!⁵

The heavens and the earth and all within them extol and glorify Him.⁶

The creation of you all and the resurrection of you all is but like that of a single soul.⁷

We did indeed offer the Trust to the heavens, and the earth, and the mountains.⁸

² Qur’an, 6:59.

³ Qur’an, 3:26.

⁴ Qur’an, 7:54.

⁵ Qur’an, 11:44.

⁶ Qur’an, 17:44.

⁷ Qur’an, 31:28.

⁸ Qur’an, 33:72.

*The Day that We roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books [completed].*⁹

*No just estimate have they made of God, such as is due to Him: on the Day of Judgement the whole of the earth will be but His handful.*¹⁰

*Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would indeed have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of God.*¹¹

And study the Suras which begin *al-Hamdulillah*, or *Tusabbihu*, and see the rays of this mighty mystery. Look too at the openings of the *Alif. Lam. Mim.*'s, the *Alif. Lam. Ra.*'s, and the *Ha. Mim.*'s, and understand the Qur'an's importance in the sight of God.

If you have understood the valuable mystery of this Fourth Principle, you have understood that revelation mostly comes to the prophets by means of an angel, and inspiration is mostly without means. You will have also understood the reason why the greatest saint cannot attain to the level of a prophet. And you will have understood too the Qur'an's sublimity and its sacred grandeur and the mystery of its elevated miraculousness. So too you will have understood the mystery of the necessity of the Prophet Muhammad's Ascension, that is, that he went to the heavens, to the furthest Lote-tree, to the distance of two bow-lengths, offered supplications to the All-Glorious One, Who is closer to him than his jugular vein, and in the twinkling of an eye returned whence he came. Indeed, just as the Splitting of the Moon was a miracle of his messengership whereby he demonstrated his prophethood to the jinn and mankind, so the Ascension was a miracle of his worship and servitude to God whereby he demonstrated to the spirits and angels that he was God's Beloved.

O God, grant blessings and peace to him and to his Family as befits Your mercy, and in veneration of him. Amen.

⁹ Qur'an, 21:104.

¹⁰ Qur'an, 39:67.

¹¹ Qur'an, 59:21.

The Thirteenth Word

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

*And We send down [stage by stage] in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe.¹ * We have not instructed [the Prophet] in poetry, nor is it meet for him.²*

If you want to compare the results yielded by the wisdom of the All-Wise Qur'an and of the sciences of philosophy, and their instruction and teaching and the degrees in their knowledge, then listen carefully to the following words:

With its acute expositions, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition rends the veil of familiarity and the habitual cast over all the beings in the universe, which are known as ordinary things but are all extraordinary and miracles of Divine power, and reveals those astonishing wonders to conscious beings. It attracts their gazes and opens up before their minds an inexhaustible treasury of knowledge.

As for philosophy, it conceals within veils of the commonplace all the miracles of power, which are extraordinary, and passes over them in an ignorant and indifferent fashion. It only puts forward to be noted freaks, which have fallen from being extraordinary and deviated from the order of creation, and sheered away from the perfections of their true natures; it offers them to conscious beings as objects of wise instruction. For example, it says that man's creation is ordinary, despite its being a comprehensive miracle of power, and looks on it indifferently. But then with cries of astonishment, it points out as an object of instruction a person who has diverged from the perfection of creation, and has three legs or two heads.

And for example, it considers ordinary the regular sustenance of infants and young, bestowed from the treasury of mercy, which is a most delicate and general miracle of mercy, and draws a veil of ingratitude over it. Whereas, on spotting an insect under the sea which is an exception from the general order and is alone and isolated from its fellows, being fed with green sea-weed, it wants to make the fishermen weep for it, because of the Divine favour and munificence manifested on it.³

¹ Qur'an, 17:82.

² Qur'an, 36:69.

³ Just such an event occurred in America.

So see the wealth and riches of the Holy Qur'an in regard to knowledge, wisdom, and knowledge of God, and the poverty and bankruptcy of philosophy regarding learning, instruction, and knowledge of the Maker! See them, and take a lesson!

It is because of this, because the All-Wise Qur'an contains infinite brilliant, elevated truths, that it is free of the fancies of poetry. Another reason the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition is not in verse, despite the perfection of its word-order and orderedness and its expounding with its well-ordered styles the order and art of the book of the universe, is that by not entering under the restrictions of metre, each star of its verses can be a sort of centre to the most of the other verses, and be a brother to them, and each can form a connecting line with the verses within the sphere encompassing it in order to be a bond in the relationships which exist between them. It is as if each independent verse has an eye which looks to most of the other verses, and a face turned towards them. Thousands of Qur'ans are present within the Qur'an, each of which it offers to followers of the different paths. As is described in the Twenty-Fifth Word, in Sura al-Ikhlās is a treasury of knowledge about Divine unity comprising thirty-six Sura al-Ikhlās's, formed of a compound of six phrases, each winged. Indeed, like with the stars in the sky which are apparently without order, each is unrestricted and as a sort of centre extends a line of connection to all the stars in the area surrounding it, indicating a hidden relation between beings. It is as if, like the stars of verses, each single star has an eye which looks to all stars and a face which is turned to them. See then the perfect order within the apparent lack of order, and take a lesson! Understand one meaning of the verse,

*We have not instructed [the Prophet] in poetry, nor is it meet for him!*⁴

Understand also from it that the mark of poetry is to adorn insignificant and dull facts with big and shining images and fancies, and make them attractive. Whereas the truths of the Qur'an are so great, elevated, shining and brilliant, that even the greatest and most brilliant imaginings are dull and insignificant in comparison with them. Innumerable truths like the following verses testify to this. For example:

*The Day that We roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books [completed].*⁵ * *He draws the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession.*⁶ * *It will be no more than a single blast, when lo! they will all be brought up before Us!*⁷

If you want to see and appreciate how, like shining stars, each of the

⁴ Qur'an, 36:69.

⁵ Qur'an, 21:104.

⁶ Qur'an, 7:54.

⁷ Qur'an, 36:53.

Qur'an's verses scatters the darkness of unbelief by spreading the light of miraculousness and guidance, imagine yourself in the age of ignorance and desert of savagery where everything was enveloped in veils of lifelessness and nature amid the darkness of ignorance and heedlessness. Then suddenly from the elevated tongue of the Qur'an, you hear verses like:

*Whatever is in the heavens and earth declares the praises and glory of God, the Sovereign, the Most Holy One, the Mighty, the Wise.*⁸

See how those dead or sleeping creatures of the world spring to life at the sound of declares the praises and glory in the minds of those listening, how they awake, spring up, and mention God's Names! And at the sound of,

*The seven heavens and the earth and all within them extol and glorify Him,*⁹

the stars in those black skies, all lifeless pieces of fire, and the wretched creatures on the face of the earth, present the following view to those listening: the sky appears as a mouth and the stars each as wisdom-displaying words and truth-uttering lights. The earth appears as a head, the land and sea as tongues, and all animals and plants as words of glorification. Otherwise you will not appreciate the fine points and pleasure at looking from this time to that. For if when you consider its verses, you see them as having scattered their light since that time, and become like universally accepted knowledge with the passage of time, and as shining with the other lights of Islam, and taking their colour from the sun of the Qur'an, or if you look at them through a superficial and simple veil of familiarity, you will not truly see the darkness each verse scatters or how sweet is the recital of its miraculousness, and you will not appreciate this sort of miraculousness among its many varieties. If you want to understand one of the highest degrees of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition's miraculousness, listen to the following comparison:

Let us imagine an extremely strange and vast and spreading tree which is concealed beneath a veil of the unseen and hidden in a level of concealment. It is clear that there has to be a relationship, harmony, and balance between a tree and all its members like its branches, fruits, leaves, and blossom, the same as between man's members. Each of its parts takes on a form and is given a shape in accordance with the nature of the tree. So if someone appears and traces a picture on top of the veil corresponding to the members of the tree, which has never been seen, then delimits each member, and from the branches to the fruit, and the fruit to the leaves draws a form proportionately, and fills the space between its source and extremities, which are an

⁸ Qur'an, 62:1.

⁹ Qur'an, 17:44.

infinite distance from one another, with drawings showing exactly the shape and form of its members, certainly no doubt will remain that the artist sees the concealed tree with an eye that penetrates and encompasses the unseen, then he depicts it.

In just the same way, the discriminating statements of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition concerning the reality of contingent beings (that is, concerning the reality of the tree of creation which stretches from the beginning of the world to the farthest limits of the hereafter, and spreads from the earth to the Divine Throne and from minute particles to the sun) have preserved the proportion between the members to such a degree and have given all the members and fruits a form so suitable that all investigative scholars have declared when they have concluded their researches into its depictions: "What wonders God has willed! How great are God's blessings!" They have said: "It is only you who solves and unravels the talisman of the universe and riddle of creation, O All-Wise Qur'an!"

"And God's is the highest similitude"¹⁰ –and there is no error in the comparison– let us represent the Divine Names and attributes, and dominical acts and deeds as a Tuba-tree of light, the extent of whose grandeur stretches from pre-eternity to post-eternity, and the limits of whose vastness spread through infinite, endless space, and encompass it, and the compass of whose deeds extend from,

It is God Who splits the seed-grain and date-stone,¹¹ and, Comes between man and his heart,¹² and, It is He Who shapes you in the wombs as He wishes,¹³

to,

Who created the heavens and the earth in six days,¹⁴ and, And the heavens rolled up in His right hand,¹⁵ and, He has subjected the sun and the moon.¹⁶

The All-Wise Qur'an has described that luminous reality, the truths of those Names and attributes, and acts and deeds, together with all their branches and twigs and aims and fruits in a way so harmonious, so fitting for one another, so appropriate for one another, without marring one another or spoiling the decree of one other, or their being remote from one another, that all those who have discerned the reality of things and penetrated the

¹⁰ Qur'an, 16:60.

¹¹ Qur'an, 6:95.

¹² Qur'an, 8:24.

¹³ Qur'an, 3:6.

¹⁴ Qur'an, 7:54, etc.

¹⁵ Qur'an, 39:67.

¹⁶ Qur'an, 13:2, etc.

mysteries, and all the wise and the sage who have journeyed in the realm of the inner dimension of things, have declared: “Glory be to God!” in the face of that Discriminating Exposition, and have affirmed it, saying: “How right, how conformable with reality, how fine, how worthy!”

Take, for example, the six pillars of belief, which resemble a single branch of those two mighty trees which look to the entire sphere of contingency and sphere of necessity: it depicts all the branches and boughs of those pillars –even the farthest fruits and flowers– observing such a harmony and proportion between them, and describes them in a manner so balanced, and illustrates them a way so symmetrical that the human mind is powerless to perceive it and stands astonished at its beauty. And the proof that a beauty of proportion and perfect relation and complete balance have been preserved between the five pillars of Islam, which are like one twig of the branch of belief, down to the finest details, smallest point of conduct, furthest aims, most profound wisdom, and most insignificant fruits, is the perfect order and balance and beauty of proportion and soundness of the Greater Shari’a of Islam, which has emerged from the decisive statements, senses, indications, and allusions of the comprehensive Qur’an; they form an irrefutable and decisive proof and just witness that cannot be doubted. This means that the expositions of the Qur’an cannot be attributed to man’s partial knowledge, and particularly to the knowledge of someone unlettered. They rest rather on a comprehensive knowledge and are the word of One able to see all things together and observe in one moment all truths between pre-eternity and post-eternity. The verse:

*Praise be to God, Who has revealed to His servant the Book, and has allowed no crookedness therein.*¹⁷

concerns this fact.

O God! O Revealer of the Qur’an! For the sake of the Qur’an and for the sake of the one to whom You revealed the Qur’an, illuminate our hearts and our graves with the light of belief and the Qur’an. Amen. O One from Whom help is sought!

¹⁷ Qur’an, 18:1.

The Second Station of the Thirteenth Word

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

[A conversation held with some young people who, though surrounded by temptation, had not yet lost their power of reason.]

Being assaulted by the deceptive, seductive amusements of the present time, a group of young people were asking: “How can we save our lives in the hereafter?”, and they sought help from the *Risale-i Nur*. So I said the following to them in the name of the *Risale-i Nur*:

The grave is there and no one can deny it. Whether they want to or not, everyone must enter it. And apart from the following three ‘Ways’, there is no other way it can be approached:

First Way: For those who believe, the grave is the door to a world far better than this world.

Second Way: For those who believe in the hereafter, but who approach it on the path of dissipation and misguidance, it is the door to a prison of solitary confinement, an eternal dungeon, where they will be separated from all their loved ones.

Third Way: For the unbelievers and the misguided who do not believe in the hereafter, it is the door to eternal extinction. That is to say, it is the gallows on which both themselves and all those they love will be executed. Since they think it is thus, that is exactly how they shall experience it: as punishment.

These last two Ways are self-evident, they do not require proof, they are plain for all to see. Since the appointed hour is secret, and death may come any time and cut off his head, and it does not differentiate between young and old, perpetually having such an awesome and serious matter before him, unhappy man will surely search for the means to deliver himself from that eternal extinction, that infinite, endless solitary confinement; the means to transform the door of the grave into a door opening on to an everlasting world, eternal happiness, and a world of light. It will be a question for him that looms as large as the world.

The certain fact of death, then, can only be approached in these three ways, and one hundred and twenty-four thousand veracious messengers –the prophets, in whose hands are miracles as signs of confirmation– have announced that the three ways are as described above. And, relying on their illuminations and visions, one hundred and twenty-four million saints have confirmed and set their signatures on the prophets’ tidings. And innumerable exact scholars have proved it rationally with their categorical proofs at the level of ‘certainty at the degree of knowledge.’¹ They have all unanimously declared it to be a ninety-nine per cent certain probability, saying: “The only way to be saved from extinction and eternal imprisonment, and be directed towards eternal happiness, is through belief in God and obedience to Him.”

If a person considers but does not heed the word of a single messenger not to take a dangerous road on which there is a one per cent danger of perishing, and takes it, the anxiety at perishing he suffers will destroy even his appetite for food. Thus hundreds of thousands of veracious and verified messengers announced that there is a one hundred per cent probability that misguidance and vice lead to the gallows of the grave, ever before the eyes, and eternal solitary confinement, and that there is a one hundred per cent probability that belief and worship remove those gallows, close the solitary prison, and transform the ever-apparent grave into a door opening onto an everlasting treasury and palace of felicity; and they have pointed out signs and traces of these. Confronted as he is, then, with this strange, awesome, terrifying matter, if wretched man –especially if he is a Muslim– does not believe and worship, is he able to banish the grievous pain arising from the anxiety he suffers as he all the time awaits his turn to be summoned to those gallows, ever-present before his eyes, even if he is given rule over the whole world together with all its pleasures? I ask you.

Since old-age, illness, disaster, and on all sides death open up the frightful pain and are a reminder, even if the people of misguidance and vice enjoy a hundred thousand pleasures and delights, they most certainly experience a sort of hell in their hearts, but a profound stupor of heedlessness temporarily makes them insensible to it.

Since for the people of belief and worship the grave, ever before their eyes, is the door to an everlasting treasury and eternal happiness, and since, by reason of the ‘belief coupon’, a ticket from the pre-eternal lottery of Divine Determining for millions upon millions of poundsworth of gold and diamonds has come up for each of them, they all the time await the word, “Come and collect your ticket” with a truly profound pleasure and real spiritual delight. This pleasure is such that if it materialized and the seed became a tree, it would be like a private paradise. However, one who abandons the

¹ One of these is the *Risale-i Nur*. And it is there for all to see.

delight and great pleasure due to the drives of youth, and chooses in a dissolute and licentious manner temporary illicit pleasures, which resemble poisonous honey polluted with those innumerable pains, falls to a degree a hundred times lower than an animal.

Furthermore, such a person will not be like unbelieving Europeans, for if they deny the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), they may recognize the other prophets. And if they do not know God, they may possess some good qualities which are the means to certain perfections. But a Muslim knows both the prophets, and his Sustainer, and all perfection by means of Muhammad the Arabian (PBUH). If one of them abandons the Prophet's instruction and puts himself outside his fold, he will not recognize any other prophet, neither will he recognize God. Nor will he know any of the fundamentals within his spirit which will preserve his perfections. For, since Muhammad (PBUH) is the last and greatest of the prophets, and his religion and summons are for the whole of mankind, and since he is superior to all with regard to his miracles and religion, and acts as teacher to all mankind in all matters concerning reality, and has proved this in a brilliant manner for fourteen centuries, and is the cause of pride for mankind, a Muslim who abandons Muhammad (PBUH)'s essential training and the principles of his religion will most certainly be unable to find any light, or achieve any perfection. He will be condemned to absolute decline.

And so, you unfortunates who are addicted to the pleasures of the life of this world, and with anxiety at the future, struggle to secure it and your lives! If you want pleasure, delight, happiness, and ease in this world, make do with what is licit. That is sufficient for your enjoyment. You will surely have understood from other parts of the *Risale-i Nur* that in each pleasure which is outside this and is illicit, lies a thousand pains. If the events of the future –for example, of fifty years hence– were shown in the cinema in the same way that they show at the present time the events of the past, those who indulge in vice would weep filled with horror and disgust at those things which now amuse them.

Those who wish to be permanently, eternally happy in this world and the next should take as their guide the instruction of Muhammad (PBUH) within the bounds of belief.

A Warning, Lesson and Reminder Given to a Number of Unhappy Youths

One day a number of bright youths came to me, seeking an effective deterrent in order to guard themselves against the dangers arising from life, youth, and the lusts of the soul. I said to these youths as I had to those who had previously sought help from the *Risale-i Nur*:

Your youth will definitely leave you, and if you do not remain within the bounds of the licit, it will be lost, and rather than its pleasures, it will bring you calamities and suffering in this world, in the grave, and in the hereafter. But if, through Islamic training, you spend the bounty of your youth as thanks honourably, in uprightness and obedience, it will in effect remain perpetually and will be the cause of gaining eternal youth.

As for life, if it is without belief, or because of rebelliousness belief is ineffective, it will produce pains, sorrows and grief far exceeding the superficial, fleeting enjoyment it brings. Because, since, contrary to the animals, man possesses a mind and he thinks, he is connected to both the present time, and to the past and the future. He can obtain both pain and pleasure from them. Whereas, since the animals do not think, the sorrows arising from the past and the fears and anxieties arising from the future do not spoil their pleasure of the present. Especially if the pleasure is illicit; then it is like an altogether poisonous honey.

That is to say, from the point of view of the pleasure of life, man falls to a level a hundred times lower than the animals. In fact, life for the people of misguidance and heedlessness, and indeed their existence, rather their world, is the day in which they find themselves. From the point of view of their misguidance, all the time and universes of the past are non-existent, are dead. So their intellects, which connect them to the past and the future, produce darkness, blackness for them. Due to their lack of belief, the future is also non-existent. Furthermore, because they think, the eternal separations resulting from this non-existence continuously produce darkness for their lives. But if belief gives life to life, through its light both the past and the future are illuminated and find existence. Like present time, it produces elevated, spiritual pleasures and lights of existence for the spirit and heart – in respect of belief. There is an explanation of this truth in the ‘Seventh Hope’ in *The Treatise for the Elderly*. You may refer to that.

Life is thus. If you want the pleasure and enjoyment of life, give life to your life through belief, and adorn it with religious duties, and preserve it by abstaining from sins.

Concerning the fearsome reality of death, which is demonstrated by deaths every day, everywhere, at all times, I shall explain it to you with a comparison, in the same way that I told the other youths.

For example, a gallows has been erected here in front of your eyes. Beside it is a lottery office, but one which gives tickets for truly huge prizes. We people here are ten people, whether we like it or not, we shall be summoned there; there is no other alternative. They will call us, and since the time is secret, any minute they may say either: "Come and collect the ticket for your execution! Mount the gallows!" Or: "A ticket to win a prize of millions of dollars' worth of gold has come up for you. Come and collect it!" While waiting for them to say this, two people suddenly appear at the door. One of them is a scantily dressed woman, beautiful and deceiving. In her hand is some apparently extremely delicious, but in fact poisonous, candy, which she has brought wanting us to eat it. The other is an undeceiving and undeceivable serious person. He enters behind the woman, and says:

"I have brought you a talisman, a lesson. If you study it, and if you do not eat that candy, you will be saved from the gallows. With this talisman, you will receive your ticket for the matchless prize. Look, you see with your own eyes that those who eat the honey mount those gallows, and until that time they suffer dreadful stomach pains from the poison of the candy. And who it is that will receive the ticket for the large prize is not apparent; it seems that they too mount the gallows. But there are millions of witnesses who testify that they can enter the prize arena easily. So, look from the windows! The highest officials and the high-ranking persons concerned with this business proclaim with loud voices: 'Just as you see with the clear certainty of your own eyes those mounting the gallows, so be certain as daylight, with no doubt or misgiving, that those with the talisman receive the ticket for the prize.'"

Thus, like the comparison, since the dissolute pleasures of youth in the sphere of the illicit, which are like poisonous honey, lose belief, which is the ticket for an eternal treasury and the passport for everlasting happiness, a person who indulges in them descends to death, which is like the gallows, and to the tribulations of the grave, which is like the door to eternal darkness. And since the appointed hour is unknown, its executioner, not differentiating between young and old, may come at any time to cut off your head. If you give up illicit desires, which are like the poisonous honey, and acquire belief and perform the religious duties, which are the Qur'anic talisman, one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets (Peace be upon them) together

with innumerable saints and people of truth have unanimously announced that you shall receive the ticket for the treasury of eternal happiness which comes up from the extraordinary lottery of human destiny. And they have pointed to traces of it.

In Short: Youth will go. And if it goes being squandered, it results in thousands of calamities and pains both in this world and in the next. If you want to understand how the majority of such youths end up in hospitals with imagined diseases arising from misspent youth and prodigality, and in prisons or hostels for the destitute through their excesses, and in bars due to the distress arising from their pain and suffering, then go and ask at the hospitals, prisons and graveyards.

For sure, just as you will hear from most of the hospitals the moans and groans of those ill from dissipation and debauchery resulting from the drives of youth, so will you hear from the prisons the regretful sighs of unhappy youths who are being punished for illicit deeds mostly resulting from the excesses of youth. And you will understand that most of the torments of the grave – that Intermediate Realm the doors of which continuously open and shut for those who enter it – are the result of misspent youth, as is testified to by those who have divined the life of the grave, and is affirmed by the people of reality.

Also, ask the elderly and the sick, who form the majority of mankind. Certainly, the great majority of them will say with sorrow and regret: “Alas! We wasted our youth on passion and fancy; indeed, harmfully. Be careful, do not do as we did!” Because, as a consequence of the illicit pleasures of five to ten years’ youth, a person suffers years of grief and sorrow in this world, torment and harm in the Intermediate Realm, and the calamities of Hell in the hereafter. And although such a person is in a most pitiable situation, he in no way deserves pity. For those who freely consent to indulge in harmful actions may not be pitied. They are not worthy of it.

May Almighty God save us and you from the alluring temptations of this time, and preserve us from them. Amen.

A Footnote to the Second Station of the Thirteenth Word

In His name, be He glorified!

Those in prison are in great need of the true consolation of the *Risale-i Nur*. Particularly those who having suffered the blows of youth, are passing their sweet, young lives in prison; they need the *Risale-i Nur* as much as they need bread.

Indeed, youth heeds the emotions rather than reason, and emotions and desires are blind; they do not consider the consequences. They prefer one ounce of immediate pleasure to tons of future pleasure. They kill for the one minute pleasure of revenge, then suffer for eighty thousand hours the pain of prison. And one hour's dissolute pleasure in questions of honour may result in life's enjoyment being utterly destroyed due to distress at the fear of both prison and enemies. There are many other examples, many pitfalls for the unfortunate young because of which they transform their sweet lives into the most bitter and pitiable lives.

Consider a vast state to the north;¹ it has gained possession of the passions of its young people and is shaking this century with its storms. For it has made lawful for its youths the pleasing daughters and wives of upright people, and these youths act only according to their feelings, which are blind to all consequences. By permitting men and women to go together to the public baths, they are even encouraging immorality. And they consider it lawful for vagabonds and the poor to plunder the property of the rich. All mankind trembles in the face of this calamity.

It is therefore most necessary in this century for all Muslim youths to act heroically, and to respond to this two-pronged attack with keen swords like the Fruits of Belief and the Guide For Youth from the *Risale-i Nur*. Otherwise those unfortunate youths will destroy utterly both their futures in this world, and their agreeable lives, and their happiness in the hereafter, and their eternal lives, and transform them into torment and suffering. And through their abuses and dissoluteness, they will end up in hospitals, and through their excesses in life, in prisons. In their old age, they will weep copiously with a thousand regrets.

¹ Russia. [Tr.]

If, on the other hand, they protect themselves with Qur'anic training and with the truths of the *Risale-i Nur*, they will become truly heroic youths, perfect human beings, successful Muslims, and in some ways rulers over animate beings and the rest of the animal kingdom.

When a youth in prison spends one hour out of the twenty-four each day on the five obligatory prayers, and repents for the mistakes that were the cause of his disaster, and abstains from other harmful, painful sins, this will be of great benefit for both his life, and his future, and his country, and his nation, and his relatives, and he will also gain with his fleeting youth of ten to fifteen years an eternal, brilliant youth. Foremost the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, and all the revealed scriptures, have given this certain good news.

If such a youth demonstrates through moderation and obedience, his gratitude for the pleasing, delightful bounty of youth, it will both increase it, and make it eternal, and make it a pleasure. Otherwise it will be both calamitous, and become painful, grievous, and a nightmare, and then it will depart. It will cause him to become like a vagrant, harmful for both his relatives, and his country, and his nation.

If the prisoner has been sentenced unjustly, on condition he performs the obligatory prayers, each hour will be the equivalent of a day's worship, and the prison will be like a recluse's cell. He will be counted among the pious hermits of olden times who retired to caves in order to devote themselves to worship. If he is poor, aged, and ill, and desirous of the truths of belief, on condition he performs the obligatory prayers and repents, each hour will become the equivalent of twenty hours' worship, and prison will become like a rest-house for him, and because of his friends there who regard him with affection, a place of love, training, and education. He will probably be happier staying in prison than being free, for outside he is confused and subject to the assaults of sins from all sides. He may receive a complete education from prison. On being released, it will not be as a murderer, or thirsting for revenge, but as someone penitent, proven by trial, well-behaved, and beneficial for his nation. In fact, the Denizli prisoners became so extraordinarily well-behaved after studying the *Risale-i Nur* for only a short time that some of those concerned said: "Studying the *Risale-i Nur* for fifteen weeks is more effective at reforming them than putting them in prison for fifteen years."

Since death does not die, and the appointed hour is unknown, it may come at any time; and since the grave cannot be closed, and troop after troop enter it and are lost; and since it has been shown through the truths of the Qur'an that for those who believe death is transformed into the discharge papers releasing them from eternal annihilation, while for the corrupt and the

dissolute it is disappearing for ever into eternal annihilation, and is unending separation from their loved ones and all beings, most certainly and with no doubt at all, the most fortunate person is he who with patience and thanks fully benefits from his time in prison, and studying the *Risale-i Nur* works to serve the Qur'an and his belief on the straight path.

O man who is addicted to enjoyment and pleasure! I am seventy-five years old, and I know with utter certainty from thousands of experiences, proofs, and events that true enjoyment, pain-free pleasure, grief-free joy, and life's happiness are only to be found in belief and in the sphere of the truths of belief. While a single worldly pleasure yields numerous pains; as though dealing ten slaps for a single grape, it drives away all life's pleasure.

O you unfortunate people who are experiencing the misfortune of prison! Since your world is weeping and your life is bitter, strive so that your hereafter will not also weep, and your eternal life will smile and be sweet! Benefit from prison! Just as sometimes under severe conditions in the face of the enemy, an hour's watch may be equivalent to a year's worship, so in the severe conditions you are experiencing, the hardship of each hour spent as worship becomes the equivalent of many hours, it transforms that hardship into mercy.

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In His Name, be He glorified!

My dear and loyal brothers!

I shall explain in three 'Points' an effective solace for those who are experiencing the calamity of prison, and for those who kindly help them and faithfully supervise their food, which comes from outside.

First Point: Each day spent in prison may gain as much as ten days' worship, and, with regards to their fruits, may transform those transient hours into enduring hours, and through five or ten years' punishment may be the means of saving a person from millions of years of eternal imprisonment. For the believers, the condition for gaining this most significant and valuable advantage is to perform the obligatory prayers, repent for the sins that were the cause of their imprisonment, and offer thanks in patience. For sure, prison is an obstacle to many sins; it does not provide the opportunity for them.

Second Point: Just as the cessation of pleasure causes pain, so does the cessation of pain give pleasure. Yes, on thinking of past happy, enjoyable days, everyone feels a pang of regret and longing, and says: "Alas!", and recalling calamitous, unhappy days of the past, experiences a sort of

pleasure since they are passed, and says: "Praise and thanks be to God, that calamity has left its reward and departed." He breathes a sigh of relief. That is to say, an hour's temporary pain and sorrow leave behind a sort of pleasure in the spirit, while a pleasurable hour leaves a pain.

Since the reality is thus; and since past calamitous hours together with their pains are no longer existent, and future distressing days are at the present time non-existent, and there is no pain from nothing, to continually eat bread and drink water today, for example, because of the possibility of being hungry and thirsty in several days' time, is most foolish. In just the same way, to think now of the past and future unhappy hours, which simply do not exist, and to display impatience, and ignoring one's faulty self, to moan as though complaining about God is also most foolish. So long as the power of patience is not scattered to left and right, that is, to the past and future, and is held firm in the face of the present of hour and day, it is sufficient. The distress is reduced from ten to one.

In fact, but let it not be complaining, Divine favour pointed out the above fact to me while, during a few days of material and spiritual affliction, illness and trial the like of which I had never before experienced in my life, I was being crushed in particular by the despair and distress of the heart and spirit which resulted from my being unable to serve the Qur'an and belief with the *Risale-i Nur*. I was then content with my distressing illness and imprisonment. For, saying: "It is great profit for an unfortunate like myself who waits at the door of the grave to make one hour which might be passed in heedlessness ten hours' worth of worship," I gave thanks.

Third Point: There is great gain in compassionately aiding and assisting prisoners, in giving them the sustenance they need, and in soothing their spiritual wounds with consolation. Giving them their food which comes from outside is like alms-giving which, exactly to the amount of the food, is written in the book of good deeds of those, outside and inside, who do this, together with the warders concerned. Especially if the unhappy prisoner is old, ill, poor, or a stranger, then the reward of this alms-giving increases many times over.

The condition of this high profit is to perform the obligatory prayers so that such service is for God's sake. Another condition is to hasten to their assistance with sincerity, compassion and joy, and in such a way as to not make them feel obliged.

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*In His Name, be He glorified!
And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.*

My friends in prison and brothers in religion!

It occurred to me to explain a truth to you which will save you from both worldly torment and the torment of the hereafter. It is as follows:

For example, a person killed someone's brother or one of his relatives. A murder which yields one minute's pleasure of revenge causes millions of minutes of both distress for the heart and the anguish of prison. And the fear of revenge by the murdered man's relatives, and anxiety of finding himself face to face with his enemy drives away all his pleasure in life. He suffers the torment of both fear and anger. There is only one solution for this, and that is reconciliation, which the Qur'an commands, and truth, reality, benefit, humanity, and Islam require and encourage.

Certainly, what is required in reality is peace, because the appointed hour is set, it does not change. Since his appointed hour had come, in any event the murdered man would have stayed no longer. As for the murderer, he was the means of God's decree being carried out. So long as there is no reconciliation, both sides perpetually suffer the torments of fear and revenge. It is because of this that Islam commands that "one believer should not be vexed with another believer for more than three days."¹ If the murder was not the result of a vindictive grudge and enmity, and a two-faced trouble-maker instigated the discord, it is essential to make peace quickly. Otherwise, that minor disaster becomes a large one, and continues. If they make peace, and the murderer repents and prays continuously for the man he killed, then both sides will gain much and become like brothers. In place of one departed brother, he will gain several religious brothers. He will be resigned to Divine Decree and Determining and forgive his enemy. Especially since they heed the lessons of the *Risale-i Nur*, both individual and public peace and well-being, and the brotherhood that there is in the sphere of the *Risale-i Nur*, require that they put aside all the hard feelings that exist between them.

It was thus in Denizli Prison; all the prisoners who were enemies became brothers through the lessons of the *Risale-i Nur*. It was one reason for our acquittal, and caused even the irreligious and ungodly to say about those prisoners: "Masha'llah! Barakallah!" And it was an utter relief for those prisoners. I myself have seen here a hundred men suffer inconvenience on account of one man and not go out to take exercise together. It is oppression towards them. A manly believer of sound conscience will not cause hundreds of other

¹ *Muslim*, Birr, 25.

believers harm because of some insignificant and minor error or benefit. If he makes a mistake and does cause harm, he should repent immediately.

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In His Name, be He glorified!

My loyal new brothers and old prisoners!

I have formed the firm conclusion that, in respect of Divine favour, you are an important cause in our entering here. That is to say, with its consolation and the truths of belief, the *Risale-i Nur* is to save both you from the distress of this calamity of prison and from much worldly harm, and your life from passing profitlessly and in vain through grief and sorrow and being wasted on the winds of fancy, and your hereafter from weeping like your world is weeping now; it is to provide you with true solace.

Since the reality of the matter is this, of course you must be brothers to one another, like the Denizli prisoners and Students of the *Risale-i Nur*. You can see that they examine all your possessions, food, bread, and soup which come from outside so that a knife does not get in among you and you do not attack one another. The warders who faithfully serve you suffer much trouble. Also, you do not go out to exercise together, as though you were going to attack one another like wild beasts. And so, new friends, who are by nature bold and courageous, with great moral courage you should say to the group at this time:

“If not knives, but Mausers and revolvers were given us, and the order to fire as well, we would not hurt our friends who are unfortunate and suffering this calamity like ourselves. Through the guidance and at the command of the Qur’an, and belief, and Islamic brotherhood, and our interests, we have decided to forgive them and to try not to offend them, even if formerly there were a hundred reasons for our enmity and hostility.” And so transform this prison into an auspicious place of study.

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AN IMPORTANT MATTER which occurred to my heart on the Night of Power

(The Addendum to the Second Station of the Thirteenth Word)

I shall allude briefly to a most extensive and lengthy truth which occurred to my heart on the Night of Power.

Because of the extreme tyranny and despotism of this last World War and its merciless destruction, and hundreds of innocents being scattered and ruined on account of a single enemy, and the awesome despair of the defeated, and the fearsome alarm of the victors and their ghastly pangs of conscience arising from the supremacy they are unable to maintain and the destruction they are unable to repair, and the utter transitoriness and ephemerality of the life of this world and the deceptive, opiate nature of the fantasies of civilization becoming apparent to all, and the exalted abilities lodged in human nature and the human essence being wounded in a universal and awesome manner, and man's innate love and desire for immortality being aroused and awakened, and heedlessness and misguidance and deaf, lifeless nature being smashed by the diamond sword of the Qur'an, and the exceedingly ugly, exceedingly cruel true face of world politics becoming apparent, which is the widest and most suffocating and deceptive cover for heedlessness and misguidance, most certainly and without any shadow of a doubt, since the life of this world –which is the metaphorical beloved of mankind– is thus ugly and transient, man's true nature will search with all its strength for eternal life, which it truly loves and yearns for, just as there are signs of this occurring in the North, the West, and in America.

Most certainly there is also no doubt that since the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, which each century for one thousand three hundred and sixty years has had three hundred and fifty million students, and sets the seal on each of its pronouncements and claims through the affirmation of millions of profound, veracious scholars, and each minute has been present with its sacredness in the hearts of millions of *hafiz's* and given instruction to mankind through their tongues, and which in a way unmatched by any other book conveys the good news of eternal life and everlasting happiness to mankind and heals all their wounds, –since the Qur'an has given this certain good news of eternal life and happiness with thousands of its insistent, powerful and repeated verses, and with its certain unshakeable proofs and innumerable indubitable arguments which invite and give news explicitly and implicitly tens of thousands of times, so long as human kind does not altogether lose its mind and a material or immaterial doomsday does not erupt over its head, the

broad masses and great states in the world will search out the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, and having grasped its truths, will embrace it with all their lives and spirits, just as there are [now] famous preachers in Sweden, Norway, Finland and England working to have the Qur'an accepted, and the important community of America is searching for the true religion. Because in view of this fact, the Qur'an by no means has – nor can have – any equal. Absolutely nothing can take the place of this greatest miracle.

SECONDLY: Since the *Risale-i Nur* has performed the service of a diamond sword in the hand of this greatest miracle and compelled its stubborn enemies to submit, and acts as a herald to the treasures of the Qur'an in a fashion that illuminates and heals completely both the heart, and the spirit, and the emotions, and has no source or authority other than the Qur'an and is its miracle, it performs that duty perfectly.

Furthermore it has completely routed the obstinate atheists and their fearsome propaganda against it, and smashed to pieces with the treatise *Nature: Cause or Effect* nature, which is the most impregnable bastion of misguidance, and, with the Sixth Topic of the treatise *Fruits of Belief* together with the First, Second, Third and Eighth Proofs all of which are included in the book *The Staff of Moses*, has banished heedlessness in a most brilliant fashion in its most dense, suffocating and extensive form beneath the wide-reaching veils of science and has demonstrated the light of Divine unity.

For sure, since religious instruction is now officially permitted and permission has been given to open private places of study, it is necessary for us and essential for the nation that, as far as is possible, Students of the *Risale-i Nur* should open a small '*Risale-i Nur* Study Centre' in every place. Although everyone would benefit to some extent, not everyone would understand every matter completely. But since these matters are explanations of the truths of belief, they are both learning, and knowledge of God, and lead to a sense of God's presence, and are worship.

God willing, these *Risale-i Nur* 'Medreses' will secure in five to ten weeks the results that the former medreses produced in five to ten years –and they have been so doing for twenty years.

Also, it is essential that the Government does not interfere with these flashes of the Qur'an, the *Risale-i Nur*, which is the Qur'an's herald and is beneficial in many ways for the worldly and political life of this nation and country, and for its life in the hereafter. Indeed, it should work for its total spread and acceptance, so that it may atone for the grievous sins of the past, and form a barrier to the severe trials and anarchy of the future.

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THE SIXTH TOPIC FROM *THE FRUITS OF BELIEF*

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

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

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

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

"And, for example, a depot, store, or shop in which has been brought together and stored up in regular and orderly fashion a thousand and one varieties of provisions undoubtedly makes known a wondrous owner, proprietor, and overseer of provisions and foodstuffs. In just the same way, to whatever degree it is vaster and more perfect than such a store or factory, this foodstore of the Most Merciful One known as the globe of the earth, this Divine ship, this dominical depot and shop holding goods, equipment, and

conserved food, which in one year travels regularly an orbit of twenty-four thousand years, and carrying groups of beings requiring different foods and passing through the seasons on its journey and filling the spring with thousands of different provisions like a huge waggon, brings them to the wretched animate creatures whose sustenance has been exhausted in winter, – by means of the measure or scale of the science of economics which you study – this depot of the earth makes known and makes loved its Manager, Organizer, and Owner.

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

“Another example: millions of electric lights that move and travel through a wondrous city, their fuel and power source never being exhausted, self-evidently make known a wonder-working craftsman and extraordinarily talented electrician who manages the electricity, makes the moving lamps, sets up the power source, and brings the fuel; they cause others to congratulate and applaud him, and to love him. In just the same way, although some of the lamps of the stars in the roof of the palace of the world in the city of the universe –if they are considered in the way that astronomy says– are a thousand times larger than the earth and move seventy times faster than a cannon-ball, they do not spoil their order, nor collide with one another, nor become extinguished, nor is their fuel exhausted. According to astronomy, which you study, for our sun to continue burning, which is a million times larger than the earth and a million times older and is a lamp and stove in one guest-house of the Most Merciful One, as much oil as the seas of the earth and as much coal as its mountains or as many logs and much wood as ten earths are necessary for it not to be extinguished. And however much greater

and more perfect than this example are the electric lamps of the palace of the world in the majestic city of the universe, which point with their fingers of light to an infinite power and sovereignty which illuminates the sun and other lofty stars like it without oil, wood, or coal, not allowing them to be extinguished or to collide with one another, though travelling together at speed, to that degree – by means of the measure of the science of electricity which you either study or will study – they testify to and make known the Monarch, Illuminator, Director, and Maker of the mighty exhibition of the universe; they make Him loved, glorified, and worshipped.

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

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

“It is in order to give instruction in this matter, which is a brilliant and magnificent proof of Divine unity, that the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition teaches us about our Creator most often with the verses, *Sustainer of the*

*Heavens and the Earth,*¹ and, *He created the Heavens and Earth.*”² I said this to the schoolboys, and they accepted it completely, affirming it by saying: “Endless thanks be to God, for we have received an absolutely true and sacred lesson. May God be pleased with you!” And I said:

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

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

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*³

* * *

¹ Qur’an, 6:1.

² Qur’an, 13:16.

³ Qur’an, 2:32.

THE AIR: A Window onto Divine Unity

*In His Name, be He glorified!
And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.*

My very dear and loyal brothers!

My brothers, I observed in a subtle point concerning God's unity, which suddenly became clear while studying the page of the air on a journey of the imagination and mind, that is, in the word *HE (HU)* in the phrases *THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE*, and, *SAY HE IS GOD*, (and that was only in its material aspect) that the way of belief is infinitely easy, easy to the point of being necessary, and that the way of misguidance and associating partners with God is infinitely difficult, so difficult as to be impossible. I shall explain that long and extensive point with an extremely brief indication.

Yes, if soil, one handful of which can act as a flower-pot for hundreds of plants in turn, is attributed to nature or causes, it becomes necessary either for there to be present in such a handful hundreds of immaterial machines, indeed, machines and factories to the number of the plants, or for each particle of that small amount of soil to know how to make all those different plants together with their different characteristics and living organs; quite simply, each would have to possess infinite knowledge and limitless power like a god.

The same is true for the air, which is a place of maximum manifestation of the Divine will and command; either there would have to be present on a minute scale in each of its molecules, in each waft of wind, each breath, and in the tiny amount air expended with the word *HE*, the innumerable different exchanges, centres, receivers and transmitters of all the telephones, telegraphs and radios in the world so that each could perform those innumerable acts at the same time; or else, each particle of each molecule of air exhaled with *HE*, and indeed of the element air, would have to possess abilities and personalities to the number of all the different telephone users, telegraphers, and those who speak on the radio, and know all their different languages, and broadcast them to the other particles at the same time. For such a situation is actually apparent, and every bit of air possesses that ability. Thus, in

the ways of the unbelievers, Naturalists, and Materialists not one impossibility, but impossibilities and difficulties are clearly apparent to the number of molecules of air.

If attributed to the All-Glorious Maker, however, the air together with all its particles becomes a soldier under His command. With its Creator's permission and through His power, and through being connected to its Creator and relying on Him, and through the manifestation of its Maker's Power, in an instant with the speed of lightning, and with the ease of uttering the word *HE* and the movement of the air in waves, its innumerable universal duties are performed as easily as an orderly, single duty of a single particle. That is to say, the air becomes a page for the endless, wonderful, and orderly writings of the pen of power, and its particles become the nibs of the pen, and their duties the points inscribed by it. The air functions as easily as the movement of a single particle.

Thus, while on my journey of contemplation prompted by the phrases *THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE*, and, *SAY, HE IS GOD*, and while observing the world of the air and studying the page of that element, I witnessed this brief truth with utter certainty and clarity, and in detail. And I understood with 'knowledge of certainty' that it was because there is in the word *HE*, in the air of its utterance, such a brilliant proof and flash of Divine unity, and also in its meaning and allusions such a luminous manifestation of Divine oneness and powerful proof of Divine unity, and in that proof an indication that since the pronoun *HE* is unconditional and indefinite, it suggests the question, "Who does it refer to?" that both the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition and those who constantly recite the Divine Names frequently repeat this sacred word in the station of unity.

If, for example, there is one point on a piece of white paper and two or three other points are jumbled around with it and then someone who already has numerous jobs tries to distinguish them, he will be confused; and if many burdens are loaded on a small creature, it will be crushed; and if numerous words issue from one tongue and enter one ear altogether at the same time, their order will be broken and they will be a muddle.

Despite this being the case, I saw with complete certainty that with the key and compass of *HE*, although thousands of different points, letters and words had been put in each molecule –and even in each particle– of the element air, through which I journeyed in my mind, neither did they become mixed up nor did they spoil their order; and although they performed a great many different duties, these were carried out without being confused in any way; and although very heavy loads were laid on each molecule and particle, they bore them in order without lagging or displaying any weakness at all. And I saw that thousands of different words of all different sorts enter and

issue with perfect order from what is in effect those minute ears and tongues without being mixed up and spoilt in any way, they enter those minute ears and issue from those tiny tongues, and by performing these extraordinary duties, each particle and each molecule declares through the enraptured tongue of its being and its perfect freedom, and through the testimony and tongue of the above truth: *THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE*, and: *SAY, HE IS GOD, THE ONE*, and travels among air-clashing waves like storms and lightning and thunder without in any way spoiling their order or confusing their duties. One duty is not an obstacle to another duty. I observed this and was utterly certain.

That is to say, either every particle and piece of the air has to possess infinite wisdom, knowledge, will, and power, and the qualities for being absolutely dominant over all the other particles so that it can be the means of those functions being carried out, which is absurd and impossible to the number of particles, and no devil even could imagine it, or else, and it is self-evident to the degree of 'knowledge of certainty,' 'vision of certainty,' and 'absolute certainty' that the page of the air functions through the boundless, infinite knowledge and wisdom of the All-Glorious One, and is the changing page for the pen of Divine Power and Determining, and like a signboard for writing and erasing, known as a Tablet of Appearance and Dissolution, which has the function of the Preserved Tablet in the world of transformation and change.

Thus, just as the element of air demonstrates the above-mentioned wonders and manifestation of Divine unity in only the duty of transmitting sound and shows the impossibilities of misguidance, so does it perform other important duties with order and without confusing them, such as transmitting subtle forces and energy, like electricity, light, and the forces of attraction and repulsion. At the same time as conveying these, with perfect order, it carries out duties essential for the lives of plants and animals, such as respiration and pollination. It proves in decisive fashion that it is a place of maximum manifestation of the Divine will and command. I came to the firm conclusion that it proves that in no way is there any possibility of vagrant chance, blind force, deaf nature, confused and aimless causes, and powerless, lifeless, unknowing matter interfering in the writing and duties of the page of the air. And I understood that every particle and part of it says with the tongue of its being: *SAY, HE IS GOD, THE ONE*, and: *THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE*. Just as with the key of HE I saw these wonders in the material aspect of the air, so also, as a HE, did the element of air become a key to the World of Similitudes and the World of Meaning.

I saw that the World of Similitudes is all the time taking innumerable photographs without confusing them, and that each photograph contains innumerable events occurring in this world. I understood that it was a

gigantic camera, and a vast cinema of the hereafter thousands of times larger than the world for showing in eternal theatres the fruits of the transitory and impermanent states and lives of ephemeral beings, for showing to those enjoying everlasting bliss in Paradise scenes from their old memories and adventures in this world.¹

While the faculties of memory and imagination, which are two proofs, two small examples, and two points of both the Preserved Tablet and the World of Similitudes situated in man's head, are as tiny as lentils, within them are written in perfect order and without being mixed up as much information as may be contained in a large library. This proves decisively that large examples of those faculties are the World of Similitudes and the Preserved Tablet.

It is definite and certain with 'knowledge of certainty' that the elements of air and water, and the element air and water like seminal fluid in particular, are far superior to the element of earth, and are written with more wisdom and will, and with the pen of Divine Determining and Power, and that it is completely impossible for chance, blind force, deaf nature, and lifeless and aimless causes to interfere in them, and that they are a page of the pen of Power and the wisdom of the All-Wise One of Glory.

¹ Since the time and place and conditions do not allow this to be proven with firm proofs and arguments like clear facts, it is cut short here.

The Fourteenth Word

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

Alif. Lam. Ra. [This is] a Book with verses fundamental [of established meaning]. Further explained in detail, from One All-Wise and Well-Acquainted [with all things].¹

[In order to ascend to some of the elevated truths of the All-Wise Qur'an, and of Hadiths, which are the true expounder of the Qur'an, we shall point out a number of comparisons of those truths which are like steps to assist hearts deficient in submission and obedience, and shall explain in the Conclusion an object lesson and a mystery concerning Divine favour. Since from among those truths, comparisons of the Resurrection and the Day of Judgement have been mentioned in the Tenth Word, and its Ninth Truth in particular, there is no need to repeat them. Here we shall mention only five 'Matters' as examples of the other truths.]

THE FIRST: For example, in order to induce certainty about the verse,

He created the heavens and the earth in six days,²

and the elevated truth it alludes to through the Qur'anic days, which consist of a long period of time like perhaps a thousand or fifty thousand years, that man's world and that of the animals will last six days, we draw attention to the travelling worlds, transient universes, and passing cosmoses which the Glorious Maker creates every day, every year, every century, each of which is like a day. It is as though these worlds are all guests like man. At the All-Glorious One's command, each season the world is filled and emptied.

THE SECOND: For example, the verses,

*Nor anything fresh or dry but is [inscribed] in a Record Clear.³ * And*

¹ Qur'an, 11:1.

² Qur'an, 7:54.

³ Qur'an, 6:59.

*of all things have We taken account in a Clear Book.⁴ * From Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the heavens or on earth; nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but it is in the Record Clear.⁵*

In order to be convinced of the elevated truth which these verses state, that, “All things together with all their states are recorded before they come into existence, when they come into existence, and after they have departed; and they are being recorded,” we point out to be observed the All-Glorious Inscriber’s including and preserving in immaterial fashion in the seeds and roots of the innumerable well-ordered creatures which He changes every season on the page of the earth, and particularly in the spring, the indexes of their beings, life-histories, and principles according to which they act; and when they die His inscribing in immaterial fashion with the same pen of Divine Determining those indexes, life-histories and principles in the simple seeds in their fruits; and every passing spring even His preserving them –whether fresh or dry– in perfect order in seeds like dry chips of wood and bones, limited and tiny. It is as if each spring is attached like a flower to the face of the earth in extremely orderly and balanced fashion by the hand of One All-Beautiful and All-Glorious, then plucked from it; each is placed on it, then removed. While the reality is this, one of the strangest forms of man’s misguidance is that he calls this natural writing, this inscribing full of art, this passive pattern of wisdom which is an index of dominical art and only a reflection and manifestation of the Preserved Tablet, ‘nature’, and considers it to be the source and active and effective. Can there be any comparison between the ground and the Pleiades? Can there be any comparison between reality and the views of the heedless?

THE THIRD: For example, in order to ascend to the truth which the Bringer of Sure News described concerning the Bearers of the Throne, the angels appointed to the earth and the skies, and other sorts of angels, stating that they glorify God with forty thousand heads, and with the forty thousand tongues in each head, and in forty thousand ways with each tongue, consider the following carefully. Through verses like,

*The seven heavens and the earth and all within them glorify and extol Him.⁶ * It was We Who made the hills declare in unison with him Our praises.⁷ * We did indeed offer the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains,⁸*

the All-Glorious One expresses clearly that even the greatest and most

⁴ Qur’an, 36:12.

⁵ Qur’an, 34:3.

⁶ Qur’an, 17:44.

⁷ Qur’an, 38:18.

⁸ Qur’an, 33:72.

universal of beings demonstrate that they glorify Him in accordance with their universality and in a way appropriate to their vastness. And it appears to be thus. Just as the words of glorification of the heavens, which are an ocean glorifying God, are the suns, moons, and stars, so the words of praise of the earth, a flying thing praising and glorifying, are the animals, plants and trees. That is to say, just as the trees and stars all perform particular forms of glorification, so does the earth and every part of the earth, and all the mountains and valleys, and the land and the sea, and the spheres of the firmament and the constellations in the heavens all perform universal forms of glorification. The earth, which possesses these thousands of heads containing thousands of tongues, certainly has an angel appointed to it who translates and displays in the World of Similitudes the flowers of glorification and fruits of praise it performs with each, and who represents and proclaims them in the World of Spirits.

Indeed, if numerous things take on the form of a collectivity, a collective personality comes into being. If such a collectivity fuses and becomes a unity, it will have a collective personality and a sort of spirit which will represent it, and an appointed angel who will perform its duty of glorification. As an example, consider the plane-tree in front of my room here, a mighty word of the mouth of Barla and the tongue of this mountain: see how many hundreds of tongues of smaller branches there are on the three heads of the three main branches of its trunk. Study carefully how many hundreds of words of well-ordered and balanced fruits it has, and how many hundreds of letters of well-proportioned winged seeds; just as you hear and see how eloquently it praises and glorifies the All-Glorious Maker, the Owner of the command of “*Be!*” *and it is*, so too the angel appointed to it represents its glorification with numerous tongues in the World of Meaning. Wisdom necessitates that it is so.

THE FOURTH: For example, consider the elevated truth expressed by verses like:

*Indeed, His command when He wills a thing, is, “Be!”, and it is.⁹ * And the decision of the Hour is as the twinkling of an eye.¹⁰ * And We are closer to him than his jugular vein.¹¹ * The angels ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years,¹²*

which is that the Absolutely Powerful One creates things with such ease and speed, with such facility and lack of trouble, that it appears and is understood that He creates with a mere command. Also, although the All-

⁹ Qur’an, 36:82.

¹⁰ Qur’an, 16:77.

¹¹ Qur’an, 50:16.

¹² Qur’an, 70:4.

Powerful Maker is infinitely close to beings, they are infinitely distant from him. Furthermore, despite His infinite might and glory, attaching importance to them, He also sets in order the most insignificant and lowly matters, and does not deny them the beauty of His art. Thus, the perfect order within absolute ease observed in beings testifies to the existence of this Qur'anic truth. The following comparison demonstrates its meaning and wisdom. For example, *And God's is the highest similitude*, the duties the sun displays through the dominical command and Divine subjugation, which is like a dense mirror to the Divine Name of Light among the All-Glorious Maker's Most Beautiful Names, brings this truth closer to the understanding. It is as follows:

Although through its elevatedness, the sun is infinitely close to all transparent and shining things, indeed, is closer to them than their own selves, and although it has an effect on them in numerous ways like through its manifestation, its image, and power of disposal, those transparent objects are thousands of years distant from it, they can in no way have an effect on it, they cannot claim to be close to it. Also, the sun's being as though present and seeing in all transparent particles, and wherever its light enters even, is understood through the sun's reflection and its image being apparent in accordance with the particles' capacities and colours. Furthermore, the sun's comprehensiveness and penetration increase to the vast extent of its luminosity. It is because of the greatness of its luminosity that the tiniest things cannot hide or escape from it. This means that through the mystery of luminosity its immense vastness does not exclude even insignificant and tiny things; on the contrary, it takes them within the sphere of its comprehension. Moreover, if to suppose the impossible we were to imagine the sun acted with will in the tasks and manifestations its displays, with Divine permission it would function with such ease and speed and breadth in everything from particles and droplets and the surface of the sea to the planets, that it would be supposed that it performed these mighty disposals through a mere command. A particle and a planet would be equal before its command. The effulgence it would bestow on the surface of the sea, it would bestow also with perfect order on a particle in accordance with the particle's capacity.

Thus, we see that the sun, which is a luminous bubble in the seas of the skies and a small and dense mirror to the manifestation of the Absolutely Powerful One's Name of Light, observedly displays examples of the three principles of this truth. So we surely believe with complete certainty as though witnessing it that the All-Glorious One, Who is the Light of Light, the Illuminator of Light, the Determiner of Light, and in comparison to Whose knowledge and power the sun's light and heat is like earth, is all-present and all-seeing and infinitely close to all things with His knowledge and power, and that things are utterly distant from Him, and that He does

things with such ease and facility that it is understood He creates with the ease and speed of a mere command, and that nothing at all, great or small, particular or universal, can escape from the sphere of His power, and that His magnificence encompasses all things. And this has to be believed.

THE FIFTH: While the limits of the vastness of the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity's dominicality and the tremendousness of His Godhead stretch from,

*No just estimate have they made of God, such as is due to Him: on the Day of Judgement the whole of the earth will be but His handful, and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand*¹³

to,

*And know that God comes between man and his heart,*¹⁴

and from,

*God is the Creator of All Things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs,*¹⁵

to,

*[God] knows what they hide as well as what they disclose,*¹⁶

and from,

*[Who] created the heavens and the earth,*¹⁷

to,

*God has created you and what you do,*¹⁸

and from,

*God has willed this! There is no power but with God,*¹⁹

to,

*But you will not, except as God wills,*²⁰

what is the purpose of His stern complaints and severe and awesome threats in the Qur'an against the sons of Adam, so impotent and infinitely weak and utterly poor and endlessly needy, who possess only partial will and have no power to create? In what way is it conformable, and how is it appropriate? In order to be convinced of this profound and elevated truth, consider the following two comparisons:

First Comparison: For example, there was a royal garden in which innumerable fruit-bearing and flowering things were found. Many servants were

¹³ Qur'an, 39:67.

¹⁴ Qur'an, 8:24.

¹⁵ Qur'an, 39:62.

¹⁶ Qur'an, 2:77, etc.

¹⁷ Qur'an, 7:54, etc.

¹⁸ Qur'an, 37:96.

¹⁹ Qur'an, 18:39.

²⁰ Qur'an, 76:30.

appointed to attend to it. The duty of one of the servants was only to open the water canal so that the water could spread throughout the garden and be benefited from. But the servant was lazy and did not open the canal, so harm came to the growth of the garden, or else it dried up. All the other servants had the right to complain, not about the Creator's dominical art and the Sultan's royal supervision and the obedient service of the light, air, and earth, but about that foolish servant, for their duties were all made fruitless, or else harm came to them.

Second Comparison: For example, if, through abandoning his minor duty on a mighty royal ship, a common man causes harm to come to the results of the duties of all the others employed on the ship, and some of them even are made to come to nothing, the ship's owner will complain bitterly about him in the name of all the others. And the one at fault cannot say: "I'm just an ordinary person. I don't deserve this severity because of my unimportant omission." For a single instance of non-existence results in innumerable such instances, whereas existence yields results in accordance with itself. For although the existence of a thing is dependent on the existence of all the conditions and causes, its non-existence, its removal, occurs with the removal of a single condition and results from the non-existence of a single particular. It is because of this that 'destruction is much easier than repair' has become like a universally accepted principle. Since the bases of unbelief and misguidance, and rebellion and sin are denial and rejection, they are an abandoning and non-acceptance. However positive and possessing of existence they appear superficially, in reality they are removal and non-existence. In which case they are a contagious crime. Just as they cause harm to the results of the acts of other beings, so they draw a veil over the manifestation of the beauties of the Divine Names.

The Monarch of Beings, Whose right it is to make these innumerable complaints, therefore utters awesome complaints about rebellious man in the name of those beings. And to do so is perfect wisdom. Rebellious man is certainly deserving of His severe and awesome threats; without doubt he deserves them.

Conclusion

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
And what are the goods of this world but the goods of deception?*²¹

[A slap for the heedless and a warning lesson]

O my wretched soul sunk in heedlessness, which sees this life as sweet, has forgotten the hereafter, and seeks only this world! Do you know what you resemble? An ostrich! It sees the hunter, but cannot fly, so sticks its head in the sand so the hunter will not see it. Its bulky body remains in the open, and the hunter sees it. Only, its eyes are closed in the sand and it cannot see him. O my soul, consider the following comparison, and see it!

Restricting one's view to this world transforms a great pleasure into a grievous pain. For example, there are two men in this village, that is, in Barla. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of the friends of one of them have gone to Istanbul, where they are living in fine fashion. Only one has remained here, and he too will go there. For this reason, the man longs for Istanbul and thinks of it; he wants to join his friends. When he is told to go there, he is overjoyed and goes happily. As for the second man, ninety-nine of his friends have departed from here. But some have perished, and some have been put in places where they neither see nor are seen. He imagines that they have departed and disappeared in utter misery. This wretched man becomes friendly with a single guest in place of all of them, and wants to find consolation. Through him he wants to forget his grievous pain of separation.

O my soul! Foremost God's Beloved, and all your friends, are beyond the grave. The one or two who remain will also depart for there. So do not be frightened of death, anxious at the grave, and avert your head. Look manfully at the grave, and listen to what it seeks. Laugh in death's face like a man, and see what it wants. Beware, do not be heedless and resemble the second man.

O my soul! Do not say, "The times have changed, this age is different, everyone is plunged into this world and worships this life. Everyone is drunk with the struggle for livelihood." For death does not change. Separation is not

²¹ Qur'an, 3:185.

transformed into permanence and does not become different. Man's impotence and poverty do not change, they increase. Man's journey is not cut, it becomes faster.

Also, do not say, "I am like everyone else." For everyone befriends you only as far as the grave, and the consolation of being together with everyone else in disaster has no meaning beyond the grave. And do not suppose yourself to be free and independent. For if you look at this guest-house of the world with the eye of wisdom, you will see that nothing at all is without order and without purpose. How can you remain outside the order and be without purpose? Events in the world like earthquakes are not the playthings of chance. For example, you see that the extremely well-ordered and finely embroidered shirts, one over the other and one within the other, which are clothed on the earth from the species of animals and plants, are adorned and decked out from top to bottom with purposes and instances of wisdom, and you know that the earth revolves and is turned like an ecstatic Mevlevi in perfect order within most exalted aims. How is it then, as an atheist published, they suppose the death-tainted events of the earth, like the earthquake,²² which resembles the earth's shaking off itself the weight of certain forms of heedlessness of which it disapproves from mankind, and especially from the believers, to be without purpose and the result of chance? How is it that they show the grievous losses of all those stricken to be without recompense and to have gone for nothing, and cast them into a fearsome despair? They are both making a great error and perpetrating a great wrong. Indeed, such events occur at the command of One All-Wise and All-Compassionate, in order to transform the transient property of the believers into the equivalent of alms, and make it permanent. And they are atonement for their sins arising from ingratitude for bounties. Just as a day will come when this subjugated earth will see the works of man, which are the adornment of its face, to be tainted by the attributing of partners to God and not to be the cause of thanks, and it will find them ugly. At the Creator's command, it will wipe them off its entire face and cleanse it. At God's command, it will pour those who attribute partners to God into Hell, and say to those who offer thanks, "Come and enter Paradise!"

²² This was written in connection with the Izmir earthquake.

The Addendum to the Fourteenth Word

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

*When the earth is shaken to its [utmost] convulsion, * And the earth throws up its burdens [from within], * And man cries [distressed] “What is the matter with it?” * On that Day will it declare its tidings. * For that your Sustainer will have given it inspiration.²³*

This Sura states definitely that in its movements and earthquakes the earth shakes at a command, on receiving revelation and inspiration. And sometimes it trembles.

[Prompted by an inspiration, the answers occurred to me to six or seven minor questions related to the current earthquakes, importantly from the point of view of their meaning. Although on several occasions I intended to write them in detail, permission was not given, so they have been written briefly and in short.]

First Question: More distressing than the material disaster of the present severe earthquake are its immaterial aspects; the fear and despair at further earthquakes is destroying the nightly rest of most of the people in most areas. What is the reason for this terrible torment?

The Answer, again in regard to its Meaning: It has been said that the drunken, licentious songs, some of which were performed by girls, being broadcast rapturously by means of the radio during the tarawih prayers of the month of Ramadan in every corner of this blessed centre of Islam resulted in the torment of this fear.

Second Question: Why aren't these heavenly blows dealt at the unbelievers in their countries? Why are they visited on the unhappy Muslims?

The Answer: Just as the requital for big mistakes and crimes is postponed and made in big centres, and the requital for small crimes is made quickly in small centres, as a consequence of an important instance of wisdom, the recompense of the greater part of the unbelievers' crimes is

²³ Qur'an, 99:1-5.

postponed to the Last Judgement, while the punishment for the believers' faults is in part given in this world.²⁴

Third Question: What is the reason for this disaster, which arises from the wrongdoing of a few individuals, occurring to a degree generally throughout the country?

The Answer: The general disaster results from the wrongdoing of the majority: most people in effect participate in the actions of those tyrannical individuals by supporting them either actively or morally or in some connection.

Fourth Question: Since this disaster of an earthquake results from wrongdoing and is atonement for sins, why are the innocent and those not at fault struck by it? How does Divine justice permit this?

The Answer, again in regard to its meaning: Since this matter concerns the mystery of Divine Determining, we refer you to the *Risale-i Nur* and here only say this:

*And fear tumult or oppression, which affects not in particular [only] those of you who do wrong.*²⁵

That is, beware of the calamity or disaster which when it occurs is not restricted to wrongdoers but strikes the innocent as well.

The meaning of the above verse is as follows: this world is a field of trial and examination, and a place of striving where man is accountable for his actions. Accountability and examination require that reality remains veiled so that through competition and striving the Abu Bakr's may rise to the highest of the high and the Abu Jahl's may enter among the lowest of the low. If the innocent remained untouched by such disasters, the Abu Jahl's would submit just like the Abu Bakr's, and the door of spiritual and moral progress through striving would be closed and the mystery of accountability spoiled.

Since Divine wisdom requires that oppressed and oppressor are together afflicted by disaster, what then is the share of the wretched oppressed of Divine mercy and justice?

It was said in reply to this question: for them there is a manifestation of mercy within the wrath and anger in the disaster. For just as the transient pro

perty of the innocent becomes like alms and gains permanence, the relatively little and temporary difficulty and torment is a form of martyrdom for them

²⁴ Furthermore, in abandoning an abrogated and corrupted religion, people like the Russians do not incur Divine wrath to the extent of those who betray a true and eternal religion which may not be abrogated. Thus, the earth leaves them at present, and displays its anger towards those here.

²⁵ Qur'an, 8:25.

which also gains for their transient lives a permanent life. The earthquake earns for them a huge, perpetual profit, so for them is an instance of Divine mercy within the wrath.

Fifth Question: Why does the One Who is All-Just and All-Compassionate, All-Powerful and All-Wise, not give particular punishments for particular wrongs, but inflicts a mighty element? How is this in keeping with the beauty of His mercy and His all-encompassing power?

The Answer: The All-Powerful One of Glory gives numerous duties to each element and through each duty causes them to produce numerous different results. If one result of one of an element's duties is ugly, evil, or calamitous, the other good results make this result good also. If the element, which is angry at man, is prevented from that duty so that the single ugly result will not occur, then instances of good to the number of the good results will be abandoned, and so since not doing a necessary good is evil, instances of evil will be perpetrated to the number of the instances of good. A single evil not occurring would be extremely ugly, contrary to wisdom, contrary to reality, and a fault. And power, wisdom and reality are free of fault. Since certain errors constitute rebellion comprehensive enough to make the earth and elements angry, and are insulting aggression against the rights of numerous creatures, for sure, in order to demonstrate the extraordinary ugliness of such a crime, the command being given to a mighty element to "reprimand them" among its other general duties, is perfect wisdom and justice, and for the oppressed, perfect mercy.

Sixth Question: The neglectful and heedless put it about that the earthquake resulted from a fault in the rock strata inside the earth, and look upon it as quite simply a chance event, natural, and without purpose. They do not see the non-material causes and results, so that they can come to their senses. Does 'matter', on which they base their views, have some reality?

The Answer: It has no reality other than misguidance for the following reason. Take the fly out of all the species on the earth, which each year is clothed in and changes more than fifty million finely embroidered well-ordered shirts: the intention, will, purpose, and wisdom manifested on the wing of a single fly, which is only one organ out of hundreds of one individual fly out of the countless numbers of all flies on the face of the earth, the fact that it is not neglected or left to its own devices, shows that the significant acts and states of the huge globe of the earth, which is the cradle, mother, place of recourse, and protector of innumerable conscious beings – no aspect of it whether particular or universal – can be outside the Divine will, choice, and purpose. However, as is required by His wisdom, the Possessor of absolute power makes apparent causes a veil to His disposals. When He wills an earthquake, and sometimes He does, He commands the

movement of the strata and ignites them. Even if it results from this movement or a fault in the strata, it is still at the Divine command and in accordance with His wisdom; it cannot occur in any other way.

For example, one man shot another with a rifle. If the man who fired the shot is entirely disregarded, and only the gunpowder in the bullet igniting is taken into consideration, the rights of the wretched victim would be completely violated, and it would be the epitome of foolishness. In just the same way, to forget the dominical command concerning the earth, which is a docile official of the All-Powerful One of Glory, rather, a ship or an aeroplane of His: “Explode a bomb inside the earth prepared through wisdom and will in order to arouse the heedless and the rebellious;” to forget this and to deviate into ‘nature’, is the very peak of stupidity.

An Addition and Footnote to the Sixth Question: In order to defend their way and counter the awakening of the believers and hinder them, the people of misguidance and the atheists display an obduracy so strange and a stupidity so peculiar that it makes a person regret his humanity. For example, in order to make men give up their wicked and wrongful rebellion which recently has to a degree taken on a general form, and to arouse mankind and make it forego this awesome revolt and recognize the universe’s Sovereign, Whom it does not want to recognize, the Creator of the heavens and the earth –not on account of a particular title but as Sustainer and Ruler of the whole universe and all the worlds and through a widespread and general manifestation throughout the universe in the universal sphere of His dominicality– has struck mankind in the face with awesome and widespread calamities like earthquakes, storms, and world wars through the universal elements coming to anger –through water, the air, and electricity, which are matchless and constant– and has demonstrated through them in most clear fashion His wisdom, power, justice, and self-subsistence. Although this is the case, certain brainless satans in human form respond to these universal dominical signs and divine reprimands with a foolish obstinacy, saying:

“It’s nature. It’s the explosion of some strata under the earth and just chance. It’s the sun’s heat clashing with electricity, which happened in America and brought all machinery to a standstill for five hours, and also caused the atmosphere in Kastamonu Province to turn red and take on the appearance of a conflagration.” They utter meaningless nonsense like this. Due to a boundless ignorance resulting from misguidance and an ugly obduracy arising from aggressive atheism, they do not know that causes are only each a pretext and a veil. A small seed taking the place of a village full of factories and looms to weave and produce the members of a pine-tree as large as a mountain shows this. By saying, “The tree emerged from the seed,” they in effect deny the thousand miracles displayed in the pine tree, and put forward a number of apparent causes. They reduce to nothing a

huge dominical act worked through the Creator's will and wisdom. Sometimes they attach a scientific name to a most profound, unknowable, and important truth which has purposes in a thousand respects, as though through the name it has been understood. Whereas it is merely made commonplace, and without purpose, wisdom, or meaning.

So, come and see the innumerable degrees of stupidity and foolishness! They attach a name to a truth so profound and broad and unknown it could be completely understood only if it and its purposes and instances of wisdom were described in a hundred pages. As though it were something obvious they say: "It is this." For example, "It is some substance in the sun clashing with electricity." Furthermore, they ascribe a particular and intentional dominical event to one of the natural laws, which are each the titles of universal and all-encompassing will and universal sovereignty, and are known as 'Divine laws.' And by doing this they sever its connection with Divine will and choice, then refer it to chance and nature. They display an ignorance more profound than Abu Jahl. It is a rebellious foolishness like attributing the victorious battle of an individual soldier or a battalion to military regulations and discipline, and cutting its connection with the commander, king, government, and purposeful action.

Similarly, if a wonder-working craftsman produces a hundred *okkas*²⁶ of various foodstuffs and a hundred yards of varying cloths from a chip of wood the size of fingernail, like the creation of a fruitbearing tree from a seed, and someone points to the chip of wood and declares that these things have come into being out of it 'naturally' and 'through chance,' reducing to nothing the craftsman's wondrous arts and skills, what utter lunacy it would be. It is exactly the same as that....

Seventh Question: What should be understood from this event of the earth's happening to the Muslim people of this country and being aimed at them? And why are the areas of Erzincan and Izmir affected most?

The Answer: As is indicated by many signs, like the event occurring during a hard winter in the dark of night in severely cold weather, and its restriction to a region where due respect is not paid to the month of Ramadan, and the earthquakes continuing mildly in order to arouse the neglectful –it suggests the earthquakes are aimed at and look to the believers and are shaking the earth in order to warn them to perform the prayers and their supplications, and the earth itself is shaking. There are two reasons for places like unfortunate Erzincan being shaken more than other places:

One: Since its faults are few, their purification has been expedited.

The Second: Since there is the opportunity in places like that of strong

²⁶ 1 *okka* = approx. 2.8 lbs. or 1,300 grams.

and loyal defenders of the faith and protectors of Islam being defeated to a degree or entirely and atheists establishing an effective centre of activity, it is possible that punishment has been visited on them first. None knows the Unseen save God.

*All Glory be unto You, we have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*²⁷

²⁷ Qur'an, 2:32.

The Fifteenth Word

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
And We have adorned the lowest heaven with lamps, and We have made them
missiles to drive away the evil ones.¹*

Oh, modern-educated Sir whose brain has shrunk through studying the soulless matters of astronomy, whose mind can see no further than the tip of his nose, and who cannot squeeze the mighty mystery of the above verse into his constricted brain! The heaven of the verse may be reached by a stairway of Seven Steps. Come, let us climb them together!

FIRST STEP: Truth and wisdom require that the heavens have inhabitants appropriate to them as the earth has. According to the Shari'a, those various beings are called angels and spirit beings. Reality requires it to be thus, for despite its small size and insignificance, the earth being filled with living and conscious beings, then emptied from time to time and once again repopulated suggests, indeed makes it clear, that the heavens too, in which are magnificent constellations and are like adorned palaces, should be filled with conscious and percipient creatures. Like men and jinn, those creatures are spectators of the palace of the universe, the observers of the book of creation, and the heralds of the sovereignty of dominicality. For the universe is arrayed and embellished with innumerable adornments, decorations, and ornaments, and self-evidently requires the thoughtful gazes of those who will appreciate it and wonder at it. Certainly, beauty requires a lover and sustenance is given to the hungry. However, man and jinn are able to perform only a millionth of this endless duty, this grand viewing, this extensive worship. That is to say, endless sorts of angels and spirit beings are necessary to perform these endless duties and diverse worship.

As is indicated by certain narrations and the wisdom in the order of the universe, some kinds of travelling bodies, from planets to drops of water, are the mounts of one kind of angel. It may be said that they mount them with

¹ Qur'an, 67:5.

God's permission and tour and gaze upon the manifest world. It also may be said that one type of animal bodies, from the birds of Paradise called 'The Green Birds'² in a Hadith, to flies, are the aircraft for a sort of spirit being. They enter them at God's command, travel around the physical universe, observing the miracles of creation through the windows of the senses of the animals' bodies.

The Creator, Who continuously creates subtle life and luminous percipient beings from dense earth and turbid water, surely also creates conscious beings suitable for spirit and life, from those seas of light and even from the oceans of darkness. And He creates them in great abundance. The existence of angels and spirit beings has been proved with the certainty of two plus two equals four in my treatise entitled *Nokta (Point)*, and in the *Twenty-Ninth Word*. If you wish, you may refer to them.

SECOND STEP: The earth and the heavens are connected to one another like two countries under a single government. There are important relations and transactions between them. Things necessary for the earth like light, heat, blessings, and mercy in the form of rain come from the sky, that is, they are sent. According to the consensus of the revealed religions, which are founded on revelation, and the agreement of all those who uncover the mysteries of the universe, relying on what they have witnessed, the angels and spirit beings descend to the earth from the skies. From this it may be understood through a surmise so certain it can almost be felt that for the inhabitants of the earth there is a way to ascend to the heavens.

Indeed, everyone's mind, imagination, and gaze perpetually rise to the skies. So too, having discarded all heaviness do the spirits of the prophets and saints rise there with God's permission, and having stripped off their bodies, the spirits of the dead. Since those who become light and subtle rise to the heavens, for sure, one sort of the inhabitants of the earth and the air who are clothed in what resembles a body and are light and subtle like spirits may rise there.

THIRD STEP: The silence and tranquillity of the heavens, and their order and regularity, and vastness and luminosity, show that their inhabitants are not like those of the earth; they are obedient, they do whatever they are commanded. Because the country is vast there is nothing to cause overcrowding and disputes. Their natures are pure, they are innocent, their stations are fixed.

On the earth, opposites come together, evils are mixed with good, and disputes start between them. For this reason, conflict and suffering are born. And from them examination and competition are set. And from them progress and retrogression occur. The wisdom in these facts is as follows:

² *Muslim*, Imara, 121; *Tirmidhi*, Tafsir Sura iii:19; *Ibn Maja*, Jana'iz, 4; *Jihad*, 16; *Darimi*, Jihad, 18; *Musnad*, vi, 386

Man is the fruit of the tree of creation, its furthest part. It is well-known that the fruit of something is its most distant, most comprehensive, most delicate, and most important part. Therefore, since man, who is the fruit of the universe, is a most comprehensive, most wonderful, most powerless, most weak, and most subtle miracle of power, the earth, which is his cradle and dwelling-place, is the heart and centre of the whole universe as regards meaning and art, despite being physically small and insignificant in relation to the heavens; it is the exposition and exhibition-place of all the miracles of art; and the display and point of focus of all the manifestations of the Divine Names; the place of assembly and reflection of unending dominical activity; the means and market of boundless Divine creativity, whose liberality is especially evident in the numerous small species of plants and animals; the place, in a small measure, of samples of the artefacts to be found in the truly vast worlds of the hereafter; the speedily operating workshop for eternal textiles; the fast-changing place of imitation of everlasting panoramas; the narrow, temporary field and tillage rapidly raising the seeds for never-ending gardens.

Thus, it is because of this immaterial greatness of the earth,³ and its importance in regard to art, that the All-Wise Qur'an puts it on a par with the heavens, although it is like a tiny fruit of a huge tree. It places it in one pan of a pair of scales and the whole of the rest of the universe in the other. It repeatedly says,

Sustainer of the Heavens and the Earth.

Furthermore, the speedy, constant change and transformation of the earth, which arises from the instances of wisdom mentioned above, requires that its inhabitants undergo change in accordance with it. And, it is because this limited earth manifests unlimited miracles of power that according to their creation and unlike other animate beings, no natural limit or restriction has been

³ Despite its small size, the globe of the earth may be thought of as equal to the heavens, for it may be said that 'a constant spring is greater than a lake with no inlet.' And, although a pile of grain the size of a mountain apparently seems to be thousands of times larger than a measure, since it has all passed through the measure and been transferred to another place, the measure may be seen as in balance with the grain. It is exactly the same with the globe of the earth; God Almighty has created it as a place for exhibiting His art, a place where His creativity is concentrated, as a pivot of His wisdom, a place for the manifestation of His power, a garden of His mercy, a field for His Paradise, the measure for uncountable universes and worlds of creatures, and like a spring flowing into the seas of the past and the World of the Unseen. Think of all those renewed worlds whose shirts woven of beings are changed every year, layer upon layer, in hundreds of thousands of different forms, how they fill the earth many times and being emptied into the past are poured into the World of the Unseen; consider those numerous shirts of the earth. That is, suppose all the past to be present, and then compare it with the somewhat monotonous and plain heavens: you will see that even if the earth does not weigh more than the heavens, it does not weigh less, either. Thus, you may understand the meaning of, Sustainer of the Heavens and the Earth.

placed on the faculties and powers of man and jinn, who are its most important inhabitants. As a result of this they have manifested endless progress and endless retrogression. A great field of trial and examination has opened, from the prophets and the saints to the nimrods and the devils. Since this is so, of course, with their boundless evil, the pharaoh-like devils will throw stones at the heavens and its inhabitants.

FOURTH STEP: The All-Glorious One, Who is the Sustainer, Controller, and Creator of all the worlds, has numerous principles and rules, and very many appellations, titles, and most Beautiful Names, which are all different. Whichever Name and title necessitated sending angels to the ranks of the Prophet (PBUH)'s Companions in order to do battle against unbelievers also required that there should be battle between angels and devils, and contest between the good inhabitants of the heavens and the evil inhabitants of the earth. The All-Powerful One of Glory, Who holds within the grasp of His power the breathing-in and breathing-out of the unbelievers, does not wipe them out with a single command, a single trumpet-blast. With His title of universal Sustainer and Names of All-Wise and Controller, He inaugurates a field of examination and contest.

If the comparison is not mistaken, we see that a king has numerous different titles and names in respect of the different areas of his rule. For example, in the judicature he is known by the name of Wise Judge, in the army as Commander-in-Chief, in the office of the Shaykh al-Islam as Khalifa, and in the civil service as Sultan. His obedient subjects call him Gracious Sovereign, while the rebellious call him All-Compelling Ruler. You may think of further examples.

Thus, it sometimes happens that such an exalted king, whose subjects are all within his power, does not issue the command to execute an impotent and contemptible rebel; he sends him to court under his name of Wise Judge. Also, he knows a both capable and honest official who is worthy of being favoured, but he does not favour him with his particular knowledge by private telephone. Instead, under his titles relating to the majesty of sovereignty and expedients of government, he opens a field of competition in order to make public how deserving the official is of reward, and he gives the command to his minister and invites the people to watch. He has organized a welcoming ceremony, and, as a result of a grand, elevated trial and examination, favours him in a distinguished assembly; he proclaims his worthiness. You can think of further examples in the same way.

Thus, *And God's is the highest similitude*, the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity has numerous Most Beautiful Names. Through the manifestations of His glory and appearances of His beauty, He has many attributes and titles. The Name, title, and attribute which necessitate the existence of light and darkness, summer and winter, and Paradise and Hell, require

also numerous general laws like the law of generation, those of competition and mutual assistance, and the making general to a degree also of the law of contest. From the contest of inspirations and satanic whisperings around the heart to the contest between angels and devils on the bounds of the heavens, they require that law to be all-embracing.

FIFTH STEP: Since there is coming and going from the earth to the heavens, and there is descent and ascent from the heavens to the earth and important necessities for the earth are sent from there; and since good spirits rise to the heavens, for sure, imitating the good spirits, evil spirits will also attempt to ascend to the realm of the heavens. For they are light and subtle in regard to their beings. However, they will doubtless be repulsed and expelled, for by nature they are evil and inauspicious. Moreover, there will doubtless be a sign, an indication, in the Manifest World of this important exchange, this contest outside the realm of materiality. For the wisdom of the sovereignty of dominicality requires that it should place a sign and leave an indication of these significant disposals in the Unseen for man in particular, whose most important duty is observation, witnessing, supervision, and acting as a herald; in the same way that it has made rain an indication of the endless miracles of spring, and made apparent causes signs of the wonders of Divine art. It thus summons the people of the Manifest Realm to witness them; indeed, it attracts the attentive gazes of all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth to that wondrous exhibition. That is, it shows the vast heavens to be a castle or city arrayed with towers on which sentries are posted, so that they may reflect on the majesty of dominicality.

Since wisdom requires that there should be an announcement for this elevated contest, there is surely an indication of it. But –other than shooting stars– no event appropriate to this announcement is apparent among the events of the atmosphere and heavens; there is nothing more appropriate than this. For it may be understood clearly how suitable for the repulsion of devils are these stellar events, which resemble missiles and signal rockets fired from the sturdy bastions of towering castles. And there is no other known purpose, wisdom, and aim, no other purpose appropriate to these occurrences other than these. Other occurrences are not like this. Furthermore, this purpose of them has been well-known since the time of Adam, and has been witnessed by the people of reality.

SIXTH STEP: Since man and jinn are capable of infinite evil and exertion, they are infinitely obdurate and rebellious. It is because of this that the Holy Qur'an restrains them from rebellion and insubordination with an eloquence so miraculous, styles so elevated and clear, comparisons and stories so exalted and evident that they cause the universe to tremble. For example,

observe carefully the awesome warning, fearsome threat, and severe restraining in the verses:

*O you assembly of jinn and men! If you can pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, pass beyond them! [But] you cannot pass beyond them, save by [God's] authority. * Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny? * On you will be sent a flame of fire, and smoke; no succour will you have,*⁴

which has the meaning of 'O man and jinn! If you are not going to obey my commands, come on, pass beyond the bounds of My realms if you are able!' With miraculous eloquence, it smashes the excessively conceited obstinacy of man and jinn. It proclaims their impotence, and shows just how powerless and wretched they are in relation to the immense grandeur of the sovereignty of dominicality. It is as though it says with that verse, and the verse,

*And We have made them missiles to drive away the evil ones:*⁵

'O man and jinn, proud and obstinate within your baseness, and obdurate and refractory within your weakness and poverty! How are you so bold as to oppose with your rebellion the commands of a Monarch so Glorious that the stars, moons, and suns obey His commands like soldiers under orders? Through your defiance you contest an All-Wise One of Glory Who has obedient soldiers so awesome that, if to suppose the impossible your devils could withstand them, they would drive them off with cannon-balls the size of mountains. And with your ingratitude, you revolt in the realm of a Lord of Glory Who has servants and troops so fearsome, it is not insignificant impotent creatures like you, if you were each infidel enemies the size of mountains or the earth, they would be able to hurl stars, flaming projectiles, and molten metal the size of mountains or the earth at you, and rout you. And you break a law that is such that those bound by it could if necessary strike your earth in your face, and rain down on you stars like cannon-balls the size of your globe.'

Yes, in the Qur'an are certain important 'concentrations of forces' which arise not from the enemies' strength, but from reasons like the displaying of majesty and exhibiting the enemy's wickedness. Then sometimes it mobilizes against the littlest and weakest thing, the largest and most powerful causes, in order to show its perfect order, infinite justice, vast knowledge, and power of wisdom, and holds them above it; but does not make them fall upon it or aggress against it. For example, look at this verse,

*But if you uphold each other against him, truly God is his Protector, and Gabriel, and all the righteous among the believers, and furthermore, the angels, will back him up.*⁶

⁴ Qur'an, 55:33-5.

⁵ Qur'an, 67:5.

⁶ Qur'an, 66:4.

How respectful it is concerning the Prophet (PBUH), and how compassionate towards the rights of his wives! This important concentration of forces is only to express compassionately its tremendous respect for the Prophet and the importance of the complaints of two weak beings and the observance of their rights.

SEVENTH STEP: As with angels and fish, there are numerous different varieties of stars. Some are extremely small, and some are extremely large. Everything that shines in the sky even is called a star. Thus, the stars of one sort that the Glorious Creator and Beauteous Maker created are like the embossed decorations on the face of the delicate heavens, and the shining fruits of that tree, and the praising and extolling fishes of its seas. Others He made the places of excursion and thousands of dwelling-places for the angels. And one sort of small star He made the means for driving off devils. Thus, these shooting stars fired to repulse satans may have three meanings:

The First: They are a sign and indication that the law of contest is also in force in the vastest sphere.

The Second: There are vigilant guards and obedient inhabitants in the heavens. The shooting stars are a proclamation and indication that there are Divine forces found there who are displeased at the rebellion of evil dwellers on the earth, and their eavesdropping on them.

The Third: It is the rejection and repulsion with shooting stars like missiles and signal rockets of spying satans, which are the execrable representatives of the filth of the earth, from the portals of the heavens, so that they do not soil the pure and clean and the dwelling-place of the pure, the skies; to prevent them spying on account of evil spirits, and to scare off mannerless spies.

And so, Astronomer Sir, who relies on the torch in his head like a fire-fly and shuts his eyes to the sun of the Qur'an! Open your eyes, put aside the torch in your head, and see within the light of miraculousness as bright as daylight the meaning of the verse at the beginning! Take one star of truth from the heavens of that verse, cast it at the satan in your head, and drive away your own devil! And we must do the same. Together we should say,

*O my Sustainer! I seek refuge with you from the suggestions of the Evil Ones.⁷
And God's is the eloquent proof and the decisive wisdom.⁷
All glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.⁸*

⁷ Qur'an, 23:97.

⁸ Qur'an, 2.32.

The Addendum to the Fifteenth Word

[The First Topic of the Twenty-Sixth Letter]

*In His Name be He Glorified.
And there is nothing but glorifies Him with praise.*

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
And if a suggestion from Satan assails your mind, seek refuge with God; for He is All-Hearing and All-Knowing.⁹*

A Proof of the Qur'an against Satan and His Party

This First Topic defeats in argument the Devil, silences the rebellious, and strikes them dumb by refuting in the most clear manner a fearsome and cunning stratagem of the Devil, which is to be 'unbiased'. It concerns an event part of which I described in summary form ten years ago in my work entitled Leme'at. It is as follows:

Eleven years before this treatise was written in the month of Ramadan, I was listening to the Qur'an being recited in Beyazit Mosque in Istanbul. Suddenly, although I could not see anyone, I seemed to hear an unearthly voice which captured all my attention. I listened with my imagination, and realized that it was saying to me:

'You consider the Qur'an to be extremely elevated and brilliant. Be unbiased for a minute and consider it again. That is, suppose it to be man's word. I wonder whether you would still see the same qualities and beauty in it?'

In truth, I was deceived by the voice; I thought of the Qur'an as being written by man. And just as Beyazit Mosque is plunged into darkness when the electric switch is turned off, I observed that with that thought the brilliant lights of the Qur'an began to be extinguished. At that point I understood that it was the Devil who was speaking to me. He was drawing me towards the abyss.

I sought help from the Qur'an and a light was at once imparted to my heart giving me firm strength for the defence. I began to argue back at the Devil, saying:

⁹ Qur'an, 7:200.

‘O Satan! Unbiased thinking is to take a position between two sides. Whereas what both you and your disciples from among men call unbiased thinking is to take the part of the opposing side; it is not impartiality, it is temporary unbelief. Because, to consider the Qur’an to be man’s word and to judge it as such is to take the part of the opposing side; it is to favour something baseless and invalid. It is not being unbiased, it is being biased towards falsehood.’

The Devil replied: ‘Well, in that case, say it is neither God’s Word nor man’s word. Think of it as between the two.’ To which I rejoined:

‘That is not possible either. For if there is a disputed property for which there are two claimants, and the claimants are close both to one another and to the property, the property will then either be given to someone other than them, or will be put somewhere accessible so that whoever proves ownership can take it. If the two claimants are far apart with one in the East and one in the West, then according to the rule, it will remain with the one who has possession of it, as it is not possible for it to be left somewhere between them.

‘Thus, the Qur’an is a valuable property, and however distant man’s word is from God’s, the two sides in question are that far apart; indeed, they are infinitely far from one another. It is not possible for the Qur’an to be left between the two sides, which are as far apart as the Pleiades and the ground. For they are opposites like existence and non-existence or the two magnetic poles; there can be no point between them. In which case, for the Qur’an, the one who possesses it is God’s side. It will be accepted as being in His possession, and the proofs of ownership will be regarded in that way. Should the opposing side refute all the arguments proving it to be God’s Word, it may claim ownership of it, otherwise it may not. God forbid! What hand can pull out the nails fastening that vast jewel to the Sublime Throne of God, riveted as it is with thousands of certain proofs, and break its supporting pillars, causing it to fall?’

‘And so, inspite of you, O Satan!, the just and the fair-minded reason in this equitable and rightful manner. They increase their belief in the Qur’an through even the slightest evidences. While according to the way shown by you and your disciples, if just once it is supposed to be man’s word and that mighty jewel fastened to the Divine Throne is cast to the ground, a proof with the strength of all the nails and the firmness of many proofs becomes necessary in order to raise it from the ground and fasten it once more to the Throne, and so be saved from the darkness of unbelief and reach the lights of belief. But because it is extremely difficult to do this, due to your wiles, many people are losing their faith at this time by imagining themselves to be making unbiased judgements.’

The Devil turned and said: ‘The Qur’an resembles man’s word. It is

similar to the way men converse. That means it is man's word. If it was God's Word, it would be appropriate to Him and would be altogether out of the ordinary. Just as His art does not resemble man's art, so also should His Word not resemble man's word.'

I replied: 'It may be understood as follows: apart from his miracles and special attributes, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was a human being in all his actions, conduct, and behaviour. He submitted to and complied with the Divine laws and commands manifested in creation. He too suffered from the cold, experienced pain, and so on. His deeds and attributes were not all made out of the ordinary so that he could be the leader of his community through his actions, its guide through his conduct, and instruct it through all his behaviour. If he had been out of the ordinary in all his conduct, he could not himself have been the leader in every respect, the total guide of everyone, the 'Mercy to All the Worlds' through all his attributes.

'In just the same way, the All-Wise Qur'an is the leader to the aware and the conscious, the guide of jinn and men, the teacher of those attaining to perfection, and instructor of those seeking reality. It is of necessity and of a certainty, therefore, in the same form as man's conversation and style. For men and jinn take their supplications from it and learn their prayers from it; they express their concerns in its language, and learn from it the rules of social behaviour, and so on. Everyone has recourse to it. If, therefore, it had been in the form of the Divine speech which the Prophet Moses (Peace be upon him) heard on Mount Sinai, man could not have borne listening to it and hearing it, nor made it the point of reference and recourse. Moses (Peace be upon him), one of the five greatest prophets, could only endure to hear a few words. He said:

'Is Your speech thus?' God replied: 'I have the power of all tongues.'

Next, the Devil said: 'Many people speak of matters similar to those in the Qur'an in the name of religion. Is it not possible, therefore, that a human being did such a thing and made up the Qur'an in the name of religion?'

Through the light of the Qur'an I replied as follows:

'**Firstly:** Out of love of religion, someone who is religious may say, 'The truth is thus, the reality of the matter is this. Almighty God commands that.' But he would not make God speak to suit himself. Trembling at the verse,

Who, then does more wrong than one who utters a lie concerning God?,¹⁰

he would not overstep his mark to an infinite degree, imitate God, and speak on His behalf.

'**Secondly:** It is in no way possible for a human being to be successful in doing such a thing on his own, in fact, it is completely impossible. Individuals

¹⁰ Qur'an, 39:32.

who resemble one another may imitate one another, those of the same kind may take on one another's forms, those who are close to one another in rank or status may imitate one another and temporarily deceive people, but they cannot do so for ever. For in any event, the falseness and artificiality in their behaviour will show up their imposture to the observant, and their deception will not last. If the one who is attempting to imitate another under false pretences is quite unlike them, for example, if an uneducated man wants to imitate in learning a genius like Ibn-i Sina, or a shepherd assume the position of a king, of course, they will not deceive anyone at all, they will only make fools of themselves. Everything they do will proclaim, 'This is an impostor.'

'Thus, to suppose – God forbid!, a hundred thousand times – the Qur'an to be man's word is utterly impossible, no rational being can accept it as possible, to do so is a delirium like imagining to be possible something that is self-evidently impossible like a fire-fly being seen by astronomers as a real star for a thousand years; or a fly appearing to observers in the true form of a peacock for a year; or a bogus common private posing as a famous lofty field marshal, taking over his position and remaining in it for a long period without giving away his deception; or like a slandering, unbelieving liar affecting the manner and position of the most truthful, trustworthy, upright believer throughout his life and being completely unruffled before even the most observant while concealing his fraud from them.

'In just the same way, if the Qur'an is supposed to be man's word, then it has to be supposed, God forbid, that that Perspicuous Book, which is considered to be clearly a most brilliant star, rather, a sun of perfections perpetually scattering the lights of truth in the heavens of the world of Islam, is like a fire-fly, a spurious sham made up by a counterfeiting human. And those who are closest to it and study it most carefully do not realize this, and consider it to be a perpetual, exalted star and source of truth. Together with this being impossible a hundred times over, even if you went a hundred times further in your diabolical machinations, O Satan, you could not make such an assertion, you could not deceive anyone of sound reason! Only sometimes you trick people by making them look from a great distance, thus making the star appear as small as a fire-fly.

Thirdly: Also, if the Qur'an is imagined to be man's word, it necessitates that the hidden reality of a criterion of truth and falsehood, which is miraculous in its exposition, and through the testimony of its fruits, results, and effects, is gilded with the most spiritual and life-giving, the most truthful and happiness-bringing, the most comprehensive and exalted qualities in the world of mankind, is, God forbid, the fabrication of a single unaided and unlearned man's mind; and that the great geniuses and brilliant scholars who observed that being closely and studied him meticulously at no time

saw any trace of counterfeit or pretence in him and always found him serious, genuine, and sincere.

‘This is completely impossible, an idea so nonsensical as to shame the Devil himself, like dreaming up an utterly impossible situation. For it entails supposing one who throughout his life demonstrated and taught trust, belief, confidence, sincerity, seriousness, and integrity through all his conduct, words, and actions, and raised eminently truthful and sincere followers, and was accepted to possess the highest and most brilliant and elevated virtues to be the most untrustworthy, insincere, and unbelieving. For in this question there is no point between the two.

‘If, to suppose the impossible, the Qur’an was not the Word of God, it would fall as though from the Divine Throne to the ground, it would not remain somewhere between. While being the meeting-point of truths, it would become the source of superstition and myth. And if, God forbid, the one who proclaimed that wonderful decree was not God’s Messenger, it would necessitate his descending from the highest of the high to the lowest of the low, and from the degree of being the source of accomplishments and perfections to the level of being a mine of trickery and intrigue; he could not remain between the two. For one who lies and fabricates in God’s name falls to the very lowest of degrees.

‘However impossible it is to permanently see a fly as a peacock, and to all the time see the peacocks’s attributes in the fly, this matter is that impossible. Only someone lacking all intelligence could imagine it to be possible.

‘Fourthly: Also, if the Qur’an is imagined to be man’s word, it necessitates fancying that the Qur’an, which is a sacred commander of the community of Muhammad, mankind’s largest and most powerful army, is –God forbid– a powerless, valueless, baseless forgery. Whereas, self-evidently, through its powerful laws, sound principles, and penetrating commands, it has equipped that huge army both materially, and morally and spiritually, has given it an order and regularity and imposed a discipline on it that are such as to conquer both this world and the next, and has instructed the minds, trained the hearts, conquered the spirits, purified the consciences, and employed and utilized the limbs and members of individuals according to the degree of each. To imagine it to be a counterfeit necessitates accepting a hundredfold impossibility.

‘This impossibility entails the further complete impossibility of supposing that one who, through his deliberate conduct throughout his life taught mankind Almighty God’s laws, and through his honest behaviour instructed man in the principles of truth, and through his sincere and reasonable words showed and established the straight way of moderation and happiness, and as all his life testifies, felt great fear of Divine punishment and knew God

better than anyone else and made Him known, and in splendid fashion has for one thousand three hundred and fifty years commanded a fifth of mankind and half the globe, and through his qualities of renown is in truth the means of pride of mankind, indeed, of the universe, God forbid a hundred thousand times, neither feared God, nor knew Him, nor held back from lying, nor had any self-respect. For in this matter there is no point between the two. For if, to suppose the impossible, the Qur'an is not the Word of God, if it falls from the Divine Throne to the ground, it cannot remain somewhere in between the two. Indeed, it then has to be accepted as the property of the very worst of liars. And as for this, O Satan, even if you were a hundred times more satanic, you could not deceive any mind that was not unsound, nor persuade any heart that was not corrupted.'

The Devil retorted: 'How should I not deceive them? I have deceived most of mankind and their foremost thinkers into denying the Qur'an and Muhammad.'

I replied: '**Firstly:** When seen from a great distance, the greatest thing appears the same as the smallest. A star may even appear as a candle.

'**Secondly:** Also, when seen both as secondary and superficially, something which is completely impossible may appear to be possible.

'One time an old man was watching the sky in order to spot the new moon of Ramadan when a white hair fell on his eye. Imagining it to be the moon, he announced: 'I have seen the new moon.' Now, it is impossible that the white hair should have been the moon, but because his intention was to look for just the moon and the hair was by the way and secondary, he paid it no attention and thought that impossibility was possible.

'**Thirdly:** Also, non-acceptance is one thing and denial is something quite different. Non-acceptance is indifference, a closing of the eyes to something, an ignorant absence of judgement. Many completely impossible things may be concealed within it, and the mind does not concern itself with them. As for denial, it is not non-acceptance, but an acceptance of non-existence; it is a judgement. The mind is compelled to work. So a devil like you takes hold of the mind of a person, then leads it to denial. And, showing the false as truth and the impossible as possible through satanic wiles like heedlessness, misguidance, fallacious reasoning, obstinacy, false arguments, pride, deception, and habit, you make those unfortunate creatures in human form swallow unbelief and denial, although they comprise innumerable impossibilities.

'**Fourthly:** Also, if the Qur'an is supposed to be the word of man, it necessitates imagining to be its opposite a book which has self-evidently guided the purified, veracious saints and spiritual poles, who shine like stars in the heavens of the world of mankind, has continuously instructed every level of the people of perfection in truth and justice, veracity and fidelity,

faith and trustworthiness, and has ensured the happiness of the two worlds through the truths of the pillars of belief and the principles of the pillars of Islam, and through the testimony of these achievements is of necessity veracious, and pure, genuine truth, and absolutely right, and most serious – it necessitates imagining, God forbid, that this Book comprises the opposites of these qualities, effects, and lights. And that, regarding it as a collection of fabrications and lies, is a frenzy of unbelief that would shame even the Sophists and the devils, and cause them to tremble.

‘And this impossibility necessitates the further most ugly and abhorrent impossibility that One who, according to the testimony of the religion and Shari’a of Islam which he proclaimed, and the unanimous indications to the extraordinary fear of God and pure and sincere worship which he demonstrated throughout his life, and as necessitated by the good moral qualities unanimously witnessed in him, and according to the affirmation of the people of truth and perfection whom he reared, was the most believing, the most steadfast, the most trustworthy, and the most truthful, was – God forbid, and again, God forbid – without belief, that he was most untrustworthy, did not fear God, nor shrink from lying. To imagine this necessitates imagining the most loathsome form of impossibility and perpetrating the most iniquitous and vicious sort of misguidance.

‘In Short: As is stated in the Eighteenth Sign of the Nineteenth Letter, the common people, whose understanding of the Qur’an is gained by listening to it, say, ‘Were the Qur’an to be compared with all the books I have listened to and the other books in the world, it would not resemble any of them; it is not of the same sort as them nor of the same degree.’ The Qur’an, then, is of a degree either above all of them or below all of them. To be below them is impossible, and no enemy nor the Devil even could accept it. In which case, the Qur’an is above all other books, and is therefore a miracle. In just the same way, we say according to the categorical proof called ‘residue’, taken from the sciences of method and logic:

‘O Satan and O disciples of Satan! The Qur’an is either the Word of God come from the Supreme Throne of God and His Greatest Name, or, God forbid, and again, God forbid, it is a human forgery fabricated on earth by someone without belief who neither feared God nor knew Him. In the face of the above proofs, O Satan, you can neither say that, nor could you have said it, nor will you be able to say it in the future. Therefore, the Qur’an is the Word of the Creator of the universe. Because there is no point between the two; it is impossible and precluded that there should be. Just as we have proved in the most clear and decisive manner; and you have seen it and heard it.

‘In the same way, Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) is either God’s Messenger and the highest of the prophets and the most superior

of creatures, or, God forbid, he has to be imagined to be someone without belief having fallen to the lowest of the low because he lied concerning God, and did not know God, and did not believe in His punishment.¹¹ And as for this, O Devil, neither you nor the philosophers of Europe and hypocrites of Asia on whom you rely could say it, nor could you say it in the past, neither shall you be able to say it in the future, for there is no one in the world who would listen to it and accept it. It is because of this that the most corrupting of those philosophers and the most lacking in conscience of the hypocrites, even, admit that ‘Muhammad the Arabian (PBUH) was very clever, and was most moral and upright.’

‘Since this matter is restricted to these two sides, and the second one is impossible and no one at all claims it to be true, and since we have proved with decisive arguments that there is no point between them, for sure and of necessity, in spite of you and your party, Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him) was God’s Messenger, and the highest of the prophets and the best of all creatures.’

Upon him be blessings and peace to the number of angels and jinn and men.

¹¹ Relying on the fact that the Qur’an mentions the blasphemies and obscenities of the unbelievers, in order to refute them, trembling, I too have been compelled to use these expressions in the form of impossibilities in order to demonstrate the total impossibility and complete worthlessness of the blasphemous ideas of the people of misguidance.

A SECOND, SMALL OBJECTION OF SATAN

*Not a word does he utter but there is a sentinel by him, ready [to note it]. * And the stupor of death will bring the truth [before his eyes]: ‘This was the thing you were trying to escape!’ * And the Trumpet shall be blown: that will be the Day whereof warning [had been given]. * And there will come forth every soul: with each will be [an angel] to drive, and [an angel] to bear witness. * ‘You were heedless of this; now have We removed your veil. And sharp is your sight this Day!’ * And his companion will say: ‘Here is [his record] ready with me!’ * ‘Throw, throw into Hell every contumacious rejecter!’¹²*

One time while reading these verses from Sura Qaf, the Devil said to me: ‘You consider the most important aspects of the Qur’an’s eloquence to lie in its clarity and fluency of style. But in this verse it jumps from one subject to another. It jumps from death agonies to the resurrection of the dead, from the blowing of the trumpet to the Last Judgement, and from that to the entry into Hell of the unbelievers. What fluency of style remains with this extraordinary switching about? In most places in the Qur’an, it brings together subjects that bear little relation to each other like this. Where is its eloquence and smoothness with such discontinuity?’

I answered as follows:

‘After its eloquence, one of the most important elements of the miraculousness of the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition is its conciseness. Conciseness is one of the strongest and most important elements of the Qur’an’s miraculousness. Instances of this miraculous conciseness of the Qur’an are so numerous and beautiful that exacting scholars are left in wonder at it. For example:

Then the word went forth: ‘O earth! swallow up your water, and O sky! withhold [your rain]!’ And the water abated, and matter was ended. The ark rested on Mount Judi, and the word went forth: ‘Away with those who do wrong!’¹³

¹² Qur’an, 50:18-24.

¹³ Qur’an, 11:44.

‘It describes the Great Flood and its consequences so concisely and miraculously in a few short sentences that it has caused many scholars of rhetoric to prostrate before its eloquence. And, for example:

*The Thamud rejected [their prophet] through their inordinate wrongdoing. * Behold, the most wicked man among them was deputed [for impiety]. * But the apostle of God said to them: ‘It is a she-camel of God. And [bar her not from] having her drink!’ * Then they rejected him, and they hamstrung her. So their Lord, on account of their crime, obliterated their traces and made them equal [in destruction, high and low]! * And for Him is no fear of its consequences.*¹⁴

‘In these few short sentences and with a miraculousness within the conciseness, fluency, and clarity, and in a way that does not spoil the understanding, the Qur’an relates the strange and momentous events concerning the Thamud people, together with the consequences and their calamitous end. And for example:

*And remember Zun-Nun, when he departed in wrath: he imagined that We had no power over him. But he cried through the depths of darkness: ‘There is no god but You; glory be unto You; I was indeed among the wrongdoers.’*¹⁵

‘Here, many sentences have been ‘rolled up’ between the words ‘that We had no power over him’ and ‘but he cried out in the depths of the darkness,’ but these omitted sentences neither spoil the understanding, nor mar the fluency of the style. It mentions the most important elements in the story of Jonah (Peace be upon him), and refers the rest to the intelligence.

‘And for example, in Sura Yusuf, the seven or eight sentences between the words ‘Send me’ and ‘Joseph, O man of truth!’¹⁶ have been skipped in conciseness. It neither impairs the understanding, nor mars the smoothness of the style. There are a great many instances of this sort of miraculous conciseness in the Qur’an, and they are very beautiful indeed.

‘However, the conciseness of the verses from Sura Qaf are particularly wonderful and miraculous. For they each point out the truly dreadful future of the unbelievers when each endless day will last fifty thousand years, and the grievous, dire things that will happen to them in the awesome revolutions of the future. It conveys the mind over them like lightning, presenting that long, long period of time to the mind’s eye as a single present page. Referring the events which are not mentioned to the imagination, it describes them with a most elevated fluency and smoothness of style.

¹⁴ Qur’an, 91:11-15.

¹⁵ Qur’an, 21:87.

¹⁶ Qur’an, 12:45-6.

*When the Qur'an is read, listen to it with attention, and hold your peace: that you may receive mercy.*¹⁷

‘And now if you have anything to say, O Satan, say it!’

Satan replied: ‘I cannot oppose what you say, nor defend myself. But there are many foolish people who listen to me; and many devils in human form who assist me; and many pharaohs among philosophers who learn things from me which flatter their egos, and prevent the publication of works like yours. Therefore I shall not lay down my arms before you.’

¹⁷ Qur'an, 7:204.

The Sixteenth Word

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

*Indeed, His command when He wills a thing is, 'Be!', and it is. * So glory be unto Him in Whose hand is the dominion of all things, and to Him will you all be brought back.¹*

[This Word was written to afford insight and understanding to my blind soul by pointing out four Rays from the light of the above verse – to dispel the darkness and afford me certainty.]

FIRST RAY

O my ignorant soul! You say, 'The Oneness of the Divine Essence together with the universality of the Divine acts, the Unity of Almighty God's person together with His unassisted comprehensive dominicality, His Singleness together with His unshared all-embracing disposal, His being beyond space and yet present everywhere, His infinite exaltedness together with being close to all things, and His being One and yet Himself holding all matters in His hand, are among the truths of the Qur'an. Yet the Qur'an is All-Wise, and that which is Wise does not impose on the reason things which are unreasonable. And the reason sees an apparent contradiction between these things. I would like an explanation of them which will impel the reason to submit.'

The Answer: Since that is the way it is and you want to be certain and reassured, relying on the effulgence of the Qur'an, we say: the Divine Name of Light has solved many of my difficulties. God willing, it will solve this one too. Choosing the way of comparison, which brings clarity to the mind and luminosity to the heart, like Imam-i Rabbani, we say:

*I am neither the night nor a lover of the night;
I am a servant of the Sun; it is of the Sun that I speak.*

Since comparison is a most brilliant mirror to the Qur'an's miraculousness, we too shall look at this mystery by means of a comparison. It is as follows:

¹ Qur'an, 36:82-3.

A single person may gain universality by means of various mirrors. While being a single individual, he becomes like a universal possessing general qualities. For example, while the sun is a single individual, by means of transparent objects, it becomes so universal it fills the face of the earth with its images and reflections. It even has as many manifestations as the number of droplets and shining motes. Although the sun's heat, light, and the seven colours in its light comprehend, encompass, and embrace all the things which confront them, all transparent things also hold in the pupils of their eyes the sun's heat, and its light and seven colours, together with its image. And they make a throne for them in their hearts. That is to say, with regard to Unity, the sun encompasses all the things which confront it, while with regard to Oneness, the sun is present together with many of its attributes in everything through a sort of manifestation of its essence. Since we have passed from the comparison to a discussion of representation, we shall indicate three of the many sorts of representation which will be a means to understanding this matter.

The First: This is the reflection of dense, physical objects. These reflections are both other than the thing reflected; they are not the same, and they are dead, without life. They possess no quality other than their apparent identity. For example, if you enter a store full of mirrors, one Said will become thousands of Said's, but the only living one is you, all the others are dead. They possess none of the characteristics of life.

The Second: This is the reflection of physical luminous objects. This reflection is not the same as the thing reflected, but neither is it other than it. It does not hold the luminous object's nature, but it possesses most of its characteristics, and may be considered as living. For example, the sun entered the world and displayed its reflection in all mirrors. Present in each of the reflections are light and the seven colours in light, which are like the sun's qualities. Let us suppose the sun possessed consciousness, and its heat was pure power; its light, pure knowledge; and its seven colours, the seven attributes: the single sun would be present in all mirrors at one moment, and would be able to make each a throne for itself and a sort of telephone. One mirror would not be an obstacle to another. It would be able to meet with all of us by means of our mirrors. While we are distant from it, it would be closer to us than ourselves.

The Third: This is the reflection of luminous spirits. This reflection is both living, and the same as the spirits. But since it appears in relation to the capacity of the mirrors, it does not hold completely the spirit's essence and nature. For example, at the moment the Angel Gabriel (Peace be upon him) is in the presence of the Prophet in the form of Dihya, he is prostrating with his magnificent wings in the Divine Presence before the Sublime Throne. And at the same moment he is present in innumerable places, and is relaying

the Divine commands. One task is not an obstacle to another. Thus, it is through this mystery that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), whose essence is light and nature, luminous, in this world hears at the same time all the benedictions recited for him by all his community, and at the resurrection will meet with all the purified at the same time. One will not be an obstacle to another. In fact, some of the saints who have acquired a high degree of luminosity and are called 'substitutes' (abdal) have been observed in many places at the same time, and the same person has performed numerous different acts at the same time.

Indeed, just as things like glass and water act as mirrors to physical objects, so the air and ether, and certain beings of the World of Similitudes are like mirrors to spirit beings; they become like means of transport and conveyance of the speed of lightning and imagination. The spirit beings travel in those pure mirrors and subtle dwellings with speed of imagination. They enter thousands of places at the same time. Despite being restricted particulars, through the mystery of luminosity impotent and subjugated creatures like the sun and semi-luminous beings restricted by matter like spirit beings may be present in numerous places while being in one place, thus becoming like absolute universals, and with a limited power of choice being able to perform many matters simultaneously.

Thus, what thing may hide itself from address of Oneness which is within the manifestation of the attributes and acts of the Most Pure and Holy One through His universal will, absolute power, and all-encompassing knowledge? The Most Holy One, Who is far beyond and exalted above matter; free and exempt from any restriction or limitation and the darkness of density; of the sacred lights of Whose Names all these lights and luminous beings are but dense shadows; and of Whose beauty all existence and all life and the World of Spirits and the World of Similitudes are semi-transparent mirrors; Whose attributes are all-encompassing and Whose qualities, universal? What matter could be difficult for Him? What thing can be concealed from Him? What individual can be distant from Him? What person can draw close to Him without acquiring universality?

Although by means of its unrestricted light and immaterial reflection, the sun is closer to you than the pupil of your eye, since you are restricted, you are truly distant from it. In order to draw close to it, you have to transcend numerous restrictions and pass over many universal degrees. Simply, in effect you have to expand to the size of the earth and rise as far as the moon, then you may be able to approach directly to a degree the sun's essential level, and meet with it without veil. In just the same way, the Glorious One of Beauty and Beauteous One of Perfection is infinitely close to you, and you are infinitely distant from Him. If your heart has strength, and your mind, eminence, try to put the points in the comparison into practice.

SECOND RAY

O my senseless soul! You say that verses like,

*Indeed, His command when He wills a thing is, 'Be!', and it is,*²

and,

*It will be no more than a single blast, when lo! they will all be brought up before Us!*³

show that the existence of things is instantaneous and merely through a command, and that verses like,

*[Such is] the artistry of God, Who disposes of all things in perfect order,*⁴

and,

*Who has created everything in the best way*⁵

show that existence of things is gradual, through a vast power within knowledge, and a fine art within wisdom. What is the point of agreement between them?

The Answer: Relying on the effulgence of the Qur'an, we say:

Firstly: There is no contradiction. Some are like the former, like primary creation. And some are like the latter, like the repetition of creation...

Secondly: The infinite order and extreme skill, fine art, and perfect creation together with the ease, speed, multiplicity, and extensiveness which are observed in beings testify decisively to the existence of the truths of these two sorts of verses. Since this is so, proving it to be true outside this and making that the point of discussion, is unnecessary. It should rather be asked: 'What is the wisdom in them? What is their meaning and purpose?' Thus, we shall point to this wisdom with an analogy in the form of a comparison.

For example, a craftsman like a tailor creates something artistic with much difficulty and employing many skills, and makes a model for it. Then he can make others similar to it quickly and without difficulty. Sometimes, even, it becomes so easy they are as though made at a command, and they acquire a powerful order in that way; like a clock, they function and work as though at the touch of a command.

In just the same way, after making this palace of the world and all its contents originally, the All-Wise Maker and All-Knowing Inscriber gave everything, particular and universal, the whole and the parts, a specified measure

² Qur'an, 36:82.

³ Qur'an, 36:53.

⁴ Qur'an, 27:88.

⁵ Qur'an, 32:7.

and proportion through an ordering of Divine Determining, like a model. So, look! Making every century a model, the Pre-Eternal Inscraper clothes them with bejewelled new worlds through the miracles of His power. And making every year a scale, He sews skilfully fashioned new universes through the wonders of His mercy according to their stature. And making every day a line, He writes the decorated, constantly renewed beings in them through the subtleties of His wisdom.

Furthermore, just as that Absolutely Powerful One makes each century, each year, and each day a model, so He makes the face of the earth, and the mountains and plains, gardens and orchards, and trees each a model. He continuously sets up new universes on the earth and creates new worlds. He removes one world and replaces it with another, well-ordered world. Season after season He displays the miracles of His power and gifts of His mercy in all the gardens and orchards. He writes them all as wisdom-displaying books, establishes them as kitchens of His mercy, and clothes them in ever-renewed garments full of art. Every spring He arrays all trees in raiments of brocade and adorns them with fresh jewels like pearls. He fills their hands with the star-like gifts of His mercy.

Thus, the One Who performs these matters with infinitely fine art and perfect order and changes with infinite wisdom, bounty, and perfection of power and art the travelling worlds which follow on one after the other and are attached to the string of time, is certainly All-Powerful and All-Wise. He is All-Seeing and All-Knowing to an infinite degree. Chance cannot interfere in His works. He is the All-Glorious One Who decrees,

*Indeed, His command when He wills a thing is, 'Be!', and it is,*⁶

and,

*And the decision of the Hour is as the twinkling of an eye, or even closer,*⁷

and both proclaims the perfection of His power, and that in relation to His power the resurrection and Great Gathering are most easy and free of trouble. Since His creational command comprises power and will, and all things are entirely subjugated and obedient to His command, and He creates with no difficulty or hindrance, in order to express the absolute ease in His creating, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition decrees that He does this through a mere command.

To Conclude: Some verses proclaim the extremely fine art and infinite perfection of wisdom in beings, especially at the start of their creation. Others describe the extreme ease and speed and infinite obedience and lack of difficulty in the recreation and return of things in particular.

⁶ Qur'an, 36:82.

⁷ Qur'an, 16:77.

THIRD RAY

O my soul full of doubts and evil suggestions and exceeding its bounds! You say that verses like,

*There is not a moving thing, but He has grasp of its forelock,*⁸

and,

*In Whose hand is the dominion of all things,*⁹

and,

*And We are closer to him than his jugular vein,*¹⁰

show that God is infinitely close to us. And yet, the verses,

*And to Him shall you return.*¹¹

and,

*The angels ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years,*¹²

and, the Hadith which says: ‘God is beyond seventy thousand veils,’¹³ and truths like the Prophet’s Ascension show that we are infinitely distant from Him. I would like an explanation which will bring this profound mystery closer to the understanding.

The Answer: Then listen to the following:

Firstly: At the end of the First Ray we said that although with regard to its unrestricted light and immaterial reflection, the sun is closer to you than the pupil of your eye, which is the window of your spirit and its mirror, since you are restricted and imprisoned in materiality, you are extremely distant from it. You can make contact with it only through some of its reflections and shadows, and meet with it through a sort of its minor and particular manifestations, and draw close to its colours, which are like a category of attribute, and to its rays and manifestations, which are like a class of its names. If you want to approach the sun’s essential level and meet with the sun’s essence directly in person, then you have to transcend very many restrictions and traverse very many levels of universality. Simply, after abstracting yourself from materiality, becoming enlarged to the extent of the earth, expanding in the spirit like the air, rising as far as the moon and resembling the full-moon, only then can you claim to meet with it in person without veil and to draw close to it to any degree.

In just the same way, the All-Glorious One of Perfection, the Peerless One of Beauty, the Necessarily Existent One, the Giver of Existence to All

⁸ Qur’an, 11:56.

⁹ Qur’an, 36:83.

¹⁰ Qur’an, 50:16.

¹¹ Qur’an, 36:83.

¹² Qur’an, 70:4.

¹³ al-Ghazzali, *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din*, i, 101; *Musnad*, iv, 401, 405.

Beings, the Eternal Sun, the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, is closer to you than yourself. Yet you are infinitely distant from Him. If you have the power, put the fine points in the comparison into practice...

Secondly: For example, *And God's is the highest similitude*, among many names, a king's name of 'Commander' appears in many spheres, one within the other. It has a manifestation and appearance in spheres extensive and narrow, universal and particular, from the universal sphere of Commander-in-Chief, to those of Field Marshal and General, then those of captain and corporal. Now, in his military duties, a private soldier holds as his authority the minor point of commandership manifest in the rank of corporal; he is in touch with and connected to the Commander-in-Chief through this minor manifestation of his name. If he wishes to get in touch with him through his essential name and meet with him through that title, he will have to rise from the corporalship to the universal rank of Commander-in-Chief. That is to say, the king is extremely close to the soldier through his name, decree, law and knowledge, his telephone and regulations, and if he is luminous like a saint who is an abdal, with his presence in person. Nothing at all can be an obstacle or obstruction for him. Whereas the soldier is extremely distant. Thousands of degrees form obstructions, and thousands of veils intervene. But sometimes the king is compassionate, and contrary to his practice, receives a soldier into his presence and favours him with his grace.

In just the same way, although the All-Glorious One, the Lord of the command of, '*Be!*', *and it is*, for Whom the suns and stars are like His soldiers under orders, is closer to all things than they themselves, all things are infinitely distant from Him. If you want to enter the presence of His grandeur without veil, you have to pass through seventy thousands of veils of darkness and light, that is, material and physical veils and the veils of the Divine Names and attributes, rise through the thousands of particular and universal degrees of manifestation of each Name, pass on through the most elevated levels of His attributes, and ascend as far as the Sublime Throne, which manifests His Greatest Name, and if you are not the object of favour and attraction, work and journey spiritually for thousands of years. For example, if you want to draw close to Him through His Name of Creator, you have to have a relationship through the particularities of your own Creator, then in regard to the Creator of all mankind, then through the title of Creator of all living creatures, then through the Name of Creator of all beings. Otherwise you will remain in shadow and only find a minor manifestation.

A REMINDER: Because of his impotence, the king in the comparison put means like Field Marshal and General in the degrees of his names. But the Absolutely Powerful One, in Whose hand is the dominion of all things, has no need of intermediaries. Intermediaries are only apparent; a veil to His dignity and grandeur. They are heralds and observers of the sovereignty of His dominicality within worship, awe, impotence, and want. They are not His assistants, and cannot be partners in the sovereignty of His dominicality.

FOURTH RAY

O my lazy soul! Like the soldier in the previous comparison was received into the royal presence as a pure favour, the reality of the five daily prayers, which are like a sort of Ascension, are a being received into the presence of the All-Glorious One of Beauty, the Beauteous One of Glory, Who is the True Object of Worship, as an instance of pure mercy. Declaring 'God is Most Great!', it is to traverse the two worlds either in fact, or in the imagination, or by intention, be divested of the restrictions of materiality, pass to a universal degree of worship or a shadow or form of universality, and being honoured with a sort of presence, it is to manifest the address of 'You alone do we worship!' (everyone according to his own capacity); it is a most elevated attainment. The repetition of 'God is Most Great! God is Most Great!' in the actions of the prayers indicates rising through the degrees of spiritual progress, and ascending from minor particulars to universal spheres, and is a concise title of the perfections of Divine sublimity which are beyond our knowledge. It is as if each 'God is Most Great!' indicates traversing a step in the Ascension. To attain to a shadow or a ray of this reality of the prayers either in fact, or by intention, or with the imagination, is a great happiness.

The frequent declaring of 'God is Most Great!' during the Hajj is for the above reason. For the blessed Hajj is worship at a universal level for everyone. Just as on a special day like a festival a soldier goes to the king's celebrations like a General in the sphere of General, and receives his favours, in the same way, a Hajji, no matter how lowly, is turned towards his Sustainer under the title Mighty Sustainer of every region of the earth, like a saint who has traversed all the degrees. He is honoured with universal worship. For sure, the universal degrees of dominicality opened with the key of the Hajj, and the horizons of the tremendousness of Godhead which are visible to his eye through its telescope, and the spheres of worship which gradually unfold to his heart and imagination through its observances, and the heat, wonder, awe, and dread of dominicality caused by the levels of sublimity and last stage of manifestation, can only be quietened by 'God is Most Great! God is Most Great!', and those observed or imagined unfolded degrees can only be proclaimed by it. After the Hajj, this meaning is found in various exalted and universal degrees in the Festival ('*Eid*) Prayers, the prayers for rain, and those recited at solar and lunar eclipses, and in prayers performed as a congregation. Thus, the importance of the marks and observances of Islam, also even if of the category of Sunna, lies in this reason.

Glory be unto the One Who has placed His treasures between the Kaf and the Nun.

So glory be unto Him in Whose hand is the dominion

*of all things, and to Him will you all be brought back.*¹⁴

*Glory be unto You, we have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*¹⁵

*O our Sustainer! Do not take us to task if we forget or unwittingly do wrong!*¹⁶ *
*O our Sustainer! Let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us, and grant us Mercy from Your presence, for You are the Granter of bounties without measure.*¹⁷

And grant blessings and peace to Your Most Noble Messenger, the manifest of Your Greatest Name, and to his Family, and Companions, and brothers, and followers. Amen. O Most Merciful of the Merciful!

* * *

A Short Addendum

The All-Powerful and All-Knowing One, the All-Wise Maker, shows His power and His wisdom and that chance can in no way interfere in His works through the system and order His rules and practices in the universe demonstrate in the form of laws. So too, through exceptions to the laws, the wonders of His practices, superficial changes, differences in individual characteristics, and changes in the times of appearance and descent, He shows His volition, will, choice, that He is the Agent with choice, and that He is under no restrictions whatsoever. Thus, rending the veil of monotony, and proclaiming that everything is in need of Him every moment for everything in every way and is obedient to His dominicality, He dispels heedlessness, and turns the gazes of man and jinn from causes to the Producer of Causes. The statements of the Qur'an look to this principle.

For example, in most places some fruit-bearing trees produce fruit one year, that is, it is given to their hands from the treasury of mercy, and they

¹⁴ Qur'an, 36:83.

¹⁵ Qur'an, 2:32.

¹⁶ Qur'an, 2:286.

¹⁷ Qur'an, 3:8.

offer it. Then the following year while all apparent causes are present, they do not take it and offer it; that is, they do not produce fruit. Also, for example, contrary to other necessities, the times rain falls are so changeable that it has been included among 'the Five Hidden Things.'¹⁸ For the most important position in existence is that of life and mercy. And rain is the source of life and pure mercy. Thus, the water of life and rain of mercy does not enter under a monotonous law, which is a veil and leads to heedlessness, rather, the All-Glorious One, Who is Most Merciful and All-Compassionate, and the Bestower of Bounties and Giver of Life, holds it in His hand directly, without veil, so that the doors of supplication and thanks will all the time be left open. And, for example, the giving of sustenance and determining of particular features are works of special favour, and their occurring in unexpected ways shows in excellent fashion the will and choice of the Sustainer. You may make further comparisons with other Divine acts, like the disposals of the air and weather and the subjugation of the clouds.

¹⁸ *Bukhari*, ii, 41; ix, 142; *Ibn Hibban*, i, 144.

The Seventeenth Word

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

*That which is on earth We have made as a glittering show for the earth, in order that We may test them, as to which of them are best in conduct * Verily what is on earth We shall make but as dust and dry soil.¹ * What is the life of this world but play and amusement?²*

[This Word consists of two elevated Stations, and one brilliant Addendum.]

The All-Compassionate Creator, the Munificent Provider, the All-Wise Maker made this world in the form of a festival and celebration for the World of Spirits and spirit beings. Adorning it with the wondrous embroideries of all His Names, He clothes each spirit, great or small, elevated or lowly, in a body decked out with senses, suitable to it and appropriate for benefiting from the innumerable, various good things and bounties in the festival; He gives each a corporeal being and sends it to the spectacle once. And He divides the festival, which is most extensive in regard to both time and space, into centuries, years, seasons, and even days and their parts, and makes them all exalted festivals in the form of parades for all the groups of His creatures with spirits and for His plant and vegetable artefacts. Especially the face of the earth in spring and summer, it is a series of festivals for the groups of small beings so glittering it draws the gazes of the spirit beings and angels and the dwellers of the heavens in the high levels of the world. For those who think and contemplate it is a place for reflection so wonderful, the mind is powerless to describe it. But in the face of the manifestations of the Divine Names of Most Merciful and Giver of Life in this Divine feast and dominical festival, the Names of Subduer and Dealer of Death appear with death and separation. And this is apparently unconformable with the all-embracing mercy of,

My Mercy encompasses all things.³

However, in reality there are several ways in which it is conformable, and one of these is as follows:

After each group of beings has completed its turn in the parade and the

¹ Qur'an, 18:7-8.

² Qur'an, 6:32.

³ Qur'an, 7:156.

desired results have been obtained from it, in a compassionate way the Most Generous Maker and Compassionate Creator makes most of them feel weariness and disgust with the world, and bestows on them a desire for rest and a longing to migrate to another world. And when they are to be discharged from their duties of life, He awakens in their spirits a compelling desire for their original home.

Moreover, it is not far from the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful that just as He bestows the rank of martyrdom on a soldier who perishes on account of his duty while fighting, and rewards a sheep slaughtered as a sacrifice by giving it an eternal corporeal existence in the hereafter and the rank of being a mount for its owner on the Bridge of Sirat⁴ like Buraq, so too with other animals and beings with spirits who perish while performing the dominical duties peculiar to their natures and in obeying the Divine commands, and who suffer severe distress, – it is not unlikely that there should be for them in the inexhaustible treasuries of His mercy a sort of spiritual reward and kind of wage suitable to their capacities, and that they should not be unduly troubled at departing this world, indeed, that they should be pleased. None knows the Unseen save God.

However, although man, the noblest of beings with spirits and the one who benefits most from the festivals with regard to both quality and quantity, is captivated by the world and absorbed in it, as a work of mercy, the Most Merciful induces in him a state of mind whereby he feels disgust at the world and a longing to travel to the eternal realm. A person whose humanity is not plunged in misguidance profits from that state of mind, and departs with a tranquil heart. Now, by way of example, we shall explain five of the aspects which produce that state of mind.

The First: By showing with the season of old age the stamp of transience and decline on the beautiful and inviting things of this world, and their bitter meaning, it makes a person feel disgust at the world and causes him to seek a permanent beloved in place of the transient.

The Second: Since ninety-nine per cent of all the friends to whom a person is attached have departed this world and settled in another, impelled by his heart-felt love, it bestows on him a longing for the place they have gone to, and makes him meet death and the appointed hour with joy.

The Third: By means of certain things, it makes a person realize the infinite weakness and impotence in man, and understand how heavy are the burdens of life and responsibilities of living, and awakens in him a serious wish for rest and a sincere desire to go to another world.

The Fourth: Through the light of belief, it shows to the heart of a believer that death is not execution, but a change of abode; that the grave is not the mouth of a dark well, but the door to light-filled worlds; and that for

⁴ Ibn Hajar, *Talkhis al-Khabir*, iv, 138; Suyuti, *Jam' al-Jawami'*, No: 3017.

all its glitter, the world is like a prison in relation to the hereafter. To be released from the prison of this world and enter the gardens of Paradise, and pass from the troublesome turmoil of bodily life to the world of rest and the arena where spirits soar, and to slip free from the vexatious noise of creatures and go to the presence of the Most Merciful is a journey, indeed, a happiness, to be desired with a thousand lives.

The Fifth: By informing a person who heeds the Qur'an about the knowledge of reality it contains, and through the light of reality the world's true nature, it makes him realize that love for the world and attachment to it are quite meaningless. That is, it says the following to man, and proves it:

'The world is a book of the Eternally Besought One. Its letters and words point not to themselves but to the essence, attributes and Names of another. In which case, learn its meaning and grasp it, but ignore its decorations, then go!

'The world is also a tillage; sow and reap your crop, and preserve it. Throw away the chaff, and give it no importance!...

'The world is also a collection of mirrors which continuously pass on one after the other; so know the One Who is manifest in them, see His lights, understand the manifestations of the Names which appear in them and love the One they signify. Cease your attachment for the fragments of glass which are doomed to be broken and perish!...

'The world is also a travelling place of trade. So do your commerce and come; do not chase in vain the caravans which flee from you and pay you no attention. Do not weary yourself for nothing!...

'The world is also a temporary exhibition. So look at it and take lessons. Pay attention, not to its apparent, ugly face, but to its hidden, beautiful face which looks to the Eternal All-Beautiful One. Go for a pleasant and beneficial promenade, then return, and do not weep like a silly child at the disappearance of scenes displaying fine views and showing beautiful things, and do not be anxious!...

'The world is also a guesthouse. So eat and drink within the limits permitted by the Generous Host Who made it, and offer thanks. Act and behave within the bounds of His law. Then leave it without looking behind you, and go. Do not interfere in it in a delirious or officious manner. Do not busy yourself for nothing with things which part from you and do not concern you. Do not attach yourself to passing things and drown!..'

This Fifth Aspect shows the secrets in the world's inner face through apparent truths like these, and greatly lightens the parting from it. Indeed, to those who are aware it makes parting desirable for them, and shows that there is a trace of mercy in everything and every aspect of it. The Qur'an indicates these Five Aspects, and its verses point to other particular aspects.

Woe to that person who has no share of these five Aspects!

The Second Station of the Seventeenth Word⁵

*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.*
* * *

*Know, O arrogant one, happiness in this world is in abandoning it.
To know God is enough. Abandon the world; all things will be for you.*
* * *

*To be arrogant is total loss; whatever you do, all things will be against you.
So both states demand abandoning the world here.*
* * *

*Abandoning the world is to regard it as God's property, with His permission,
in His Name;
If you want to do trade, it lies in making this fleeting life eternal.*
* * *

*If you seek yourself, it is both rotten and without foundation.
If you seek the world outside, the stamp of ephemerality is upon it.*
* * *

*That means there is no value in taking it; the goods in this market are all rotten.
So pass on; the sound goods are all lined up beyond it.*

⁵ The pieces in this Second Station resemble poetry, but they are not poetry. They were not put into verse intentionally. They rather took on that form to a degree due to the perfect order of the truths they express.

A FRUIT OF THE BLACK MULBERRY

[The Old Said spoke this with the tongue of the New Said
under the blessed mulberry tree.]

The one I'm addressing isn't Ziya Pasha, it's those enamoured of Europe.
The one speaking isn't my soul, it's my heart in the name of the students of the Qur'an.
* * *

The previous words are all truth; beware, don't lose course, don't exceed their bounds!
Don't heed the ideas of Europe and deviate, or they'll make you regret it!
* * *

You see the most enlightened of them, in brilliance their standard-bearer,
Exclaim in bewilderment: Of whom, to whom can I complain?
* * *

The Qur'an says, and I say too – I won't hold back:
I lodge my complaint with Him. I'm not confused, like you.
* * *

I cry out to the True God; I don't slip away, like you.
I shout my cause from the ground to the skies; I don't flee, like you.
* * *

For all the Qur'an's cause is light upon light; I don't renege, like you.
In the Qur'an is truth and wisdom; I'll prove it. I count as nothing hostile philosophy.
* * *

In the Criterion are diamond truths; I take them to myself, not sell them, like you.
I journey from creation to Creator; I don't lose the way, like you.
* * *

I pass over thorny paths, I don't tread on them, like you.
From the earth to the Throne, I offer thanks; I don't neglect it, like you.
* * *

I look on death and the appointed hour as a friend; I am not frightened, like you.
I'll enter the grave smiling, not trembling, like you.

* * *

I don't see it as a monster's mouth, a beast's lair, descending to nothingness,
like you.

It joins me with my friends; I'm not vexed at the grave, like you.

* * *

It's the door of Mercy, gate of Light, portal of Truth; I am not discomforted by it;
I won't retreat.

Saying: In the Name of God, I'll knock on it.⁶ I'll not look behind me nor feel terror.

* * *

Saying: All Praise be to God!, I'll lay down and find ease. I'll suffer no trouble
nor remain solitary.

Saying, God is Most Great!, I'll hear the Call to the Resurrection and rise up,⁷
I won't hang back from the Great Gathering, or the Mighty Mosque.

* * *

I'll feel no distress, thanks to Divine favour, the Qur'an's light,
and the effulgence of belief;

Not stopping, I'll hasten, fly, to the shade of the Most Merciful's Throne.
God willing, I won't go astray, like you.

* * *

⁶ I won't exclaim: 'Alas!', and flee.

⁷ I'll hear the Call of Israfil on the dawn of the Resurrection, and declaring, 'God is Most Great!', shall rise up. I won't hold back from the Great Gathering and Congress of Prayers.

A SUPPLICATION WHICH OCCURRED TO ME IN PERSIAN

[This supplication occurred to my heart in Persian, and was therefore written in that language.⁸ It was first included in my published work, *Hubab*.]

O my Sustainer! Heedlessly not trusting in You but in my own power and will, I cast an eye over ‘the six aspects’ searching for a cure for my ills. Alas, I could find no cure for them, and I understood it was being said to me: ‘Are your ills not sufficient as cure for you?’

In heedlessness I looked to past time on my right to find solace, but I saw that yesterday appeared to be my father’s grave and past time as the huge tomb of all my forbears. It filled me with horror rather than consolation.(*)

(* Belief shows that horrific vast grave to be a familiar and enlightened meeting and a gathering of friends.

Then I looked to the future on the left, but again I could find no cure. For tomorrow appeared as my grave and the future as the vast tomb of my contemporaries and the forthcoming generations; it afforded not a feeling of familiarity, but one of fright.(*)

(* Belief and the peace of belief shows that terrible huge grave to be a feast of the Most Merciful in delightful palaces of bliss.

Since no good appeared from the left either, I looked at the present day, and I saw that it resembled a bier; it was bearing my desperately struggling corpse.(*)

(* Belief shows the bier to be a place of trade and a glittering guesthouse.

Thus, I could find no cure from this aspect either, so I raised my head and looked at the top of the tree of my life. But I saw that its single fruit was my corpse; it was looking down on me from the tree-top.(*)

(* Belief shows the tree’s fruit to be not the corpse, but the worn out home of my spirit, which will manifest eternal life and is destined for everlasting happiness, from which it has departed in order to travel among the stars.

Despairing of that aspect too, I lowered my head. I looked and saw that the dust of my bones underfoot had mixed with the dust of my first creation. It afforded no cure, but added further pain to my ills.(*)

(* Belief shows the dust to be the door leading to mercy and a curtain before the halls of Paradise.

⁸ The Supplication is included in the original together with an enlarged Turkish rendering, which is the basis of the translation here. [Tr.]

I turned away from that too and looked behind me, where I saw a transient world without foundation revolving and departing in the valleys of nothingness and the darkness of non-existence. It was no salve for my ills, it rather added the poison of horror and fright.(*)

(*) Belief shows the world revolving in darkness to consist of missives of the Eternally Besought One and pages of Divine inscriptions, which, having completed their duties and expressed their meanings, have left their results in existence in their place.

Since I could see no good in that either, I switched my gaze to before me. I saw that the door of the grave stood open at the end of my road. The highway leading to eternity beyond it, struck my gaze from afar.(*)

(*) Since belief shows the door of the grave to open onto the world of light and the road to lead to eternal happiness, it was both a salve for my ills, and a cure.

Thus, rather than receiving consolation and a feeling of familiarity, I felt only horror and fear at these six aspects. And apart from the faculty of will I had nothing in my hand with which to withstand them and act in the face of them.(*)

(*) Belief gives a document for relying on an infinite power in place of the power of choice, which is like the smallest indivisible particle; indeed, belief itself is a document.

But the human weapon called the faculty of will both lacks power and its range is short. And it is inaccurate. It cannot create, and apart from 'acquiring,' can do nothing.(*)

(*) Belief causes the faculty of will to be employed in God's name, and makes it sufficient before everything it may face. Like when a soldier employs his insignificant strength on account of the state, he can perform deeds thousands of times greater than his own strength...

It can neither penetrate the past nor discern the future, and in regard to my hopes and fears concerning these, was of no benefit.(*)

(*) Belief takes its reins from the hand of the animal body and hands them over to the heart and the spirit, and may therefore penetrate the past and the future. For the sphere of life of the heart and spirit is broad.

The arena of the faculty of will is brief present time and the passing present instant.

Thus, despite all my needs and weakness, want and poverty, and my wretched state induced by the horrors and terrors arising from the six aspects, clearly written on the page of my being by the pen of power, and included in my nature, were desires stretching to eternity and hopes spreading through eternity.

Indeed, whatever there is in the world, there are samples of it in my being. I am connected to everything. It is for them that I am caused to work.

The sphere of need stretches as far as the eye can see.

In fact, wherever the imagination goes, the sphere of need extends that far. There is need there too. Whatever man lacks, he is in need of. That

which he does not have, he needs. And what he lacks is endless.

But then the extent of his power extends only as far as his short arm reaches. That means my want and needs are as great as the world. Whereas my capital is as infinitesimal as an indivisible particle.

So, of what use is the faculty of will, worth twopence in relation to my needs which encompass the world and can only be obtained for millions of liras? They cannot be bought with it, and cannot be gained by it. In which case, one has to search for another solution.

The solution is this: to forego one's own will and leave matters to the Divine will; to give up one's own power and strength, and seeking refuge in the power and strength of Almighty God, to adhere to true reliance on Him.

'O my Sustainer! Since the way to be saved is this, I forego my own will in Your way, and I give up my egotism. Then Your grace may take me by the hand out of compassion for my impotence and weakness, and Your mercy may take pity on my need and indigence and be a support for me, and open its door for me.'

Yes, whoever finds the boundless sea of mercy, surely does not rely on his own mirage-like will and choice; he does not abandon mercy and have recourse to his will.

Alas! We have been deceived. We supposed the life of this world to be constant, and so have lost everything. Yes, this passing life is but a sleep; it passes like a dream. This frail life flies like the wind, and departs.

Arrogant man, who relies on himself and supposes he will live for ever, is doomed to die. He passes swiftly. The world, too, man's house, tumbles into the darkness of non-existence. Hopes do not last, while pains endure in the spirit.

Since the reality is this, come, my wretched soul, which yearns for life, is enamoured of the world and afflicted with endless hopes and pains! Awake and come to your senses! As the fire-fly relies on its own miniscule light and remains in the boundless darkness of the night, and since it does not rely on itself, the honey-bee finds the sun of daytime, and gazes on its friends, the flowers, gilded with the sunlight; if you rely on yourself and your being and your ego, you will resemble the fire-fly. Whereas if you sacrifice your transient being in the way of the Creator Who gave it to you, you will find an unending light of existence. So sacrifice it! For your being is a trust given to you for safekeeping.

Moreover, it is His property, and it is He Who bestowed it. So do not scorn it, sacrifice it unhesitatingly. Sacrifice it so that it will be made permanent. For negation of a negation is an affirmation. That is, if non-being is not, there is being. If non-being is negated, existence comes into being.

The All-Generous Creator buys His own property from you, and gives you the high price of Paradise in return. Also, He looks after that property well for you, and increases its value. And He will return it to you in both enduring and perfect form. O my soul! Do not delay! Do this trade which is profitable in five respects, and be saved from five losses; make a fivefold profit all at once!

* * *

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
But when it set, he said: 'I love not those that set.'*⁹

It made me weep, the verse I love not those that set, which was uttered by Abraham (Peace be upon him), and announces the universe's passing and death.

The eyes of my heart wept at it, pouring out bitter tear-drops. Each tear-drop was sorely sad as the eyes of my heart wept. The verse causes others to weep, and as though weeps itself. The following lines in Persian are my tear-drops, they are a sort of commentary of some words present within the Divine Word of God's Wise One, the Prophet Muhammad.

A beloved who is hidden through setting is not beautiful, for those doomed to decline cannot be truly beautiful. They may not be loved with the heart, which is created for eternal love and is the mirror of the Eternally Besought One, and should not be loved with it.

A desired one who is doomed to be lost on setting; such a one is not worthy of the heart's attachment, the mind's preoccupation. He may not be the object of desires. He is not worthy of being regretted with the sorrow and grief that follows. So why should the heart worship such a one and be bound to him?

One sought who is lost in ephemerality; I do not want such a one. For I am ephemeral, I do not want one who is thus. What should I do?

A worshipped one who is buried in death; I shall not call him, I shall not seek refuge with him. For I am infinitely needy and impotent. One who is impotent can find no cure for my boundless ills. He can spread no salve on my eternal wounds. How can one who cannot save himself from death be an object of worship?

⁹ Qur'an, 6:76.

Indeed, the reason, which is obsessed with externals, cries out despairingly at seeing the deaths of the things it worships in the universe, and the spirit, which seeks for an eternal beloved, utters the cry: I love not those that set.

I do not want separation, I do not desire separation, I cannot abide separation...

Meetings followed immediately by separation are not worth sorrow and grief, they are not worthy of being longed for. For just as the passing of pleasure is pain, imagining the passing of pleasure is also a pain. The works of all the metaphorical lovers, that is, the works of poetry on love, are all cries at the pain arising from imagining this passing. If you were to constrain the spirit of all the works of poetry, from each would flow these grievous cries.

Thus, it is due to the pain and tribulations of those meetings stained with transitoriness, those sorrowful, metaphorical loves, that my heart weeps and cries through the weeping of, *I love not those that set*.

If you want permanence in this transitory world, permanence comes from transitoriness. Find transience with regard to your evil-commanding soul so that you may be enduring.

Divest yourself of bad morals, the basis of the worship of this world. Be transitory! Sacrifice your goods and property in the way of the True Beloved. See the ends of beings, which point to non-existence, for the way leading to permanence in this world starts from transitoriness.

The human mind, which plunges into causes, is bewildered at the upheavals of the passing of the world, and laments despairingly. While the conscience, which desires true existence, severs the connection with metaphorical beloveds and transient beings through crying like Abraham, I love not those that set, and it binds itself to the Truly Existent One, and Eternal Beloved.

O my ignorant soul! Know that the world and its beings are certainly ephemeral, but you may find a way leading to permanence in each ephemeral thing, and may see two flashes, two mysteries, of the manifestations of the Undying Beloved's Beauty.

Yes, it is within the bounty that the bestowal is to be seen and the favour of the Most Merciful perceived. If you pass from bounty to bestowal, you will find the Bestower. Also, each work of the Eternally Besought One makes known the All-Glorious Maker's Names like a missive. If you pass from the decoration to the meaning, you will find the One signified by way of His Names. Since you can find the kernel, the essence, of these ephemeral beings, obtain it. Then without pity you can throw away their meaningless shells and externals onto the flood of ephemerality.

Among beings there is no work which is not a most meaningful embodied word and does not cause to be read numerous of the Glorious Maker's Names. Since beings are words, words of power, read their meanings and place them in your heart. Fearlessly cast words without meaning onto the winds of transience. Do not concern yourself looking behind them, needlessly occupying yourself.

Since the chain of thought of the worldly mind, which worships externals and whose capital consists of 'objective' knowledge, leads to nothingness and non-existence, it cries out despairingly in its bewilderment and frustration. It seeks a true path leading to reality. Since the spirit has withdrawn from 'those that set' and the ephemeral, and the heart has given up its metaphorical beloveds, and the conscience too has turned its face from transitory beings, you too, my wretched soul, attract the assistance of I love not those that set, like Abraham, and be saved.

See how well Mawlana Jami expressed it, whose nature was kneaded with love and who was intoxicated with the cup of love:

Yaki khwah(1) *Yaki khwan*(2) *Yaki ju*(3) *Yaki bin*(4) *Yaki dan*(5) *Yaki gu*(6)¹⁰

That is,

1. Want only One; the rest are not worth wanting.
2. Call One; the others will not come to your assistance.
3. Seek One; the rest are not worth it.
4. See One; the others are not seen all the time; they hide themselves behind the veil of ephemerality.
5. Know One; knowledge other than that which assists knowledge of Him is without benefit.
6. Say One; words not concerning Him may be considered meaningless.

Yes, Jami, you spoke the truth absolutely. The True Beloved, the True Sought One, the True Desired One, the True Object of Worship is He alone...

For, in a mighty circle for the mentioning of the Divine Names, this world together with all its beings and their different tongues and various songs declares, *There is no god but God*; together they testify to Divine unity. And binding the wound caused by *I love not those that set*, point to an Undying Beloved in place of all the metaphorical beloveds, attachment to whom has been severed.

* * *

¹⁰ Only this line is Mawlana Jami's.

[About twenty-five years ago on Yuşa Tepesi (Mount Joshua) above the Istanbul Bosphorus, at a time I had decided to give up the world, a number of important friends came to me in order to call me back to the world and my former position. I told them to leave me till the following morning so that I could seek guidance. That morning the following two Tables were imparted to my heart. They resemble poetry, but they are not. I have not changed them for the sake of that blessed memory, and they have been kept as they occurred to me. They were added to the Twenty-Third Word, and now have been included here on account of their 'station'.]

THE FIRST TABLE

[The Table depicting the reality of the world of the heedless.]

Don't call me to the world; -- I came, and saw it was transitory.
Heedlessness was a veil; -- I saw the light of truth was concealed.
All the beings in existence, -- I saw were ephemeral, harmful.
If you say, being, I dressed in it; -- Alas! It was non-being; I suffered much!
If you say, life, I tasted it; -- I saw it was torment upon torment.
The mind became pure torture; -- I saw permanence to be tribulation.
Life became pure whim; -- I saw attainment to be pure loss.
Deeds became pure hypocrisy; -- I saw hopes to be pure pain.
Union became parting itself; -- I saw the cure to be the ill.
These lights became darkness; -- I saw these friends to be orphans.
These voices became announcements
of death; -- I saw the living to be dead.
Knowledge was transformed into fancy; -- I saw in science a thousand
ailments.
Pleasure became pure pain; -- I saw existence to be compounded
non-existence.
If you say the Beloved, I found him; -- Alas! On separation I suffered
grievous pain.

THE SECOND TABLE

[The Table indicating the reality of the world of
the people of guidance, those with easy hearts.]

Then the heedlessness passed, -- And I saw the light of truth clearly.
 Existence became the proof of God; -- See, life is the mirror of God.
 The mind became the key to treasures. -- See, transience is the door to permanence.
 The spark of perfection died, -- But, behold the Sun of Beauty!
 Separation became true union; -- See, pain is pure pleasure.
 Life became pure action; -- See, eternity is pure life.
 Darkness became the container of light; -- See, there is true life in death.
 All things became familiar; -- See, all sounds are the mentioning of God.
 All the atoms in existence -- -- See, each recites God's praises
 and extols Him.
 I found poverty to be a treasury of
 wealth;-- See, in impotence is perfect strength.
 If you find God, -- See, all things are yours.
 If you are the slave of the Owner of
 All Things, -- See, His property is yours.
 If you are arrogant and claim to
 own yourself, -- See, it is trial and tribulation without end;
 Experience its boundless torment; -- See, it is a calamity most crushing.
 If you are a true slave of God, -- See, it is a limitless pleasure and ease.
 Taste its uncountable rewards, -- Experience its infinite happiness...

* * *

[Twenty-five years ago in Ramadan after the Afternoon Prayer, I read Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir Geylani’s composition in verse about the Most Beautiful Names. I felt a desire to write a supplication with the Divine Names, and at that time only this much was written. I wanted to write a supplication similar to that of my holy master, but, alas! I have no ability to write poetry and it remained deficient. Nevertheless, the supplication was added to the Thirty-Third Letter of the Thirty-Third Word, known as the Thirty-Three Windows, then was included here on account of its ‘station’.]

He is the Enduring One

The Wise Judge of affairs, we are under His decree;
 He is the Just Arbiter; His are the heavens and the earth.
 The One Knowing of the secrets and hidden matters in His dominions;
 He is the All-Powerful, Self-Subsistent; His is all from the Throne to the ground.
 The Perceiver of the fine points and embroideries in His art;
 He is the Creator, the Loving One; His is the beauty and the splendour.
 The Glorious One Whose attributes are reflected in the mirrors in His creation;
 He is the Lord, the Most Holy; His is the might and the grandeur.
 The Originator of creatures; we form the embroideries of His art;
 He is the Constant, the Enduring One; His is the dominion and eternity.
 The Munificent Bestower of gifts; we are the caravan of His guests;
 He is the Provider, the Sufficer; His is the praise and laudation.
 The Beauteous Granter of gifts; We are the weavings of His knowledge;
 He is the Creator, the Faithful; His is the munificence, the giving.
 The Hearer of complaints and supplications in His creation;
 He is the Merciful, the Healer; His are the thanks and the praise.
 The Pardoner of the faults and sins of His servants;
 He is the Oft Forgiving, the Compassionate; His is forgiveness and acceptance.

O my soul! Together with my heart, weep and cry, and say:

I am ephemeral; I do not want one such as that.
 I am impotent; I do not want one such as that.
 I have surrendered my spirit to the Most Merciful; I do not want another.
 I want one, but I want an eternal friend.
 I am a mere speck, but I want an eternal sun.
 I am nothing, but nothing, yet I want these beings, all of them.

A FRUIT OF THE PINE, CEDAR, JUNIPER,
AND BLACK CYPRESS TREES
IN THE UPLANDS OF BARLA

[While being a part of the Eleventh Letter, this has

One time during my captivity while gazing at the majestic and wonderful forms of the pine, cedar, and juniper trees on the mountain top, a gentle breeze was blowing. Transforming the scene into a magnificent, delightful, and clamorous display of dancing and a rapturous performance of praise and glorification, the enjoyment of watching it was transformed into instruction for my eyes and wisdom for my ears. I suddenly recalled the Kurdish lines of Ahmad al-Jizri, whose meaning is:

‘Everyone has hastened to gaze at You and Your Beauty; they are acting coyly before Your Beauty.’

My heart wept as follows, expressing their instructive meanings. The meaning of the verses in Persian written at Tepelice in the mountains of Barla about the fruit of the pine, cedar, juniper, and black cypress trees is this:

Living creatures have appeared from everywhere on the face of the earth, Your art, to gaze on You.

From above and below they emerge like heralds, and call out.

The herald-like trees take pleasure at the beauty of Your embroideries, and they dance.

They are filled with joy at the perfection of Your art, and utter most beautiful sounds.

It is as if the sweetness of their own voices fills them with joy too, and makes them perform a delicate melody.

In response the trees have started dancing and are seeking ecstasy.

It is through these works of Divine mercy that all the living creatures receive instruction in the glorification and prayer particular to each.

After receiving instruction, on high rocks the trees raise their heads to the Divine Throne.

Each, like Shahbaz Qalandar,¹¹ stretches out a hundred hands to the Court of God, and assumes an imposing position of worship.

They make their small tassel-like twigs and branches dance, so both they and those that watch them express their fine pleasure and elevated delight.

They give voice as though touching the most sensitive strings and veins of the veils of love: 'Ah! It is He!'

From it a meaning such as this comes to mind: they recall both the weeping caused by the pain of the fading of metaphorical loves, and a profoundly sorrowful moaning.

They make heard the melancholy songs of all lovers parted from their beloveds, like Sultan Mahmud.

They seem to have a duty of making the dead hear the pre-eternal songs and sorrowful voices, who no longer hear worldly voices and words.

The spirit understands from this that beings respond with glorification to the manifestation of the Glorious Maker's Names; they perform a graceful chant.

The heart reads the mystery of Divine unity from these trees, each like an embodied sign, from the elevated word-order of this miraculousness. That is, there is so wonderful an order, art, and wisdom in the manner of their creation, that if all the causes in existence had the power to act and choose, and they gathered together, they could not imitate them.

The soul, on seeing them, sees the whole earth as revolving in a clamorous tumult of separation, and seeks enduring pleasure. It receives the meaning: 'You will find it in abandoning worship of this world.'

The mind discovers from the chanting animals and trees and the vociferous plants and air, a most meaningful order of creation, embroidery of wisdom, and treasury of secrets.

The desirous soul receives such pleasure from the murmuring air and whispering leaves that it forgets all metaphorical pleasures, and through abandoning these, which endow it with life, wants to die in the pleasure of reality.

The imagination sees that appointed angels have entered these trees like bodies, from whose branches hang many flutes. It is as though an Eternal Monarch has clothed the angels in the trees for a splendid parade accompanied with the sounds of a thousand flutes. Thus the trees show themselves to be not lifeless, unconscious bodies, but highly conscious and meaningful.

¹¹ Shahbaz Qalandar was a famous hero who through the guidance of Shaykh Geylani took refuge at the Divine Court and rose to the degree of sainthood.

The flutes are pure and powerful as though issuing from a heavenly, exalted orchestra. The mind does not hear from them the sorrowful plaints of separation, that foremost Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi and all lovers hear, but dominical praise and laudation and grateful thanks offered to the Most Merciful One, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsistent.

Since the trees have all become bodies, their leaves have become tongues. At the touching of the breeze each recites over and over again: 'It is He! It is He!' With the benedictions of their lives they proclaim their Maker to be Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent.

With the tongue of disposition they continuously declare 'O God!', and seek the necessities of their lives from Him, from the treasury of mercy. And through the tongue of their manifesting life from top to bottom, they recite His Name of 'O Living One!'

O Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One! Through the Names of Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent, endow the heart of this wretched one with life, and bestow sound direction on his confused mind. Amen.

[One time at night in a high spot on Çamdağı (the Pine Mountain) near Barla I was looking at the face of the heavens when the following lines suddenly occurred to me. With the imagination I heard the speaking of the stars through the tongue of disposition, and that is how the lines were written. Since I do not know the rules of versification, they were not written accordingly, but as they occurred to me. The piece is taken from the Fourth Letter, and the last part of the First Stopping Place of the Thirty-Second Word.]

THE UTTERANCE OF THE STARS

Then listen to the stars, listen to their harmonious address!

See what wisdom has emblazed on the decree of its light!

Altogether they start to speak with the tongue of truth,

They address the majesty of the All-Powerful One of Glory's sovereignty:

We are each of us light-scattering proofs of the existence of our Maker;

We are witnesses both to His Unity and His Power;

We are subtle miracles gilding the face of the skies

For the angels to make excursions on;

We are the innumerable attentive eyes of the heavens

That watch the earth, that study Paradise;¹²

¹² That is, since innumerable miracles of power are exhibited on the face of the earth, which is the seedbed and tillage for Paradise, the angels in the world of the heavens gaze on those miracles, those marvels. And like the angels, the stars, which are like the eyes of the heavenly bodies, gaze on the finely fashioned creatures on the earth, and in so doing look at the world of Paradise. At the same time they look on both the earth and Paradise; they observe those fleeting wonders in an enduring form in Paradise. That is to say, there, there are prospects of both worlds.

*We are the innumerable exquisite fruits that the hand of wisdom of the Beauteous
One of Glory has fastened
To the celestial portion of the tree of creation, to all the branches of the Milky Way;
For the inhabitants of the heavens, we are each of us a travelling mosque,
a spinning house, a lofty home,
Each is an illumining lamp, a mighty ship, an aeroplane;
We are each of us a miracle of power of the All-Powerful One of Perfection, The All-
Wise One of Glory;
Each a wonder of His creative art, a rarity of His wisdom, a marvel of
His creation, a world of light;
We demonstrated to mankind innumerable proofs, we made them hear with these
innumerable tongues of ours;
But their accursed unseeing, unbelieving eyes did not see our faces, they did not hear
our words; and we are signs that speak the truth;
Our stamp is one; our seal is one; we are mastered by our Sustainer;
We glorify Him through our subjugation;
We recite His Names; we are each of us in ecstasy, a member of the
mighty circle of the Milky Way.*

The Eighteenth Word

[This Word consists of two Stations, of which the Second has not yet been written. There are three Points in the First Station.]

FIRST POINT

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

Think not that those who exult in what they have thus contrived, and who love to be praised for what they have not done – think not that they will escape suffering: for grievous suffering does await them.¹

A Chastening Slap for my Evil-Commanding Soul:

O my foolish soul, charmed at glory, enamoured of fame, addicted to praise, and without equal in egotism! If it is a just claim that the source of the fig and its thousands of fruits is its tiny seed, and that all the grapes in their hundred bunches hanging from a dry branch of the vine are produced through the skill of the branch, and that those who benefit from them should praise and esteem the branch and the seed, then perhaps you have the right to be proud and conceited about the bounties with which you are loaded. But in fact you deserve to be constantly chided, because you are not like the seed and the branch: since you have the faculty of will, you reduce the value of those bounties through your pride. Through your conceit, you destroy them; through your ingratitude, you nullify them; through claiming them as your own, you lay hands on them unlawfully. Your duty is not to glory in your deeds, but to offer thanks. What is fit for you is not fame, but humility. Your right is not praise, it is repentance and to seek forgiveness. Your perfection lies not in self-centredness, but in recognizing God.

Yes, you in my body resemble ‘nature’ in the world. Both of you were created to receive good and be the thing to which evil is referred. That is to say, you are not the agent and source, but the recipient and passive. You have only an effect, and that is being the cause of evil because you did not accept as you should have done a good arising from absolute good. Also you

¹ Qur’an, 3:188.

were both created as veils, so that things that are apparently ugly, whose beauty is not obvious, would be attributed to you, and you would be means of the Most Holy Divine Essence being acknowledged free of defect. But you have taken on a form entirely contrary to the duty of your natures. Although out of your incapacity you have transformed good into evil, you as though act as partners to your Creator. That means one who worships himself and worships nature is extremely foolish and perpetrates a great wrong.

And do not say: 'I am a place of manifestation, and one who manifests beauty becomes beautiful.' For you have not assimilated it, so are not a place of manifestation but a place of passage.

And do not say: 'Among people I was chosen. These fruits, these fine works, are shown through me. That means I have some merit.' No! God forbid! Rather they were given to you first because you are more bankrupt, needy, and sad than everyone else!²

SECOND POINT

This Point elucidates one meaning of the verse:

*Who has created everything in the best way,*³

and is as follows:

In everything, even the things which appear to be the most ugly, there is an aspect of true beauty. Yes, everything in the universe, every event, is either in itself beautiful, which is called 'essential beauty,' or it is beautiful in regard to its results, which is called 'relative beauty.' There are certain events which are apparently ugly and confused, but beneath that apparent veil, there are most shining instances of beauty and order.

Beneath the veil of stormy rains and muddy soil in the season of spring are hidden the smiles of innumerable beautiful flowers and well-ordered plants. And behind the veils of the harsh destruction and mournful separations of autumn is the discharge from the duties of their lives of the amiable small animals, the friends of the coy flowers, so as to preserve them from the blows and torments of winter events, which are manifestations of Divine might and glory, and under the veil of which the way is paved for the new and beautiful spring.

Beneath the veil of events like storms, earthquakes, and plague, is the unfolding of numerous hidden immaterial flowers. The seeds of many potentialities which have not developed sprout and grow beautiful on account of events which are apparently ugly. As though general upheavals and universal

² Truly, I was extremely pleased at the New Said silencing his soul to this extent in this dispute, and said, A thousand bravo's!

³ Qur'an, 32:7.

change are all immaterial rain. But because man is both enamoured of the apparent and is self-centered, he considers only the externals and pronounces them ugly. Since he is self-centred, he reasons according to the result which looks to himself and judges it to be ugly. Whereas, if, of their aims one looks to man, thousands look to their Maker's Names.

For example, man reckons to be harmful and meaningless thorned plants and trees, which are among the great miracles of the Creator's power. Whereas they are the well-equipped heroes of the grasses and trees. And for example, hawks harrying sparrows is apparently incompatible with mercy, but through this harrying, the sparrow's abilities unfold. And for example, he considers the snow to be very cold and uninviting, but under that chilly, unpleasing veil there are aims so warm and results so sweet they defy description. Also, since man is self-centred and worships the apparent and therefore judges everything according to the face that looks to him, he supposes to contrary to good manners many things that are perfectly polite and correct. For example, in man's view, the discussion of his sexual organ is shameful. But this veil of shame is in the face which looks to man. Whereas the faces that look to creation, art, and its aims and purposes are veils which if considered with the eye of wisdom, are perfectly correct. Shame does not touch them at all.

Thus, certain expressions of the All-Wise Qur'an, the source of politeness and right conduct, are in accordance with these faces and veils. Beneath the apparent faces of creatures and events which seem to us to be ugly, are extremely fine, wise art and beautiful faces looking to their creation, which look to their Maker; so too there are numerous beautiful veils which conceal their wisdom, and moreover, great numbers of apparent instances of disorder and confusion which are most regular sacred writing.

THIRD POINT

*If you do love God, follow me; God will love you.*⁴

Since in the universe there is observedly beauty of art, and this is certain, it necessitates with a certainty as definite as actually witnessing it the Messengership of Muhammad (PBUH). For the beauty of art and finely ornamented forms of these beautiful creatures show that their Fashioner possesses a significant will to make beautiful and powerful desire to adorn. And this will and desire show that the Maker possesses an elevated love and sacred inclination towards the perfections of the art He displays in His creatures. And this love and inclination require to be turned towards and concentrated on man, the most enlightened and perfect individual among beings. And man is the conscious fruit of the tree of creation. And the fruit

⁴ Qur'an, 3:31.

is the most comprehensive and furthest part, the part with the most general view and universal consciousness. And the one with the most comprehensive view and universal consciousness should be the most elevated and brilliant individual, who will meet with and be addressed by that Beauteous Maker; who will expend his universal consciousness and comprehensive view entirely on the worship of his Maker, the appreciation of His art, and offering thanks for His bounties.

Now, two signboards, two spheres appear. One is a magnificent, well-ordered sphere of dominicality and exquisitely fashioned, bejewelled signboard of art. The other is an enlightened and illumined sphere of worship and broad and comprehensive signboard of thought and reflection, admiration, thanks, and belief. This second sphere acts with all its strength in the name of the first sphere.

Thus, it will be clearly understood how closely connected with the Maker is the leader of the second sphere, which serves all the Maker's art-cherishing aims, and how beloved and acceptable he is in His eyes.

Is it at all reasonable to accept that the munificent Fashioner of these fine creatures, Who so loves His art and even takes into consideration all the tastes of the mouth, would remain indifferent towards His most beautiful creature, who, in a clamour of admiration and appreciation which makes the Throne and earth reverberate and in a litany of thanks and exaltation which brings to ecstasy the land and the sea, is worshipfully turned towards Him? Would He not speak with him and want to make him His Messenger and wish his commendable conduct to pass to others? It is possible that He would not speak with him and not make him His Messenger... By no means!

*Verily, the religion before God is Islam.⁵
Muhammad is the Messenger of God.⁶*

⁵ Qur'an, 3:19.

⁶ Qur'an, 48:29.

The Nineteenth Word

[About the Messengership of Muhammad (PBUH)]

I could not praise Muhammad with my words; rather, my words were made praiseworthy by Muhammad.

Yes, this Word is beautiful, but what makes it so is the most beautiful of all things, the attributes and qualities of Muhammad (PBUH).

Also being the Fourteenth Flash, this Word consists of fourteen ‘Droplets.’

FIRST DROPLET

There are three great and universal things which make known to us our Sustainer. One is the book of the universe, a jot of whose testimony we have heard from the thirteen Flashes together with the thirteenth lesson from the Arabic *Risale-i Nur*. Another is the Seal of the Prophets (Peace and blessings be upon him), the supreme sign of the book of the universe. The other is the Qur’an of Mighty Stature. Now we must become acquainted with the Seal of the Prophets (PBUH), who is the second and articulate proof, and must listen to him.

Yes, consider the collective personality of this proof: the face of the earth has become his mosque, Mecca, his *mihrab*, and Medina, his pulpit. Our Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him), this clear proof, is leader of all the believers, preacher to all mankind, the chief of all the prophets, lord of all the saints, the leader of a circle for the remembrance of God comprising all the prophets and saints. He is a luminous tree whose living roots are all the prophets, and fresh fruits are all the saints; whose claims all the prophets relying on their miracles and all the saints relying on their wonder-working confirm and corroborate. For he declares and claims: “There is no god but God!” And all on left and right, that is, those luminous reciters of God’s Names lined up in the past and the future, repeat the same words, and through their consensus in effect declare: “You speak the truth and what you say is right!” What false idea has the power to meddle in a claim which is thus affirmed and corroborated by thousands?

SECOND DROPLET

Just as that luminous proof of Divine unity is affirmed by the unanimity and consensus of those two wings, so do hundreds of indications in the revealed scriptures, like the Torah and Bible,¹ and the thousands of signs that appeared before the beginning of his mission, and the well-known news given by the voices from the Unseen and the unanimous testimony of the soothsayers, the indications of the thousands of his miracles like the Splitting of the Moon, and the justice of Shari'a all confirm and corroborate him. So too, in his person, his laudable morals, which were at the summit of perfection; and in his duties, his complete confidence and elevated qualities, which were of the highest excellence, and his extraordinary fear of God, worship, seriousness, and fortitude, which demonstrated the strength of his belief, and his total certainty and his complete steadfastness, – these all show as clearly as the sun how utterly faithful he was to his cause.

THIRD DROPLET

If you wish, come! Let us go to Arabian Peninsula, to the Era of Bliss! In our imaginations we shall see him at his duties and visit him. Look! We see a person distinguished by his fine character and beautiful form. In his hand is a miraculous book and on his tongue, a truthful address; he is delivering a pre-eternal sermon to all mankind, indeed, to man, jinn, and the angels, and to all beings. He solves and expounds the strange riddle of the mystery of the world's creation; he discovers and solves the abstruse talisman which is the mystery of the universe; and he provides convincing and satisfying answers to the three awesome and difficult questions that are asked of all beings and have always bewildered and occupied minds: "Where do you come from? What are you doing here? What is your destination?"

FOURTH DROPLET

See! He spreads such a Light of truth that if you look at the universe as being outside the luminous sphere of his truth and guidance, you see it to be like a place of general mourning, and beings strangers to one another and hostile, and inanimate beings to be like ghastly corpses and living creatures like orphans weeping at the blows of death and separation. Now look! Through the Light he spreads, that place of universal mourning has been transformed into a place where God's Names and praises are recited in joy and ecstasy. The foreign, hostile beings have become friends and brothers. While the dumb, dead inanimate creatures have all become familiar officials and docile servants. And the weeping, complaining orphans are seen to be

¹ In his *Risale-i Hamidiye*, Husayn Jisri extracted one hundred and fourteen indications from those scriptures. If this many have remained after the texts have become corrupted, there were surely many explicit mentions before.

either reciting God's Names and praises or offering thanks at being released from their duties.

FIFTH DROPLET

Also, through his Light, the motion and movement of the universe, and its variations, changes and transformations cease being meaningless, futile, and the playthings of chance; they rise to being dominical missives, pages inscribed with the signs of creation, mirrors to the Divine Names, and the world itself becomes a book of the Eternally Besought One's wisdom. Man's boundless weakness and impotence make him inferior to all other animals and his intelligence, an instrument for conveying grief, sorrow, and sadness, makes him more wretched, yet when he is illumined with that Light, he rises above all animals and all creatures. Through entreaty, his illuminated impotence, poverty, and intelligence make him a petted monarch; due to his complaints, he becomes a spoiled vicegerent of the earth. That is to say, if it were not for his Light, the universe and man, and all things, would be nothing. Yes, certainly such a person is necessary in such a wondrous universe; otherwise the universe and firmaments would not be in existence.

SIXTH DROPLET

Thus, that Being brings and announces the good news of eternal happiness; he is the discoverer and proclaimer of an infinite mercy, the herald and observer of the beauties of the sovereignty of dominicality, and the discloser and displayer of the treasures of the Divine Names. If you regard him in that way, that is in regard to his being a worshipful servant of God, you will see him to be the model of love, the exemplar of mercy, the glory of mankind, and the most luminous fruit of the tree of creation. While if you look in this way, that is, in regard to his Messengership, you see him to be the proof of God, the lamp of truth, the sun of guidance, and the means to happiness. And look! His Light has lighted up from east to west like dazzling lightning, and half the earth and a fifth of mankind has accepted the gift of his guidance and preserved it like life itself. So how is it that our evil-commanding souls and satans do not accept with all its degrees, the basis of all such a Being claimed, that is, *There is no god but God?*

SEVENTH DROPLET

Now, consider how, eradicating in no time at all their evil, savage customs and habits to which they were fanatically attached, he decked out the various wild, unyielding peoples of that broad peninsula with all the finest virtues, and made them teachers of all the world and masters to the civilized nations. See, it was not an outward domination, he conquered and subjugated their minds, spirits, hearts, and souls. He became the beloved of hearts, the teacher of minds, the trainer of souls, the ruler of spirits.

EIGHTH DROPLET

You know that a small habit like cigarette smoking among a small nation can be removed permanently only by a powerful ruler with great effort. But look! This Being removed numerous ingrained habits from intractable, fanatical large nations with slight outward power and little effort in a short period of time, and in their place he so established exalted qualities that they became as firm as if they had mingled with their very blood. He achieved very many extraordinary feats like this. Thus, we present the Arabian Peninsula as a challenge to those who refuse to see the testimony of the blessed age of the Prophet. Let them each take a hundred philosophers, go there, and strive for a hundred years; would they be able to carry out in that time one hundredth of what he achieved in a year?

NINTH DROPLET

Also, you know that an insignificant man of small standing among a small community in a disputed matter of small importance cannot tell a small but shameful lie brazen-faced and without fear without displaying anxiety or disquiet enough to inform the enemies at his side of his deception. Now look at that Being; although he undertook a tremendous task which required an official of great authority and great standing and a situation of great security, can any contradiction at all be found in the words he uttered among a community of great size in the face of great hostility concerning a great cause and matters of great significance, with great ease and freedom, without fear, hesitation, diffidence, or anxiety, with pure sincerity, great seriousness, and in an intense, elevated manner that angered his enemies? Is it at all possible that any trickery should have been involved? God forbid! *It is naught but Revelation inspired.*² The truth does not deceive, and one who perceives the truth is not deceived. His way, which is truth, is free of deception. How could a fancy appear to one who sees the truth to be the truth, and deceive him?

TENTH DROPLET

Now, look! What curiosity-arousing, attractive, necessary, and awesome truths he shows, what matters he proves!

You know that what impels man most is curiosity. Even, if it was to be said to you: “If you give half of your life and property, someone will come from the Moon and Jupiter and tell you all about them. He will also tell you the truth about your future and what will happen to you,” you would be bound to give them if you have any curiosity at all. Whereas that Being tells of a Monarch Who is such that in His realm, the Moon flies round a moth like a fly, and the moth, the earth, flutters round a lamp, and the lamp, the sun, is merely one lamp among thousands in one guest-house out of thousands of that Monarch.

² Qur’an, 53:4.

Also, he speaks truly of a world so wondrous and a revolution so momentous that if the earth was a bomb and exploded, it would not be all that strange. Look! Listen to Suras like, *When the sun is folded up;*³ * *When the sky is cleft asunder;*⁴ * *[The Day] of Noise and Clamour;*⁵ which he recites.

Also, he speaks truly about a future in comparison with which the future in this world is like a tiny mirage. And he tells most seriously of a happiness in comparison with which all worldly happiness is but a fleeting flash of lightning in relation to an eternal sun.

ELEVENTH DROPLET

For sure, wonders await us under the apparent veil of the universe which is thus strange and perplexing. So one thus wonderful and extraordinary, a displayer of marvels, is necessary to tell of its wonders. It is apparent from that Being's conduct that he has seen them, and sees them, and says that he has seen them. And he instructs us most soundly concerning what the God of the heavens and the earth, Who nurtures us with His bounties, wants and desires of us. Everyone should therefore leave everything and run to and heed this Being who teaches numerous other necessary and curiosity-arousing truths like these, so how is it that most people are deaf and blind, and mad even, so that they do not see this truth, and they do not listen to it and understand it?

TWELFTH DROPLET

Thus, just as this Being is an articulate proof and true evidence at the degree of the veracity of the unity of the Creator of beings, so is he a decisive proof and clear evidence for the resurrection of the dead and eternal happiness. Yes, with his guidance he is the reason for eternal happiness coming about and is the means of attaining it; so too through his prayers and supplications, he is the cause of its existence and reason for its creation. We repeat here this mystery, which is mentioned in the Tenth Word, due to its 'station'.

See! This Being prays with a prayer so supreme it is as if the Arabian Peninsula and the earth itself performs the prayers through his sublime prayer, and offers entreaties. See, he also entreats in a congregation so vast that it is as if all the luminous and perfected members of mankind from the time of Adam till our age and until the end of time, are following him and saying "Amen" to his supplications. And see! He is beseeching for a need so universal that not only the dwellers of the earth, but also those of the heavens, and all beings, join in his prayer, declaring: "Yes! O our Sustainer!

³ Qur'an, 81:1.

⁴ Qur'an, 82:1.

⁵ Qur'an, 101:1.

Grant it to us! We too want it!” And he supplicates with such want, so sorrowfully, in such a loving, yearning, and beseeching fashion that he brings the whole cosmos to tears, leading them to join in his prayer.

And see! The purpose and aim of his prayer is such it raises man and the world, and all creatures, from the lowest of the low, from inferiority, worthlessness, and uselessness to the highest of the high; that is to having value, permanence, and exalted duties. And see! He seeks and pleads for help and mercy in a manner so elevated and sweet, it is as if he makes all beings and the heavens and the earth hear, and bringing them to ecstasy, to exclaim: “Amen, O our God! Amen!” And see! He seeks his needs from One so Powerful, Hearing, and Munificent, One so Knowing, Seeing, and Compassionate, that He sees and hears the most secret need of the most hidden living being and its entreaties, accepts them, and has mercy on it. For He gives what is asked for, if only through the tongue of disposition. And He gives it in so Wise, Seeing, and Compassionate a form that it leaves no doubt that that nurturing and regulation is particular to the All-Hearing and All-Seeing One, the Most Generous and Most Compassionate One.

THIRTEENTH DROPLET

What does he want, this pride of the human race, who taking behind him all the eminent of mankind, stands on top of the world, and raising up his hand, is praying? What is this unique being, who is truly the glory of the cosmos, seeking? Listen! He is seeking eternal happiness. He is asking for eternal life, and to meet with God. He wants Paradise. And he wants all the Sacred Divine Names, which display their beauty and decrees in the mirrors of beings. Even, if it were not for reasons for the fulfilment of those countless requests, like mercy, grace, wisdom, and justice, a single of that Being’s prayers would have been sufficient for the construction of Paradise, the creation of which is as easy for Divine power as the creation of the spring. Yes, just as his Messengership was the reason for the opening of this place of examination and trial, so too his worship and servitude to God were the reason for the opening of the next world.

Would the perfect order observed in the universe, which has caused scholars and the intelligent to pronounce: “It is not possible for there to be anything better than what exists;” and the faultless beauty of art within mercy, the incomparable beauty of dominicality, – would these permit the ugliness, the cruelty, the lack of order of its hearing and responding to the least significant, the least important desires and voices, and its considering unimportant the most important, the most necessary wishes, and its not hearing them or understanding them, and not carrying them out? God forbid! A hundred thousand times, God forbid! Such a beauty would not permit such an ugliness; it would not become ugly.

And so, my imaginary friend! That is enough for now, we must return. For if we remain a hundred years in this age in the Arabian Peninsula, we still would only completely comprehend one hundredth of the marvels of that Being's duties and the wonders he carried out, and we would never tire of watching him.

Now, come! We shall look at the centuries, which will turn above us. See how each has opened like a flower through the effulgence it has received from that Sun of Guidance! They have produced millions of enlightened fruits like Abu Hanifa, Shafi'i, Abu Bayazid Bistami, Shah Geylani, Shah Naqshband, Imam Ghazzali, and Imam Rabbani. But postponing the details of our observations to another time, we must recite some benedictions for that displayer of miracles and bringer of guidance, which mention a number of his certain miracles:

Endless peace and blessings be upon our master Muhammad, to the number of the good deeds of his community, to whom was revealed the All-Wise Criterion of Truth and Falsehood, from One Most Merciful, Most Compassionate, from the Sublime Throne; whose Messengership was foretold by the Torah and Bible, and told of by wondrous signs, the voices of jinn, saints of man, and soothsayers; at whose indication the moon split; our master Muhammad! Peace and blessings be upon him thousands and thousands of times, to the number of the breaths of his community; at whose beckoning came the tree, on whose prayer rain swiftly fell; and whom the cloud shaded from the heat; who satisfied a hundred men with his food; from between whose fingers three times flowed water like the Spring of Kawthar; and to whom God made speak the lizard, the gazelle, the wolf, the torso, the arm, the camel, the mountain, the rock, and the clod; the one who made the Ascension and whose eye did not waver; our master and intercessor, Muhammad! Peace and blessings be upon him thousands and thousands of times, to the number of the letters of the Qur'an formed in the words, represented with the permission of the Most Merciful in the mirrors of the airwaves, at the reciting of all the Qur'an's words by all reciters from when it was first revealed to the end of time. And grant us forgiveness and have mercy on us, O God, for each of those blessings. Amen.

[I have described the evidences for Muhammad's (PBUH) Prophethood which I have here indicated briefly in a Turkish treatise called *Şua'at-ı Marifeti'n-Nebi* and in the Nineteenth Letter (*The Miracles of Muhammad*). And there too aspects of the All-Wise Qur'an's miraculousness have been mentioned briefly. Again, in a Turkish treatise called *Lemeat* (Glams) and in the Twenty-Fifth Word (*The Miraculousness of the Qur'an*) I have explained concisely forty ways in which the Qur'an is a miracle, and indicated forty aspects of its miraculousness. And of those

forty aspects, only the eloquence in the word-order, I have written in forty pages in an Arabic commentary called *Isharat al-I'jaz (Signs of Miraculousness)*. If you have the need, you may refer to those three works.]

FOURTEENTH DROPLET

The All-Wise Qur'an, the treasury of miracles and supreme miracle, proves the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) together with Divine unity so decisively that it leaves no need for further proof. And we shall give its definition and indicate one or two flashes of its miraculousness which have been the cause of criticism.

The All-Wise Qur'an, which makes known to us our Sustainer, is thus: it is the pre-eternal translator of the great book of the universe; the discloser of the treasures of the Divine Names concealed in the pages of the earth and the heavens; the key to the truths hidden beneath these lines of events; the treasury of the favours of the Most Merciful and pre-eternal addresses, which come forth from the World of the Unseen beyond the veil of this Manifest World; the sun, foundation, and plan of the spiritual world of Islam, and the map of the worlds of the hereafter; the distinct expounder, lucid exposition, articulate proof, and clear translator of the Divine Essence, attributes, and deeds; the instructor, true wisdom, guide, and leader of the world of humanity; it is both a book of wisdom and law, and a book of prayer and worship, and a book of command and summons, and a book of invocation and Divine knowledge – it is book for all spiritual needs; and it is a sacred library offering books appropriate to the ways of all the saints and veracious, the purified and the scholars, whose ways and paths are all different.

Consider the flashes of miraculousness in its repetitions, which are imagined to be a fault: since the Qur'an is both a book of invocation, and a book of prayer, and a book of summons, the repetition in it is desirable, indeed, it is essential and most eloquent. It is not as the faulty imagine. For the mark of invocation is illumination through repetition. The mark of prayer is strengthening through repetition. The mark of command and summons is confirmation through repetition. Moreover, everyone is not capable of always reading the whole Qur'an, but is mostly able to read one Sura. Therefore, since the most important purposes of the Qur'an are included in most of the longer Suras, each is like a small Qur'an. That is to say, so that no one should be deprived, certain of its aims like Divine unity, the resurrection of the dead, and the story of Moses, have been repeated. Also, like bodily needs, spiritual needs are various. Man is need of some of them every breath; like the body needs air, the spirit needs the word *Hu* (He). Some he is in need of every hour, like "In the Name of God." And so on. That means the repetition of verses arises from the repetition of need. It makes the

repetition in order to point out the need and awaken and excite it, and to arouse desire and appetite.

Also, the Qur'an is a founder; it is the basis of the Clear Religion, and the foundation of the world of Islam. It changed human social life, and is the answer to the repeated questions of its various classes. Repetition is necessary for a founder in order to establish things. Repetition is necessary to corroborate them. Confirmation, verification and repetition are necessary to emphasize them.

Also, it speaks of such mighty matters and minute truths that numerous repetitions are necessary in different forms in order to establish them in everyone's hearts. Nevertheless, they are apparently repetitions, but in reality every verse has numerous meanings, numerous benefits, and many aspects and levels. In each place they are mentioned with a different meaning, for different benefits and purposes.

Also, the Qur'an's being unspecific and concise in certain matters to do with cosmos is a flash of miraculousness for the purpose of guidance. It cannot be the target of criticism and is not a fault, like some atheists imagine.

If you ask: "Why does the All-Wise Qur'an not speak of beings in the same way as philosophy and science? It leaves some matters in brief form, and some it speaks of in a simple and superficial way that is easy in the general view, does not wound general feelings, and does not weary or tax the minds of ordinary people. Why is this?"

By way of an answer we say: Philosophy has strayed from the path of truth, that's why. Also, of course you have understood from past Words and what they teach that the All-Wise Qur'an speaks of the universe in order to make known the Divine Essence, attributes, and Names. That is, it explains the meanings of the book of the universe to make known its Creator. That means it looks at beings, not for themselves, but for their Creator. Also, it addresses everyone. But philosophy and science look at beings for themselves, and address scientists in particular. In which case, since the All-Wise Qur'an makes beings evidences and proofs, the evidence has to be superficial so that it will be quickly understood in the general view. And since the Qur'an of Guidance addresses all classes of men, the ordinary people, which form the most numerous class, want guidance which is concise with unnecessary things being vague, and which brings subtle things close with comparisons, and which does not change things which in their superficial view are obvious into an unnecessary or even harmful form, lest it causes them to fall into error.

For example, it says about the sun: "The sun is a revolving lamp or lantern." For it does not speak of the sun for itself and its nature, but because it is a sort of mainspring of an order and centre of a system, and order and system are mirrors of the Maker's skill. It says:

*The sun runs its course.*⁶

that is, the sun revolves. Through calling to mind the orderly disposals of Divine power in the revolutions of winter and summer, and day and night with the phrase, The sun revolves, it makes understood the Maker's tremendousness. Thus, whatever the reality of this revolving, it does not affect the order, which is woven and observed, and which is the purpose. It also says,

*And set the sun as a lamp.*⁷

Through depicting through the word lamp the world in the form of a palace, and the things within it as decorations, necessities, and provisions prepared for man and living beings, and inferring that the sun is also a subjugated candleholder, it makes known the mercy and bestowal of the Creator. Now look and see what this foolish and prattling philosophy says:

"The sun is a vast burning liquid mass. It causes the planets which have been flung off from it to revolve around it. Its mass is such-and-such. It is this, it is that." It does not afford the spirit the satisfaction and fulfilment of true knowledge, just a terrible dread and fearful wonder. It does not speak of it as the Qur'an does. You may understand from this the value of the matters of philosophy, whose inside is hollow and outside, ostentatious. So do not be deceived by its glittering exterior and be disrespectful towards the most miraculous expositions of the Qur'an!

O God! Make the Qur'an healing for us, the writer of this and his peers, from all ills, and a companion to us and to them in our lives and after our deaths, and in this world, and in the grave, and at the Last Judgement an intercessor, and on the Bridge a light, and from the Fire a screen and shield, and in Paradise a friend, and in all good deeds a guide and leader, through Your grace and munificence and beneficence and mercy, O Most Munificent of the Munificent and Most Merciful of the Merciful! Amen.

O God! Grant blessings and peace to the one to whom the All-Wise Qur'an, the Distinguisher between Truth and Falsehood, was re-vealed, and to all his Family and Companions. Amen. Amen.

[NOTE: The Six Drops of the Fourteenth Droplet in the Arabic *Risale-i Nur*, and especially the Six Points of the Fourth Drop, explain fifteen of the approximately forty sorts of the All-Wise Qur'an's miraculousness. Deeming those to be sufficient, we have limited the discussion here. If you wish, refer to them, and you will find a treasury of miracles...]

⁶ Qur'an, 36:38.

⁷ Qur'an, 71:16.

The Twentieth Word

[This Word consists of Two Stations]

First Station

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

*And when We told the angels: Prostrate before Adam, they prostrated, except Iblis.¹ * God commands that you sacrifice a cow.² * And yet after all this your hearts hardened and became like rocks or even harder.³*

One day while reading these verses, three points were imparted to me from the effulgence of the Qur'an against the promptings of Satan. His suggestions took this form:

He said: "You say the Qur'an is a miracle, and of infinite eloquence, and that it is guidance for everyone at all times. So what is the meaning in its persistently repeating in historical form certain minor events like the following: how is it appropriate to mention an insignificant event like the slaughtering of a cow as though it were something significant, and even naming that important Sura, The Cow? Also the event of 'prostrating before Adam;' it occurred in the realm of the Unseen and cannot be understood rationally. It may be submitted to and accepted with certainty only after a strong belief has been attained. Whereas the Qur'an instructs those who use their reasons; in many places it says: So will you not think?, and refers what it says to the reason. Also, how is it guidance to show certain natural conditions of rocks to be important which are the results of chance?"

The Points with which I was inspired took this form:

FIRST POINT: In the All-Wise Qur'an are numerous minor events behind which are concealed universal principles, and which are shown as the tips of general laws. For example,

He taught Adam the Names, all of them.⁴

¹ Qur'an, 2:34.

² Qur'an, 2:67.

³ Qur'an, 2:74.

⁴ Qur'an, 2:31.

This is the ‘teaching of the Names,’ which was a miracle of Adam before the angels because of his ability to be vicegerent of the earth, and was a minor event. But it forms the tip of a universal principle which is as follows: it was the teaching, due to man’s comprehensive disposition, of countless sciences, and numerous all-embracing branches of knowledge about the universe, and extensive learning about the Creator’s attributes and qualities, which afforded man superiority over not only the angels but also the heavens and earth and mountains in the question of the bearing of the Supreme Trust. And like the Qur’an states that through his comprehensive disposition, man is a spiritual vicegerent of the earth, so the minor event in the Unseen of the angels prostrating before Adam and Satan not prostrating is the tip of a broad and universal observed principle; these hint at an extensive truth which is as follows:

By mentioning the angels’ obedience and submission before the person of Adam, and Satan’s pride and refusal, the Qur’an makes understood that most of the physical beings in the universe and their non-physical representatives and appointed beings are subjugated to man, and that man’s senses are predisposed and amenable to benefiting from all of them. And pointing out what a fearsome enemy and serious obstacle in the path of man’s progress are evil matter and its representatives and evil indwelling spirits, which corrupt man’s nature and drive him down wrong paths, the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition, while speaking of a minor matter with Adam (Peace be upon him), converses in elevated fashion with the whole universe and all mankind.

SECOND POINT: Although the Land of Egypt is a part of the Greater Sahara Desert, through the blessing of the Nile, it has become like an extremely fertile arable field. Such a blessed heavenly place being found adjacent to the hellish Sahara has made its agriculture highly sought after by its people and has so fixed it in their characters that for them it has become sacred, and the cow and the bull, the means of agriculture, have also become sacred, and even objects of worship. The people of Egypt of that time considered the cow and bull to be so holy they worshipped them. Thus, it is understood from the question of ‘the Calf’ that the Children of Israel of that time, who grew up in Egypt, had come to have a share of that custom.

Thus, the All-Wise Qur’an makes understood through the sacrifice of a cow that through his messengership, Moses excised and destroyed the concept of cow-worship, which had become a part of that nation’s character and worked in their very natures.

Thus, through this minor incident, it expounds with an elevated miraculousness a universal principle which is essential instruction in wisdom for everyone at all times.

Making an analogy with this, you may understand that certain minor

incidents in the Qur'an which are mentioned in the form of historical events, are the tips of universal principles. Even, in *Lemeat*, in the section on the Miraculousness of the Qur'an, taking the seven sentences of the Story of Moses, which is mentioned and repeated in many Suras, we have explained how each part of those particular sentences comprises an important universal principle. If you wish, you may refer to that treatise.

THIRD POINT:

*And yet, after all this your hearts hardened and became like rocks, or even harder: for, behold, there are rocks from which streams gush forth; and, behold, there are some from which, when they are cleft, water issues; and there are some that fall down for awe of God. And God is not unmindful of what you do.*⁵

While reading the above verse, the Whisperer said: "What meaning is there in discussing and explaining as though they were the most important and significant of matters, certain natural states of rocks which are commonplace and everyone knows about? How is it fitting, and what need is there?"

In the face of this suggestion, the following point was imparted to me from the effulgence of the Qur'an:

Yes, it is fitting and there is need for it. And it is so fitting and there is a meaning so significant and truth so enormous and necessary that only through the Qur'an's miraculous conciseness and guiding grace has it been simplified to a degree, and summarized. Yes, conciseness, one foundation of the Qur'an's miraculousness, and guiding grace and fitting instruction, which are one light of its guidance, require that in the face of ordinary people, who form the majority of those whom the Qur'an addresses, universal truths and profound and general principles are shown in familiar and particular forms, and that, due to their simple minds, only the tips of vast truths are shown, and in a simple form, and, moreover, that the Divine disposals, which are wondrous and extraordinary beneath the veil of the commonplace and under the earth, are shown briefly. Thus, it is due to this mystery that the All-Wise Qur'an says the following with the above verse:

O Children of Israel and Sons of Adam! What has happened to you that your hearts have become harder and more lifeless than stone? For do you not see that those extremely hard, lifeless, huge rocks formed in vast strata under the earth are so obedient and subjugated before the Divine commands and so soft and tractable under the dominical works that to whatever degree the Divine disposals occur without resistance in the formation of trees in the air, orderly water channels and veins, like the circulation of blood in veins, occur with the same ease and order and with perfect wisdom in those hard,

⁵ Qur'an, 2:74.

deaf rocks under the earth.⁶ And like the way the branches of trees and plants spread in the air with ease encountering no obstacles, the delicate veins of roots spread with the same ease in the rocks under the earth. The Qur'an indicates this and teaches an extensive truth with the verse, and thus by allusion says the following to the hard-hearted:

O Children of Israel and Sons of Adam! What sort of heart do you bear within your weakness and impotence so that with its hardness it resists the command of such a One? Whereas how perfectly and obediently the huge strata of hard rocks carry out their delicate duties in the darkness before His commands. They display no disobedience. Indeed, those rocks act as treasurers for the water of life and other means of life of all the living creatures above the earth, and are the means for their division and distribution. They do this with such wisdom and justice that they are soft like wax or air in the hand of power of the All-Wise One of Glory; offering no resistance, they prostrate before His mighty power. For just like well-ordered creatures and wise and gracious Divine disposals occur on top of the earth, which we observe, the same occur beneath it. Indeed, Divine wisdom and favour are manifest there in a more wondrous and strange way in regard to wisdom and order. See how like wax those hard, unfeeling mighty rocks display a softness towards the creational commands, and how they offer no resistance or hardness to the delicate waters, the fine roots, and silken veins, which are Divine officials. As though like a lover, the rock's heart melts at the touch of those delicate, beautiful things, and becomes earth in their path.

And, through,

And, behold, there are some that fall down for awe of God,

the Qur'an shows the tip of a vast truth which is like this: like in the event of 'Moses asking for the vision of God' and the famous mountain crumbling at the Divine manifestation and the rocks being scattered, through the manifestations of Divine glory in the form of earthquakes and the mountains shaking, most of which are like great monoliths formed of solidified liquid, and certain other geological occurrences – through such awesome manifesta

⁶ Yes, it is only fitting that the Qur'an should explain the three important duties of the rock strata, the foundation stone of the majestic travelling palace known as the earth, which are entrusted to it by the All-Glorious Creator.

Their First Duty: Just as earth acts as a mother to plants and raises them through dominical power, so through Divine power, the rocks act as a nurse to the earth and raise it.

Their Second Duty: They serve the orderly circulation of waters in the body of the earth, like the circulation of the blood.

Their Third Duty: This is to act as treasurer to the rising and continuous flow with regular balance of the springs and rivers, sources and streams. Indeed, the evidences of Divine unity which the rocks make flow with all their strength in mouthfuls in the form of the water of life, they write and sprinkle over the face of the earth.

tions of glory, the rocks fall from the high summits of the mountains and are broken up. Some of these crumble and being transformed into earth, become the source of plants. Others remain as rocks, and rolling down to the valleys and plains, are scattered. They serve many purposes in the works of the earth's inhabitants; by being utilized in their houses for example, and prostrating in submission before Divine wisdom and power for certain hidden instances of wisdom and benefits, they take on the form of being at the command of the principles of Divine wisdom. The evidence that their leaving their high places out of awe, choosing lower places in humble fashion, and being the means of those significant benefits, and that they are neither futile, nor acting of their own accord, nor are objects of chance, but that within the disorder, through the wise disposals of One All-Wise and All-Powerful they are within a wise order not apparent to the superficial eye – the evidence for this are the purposes and benefits attached to the rocks, and the perfect order and fine art of the shirts adorned and embossed with the jewels of fruits and flowers with which the bodies of the mountains down which they roll are clothed. These testify in a decisive fashion which cannot be doubted.

Thus, you have seen how valuable these three parts of the verse are from the point of view of wisdom. Now see the Qur'an's subtle manner of exposition and miraculous eloquence. See how it shows through the three famous and observed events in the three parts of the verse, the tips of the above-mentioned extensive and important truths, and through recalling three further events, which are a warning lesson, it offers subtle guidance; its restrains in a way that cannot be resisted.

For example, in the second part of the verse, it says:

And, behold, there are some from which, when they are cleft, water issues;

By alluding through this sentence to the rock which split with perfect eagerness under the Staff of Moses (Peace be upon him) and poured forth twelve streams from twelve sources, it imparts the following meaning: O Children of Israel! Great rocks become soft and crumble before a single miracle of Moses (PUH). They shed tears in floods, pouring forth out of either awe or joy. How is it you are so unfair you are obstinate in the face of all Moses' miracles, and not weeping, your eyes are lifeless and your hearts, hard?

And in the third part, it says:

And, behold, there are some that fall down for awe of God.

Through calling to mind with this part the famous event of the huge mountain crumbling and being scattered out of awe at the manifestation of Divine glory, which occurred on Mount Sinai at the supplications of Moses (Peace be upon him), and the rocks rolling down all round out again in awe, it

teaches this meaning: O people of Moses (PUH)! How is it you do not fear God when the mountains which are composed of rocks are crushed and scattered out of awe of Him? Although you know that Moses climbed Mount Sinai above you in order to receive the Covenant, and that on his seeking the vision of God, the mountain crumbled, and you saw it, how is it you are so bold you do not tremble out of fear of God, and you make your hearts hard and unfeeling?

And, in the first part, it says:

For, behold, there are rocks from which streams gush forth;

Through recalling with this part rivers like the blessed Nile and the Tigris and Euphrates, which gush up out of mountains, the Qur'an makes understood the miraculous fashion rocks receive the creational commands and are subjugated to them. It infers the following meaning to vigilant hearts: it is certainly not possible that the mountains could be the actual source of such mighty rivers. For let us suppose the water was cut completely and the mountains each became a conical reservoir, they would only persist a few months before losing the balance to the swift and abundant flow of those large rivers. And the rain, which penetrates only about a metre into the earth, would not be sufficient income for that high expenditure. This means that the springs of these rivers are not something ordinary and natural arising from chance, but that the All-Glorious Creator makes them flow forth from an unseen treasury in truly marvellous fashion.

Thus, alluding to this mystery and stating this meaning, it is narrated in a Hadith: "Each of those three rivers is a drop from Paradise which continuously issues forth from Paradise, as a result of which they are sources of abundance."⁷ And in another it is said: "The source of these three rivers is from Paradise."⁸ The truth of these narrations is this: since physical causes are not capable of producing their abundant flow, their sources must be in an unseen world and must arise from a treasury of mercy; the equilibrium between their incomings and outgoings is maintained in this way.

Thus, through inferring this meaning, the All-Wise Qur'an gives the following instruction: O Children of Israel and Sons of Adam! With your hardness of heart, unfeelingness, and heedlessness you disobey and close your eyes to the commands and light of knowledge of the Pre-Eternal Sun, One so Glorious that He makes flow forth from the mouths of common, lifeless rocks mighty rivers like the blessed Nile, which transforms Egypt into a paradise and produces witnesses to His unity for the universe's heart and earth's mind as eloquent as the force, appearance, and abundant flow of those mighty rivers, and makes them flow to the hearts and minds of jinn and men.

⁷ *Muslim*, iv, No: 2839; *Musnad*, ii, 289, 440.

⁸ *Muslim*, Janna, 26; *Bukhari*, ii, 134; Tabrizi, *Mishkat al-Masabih*, No: 5628.

How is it that while some unfeeling, lifeless rocks manifest the miracles of His power in such wondrous fashion,⁹ showing the All-Glorious Creator as the sunlight shows the sun, you are blind before the light of His knowledge, and do not see it?

So see what eloquence has been clothed on these three truths, and note carefully the eloquent guidance. What hardness of heart can withstand without melting the heat of this eloquent guidance?

If you have understood this from the beginning to here, behold one flash of the All-Wise Qur'an's miraculous guidance, and offer thanks to Almighty God!

Glory be unto to You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.¹⁰

O God! Grant us understanding of the mysteries of the Qur'an as You love and is pleasing to You, and grant us success in the service of it. Amen. Through Your Mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!

O God! Grant blessings and peace to the one to whom the All-Wise Qur'an was revealed, and to all his Family and Companions.

⁹ The blessed Nile rises in the Mountains of the Moon, the main stream of the River Tigris in a cave in the district of Müküs in the province of Van, and the main branch of the Euphrates, in the foothills of a mountain in the region of Diyadin. It is established by science that the origins of mountains are rocks solidified from liquid matter. One of the Prophet (PBUH)'s glorifications, "*Glory be to the One Who spread out the earth on solidified liquid*" is decisive evidence that the original creation of the earth was as follows: some liquid matter solidified at the Divine command and became rock. With Divine leave, the rock became earth. The word Earth (*arz*) in the glorification, means earth (soil). That is to say, the liquid matter was too soft to support anything, and the rock was too hard to be benefited from. Therefore, the All-Wise and Compassionate One spread the earth over the rock and made it the place of habitation for living beings.

¹⁰ Qur'an, 2:32.

The Second Station of the Twentieth Word

[A flash of the Qur'an's miraculousness that shines on the Miracles of the Prophets.]

Note carefully the two questions and answers at the end.

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Nor anything fresh or dry, but is in a Record Clear.*¹¹

Fourteen years ago (and now thirty years have passed) in my Qur'anic commentary called *Isharat al-I'jaz* (Signs of Miraculousness), I wrote a discussion in Arabic about one of the mysteries of this verse. Now two of my brothers whose wishes are important in my view have asked for an explanation of that discussion in Turkish. And so, relying on Almighty God's assistance, and on the effulgence of the Qur'an, I say this:

According to one interpretation, the Clear Book or Record consists of the Qur'an. The above verse states that everything, fresh or dry, is found within it, is that so? Yes, everything is found in it, but everyone cannot see this, for all the things it contains are found at different levels. Sometimes the seeds, sometimes the nuclei, sometimes the summaries, sometimes the principles, sometimes the signs, are found either explicitly, or implicitly, or allusively, or vaguely, or as a reminder. One of these is expressed according to need, in a manner suitable to the purposes of the Qur'an and in connection with the requirements of the position. For instance:

Things like the aeroplane, electricity, railways, and the telegraph have come into existence as wonders of science and technology as the result of man's progress in science and industry. Surely the All-Wise Qur'an, which addresses all mankind, does not neglect these. Indeed, it has not neglected them; it indicates them in two 'Ways'.

The First: In the form of the miracles of the Prophets...

The Second is this: it indicates them in the form of certain historical events. For instance:

¹¹ Qur'an, 6:59.

*Woe to the makers of the pit [of fire] * Fire supplied [abundantly] with fuel * Behold! They sat over against [the fire] * And they witnessed [all] that they were doing against the believers * And they ill-treated them for no other reason than that they believed in God, the Mighty, the One to Whom all Praise is due.*¹²

Likewise,

*In the loaded ark * And We have created for them similar [vessels] on which they ride,*^{13 14}

Just as verses like these point to the railway, so the following verse alludes to electricity, as well as pointing to numerous other lights and mysteries:

*God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a niche, and within it a lamp; the lamp enclosed in glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star. Lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though the fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light!*¹⁵ *God guides whom He wills to His Light.*¹⁶

Since numerous people have occupied themselves with this second sort, and they are in need of much care and elucidation, and since they are many, for now we shall content ourselves with these verses that allude to the railway and electricity, and shall not open that door.

As for *The First Sort*, it indicates them in the form of the Miracles of the Prophets. And we shall mention some of these by way of example.

INTRODUCTION: The All-Wise Qur'an sends the Prophets to man's communities as leaders and vanguards of spiritual and moral progress. Similarly it gives all of them a number of wonders and makes them the masters and foremen in regard to mankind's material progress, and commands men to follow them absolutely. Thus, just as by speaking of the spiritual and moral perfections of the Prophets, it is encouraging people to benefit from them, so too in discussing their miracles it is inferring encouragement to achieve similar things and to imitate them. It may even be said that like spiritual and moral attainments, material attainments and wonders were first given to mankind as a gift by the hand of miracles. Thus, what first gave man the gift of the ship, which was a miracle of Noah (Peace be upon him), and

¹² Qur'an, 85:4-8.

¹³ Qur'an, 36:41-2.

¹⁴ This sentence indicates that the railway has taken the World of Islam prisoner. The unbelievers defeated Islam with it.

¹⁵ The sentence, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though the fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! illuminates that allusion.

¹⁶ Qur'an, 24:35.

the clock, a miracle of Joseph (Peace be upon him), was the hand of miracles. It is a subtle indication to this truth that most craftsmen have a Prophet as the patron of their craft. For example, seamen have Noah (PUH), watchmakers have Joseph (PUH), tailors have Idris (PUH), and so on.

Indeed, investigative scholars and the science of rhetoric are in agreement that all the Qur'an's verses contain numerous aspects of guidance and instruction. The verses of the miracles of the Prophets, which are the most brilliant of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition's verses, are not therefore mere historical stories, but comprise numerous meanings and sorts of guidance. Yes, in mentioning the Prophets' miracles, it is tracing the final limit of man's science and industry. It is pointing the finger at his furthest aims. It is specifying his final goals. And by striking the hand of encouragement on man's back, it is urging him forward towards them. Just as the past is the store of the seeds of the future and mirror to its attributes, so the future is the arable field of the past and the mirror to its states. Now we shall explain only a few samples of that most extensive source as examples:

For example, the verse:

*To Solomon [We made] the wind [obedient]: its early morning [stride] was a month's [journey], and its evening [stride] was a month's [journey],*¹⁷

which describes one of Solomon's (Peace be upon him) miracles, the subjugating of the air. This says: "Solomon traversed the distance of two months in one day by flying through the air." It is thus suggesting that the road is open for man to cover such a distance in the air. In which case, O man! since the road is open to you, reach this level! And in meaning Almighty God is saying through the tongue of this verse: "O man! I mounted one of my servants on the air because he gave up the desires of his soul. If you too give up laziness, which comes from the soul, and benefit thoroughly from certain of my laws in the cosmos, you too may mount it..."

And the verse,

*So We said: "Strike the rock with your staff." Then gushed forth therefrom twelve springs,*¹⁸

which explains a miracle of Moses (Peace be upon him). This verse indicates that the treasures of mercy concealed under the earth may be profited from with simple tools. Even from places hard as rock, the water of life may be attracted with a staff. Thus, through this meaning the verse says to man: "You may find the subtlest effulgence of mercy, the water of life, with a staff. In which case, come on, work and find it!" And in meaning Almighty

¹⁷ Qur'an, 34:12.

¹⁸ Qur'an, 2:60.

God says through the verse's allusive tongue: "O man! I put in the hand of one of my servants who trusted in Me a staff that draws the water of life from wherever he wishes, if you too rely on the laws of My mercy, you may obtain an implement resembling it or close to it. So, come on and do so!" And one of the most important contributions to man's progress was the creation of an implement that causes water to flow forth from most of the places it is struck. This verse traces farther goals and limits, and ends beyond that, just as the previous verse specified final points far ahead of today's aeroplanes.

And for example,

*I shall heal the blind and the leper and I shall quicken the dead, by God's leave,*¹⁹

which concerns a miracle of Jesus (Peace be upon him). Just as the Qur'an explicitly urges man to follow Jesus' (Peace be upon him) high morals, so it allusively encourages him towards the elevated art and dominical medicine of which Jesus was the master. The verse indicates the following: "Remedies may be found for even the most chronic ills. In which case, O man!, O calamity-afflicted sons of Adam! Don't despair! Whatever the ill, its cure is possible. Search for it and you will find it. It is even possible to give a temporary tinge of life to death." And in meaning Almighty God is saying through the figurative tongue of this verse: "O man! I gave two gifts to one of My servants who abandoned the world for Me. One was the remedy for spiritual ills, and the other the cure for physical sicknesses. Moribund hearts were raised to life through the light of guidance, and sick people who were as though dead found health through his breath and cure. You too may find the cure for every ill in the pharmacy of My wisdom. Work to find it! If you seek, you will certainly find." Thus, this verse traces the limit which is far ahead of man's present progress in medicine. It hints at it, and urges him towards it.

And for example, the verses:

*And We made the iron soft for him*²⁰ * *And We gave him wisdom and sound judgement in speech and decision,*²¹

which are about David (Peace be upon him), and,

*And We made a font of molten copper to flow for him,*²²

which is about Solomon (Peace be upon him). These indicate that the softening of iron is one of the greatest of Divine bounties, through which is shown the virtue of one of the greatest Prophets. Indeed, softening iron, that is,

¹⁹ Qur'an, 3:49.

²⁰ Qur'an, 34:10.

²¹ Qur'an, 38:20.

²² Qur'an, 34:12.

making it soft like dough, and smelting copper, and finding minerals and extracting them is the origin and source, and basis and foundation of all man's material industries. Thus, this verse indicates: "A great bounty bestowed on a great Messenger and vicegerent of the earth in the form of a great miracle was the softening of iron. Making it as soft as dough and fine as a thread and smelting copper are the basis of most of the general industries." Since wisdom was given to the tongue of one who was both Messenger and vicegerent, that is, to one who was both a spiritual and material leader, and craft and industry were given to his hand. It is on the one hand explicitly urging men towards the wisdom on his tongue, and on the other is implicitly encouraging them towards the craft in his hand. Through the allusive tongue of this verse, in meaning Almighty God is saying:

"O Sons of Adam! I gave such wisdom to the tongue and heart of one of My servants who complied with my commands and obligations that he rendered judgement on everything with the finest distinction and made manifest the truth. And I gave him such art that he could mould iron into any shape in his hand as though it were wax. It was a significant means of power for his vicegerency and rule. Since it was possible, it was given. It is both important, and you are in much need of it in your social life. If you too obey my commands in creation, that wisdom and craft will be given you too. In the course of time you will reach it and draw close to it." Thus, it is through the softening of iron and smelting of copper that man achieves his greatest progress in industry, and his greatest power and strength. In the verse, the word qitr is used to describe copper. These verses direct mankind's sight towards this truth, and they sternly warned the people of former times who did not appreciate their importance, as well as the lazy in modern times...

And, for example, the verse,

*Said one who had knowledge of the Book: "I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye!" Then when [Solomon] saw it placed firmly before him,*²³

which points to the following wondrous event: in order to attract Bilkis' throne to him, one of Solomon's (Peace be upon him) ministers who was versed in the science of attraction said: "I'll have the throne here before you before you can blink your eyes." The verse suggests then that it is possible to bring either things themselves or their images to one instantaneously from far away, and it is a fact that Almighty God bestowed this ability on Solomon (PBH) in the form of a miracle, to establish his innocence and justice. For being honoured with rulership as well as his Messengership, Solomon could in this way himself be informed of events in all the regions of his extensive dominions, and see the condition of his subjects and hear of their ills. That

²³ Qur'an, 27:40.

means, if man relies on Almighty God, and asks it of Him with the tongue of his innate capacity, like Solomon (PBH) asked for it with the tongue of his chastity, and if he conforms to His laws of wisdom in the universe, the world may become like a town for him. That is to say, while Bilkis' throne was in Yemen, it was instantaneously present in Damascus, or its image was, and it was seen. The images of the men around the throne were also certainly conveyed there, and their voices heard. This therefore indicates splendidly the attraction of images and sounds from long distances, and in effect says:

“O Kings and Rulers! If you wish to act with pure justice, endeavour to see and understand the face of the earth in all its details, like Solomon. For, by rising to the level of being informed whenever he wishes about every part of his realm, a just ruler and king who cherishes his subjects will avoid inequity, and may rule with complete justice.” And Almighty God in effect says through the allusive tongue of the verse:

“O Sons of Adam! I bestowed on one of My servants a broad realm, and so that he could act completely justly within it, I allowed him to know personally of all situations and events that occurred there. And since I have given all men the innate capacity to be vicegerent of the earth, I gave them also the ability to see, consider, and understand the whole face of the earth in accordance with that ability, for My wisdom requires this. If individuals do not reach that point, men may reach it as a race. And if they do not reach it physically, the saints may reach it in meaning. In which case, you may take advantage of this great bounty. Come on, let's see you do it! On condition you do not neglect your duties of worship, strive to transform the face of the earth into a garden every part of which you may see, and the sounds of every corner of which you may hear. Heed the decree of the Most Merciful:

*It is He Who has made the earth manageable for you, so traverse its tracts and enjoy of the sustenance which He furnishes, but unto Him is the Resurrection.*²⁴

The above-mentioned verse thus alludes to the farthest limit far in the future in the attraction of images and sounds, one of man's finest arts, and hints encouragement.

And, for example, the verses,

*And also others bound together in fetters²⁵ * And of the evil ones were some who dived for him, and did other work besides,*²⁶

state that Solomon (PBH) subjugated jinns, satans, and evil spirits, and preventing their evil, employed them usefully, and they say: the jinn, the most important intelligent inhabitants of the earth after man, may serve him.

²⁴ Qur'an, 67:15.

²⁵ Qur'an, 38:38.

²⁶ Qur'an, 21:82.

Contact may be made with them. Devils too may be compelled to give up their enmity and whether they want to or not made to serve. Thus, Almighty God subjected them to one of His servants who was obedient to His commands. Through the allusive tongue of the verses, in meaning Almighty God is saying: “O man! I made jinns, devils, and their evil obey one of My servants who obeyed Me. If you too are subjugated to my commands, numerous beings, and even jinns and devils, may be subjugated to you.”

These verses trace the final limits of the calling-up of spirits, and conversing with jinns, like spiritualism, which have been filtered from a blend of art and science and have arisen from man’s extraordinary physical and spiritual sensitivity. The verses specify the most beneficial form of these and open up the way to them. But it is not to be subjugated to jinns, devils, and evil spirits, who sometimes call themselves the spirits of the dead, and to become their playthings, and a laughing-stock, like nowadays, but to subjugate them through the talisman of the Qur’an, and be delivered from their evil.

Other verses about Solomon (Peace be upon him) which allude to spirits appearing in physical form, and his calling up demons and subjugating them, and other verses besides, such as,

*Then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as man in all respects,*²⁷

indicate both the calling-up of spirits, and spirit beings assuming physical form. But the calling-up of good spirits alluded to here is not in the manner of ‘the cultured,’ to be disrespectful to spirits in that utterly serious world and attract them to their own places and games, but –like one group of the saints like Muhyiddin al-Arabi, who, most seriously and for a serious purpose, met with spirits when they wanted– to be attracted to them and to form a relation with them, and by going to their place and drawing close to their world to an extent, to benefit from their spirituality. It is this that the verses allude to, and within the allusion, make it understood that they are encouraging man to achieve it. They trace the furthest limit of occult arts and sciences of this sort, and point out their best form.

And, for example, the verses about David’s (Peace be upon him) miracles:

*It was We that made the hills declare in unison with him Our praises, at eventide, and at break of day.*²⁸ * *O you mountains! Sing you back the Praises of God with him! and you birds! And We made the iron soft for him.*²⁹ * *We have been taught the speech of birds.*³⁰

These indicate that Almighty God gave to David’s (PBH) praises and glorifi

²⁷ Qur’an, 19:17.

²⁸ Qur’an, 38:18.

²⁹ Qur’an, 34:10.

³⁰ Qur’an, 27:16.

cations such strength and a sound so loud and agreeable they brought the mountains to ecstasy, which, each like a huge gramophone or a man, formed a circle on the horizon around the chief reciter, reciting also the glorifications. Is this possible, I wonder? Is it the truth?

Yes, it is the truth. Every mountain with caves can speak with man in man's language like a parrot. By means of an echo. You say: "All praise be to God!" to the mountain before you, and the mountain will declare: "All praise be to God!", exactly the same as you. Since Almighty God has given this ability to mountains, it can surely be made to develop, and that seed made to sprout.

Thus, since He gave to David (PBH) the vicegerency of the earth together with his Messengership in exceptional form, He so made the seed of that ability unfold – as a miracle – worthy of his extensive Messengership and magnificent rule that huge mountains followed him like soldiers, students, or followers, and at his command and in his tongue declared the praises and glorifications of the All-Glorious Creator. Whatever David (PBH) said, they repeated. Now at the present time, because the means of communication have multiplied and developed, a powerful commander could compel his large army dispersed in the mountains to declare: "God is Most Great!", and could make the mountains speak, bringing them to tumult. Since a commander of men can make the mountains speak metaphorically in the tongue of those present in the mountains, surely a magnificent commander of Almighty God could make them speak actually, and recite His praises. In addition, I have explained in previous Words that all mountains have a collective personality or corporate identity, and offer glorifications and worship in a way suitable to each. That is to say, just as through the mystery of echo all mountains recite glorifications in the tongue of men, so too they glorify the All-Glorious Creator in their own particular tongues.

Also, the verses,

*And the birds gathered [in assemblies];³¹ * We have been taught the speech of birds,³²*

show that Almighty God bestowed on David and Solomon (Peace be upon them) knowledge of the tongues of the bird species, and of the tongues of their innate capacities; that is, of the things for which they would be useful. Yes, since it is the truth and since the face of the earth is a laden table set up by the Most Merciful in honour of man, most of the other animals and birds who benefit from it may be subjugated to man and serve him. Man employs some of the smallest of them, the honey-bee and silk-worm, and through Divine inspiration has opened up a beneficial highway, and by employing

³¹ Qur'an, 38:19.

³² Qur'an, 27:16.

pigeons in various tasks and teaching birds like parrots to speak, he has added fine things to the virtues of human civilization. In the same way, if the tongues of innate capacities of other birds and animals were known, there are many species which could be employed in important tasks like their brothers, the domesticated animals. For example, against plagues of locusts: if the tongue of starlings was known, who eat and destroy locusts, and their movements could be regulated, what valuable services they could be employed in free of charge.

Thus, this verse traces the furthest limit in subjugating birds and benefiting from them in this way, and in making lifeless beings speak like a telephone or gramophone, and in profiting from birds. It specifies the most distant goal. It points a finger at it in majestic fashion and in a way urges man towards it. Through the allusive tongue of these verses, Almighty God is therefore saying in meaning:

“O men! In order to honour his prophethood and the complete justice of his rule, I subjugated to one of your fellow men who was totally submissive to me, the huge creatures in my dominions, causing them to speak, and I made most of my troops and animals his servants. In which case, since I have committed to each of you the Supreme Trust, from which the sky, earth, and mountains shrank, and I have given you the ability to be My vicegerent on earth, you should yield to Me, the One in Whose hand are the reins of these creatures, so that the creatures in My dominions may yield also to you, and you may obtain in the name of the One Who holds them, their reins, and rise to a position worthy of your abilities.

Since the truth is this, rather than listening to the gramophone, playing with pigeons and making them deliver letters, and teaching parrots to speak, you should strive to attain to the most agreeable and elevated amusement. Then the mountains may be huge gramophones for you like David’s, and the harmonious recitations of Divine praises may reach your ears from the trees and plants at the touching of the breeze, and the mountains may show their true nature as wondrous creatures who recite the Divine praises in thousands of tongues, and most birds may be clothed in the form of intimate friends or obedient servants, like Solomon’s Hoopoe. Then they may entertain you and drive you eagerly towards the perfections and attainments of which you are capable, and not make you fall from the position required by being a human being, like other amusements.”

And, for example, in the verse,

*We said: “O fire! Be cool and [a means of] safety for Abraham,”*³³

³³ Qur’an, 21:69.

which is about one of Abraham's (Peace be upon him) miracles, are three subtle indications:

The First: Like other natural causes, fire does not act according to its own wishes and nature, blindly, but performs a duty under a command. Thus it did not burn Abraham (Peace be upon him), because it was commanded not to burn him.

The Second: There is a degree of heat which burns through its coldness. That is, it has an effect like burning. Through the word, *Be cool!*,³⁴ Almighty God is saying to the coldness: "Do not burn him with your coldness, the same as your heat!" That is to say, through its coldness, fire at that degree has an effect like burning. It is both fire and cold. In fact, in natural science there is a degree of fire, the state of 'white heat,' the heat of which does not spread to its surroundings. It attracts the heat around it to itself and with this cold, freezes surrounding liquids such as water, in effect burning them through its cold. Thus, intense cold is a category of fire which burns through its cold. In which case, this intense cold is surely a part of Hell, for it contains all the degrees and sorts of fire.

The Third: Just as there is an immaterial substance like belief which counters the effects of Hell-fire and affords protection against it, the armour of Islam, so there is a physical substance which protects against the effects of worldly fire. For as is required by the Name of All-Wise, this world is the abode of wisdom, and Almighty God carries out His works under the veil of causes. Therefore, the fire burnt neither Abraham's body, nor his garments; He imbued them with a state which resisted fire. Thus, by this allusion, the verse is in effect saying: "O nation of Abraham! Resemble Abraham, so that your garments may be your armour against fire, your greatest enemy both here and there. Clothe your spirit in belief in God, and it will be your armour against Hell-fire. Moreover, there are certain substances which Almighty God has hidden in the earth for you which will protect you from the evils of fire. Search for them, extract them, and clothe yourselves in them!" Thus, one of man's important discoveries and a step in his progress was his finding a substance which fire does not burn; and he clothed himself in garments resistant to fire. So see how elevated, subtle, and fine a garment this verse weaves on the loom of *Hanifan Musliman*, which will not be rent in all eternity.

And, for example, the verse,

*And He taught Adam the Names, all of them,*³⁵

³⁴ One Qur'anic commentary states: If He had not said: Be cool!, it would have burnt him with its coldness. [See, for example, Ibn Hanbal, *al-Zuhd*, 101.– Tr.]

³⁵ Qur'an, 2:31.

which says: “Adam’s (Peace be upon him) greatest miracle in the question of the supreme vicegerency was the teaching of the Names.” Like the miracles of the other Prophets each allude to a particular human wonder, the miracle of Adam, who was the father of all the Prophets and the ‘Inauguration of the Office of Prophethood,’ points almost explicitly to the final points of all human attainment and progress, and humanity’s final goals. Through the tongue of allusion, Almighty God (May His glory be exalted) is saying with this verse:

“O Sons of Adam! Since as a proof of their superiority over the angels in the question of the vicegerency, I taught your forefather all the Names, you too, since you are his sons and the inheritors of his abilities, should learn all the Names and in your position as holder of the Supreme Trust demonstrate before all creatures your worthiness. For the way is open to you to rise to exalted rank such as holding the highest positions over all beings in the universe, and for vast creatures like the earth to be subjected to you. Come on, step forward, adhere to all My Names, and rise! But your forefather was once deceived by Satan, and temporarily fell to the earth from a position like Paradise. Beware! In your progress, do not follow Satan and from the heavens of Divine wisdom thus fall into the misguidance of ‘nature.’ Continuously raising your head and studying carefully My Most Beautiful Names, make your sciences and your progress steps by which to ascend to those heavens. Then you may rise to My dominical Names, which are the realities and sources of your sciences and attainments, and you may look to your Sustainer with your hearts through the telescope of the Names.”

A SIGNIFICANT POINT AND IMPORTANT MYSTERY

By describing under the title of ‘the teaching of the Names’ all the attainments of learning and scientific progress and wonders of technology which man manifests through his comprehensive disposition, this wondrous verse contains the following subtle and elevated allusion: all attainments and perfections, all learning, all progress, and all sciences, have an elevated reality which is based on one of the Divine Names. On being based on the Name, which is concealed under numerous veils and has various manifestations and different spheres, the sciences and arts and attainments find their perfection and become reality. They are not some incomplete and deficient shadow.

For example, engineering is a science; its reality and final point reaches to Almighty God’s Names of All-Just and Determiner, and observes with all their majesty the wise manifestation of those Names in the mirror of engineering.

And, for example, medicine is a science, and also an art; its final point and reality are based on the Absolutely Wise One’s Name of Healer, and through observing that Name’s compassionate manifestations in the vast

pharmacy of the earth, medicine finds its perfection and becomes reality.

And, for example, the natural sciences, which discuss the reality of beings; through seeing the regulating, nurturing supreme manifestations of Almighty God's (May His glory be exalted) Name of All-Wise in things, in their benefits and advantages, and through attaining to the Name, and being based on It, these sciences may contain true wisdom. Otherwise they are either transformed into superstition, or become nonsense, or open up the way to misguidance like Naturalist philosophy.

There, three examples for you! You may make analogies with these for the other sciences and attainments.

Thus, with this verse, the All-Wise Qur'an strikes the hand of encouragement on man's back, urging him to the highest peaks, the furthest limits, the final degrees, which he is far behind at the present degree of his progress. It points its fingers at those degrees, saying: "Forward march!" Contenting ourselves for now with these jewels from the sublime treasury of this verse, we close this door.

Also, for example, the All-Wise Qur'an, the supreme miracle of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), the Seal of the Office of Prophethood, in the face of whose claim to Divine Messengership the miracles of all the former Prophets were like a single confirmatory miracle; the leader of the Prophets and cause of pride of the universe; who manifested in detail with all their degrees all the Names which were taught in brief to Adam (PBH); who, in raising his finger, through the manifestation of Divine glory split the moon, and lowering it, through the manifestation of Divine beauty poured water from it like the Spring of Kawthar; and who was verified and corroborated by a thousand miracles.³⁶ Through numerous clear verses like,

Say: If all mankind and the Jinn were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support,³⁷

which describes the purity of its exposition, the eloquence of its expression, the comprehensiveness of its meanings, and the elevatedness and sweetness of its styles concerning truth and reality, which are the most brilliant of the All-Wise Qur'an's aspects of miraculousness – through verses like these, it directs the gazes of men and jinn to the clearest and most brilliant aspects of this pre-eternal miracle. It provokes all men and jinn. Arousing the eagerness of its friends and obstinacy of its enemies, it urges them with intense encouragement to imitate and copy it, to resemble it with their words. It also places that miracle before the eyes of creatures in such a way that it is as if the only aim in man coming into this world is to take that miracle as his goal

³⁶ Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, i, 10< Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vi, 58, 583.

³⁷ Qur'an, 17:88.

and guiding principle, and studying it to understand the purpose of his creation, and to proceed towards it.

In Brief: The miracles of the other Prophets (Peace be upon them) all indicate a wonder of human art or craft, and Adam's (Peace be upon him) miracle indicates in concise form, besides the bases of those crafts, the index of the sciences and branches of knowledge, and of the wonders and perfections, and urges man towards them. As for the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, the supreme miracle of Muhammad (PBUH), since it shows in detail the reality of the teaching of the Names, it points clearly to the true goal of the sciences and branches of knowledge, which are truth and reality, as well as the perfections, attainments, and happiness of this world and the next. With truly powerful encouragement, it urges man towards them. It encourages and urges in a such way it says:

“O man! In the face of manifestations of dominicality, the elevated purpose of the universe is man's universal worship and submission to God, while his furthest aim is to attain to that worship by means of those sciences and perfections.” In stating this, it hints:

“At the end of time, mankind will spill into science and learning. It will obtain all its strength from science. Power and rule will pass to the hand of science.”

Also, since the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition repeatedly puts forward its eloquence and beauty of expression, by allusion it says: “At the end of time, eloquence and beauty of expression, the most brilliant of the sciences and branches of knowledge, will be most sought after in all their varieties. Even, in order to make one another accept their ideas and carry out their word, men will find their most effective weapon in eloquent expression, and their most irresistible force in fine oratory.”

In Short: Most of the Qur'an's verses are keys to a treasury of perfections and guides to a store of knowledge.

If you wish, you may reach up to the skies of the Qur'an and the stars of its verses by making the previous twenty Words a stairway of twenty steps.³⁸ Through them you will see what a brilliant sun is the Qur'an! See how it sprinkles a pure light over the Divine truths and the truths of the contingent realm! See what a brilliant effulgence it spreads!

Conclusion: Since together with alluding to the wonders of present-day human progress, all the verses about the Prophets are also in a style which as though infers and traces their limits in the future; and since it is certain that all the verses point to numerous meanings, indeed, it is unanimously

³⁸ Indeed, the thirty-three *Words*, thirty-three *Letters*, thirty-one *Flashes*, and thirteen *Rays* form a stairway of one hundred and twenty steps.

agreed upon, and since there are categorical commands to follow and obey the Prophets, then together with the explicit meanings of the above verses, it may be said that they indicate in allusive fashion the important of man's arts and sciences, and urge him towards them.

TWO IMPORTANT ANSWERS TO TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

THE FIRST

If you say: "The Qur'an was revealed for man, so why does it not describe the wonders of civilization explicitly, for they have the greatest importance in his eyes? Why does it suffice with secret signs, concealed allusions, slight indications, and slender reminders?"

The Answer: Because the rights of the marvels of human civilization can only claim that much in the Qur'an's discussions. For the Qur'an's basic duty is to teach about the perfections and acts in the 'sphere of dominicality' and the duties and circumstances in the 'sphere of worship.' So the rights of human wonders in those two spheres diminish to being only a weak sign and slight indication. For if they were to demand their rights from the 'sphere of dominicality,' they would receive very few.

For example, if man's aeroplane³⁹ were to say to the Qur'an: "Give me the right to speak and a place in your verses," the planets, earth, and moon, which are the aeroplanes of the 'sphere of dominicality,' would reply in the name of the Qur'an: "You take a place in relation to your size." And if man's submarines were to ask for a place from the Qur'an's verses, the submarines of that sphere, that is, the earth and stars which swim in the vast ocean of the atmosphere and the ether would say: "Your place beside us is so small as to be negligible." And if the brilliant, star-like electric lights were to demand the right to speak and ask to be included in its verses, the electric lights of that sphere, the shooting stars, lightning, and stars and lamps which adorn the face of the skies, would say: "You may enter its discussions and explanations in relation to your light." If the wonders of civilization were to demand their rights with a view to fineness of art and seek a place from its verses, then a single fly would bid them to be silent, saying: "Your rights are not equal to even one of my wings! For if all the fine arts and delicate instruments achieved through man's faculty of will were to be gathered together, they could not be as wondrous as the fine art of my delicate members and tiny body." The verse,

³⁹ While writing this serious matter, involuntarily my pen adopted this subtle, though witty, style. So I left my pen free. I hope that the somewhat unserious style does not mar the seriousness of the subject.

*Those on whom you call besides God cannot create [even] a fly, if they all met together for the purpose.*⁴⁰

bids you to fall silent!”

If the marvels of civilization were to go to the ‘sphere of worship’ and demand their rights, they would receive a reply like this: “Your relations with us are very few, and you may not easily enter our sphere. For our programme is this: the world is a guest-house, and as for man, he remains there only a short time. He is a guest with many duties and in a brief lifetime is charged with preparing all the necessities for eternal life. The most important and essential matters will be offered to you. But most of you see this fleeting world through a veil of heedlessness, as an eternal abode, coloured and shaped by worldly feelings. So your share of worship, the basis of which is love of the truth and thinking of the hereafter, is very small. However, if there are among you respected craftsmen and artists and inspired inventors, who, purely for the benefit of God’s servants, serve the general interest and public well-being and betterment of social life, which is a valuable worship, these signs and indications of the Qur’an are surely sufficient for those sensitive people, who of course form a minority, in order to encourage their efforts and appreciate their art.”

THE ANSWER TO THE SECOND QUESTION

If you say: “None of my doubts remains now after these investigations, and I affirm that together with other wonders, in the Qur’an are allusions to and indications of the wonders of modern civilization, indeed, to further advancements. Everything necessary for man’s happiness in this world and the next is found within it in relation to its worth. But why does the Qur’an not mention them explicitly so that obstinate unbelievers would be compelled to confirm it, and our hearts also would be easy?”

The Answer: Religion is an examination, a test, proposed by God so that in the arena of competition elevated spirits and base spirits may be distinguished from one another. Just as materials are plunged in the fire so that diamonds and coal, gold and earth, separate out from one another, so too religion is a trial concerning the obligations placed on man by God and a driving to competition, which is what this abode of examination consists of. In this way the elevated jewels in the mine of man’s abilities become separated out from the dross. Since the Qur’an was revealed in this abode of examination for man to be perfected through trial in the arena of competition, it will surely only allude to the hidden events of the future pertaining to this world which everyone will see, and will only open the door to the reason to a degree that proves its argument. If it mentioned them explicitly, the

⁴⁰ Qur’an, 22:73.

mystery of man's accountability would be negated. Simply, it would be as self-evident as writing *There is no god but God* clearly in stars on the face of the skies. Then everyone would have to affirm it whether they wanted to or not. There would be no competition, and the examination too would go for nothing. A spirit like coal would remain on the same level of a spirit like diamonds.⁴¹

In Short: The All-Wise Qur'an is wise. It affords everything a position in relation to its value. Thus, one thousand three hundred years ago, the Qur'an saw concealed in the darkness of the future, man's hidden fruits and progress, and showed them in a form better than we see and shall see. That means the Qur'an is the Word of One Who sees at the same instant all time and all within it.

Thus, one flash of the Qur'an's miraculousness which shines on the face of the miracles of the Prophets.

O God! Grant us understanding of the mysteries of the Qur'an and success in the service of it at every instant at all times.

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*⁴²

O God! Grant blessings and peace and benedictions and honour to our master and lord Muhammad, Your servant and Prophet and Messenger, the Unlettered Prophet, and to his Family and Companions and wives and descendants, and to all the Prophets and Messengers, and to the angels close to Your Throne, and the saints and the righteous; grant too the most excellent of blessings and the purest peace and the most abundant benedictions, to the number of the Suras of the Qur'an, and its verses, and words and letters, and its meanings and indications and signs and allusions, and grant us forgiveness, and have mercy on us, and be gracious to us, O God, Our Creator, to the number of those blessings, through Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful! And all praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds. Amen. Amen.

⁴¹ . Abu Jahl the Accursed and Abu Bakr the Truthful would appear to be equal, and the mystery of the examination set by God, lost.

⁴² Qur'an, 2:32.

The Twenty-First Word

[This Word consists of Two Stations.]

First Station

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
For such Prayers are enjoined on believers at stated times.¹*

One time, a man great in age, physique, and rank said to me: “The prayers are fine, but to perform them every single day five times is excessive. Since they never end, it becomes wearying.”

A long time after the man said these words, I listened to my soul and I heard it say exactly the same things. I looked at it and saw that with the ear of laziness, it was receiving the same lesson from Satan. Then I understood that those words were as though said in the name of all evil-commanding souls, or else they had been prompted. So I said: “Since my soul commands to evil, one who does not reform his own soul cannot reform others. In which case, I shall begin with my own soul.”

I said: O soul! Listen to five ‘Warnings’ in response to those words which you uttered in compounded ignorance, on the couch of idleness, in the slumber of heedlessness.

FIRST WARNING

O my wretched soul! Is your life eternal, I wonder? Have you any incontrovertible document showing that you will live to next year, or even to tomorrow? What causes you boredom is that you fancy you shall live for ever. You complain as though you will remain in this world to enjoy yourself for ever. If you had understood that your life is brief and that it is departing fruitlessly, it surely would not cause you boredom, but excite a real eagerness and agreeable pleasure to spend one hour out of the twenty-four on a fine, agreeable, easy, and merciful act of service which is a means of gaining the true happiness of eternal life.

¹ Qur’an, 4:103.

SECOND WARNING

O my stomach-worshipping soul! Every day you eat bread, drink water, and breathe air; do they cause you boredom? They do not, because since the need is repeated, it is not boredom that they cause, but pleasure. In which case, the five daily prayers should not cause you boredom, for they attract the needs of your companions in the house of my body, the sustenance of my heart, the water of life of my spirit, and the air of my subtle faculties. Yes, it is by knocking through supplication on the door of One All-Compassionate and Munificent that sustenance and strength may be obtained for a heart afflicted with infinite griefs and sorrows and captivated by infinite pleasures and hopes. And it is by turning towards the spring of mercy of an Eternal Beloved through the five daily prayers that the water of life may be imbibed by a spirit connected with most beings, which swiftly depart from this transitory world crying out at separation. And being most needy for air in the sorrowful, crushing, distressing, transient, dark, and suffocating conditions of this world, it is only through the window of the prayers that a conscious inner sense and luminous subtle faculty can breathe, which by its nature desires eternal life and was created for eternity and is a mirror of the Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal One and is infinitely delicate and subtle.

THIRD WARNING

O my impatient soul! Is it at all sensible to think today of past hardships of worship, difficulties of the prayers, and troubles of misfortune, and be distressed, and to imagine the future duties of worship, service of the prayers, and sorrows of disaster, and display impatience? In being thus impatient you resemble a foolish commander, who, although the enemy's right flank joined his right flank and became fresh forces for him, sent a significant force to the right flank, and weakened the centre. Then, while there were no enemy soldiers on the left flank, he sent a large force there, and gave them the order to fire. No forces then remained in the centre, and the enemy understood this and attacked it and routed him.

Yes, you resemble this, for the troubles of yesterday have today been transformed into mercy; the pain has gone while the pleasure remains. The difficulty has been turned into blessings, and the hardship into reward. In which case, you should not feel wearied at it, but make a serious effort to continue with a new eagerness and fresh enthusiasm. As for future days, they have not yet arrived, and to think of them now and feel bored and wearied is a lunacy like thinking today of future hunger and thirst, and starting to shout and cry out. Since the truth is this, if you are reasonable, you will think of only today in connection with worship, and say: "I am spending one hour of it on an agreeable, pleasant, and elevated act of service, the reward for which is high and whose trouble is little." Then your bitter dispiritedness will be transformed into sweet endeavour.

My impatient soul! You are charged with being patient in three respects. One is patience in worship. Another is patience in refraining from sin. And a third is patience in the face of disaster.² If you are intelligent, take as your guide the truth apparent in the comparison in this Third Warning. Say in manly fashion: “O Most Patient One!”, and shoulder the three sorts of patience. If you do not squander on the wrong way the forces of patience Almighty God has given you, they should be enough to withstand every difficulty and disaster. So hold out with those forces!

FOURTH WARNING

O my foolish soul! Is this duty of worship without result, and is its recompense little that it causes you weariness? Whereas if someone was to give you a little money, or to intimidate you, he could make you work till evening, and you would work without slacking. So is it that the prescribed prayers are without result, which in this guest-house of the world are sustenance and wealth for your impotent and weak heart, and in your grave, which will be a certain dwelling-place for you, sustenance and light, and at the Resurrection, when you will anyway be judged, a document and patent, and on the Bridge of Sirat, over which you are bound to pass, a light and a mount? Are their recompense little? Someone promises you a present worth a hundred liras, and makes you work for a hundred days. You trust the man who may go back on his word and work without slacking. So if One for Whom the breaking of a promise is impossible, promises you recompense like Paradise and a gift like eternal happiness, and employs you for a very short time in a very agreeable duty, if you do not perform that service, or you act accusingly towards His promise or slight His gift by performing it unwillingly like someone forced to work, or by being bored, or by working in half-hearted fashion, you will deserve a severe reprimand and awesome punishment. Have you not thought of this? Although you serve without flagging in the heaviest work in this world out of fear of imprisonment, does the fear of an eternal incarceration like Hell not fill you with enthusiasm for a truly light and agreeable act of service?

FIFTH WARNING

O my world-worshipping soul! Does your slackness in worship and remissness in the prescribed prayers arise from the multiplicity of your worldly occupations, or because you cannot find time due to the struggle for livelihood? Were you created only for this world that you spend all your time on it? You know that in regard to your abilities you are superior to all the animals, but in regard to procuring the necessities of worldly life you cannot compete with even a sparrow. So why can you not understand that your basic

² Suyuti, *al-Durar al-Muntathira*, 46; Suyuti, *al-Fath al-Kabir*, ii, 200.

duty is not to labour like an animal, but to strive for a true, perpetual life, like a true human being. In addition, the things you call worldly occupations mostly do not concern you, and are trivial matters which you meddle in officiously. You neglect the essential things and pass your time acquiring inessential information as though you were going to live for a thousand years. For example, you squander your precious time on worthless things like learning what the rings around Saturn are like or how many chickens there are in America. As though you were becoming an expert in astronomy or statistics.

If you say: “What keeps me from the prayers and worship and causes me to be lax is not unnecessary things like that, but essential matters like earning a livelihood,” then my answer is this: if you work for a daily wage of one hundred kurush, and someone comes to you and says: “Come and dig here for ten minutes, and you will find a brilliant and an emerald worth a hundred liras.” If you reply: “No, I won’t come, because ten kurush will be cut from my wage and my subsistence will be less,” of course you understand what a foolish pretext it would be. In just the same way, you work in this orchard for your livelihood. If you abandon the obligatory prayers, all the fruits of your effort will be restricted to only a worldly, unimportant, and unproductive livelihood. But if you spend your rest periods on the prayers, which allow your spirit to relax and heart to take a breather, you will discover two mines which are an important source, both for a productive worldly livelihood, and your livelihood and provisions of the hereafter.

First Mine: Through a sound intention, you will receive a share of the praises and glorifications offered by all the plants and trees, whether flowering or fruit-bearing, that you grow in the garden.³

Second Mine: Whatever is eaten of the garden’s produce, whether by animals or man, cattle or flies, buyers or thieves, it will become like almsgiving from you.⁴ But on condition you work in the name of the True Provider and within the bounds of what He permits, and see yourself as a distribution official giving His property to His creatures.

So see what a great loss is made by one who abandons the prescribed prayers. What significant wealth he loses, and he is deprived of those two results and mines which would otherwise cause him to work eagerly and ensure his morale is strong; he becomes bankrupt. Even, as he grows old, he will grow weary of gardening and lose interest in it, saying, “What is it to me? I am anyway leaving this world, why should I put up with this much difficulty?” He will sink into idleness. But the first man says: “I shall work harder at both worship and licit activities in order to send even more abundant light to my grave and procure more provisions for my life in the hereafter.”

³ This First Station was a lesson for someone in a garden, so it was explained in this way.

⁴ *Bukhari*, iii, 135; *Muslim*, ii, 1189; *Ibn Hibban*, v, 152; *Musnad*, iii, 184, 191.

In Short: O my soul! Know that yesterday has left you, and as for tomorrow, you have nothing to prove that it will be yours. In which case, know that your true life is the present day. So throw at least one of its hours into a mosque or prayer-mat, a coffer for the hereafter like a reserve fund, set up for the true future. Know too that for you and for everyone each new day is the door to a new world. If you do not perform the prayers, your world that day will depart dark and wretched, and will testify against you in the World of Similitudes. For everyone, every day, has a private world out of this world, and its nature is dependent on the person's heart and actions. Like a splendid palace reflected in a mirror takes on the colour of the mirror; if it is black, it appears black; if it is red, it appears red. Also it takes on the qualities of the mirror; if the mirror is smooth, it shows the palace to be beautiful, and if it is not, it shows it to be ugly. As it shows the most delicate things to be coarse, so you alter the shape of your own world with your heart, mind, actions, and wishes. You may make it testify either for you or against you. If you perform the five daily prayers, and through them you are turned towards that world's Glorious Maker, all of a sudden your world, which looks to you, is lit up. Quite simply as though the prayers are an electric lamp and your intention to perform them touches the switch, they disperse the world's darkness and show the changes and movements within the confused wretchedness of worldly chaos to be a wise and purposeful order and a meaningful writing of Divine power. They scatter one light of the light-filled verse,

*God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth*⁵

over your heart, and your world on that day is illuminated through the light's reflection. It will cause it to testify in your favour through its luminosity.

Beware, do not say: "What are my prayers in comparison with the reality of the prayers?", because like the seed of a date-palm describes the full-grown tree, your prayers describe your tree. The difference is only in the summary and details; like the prayers of a great saint, the prayers of ordinary people like you or me, even if they are not aware of it, have a share of that light. There is a mystery in this truth, even if the conscious mind does not perceive it... but the unfolding and illumination differs according to the degrees of those performing them. However many stages and degrees there are from the seed of a date-palm to the mature tree, the degrees of the prayers and their stages are even more numerous. But the essence of that luminous truth is present in all the degrees.

*O God! Grant blessings and peace to the one who said: "The five daily prayers are the pillar of religion,"*⁶ *and to all his Family and Companions.*

⁵ Qur'an, 24:35.

⁶ *Tirmidhi*, Iman, 8; *Ibn Maja*, Fitan, 12; *Musnad*, v, 231, 237; *al-Mustadrak*, ii, 76.

The Second Station of the Twenty-First Word

[This comprises five cures for five of the heart's wounds.]

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

*And say: "O my Sustainer! I seek refuge with You from the suggestions of the evil ones * And I seek refuge with you, O my Sustainer, lest they should come near me."*⁷

O one afflicted with the sickness of scruples! Do you know what your scruples resemble? A calamity! The more importance they are given, the more they grow. If you give them no importance, they die away. If you see them as big, they grow bigger. If you see them as small, they grow smaller. If you fear them, they swell and make you ill. If you do not fear them, they are light and remain hidden. If you do not know their true nature, they persist and become established. While if you do know them and recognize them, they disappear. And so, I shall explain only five 'Aspects' which, of the many sorts of these calamitous scruples, are those which most frequently occur. Perhaps it may be curative for you and for me, for these scruples are such that ignorance invites them and knowledge repulses them. If you do not recognize them they come, if you do recognize them they go.

FIRST ASPECT - FIRST WOUND

Satan first casts a doubt into the heart. If the heart does not accept it, it turns from a doubt into abuse. It depicts before the imagination some unclean memories and unmannerly, ugly states which resemble abuse, and causes the heart to declare: "Alas!", and fall into despair. The person suffering from scruples supposes that he has acted wrongfully before his Sustainer and feels a terrible agitation and anxiety. In order to be saved from it, he flees from the Divine presence and wants to plunge into heedlessness. The cure for this wound is this:

O wretched man suffering from scruples! Do not be alarmed! For what comes to your mind is not abuse, but something imaginary. And like to imagine unbelief is not unbelief, to imagine abuse is not abuse either. For

⁷ Qur'an, 23:97-8.

according to logic, an imagining is not a judgement, and abuse is a judgement. Moreover, those ugly words are not the words of your heart, because your heart is saddened and sorry at them. Rather they come from the inner faculty situated near the heart which is a means of Satanic whisperings. The harm of scruples is imagining the harm. That is, it is to suffer harm in the heart through imagining them to be harmful. For it is imagining to be reality an imagining which is devoid of judgement. Also, it is to attribute to the heart Satan's works; to suppose his words to be from it. Such a person thinks it is harmful, so it becomes harmful. That is anyway what Satan wanted.

SECOND ASPECT

It is this: when meanings arise in the heart, they enter the imagination stripped of form; it is there that they are clothed in an image or form. The imagination, always affected by some cause, weaves images of a sort. It leaves on the way the images of the things to which it gives importance. Whatever meaning passes through it, it either clothes it, or wears it, or taints it, or veils it. If the meanings are pure and clean, and the images, dirty and base, there is no clothing, but there is contact. The man with scruples confuses the contact with being clothed. He exclaims: "Alas! How corrupted my heart has become. This lowness has made me despicable!" Satan takes advantage of this vein of his. The cure for such a wound is as follows:

Listen, O you unfortunate! Just as outward cleanliness, which is the means to the correct conduct of your prayers, is not affected by the uncleanness of the inside of your inner organs, and is not spoiled by it, so the sacred meanings being close to unclean forms does not harm them. For example, you are reflecting on some Divine signs when suddenly you feel ill, or an appetite, or a stimulation like a need to pass water. Of course your imagination will see whatever is necessary to cure the ill or answer the need, and will look at it, weave lowly forms appropriate to them, and the meanings that arise will pass between them. But there is no harm in their passing, nor soiling, nor error, nor injury. If there is any mistake, it is in paying them attention and imagining the harm.

THIRD ASPECT

It is this: there are certain hidden connections between things. There are even the threads of connections between things you least expected. They are either there in fact, or your imagination made them according to the art with which it was preoccupied, and tied them together. It is due to this mystery of connections that sometimes seeing a sacred thing calls to mind a dirty thing. As stated in the science of rhetoric, "Although opposition is the cause of distance in the outer world, it is the cause of proximity in the imagination." That is, an imaginary connection is the means of bringing together the

images of two opposites. The recollection which arises from this connection is called the association of ideas.

For example, while performing the prayers or reciting supplications before the Ka'ba in the Divine Presence, this association of ideas takes hold of you and drives you to the furthest, lowest trivia, although you are reflecting on Qur'anic verses. If your head is afflicted with association of ideas in this way, beware, do not be alarmed. Rather, the moment you come to your senses, turn back. Do not say: "I've done a great wrong," and keep playing with the trigger, lest through your attention, that tenuous connection strengthens. For the more you feel regret, the more importance you give it and that faint memory of yours becomes ingrained. It becomes an imaginary sickness. Do not be frightened, it is not a sickness of the heart. This sort of recollection is mostly involuntary. Especially in sensitive, nervous people it is more common. Satan works the mine of this sort of scruple a great deal. The cure for this wound is as follows:

The association of ideas is mostly involuntary. One is not answerable for it. In association there is proximity; there is no touching or intermingling. Therefore the nature of the ideas do not pass to one another and do not harm one another. Just as Satan and the angel of inspiration being in proximity to one another around the heart, and sinners and the pious being close to one another in the same house cause no harm, so too, if at the prompting of the association of ideas, dirty imaginings come and enter among clean thoughts, they cause no harm. Unless it is intentional, or by imagining them to be harmful, one is over-occupied with them. And sometimes the heart becomes tired, and the mind occupies itself with anything it encounters in order to entertain itself. Then Satan finds an opportunity, and scatters dirty things before it, and eggs it on.

FOURTH ASPECT

This is a scruple arising from searching for the best form of an action. Supposing it to be fear of God, the more rigorous it becomes, the more severe the condition becomes for the person. It even reaches the point that while searching for even better forms of action, he deviates into what is unlawful. Sometimes searching for a Sunna makes him give up what is obligatory. He says: "I wonder if my act was sound?", and repeats it. This state continues, and he falls into terrible despair. Satan takes advantage of this state of his, and wounds him. There are two cures for such a wound.

The First Cure: Scruples like this are worthy of the Mu'tazilites, because they say: "Actions and things for which a person is responsible are either, of themselves and in regard to the hereafter, good, and because of this good they were commanded, or they are bad, and because they are bad they were prohibited. That means, from the point of view of reality and the

hereafter, the good and bad in things is dependent on the things themselves, and the Divine command and prohibition follows this.” According to this school of thought, the following scruple arises in every action which a person performs: “I wonder if my action was performed in the good way that in essence it is?” While the true school, the Sunni School, says: “Almighty God orders a thing, then it becomes good. He prohibits a thing, then it becomes bad.” That is, goodness becomes existent through command, and badness through prohibition. They look to the awareness of the one who performs the action, and are established according to that. And this good and bad is not in the apparent face which looks to this world, but in the face that looks to the hereafter.

For example, you performed the prayers or took the ablutions and there was a cause that of itself would spoil them, but you were completely unaware of it. Your prayers and ablutions, therefore, are both sound and acceptable. However, the Mu’tazilites say: “In reality it was bad and unsound. But it may be accepted from you because you were ignorant and did not know, so you have an excuse.” Therefore, according to the Sunni School, do not say about an action which is conformable with the externals of the Shari’a: “I wonder if it was sound?”; do not have scruples about it. Say: “Was it accepted?”; do not become proud and conceited!

The Second Cure: This is: “There is no difficulty in religion.”⁸ Since the four schools of law are true; and since realizing a fault which leads to the seeking of forgiveness is preferable –for the person afflicted with scruples– to seeing actions as good, which leads to pride, that is, it is better if such a person sees his action as faulty and seeks forgiveness, rather than considering it to be good and falling into pride; since it is thus, throw away your scruples and say to Satan: “This state is a difficulty. It is difficult to be aware of the reality of things. It is contrary to the ease in religion expressed by: There is no difficulty in religion. It is contrary to the principle, Religion is facility. Certainly such an action is conformable with a true school of law. That is enough for me. And at least by admitting my inability to perform the worship in a way worthy of it, it is a means of taking refuge with Divine compassion through humbly beseeching forgiveness, and to meekly supplicating that my faulty actions be accepted.

FIFTH ASPECT

In matters of belief, what occurs to one in the form of doubts are scruples. The unhappy man suffering from scruples sometimes confuses conceptions in his mind with imaginings. That is, he imagines a doubt that has occurred to his imagination to be a doubt that has entered his mind, and supposes that

⁸ *Bukhari*, i, 16; *Ibn Hibban, Sahih*, i, 280; *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, iii, 33, 36, 47; vi, 42, 47.

his beliefs have been damaged. Sometimes he supposes a doubt he has imagined to have harmed his belief. Sometimes he supposes a doubt he has imagined to have been confirmed by his reason. Sometimes he supposes pondering over a matter related to unbelief to be unbelief. That is, he supposes to be contrary to belief his exercising his ability to reflect in the form of understanding the causes of misguidance, and his ability to study and reason in impartial fashion. Then, taking fright at these suppositions, which result from the whisperings of Satan, he exclaims: "Alas! My heart is corrupted and my beliefs spoiled." Since those states are mostly involuntary, and he cannot put them to rights through his faculty of will, he falls into despair. The cure for this wound is as follows:

Just as imagining unbelief is not unbelief, neither is fancying unbelief, unbelief. And just as imagining misguidance is not misguidance, so too reflecting on misguidance is not misguidance. For both imagining, and fancying, and supposing, and reflecting, are different from confirmation with the reason and submission of the heart, they are other than them; they are free to an extent; they do not listen to the faculty of will; they are not included among the obligations of religion. But affirmation and submission are not like that; they are dependent on a balance. And just as imagining, fancying, supposing, and reflecting are not affirmation or submission, so they cannot be said to be doubt or hesitation. But if they are repeated unnecessarily and become established, then a sort of real doubt may be born of them. Also, continually taking the part of the opposing side calling it unbiased reasoning or being fair reaches the point that the person involuntarily favours the opposing side. His taking the part of the truth, which is incumbent on him, is destroyed. He too falls into danger. A state of mind becomes fixed in his head whereby he becomes an officious representative of Satan or the enemy.

The most important of this sort of scruple is this: the person suffering from it confuses something that is actually possible with something which is reasonably possible. That is, if he sees something which is of itself possible, he imagines it to be reasonably possible and reasonably doubtful. Whereas one of the principles of theology (*kalam*) is that something which is of itself possible is not opposed to certain knowledge and does not contradict the demands of reason. For example, the Black Sea sinking into the earth at this moment is of itself possible, but we judge with certainty that the sea is in its place, and we know this without doubting it, and that possibility which is actually possible causes us no doubt and does not damage our certainty. And, for example, of itself it is possible that the sun will not set today or that it will not rise tomorrow. But this possibility in no way damages our certainty that it will rise and gives rise to no doubt. Similarly, unfounded suspicions arising from possibilities of this sort about, for example, the setting of

the life of this world and rising of the life of the hereafter, which are among the truths of belief, cause no harm to the certainty of belief. Furthermore, the well-known rule, A possibility that does not arise from any proof or evidence is of no importance is one of the established principles of both the sciences of the principles of religion and the principles of jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

If you say: “What is the wisdom and purpose in scruples being visited on us, which are thus harmful and an affliction for believers?”

The Answer: On condition they do not lead to excess or overwhelm a person, essentially scruples are the cause of vigilance, lead to seeking the best way, and give rise to seriousness. They banish indifference and repulse carelessness. Therefore, in this realm of examination and arena of competition, the Absolutely Wise One put them in the hand of Satan as a whip of encouragement for us. He strikes it at our heads. If it hurts excessively, one must complain to the All-Wise and Compassionate One, and say: “I seek refuge with God from Satan the Accursed.”

The Twenty-Second Word

[This Word consists of Two Stations]

First Station

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

*So God sets forth parables for men, so that they may bear [them] in mind.¹ *
Such are the similitudes which we propound to men that they may reflect.²*

One time two men were washing in a pool. Under some extraordinary influence they lost their senses and when they opened their eyes, they saw that it had transported them to a strange land. It was such that with its perfect order it was like a country, or rather a town, or a palace. They looked around themselves in complete bewilderment: if it was looked at in one way, a vast world was apparent; if in another, a well-ordered country; and if in another, a fine town. And if it was looked at in still another way, it was a palace which comprised a truly magnificent world. Travelling around this strange world, they observed it and saw that creatures of one sort were speaking in a fashion, but they did not understand their language. Nevertheless, it was understood from their signs that they were performing important works and duties.

One of the two men said to his friend: "This strange world must have someone to regulate it, and this orderly country must have a lord, and this fine town, an owner, and this finely made palace, a master builder. We must try to know him, for it is understood that the one who brought us here was he. If we do not recognize him, who will help us? What can we await from these impotent creatures whose language we do not know and who do not heed us? Moreover, surely one who makes a vast world in the form of a country, town, and palace, and fills it from top to bottom with wonderful things, and embellishes it with every sort of adornment, and decks it out

¹ Qur'an, 14:25.

² Qur'an, 59:21.

with instructive miracles wants something from us and from those that come here. We must get to know him and find out what he wants.”

The other man said: “I do not believe it, that there is a person such as the one you speak of, and that he governs this whole world on his own.”

His friend replied to him: “If we do not recognize him and remain indifferent towards him, there is no advantage in it at all, and if it is harmful, its harm will be immense. Whereas if we try to recognize him, there is little hardship involved, and if there is benefit, it will be great. Therefore, it is in no way sensible to remain indifferent towards him.”

The foolish man said: “I consider all my ease and enjoyment to lie in not thinking of him. Also, I am not going to bother with things that make no sense to me. All these things are the confused objects of chance, they are happening by themselves. What is it to me?”

His intelligent friend replied: “This obstinacy of yours will push me, and a lot of others, into disaster. It sometimes happens that a whole country is laid waste because of one ill-mannered person.”

So the foolish man turned to him and said: “Either prove to me decisively that this large country has a single lord and single maker, or leave me alone.”

His friend replied: “Your obstinacy has reached the degree of lunacy, and you will be the cause of some disaster being visited on us. So I shall show you twelve proofs demonstrating that this world which is like a palace, and country which is like town, has a single maker and that it is only he who runs and administers everything. He is completely free of all deficiency. This maker, who does not appear to us, sees us and everything, and hears our words. All his works are miracles and marvels. All these creatures whom we see but whose tongues we do not understand are his officials.”

FIRST PROOF

Come and look carefully at everything around you: a hidden hand is working within all these works. For something which has not even an ounce of strength,³ something as small as a seed, is raising a load of thousands of pounds. And something that does not have even a particle of consciousness⁴ is performing extremely wise and purposeful works. That means they are not working by themselves, but that a hidden possessor of power is causing them to work. If they were independent, it would necessitate all the works which we see everywhere in this land being miracles and everything to be a wonder-working marvel. And that is nonsense.

³ This alludes to seeds, which bear trees on their heads.

⁴ This indicates delicate plants like the grapevine, which themselves cannot climb or bear the weight of fruits, so throwing their delicate arms around other plants or trees and winding themselves around them, they load themselves onto them.

SECOND PROOF

Come, look carefully at the things which adorn all these plains, fields, and dwellings! There are marks on each telling of that hidden one. Simply, each gives news of Him like a seal or stamp. Look in front of your eyes: what does He make from one ounce of cotton?⁵ See how many rolls of cloth, fine linen, and flowered material have come out of it. See how many sugared delights and round sweets are being made. If thousands of people like us were to clothe themselves in them and eat them, they would still be sufficient. And look! He has taken a handful of iron, water, earth, coal, copper, silver, and gold, and made some flesh⁶ out of them. Look at that and see! O foolish one! These works are particular to such a one that all this land together with all its parts is under his miraculous power and is submissive to his every wish.

THIRD PROOF

Come, look at these mobile works of art!⁷ Each has been fashioned in such a way that it is simply a miniature sample of the huge palace. Whatever there is in the palace, it is found in these tiny mobile machines. Is it at all possible that someone other than the palace's maker could come and include the wondrous palace in a tiny machine? Also, is it at all possible that although he has included a whole world in a machine the size of a box, there could be anything in it that was purposeless or could be attributed to chance? That means that however many skilfully fashioned machines you can see, each is like a seal of that hidden one. Rather, each is like a herald or proclamation. Through their tongues of disposition they are saying: "We are the art of One Who can make this entire world of ours as easily and simply as He created us."

FOURTH PROOF

O my stubborn friend! Come, I shall show you something even stranger. Look! All these works and things in this land have changed and are changing. They do not stop in any one state. Note carefully that each of these lifeless bodies and unfeeling boxes has taken on the form of being absolutely dominant. Quite simply it is as though each rules all the others. Look at this

⁵ This indicates a seed. For example, a poppy seed like an atom, the kernel of an apricot stone, and a tiny melon seed, produce from the treasury of mercy woven leaves finer than broadcloth, flowers whiter than linen, and fruits sweeter than sugar and more delicate and delicious than sweets and preserves, and they offer them to us.

⁶ This indicates the creation of animal bodies from the elements, and living creatures from sperm.

⁷ This alludes to animals and humans. For since animals are tiny indexes of the world, and man is a miniature sample of the universe, whatever there is in the world, a sample of it is in man.

machine next to us;⁸ it is as though issuing commands; all the necessities and substances necessary for its adornment and functioning come hastening to it from distant places. Look over there: that lifeless body⁹ is as though beckoning; it makes the largest bodies serve it and work in its own workplace. Make further analogies in the same way.

Simply, everything subjugates to itself all the beings in this world. If you do not accept the existence of that hidden one, you have to attribute all his skills, arts, and perfections in the stones, earth, animals, and creatures resembling man everywhere in this land to the things themselves. In place of a single wonder-working being, which your mind deems unlikely, you have to accept millions like him, who are both opposed to one another, and similar, and one within the other, so they do not cause confusion everywhere and the order be spoiled. Whereas if two fingers meddle in a country, they cause confusion. For if there are two headmen in a village, or two governors in a town, or two kings in a country, the result is chaos. So what about an infinite, absolute ruler?

FIFTH PROOF

O my sceptical friend! Come, look carefully at the inscriptions of this vast palace, look at all the adornments of the town, see the ordering of this whole land, and reflect on all the works of art in this world! See! If these inscriptions are not worked by the pen of one hidden who possesses infinite miracles and skills, and are attributed to unconscious causes, to blind chance and deaf nature, then every stone and every plant in this land has to be an inscriber so wondrous it can write a thousand books in every letter and include millions of works of art in a single inscription. Because look at the inscription on these stones;¹⁰ in each are the inscriptions of all the palace, and the laws ordering all the town, and the programmes for organizing the whole country. That means that it is as wonderful to make these inscriptions as to make the whole country. In which case, all the inscriptions, all the works of art, are proclamations of that hidden one, and seals of his.

⁸ The machine indicates fruit-bearing trees. For they bear on their slender branches hundreds of workbenches and factories, and weave, adorn, and cook wonderful leaves, flowers and fruits, and stretch them out to us. And majestic trees like the pine and the cedar, even, set up their workbenches on dry rock, and work.

⁹ This alludes to grains, seeds, and the eggs of flies. For example, a fly leaves its eggs on the leaves of the elm. Suddenly the huge tree turns its leaves into a mother's womb and a cradle for the eggs, and into a store full of a food like honey. Simply, in that way the tree, which is not fruit-producing, produces fruits bearing spirits.

¹⁰ This alludes to man, the fruit of the tree of creation, and to the fruit which bears its tree's programme and index. For whatever the pen of power has written in the great book of the universe, it has written its summary in man's nature. And whatever the pen of Divine Determining has written in a tree the size of a mountain, it has also included it in its fruit the size of a finger nail.

Since a letter cannot exist without showing the one who wrote it, and an artistic inscription cannot exist without making known its inscriber, how is it that an inscriber who writes a huge book in a single letter and inscribes a thousand inscriptions in a single inscription, should not be known through his writing and through his inscribing?

SIXTH PROOF

Come, let us go out onto this broad plain.¹¹ On it is a high mountain whose summit we shall climb to so that we can see all the surrounding country. We shall take with us a good pair of binoculars which will bring everything close, for strange things are happening in this strange land. Every hour things are taking place that we could not imagine. Look! These mountains, plains, and towns are suddenly changing. And how? In such a way that millions of things are being changed in a most regulated and orderly fashion one within the other. Truly wondrous transformations are being wrought, just as though millions of various cloths are being woven one within the other. Look! These flowery things which we know and are familiar with are disappearing and others have come in their place in orderly fashion which resemble them in nature but are different in form. It is quite simply as though this plain and the mountains are each a page, and within them are being written hundreds of thousands of different books. And they are being written faultlessly and without defect.

It is impossible a hundred times over that these matters should have come about on their own. Yes, for these works which are skilfully and carefully fashioned to an infinite degree to have occurred on their own is impossible a thousand times, for rather than themselves, they show the artist who fashioned them. Moreover, the one who did this displays such miracles that nothing at all could be difficult for him. It is as easy for him to write a thousand books as to write one book. Look all around you; he both puts everything in its proper place with perfect wisdom, and he munificently showers the favours on everyone of which they are worthy, and he draws back and opens general veils and doors so bountifully that everyone's desires are satisfied. And he sets up tables so generously that a feast of bounties is given to all the people and animals of this land; each group and individual is given one particular and suitable for it, even. So, is there anything more impossible in the world than that there should be anything attributable to chance in these matters that we see, or that among these matters that we see there is anything

¹¹ This indicates the face of the earth in the spring and summer. For the groups of hundreds of thousands of different creatures are created one within the other and written there. They are changed without fault or error and with perfect order. Thousands of tables of the Most Merciful One are laid out, then removed and replaced by fresh ones. All the trees as though bear trays, all the gardens are like cauldrons.

purposeless or vain, or that many hands should be interfering in them, or that their maker should not be capable of everything, or that everything should not be subjugated to him? And so, my friend, find a pretext in the face of these if you can!

SEVENTH PROOF

Come, my friend! Now we shall leave these particular matters and turn our attention to the mutual positions of the parts of this wondrous world in the form of a palace. Look! Universal works are being carried out and general revolutions are occurring in this world with such order that all the rocks, earth, trees, everything in this palace, observe the universal systems of the world, and conform to them as if each was acting with will. Things which are distant hasten to assist one another. Now look, a strange caravan¹² has appeared, coming from the Unseen. The mounts in it resemble trees, plants, and mountains. Each bears a tray of provisions on its head. And look, they are bringing the provisions for the various animals awaiting them on this side. And see, the mighty electric lamp¹³ in that dome both furnishes them with light, and cooks all their food so well that the foods to be cooked are each attached to a string¹⁴ by an unseen hand and held up before it. And on this side, see these wretched, weak, powerless little animals; how before their heads are attached two small pumps¹⁵ full of delicate sustenance, like two springs; it is enough for those powerless creatures to only press their mouths against them.

In Short: Just as all the things throughout the world look to one another, so they help one another. And just as they see one another, so they co-operate with one another. And just as they perfect each other's works, so too they support one another; standing shoulder to shoulder, they work together. Make analogies with this for everything; they are uncountable. Thus, all these things demonstrate as decisively as two plus two equals four that everything is subjugated to the maker of this wondrous palace, that is, to the owner of this strange world. Everything is like a soldier under his command. Everything turns through his strength. Everything acts through his command. Everything is set in order through his wisdom. Everything helps the others through his munificence. Everything hastens to the assistance of the others through his compassion, that is, they are made to hasten to it. Now, my friend, say something in the face of this if you can!

¹² These are the caravans of plants and trees, which bear the sustenance of all the animals.

¹³ The mighty electric lamp indicates the sun.

¹⁴ And the string, and the food attached to it, are the slender branches of trees and their delicious fruits.

¹⁵ And the two small pumps allude to the breasts of mothers.

EIGHTH PROOF

Come, my foolish friend who thinks himself reasonable like my soul! You do not want to recognize the owner of this magnificent palace! But everything shows him, points to him, testifies to him. How can you deny the testimony of all these things? You have therefore to deny the palace as well, and say: "There is no world, no country." Deny yourself, too, and disappear! Or else come to your senses and listen to me! Now, look, there are uniform elements and minerals inside the palace and encompassing the land.¹⁶ Simply, everything appearing in the country is made of those elements. That means, whoever those things belong to, everything made of them is also his. Whoever the field belongs to, the crops are his too. And whoever the sea belongs to, the things within it are also his.

And look, these textiles, these decorated woven materials, are being made out of a single substance. It is self-evidently the same person who brings the substance, prepares it, and makes it into string. For such a work would not permit the participation of others. In which case, all the woven, skilfully made things are particular to him.

And look! Every sort of these woven, manufactured goods is found in every part of the country; they have spread with all their fellows, and are being made and woven together and one within the other, in the same way, at the same instant. That means they are the work of the same person and the same act through a single command, otherwise their correspondence and conformity at the same instant, in the same fashion, of the same sort, would be impossible. In which case, each of these skilfully fashioned things is like a proclamation of that hidden one which points to him. As if each sort of flowered material, each ingenious machine, each sweet mouthful, is a stamp of that miracle-displaying person; a stamp of his, a mark, a decoration; each says through the tongue of disposition: "Whose-ever work of art I am, the boxes and shops where I am found are also his property." Each inscription says: "Whoever wove me also wove the roll of cloth of which I am a part." Every sweet mouthful says: "Whoever makes me and cooks me, the cauldron in which I am is also his." And every machine says: "Whoever made me, also makes all those like me who have spread throughout the land, and the one who raises us in every part of it, is also he. That means he is also the country's owner. In which case, whoever the owner of all this country and palace is, he may be our owner too."

For example, in order to be the true owner of a single cartridge-belt or

¹⁶ As for the elements and minerals, these indicate the elements of air, water, light, and earth, which have numerous well-ordered duties; they hasten to the assistance of all needy beings with dominical leave, enter everywhere and bring help at the Divine command, and raise all the things necessary for life and suckle living creatures, and are the source of the weaving and inscribing of the Divine artefacts, and their progenitors and cradles.

even a button belonging to the government, one also has to own all the factories in which they are made. If a bragging irregular soldier claims otherwise, he will be told: “They are government property.” And they will be taken from him, and he will be punished.

In Short: Just as the elements in this country all surround and encompass it, and their owner can only be one who owns the whole country, in the same way, since the works of art that are spread throughout it resemble one another and display a single stamp, they show that they are the art of a single person who governs everything.

And so, my friend! There is a sign of oneness, a stamp of unity, in this country, that is, this magnificent palace. For while being the same, certain things are all-encompassing. And while being numerous, some display a unity or similarity, since they resemble one another and are found everywhere. As for unity, it shows One of Unity. That means that its maker, owner, lord, and fashioner has to be one and the same. In addition, look carefully at this: from behind the veil of the unseen a thickish string has appeared.¹⁷ Now look, thousands of strings have hung down from it. And see the tips of the strings: a diamond, a decoration, a favour, a gift has been attached to each. Suitable presents are being given to everyone. Do you know what a lunatic action it is not to recognize or thank the one who stretches out from behind the strange veil of the unseen such wondrous favours and gifts. Because if you do not recognize him, you will be compelled to say: “These strings are making the diamonds and other gifts on their tips themselves and offering them.” Then you have to attribute to each string the meaning of a king. Whereas before our eyes an unseen hand is making the strings too, and attaching the gifts to them. That means, everything in this palace points to that miracle-displaying one rather than to themselves. If you do not recognize him, through denying them, you fall a hundred times lower than an animal.

NINTH PROOF

Come, my unreasoning friend! You do not recognize this palace’s owner, and you do not want to recognize him because you deem his existence unlikely. You deviate into denial because you cannot comprehend with your narrow brain his wondrous arts and acts. Whereas the true unlikelihood, real difficulties, hardships, and awesome trouble lie in not recognizing him. For if we recognize him, this whole palace, this world, becomes as easy, as trouble-free as a single thing; it becomes the means to the abundance and plenty around us. If we do not recognize him and he does not exist, then everything becomes as difficult as this whole palace, because everything is as skilfully

¹⁷ The thickish string alludes to fruit-bearing trees, the thousands of strings, to their branch-es, and the diamonds, decorations, favours, and gifts, to the varieties of blossoms and fruits.

made as the palace. Then neither the abundance nor the plenty would remain. Indeed, not one of these things which we see would pass to anyone's hand, let alone ours. Look at just the jar of conserve attached to this string.¹⁸ If it had not emerged from his hidden, miracle-displaying kitchen, we could not have bought it for a hundred *liras*, although we buy it now for forty *para*.¹⁹

Yes, all unlikelihood, difficulty, trouble, arduousness, indeed, impossibility, lies in not recognizing him. For a tree is given life from one root, through one law, in one centre, and the formation of thousands of fruits is as easy as one fruit. But if the fruits were tied to different centres and roots, and different laws, each fruit would be as difficult to produce as the tree. And if the equipping of an entire army is in one centre, through one law, and from one factory, as regards quantity it is as easy as equipping a single soldier. While if each soldier is equipped from all different places, then to equip one soldier there would have to be as many factories as for the entire army.

Just like these two examples, if, in this well-ordered palace, this fine town, this advanced country, this magnificent world, the creation of all things is attributed to a single being, it becomes so easy, so light, it is the reason for the infinite abundance, availability, and munificence we see. Otherwise everything would become so expensive, so difficult, that if the whole world was given to someone, they could not obtain them.

TENTH PROOF

Come, my friend, who has come a little to his senses! We have been here fifteen days²⁰ now. If we do not know the regulations of this world and do not recognize its king, we shall deserve punishment. We have no excuse, because for fifteen days, as though given a respite, they did not interfere with us. Of course we have not just been left to our own devices. We cannot wander around among these delicate, well-balanced, subtle, skilfully made and instructive creatures like an animal and spoil them; they would not permit us to harm them. The penalties of this country's august king are bound to be awesome. You can understand how powerful and majestic he is from the way he orders this huge world as though it was a palace, and makes it revolve like a machine. He administers this large country like a house, missing nothing. See, like filling a container and emptying it, he continuously fills this palace, this country, this town, with perfect order, and empties it with perfect wisdom. Like spreading out a table then clearing it away, varieties of foods are brought in turn and given to eat in the form of a great

¹⁸ The jar of conserve indicates the gifts of Divine mercy like melons, water melons, pomegranates, and coconuts, which are the conserves of Divine power, and like tins of milk.

¹⁹ 1 *Para* = 1/40th of a *kurush*; 100 *kurush* = 1 *lira*.

²⁰ Fifteen days indicates the age of fifteen, the age of discretion. (See, *Bukhari*, iii, 232.)

variety of tables²¹ being laid out by an unseen hand in every part of his vast country, and then being cleared away. The unseen hand clears away one, then brings another in its place. You see this too, and if you use your head, you will understand that within that awesome majesty is an infinitely munificent liberality.

And see, just as all these things testify to that unseen one's sovereignty and unity, so too these revolutions and changes which pass on in succession like caravans and are opened and closed from behind that true veil, testify to his continuance and permanence. For the causes of things disappear along with them. Whereas the things which we attribute to them, which follow on after them, are repeated. That means those works are not theirs, but the works of one who does not perish. It is understood from the the bubbles on the surface of a river disappearing and the bubbles which succeed them sparkling in the same way that what makes them sparkle is a constant and elevated possessor of light. Similarly, the speedy changing of things and the things that follow on after them assuming the same colours shows that they are the manifestations, inscriptions, mirrors, and works of art of one who is perpetual, undying, and single.

ELEVENTH PROOF

Come, my friend! Now I shall show you a decisive proof as powerful as the ten previous ones. We shall board a boat,²² and sail to a peninsula, far away. For the key to this riddle-filled world will be there. Moreover, everyone is looking to that peninsula and awaiting something from it; they are receiving orders from there. See, we are going there. Now we have arrived and have alighted on the peninsula. There is a vast gathering, a great concourse, as though all the important people of the country have gathered there. Look carefully, this great community has a leader. Come, we shall draw closer; we must become acquainted with him. Look! What brilliant decorations he has, more than a thousand of them.²³ How powerfully he speaks! How pleasant is his conversation! In these two weeks I have learnt a little of what he says. You learn them from me. See, he is speaking of this country's miracle-displaying king. He is saying that the glorious king sent him to us.

²¹ The tables indicate the face of the earth in summer, during which hundreds of tables of the Most Merciful emerge fresh and different from the kitchens of mercy. Every garden is a cauldron, every tree, a tray-bearer.

²² The ship indicates history, and the peninsula, the Era of Bliss or Age of the Prophet (PBUH). Through casting off the dress of this low civilization on its dark shore, entering the seas of time, boarding the ship of history and alighting at the Arabian Peninsula and Era of Bliss, and visiting the Glory of the World (PBUH) at his duties, we know that he is a proof of Divine Unity so brilliant that he illuminates the entire globe and the two faces of the past and the future, and disperses the darkness of unbelief and misguidance.

²³ The thousand decorations are the miracles of Muhammad (PBUH), which according to those who have investigated them, reach nearly a thousand. (Bayhaqi, *Dala'il*, i, 10.)

And he is displaying such wonders that they leave no doubt that he is his special envoy. Look carefully, it is not only the creatures on this peninsula that are listening to what he says; he is making the whole country hear in wondrous fashion. For near and far everyone is trying to hear the speech here. It is not only humans that are listening, animals are listening too. Look, even the mountains are listening to the commands he brought so that they are stirring in their places, and the trees, too, move to the place that he indicates. He brings forth water from wherever he wishes. He even makes his fingers like a Spring of Kawthar, and gives to drink from them. Look, at his sign, an important lamp²⁴ in the dome of this palace splits into two. That means this country together with all its beings recognizes that he is an official and envoy. They heed and obey him, as though knowing that he is the most eminent and true interpreter of an unseen displayer of miracles, and the herald of his dominicality, the discloser of his talisman, and a trustworthy envoy delivering his commands. All those with intelligence around him declare: “Yes, that is right!” about everything he says, and affirm it. Indeed, through submitting to his signs and commands, the mountains and trees in this country and the huge light²⁵ that illuminates it, say: “Yes, yes, everything you say is true!”

My foolish friend! Could there be any contradiction or deception concerning the miracle-displaying king about whom this most luminous, magnificent, and serious being, who bears a thousand decorations particular to the king’s own treasury, is speaking with all his strength, confirmed by all the country’s notables, and concerning the king’s attributes which he mentions, and the commands which he relays? If there is anything contrary to the truth in these things, it will be necessary to deny this palace, these lamps, this community, both their reality and their existence. If you can, raise any objections against these; but you will see that they will be smashed by the power of the proof, and flung back at you.

TWELFTH PROOF

Come, my brother, who has come to his senses a little! I shall show you a further proof of the strength of all the eleven preceding proofs. See this luminous Decree,²⁶ which descends from above and which everyone looks

²⁴ The important lamp is the moon, which split into two halves at his indication. That is, as Mawlana Jami said: “With the pen of his finger, that unlettered one who knew no writing, wrote an alif on the page of the skies and made one forty, two fifties.” That is, before it split, the moon resembled $m\bar{m}$, the value of which is forty; and after splitting it became two crescents, and resembled two $nu\backslash ns$, the value of which is fifty.

²⁵ The huge light is the sun; when it reappeared from the East on the earth’s revolving backwards, Imam ‘Ali (May God be pleased with him), who had been unable to perform the prayers since the Prophet (PBUH) was sleeping in his arms, due to this miracle, was able to perform the prayers on time. (See, Qadi Iyad, *al-Shifa’*, i, 240; Suyuti, *al-Khasa’is al-Kubra*, ii, 342.)

²⁶ The luminous Decree refers to the Qur’an, and the seal on it, to its miraculousness.

on in rapt attention out of either wonder or veneration. The one with the thousand decorations has stopped by it and is explaining its meaning to everyone. The styles of the Decree so shine they attract everyone's appreciative gaze, and it speaks of matters so important and serious that everyone is compelled to give ear to them. For it describes all the qualities, acts, commands, and attributes of the one who governs this whole land, who made this palace, and exhibits these wonders. Just as there is a mighty stamp on the Decree as a whole, look! there is an inimitable seal on every line and every sentence, and, moreover, the meanings, truths, commands, and instances of wisdom it states are seen to be in a style particular to him, thus bearing the meaning of a stamp.

In Short: The Supreme Decree shows the Supreme Being as clearly as the sun, so that anyone who is not blind can see it.

My friend! If you have come to your senses, this is enough for now. If you have something to say, say it.

In reply, the obstinate man said: "I can only say this in the face of these proofs of yours: All praise be to God for I have come to believe. And I believe in a way bright as the sun and clear as daylight that this country has a single King of Perfection, this world, a Single Glorious Owner, this palace, a Single Beauteous Maker. May God be pleased with you, for you have saved me from my former obstinacy and foolishness. Each of the proofs you showed was sufficient to demonstrate the truth. But because with each successive proof, clearer, pleasanter, more agreeable, more luminous, finer levels of knowledge, veils in acquaintanceship, and windows of love were opened and revealed, I waited and listened."

The story in the form of a comparison indicating the mighty truth of Divine unity and belief in God has reached its conclusion. Through the grace of the Most Merciful, the effulgence of the Qur'an, and the light of belief, we shall now set out twelve 'Flashes' and an Introduction from the sun of true Divine unity corresponding to the twelve proofs in the story.

Success and Guidance are from God alone.

The Second Station of the Twenty-Second Word

Introduction

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

*God is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs. * To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth.²⁷ * So glory to Him in Whose hands is the sovereignty of all things, and to Him will you all be brought back.²⁸ * 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.²⁹ * There is not a moving creature, but He has grasp of its forelock. Verily it is my Sustainer that is on a Straight Path.³⁰*

In my treatise entitled *Katre*, which is about belief in God, the principal pole of the pillars of belief, I explained in brief the evidence to Almighty God's existence and unity given by all beings through fifty-five tongues. Also, in the treatise *Nokta*, I mentioned four universal proofs out of the evidences of Almighty God's existence and unity each of which has the strength of a thousand proofs. Moreover, since I have discussed in around twelve of my Arabic treatises hundreds of decisive proofs demonstrating Almighty God's necessary existence and unity, I shall be content with those and not now undertake any profound investigations. Only, I shall try to explain in this Twenty-Second Word, twelve 'Flashes' from the sun of belief in God which I have written briefly in other places in the *Risale-i Nur*.

FIRST FLASH

The affirmation of Divine unity is of two sorts. For example, if the goods of a rich man arrive in a market or a town, there are two ways in which one

²⁷ Qur'an, 39:62.

²⁸ Qur'an, 36:83.

²⁹ Qur'an, 15:21.

³⁰ Qur'an, 11:56.

may know they are his. One is briefly and simply, as with ordinary people, which is: “No one apart from him is capable of owning this vast amount of goods.” But when under the supervision of a common man such as that, much of it may be stolen. Many others may claim ownership of parts of it. The second sort is this: through reading his writing on every packet, recognizing his signature on every roll, and seeing his seal on every bill, the man declares: “Everything belongs to that person.” Here, everything in effect shows the important man. Similarly, the affirmation of Divine unity is of two sorts:

One is the superficial and common affirmation of Divine unity which says: “Almighty God is One, He has no partner or like. This universe is His.”

The Second is the true affirmation of Divine unity which, through seeing on everything the stamp of His power, the seal of His dominicality, and the inscriptions of His pen, is to open a window directly onto His light from everything and to confirm and believe with almost the certainty of seeing it that everything emerges from the hand of His power and that in no way has He any partner or assistant in His Godhead or in His dominicality or in His sovereignty, and thus to attain to a sort of perpetual awareness of the Divine presence. In this Word, we shall mention rays demonstrating this pure and elevated true affirmation of Divine unity.

A Reminder within the First Point: O heedless worshipper of causes! Causes are a veil; for Divine dignity and grandeur require them to be thus. But that which acts and performs matters is the power of the Eternally Besought One; for Divine unity and glory require it to be thus, and necessitate their independence. The officials of the Pre-Eternal Monarch are not executives of the sovereignty of dominicality, they are the heralds of His sovereignty and the observers and superintendents of His dominicality. Their purpose is to make known the dignity of power and majesty of dominicality, so that power should not be seen to be associated with base and lowly matters. Not like a human king, tainted by impotence and indigence, who therefore takes officials as partners. That is to say, causes have been placed so that the dignity of power may be preserved in the superficial view of the mind. For like the two faces of a mirror, everything has an outer face that looks to this manifest world, which resembles the mirror’s coloured face and may reflect various colours and states, and an inner face which looks to its Maker, which resembles the mirror’s shining face. In the outer face which looks to the manifest world may be states incompatible with the dignity and perfection of the Eternally Besought One’s power, so causes have been put to be both the source and the means of those states. But in the inner face, that of reality, which looks to their Creator, everything is transparent and beautiful; it is fitting that power should itself be associated with it. It is not

incompatible with its dignity; therefore, causes are purely apparent and in the inner face of things and in reality have no true effect.

A further instance of wisdom in apparent causes is this: causes have been put so that unjust complaints and baseless objections should be directed at them and not at the Absolutely Just One. For the faults arise from them, from their incapacity and lack of ability. A comparison is narrated which is in the form of a subtle example illustrating this mystery:

The Angel Azra'il (Peace be upon him) said to Almighty God: "Your servants will complain about me while I am carrying out my duty of taking possession of the spirits of the dying; they will be resentful towards me." So Almighty God said to him through the tongue of wisdom: "I shall leave the veil of disasters and illnesses between you and my servants so that the complaints will be directed at them, and they will not be indignant at you."³¹ So see, illnesses are a veil; what are imagined to be the bad things at the appointed hour are attributed to them, and what are in reality the good things in the spirits of the dying being seized are attributed to Azra'il (PBH) and his duty. Azra'il is also a veil; he is a supervisor of that duty and a veil to Divine power so that certain conditions when spirits are seized which are apparently unkind and are inappropriate to the perfection of mercy be attributed to him.

Yes, dignity and grandeur demand that causes are a veil to the hand of power in the view of the mind, while Divine unity and glory demand that causes withdraw their hands and have no true effect.

SECOND FLASH

Look at this garden of the universe, this orchard of the earth; look carefully at the beautiful face of the heavens gilded with stars! You will see that on all the artefacts spread out and scattered over them are stamps particular to the Creator of All Things, and on all creatures are seals special to the Maker of All Things, and on the levels of being written on the pages of night and day, and summer and winter, all published by the pen of power, are inimitable, illustrious signatures of an All-Glorious Maker, an All-Beauteous Creator. We shall now mention a few of those stamps, seals, and signatures by way of example:

For example, of the innumerable stamps, consider this one out of many placed on life: "He makes everything out of one thing and makes one thing out of everything." For He makes the innumerable members and systems of animals out of a fluid and also out of simple water which is drunk. Thus, to make one thing everything is surely the work of One possessing Absolute Power. And One Who with perfect order transforms into a particular body numerous substances from the innumerable foods eaten, whether plant or animal, and weaves from them a particular skin, and makes from them

³¹ Suyuti, *al-Durr al-Manthur*, v, 173-4.

simple members, is surely One Powerful over All Things and One Knowing of All Things. Indeed, the Creator of Life and Death administers life through His wisdom in this workshop of the world through a law issuing from His command so miraculous that only one Who holds the whole universe in the grasp of His power could apply that law and enforce it.

Thus, if your mind is not extinguished and your heart not blind, you will understand that what makes one thing with perfect ease and order, and makes everything one thing skilfully with perfect balance and order, is a stamp particular to the Maker of everything and a seal special to the Creator of All Things. For example, if you see that together with weaving a hundred rolls of broadcloth and various other cloths like silk or cambric from a single ounce of cotton, a wonder-worker makes many foods from it like helva and pastries, then you see that he takes a handful of iron and stone, honey and butter, water and earth, and makes some fine gold, you would certainly pronounce him to possess unique art, for all the elements of the earth are subjugated to his command and all the substances of the earth subject to his word. Indeed, the manifestation of power and wisdom in life is a thousand times more wondrous than this example.

Thus, one stamp on life out of many.

THIRD FLASH

Look at the living creatures revolving in this flowing universe, in this flood of beings! You will see that on each are many seals placed by the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One. One of them is this: a living creature, for example a human being, is quite simply a miniature sample of the universe, a fruit of the tree of creation, and a seed of the world, for he comprises samples of most of the realms of beings in the world. It is as if the animate being is a drop filtered from the universe in an extremely fine measure. So to create it and be its Sustainer, one has to hold the whole universe in the grasp of one's power.

Thus, if your mind is not submerged in delusions you will understand that to make a word of power, for example, a honey-bee, a minute index of most things, and to write in one page, for example in man, most of the matters in this book of the universe, and to include in one point, for example in a tiny fig seed, the programme of the mighty fig-tree, and to display in a single letter, for example in the human heart, the works of all the Divine Names manifested in the pages of the macrocosm which encompass it, and to make written in the human faculty of memory, which is situated in a place the size of a lentil, writings enough to fill a library, and to include in that tiny faculty a detailed index of all events in the cosmos –to do all things is most certainly a stamp particular to the Creator of All Things, the Glorious Sustainer of the universe.

Thus, if one seal out of many dominical seals on living beings displays its light and makes read its signs thus, if you were able to see and consider all those seals at once, would you not declare: “Glory be to Him Who is concealed in the intensity of His manifestation!”?

FOURTH FLASH

Look carefully at the multicoloured, multifarious beings swimming in the seas of the heavens and scattered over the face of the earth! You will see that on each are inimitable signatures of the Pre-Eternal Sun. Just as the stamps on life and seals on living beings are apparent and we saw one or two of them, so are there such signatures on the giving of life. Since comparisons bring profound meanings closer to the understanding, we shall demonstrate this truth with a comparison.

For example, from the planets to droplets of water, to fragments of glass and sparkling snow-flakes, a signature from the sun’s image and reflection, a luminous work particular to the sun, is apparent. If you do not accept the tiny suns apparent in those innumerable things to be the manifestation of the sun’s reflection, you have to accept the actual existence of a true, natural sun in every droplet and fragment of glass facing the light, and in every transparent speck before it, thus descending to the depths of lunacy.

In just the same way, there is such a signature on all living beings in regard to the giving of life from among the luminous manifestations of the Pre-Eternal Sun, that supposing all causes were gathered together and had the power to act and possessed will, they still could not imitate that signature. For living beings, all miracles of Divine power, are points of focus of the Divine Names, which are like the rays of the Pre-Eternal Sun. If that strange inscription of art, that wondrous ordering of wisdom, that manifestation of the mystery of Oneness on living beings is not ascribed to the Single and Eternally Besought One, it necessitates accepting that concealed within each living creature, and even in a fly or a flower, is an infinite creative power, a knowledge encompassing all things, an absolute will with which to govern the universe, and even the eternal attributes particular to the Necessarily Existent One, thus falling to the most ludicrous degree of misguidance and superstition. Quite simply, it necessitates attributing Divinity to each particle of the flower or fly. For a state has been given to those particles, especially if they are in seeds, whereby they look to the living being of which they are a part, and take up a position in accordance with its systems and ordering. The particle is even in a position to look to all members of the species to which its living being belongs, or to fly with wings in order to be planted in a place suitable to the continuation of its species and to plant the species’ flag. In fact, it holds a position whereby that living being’s transactions with all other beings may be continued, and its relations with them connected with sustenance. For it is in need of all of them.

Thus, if that particle is not an official of a Possessor of Absolute Power, and if its relation with Him is severed, it has to be ascribed an eye which sees all things and a consciousness which encompasses all things.

In Short: If the miniature suns and various colours in droplets of water and fragments of glass are not attributed to the sun's reflection and the manifestation of its reflection, one has to accept the existence of innumerable suns in place of the one sun; it necessitates accepting an utterly impossible superstition. In exactly the same way, if everything is not attributed to the Absolutely Powerful One, it necessitates accepting infinite gods instead of the Single God; indeed, gods to the number of particles in existence, thus falling to the degree of accepting a hundredfold impossibility.

To Sum Up: From every particle three windows open up onto the light of unity and necessary existence of the Pre-Eternal Sun:

First Window: A soldier has a relation with each of the spheres of the military, that is, with his squad, his company, his battalion, his regiment, his division, and the army, and duties in accordance with those relations, and actions in accordance with the duties and army regulations. Particles have similar relations.

For example, a lifeless particle in the pupil of your eye has relations with your eye, your head, your body, your powers of reproduction, and attraction and repulsion, with your veins and arteries, and motor and sensory nerves, and with the rest of the human race, and it has duties in relation to each. This shows self-evidently to eyes that are not blind that it is the work of art and charged official of the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One, and is under his regulation.

Second Window: All molecules of air may visit all flowers and fruits. They may also enter them and work within them. If they are not the subjugated officials of an Absolutely Powerful One Who sees and knows all things, those wandering molecules would have to know all the systems and structures of the fruits and flowers and their art, and the tailoring of the all-different forms which clothe them with its perfect and all-embracing art. Thus those particles all display as clearly as the sun the rays of a light of Divine unity. You may compare light with air, and earth with water.

In any event, the original sources of things are these four substances. According to modern science they are hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen, the components of the former elements.

Third Window: You fill a flower-pot with some earth, which is composed of particles and is the means of growth of any flowering or fruit-bearing plant, then put some seeds in it. The same as the seed of animals does not differ, but is a fluid, the seeds of all the flowering and fruit-bearing plants in the world do not differ from one another. Being composed of

carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, and oxygen, they only differ by virtue of the programme of their progenitors, deposited in them through the immaterial writing of the pen of Divine Determining.

Thus, if we put these seeds in turn in the flower-pot, we believe as though it has occurred that each plant will appear together with its wonderful forms and shapes and parts. If those particles are not officials under the orders of one who knows all the states and conditions of everything, is capable of giving everything a being suitable to it and everything necessary for it, and to whose power everything is subjugated with utterly facility, every particle of the earth would then have to contain immaterial factories and printing-presses to the number of all the flowering and fruit-bearing plants, so that it could be the source of all those various and different beings whose parts, members, and forms are all distant and different from one another. It is otherwise necessary to attribute to all those beings comprehensive knowledge and a power capable of forming them, so that they could be the means of the above.

That is to say, if the connection with Almighty God is severed, it becomes necessary to accept gods to the number of particles of earth, and this is an impossible superstition compounded a thousand times over. However, when they are officials, it becomes extremely easy. Just as, in his king's name and through his power, a common soldier of a mighty king can make a whole country migrate, or join two seas, or take another king prisoner, so at the command of the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, a fly did away with Nimrod, and an ant destroyed Pharaoh's palace, razing it to the ground, and a fig-seed bears the load of a fig-tree.

Moreover, in all particles are two further truthful witnesses to the Maker's necessary existence and unity. One is that together with their absolute impotence, they all perform most important and various duties. The other is that despite their lifelessness, they all conform to the universal order and systems, thus displaying a universal consciousness. That is to say, through the tongue of its impotence each particle testifies to the necessary existence of the Absolutely Powerful One, and through its conforming to the order in the world, each testifies to His unity.

Just as every particle testifies in two ways to His being the Necessarily Existent One of Unity, so too on every living being are two signs that He is the Single and Eternally Besought One.

Yes, on all living beings are a seal of Divine oneness and a stamp of 'eternal besoughtness.' For each displays together in the mirror of its being most of the Divine Names, the manifestations of which are apparent in the universe. Quite simply, like a point of focus, each displays the manifestation of the Greatest Name of Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One. Thus, since it

shows a sort of shadow of the oneness of the Divine Essence under the veil of the Name of Giver of Life, it bears a stamp of Divine oneness. And since the living being is like a miniature sample of the universe and a fruit of the tree of creation, it shows a seal of Divine eternal besoughtness, which conveys altogether with ease to the tiny sphere of its life its needs, which are as many as the universe. That is to say, this shows it has a Sustainer Whose regard and favour take the place of all things. Everything in existence cannot take the place of His regard.

Furthermore, this situation shows that its Sustainer is in need of nothing, nor does anything diminish His treasury, and nor is anything at all difficult for His power. This, then, is a sort of seal of 'eternal besoughtness.'

Thus, on every living being are a seal of Divine oneness and stamp of eternal besoughtness. Yes, through the tongue of its life, every living being recites:

*Say, He is God, the One, * The Eternally Besought.*³²

In addition to these two seals are several more important 'windows', but since they have been explained in detail in other places, our discussion here has been brief.

Seeing that each particle in existence at once opens up three windows and two openings onto the unity of the Necessarily Existent, and life too opens two doors, you can compare how all the levels of beings from particles to the sun spread the light of knowledge of the All-Glorious One.

Thus, you can understand from this the degrees of progress in knowledge of God, and the levels of awareness of His presence.

FIFTH FLASH

If a book is hand-written and in the form of a letter, a single pen is sufficient to write it, while if it is printed, pens, that is, pieces of print, are necessary to the number of the book's letters so that it can be printed and come into existence. If most of the book is written in an extremely fine script within some of its letters, like Sura Ya. Sin. being written within the letters Ya. Sin., then for it to be printed all the small pieces of print are necessary for those single letters.

Similarly, if you say the book of the universe is the writing of the pen of power of the Eternally Besought One and the missive of the Single and Unique One, you travel a reasonable road so easy as to be necessary. But if you attribute it to nature and causes, you travel a road so difficult as to be impossible, and so full of superstition and delusion as to be unacceptable. For then there would have to be present in every bit of earth and every drop

³² Qur'an, 112:1-2.

of water and every piece of air millions of metal printing-presses and innumerable immaterial factories, which could fashion and form the countless numbers of flowering and fruit-bearing plants. Otherwise one has to accept that they possess all-encompassing knowledge and power over all things so that they could be the true source of those creatures. For every piece of earth, water, and air can be the source of most plants. However, plants, whether flowering or fruit-bearing, are formed in so well-ordered and balanced a fashion, and are so distinctive and different from one another, that a different immaterial factory or different printing-press would be necessary for each. That means, if nature ceases being a pattern and becomes the source, it necessitates that everything contains the machines to make everything else. Nature-worship is therefore based on an idea so superstitious that even those who subscribe to it are ashamed of it. See the infinitely delirious unreason of the misguided, who suppose themselves to be intelligent, and take a lesson!

In Short: All the letters of a book describe themselves to the extent of a letter and point to their own existence in one way, while they describe their writer with ten words and show him in many ways. For example: “The one who wrote me has fine handwriting. His pen is red, and so on.” In just the same way, all the letters of the mighty book of the universe point to themselves to the extent of their own size and physical beings, but describe the Names of the Pre-Eternal Inscraper like odes, and testify to the One they signify and point to His Names with fingers to the number of their attributes. That means that even if one denies both oneself and the universe like the foolish Sophists, one still should not deny the All-Glorious Maker.

SIXTH FLASH

Just as the All-Glorious Creator has placed on the heads of all His beings and on the foreheads of all His creatures the seals of His oneness, some of which you have seen in the previous Flashes, so in brilliant fashion has He placed many stamps of oneness on all species and numerous seals of unity on all universals, as well as the various stamps of unity on the world as a whole. Of those many seals and stamps, we shall point out one on the page of the face of the earth in the springtime. It is like this:

The Pre-Eternal Inscraper’s raising to life in the spring and summer at least three hundred thousand species of plants and animals with complete distinction and differentiation and total order and separation amid infinite intermingling and confusion, is a stamp of Divine unity as clear and brilliant as the spring itself. Yes, anyone with an iota of consciousness will understand that to create with perfect order while raising to life of the dead earth in the spring, three hundred thousand samples of the resurrection of the dead, and to write without fault, error, mistake or deficiency, in most well-balanced, well-proportioned, well-ordered, and perfect fashion the individual

members of three hundred thousand different species one within the other on the face of the earth, is a seal particular to an All-Glorious One, an All-Powerful One of Perfection, an All-Wise One of Beauty, possessing infinite power, all-encompassing knowledge, and a will capable of governing the whole universe. The All-Wise Qur'an decrees:

*So look to the signs of God's Mercy, how He raises to life the earth after its death; He it is Who will raise the dead to life, for He is Powerful over all things.*³³

Yes, it is surely easy for the Creative Power which, within a few days, demonstrates examples of three hundred thousand resurrections in raising the earth to life, to raise men to life. For example, could it be said to a Displayer of Miracles Who at a sign will remove the mountains of Gelincik and Sÿbhan: "Are you able to remove from this valley this huge rock which is blocking our path?" Similarly, can it be said in a way that infers doubt to an All-Wise and Powerful One, an All-Generous and Compassionate One, Who created the sky and the mountains and the earth in six days and continuously fills and empties them: "Can you remove from us this layer of earth which was prepared and laid out in eternity and is blocking our way to your banquet? Can you level the earth and let us pass on?"

You observed a seal of Divine unity on the face of the earth in the summertime. Now look! A stamp of unity is clearly obvious on the vast, wise and perspicacious disposals of the spring on the face of the earth. For that activity is on an absolutely vast scale, and the vastness is together with an absolute speed, and that speed is together with an absolute munificence, and together with these an absolute order and perfect beauty of art and exquisiteness of creation are apparent. These form a seal which could belong only to one possessing infinite knowledge and boundless power. Yes, we see that on the earth within an absolute extensiveness are a creation, disposal, and activity which are on an absolutely vast scale. And these are occurring within that vast scope with absolute speed. And together with that speed and vast scope an absolute munificence is apparent in the multiplication of individual beings. And together with that munificence, vast scope, and speed, an absolute ease is apparent. And to create the absolute order and exceptional beauty of art to be seen in all species and individuals, and the perfect differentiation within infinite intermingling, and the valuable works within extreme abundance, and the complete correspondence on an extensive scale, and the artistic marvels with the greatest ease, and to demonstrate a wondrous art and miraculous activity at one moment, everywhere, in the same fashion, in every individual – together with that munificence, ease, speed, and vast scope, is certainly and without doubt the stamp of One Who although He is

³³ Qur'an, 30:50.

nowhere is all-present and all-seeing everywhere. Nothing is hidden from Him, nor is anything difficult for him. Particles and stars are equal in relation to His power.

For example, in a garden of that All-Glorious and Compassionate One's munificence, I counted the bunches hanging from a grape-vine of the thickness of two fingers, which I saw to be like one little pip among the bunches of His miracles: there were one hundred and fifty-five. I counted the grapes in one bunch: there were around one hundred and twenty. I thought: if this vine was a tap from which flowed honeyed water and it produced water continuously, it would only just be enough for the bunches which, in the face of this heat, suckle those hundreds of little pumps of the sherbet of mercy. However, it only occasionally obtains a little moisture. The One Who does this, then, must surely be powerful over all things. *Glory be to Him at Whose art minds are bewildered!*

SEVENTH FLASH

Look! With little difficulty you can see the seals of the Single, Eternally Besought One on the page of the earth, so raise your head, open your eyes, and look too at the great book of the universe. You will see that on it as a whole a stamp of unity is read out which is as clear as it is big. For like the components of a factory or members of a palace or town, these beings support one another, stretch out their hands to assist one another, and answer the needs and requests of one another, saying: "Here I am, at your service!" Assisting one another, they work together in order. Joining efforts, they serve animate beings. Co-operating and turned a single goal, they obey an All-Wise Disposer. They conform to a rule of mutual assistance which is in force from the sun and moon, night and day, and winter and summer, to plants coming to the assistance of hungry and needy animals, and animals hastening to the assistance of weak, noble men, and even nutritious substances flying to assist delicate, weak infants and fruits, and particles of food passing to the assistance of the cells of the body. They show to anyone who is not altogether blind that they are acting through the strength of a single, most generous Nurturer, and at the command of a single most wise Disposer.

Thus, on the one hand this mutual support and assistance, this answering one another's needs, this mutual embracing, this subjugation, this order, testify decisively that beings are administered and organized by a single Disposer and are being impelled and directed by a single Nurturer. And on the other hand, this perfect grace within the universal wisdom to be seen plainly in the art of things; and the all-embracing mercy which shines within the providence; and the sustenance spread over that mercy and scattered so as to answer the needs of all living beings needy for sustenance; –these form a stamp of Divine unity so brilliant that anyone whose mind is not altogether

extinguished will understand it and anyone who is not altogether blind will see it.

Yes, a veil of wisdom demonstrating intention, consciousness, and will, has covered the whole universe, and upon that veil of wisdom has been spread a veil of grace and favour exhibiting beneficence, adornment, embellishment, and benevolence; and over that adorned veil of favour a garment of mercy displaying flashes of making known and loved, of bestowal and the granting of gifts has enveloped the universe; and spread over that illuminated veil of universal mercy is a table of general provisions showing kindness and bestowal and benevolence and perfect compassion and fine nurturing and dominical favour.

Yes, all beings from particles to suns, whether individuals or species, or large or small, have been clothed in a magnificent shirt of wisdom embroidered with fruits and aims, benefits and purposes. And over the wisdom-displaying shirt, a garment of favour embroidered with flowers of grace and beneficence has been cut out in accordance with the stature of things; and over that ornamented garment of favour, a general table of sustenance has been set up, lit up with flashes of love, bestowal, affection, and the granting of gifts, to which the decorations of mercy have been attached, and which, together with bestowing those illuminated and jewel-encrusted decorations, is sufficient for all the groups of living beings on the face of the earth, and meets all their needs. Thus, this matter points to an All-Glorious Provider Who is All-Wise, All-Generous, and All-Compassionate, and shows Him as clearly as the sun.

Is that so? Is everything in need of sustenance?

Yes, like individual beings are in need of sustenance and all the necessities to continue their lives, we see that all the beings in the world, and especially living beings, whether universal or particular, wholes or parts, have many desires and needs, material and otherwise, for their existence, their lives, and the continuation of their lives. But their wants and needs are for such things that their hands cannot reach the least of them and their power is insufficient for the smallest of them. Yet, we see that all their wishes and material and immaterial sustenance is given to them “From where he could not imagine,”³⁴ from un hoped for places, with perfect order, at the appropriate time, in a suitable fashion, with perfect wisdom. And so, does this want and need of creatures and this manner of unseen help and assistance not show an All-Wise and Glorious Nurturer, an All-Compassionate Beauteous Disposer?

³⁴ Qur’an, 65:3.

EIGHTH FLASH

Any sort of seed sown in a field shows that the field must be at the disposal of the seed's owner, and that the seed too is under the disposal of the one who has control of the field. Similarly, the arable field of beings known as the elements and their universality and comprehensiveness as well as their sameness and uncomplex nature, and the plants and animals –these fruits of mercy, miracles of power, and words of wisdom known as creatures– and their spreading to most places and settling everywhere as well as their being similar and resembling one another, show that they are under the disposal of a single Miracle-Displaying Maker, and in such a way that it is as if every flower, fruit, and animal is a seal, stamp, and signature of its Maker. Wherever they are found, each says through the tongue of disposition: “Whose-ever seal I am, the place I am found is also of his making. Whose-ever stamp I am, this place is a missive of His. Whose-ever signature I am, this land too is of his weaving.” That means, to be Sustainer of the least creature is particular to the One Who holds all the elements in the grasp of His power. Anyone who is not blind can see that to regulate and govern the simplest animal is particular to the One Who has all beings in the grasp of His dominicality.

Indeed, through the tongue of similarity to other individuals, all individual beings say: “Only one who owns my species can be my owner. It cannot be otherwise.” And through the tongue of spreading over the face of the earth together with other species, each species says: “Only one who owns the whole face of the earth can be our owner. It cannot be otherwise.” And through the tongue of being bound to the sun and other planets and mutually supportive with the skies, the earth says: “Only one who is owner of the whole universe can be my owner. It cannot be otherwise.” Yes, supposing someone were to say to a conscious apple: “You are my work of art.” Through the tongue of disposition, the apple would reply: “Be silent! If you are capable of fashioning all the other apples on the earth; indeed, if you can have disposal over all my fellows, the other fruit-bearing trees, spread over the earth, and all the gifts of the Most Merciful proceeding from the treasury of mercy in boatloads, then you can claim to be my Sustainer.” The apple would say that and aim a slap at that foolish person.

NINTH FLASH

We have pointed out some of the seals, stamps, and signatures on particulars and parts, universals and wholes, on the world as a whole, and on life, living beings, and raising to life. Now, we shall indicate one of the countless stamps on species.

Since the countless fruits of a fruit-bearing tree are administered from one centre, in accordance with one law and a single way of raising, the difficulty, hardship, and expense are transformed into ease. It is so easy the numerous

fruits raised become equal to a single fruit. That means in regard to quantity, multiplicity and numerous centres necessitate the difficulty, expense, and equipment of the whole tree for a single fruit. The difference is only in regard to quality. Like all the factories required for the whole army are necessary to manufacture all the military equipment necessary for a single soldier. That is to say, if the matter passes from unity to multiplicity, in respect of quantity the difficulties increase to the number of individuals. Thus, the extraordinary ease to be seen clearly in all species is the result of the ease and facility arising from unity.

In Short: The conformity and similarity in basic members between all the individuals of a species, and all the species of a genus, prove that they are the works of a single Maker, because the unity of the pen and oneness of the seal requires this. Similarly, the observable absolute ease and lack of difficulty require –indeed, necessitate– that they are the works of One Maker. Otherwise difficulties rising to the degree of impossibility would doom the genus and the species to non-existence.

To Conclude: If all things are ascribed to Almighty God, they become as easy as a single thing, while if they are attributed to causes, they become as difficult as everything. Since it is thus, the extraordinary profusion observed in the universe and the boundless abundance before our eyes display a stamp of unity like the sun. If these fruits which we obtain in such plenty were not the property of the Single One of Unity, we would not have a single pomegranate to eat, even if we gave the whole world for it.

TENTH FLASH

Just as life, which displays a manifestation of Divine beauty, is a proof of Divine oneness, and a sort of manifestation of unity, death too, which displays the manifestation of Divine glory, is a proof of Divine unity.

For example, *And God's is the highest similitude*, by showing the sun's light and reflection, the bubbles on a wide flowing river which sparkle in the sun and transparent objects which glisten on the face of the earth testify to the sun. On those tribes of bubbles and transparent objects disappearing, the continued magnificent manifestation of the sun and the uninterrupted and constant display of its light on the successive groups and tribes of bubbles and transparent objects which follow on after them, testify decisively that the little images of the sun and the lights and flashes which appear and sparkle, flare up and die away, and are changed and renewed, are the manifestations of an enduring, perpetual, elevated, single Sun whose manifestation is undying. That is to say, just as through their appearance and becoming visible, the shining droplets demonstrate the sun's existence, so with their disappearance and extinction, they demonstrate its continuation, permanence, and unity.

In exactly the same way, through their existence and lives these flowing beings testify to the necessary existence and oneness of the Necessarily Existent One, and with their deaths and disappearance, they testify to the His pre-eternity, everlastingness, and unity. Yes, the beautiful creatures and fine beings which are renewed and restored within the decline and disappearance that occur through the alternation of night and day, winter and summer, and the centuries and ages, surely point to the existence, continuance, and unity of an elevated, eternal possessor of continually manifested beauty. While the deaths and disappearance of those beings together with their apparent and lowly causes demonstrate that the causes are nothing but a mere veil. This situation proves decisively that these arts, these inscriptions, these manifestations, are the constantly renewed arts, the changing inscriptions, the moving mirrors of an All-Beauteous One of Glory, all of Whose Names are sacred and beautiful; that they are His seals which follow on one after the other, and His stamps that are changed with wisdom.

In Short: The mighty book of the universe both teaches us the creational signs concerning Divine existence and unity, and it testifies to all the attributes of perfection, beauty, and glory of that All-Glorious One. And they prove the perfection of the Divine Essence faultlessly and without defect. For it is obvious that perfection in a work points to the perfection of the act which is the source and origin of the work. And the perfection of the act points to the perfection of the name, and the perfection of the name, to the perfection of the attribute, and perfection of the attribute to the perfection of the essential qualities, and the perfection of the qualities point necessarily and self-evidently to the perfection of the essence possessing those qualities.

For example, the perfect inscriptions and adornments of a faultless palace indicate the perfection of a master builder's acts behind them. And the perfection of the acts shows the perfection of that active master's titles and names, which demonstrate his rank. And the perfection of the names and titles show the perfection of the other attributes qualifying the master builder's art. And the perfection of the art and attributes show the perfection of the abilities and essential capacity of that craftsman, which are called the essential qualities. And the perfection of those essential qualities and abilities show the perfection of the master's essential nature.

In exactly the same way, the faultless works observed in the world, which manifest the meaning of "Do you see any flaw?",³⁵ this art in the well-ordered beings of the universe, point observedly to the perfect acts of an active possessor of power. And those perfect acts point clearly to the perfect Names of a Glorious Agent. And that perfection necessarily points to and testifies to the perfect attributes of the Beauteous One signified by the

³⁵ Qur'an, 67:3.

Names. And certainly those perfect attributes point and testify to the perfection of the Perfect One qualified by the attributes. And those perfect qualities point with such absolute certainty to the perfect Essence of the One possessing the qualities that they indicate that all the sorts of perfection to be seen in the whole universe are but signs of His perfections, hints of His Glory, and allusions to His beauty, and pale, weak shadows in relation to His perfection.

**THE ELEVENTH FLASH,
WHICH HAS THE STRENGTH OF SUNS**

As is defined in the Nineteenth Word, our master Muhammad the Trustworthy (Peace and blessings be upon him) is the supreme sign of the mighty Book of the Universe and the Greatest Name of that mighty Qur'an, the seed of the tree of the universe and its most luminous fruit, the sun of the palace of the world and the radiant moon of the world of Islam, the herald of the sovereignty of Divine dominicality, and the wise discloser of the talisman of the universe, who flies in the levels of reality with the wings of Messengership, which take under their shade all the prophets, and the wings of Islam, which take under their protection all the world of Islam; who took behind him all the prophets and messengers, all the saints and veracious ones, all the purified and the scholars, and demonstrated Divine unity with all his strength and opened up the way to Divine oneness; has any doubt or suspicion, then, the power to conceal or obscure the belief in God which he demonstrated, or the Divine unity which he proved? Since in the Nineteenth Word and Nineteenth Letter we have defined and described briefly and to a small degree in Fourteen Droplets and Nineteen Signs from the water of life of that Clear Proof's knowledge that miracle-displaying Being together with his various miracles, we shall here content ourselves with this indication, and conclude with a benediction for him:

O God! Grant blessings to the one who demonstrated Your necessary existence and unity, and testified to Your glory and beauty and perfection; the verified and veracious witness, the verifying articulate proof; the lord of the prophets and messengers, the bearer of the mystery of their consensus, affirmation, and miracles; the leader of the saints and veracious ones, the holder of the mystery of their accord, verifications, and wonder-working; the one with evident miracles, clear marvels, and decisive evidences which corroborated and affirmed him; who displayed exalted purity in his self, elevated morals in his duty, and lofty qualities in his Shari'a, perfect and free of all contradiction, to whom according to the consensus of the revealed and the Revealer and the one who revealed it to him, dominical reve

lation descended; the traveller through the Worlds of the Unseen and of the Inner Dimensions of Things; the observer of spirits, who conversed with the angels; the sample of the perfections of the universe, in regard to both individuals, and species, and realms of beings; the most luminous of the fruits of the tree of creation; the lamp of truth; the proof of reality; the embodiment of mercy; the exemplification of love; the discloser of the talisman of the universe; the herald of the sovereignty of dominicality; the sign that the elevatedness of his collective personality was before the eyes of the world's Creator at the creation of the universe; the possessor of a Shari'a that indicates through the breadth of its principles and strength that it is the order of the Orderer of the World, drawn up by the Creator of the Universe.

Yes, the One Who ordered the universe with this perfect and total order is He Who ordered this religion with its fine and beautiful order, our master, we are the community of the sons of Adam, our guide to belief, we are the community of believers, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Mutallib, Upon him be the most perfect blessings and most complete peace as long as the heavens and earth subsist, for he is the veracious and verified witness who summoned the leaders of witnesses and has instructed the branches of mankind throughout the centuries and all the regions of the world in elevated fashion with all his strength, with complete seriousness and utter steadfastness, and with the power of his certainty and perfect belief, testifying:

"I testify that there is no god but God, the One, He has no partner."

**THE TWELFTH FLASH,
WHICH HAS THE STRENGTH OF SUNS**

This Twelfth Flash of the Twenty-Second Word is such an ocean of truths that all the previous twenty-two Words form only twenty-two drops of it, and it is a source of such lights that they form only twenty-two flashes of that Sun. Yes, all the previous twenty-two Words are flashes of the stars of the verses shining in the skies of the Qur'an; all are single droplets from the river of a verse flowing from that ocean of discernment distinguishing truth and falsehood; each is but one pearl from a single of its verses, all of which are chests of jewels in the sublime treasury of God's Book. Thus, the Word of God, which is in small part defined in the Fourteenth Droplet of the Nineteenth Word, has been revealed from the Greatest Name, the Sublime

Throne, and the greatest manifestation of dominicality, and it repeatedly states with all its strength within a breadth and elevatedness that binds pre-eternity to post-eternity and ties the ground to the Divine Throne, and with the certainty of all its verses: *There is no god but God!*; it calls the whole universe to witness and makes it testify. Yes, altogether the world hymns: *There is no god but God!*

If you look at the Qur'an with the eyes of a sound heart, you will see that its six aspects are so brilliant and transparent that no darkness, no misguidance, no doubt or suspicion, no trickery could enter it or find a fissure through which to enter and violate its purity. For above it is the stamp of miraculousness; beneath it, proof and evidence; behind it, its point of support, pure dominical revelation; before it, the happiness of this world and the next; on its right, questioning the reason and ensuring its confirmation; on its left, calling on the conscience to witness and securing its submission; within it is self-evidently the pure guidance of the Most Merciful; its outside observedly consists of the lights of belief; and its fruits, with all certainty the purified and veracious scholars and saints, who are adorned with all the human perfections and attainments. If you fasten your ear to the breast of that tongue of the Unseen, you will hear from afar a most familiar and convincing, an infinitely serious and elevated heavenly voice equipped with proof which repeats "*There is no god but God.*" It states this so certainly it is at the degree of 'absolute certainty', and illuminates you with a 'knowledge of certainty' resembling 'vision of certainty.'

In Short: Both God's Most Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him) and the Most Decisive Criterion of Truth and Falsehood were suns. One, the tongue of the Manifest World, pointing with the fingers of Islam and Messengership and confirmed by all the prophets and purified ones supported by a thousand miracles, demonstrated this truth with all his strength.

And the other, like the tongue of the World of the Unseen, indicating with the fingers of right and guidance under the confirmation of all the creational signs in the universe within forty aspects of miraculousness, demonstrates the same truth with all seriousness. Is that truth then not clearer than the sun and more brilliant than sunlight?

Oh, obdurate little man sunk in misguidance!³⁶ How can you oppose these suns with the lamp of your head, dimmer than a fire-fly? How can you show disdain for them? Are you trying to extinguish them by puffing? Pooh to your denying mind! How can you deny the words and claims which those two tongues of the Manifest and Unseen Worlds speak in the

³⁶ This is addressing someone who was trying to abolish the Qur'an.

name of the Sustainer of all the worlds and Owner of the universe; which they speak on His behalf? Oh, you wretch, lower and more impotent than a fly! Who are you that you attempt to give the lie to the universe's Glorious Owner?

Conclusion

O friend, whose mind is alert and heart, attentive! If you have understood this Twenty-Second Word from the beginning up to here, take the twelve Flashes together in your hand, and finding a lamp of truth as powerful as a thousand electric lamps, adhere to the below-mentioned verses of the Qur'an. Mount the steed of Divine assistance, ascend to the heavens of truth, rise to the Throne of Divine knowledge. Declare:

*I testify that there is no god but You, You are One, You have no partner!*³⁷

And, saying,

*I testify that there is no god but God, He is One, He has no partner; His is the dominion and His is the praise; He gives life and gives death, and He is ever-living and dies not; in His hand is all good, and He is powerful over all things,*³⁸

proclaim His unity over the heads of all the beings in the universe in this mighty mosque of the world.

*Glory be to You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*³⁹

*O our Sustainer! Do not call us to task if we forget or fall into error. * Our Sustainer! Lay not a burden on us like that which you laid on those before us; * Our Sustainer! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have the strength to bear. * Blot out our sins. And grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Protector; help us against those who stand*

³⁷ Bukhari, i, 214; Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, i, 272; iii, 136, 227, 229.

³⁸ Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunna*, v, 53, 75, 132; Ibn Hajar, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, iv, 86-115; x, 85, 114.

³⁹ Qur'an, 2:32.

*against faith.⁴⁰ * Our Sustainer! Let not our hearts deviate now after You have guided us, but grant us mercy from Your presence; for You are the Granter of bounties without measure. * Our Sustainer! You are He that will gather mankind together against a Day about which there is no doubt; for God never fails in His promise.⁴¹*

O God! Grant blessings and peace to the one whom You sent as a Mercy to all the worlds, and to all his Family and Companions. And have mercy of us and have mercy on his community, through Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful. Amen.

And the close of their prayer will be: Praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds!⁴²

⁴⁰ Qur'an, 2:286.

⁴¹ Qur'an, 3:8-9.

⁴² Qur'an, 10:10.

The Twenty-Third Word

[This Word contains Two Chapters]

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

*Indeed, We have created man on the most excellent of patterns, * Then sent him down to the lowest of the low, * Except those who believe and do good deeds.¹*

First Chapter

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

FIRST POINT

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

For example: among man's arts, the value of the materials used and that of the art are entirely different. Sometimes they are equal, sometimes the material is more valuable, and sometimes it happens that five *liras*' worth of art is to be found in material like iron worth five *kurush*. Sometimes, even, an antique work of art is worth a million while the material of which it is composed is not worth five *kurush*. If such a work of art is taken to the

¹ Qur'an, 95:4-6.

antiques market and ascribed to a brilliant and accomplished artist of former times, and announced mentioning the artist and that art, it may be sold for a million *liras*.² Whereas if it is taken to the scrap-dealers, the only price received will be for the five kurush's worth of iron.

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

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

SECOND POINT

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

*God is the Protector of those who believe; He leads them out of darkness into light.*³

² See, page 295, footnote 19.

³ Qur'an, 2:257.

It was like this:

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

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

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

and I awoke from my vision.

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

Thus, one who relies on his ego, who falls into the darkness of heedlessness and is afflicted with the blackness of misguidance resembles my first state in the vision, which, like with the pocket-torch and due to deficient and misguided knowledge, saw the past in the form a huge grave amid darkness imbued with non-existence. It showed the future to be a stormy and desolate

wasteland governed by coincidence, and events and beings, which are all submissive officials of One All-Wise and All-Compassionate to be monsters. Such a person as though manifests the verse,

*And those who reject belief, their protectors are the evil ones; they lead them out of light into darkness.*⁴

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

*God is the light of the heavens and the earth.*⁵

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

THIRD POINT

Belief is both light and strength. Yes, one who acquires true belief may challenge the whole universe and be saved from the pressure of events in accordance with the strength of his belief. Saying, "I place my trust in God," he travels through the mountainous waves of events in the ship of life in complete safety. He entrusts all his burdens to the hand of power of the Absolutely Powerful One, voyages through the world in ease, then takes his rest in the Intermediate Realm. Later he may fly up to Paradise in order to enter eternal happiness. Otherwise, if he does not rely on God, rather than flying, the burdens of the world will drag him down to the lowest of the low. That is to say, belief necessitates affirmation of Divine unity, affirmation of Divine unity necessitates submission to God, submission to God necessitates reliance on God, and reliance on God necessarily leads to happiness in this

⁴ Qur'an, 2:257.

⁵ Qur'an, 24:35.

world and the next. But do not misunderstand this, reliance on God is not to reject causes altogether; it is rather to know that causes are a veil to the hand of power and have recourse to them. Knowing that attempting causes is a sort of active prayer, it is to seek the effects only from Almighty God, recognize that the results are from Him alone, and to be thankful to Him.

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

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

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

FOURTH POINT

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

Out of thousands of proofs of this matter, the differences in the ways animals and man come into the world are a clear indication and decisive proof.

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

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

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

Furthermore, since man is subject to endless tribulations and afflicted with innumerable enemies despite his boundless impotence, and suffers from endless needs and has innumerable desires despite his boundless poverty, after belief, his fundamental innate duty is supplication. As for supplication, it is the basis of worship of God and servitude to Him. In order to secure a desire or wish he cannot obtain, a child will either cry or ask for it, that is, he will supplicate through the tongue of his impotence either actively or verbally, and will be successful in securing it. In the same way, man is like a delicate, petted child in the world of living creatures. He has to either weep at the Court of the Most Merciful and Compassionate One through his

weakness and impotence, or supplicate through his poverty and need, so that the things he wants may be made subject to him, or he may offer thanks for their being made so. Otherwise like a silly child who creates a fuss over a fly, saying: “With my own strength I subjugate things it is not possible to subjugate and things a thousand times more powerful, and I make them obey me through my own ideas and measures,” he displays ingratitude for the bounties. And just as this is contrary to man’s innate nature, so he makes himself deserving of severe punishment.

FIFTH POINT

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

*Say: My Sustainer would not concern Himself with you but for your supplication,*⁶

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

*Call upon Me and I will answer you.*⁷

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

The Answer: To answer is one thing, to accept is something quite different. Every supplication is answered, but its being accepted and exactly what was sought being given is dependent on Almighty God’s wisdom. For example, if a sick child calls the doctor, saying: “Doctor! Doctor!”, and he replies: “Here I am, what do you want?”, and the child says: “Give me that medicine!”, the doctor will either give him exactly what he asks for or something better and more beneficial for him. Or knowing that medicine is harmful for his illness, he will give him nothing.

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

Also, supplication is a form of worship and recognition of man’s servitude to God. The fruits of this pertain to the hereafter. The aims pertaining to this world are the times of a particular sort of supplication and worship. For example, the prayers and supplications for rain are a form of worship.

⁶ Qur’an, 25:77.

⁷ Qur’an, 40:60.

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

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

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

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

The fourth sort of supplication is the most well-known; it is our supplication. This too is of two sorts: one is active and by disposition, and the other,

verbal and with the heart. For example, having recourse to causes is an active prayer. To gather together causes is not in order to create the effect, but through the tongue of disposition to take up an acceptable position in order to seek the effect from Almighty God. To plough a field is to knock at the door of the treasury of mercy. Since this sort of active supplication is directed towards the Absolutely Generous One's Name and title, it is accepted in the great majority of cases.

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

O impotent, needy man! Do not neglect a means like supplication, which is the key to the treasury of mercy and to an inexhaustible strength. Cling to it! Rise to the highest peaks of humanity! Include in your supplications those of all the universe, like a king! Say, "*From You alone do we seek help*,"⁸ like a servant and deputy representing all the universe! Be on the Most Excellent Pattern of creation!

⁸ Qur'an, 1:4.

Second Chapter

INCLUDING FIVE REMARKS WITH RESPECT TO MAN'S HAPPINESS AND MISERY

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

FIRST REMARK

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

Thus for man in this position the only True Object of Worship will be One in Whose hand are the reins of all things, with Whom are the treasures of all things, Who sees all things, and is present everywhere, Who is beyond space, exempt from impotence, free of fault, and far above all defect; an All-Powerful One of Glory, an All-Compassionate One of Beauty, an All-Wise One of Perfection.

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

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

For example, unbelief is an evil, a destruction, an absence of affirmation. But that single evil comprises insulting the whole universe, belittling all the Divine Names, and abusing all humanity. For these beings have elevated positions and important duties; they are dominical missives, Divine mirrors, and Divine officials. But unbelief dismisses them from their rank of being mirrors, officials charged with duties, and bearing meanings, and reduces them to the level of futility and being the playthings of chance. And through the destruction of death and separation, it lowers them to the degree of being swiftly decaying ephemeral matter lacking all importance and value, to being nothing. So too through denial it insults the Divine Names, the inscriptions, manifestations, and beauties of which are to be seen throughout the universe and in the mirrors of beings. And it casts down to a position more abased and weaker, more powerless and needy than the lowliest transient animal the one who holds the rank of vicegerent of the earth, known as man. For man is a well-composed ode of wisdom proclaiming the manifestations of the Sacred Divine Names, and a seed-like self-evident miracle of Divine power containing all the members of an eternal tree, and who, with assuming the 'Supreme Trust,' rose to being higher than the earth, sky and mountains and gained superiority over the angels. It reduces him to the level of being a common sign-board lacking all meaning, confused, and swiftly decaying.

In Short: In regard to destruction and evil, the evil-commanding soul may commit infinite crimes, but concerning creativity and good, its power is

extremely little and partial. Yes, he may destroy a house in one day, while it cannot be built in a hundred. However, if the soul gives up egoism and seeks good and existence from Divine assistance, and if it foregoes evil and destruction and relying on the soul, and seeking forgiveness becomes a true slave of God's, then it will manifest the meaning of the verse,

*God will change their evil into good.*⁹

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

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

SECOND REMARK

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

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

Indeed, man resembles a seed. This seed has been given significant immaterial members by Divine power and a subtle, valuable programme by Divine Determining, so that it may work beneath the ground, and emerging from that narrow world, enter the broad world of the air, and asking its Creator with the tongue of its disposition to be a tree, find a perfection worthy of

⁹ Qur'an, 25:70.

it. If, due to bad temperament, the seed uses the immaterial members given it in attracting certain harmful substances under the ground, in a short time it will rot and decay in that narrow place without benefit. But if the seed conforms to the creational command of,

*God is the Splitter of the seed-grain and date-stone*¹⁰

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

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

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

Yes, true progress is to turn the faces of the heart, spirit, intellect, and even the imagination and other subtle faculties given to man towards eternal life and for each to be occupied with the particular duty of worship worthy of it. Progress is not as the people of misguidance imagine, to plunge into the life of this world in all its minute details and in order to taste every sort of pleasure, even the basest, make subject to the evil-commanding soul all the subtle faculties and the heart and intellect, and make them assist it; to do this is not progress, it is decline. I saw this fact in a vision which is described in the following comparison:

I was entering a large town when I looked and saw it was full of large palaces. At the doors of some of these palaces was merry-making like a brilliant theatre; it captured and held everyone's attention and was entertaining them. I looked carefully and saw that the lord of such a palace had come to the door; he was playing with a dog and assisting the merry-making. The ladies were indulging in sweet conversation with ill-mannered youths. Grown-up girls were organizing the children's games. And the doorkeeper

¹⁰ Qur'an, 6:95.

had taken the role of directing the others. I then realized that the inside of the huge palace was completely empty. Its refined duties all remained undone. The morals of its inhabitants had declined so that they had taken on these roles at the door.

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

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

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

THIRD REMARK

In regard to his acts and deeds and his labour man is a weak animal, an impotent creature. The extent of his power of disposal and ownership in this respect is so narrow that it is no greater than as far as his hand can reach. Domestic animals, even, the reins of which have been given to man, have each taken a share of his weakness, impotence, and laziness, so that if they

are compared with their wild counterparts, a great difference is apparent. (Like domestic goats and cattle, and wild goats and cattle). But in regard to passivity, acceptance, supplication, and entreaty, man is an honoured traveller in this hostel of the world. He is the guest of One so generous that infinite treasuries of mercy have been opened to him and innumerable unique beings and servants subjugated to him. And a sphere so large has been prepared for this guest's recreation, amusement, and benefit that half its diameter is as long and broad as the imagination can stretch.

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

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

This means that if man, who is created on the most excellent of patterns, restricts his thought to the life of this world, he falls a hundred times lower than a creature like a sparrow, although he is higher than the animals. I explained this fact in another place by means of a comparison. It is related to this, so I shall repeat it here. It was like this:

A man gave one of his servants ten pieces of gold and told him to have a suit of clothes made in a particular cloth. Then to a second one, he gave a thousand pieces of gold, and putting in the servant's pocket a note on which certain things were written, sent him to a market. The first servant bought an excellent suit of the finest cloth with the ten pieces of gold. While the second servant did not use his head, and looking at the first servant and not reading the account-note in his pocket, he gave the thousand pieces of gold to a shop

keeper and asked for a suit of clothes. The dishonest shopkeeper gave him a suit of the very worst-quality cloth. Then the wretched servant returned to his lord and received a severe reprimand and a terrible punishment.

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

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

The reason for man's wealth in regard to faculties is this: by reason of the mind and thought, man's senses and feelings have greatly developed and expanded. And numerous emotions have come into being because of the multiplicity of his needs. And his senses have become extremely diverse. And because of the comprehensiveness of his nature, desires have appeared turned towards numerous aims. And because he has numerous duties due to his nature, his members and faculties have expanded greatly. And since he has been created with a nature capable of performing every sort of worship, he has been given abilities which embrace the seeds of all perfections.

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

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

I saw that I was a traveller and was going on a long journey; that is to say, I was being sent. The one who was my lord gradually gave me some of the money from the sixty gold pieces he had allotted me. I spent them, and came

to a hostel where there were amusements of all kinds. In one night in that hostel I spent ten pieces of gold on gambling, amusements, and the enjoyment of fame. In the morning I had no money left. Moreover I had done no trade nor bought any goods for the place I was going. All that remained to me from the money were sins and pains, and from the amusements, wounds and sorrow. While in that sorry state, a man suddenly appeared. He said to me:

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

I looked, my soul did not agree to this.

So he said: “A third, then.”

My soul still did not obey him.

Then he said: “A quarter.”

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

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

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

In distress I put my head out of the window and looked ahead to see when the tunnel would end. I saw that in place of the tunnel’s entrance were numerous holes. People were being thrown into them from the long train. I saw a hole opposite me. On either side of it was a gravestone. I looked in amazement. I saw that written on one of the gravestones was the name SAID. In my bewilderment and anxiety I exclaimed: “Alas!” Then suddenly I heard the voice of the man who had given me advice at the door of the hostel. He asked:

“Have you come to your senses?”

I replied: "Yes, but it is too late now."

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

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

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

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

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

FOURTH REMARK

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

Just as through crying or asking or looking unhappy, a child subjugates the strong to himself, and is so successful in getting what he wants that he

could not obtain one thousandth of it with a thousand times his own strength. That is to say, since weakness and impotence excite compassion and a sense of protection towards him, the child can subjugate heroes to himself with his tiny finger. Now, should such a child with foolish conceit deny the compassion and accuse the protection saying: “I subjugate these with my own strength”, of course he will receive a slap.

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

*I have been given it on account of the knowledge I have,*¹¹

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

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

*God is enough for us, for He is the Best Disposer of Affairs,*¹²

and rise in degree.

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

¹¹ Qur’an, 28:78.

¹² Qur’an, 3:173.

full of wonder at their glorifications, and like a foreman of these beings full of respect for their worship.

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

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

FIFTH REMARK

Man has been sent to this world as an official and guest, and has been given abilities of great significance. And he has been entrusted with important duties in accordance with those abilities. In order to employ man in fulfilling those aims and duties, powerful encouragement and severe threats have been made. We shall here summarize the fundamentals of worship and of man's duties, which we have explained at length elsewhere, so that the mystery of 'the Most Excellent of Patterns' may be understood.

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

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

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

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

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

Then through beholding admiringly the adornment and subtle arts in beings, it is to feel love for knowledge of their All-Beauteous Creator, and to

yearn to ascend to the presence of their All-Perfect Maker and to receive His favours.

Second Aspect: This is the station of presence and address wherein man passes from the work to the producer of the work and he sees that an All-Beauteous Maker wants to make himself known and acquainted through the miracles of His art, and he responds with knowledge and belief.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

O heedless man created on the Most Excellent of Patterns, who, through the misuse of his will is descending to the lowest of the low! Listen to me! In the heedlessness induced by the intoxication of youth I, like you, thought the world was fine and lovely. Then the moment I awoke in the morning of

old age, I saw how ugly was the world's face that was not turned towards the hereafter, which I had previously imagined to be beautiful. To see this and how beautiful was its true face, which looks to the hereafter, you may refer to the two 'Signboards' in the Second Station of the Seventeenth Word, and see for yourself.

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

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

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*¹³

*O My Sustainer! Expand for me my breast * Make easy for me my affair * And loosen the knot on my tongue * That they may understand my words.*¹⁴

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

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

¹³ Qur'an, 2:32.

¹⁴ Qur'an, 20:25-8.

The Twenty-Fourth Word

[This Word consists of five 'Branches'. Study the Fourth Branch carefully. And hold on to the Fifth Branch and climb it, then pluck its fruits!]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
God, there is no god but He; His are the Most Beautiful Names.¹*

We shall indicate five branches of one of the many truths from the luminous tree of this glorious verse.

FIRST BRANCH

A sultan has different titles in the spheres of his government, and different styles and attributes among the classes of his subjects, and different names and signs in the levels of his rule, for example, Just Judge in the judiciary, Sultan in the civil service, Commander-in-Chief in the army, and Caliph in the learned establishment. If, making an analogy with these, you know the rest of his names and titles, you will understand that a single sultan may possess a thousand names and titles in the spheres of his rule and levels of government. It is as if, through his corporate personality and telephone, the ruler is present and knowing in every sphere; and through his laws and regulations and representatives, sees and is seen; and behind the veil in every degree, disposes and sees, governs and observes through his decree, knowledge, and power.

It is exactly the same for the Sustainer of All the Worlds, Who is the Ruler of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity; in the degrees of His dominicality He has attributes and designations which are all different but which look to each other; and in the spheres of His Godhead He has names and marks which are all different but which are one within the other; and in His magnificent activities He has representations and appellations which are all different but which resemble each other; and in the disposals of His power He

¹ Qur'an, 20:8.

has titles which are all different but which hint of one another; and in the manifestations of His attributes He has sacred appearances which are all different but which show one another; and in the displays of His acts He has wise disposals which are of numerous sorts but which complete one another; and in His multicoloured art and varieties of creatures, He has splendid aspects of dominicality which are all different but which look to one another. And together with this, in every world, in every realm of beings, the title of one of the Most Beautiful Names is manifested. In each sphere one Name is dominant and the other Names are subordinate to it, rather, they are there on account of it.

Furthermore, in every level of beings, many or few, great or small, particular or general, He has an appearance through a particular manifestation, a particular dominicality, a particular Name. That is to say, although the Name in question is general and encompasses everything, it is turned towards a thing with such intention and importance that it is as if it is special to that thing alone. Moreover, although the All-Glorious Creator is close to everything, there are almost seventy thousand luminous veils obscuring Him. You can compare how many veils there are from the particular degree of creativity of the Name of Creator which is manifested on you to the greatest degree and supreme title which is Creator of all the universe. That means, on condition you leave the whole universe behind you, from the door of creativity you may reach the limits of the Name of Creator and draw close to the sphere of attributes.

The veils have windows which look to one another, and the Names appear one within the other, and the acts look to one another, and the similitudes enter one within the other, and the titles hint of one another, and the manifestations resemble each other, and the disposals assist and complete one another, and the various dispositions of dominicality help and assist one another. It surely therefore necessitates not denying the other titles, acts, and degrees of dominicality when Almighty God is known through one of His Names, titles, or degrees of dominicality. Indeed, it is harmful if a transition is not made from the manifestation of any one Name to the others. For example, if the works of the Names of All-Powerful and Creator are seen, and not the Name of All-Knowing, a person may fall into heedlessness and the misguidance of nature. He should always keep in view and recite: "He!" and: "He is God!" He should listen, and hear from everything: "Say, He is God, the One!" His tongue should utter and proclaim: "All the world declares: There is no god but He!" Thus, through the decree of God, *There is no god but He; His are the Most Beautiful Names*, the Qur'an points to these truths we have mentioned.

If you want to observe these elevated truths from close to, go and ask a stormy sea or the quaking earth: "What are you saying?" You will hear that

they are saying: “O Glorious One! O Glorious One! O One of Might, All-Compelling!” Then ask the small animals and their young being raised with kindness and compassion in the sea and on the land: “What are you saying?” They will surely reply: “O Beauteous One! O Beauteous One! O Most Compassionate and Merciful One!”² Then listen to the skies; they say: “O Glorious One of Beauty!” And give your ear to the earth; it says: “O Beauteous One of Glory!” Listen carefully to the animals; they are saying: “O Most Merciful One! O Provider!” And ask the spring; you will hear many Names like: “O Gentle One! O Most Merciful One! O Most Compassionate One! O Most Generous One! O Gracious One! O Benevolent One! O Giver of Forms! O Giver of Light! O Bestower! O Adorner!” Then ask a human being who is a true human, and see how he recites all the Most Beautiful Names and how they are written on his forehead. If you look carefully, you too may read them. It is as if the universe is a huge orchestra celebrating the Divine Names. Mixing the faintest song with the most powerful refrains, it produces a sublime and subtle harmony. You may make further analogies in the same way.

For sure, man is the place of manifestation of all the Names, but the Names being various has resulted in the universe’s variety and the differences in the angels’ worship, and has also caused a degree of variety among men. The different laws of the prophets, the different ways of the saints, and the different paths of the purified scholars has arisen from this mystery. For example, together with the other Names, the Name of All-Powerful was predominant in Jesus (Peace be upon him). And in those who follow the path of

² Even, one day I looked at the cats; all they were doing was eating, playing, and sleeping. I wondered: how is it these little monsters which perform no duties are known as blessed. Later, I lay down to sleep for the night. I looked; one of the cats had come. It lay against my pillow and put its mouth against my ear, and murmuring: “O Most Compassionate One! O Most Compassionate One!” in the most clear manner, as though refuted in the name of its species the objection and insult which had occurred to me, throwing it in my face. Then this occurred to me: I wonder if this recitation is particular to this cat, or is it general among cats? And is it only an unfair objector like me who hears it, or if anyone listens carefully, can they hear it?

The next morning I listened to the other cats; it was not so clearly, but to varying degrees they were repeating the same invocation. At first, “O Most Compassionate!” was discernible following their purring. Then gradually their purrings and meowings became the same “O Most Merciful!” It became an unarticulated, eloquent and sorrowful recitation. They would close their mouths and utter a fine “O Most Compassionate!”

I related the story to the brothers who visited me, and they listened carefully as well, and said that they heard it to an extent. Later I wondered what this Name’s special feature was, and why they recite it in the way of men and not in animal tongue. Then it imparted to my heart that since these animals are very delicate and petted like children and are a friend of man, they are in much need of kindness and compassion. When they are stroked and paid attention to in the way they like, as praise and thanks for the bounty, and unlike dogs, they proclaim the mercy of their All-Compassionate Creator in their own worlds. They warn men in the sleep of heedlessness, and through their cry of “O Most Compassionate!”, they remind those who worship causes Who it is that help comes from and from Whom mercy may be awaited.

love, the Name of Loving One prevails, and in those who follow the path of contemplation and reflection, the Name of All-Wise.

Thus, if someone is both a teacher, and a policeman, and a clerk of the court, and an inspector in the civil service, in each office he has both relations, and duties, and obligations, and salaries, and responsibilities, and promotion, and enemies and rivals who are the cause of his failures. He appears before the king with many titles, and he sees the king. He seeks help from him with many tongues. He has recourse to many of the ruler's titles, and seeks his help in many forms in order to be saved from the evil of his enemies.

In just the same way, man, who manifests many Names and is charged with many duties and afflicted with many enemies, invokes many of the Names in his prayers and supplications. Like Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him), the cause of pride of mankind and truly the most perfect man, supplicated with a thousand and one Names in his prayer, *Jawshan al-Kabir*. It is due to this mystery that the Sura,

*Say, I seek refuge with the Sustainer and Cherisher of men, * The Sovereign of men, * The God of men, * From the evil of the whispering, elusive tempter³*

commands that we take refuge with God through three titles, and,

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

shows the seeking of help through three Names.

SECOND BRANCH

This explains two mysteries which comprise the keys to many further mysteries.

FIRST MYSTERY: “Why do the saints differ greatly in their visions and illuminations although they are unanimous on the principles of belief? Why are their illuminations, which are at the degree of witnessing, sometimes opposed to reality and contrary to the truth? And why in their ideas which they consider to be the truth, establishing them through decisive proofs, do thinkers and scholars see and show reality in a way that contradicts one another? Why does one truth take on numerous colours?”

SECOND MYSTERY: “Why did the early prophets leave some of the pillars of belief like bodily resurrection in brief form and not explain them in detail like the Qur’an, so that in the future some of their communities went as far as denying some of those concise pillars? Also, why did some of the saints only advance in the affirmation of Divine unity, and although they

³ Qur’an, 114:1-4.

even progressed as far as the degree of ‘absolute certainty’ in Divine unity, some of the pillars of belief appear in their paths very little and in summary form? And as a result, those who followed them in the future did not give the necessary importance to the pillars of belief, and some of them even fell into error? Since true perfection is found through the unfolding of all the pillars of belief, why did some of the mystics advance significantly in them, while some remained very backward, whereas God’s Most Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him), who manifested all the Divine Names at their maximum degree and was the chief of the prophets, and the All-Wise Qur’an, which is the luminous chief of all the sacred scriptures, described in detail all the pillars of belief, clearly, and in a most serious manner and deliberate way?”

Because in reality the most true and complete perfection is thus. Yes, the wisdom in these mysteries is this: for sure man is the place of manifestation of all the Names, but since his power is slight, his will partial, his abilities various, and desires different, he searches for reality among thousands of veils and barriers. So, in uncovering reality and witnessing the truth, barriers intervene. Some people cannot by-pass the barriers. Their abilities are all different. The abilities of some cannot support the unfolding of some of the truths of belief. Moreover, the colours of the Name’s manifestations vary according to the place they are manifested; they become all different. Some people who manifest them cannot be the means to the complete manifestation of a Name. Also, the manifestation of the Names takes on different forms in respect of universality, particularity, shadow, or originality. Some capacities cannot transcend particularity. And some cannot emerge from the shadow. In some capacities, sometimes one Name is predominant, and it carries out its word and rules in that capacity. Now we shall make a few indications to this profound mystery and this extensive wisdom with an enigmatical, comprehensive, true, but somewhat complex, comparison.

For example, let us suppose an adorned flower, a living droplet enamoured of the Moon, and a translucent atom which looks to the Sun. Each of these possesses consciousness and some perfection, and each has a yearning for that perfection. Together with indicating many truths, these three things also allude to the spiritual voyaging of the soul, the mind, and the heart. They also correspond to three levels of those who investigate reality.⁴

The First indicates those who follow the path of intellectual thought; those who follow the path of sainthood; and those who follow the path of prophethood.

The Second corresponds to those who approach reality by striving for

⁴ There are also three groups in each level. The three things given as examples in the comparison look to these three groups which are in each level. Indeed, they look to those nine groups, not the three levels.

perfection through the bodily systems; and those who approach it by striving with the mind and refining the soul; and those who approach it through belief, submission, and purifying the heart.

The Third is the comparison of those who do not give up egotism, are plunged in works, and approach reality through deduction and reasoning only; and of those who search for reality through knowledge and science, reason and learning; and those who approach reality swiftly through belief and the Qur'an, poverty and worship. These comparisons point to the wisdom in the differences between the three groups, whose capacities are also different.

Thus, under the titles of Flower, Droplet, and Atom, we shall show by means of a comparison, the mystery and extensive wisdom in the progress of the three groups. For example, through its Creator's permission and at His command, the Sun has three sorts of manifestation, reflection and radiance: one is its reflection on flowers, one its reflection on the Moon and the planets, and one its reflection on shining objects like glass and water.

The First is in three ways:

One is a universal and general manifestation and reflection whereby its radiance encompasses all flowers at once.

Another is a special manifestation whereby it has a special reflection for each species.

Another is a particular manifestation whereby its effulgence is in accordance with the individuality of each flower. This comparison of ours is in conformity with this statement, that the adorned colours of flowers arises from the changing reflections of the seven colours in the Sun's light. According to this, flowers too are sorts of mirrors to the Sun.

The Second is the light and effulgence which, with the All-Wise Creator's permission, the Sun gives to the Moon and planets. Having received this extensive, universal light and effulgence, the Moon, whose light is like a shadow of that light, profits from the Sun in a universal fashion. Then its radiance and effulgence shines in a particular way on the seas and air and shining earth, and partially on the bubbles on the sea and translucent particles of the earth and the molecules of the air.

The Third is, through the Divine command, a reflection of the Sun which, making the air and the surface of the seas into mirrors, is pure, universal, and without shadow. Then the Sun gives to each of the bubbles on the sea, the droplets of water, molecules of air, and snow-flakes, a particular reflection and tiny image of itself.

Thus, in the three forms mentioned above, the Sun bestows an effulgence and favour on every flower, the Moon, and all droplets and atoms. And these in turn are each in two ways:

The First Way is direct, and without barrier or veil. This way represents the way of prophethood.

The Second Way: In this, barriers intervene. The capacities of the mirrors and places of manifestation add colour to the Sun's manifestations. This way represents the way of sainthood.

Thus, on the First Way, 'Flower', 'Droplet', and 'Atom' can each say: "I am a mirror to the Sun of all the world." But on the Second Way they cannot say that; they can rather say: "I am the mirror to my own Sun, or the mirror to the Sun which is manifested in my species." For that is the manner in which they know the Sun. They cannot see a Sun which looks to the whole world; the Sun of that individual or species or genus appears to it within narrow confines and under limiting restrictions. And it cannot ascribe to that restricted Sun the works of the unrestricted, unconfined, absolute Sun. For within those narrow restrictions and limited confines it cannot attribute to the Sun with the certain witnessing of the heart its majestic works like furnishing the whole face of the earth with light and heat, stirring all plants and animals into life, and making the planets revolve around it. Indeed, even if those three things, which we suppose to have consciousness, ascribe those wondrous works to the Sun which they see under those restrictions, they can only do so with the mind and through belief, and through submitting to the fact that that restricted thing is absolute. Whereas these judgements of 'Flower', 'Droplet', and 'Atom', which we suppose to possess reason like a human being, that is, their ascribing those mighty works to the Sun, is through the mind and reason, it is not through illumination. Indeed, sometimes their judgements concerning belief clash with their illuminations about the cosmos. They can only believe them with great difficulty.

Now the three of us must enter into this comparison, which is narrow for reality, but in some of the corners of which the members of reality are to be seen and which is mixed with reality. The three of us shall suppose ourselves to be 'Flower', 'Droplet', and 'Atom'. For the consciousness which we suppose them to have insufficient. We must add our reasons to theirs. That is to say, just as they receive effulgence from their physical Sun, we too shall receive effulgence from our immaterial Sun, and must understand it.

And so, my friend, who has not forgotten the world, is preoccupied with materiality, and whose soul is dense! You be 'Flower'. 'Flower' takes on a colour dissolved from the Sun's light, and it mixes the Sun's image in with that colour and clothes itself in an adorned form. For your capacity resembles it as well. Then let this philosopher who has studied secular science and is plunged in causes like the Old Said be 'Droplet', which is enamoured of the Moon. For the Moon affords him the shadow of light it has received from the Sun, and it gives a light to the pupil of his eye. 'Droplet' too shines

with the light, but he can only see the Moon with it, he cannot see the Sun. Rather, he can only see it through his belief. Then, let this poor man be 'Atom', who knows everything to be directly from Almighty God and considers causes to be a veil. He is such an 'Atom' that knows himself to be poor in his own self. He has nothing on which to depend so as to rely on himself like 'Flower'. He possesses no colour that he should appear through it. And he does not recognize other things that he should turn towards them. He has a sheer purity by which he holds the Sun's image directly in the pupil of his eye. Now, since we have taken the place of these three things, we must consider ourselves. What do we have? What must we do?

Thus, we look and see that through his favours a Most Munificent One is adorning, illuminating, and nurturing us. And man worships one who bestows favours on him. He wants to be close to one worthy of being worshipped, and desires to see him. In which case, in accordance with our capacities, each of us journeys through the attraction of that love. You who is like 'Flower', you are going, but go as a flower. See, you have gone. You have advanced and advanced till you have reached a universal degree, as though you have become like all flowers. But 'Flower' is a dense mirror; it dissolves and refracts the seven colours in light; it conceals the Sun's reflection. You will not be successful in seeing the face of the Sun which you love, for the colours and characteristics, which are restricted, disperse it, draw a veil over it and obscure it. In this situation, you cannot be saved from the separation which occurs with the interposing of barriers. However, you can be saved on one condition, which is that you raise your head, which is sunk in love of your own soul, and withdraw your gaze, which glories and takes pleasure in its own merits, and cast it at the face of the Sun in the sky. But on condition you turn your face looking down to the earth to gain your livelihood, up to the Sun. For you are its mirror. Your duty is to act as a mirror to it. Whether you know it or not, your sustenance will anyway come from the earth, the door to the treasury of mercy. Yes, a flower is a miniscule mirror of the Sun, and the Sun too is merely a drop-like flash manifesting in the seas of the skies the Name of Light of the Pre-Eternal Sun.

O heart of man! Understand from this, of what sort of a Sun you are the mirror. After fulfilling this condition, you will find your perfection. But just as in actual reality you cannot see the Sun in that way, so you cannot understand this truth naked; the colours of your attributes give it a colour and your cloudy telescope imposes a form on it, and your limited capacity restricts it.

Now, wise philosopher who has entered into 'Droplet'! You have advanced as far as the Moon with the telescope of your droplet of thought and by the stairway of philosophy. You have entered the Moon. Look, of itself the Moon is dense and dark; it has neither light nor life. Your

endeavour has all been in vain and your knowledge has proved to be profitless. You can only be saved from the darkness of despair, the desolation of loneliness, the pestering of evil spirits, and the horrors of that bleakness through these conditions: that you give up the night of nature and turn to the Sun of reality, and you believe with complete certainty that the light of this night are the shadows of the lights of the daytime Sun. After fulfilling these conditions, you will find your perfection. You will find the majestic Sun in place of the poor and darksome Moon. But like your previous friend, you will not be able to see the Sun clearly; you will see it beyond the veils with which your reason and your philosophy are familiar and conversant, and behind the screens woven by science and learning, and within a colour conferred by your capacity.

And now our Atom-like third friend, who is both poor and colourless. He swiftly evaporates in the Sun's heat, abandons his egotism, mounts the steam, and rises into the air. The dense matter within him takes fire with the flame of love and is transformed into light and radiance. He adheres to a ray proceeding from the manifestations of that light, and draws close to it. O you who resembles 'Atom'! Since you act as a direct mirror to the Sun, at whatever degree you are, you will find an opening, a window, looking purely at the Sun itself in a fashion that affords absolute certainty. And you will experience no difficulty in attributing to the Sun its wondrous works. Without hesitation you will be able to ascribe to it the majestic attributes of which it is worthy. Nothing will be able to take you by the hand and make you forego ascribing to it the awesome works of its essential sovereignty. Neither the constriction of barriers, nor the limitations of your capacity, nor the smallness of mirrors will confuse you, nor impel you contrary to the truth. Because, since you look at it purely, sincerely, and directly, you have understood that what appears in the places of manifestation and is observed in the mirrors, is not the Sun, but manifestations of it of a sort, and coloured reflections of it of a sort. For sure those reflections are its titles, but they do not display all the works of its splendour.

Thus, in this comparison, which is mixed with reality, perfection is reached by means of three ways which are all different, and which differ concerning the virtues of those perfections and the details of the degrees of witnessing. But in conclusion and in submitting to the Truth and confirming the reality, they are in agreement. Just as a man of the night who has never seen the Sun and has only seen its shadow in the mirror of the Moon, cannot squeeze into his mind the resplendent light and awesome gravity particular to the Sun, but submits to those who have seen it and imitates them; similarly, one who cannot attain to the maximum degrees of Names like All-Powerful and Giver of Life through the legacy of Muhammad (PBUH), accepts the resurrection of the dead and Great Gathering imitatively, and declares it is not a

matter that can be understood through the reason. For the reality of the resurrection and Last Judgement is the manifestation of the Greatest Name and of the supreme degree of certain other Names. Those whose gaze cannot rise there are compelled to believe it by way of imitation. While those whose minds can enter there, see the resurrection and Last Judgement as easily as day and night, and spring and winter, and accept it with an easy mind.

Thus, it is due to this mystery that the Qur'an speaks of the resurrection and Great Gathering at the highest level and in the most perfect detailed manner, and our Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him), who manifested the Greatest Name, taught it thus. And as required by the wisdom of guidance, the former prophets did not teach their communities, which were at a somewhat simple and primitive level, about the resurrection of the dead at the highest level and with the most extensive details. It is also due to this mystery that some of those who followed the path of sainthood did not see or could not demonstrate some of the truths of belief at the greatest degree. It is also due to this mystery that there are pronounced differences in the degrees of those who have knowledge of God. Numerous other mysteries like these unfold from this truth. Now, since both this comparison hints at the truth a little, and the truth is extremely extensive and profound, we also shall content ourselves with the comparison, and not attempt mysteries which are beyond our limit and capacity.

THIRD BRANCH

Since the Hadiths that speak of the signs of the end of time, the events at the end of time, and the merits and rewards of certain actions have not been well understood, some scholars who rely on their reason have pronounced some of them to be either weak or false. While some of the scholars whose belief was weak but whose egotism was strong have gone as far as denying them. For now we shall not attempt any detailed discussion, but shall only explain twelve 'Principles'.

FIRST PRINCIPLE: This is a matter which we have explained in the question and answer at the end of the Twentieth Word. Its summary is this: Religion is an examination, a test, which distinguishes elevated spirits from base ones. It therefore speaks of matters that everyone shall see with their eyes in the future in such a way that they remain neither altogether unknown, nor self-evident so that everyone would be compelled to confirm them. They open the door to the reason but do not take the will from the hand. Because if a sign of the Last Day appeared completely self-evidently and everyone was compelled to affirm it, then a disposition like coal would remain equal to one like diamonds. The mystery of man's accountability and results of examination would go for nothing. It is because of this that there has been much dispute over many matters like that of the Mahdi and Sufyan.

Also, the narrations differ greatly; they have become pronouncements which contradict one another.

SECOND PRINCIPLE: There are various levels in the matters of Islam. If one requires certain proof, for another the prevailing opinion is sufficient. Others require merely assent and acceptance and not to be rejected. In which case, secondary matters or particular events in time which are not among the bases of belief do not require certain compliance and definite proof, just not to be rejected and to be submitted to, and not to be interfered with.

THIRD PRINCIPLE: In the time of the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) most of the Jewish and Christian scholars entered Islam, and their former knowledge became Muslim along with them. Some of their former knowledge which was contrary to the truth was imagined to be a part of Islam.

FOURTH PRINCIPLE: Some of the words of the narrators of Hadith or the meanings they deduced were considered to be part of the texts of the Hadiths themselves. However, since man cannot be free of fault, some of their deductions or words which were contrary to the truth were supposed to be Hadiths and were pronounced to be weak.

FIFTH PRINCIPLE: According to the meaning of: “Among my community are transmitters of Hadiths,” that is, meaning, “who are inspired,”⁵ some of the meanings which were obtained through the inspirations of scholars of related Hadiths who followed the path of illumination and sainthood were supposed to be Hadiths. Whereas, due to certain obstructions, the inspiration of saints may be in error. Thus, some that are contrary to the truth may arise from this.

SIXTH PRINCIPLE: There are certain stories which, having become universally known, have become like proverbs. Their true meanings are not borne in mind. For whatever purpose they were spread, that is what is considered. Thus, some stories and fables which have become well-known among people in this way, God’s Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him) told in the form of comparisons and metaphors for the purpose of guidance. If there is any error in the true meanings of this sort of matters, it pertains to the customs and traditions of the people, and the way they have been passed among them.

SEVENTH PRINCIPLE: There are many similes and parables that with the passage of time or with passing from the hand of learning to the hand of ignorance have been supposed to be physical fact, and have become mistaken. For example, two angels of God in the World of Similitudes called ‘The Ox’ and ‘The Fish’,⁶ who are among the supervisors of the animals of

⁵ *Bukhari*, iii, 211; v, 15; *Muslim*, iv, 184; al-Hakim; *al-Mustadrak*, iii, 86; Ibn Hibban, ix, 21.

⁶ Suyuti, *al-Durr al-Manthur*, vi, 249; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iii, 588; iv, 120, 203.

the land and the sea and are represented as an ox and fish, were imagined to be huge ox and a physical fish, and the Hadith was wrongly interpreted. And for example, one time in the presence of the Prophet a deep rumbling was heard. God's Messenger (PBUH) decreed: "That is the sound of a rock that has been rolling downhill for seventy years and only now has hit the bottom of Hell."⁷ Thus, someone hearing this Hadith who does not know the truth may deviate into denial. But then, twenty minutes after the Hadith was spoken it was definitely established, for someone came and told God's Messenger (PBUH): "The famous dissembler died twenty minutes ago." God's Messenger (PBUH) had described most eloquently how the dissembler's seventy year lifetime of unbelief had been a continuous descent to the lowest of the low as a stone of Hell. Almighty God had made that rumbling heard at the moment of his death and given him a sign.

EIGHTH PRINCIPLE: In this arena of trial and realm of examination, Almighty God, the Absolutely Wise One, conceals most important things in the midst of numerous others, and this is tied to many purposes, benefits, and instances of wisdom. For example, He has hidden the Night of Power in the whole of Ramadan, and the hour when prayers are answered in the whole of Friday, and well-accepted saints among the people generally, and the appointed hour in a person's life-time, and the time of Doomsday in the life of the world.⁸ For if the time of man's death had been specified, the first half of his life would be passed in absolute heedlessness and the second, in terror, like going step by step to the gallows. Whereas for the balance between this world and the next to be preserved, and to remain perpetually between hope and fear, living and dying have to be possible every moment. In which case, twenty years of uncertain life are preferable to a thousand years of life that are specified.

Thus, the Last Day is the appointed hour of the world, the macroanthropos. If the time had been specified, all the early and middle ages would have been plunged into absolute heedlessness, and the latter centuries, into terror. Just as in his personal life man is concerned with the continued existence of his home and village, so in his social life and as a member of mankind he is concerned with the continued existence of the earth and the world. The Qur'an says,

*The Hour has drawn nigh.*⁹

That is, Doomsday is near. It still not having come after a thousand or this many years does not negate its closeness. Because Doomsday is the appointed hour of the world, and in relation to the life of the world one or

⁷ *Muslim*, iv, 3184, No: 2844; 2145, No: 2782; *Musnad*, ii, 271; iii, 341, 346, 360.

⁸ Ibn Hajar, *Munabihat*, 25.

⁹ Qur'an, 54:1.

two thousand years are like one or two minutes in relation to a year. The Hour of Doomsday is not only the appointed hour of mankind that it should be related to it and seen as distant. It is because of this that the Absolutely Wise One conceals Doomsday in His knowledge among the 'Five Hidden Things.' It is due to the mystery of this vagueness that every age including the Age of the Bliss, the Age of the Prophet, people have been frightened of the end of the world. Some of them even said that the conditions had all but appeared.¹⁰

Thus, unfair people who do not know this truth say: "Why did the Companions of the Prophet with their vigilant hearts and keen sight, who had been taught all the details of the hereafter, suppose a fact that would occur one thousand four hundred years later to be close to their century, as though their ideas had deviated a thousand years from the truth?"

The Answer: Because, through the effulgence of the Prophet's conversation, the Companions thought of the hereafter more than anyone, and knowing the transience of the world and understanding the Divine wisdom in the hour of Doomsday being vague, they assumed a position of always awaiting the world's appointed hour and worked seriously for the hereafter. God's Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him) repeating: "Expect Doomsday. Wait for it"¹¹ was prophetic guidance arising from this wisdom, it was not a pronouncement of revelation concerning the specific time of its occurrence and far from the truth. The cause is one thing and the wisdom is another. Thus, sayings of the Prophet (PBUH) of this sort arise from the wisdom in certain things being indefinite.

It is also due to this mystery that they expected the individuals who will come at the end of time like the Mahdi and Sufyan long beforehand, and even in the time of the generation succeeding the Prophet, and hoped to live long enough to see them. Some of the saints, even, said that they had passed. Like the end of the world, Divine wisdom requires that the times of these individuals are not specified either. Because every age is in need of the Mahdi's meaning, for he strengthens morale and saves the people from despair. Every century has to have a share of this meaning. In order that people should not heedlessly follow evil and the reins of the soul should not be left free in indifference, every century the fearsome individuals who come to lead strife must be shrunk from and feared. If they had been specified, the benefits of general guidance would have been lost.

Now, the difference in the narrations about individuals like the Mahdi, and their meaning, is this: those who expounded Hadiths applied the text of the Hadiths to their own interpretations and commentaries. For example, since

¹⁰ al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iv, 545, 549; *Musnad*, ii, 298, 299.

¹¹ *Tirmidhi*, Fitan, 39.

the centre of power at that time was Damascus or Medina, they imagined the events connected with the Mahdi and Sufyan in places like Basra, Kufa, and Syria, which were in the region of those centres, and expounded them accordingly. Moreover, they imagined the mighty works belonging to the collective identity or community which those individuals represent to be in their persons and expounded them in that way, so that they ascribed a form to them whereby when those extraordinary individuals appear, everyone will recognize them. However, as we said, this world is the arena of trial. The door is opened to the reason, but the will is not taken from the hand. So, when those individuals, and even the terrible Dajjal, appear, many people and himself even will not know to start with that he is the Dajjal. Those individuals of the end of time will be known through the insight and the light of belief.

It is narrated in a Hadith about the Dajjal, who is one of the signs of the end of time: “His first day is like a year, his second day like a month, his third day like a week, and his fourth day like other days. When he appears the world will hear. He will travel the world in forty days.”¹² Some unfair people have said about this narration that it is impossible, God forbid, and have gone as far as denying and declaring it null. Whereas, And the knowledge of it is with God, the reality of it must be this:

It indicates the appearance of an individual from the North who will come to lead a great current issuing forth from the godless ideas of Naturalism, in the North, where the world of unbelief is at its densest, and who will be atheist. There is an instance of wisdom in this, for in the latitudes close to the North Pole the whole year is one day and one night; there are six months of night and six months of day. “One day of the Dajjal is a year” alludes to his appearance close to those latitudes. What is meant from “His second day is a month” is that passing in this direction from the North, it sometimes happens that for a month in the summer the sun does not set. This suggests that the Dajjal will emerge in the North and invade southwards towards the civilized world. By attributing the day to the Dajjal, it points to this. He comes further in this direction, and the sun does not set for a week, and so it continues until there are three hours between its rising and setting. While being held as a prisoner-of-war in Russia, I was in such a place. Close to us was a place where the sun did not set for a week. They used to go there to watch it. As for the part, “When the Dajjal appears, all the world will hear of it,” the telegraph and radio have solved this. As for his travelling the world in forty days, the railway and aeroplane, which are his mounts, have solved. Deniers who formerly considered these two statements to be impossible, now see them as commonplace!

Since in another treatise I have written in some detail about Gog and

¹² *Muslim*, iv, 252, No: 110; *Musnad*, iii, 367; vi, 181; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, vi, 530.

Magog and the Barrier, which are among the signs of the end of the world, I refer readers to those, and here only say this: there are narrations stating that the tribes known as the Manchurians and Mongols, who threw human society into chaos and were the cause of the building of the Great Wall of China, will again overturn human civilization close to Doomsday with an idea like anarchy.

Some atheists say: “Where are the tribes that perform these extraordinary acts and that will perform them?”

The Answer: A calamity like locusts appears in one season in enormous numbers, then on the change of the seasons, those numerous tribes which disrupt the country consign their reality to a few limited individuals. Then, when the time comes, at the Divine command, great numbers appear from those limited individuals and embark on the same corruption. As though the reality of their national identity is fined down, but not destroyed, and when the time arrives, it reemerges. In just the same way, those same tribes which overturned the world at one time will when the time comes again overturn human civilization with Divine permission. But what impels them will be in a different form. None knows the Unseen save God.

NINTH PRINCIPLE: The results of some of the questions of belief look to this restricted and narrow world, while others look to the world of the hereafter, which is broad and absolute. In order to give the appropriate effect of either encouraging or restraining, some Hadiths about the merits and rewards of actions are in an eloquent style, and some unthinking people have supposed them to be exaggerated. However, since they are all pure truth and reality, there is no exaggeration or overstatement in them.

For instance, there is this Hadith which has worried the heads of the unfair more than any. Its meaning is: “If the world had as much value as a fly’s wing for Almighty God, the unbelievers would not have had so much as a mouthful of water from it.”¹³ The reality of it is this: the phrase for Almighty God refers to the eternal realm. Yes, since a light from the eternal realm to the extent of a fly’s wing is everlasting, it is greater than a temporary light that fills the face of the earth. That means it is not to say that the huge world is equal to a fly’s wing, but that everyone’s private world which is situated within their short lives, is not equal to an everlasting Divine effulgence and bounty to the extent of a fly’s wing from the eternal realm.

Furthermore, the world has two faces, indeed, three faces. One is the mirror to Almighty God’s Names, another looks to the hereafter and is its arable field, and the third looks to transience and non-existence. This is the world of the people of misguidance which is not in accordance with the things that please God that we know. That is to say, it infers not that the vast world

¹³ *Tirmidhi*, Zuhd, 13; *Ibn Maja*, Zuhd, 3; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iv, 306.

which is the mirror to the Most Beautiful Names, and consists of missives of the Eternally Besought One, and is the tillage of the hereafter, but that the world of those who worship the world, which is opposed to the hereafter and is the source of all wrongs and spring of calamities, is not worth one everlasting particle which will be given to the believers in the hereafter. Thus, how can the way it is understood by the unfair atheists be compared with this most true and serious truth? What has the meaning which those atheists supposed to be the most exaggerated and overstated to do with this?

And, for example, others which the unfair atheists supposed to be exaggeration and even impossible overstatement are narrations about the rewards for actions and merits of some of the Qur'an's Suras. For example, there are narrations that, "The merit of Sura al-Fatiha is equal to that of the Qur'an."¹⁴ And, "Sura al-Ikhlās equals a third of the Qur'an,"¹⁵ "Sura al-Zilzāl, a quarter,"¹⁶ "Sura al-Kafirun, a quarter,"¹⁷ "Sura Ya. Sin., ten times the Qur'an."¹⁸ Unjust and unthinking people have said that these are impossible because Sura Ya. Sin. and the other meritorious Suras are within the Qur'an, which makes it meaningless.

The Answer: The reality is this: for each of the All-Wise Qur'an's letters is a merit. Each is a good deed. Out of Divine grace the merits of those letters sprout and yield sometimes ten, sometimes seventy, and sometimes seven hundred, merits, like the letters of *Ayat al-Kursi*. Sometimes they yield one thousand five hundred, like the letters of Sura al-Ikhlās, and sometimes ten thousand, like verses recited on *Layla al-Bara'a* and those that coincide with other acceptable times. And sometimes they yield thirty thousand, like verses recited on the Night of Power, which are like poppy seeds in their multiplicity. The indication that that night is the equivalent to a thousand months makes it understood that on that night one letter has thirty thousand merits. For example, let us suppose there is a field planted with maize, one thousand plants of it. If some seeds produce seven shoots, and from each shoot a hundred grains, then a single seed becomes the equivalent of two thirds of the whole field. For example, if one seed produces ten shoots, and each yields two hundred grains, then a single seed is the equivalent of twice the original field. You can make further analogies in the same way.

Now, let us imagine the All-Wise Qur'an to be a luminous, sacred, heavenly field. Each of its letters together with its original merit is like a seed. Their shoots will not be taken into consideration. They may be compared with the Suras and verses about which are narrations concerning their merits,

¹⁴ Bukhari, Tafsir Sura, I; xv, 3; Fada'il al-Qur'an, 9; Tirmidhi, Thawab al-Qur'an, 1.

¹⁵ Tirmidhi, Thawab al-Qur'an, 10, 11; Ibn Maja, Adab, 52.

¹⁶ Tirmidhi, Thawab al-Qur'an, 9; Musnad, iii, 147, 221.

¹⁷ Tirmidhi, Thawab al-Qur'an, 9; Musnad, iii, 147, 221.

¹⁸ Tirmidhi, Thawab al-Qur'an, 7; Darimi, Fada'il al-Qur'an, 21.

like Ya. Sin., Ikhlas, Fatiha, Kafirun, Zilzal. For example, the Qur'an has three hundred thousand six hundred and twenty letters, and Sura al-Ikhlas together with Bismillah, sixty-nine. Three times sixty nine is two hundred and seven letters. Thus, if Sura Ya. Sin.'s letters are reckoned and compared with all the letters of the All-Wise Qur'an, and then multiplied ten times, it produces the following result: each letter of Sura Ya. Sin. has close on five hundred merits. That is, that many good deeds may be reckoned. And so, if you apply the others to this, you will understand what a subtle, fine, true, and unexaggerated truth it is.

TENTH PRINCIPLE: Like with most of the other sorts of creatures, among mankind are certain individuals who are extraordinary by virtue of their acts and deeds. If those individuals have advanced in good deeds, they have been the cause of pride of mankind. Otherwise, they have been the cause of their shame. Also, they are hidden. It is as though each becomes a collective identity, an imaginary goal. Other individuals try to emulate them, and it is possible. That means, being absolute and indefinite, it is possible for such a perfect, extraordinary person to be present everywhere. In regard to this indefiniteness, according to logic, his universality may be posited in the form of a possible proposition. That is, it is possible for all acts to produce the following result: for example, "Whoever performs two rak'ats of prayers at such and such a time has performed the equivalent of the Hajj."¹⁹ It is thus the truth that at certain times two rak'ats of prayers may be the equivalent of a Hajj. Due to its universality, this meaning may apply to all prayers of two rak'ats. That means what narrations of this sort refer to is not in fact continuous and universal, because since there are conditions of acceptance, it disallows it being continuous and universal. It is either in fact temporary and absolute or possible and universal. That is to say, the universality in this sort of Hadith is in regard to possibility. For example, "Backbiting is like murder."²⁰ This means, someone who indulges in backbiting is more harmful than deadly poison, like a killer. And for example, "A good word is a deed so good it is like freeing a slave."²¹

Here, in order to encourage and restrain, it points out the possibility of that indefinite perfect individual being present everywhere in absolute form as though it is actually the case, thus arousing eagerness for good and disgust for evil. Furthermore, the things of the eternal world cannot be measured on the scale of this world. The greatest thing here is not equal to the least thing there. Because the merits of actions look to that world, our worldly view is narrow for them. We cannot fit them into our minds. For example, "Whoever reads this is given the reward of Moses and Aaron." That is to say:

¹⁹ *Kanz al-'Ummal*, vii, 808; Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, 7740.

²⁰ *Musnad al-Firdaws*, iii, 116, 117.

²¹ al-Manzari, *al-Tarhib wa'l-Tarhib*, iii, 421, 434; *Kanz al-'Ummal*, iii, 589.

*All praise be to God, Sustainer of the heavens and Sustainer of the earth * Sustainer of all the worlds, His is the might in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. * All praise be to God, Sustainer of the heavens and Sustainer of the earths, * Sustainer of all the worlds, and His is the sublimity in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. * And His is the dominion, Sustainer of the heavens, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.*

What has most attracted the attention of the unfair and the unthinking is narrations like these. The reality of the matter is this:

With our narrow mind and short views in this world, we know how much we imagine the the rewards of Moses and Aaron (Peace be upon them) to be. The reward the Absolutely Compassionate One will give to one of His infinitely needy servants in the world of eternity and everlasting happiness, in return for a single invocation may be equal to the reward of those two, but equal to the rewards as we conceive of them and surmise them to be.

For example, there is a primitive, uncouth man who has never seen the king and does not know the majesty of his rule. He imagines a lord in a village, and with his limited ideas thinks of the king as a more exalted version of the lord. Long ago with us even, there was a simple-minded tribe who used to say: “Our lord knows what the Sultan does as he cooks his bulgur soup on his stove in a saucepan.” That is to say, they imagined the Sultan in such a narrow situation and so common a form that he cooked his own wheat soup; they supposed him to have the majesty of a captain. Now, if someone was to say to one of that tribe: “If you do this work for me today, I’ll give you as much majesty as you think the Sultan has, and give you a rank as high as a captain.” To say that is right, because, of the majesty of kingship, what enters the narrow bounds of his ideas is only the majesty of a captain.

Thus, with our worldly views and narrow minds, we cannot think as much as that primitive man of the true rewards which look to the hereafter. It is not the equivalent of the true rewards of Moses and Aaron (Peace be upon them), for according to the rule of similes and comparisons, the unknown is compared to the known; the true reward, which is unknown, for an invocation of one of God’s believing servants is compared with the rewards that we know and surmise. Moreover, the surface of the sea and the heart of a droplet are equal when it comes to holding the complete reflection of the sun. The difference is only in quality. The nature of the reward reflected in the mirrors of the ocean-like spirits of Moses and Aaron (Peace be upon them) is exactly the same in nature as the reward that a believing servant, who is like a droplet, receives from a Qur’anic verse. They are the same in nature and quantity, while their quality is dependent on capacity.

Also, it sometimes happens that a single word, a single glorification, opens

a treasury of happiness that was not opened with sixty years of service. That is to say, it sometimes happens that a single verse may be as beneficial as the Qur'an. Also, the Divine effulgence which God's Noble Messenger (PBUH), who manifested the Greatest Name, received from a single verse, may have been as much as all the effulgence one of the other prophets received. And it would not be contrary to the truth if it is said that a believer who through 'the legacy of prophethood' manifests the shadow of the Greatest Name, receives, in accordance with his own capacity and in regard to quantity, a reward as great as a prophet's effulgence. Furthermore, reward and merit are from the world of light, and one world from that world may be contained in a speck. Just as the heavens and all its stars may appear in a tiny fragment of glass, so luminous reward and merit like the heavens may be situated in an invocation or verse which acquires transparency through pure intention.

Conclusion: O unfair, unthinking, self-centred, cavilling man whose belief is weak and philosophy, strong! Consider these Ten Principles, then do not make the pretext a narration you thought was contrary to the truth and definitely opposed to reality, and point the finger of objection at Hadiths thus casting aspersions on the Noble Messenger's (PBUH) sinlessness! Because, firstly, these Ten Principles and what they entail will make you forego denial; they say: "If there is any real fault, it is ours," it may not be referred to the Hadiths. They say too: "If the fault is not real, it springs from your misunderstanding." In short; if one embarks on denial and rejection, one first has to deny these Ten Principles and show them to be false. Now, if you are fair, after pondering over these Ten Principles with due attention, do not attempt to deny a Hadith your reason considers contrary to the truth! Say, "There is either an explanation, or an interpretation, or an exegesis of this," and do not criticize it.

ELEVENTH PRINCIPLE: Just as the Qur'an has obscure verses which are in need of interpretation or else require absolute submission, Hadiths also contain difficulties like the obscurities of the Qur'an. They are sometimes in need of extremely careful expounding and interpretation. The above examples may be sufficient for you.

Yes, someone who is awake interprets the dream of another who is sleeping, and sometimes one who is sleeping hears the words spoken by those near him who are awake, but gives them a meaning and interprets them in a way that applies to his own world of sleep. O man stupified by the sleep of heedlessness and philosophy! Do not deny in your dream what One saw, who manifested the meaning of, "His eye never wavered nor did it swerve,"²² and "My eye sleeps, but my heart sleeps not,"²³ and who was truly awake and

²² Qur'an, 53:17.

²³ Bukhari, Tahajjud, 16; Tarawih, 1; Manaqib, 24; Tirmidhi, Adab, 86; Musnad, i, 274.

aware, interpret it. Yes, if a mosquito bites someone who is asleep, he sometimes dreams that he has received terrible wounds in war and this has a reality in sleep. If he was to be questioned, he would say: "Truly I have been wounded. Guns and rifles were fired at me." Those sitting by him laugh at his anguish in sleep. Thus, the sleep-stained view of heedlessness and philosophical thought certainly cannot be the criterion for the truths of prophethood.

TWELFTH PRINCIPLE: Since prophethood, the affirmation of Divine unity, and belief all look to unity, the hereafter, and Divinity, they see truth and reality in accordance with those. While philosophers and scientists look to multiplicity, causes, and nature, and see in accordance with them. Their points of view are extremely distant from one another. The greatest aim of the people of philosophy is so small and insignificant as to be imperceptible among the aims of the scholars of religion and theology.

It is because of this that scientists have advanced greatly in detailed explanation of the nature of beings and their minutest states, but they are so far behind the exalted Divine sciences and sciences concerned with the hereafter, which are true wisdom and knowledge, that they are more backward than a simple believer. Those who do not understand this mystery suppose the investigative scholars of Islam to be relatively backward to the philosophers. But how can those whose minds see no further than their eyes and are submerged in multiplicity reach those who follow elevated sacred aims through 'the legacy of prophethood'?

Furthermore, when something is considered from two points of view, it shows two different truths, and both of them may be the truth. No certain fact of science can touch the sacred truths of the Qur'an. The short hand of science cannot reach up to its pure sublimity. We shall mention an example to illustrate this:

For example, if the globe of the earth is considered from the point of view of the people of science, its reality is this: as a middle-sized planet, it revolves around the sun amid countless stars; it is a small creature in relation to the stars. But as is explained in the Fifteenth Word, if it is considered from the point of view of the people of the Qur'an, its reality is this: since man, the fruit of the world, is a most comprehensive, most wondrous, most impotent, most weak, and most subtle miracle of Divine power, the earth, his cradle and dwelling-place, is in regard to meaning and art, the universe's heart and centre; despite its smallness and lowliness in relation to the heavens, it is the display and exhibition of all the miracles of Divine art; the place of reflection and point of focus of the manifestations of all the Divine Names; the place of display and reflection of infinite dominical activity; the means and market of boundless Divine creativity and especially the munificent creation of the numerous species of plants and small animals; and the

place in small measure of samples of the creatures of the broad worlds of the hereafter; it is a rapidly working loom weaving everlasting textiles; the swiftly changing place producing views for eternal panoramas; and the narrow and temporary arable field and seed-bed producing at speed the seeds for everlasting gardens.

It is because of this vastness of meaning and importance of art of the earth that the All-Wise Qur'an holds it –like a tiny fruit of the vast tree of the heavens– equal to all the heavens, like holding a tiny heart equivalent to a huge body. It places it in one pan of a scales and places all the heavens in the other, and repeatedly says: “Sustainer of the heavens and the earth.” Compare other matters with this and understand that the soulless, dim truths of philosophy cannot clash with the brilliant, living truths of the Qur'an. Since the point of view is different, they appear differently.

FOURTH BRANCH

Are you not aware that before God prostrate themselves all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth – the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and a great number among mankind? But a great number are such as are fit for punishment; and such as God shall disgrace, none can raise to honour; for, verily, God does what He wills.²⁴

We shall point out only a single jewel from the treasure of this extensive and sublime verse. It is as follows:

The All-Wise Qur'an states clearly that everything, from the heavens to the earth, from the stars to flies, from angels to fishes, and from planets to particles, prostrates, worships, praises and glorifies Almighty God. But their worship varies according to their capacities and the Divine Names that they manifest; it is all different. We shall explain one of the varieties of their worship with a comparison.

For example, *And God's is the highest similitude*, when a mighty lord of all dominion builds a city or splendid palace, he employs four categories of workers.

THE FIRST CATEGORY are his slaves and bondsmen. This sort receive no wage or remuneration, but for each item of work that they carry out through their lord's command, they experience a subtle pleasure and pleasant eagerness. Whatever they utter by way of praise and description of their lord increases their pleasure and eagerness. Knowing their connection with their holy lord to be a great honour, they content themselves with that. Also they find pleasure from looking to their work with the view of their lord, and

²⁴ Qur'an, 22:18.

for his sake and in his name. They are not in need of any wage, rank, or remuneration.

THE SECOND CATEGORY are ordinary servants. They do not know why they are working or that they are being employed by the glorious lord. He causes them to work through his own ideas and knowledge and gives them an appropriately small wage. These servants are unaware of what various and comprehensive aims and exalted matters result as a consequence of their work. Some of them even imagine that their work concerns themselves alone and has no aim besides their wage.

THE THIRD CATEGORY: The lord of all dominion has some animals which he employs in various jobs in the construction of the city and palace. He only gives them fodder, but their working at tasks suitable for their abilities gives them pleasure. For, if a potentiality or ability is realized in action and work, there is a breathing in and expansion and this results in pleasure. The pleasure to be had from all activity stems from this. The wage and remuneration of this sort of servant, then, is only fodder and that pleasure.

THE FOURTH CATEGORY are workers who know what they are doing, and why and for whom they are working, and why the other workers are working, and what the purpose of the lord of all dominion is, and why he is causing them to work. Workers of this category are therefore bosses and supervisors over the other workers. They receive remuneration that is graded according to their rank and degree.

In exactly the same way, the Sustainer of All the Worlds, Who is the All-Glorious Lord of the heavens and the earth and the All-Beauteous Builder of this world and the hereafter, employs both angels, and animals, and inanimate beings and plants, and human beings in the palace of this world, in this realm of causality. He employs them not out of need, for the Creator of everything is He, but for certain instances of wisdom, like the functioning of His might, sublimity, and dominicality. He causes them to worship and has charged these four categories with different duties of worship.

The First Category is the angels, who are represented in the comparison by the slaves. For the angels there is no endeavour and progress; they all have their fixed station and determined rank, and receive a particular pleasure from the work itself and an emanation from their worship. That is to say, the reward of these servants is found within their duties. Just as man is nourished by air, water, light, and food, and receives pleasure from them, so are the angels nourished by the varieties of remembrance, glorification, praise, worship, knowledge, and love of God, and take pleasure in them. For, since they are created out of light, light is sufficient for their sustenance. Fragrant scents, even, which are close to light, are a sort of nourishment for them which they enjoy. Indeed, good spirits take pleasure in sweet smells.

Furthermore, there is in the tasks that the angels perform at the command of the One Whom they worship, in the work they accomplish for His sake, in the service they discharge in His name, in the supervision they execute through His favour, in the honour they gain through their connection with Him, in the immaculateness they attain through studying His dominion in both its outer face and its face which looks to Him, and in the ease they find through beholding the manifestations of His beauty and glory, such sublime bliss that the human mind cannot comprehend it, and one who is not an angel cannot perceive it.

One sort of the angels are worshippers, and the worship of another sort is in work. Of the angels of the earth, the sort that are workers have a kind of human occupation. If one may say so, one type are like shepherds and another like farmers. That is to say, the face of the earth is like a general farm and an appointed angel supervises all the species of animals within it through the command of the All-Glorious Creator, and with His permission, for His sake and through His power and strength. And for each species of animal there is a lesser angel who is appointed to act as a special shepherd.

The face of the earth is also a place of cultivation; the plants are all sown in it. There is an angel charged with supervising them in the name of God Almighty and through His power, and there are angels who are lesser than him and who worship and glorify God by supervising particular species. The Archangel Michael (Peace be upon him), who is one of the bearers of the throne of sustenance, is the most important overseer of these.

The angels who are in the position of shepherd and farmer do not bear any resemblance to human beings, for their supervision is purely for the sake of Almighty God, and in His name and through His power and command. Their supervision of animals consists only of beholding the manifestations of dominicality in the species where they are employed; studying the manifestations of power and mercy in it; making known to that species the Divine commands by way of a sort of inspiration; and in some way ordering the voluntary actions of the species.

Their supervision of the plants in the field of the earth in particular consists of representing the plants' glorification in the angelic tongue; proclaiming in the angelic tongue the salutations the plants offer to the All-Glorious Creator through their lives; and employing the faculties given to plants correctly and directing them towards certain aims and ordering them to some extent. These duties of the angels are meritorious actions of a sort by reason of the angels' faculty of will. Indeed, they are a kind of worship and adoration. But the angels have no real power of disposal, for on everything is a stamp peculiar to the Creator of all things. Another's hand cannot interfere in creation. That is to say, this sort of work of the angels forms their worship. It is not a custom like with human beings.

The Second Category of workers in this palace of the universe are animals. Since animals also have an appetitive soul and faculty of will, their work is not ‘purely for the sake of God;’ to some extent, they take a share for their souls. Therefore, since the Glorious and Munificent Lord of All Dominion is all-generous, He bestows a wage on them during their work so that their souls receive a share. For example, the All-Wise Creator employs the famous nightingale,²⁵ renowned for his love of the rose, for five aims.

First Aim: It is the official employed to proclaim in the name of the animal species the intense relationship that exists between them and the plant species.

Second Aim: It is a dominical orator from among the animals, who are like guests of the All-Merciful One needy for sustenance, employed to acclaim the gifts sent by the All-Generous Provider, and to announce their joy.

Third Aim: It is to announce to everyone the welcome offered to plants, which are sent for the assistance of his fellow animals.

Fourth Aim: It is to announce, over the blessed heads and to the beautiful faces of plants, the intense need of the animal species for them, which reaches the degree of love and passion.

Fifth Aim: It is to present with acute yearning at the Court of Mercy of the All-Glorious and Beauteous and Munificent Lord of All Dominion a most graceful glorification inspired by the truly delicate face of the rose.

There are further meanings similar to these five aims, and they are the purpose of the deeds the nightingale performs for the sake of Truth (All glory be unto Him and may He be exalted). The nightingale speaks in his own tongue, but we understand these meanings from his plaintive words. If he himself does not altogether know the meaning of his own song like the angels do, it does not impair our understanding. The saying, “One who listens understands better than the one who speaks” is well-known. Also, the nightingale does not show that he does not know these aims in detail, but this does not mean that they do not exist. At least he informs you of them like a clock informs you of the time. What difference does it make if he does not know? It does not prevent you from knowing.

However, the nightingale’s small wage is the delight he experiences from gazing on the smiling, beautiful roses, and the pleasure he receives from conversing with them and pouring out his woes. That is to say, his sorrowful song is not a complaint arising from animal grief, it is thanks in return for the gifts of the Most Merciful. Compare the bee, the spider, the ant, creeping insects, the male animals that are the means of reproduction, and the nightingales of all small creatures, with the nightingale: the deeds of all of them

²⁵ Since the nightingale speaks poetically, our discussion also becomes poetic for a bit. But it is not imaginary, it is the truth.

have numerous aims. For them, too, a particular pleasure, like a small wage, has been included in their duties. Through that pleasure, they serve the important aims contained in dominical art. Just as an ordinary seaman acts as helmsman on an imperial ship and receives a small wage, so do the animals employed in duties of glorification each receive a small wage.

An Addendum to the Discussion on the Nightingale: However, do not suppose this proclaiming and heralding and these songs of glorification are peculiar to the nightingale. In most species there is a class similar to the nightingale that consists of a fine individual or individuals which represent the finest feelings of that species with the finest glorification and finest poetry. The nightingales of flies and insects, in particular, are both numerous and various. Through their humming poetry they make all animals with ears, from the largest to the smallest, hear their glorifications, and give them pleasure.

Some of them are nocturnal. These poetry-declaming friends of all small animals are their sweet-voiced orators when all beings are plunged into the silence and tranquillity of the night. Each is the centre of a circle of silent recollection, an assembly in solitude, to which all the others listen, and, in a fashion, recollect and extol the All-Glorious Creator in their own hearts.

Another sort are diurnal. By day, in spring and summer, they proclaim the mercy of the Most Merciful and Compassionate One to all animate beings from the pulpits of the trees with their ringing voices, subtle songs, and poetic glorifications. It is as if, like the leader of a gathering for the recitation of God's Names induces the ecstasy of those participating, all the creatures listening start to praise the All-Glorious Creator each in its own special tongue and with a particular chant.

That is to say, every sort of being, and even the stars, have a chief-reciter and light-scattering nightingale. But the most excellent, the most noble, the most luminous, the most dazzling, the greatest and the most honourable nightingale, whose voice was the most ringing, whose attributes the most brilliant, whose recitation the most complete, whose thanks the most universal, whose essence was the most perfect, and whose form the most beautiful, who brought all the beings of the heavens and the earth in the garden of the universe to ecstasy and rapture through his subtle poetry, his sweet song, his exalted glorification, was the glorious nightingale of human kind, the nightingale of the Qur'an: Muhammad the Arabian, Upon whom and upon whose Family and those who resemble him be the best of blessings and peace.

To Conclude: The animals, who serve in the palace of the universe, conform with complete obedience to the creational commands and display perfectly in the name of Almighty God the aims included in their natures. The glorification and worship they perform by carrying out the duties related to

their lives in this wonderful fashion through the power of God Almighty, are gifts and salutations which they present to the Court of the All-Glorious Creator, the Bestower of Life.

The Third Category of Workers are plants and inanimate creatures. Since they have no faculty of will, they receive no wage. Their work is ‘purely for the sake of God,’ and in His name, on His account, and through His will, power and strength. However, it may be perceived from their growth and development that they receive a sort of pleasure from their duties of pollination and producing seeds and fruits. But they experience no pain at all. Due to their will, animals experience pain as well as pleasure. Since will does not enter into the work of plants and inanimate beings, their work is more perfect than that of animals, who have will. Among those who possess will, the work of creatures like the bee which are enlightened by revelation and inspiration is more perfect than the work of those animals which rely on their faculty of will.

All the species of plants in the field of the face of the earth pray and ask of the All-Wise Creator through their tongues of disposition and potentiality: “O our Sustainer! Give us strength so that by raising the flag of our species in every part of the earth, we may proclaim the splendour of Your dominicality; and grant us prosperity so that we may worship You in every corner of the mosque of the earth; and bestow on us the power to spread and travel in order to exhibit through our particular tongue the embroideries of Your Most Beautiful Names and Your wonderful, antique arts.”

The All-Wise Creator answers their silent prayer and bestows on the seeds of one species tiny wings made of hair: they fly away spreading everywhere. They cause the Divine Names to be read in the name of their species. (Like the seeds of most thorned plants and some yellow flowers.) He gives to some species beautiful flesh that is either necessary or pleasant for human beings; He causes man to serve them and plant them everywhere. To some He gives, covering a hard and indigestible bone, flesh that animals eat so that they disperse the seeds over a wide area. On some He bestows small claws that grip onto all who touch them; moving on to other places, they raise the flag of the species and exhibit the antique art of the All-Glorious Maker. And to some species, like the bitter melon, He gives the force of a buckshot rifle so that, when the time is ripe, the small melons which are its fruits, fall and fire out their seeds like shot to a distance of several metres, and sow them. They work so that numerous tongues will glorify the All-Glorious Creator and recite His Beautiful Names. You may think of other examples in the same way.

The All-Wise Creator, Who is All-Powerful and All-Knowing, has created everything beautifully and with perfect order. He has fitted them out beautifully, turned their faces towards beautiful aims, employed them in

beautiful duties, caused them to utter beautiful glorifications and to worship beautifully. O man! If indeed you are a human being, do not confuse nature, chance, futility, and misguidance with these beautiful matters. Do not make them ugly. Do not act in an ugly fashion. Do not be ugly!

The Fourth Category are human beings. Human beings, who are servants of a sort in the palace of the universe, resemble both angels and animals. They resemble angels in universality of worship, extensiveness of supervision, comprehensiveness of knowledge, and in being heralds of Divine dominicality. However, man is more comprehensive in his worship, but since he has an appetitive soul that is disposed towards evil, contrary to the angels, he is subject to progress and decline, which is of great importance. Also, since in his work man seeks pleasure for his soul and a share for himself, he resembles an animal. Since this is so, man receives two wages: the first is insignificant, animal, and immediate; the second, angelic, universal, and postponed.

Now, man's duty and his wages, and his progress and decline, have been discussed in part in all thirty-three of the Words, and have been explained in greater detail in the Eleventh and Twenty-Third Words in particular. We shall therefore cut short the discussion here and close the door. And beseeching the Most Merciful to open to us the gates of His mercy, and seeking forgiveness for our faults and errors, we conclude it here.

FIFTH BRANCH

The Fifth Branch has five 'Fruits'.

FIRST FRUIT

O my self-worshipping soul! O my world-worshipping friend! Love is the cause of the universe's existence, and what binds it; and it is both the light of the universe and its life. Since man is the most comprehensive fruit of the universe, a love that will conquer the universe has been included in his heart, the seed of that fruit. Thus, only one possessing infinite perfection may be worthy of such an infinite love.

O soul and O friend! Two faculties, through which one may experience fear and love, have been included in man's nature. This love and fear are bound to be turned towards either creatures or Creator. However, fear of creatures is a grievous affliction, while love for them is a calamitous tribulation. For you will fear people who will neither pity you nor accept your pleas for mercy. So fear is a grievous calamity. As for love, the one you love will either not recognize you or will depart without bidding you farewell. Like your youth and property. Or else he will despise you because of your love. Have you not noticed that in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases of metaphorical love, the lover complains about the beloved. For to love and idol

ize worldly beloveds with the inner heart, which is the mirror of the Eternally Besought One, oppresses the beloved, and he finds it disagreeable and rejects it. Because man's nature rejects and casts away things that are contrary to it and unworthy of it. (Physical loves are outside our discussion.)

That is to say, the things you love either will not recognize you, or they will scorn you, or they will not accompany you. They will part from you in spite of you. Since this is so, direct your fear and love to the One by Whom your fear will become pleasurable abasement, and your love, shadowless happiness. Yes, to fear the Glorious Creator means finding a way to His compassionate mercy, and taking refuge in it. Fear is a whip; it drives you into the embrace of His mercy. It is well-known that a mother gently scares her infant, for example, and draws it to her breast. The fear is most pleasurable for the child, because it drives him to her tender embrace. Whereas the tenderness of all mothers is but a flash of Divine mercy. That means there is a supreme pleasure in fear of God. If there is such pleasure in fear of God, it is clear what infinite pleasure there is to be found in love of God. Moreover, one who fears God is saved from the calamitous and distressing fear of others. Also, because it is for God's sake, the love he has for creatures is not tinged with sorrow and separation.

Indeed, man loves firstly himself, then his relations, then his nation, then living creatures, then the universe, and the world. He is connected with all these spheres. He may receive pleasure at their pleasure and pain at their pain. However, since nothing is stable in this world of upheavals and revolutions swift as the wind, man's wretched heart is constantly wounded. The things his hands cling onto tear at them as they depart, even severing them. He remains in perpetual distress, or else plunges into heedless drunkenness. Since it is thus, my soul, if you have sense, gather together all those loves and give them to their true owner; be saved from those calamities. These infinite loves are particular to One possessing infinite perfection and beauty. When you give it to its true owner, you will be able to love everything without distress in His name and as His mirrors. That means this love should not be spent directly on the universe. Otherwise, while being a delicious bounty, it becomes a grievous affliction.

There is another aspect besides, O soul! and it is the most important. You spend all your love on yourself. You make your own soul your object of worship and beloved. You sacrifice everything for your soul. Simply, you ascribe to it a sort of dominicality. Whereas the cause of love is either perfection, because perfection is loved for itself, or it is benefit, or it is pleasure, or it is goodness, or causes like these. Now, O soul! In several of the Words we have proved decisively that your essential nature is kneaded out of fault, deficiency, poverty, and impotence, and like the relative degree of darkness and obscurity shows the brightness of light, with regard to opposites, you act

as a mirror through them to the perfection, beauty, power, and mercy of the Beauteous Creator. That means O soul, that it is not love you should have for your soul, but enmity, or you should pity it, or after it is at peace, have compassion on it. If you love your soul because it is the source of pleasure and benefit and you are captivated by their delights, do not prefer the pleasure and benefit of the soul, which is a mere jot, to infinite pleasure and benefits. Do not resemble a fire-fly. For it drowns all your friends and the things you love in the darkness of desolation and suffices with a tiny glimmer in itself. You should love a Pre-Eternal Beloved on Whose gracious favours are dependent all the pleasures and benefits of your soul together with all the benefits and bounties and creatures of the universe with which you are connected and from which you profit and through whose happiness you are happy, so then you may take pleasure at both your own and their happiness, and receive an infinite pleasure from the love of the Absolutely Perfect One.

Anyway, your intense love for yourself and your soul is love for the Divine Essence which you misuse and spend on your own self. In which case, rend the egotism in your soul and show Him. All your loves dispersed through the universe are love given to you to spend on His Names and attributes. You have used it wrongly and you are suffering the penalty. For the penalty for an illicit, mis-spent love is merciless torment. For sure, one particle of the love of a Pre-Eternal Beloved Who, through the Names of Most Merciful and Compassionate, has prepared a dwelling like Paradise adorned with houris for you in which all your bodily desires will be gratified, and through others of His Names has readied for you in that Paradise everlasting favours that will satisfy all the longings of your spirit, heart, mind, and other subtle inner faculties, and in all of Whose Names are contained many treasuries of grace and munificence – one particle of His love may take the place of the whole universe. But the universe cannot take the place of even a particular manifestation of His love. In which case, heed this Pre-Eternal Decree which that Pre-Eternal Beloved caused His own Beloved to announce, and follow it:

*If you love God, follow me, and God will love you.*²⁶

SECOND FRUIT

O soul! Worship is not the introduction to additional rewards, but the result of previous bounties. Yes, we have received our wage, and are accordingly charged with the duties of service and worship. Because, O soul!, since the All-Glorious Creator, Who clothed you in existence which is pure good, has given you a stomach and appetite, through His Name of Provider, He has placed before you all foods on a table of bounties. Then, since He has given you a life decked out with senses, life too requires sustenance like a

²⁶ Qur'an, 3:31.

stomach; all your senses like eyes and ears are like hands before which He has placed a table of bounties as broad as the earth. Then, because He has given you humanity, which requires many immaterial foods and bounties, He has laid out before that stomach of humanity, in so far as the hand of the mind can reach, an extensive table of bounties as broad as the worlds of both the inner and outer dimensions of things. Then, since He has given you Islam and belief, which require infinite bounties and are nourished through countless fruits of mercy and are supreme humanity, He has opened up before you a table of bounties, pleasure, and happiness which includes the sphere of contingency together with the sphere of His sacred Names and attributes. Then, through giving you love, which is a light of belief, He has bestowed on you an endless table of bounties, happiness, and pleasure. That is to say, with regard to your corporeality you are an insignificant, weak, impotent, lowly, restricted, limited particular, but through His favour, you have as though risen from being an insignificant particular to being a universal, luminous whole. For by giving you life, He has raised you from particularity to a sort of universality; and by giving you humanity, to true universality; and by bestowing Islam on you, to an exalted, luminous universality; and by giving you knowledge and love of Him, He has elevated you to an all-encompassing light.

O soul! You have received this wage, and you are charged with the pleasurable, bountiful, easy, and light duty of worship. But you are lazy in this too. If you perform it half-heartedly, it is as though the former wages are insufficient for you and you are overbearingly wanting greater things. Also, you are complaining: “Why was my prayer not accepted?” But your right is not complaint, it is supplication. Through His pure grace and munificence, Almighty God bestows Paradise and eternal happiness. So seek refuge in His mercy and munificence constantly. Trust in Him and heed this decree:

Say: “In the bounty of God, and His mercy –in that let them rejoice;” that is better than the [wealth] they hoard.²⁷

If you say: “How can I respond to these countless, universal bounties with my limited and partial thanks?”

The Answer: With a universal intention and boundless belief... For example, a man enters a king’s presence with a gift worth five kurush, and he sees that other gifts worth millions have arrived from acceptable people, and have been lined up there. It occurs to him: “My present is nothing. What shall I do?” Then he says suddenly: “My Lord! I offer you all these valuable gifts in my name. For you are worthy of them. If I had the power, I would have given you gifts equal to them.” Thus, the king, who has need of

²⁷ Qur’an, 10:58.

nothing and accepts his subjects' gifts as a sign of their loyalty and respect, accepts that wretched man's universal intention and wish, and the worthiness of his elevated belief as though it was the greatest gift.

In exactly the same way, while performing the five daily prayers an impotent servant of Almighty God declares: "Salutations be to God!" That is, "I offer You on my own account all the gifts of worship all creatures offer you through their lives. If I had been able, I would have offered You as many salutations as them, for You are worthy of them, and worthy of more besides." Such an intention and belief comprise extensive universal thanks. The seeds and grains of plants are their intentions.

And for example, the melon utters a thousand intentions in its heart in the form of the nuclei of its seeds: "O my Creator! I want to proclaim the embroideries of Your Most Beautiful Names in many places on the earth." Since Almighty God knows how future things will come about, He accepts their intention as actual worship. The rule, "A believer's intention is better than his actions"²⁸ alludes to this mystery. The wisdom in offering glorifications in also infinite numbers is understood from this mystery. For instance:

*Glory and praise be unto You to the number of Your creatures, that may be as pleasing to You as the extent of Your Throne and the ink of Your words, and we glorify You with all the glorifications of Your prophets and saints and angels.*²⁹

Just as an officer presents all the duties of his soldiers to the king in his own name, so man, who acts as officer to other creatures, commands the animals and plants, has the capacity to be vicegerent over the beings of the earth, and in his own world considers himself to represent everyone, declares:

*You alone do we worship, and from You alone do we seek help;*³⁰

He offers the worship and seeking of help of all creation to the All-Glorious True Object of Worship in his own name. He also says:

O God! Grant blessings to Muhammad to the number of the particles in existence and all their compounds!

He offers benedictions for the Prophet (PBUH) in the name of everything. Because everything is connected with the Muhammadan Light. Thus, you may understand the wisdom in the countless numbers mentioned in the glorifications and benedictions for the Prophet (PBUH).

²⁸ al-Manawi, *al-Fayd al-Qadr*, vi, 291, No: 9295.

²⁹ *Muslim*, Dhikr, 79; *Tirmidhi*, Da'wat, 103; *Nasa'i*, Sahw, 94; *Musnad*, i, 258, 353.

³⁰ Qur'an, 1:4.

THIRD FRUIT

O soul! If, in a brief life, you want to do something that will profit you infinitely in the hereafter, and you want every moment of your life to be as beneficial as a life-time, and if you want to transform your habitual actions into worship and your heedlessness into awareness of the Divine presence, follow the Illustrious Practices of the Prophet (PBUH). For when you apply your actions to the rulings of the Shari'a, it affords a sort of awareness of God's presence; it becomes worship of a sort and yields many fruits for the hereafter. For example, you bought something. The moment you applied what is acceptable and required by the Shari'a, that ordinary act of shopping acquired the value of worship. Recalling the injunctions of the Shari'a calls to mind Revelation. And by thinking of the Lawgiver, you are turned towards God. And that makes you aware of His presence. That means, in applying the Illustrious Sunna to your actions, are advantages like making this fleeting life the means of gaining an everlasting life which produces eternal fruits. Heed the decree:

*So believe in God and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in God and His Word: follow him that you may be guided.*³¹

Try to reflect comprehensively the effulgence and manifestation of all of the Most Beautiful Names, whose manifestations are diffused within the ordinances of the Shari'a and Illustrious Sunna...

FOURTH FRUIT

O soul! Do not look at the worldly, and especially the dissipated and the unbelievers, and be deceived by their superficial glitter and illicit pleasures; do not imitate them. For even if you do imitate them, you will not be like them; you will decline immeasurably. You cannot be an animal even. For the intellect in your head becomes an inauspicious tool which constantly beats you over the head. For example, there is a palace and in one of its large apartments is a powerful electric lamp. Small electric lights which branch out from it and are attached to it have been divided among its small apartments. Now, someone touches the switch of the big light and turns it off; all the apartments are plunged into deep darkness and desolation. Another palace has small electric lights in all its apartments which are not connected to the large light. If the owner of the latter palace presses the switch of the large electric light and turns it off, there may still be lights on in the other apartments by which he can carry out his work, and which will not allow thieves to profit from the darkness.

O soul! The first palace is a Muslim and the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) is the large electric light in his heart. If he

³¹ Qur'an, 7:158.

forgets him, or (I seek refuge with God from Satan the Accursed) he expels him from his heart, he will accept none of the other prophets, indeed, no place will remain in his spirit for any perfection. He will not even recognize His Sustainer. All the apartments and subtle faculties in his nature will be plunged into darkness, and there will be a terrible destruction and desolation in his heart. How will he profit in the face of this destruction and desolation, where will he find familiarity? What benefit will he secure which will repair the damage? However, Europeans resemble the second palace; even if they cast out from their hearts the light of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), lights of a sort may remain, or they suppose they remain. They may continue to have a sort of belief in their Creator and in Moses and Jesus (Peace be upon them), which will allow them to attain good morals and character.

O my evil-commanding soul! If you say: "I am not a European and I want to be an animal," how many times have I told you: "You cannot be an animal. For there is intelligence in your head, and it strikes your face, eyes, and head with the pains of the past and fears of the future, and beats you. It adds a thousand pains to one pleasure. Whereas animals receive pleasure without pain. So first pluck out your intelligence and throw it away, then be an animal! You will also receive the chastening slap of 'Like cattle, nay, they are further astray.'"³²

FIFTH FRUIT

O my soul! As we have stated repeatedly, since man is the fruit of the tree of creation, he is a creature which, like a fruit, is the furthest and most comprehensive and looks to everything, and bears the seed of a heart which holds within it the aspects of unity of everything, and whose face looks to multiplicity, transience, and the world. As for worship, it is a line of union which turns his face from transience to permanence, from creation to Creator, from multiplicity to unity, and from the extremity to the source, or it is a point of union between the source and the extremity. If a valuable, conscious fruit which will form a seed looks to the living creatures beneath the tree, and relying on its beauty throws itself into their hands; if being heedless, it falls; it will fall to their hands and be smashed, and will go for nothing like a common fruit. But if the fruit finds its point of support, and it is able to think that by the seed within it holding the aspects of unity of the whole tree, it will be the means of tree's continuance and the continued existence of the tree's reality, then a single seed within that single fruit will manifest a perpetual universal truth within an everlasting life.

In the same way, if man plunges into multiplicity, is drowned in the

³² Qur'an, 7:179.

universe and intoxicated by love of the world, is deceived by the smiles of ephemeral beings and casts himself into their arms, he certainly falls into infinite loss. He falls into both transitoriness, and ephemerality, and non-existence. In effect he sentences himself to death. But if he listens with the ear of his heart to the lessons in belief from the tongue of the Qur'an and raises his head and turns towards unity, he may rise through the ascension of worship to the throne of perfections. He may become an eternal man.

O my soul! Since the reality is thus, and since you are a member of the nation of Abraham (Peace be upon him), like Abraham, say: "I love not those that set."³³ Turn your face to the Eternal Beloved and weep the following lines like me. The Persian verses to be included here have been included in the Second Station of the Seventeenth Word, and have not been repeated here.

³³ Qur'an, 6:76.

The Twenty-Fifth Word

The Miraculousness of the Qur'an

While there is a perpetual miracle like the Qur'an, searching for further proof appears to my mind as superfluous;

While there is a proof of reality like the Qur'an, would silencing those who deny it weigh heavily on my heart?

A REMINDER

[At the start, our intention was to write this Word in the form of five 'Lights', but at the end of the First Light, we were compelled to write extremely fast in order to print it in the old [Ottoman] script.¹ On some days even we wrote twenty to thirty pages in two or three hours. Therefore, writing three Lights in a brief and concise manner, we have for now abandoned the last two. I hope that my brothers will look fairly and with tolerance at any faults and defects, difficulties and mistakes, which may be attributed to me.]

Most of the verses in this treatise of *The Miraculousness of the Qur'an* have either been the cause of criticism by atheists, or have been objected to by scientists, or have been the subject of doubt and misgiving by satans among jinn and men. Thus, this Twenty-Fifth Word has explained the truths and fine points of those verses in such a way that the very points which the atheists and scientists imagined to be faults have been proved according to scholarly principles to be flashes of miraculousness and the sources of the perfections of the Qur'an's eloquence. In order not to cause aversion, decisive answers have been given without mentioning their doubts. Only, in the first Station of the Twentieth Word their doubts have been stated concerning three or four verses, like, *And the mountains [its] pegs,*² and, *And the sun runs its course.*³

¹ According to a law passed in November 1928, the Arabic (Ottoman) alphabet was banned from the end of that year, and the Latin alphabet officially adopted. [Tr.]

² Qur'an, 78:7.

³ Qur'an, 36:38.

Also, although this treatise of *The Miraculousness of the Qur'an* was written very concisely and with great speed, with regard to the science of rhetoric and sciences of Arabic, it is explained in a way so learned and profound and powerful that it has caused wonder to scholars. Although everyone who studies it will not understand all the matters discussed, there is a significant share for everyone in this garden. In spite of the defects in the phraseology and manner of expression due to its being written very fast and under confused conditions, it explains the truth and reality of most important matters.

Said Nursi

The Miraculousness of the Qur'an

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

*Say: If all mankind and all jinn were to come together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to help and support each other.*⁴

[Of the innumerable aspects of the miraculousness of the All-Wise Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, the treasury of miracles and greatest miracle of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), I have pointed out close on forty in my Arabic treatises, in the Arabic *Risale-i Nur*, in my Qur'anic commentary called *Isharat al-I'jaz* (Signs of Miraculousness), and in the preceding twenty-four Words. Now I shall explain to a degree only five of those aspects and include within them briefly the other aspects, and in an Introduction give a definition of the Qur'an and indicate its nature.]

INTRODUCTION

The Introduction consists of three parts.

FIRST PART: WHAT IS THE QUR'AN? How is it defined?

Answer: As is explained in the Nineteenth Word and proved in other Words, THE QUR'AN is the pre-eternal translator of the mighty Book of the Universe; the post-eternal interpreter of the various tongues reciting the verses of creation; the commentator of the book of the Worlds of the Seen and the Unseen; the revealer of the treasuries of the Divine Names hidden in

⁴ Qur'an, 17:88.

the heavens and on the earth; the key to the truths concealed beneath the lines of events; the tongue of the Unseen World in the Manifest World; the treasury of the post-eternal favours of the Most Merciful and of the pre-eternal addresses of the Most Holy, which come from the World of the Unseen beyond the veil of this Manifest World; it is the sun, foundation, and plan of the spiritual world of Islam; the sacred map of the worlds of the hereafter; the expounding word, lucid exposition, decisive proof, and clear interpreter of the Divine Essence, attributes, Names, and functions; it is the instructor of the world of humanity; the light and water of Islam, the macroanthropos; the true wisdom of mankind; and the true guide and leader urging humanity to prosperity and happiness; it is a both a book of law, and a book of prayer, and a book of wisdom, and a book of worship, and a book of command and summons, and a book of invocation, and a book of thought, and a unique, comprehensive sacred book comprising many books to which recourse may be had for all the needs of all mankind; it is a revealed scripture resembling a sacred library which offers treatises suitable for all the various ways and different paths of the all the saints and the veracious ones and the wise and the learned, which is appropriate for the illuminations of each way and enlightens it, and is suitable for the course of each path and depicts it.

SECOND PART and complement to the definition:

As is explained and proved in the Twelfth Word, since THE QUR'AN has come from the Sublime Throne and the Greatest Name, and from the highest degree of each Name, it is God's Word in regard to His being Sustainer of All The Worlds; it is a Divine decree through His title of God of All Beings; it is an address in the name of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth; it is a conversation in respect of absolute dominicality; it is a pre-eternal discourse on account of universal Divine sovereignty; it is a notebook of the favours of the Most Merciful from the point of view of all-embracing, all-encompassing Divine mercy; it is a collection of addresses at the start of which are certain ciphers in respect of the tremendousness of Divine majesty; and through its descent from the comprehensiveness of the Greatest Name, it is a holy scripture full of wisdom which looks to and inspects all sides of the Sublime Throne.

It is because of this mystery that with complete fitness the title of the Word of God has been given to the Qur'an, and is always given. After the Qur'an comes the level of the books and scriptures of the other prophets. However, those other innumerable Divine Words are each in the form of inspiration made manifest through a special regard, a partial title, a particular manifestation, a particular Name, a special dominicality, a particular sovereignty, a special mercy. The inspirations of the angels and man and the animals vary greatly with regard to universality and particularity.

THIRD PART: THE QUR'AN is a revealed scripture which contains in summary the books of all the prophets, whose times were all different, the writings of all the saints, whose paths are all different, and the works of all the purified scholars, whose ways are all different. Its six aspects are all brilliant and refined of the darkness of doubts and scepticism; its point of support is certain heavenly revelation and the pre-eternal Word; its aim and goal is self-evidently eternal happiness; its inner aspect is clearly pure guidance; its upper aspect is necessarily the lights of belief; its lower aspect is undeniably evidence and proof; its right aspect is evidently the surrender of the heart and conscience; its left aspect is manifestly the subjugation of the reason and intellect; its fruit is indisputably the mercy of the Most Merciful and the realm of Paradise; and its rank and desirability are assuredly accepted by the angels and man and the jinn.

Each of the attributes in these three parts concerning the Qur'an's definition have been proved decisively in other places, or they will be proved. Our claims are not isolated; each may be proved with clear proofs.

FIRST LIGHT

This Light consists of three 'Rays'.

FIRST RAY: This is the eloquence of the Qur'an, which is at the degree of miraculousness. Its eloquence is a wonderful eloquence born of the beauty of its word-order, the perfection of its conciseness, the marvels of its style, its singularity and pleasantness, the excellence of its expression, its superiority and clarity, the power and truth of its meanings, and from the purity and fluency of its language, which for one thousand three hundred years has challenged the most brilliant men of letters of mankind, their most celebrated orators, and the most profoundly learned of them, and invited them to dispute it. It has provoked them intensely. And although it has invited them to dispute it, those geniuses, whose heads touch the skies in their pride and conceit, have been unable to so much as open their mouths to do so, and have bowed their heads utterly humiliated. Thus, we shall point to the miraculousness in its eloquence in two 'Aspects'.

First Aspect: It possesses miraculousness and its miraculousness exists for the following reasons. The great majority of the people of the Arabian Peninsula at that time were illiterate. Due to this, rather than in writing, they preserved the sources of their pride, historical events and stories encouraging good morality, by means of poetry and eloquence. Due to the attraction of poetry and eloquence, meaningful sayings would remain in people's memories and be passed down the generations. In consequence of this innate need, therefore, the goods most in demand in the immaterial market of that people were eloquence and fine speech. A tribe's poet or orator was like its greatest national hero. It was he who was their greatest source of

pride. Thus, among the peoples of the world, the eloquence and rhetoric of that intelligent people, who due to their intelligence ruled the world after the establishment of Islam, was at the highest and most advanced degree. It was the thing most highly prized among them that they felt greatest need of, and was their cause of pride. They attached such value to eloquence that two tribes would do battle at the word of a poet or orator, and they would make peace at his word. They even wrote in gold on the walls of the Ka'ba the seven qasidas of seven poets called the *al-Mu'allaqat al-Sab'a*, and took great pride in them. It was at such a time when eloquence was thus most sought after that the Qur'an was revealed. Just as at the time of Moses (Peace be upon him) it was magic that was most sought after and at the time of Jesus (Peace be upon him), it was medicine. The most important of their miracles were in those fields.

The Qur'an, therefore, invited the Arabian orators of that time to reply to even one of the shortest of the Suras. It challenged them with the decree of:

*And if you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a Sura resembling it.*⁵

It also said: "If you do not believe, you shall be damned and shall go to Hell." It provoked them intensely. It smashed their pride in fearsome manner. It was contemptuous of their arrogant minds. It condemned them firstly to eternal extinction and then to eternal extinction in Hell, as well as to worldly extinction. It said: "Either dispute me, or you and your property shall perish."

If it had been possible to dispute the Qur'an, is it at all possible that while there was an easy solution like disputing it with one or two lines and nullifying the claim, they should have chosen the most dangerous and most difficult, the way of war? Yes, is it at all possible that that clever people, that politically-minded nation, who at one time were to govern the world through politics, should have abandoned the shortest, easiest, and most light way, and chosen the most dangerous, which was going to cast their lives and all their property into peril? For if their literary figures had been able to dispute it with a few words, the Qur'an would have given up its claim, and they would have been saved from material and moral disaster. Whereas they chose a perilous, lengthy road like war. That means it was not possible to dispute in by word; it was impossible, so they were compelled to fight it with the sword.

Furthermore, there are two compelling reasons for the Qur'an being imitated. The first is its enemies' ambition to dispute it, the other, its friends' pleasure at imitating it. Impelled by these, millions of books in Arabic have

⁵ Qur'an, 2:23.

been written, but not one of them resembles the Qur'an. Whether learned or ignorant, whoever looks at it and at them is bound to say: "The Qur'an does not resemble these. Not one of them has been able to imitate it." The Qur'an is therefore either inferior to all of them, and according to the consensus of friend and foe alike, this is completely non-valid and impossible, or the Qur'an is superior to all of them.

If you say: "How do you know that no one has tried to dispute it, and that no one has had sufficient confidence to challenge it, and that no one's help for anyone else was of any avail?"

The Answer: If it had been possible to dispute it, most certainly it would have been attempted. For it was a question of honour and pride, and life and property were at risk. If it had been attempted, numerous people would have supported such an attempt. For those who obstinately oppose the truth have always been many. And if many people had supported it, they surely would have found fame. For insignificant contests, even, attracted the wonder of people and found fame in stories and tales. So an extraordinary contest and event such as that would never have remained secret. The most ugly and infamous things against Islam have been passed down and become famous, but apart from one or two stories about Musaylima the Liar, no such thing has been related. Musaylima was very eloquent, but when compared with the exposition of the Qur'an, which possesses infinite beauty, his words passed into the chronicles as nonsense. Thus, the miraculousness of the Qur'an's eloquence is as certain as twice two equals four; and that is how it is.

Second Aspect: We shall now explain in five 'Points' the wisdom of the Qur'an's miraculousness contained in its eloquence.

First Point: There is a wonderful eloquence and purity of style in the Qur'an's word-order. From beginning to end, *Isharat al-I'jaz* (Signs of Miraculousness) demonstrates this eloquence and conciseness in the word-order. The way the second, minute, and hour hands of a clock each complete the order of the others, that is the way all the sentences of the All-Wise Qur'an, and its words, and the order in the relationships between the sentences and words, have been expounded in *Isharat al-I'jaz*, from its first page to its last. Whoever wishes may look at that and see this wonderful eloquence in the word-order. Here, we shall mention one or two examples in order to demonstrate the word-order in the parts of a sentence. For example:

*But if a breath of your Sustainer's punishment touches them.*⁶

In this sentence, it wants to point out the punishment as terrible through showing the severity of the least amount. That is to say, it expresses littleness or fewness, and all the parts of the sentence look also to this littleness

⁶ Qur'an, 21:46.

or fewness and reinforce it. Thus, the words, But if signify doubt, and doubt looks to littleness or fewness. The word touches means to touch lightly and expresses a small amount. And just as the word a breath is merely a whiff, so is it in the singular form. Grammatically it is a *masdar marra* and signifies once. Also the *tanwin* indicating indefiniteness in a breathe expresses littleness or fewness and means it is so insignificant that it can scarcely be known. The word of signifies division or a part; it means a bit and indicates paucity. The word punishment points to a light sort of punishment in relation to chastisement (*nakal*) or penalty (*i'qab*), and suggests a small amount. And by alluding to compassion and being used in place of Subduer, All-Compelling, or Avenger, the word Sustainer indicates littleness or fewness. It says, if the small amount of punishment suggested in all this paucity has such an effect, you can compare how dreadful Divine chastisement would be. How much then do the small parts of this sentence look to one another and assist one another! How each reinforces the aim of the whole! This example looks to the words and aim to a small degree.

Second Example:

*And spend [in God's way] out of what We have bestowed on them as sustenance.*⁷

The parts of this sentence point out five of the conditions which make almsgiving acceptable.

First Condition: This is to give only so much alms as will not cause the giver to be in need of receiving alms himself. It states this condition through the division or parts signified by out of in the words out of what.

Second Condition: It is not to take from 'Ali and give to Wali, but to give out of a one's own property. The words We have bestowed on them as sustenance express this condition. It means: "Give out of the sustenance that is yours."

Third Condition: This is not to place an obligation on the recipient. The word We in We have bestowed on them as sustenance states this condition. That is to say: "I give you the sustenance. When you give some of My property to one of My servants, you cannot place them under an obligation."

Fourth Condition: You should give it to a person who will spend it on his livelihood, for alms given to those who will squander it idly is not acceptable. The word spend points to this condition.

Fifth Condition: This is to give in God's name. The words We bestow on them as sustenance states this. That is to say: "The property is Mine; you should give it in My name."

⁷ Qur'an, 2:3.

These conditions may be extended. That is, the form almsgiving should take, with what goods. It may be given as learning and knowledge. It may be given as words, or as acts, or as advice. The word *what* in *out of what* indicates these various sorts through its generality. Furthermore, it indicates this with the sentence itself, because it is absolute and expresses generality. Thus, with the five conditions in this short sentence describing almsgiving, it opens up a broad field before the mind, granting it to it through the sentence as a whole. Thus, in the sentence as a whole, the word-order has many aspects.

Similarly, the word-order between words encompasses a broad sphere and has many aspects. And between phrases. For example, *Say: He is God, the One*⁸ contains six sentences. Three of them are positive and three negative. It proves six degrees of Divine unity and at the same time refutes six ways of associating partners with God. Each sentence is both the proof of the other sentences and the result. For each sentence has two meanings. Through one meaning it is the result, and through the other the proof. That is to say, within Sura al-Ikhlās are thirty suras composed of proofs that demonstrate each another to be as well-ordered as the Sura itself. For example:

Say, He is God, because He is One, because He is the Eternally Besought, because He begets not, because He is not begotten, because there is none that is equal to Him.

And:

And there is none that is equal to Him, because He is not begotten, because He begets not, because He is Eternally Besought, because He is One, because He is God.

And:

He is God, so He is One, so He is the Eternally Besought, so He begets not, so He is not begotten, so there is none that is equal to Him.

You can continue in the same way.

A further example:

*Alif. Lam. Mim. * This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those who fear God.*⁹

Each of these four phrases has two meanings. With one meaning each is a proof of the other phrases, with the other, it is their result. From the sixteen threads of their relationships, a miraculous word-order embroidery is wrought. It is described thus in *Isharat al-I'jaz*. Also, as is explained in the Thirteenth Word, it is as though all the Qur'an's verses have eyes that see most of the other verses and faces that look to them, so that each extends to the others the immaterial threads of relationship; each weaves a miraculous

⁸ Qur'an, 112:1.

⁹ Qur'an, 2:1-2.

embroidery. From beginning to end *Isharat al-I'jaz* expounds this beauty and eloquence of the word-order.

Second Point: This is the wonderful eloquence in its meaning. Consider this example, which is explained in the Thirteenth Word. For example, if you want to understand the eloquence of the verse,

*All that is in the heavens and on the earth extols and glorifies God, for He is the Tremendous, the Wise,*¹⁰

imagine yourself in the Age of Ignorance in the deserts of barbarism before the Light of the Qur'an. Then, at a time everything is swathed in the darkness of ignorance and heedlessness and enveloped in the lifeless veils of nature, you hear verses from the heavenly tongue of the Qur'an like:

All that is in the heavens and on the earth extols and glorifies God,

or,

*The heavens and the earth and all within them extol and glorify Him.*¹¹

Now look! See how the dead or sleeping creatures in the world are raised to life in the minds of listeners at the sound of *extols and glorifies Him*; how they become conscious, and rise up and recite God's Names. And how at the cry and light of *extols and glorifies Him* the stars, which had been lifeless lumps of fire in the black skies, all appear in the view of those who hear it as wisdom-displaying words in the mouth of the sky and truth-pronouncing lights. The earth, too, rather than being a desolate wasteland is seen to be a head with the land and sea as tongues, and animals and plants as words of glorification and praise.

Now consider this example, which is proved in the Fifteenth Word. Listen to these verses. What do they say?

*O you company of jinn and men! If you can pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, pass beyond them! But you will not be able to pass beyond them save with authority [given by God]. * Which then, of the blessings of your Sustainer do you deny? * A flash of fire, and smoke, will be sent on you, and no succour shall you have. * Which then of the blessings of your Sustainer do you deny?*¹²

*And We have adorned the skies nearest the earth with lamps, and made them missiles to drive away the evil ones.*¹³

These verses say: "O men and jinn, arrogant and refractory in your impotence and baseness, and rebellious and obstinate in your weakness and poverty! If you disobey My commands and you have the power to do so, pass

¹⁰ Qur'an, 57:1; 59:1; 61:1.

¹¹ Qur'an, 17:44.

¹² Qur'an, 55:33-6.

¹³ Qur'an, 67:5.

beyond the boundaries of My dominions! How can you dare to oppose the commands of a Monarch Whose commands the stars, moons, and suns obey as though they were soldiers under orders? In your rebelliousness you oppose an All-Wise and Glorious One Who has obedient soldiers which are thus awesome. Suppose your satans were to resist, His soldiers could rain down stones on them like cannon-balls. In your godlessness you revolt in the lands of a Sovereign so Glorious that among His forces are some which, it is not insignificant powerless creatures like you, but supposing the impossible you were infidel enemies the size of mountains or the globe, they could hurl down stars and flaming missiles on you of that magnitude and rout you. You infringe a law which binds beings such as those; if it was necessary, they could hurl the globe of the earth in your face and rain down stars and heavenly bodies on you as though they were missiles, with God's permission." You can compare with these the power, eloquence, and elevated manner of expression of other verses and their meanings.

Third Point: This is the wonderful uniqueness of its style. Indeed, the Qur'an's style is both strange, and original, and wonderful, and convincing. It has imitated nothing and no one. And no one has been able to imitate it. Its style has always preserved the freshness, youth, and singularity it possessed when it was first revealed and continues to preserve it. For instance, the unique style of the cipher-like muqatta'at, the 'disjointed letters,' like, *Alif. Lam. Mim., Alif. Lam. Ra., Ta. Ha., Ya. Sin., Ha. Mim. 'Ayn. Sin. Qaf.*, at the beginning of some of the Suras. We have described five or six of the flashes of miraculousness they comprise in *Isharat al-I'jaz*.

For example, these letters at the start of certain Suras have taken half of each category of the many well-known categories of letters, like the emphatic letters (*Kaf, Qaf, Ta, Alif, Jim, Dal, Ta, Ba*), the sibilants, the stressed letters, the soft letters, the labiolinguals, and tremolo (*qalqala*) letters (*Qaf, Ta, Dal, Jim, Ba*). Taking more than half from the light letters and less than half from the heavy letters, neither of which are divisible, it has halved every category. Although the human mind would be capable of it, halving all those categories overlapping one within the other, hesitant among two hundred possibilities, in the only way possible, which was hidden to the human mind and unknown to it, and organizing all the letters on that way, over that broad distance, was not the work of the human mind. And chance could not have interfered in it. Thus, in addition to these letters at the beginning of the Suras – Divine ciphers – displaying five or six similar flashes of miraculousness, scholars versed in the mysteries of the science of letters and the authorities from among the saints deduced many secrets from these 'disjointed letters.' They discovered such truths that they declared that on their own these letters form a brilliant miracle. Since we are not party to their secrets and also we cannot provide proofs clear to everyone, we cannot open that door. We shall therefore suffice with referring

readers to the explanation in *Isharat al-I'jaz* of five or six flashes of miraculousness related to them.

Now we shall point out the Qur'anic styles with regard to Sura, aim, verse, phrase, and word.

For example, if the Sura *About what are they disputing?*¹⁴ is studied carefully, it shows the events of the hereafter, the resurrection of the dead, and Paradise and Hell in a style so unique and wonderful that it proves the Divine acts and dominical works in this world as though looking at each of those events of the next world, and convinces the heart. To expound the style of this Sura fully would be lengthy, so we shall merely indicate one or two points, as follows:

At the start of the Sura, to prove the resurrection, it says: "We have made the earth a beautifully decked-out cradle for you, and the mountains masts and poles full of treasure for your house and your lives. We have made you as couples, loving and close to one another. We have made the night a coverlet for your sleep of comfort, the daytime the arena in which you earn your livelihood, the sun a light-giving, heat-supplying lamp, and from the clouds We pour down water as though they were a spring producing the water of life. And We create easily and quickly from the simple water the various flower-bearing and fruit-bearing things which bear all your sustenance. Since this is so, the Day of Resurrection, the day when good and evil shall be separated out, awaits you. It is not difficult for Us to bring about that Day." In a veiled way it points to proofs that after this at the resurrection, the mountains will be scattered, the skies shattered, Hell readied, and the people of Paradise given gardens and orchards. It says in effect: "Since He does these things related to the mountains and the earth before your very eyes, He shall do things resembling these in the hereafter." That is to say, the 'mountain' at the beginning of the Sura looks to the state of the mountains at the resurrection, and the garden to the gardens and paradises in the hereafter. You may compare other points to this and see what a beautiful and elevated style it has.

And, for example:

*Say: O God, Holder of All Power! You grant dominion to whomever You wish and You remove dominion from whomever You wish. You exalt whomever You wish and You bring low whomever You wish. In Your hand is all good. Indeed, You are Powerful over all things. * You enter the night into the day and enter the day into the night, and You bring forth the living from the dead and bring forth the dead from the living, and You grant sustenance to whomever You wish without measure.*¹⁵

¹⁴ The Great News, Sura 78.

¹⁵ Qur'an, 3:26-7.

These verses describe the Divine acts in human kind, and the Divine manifestations in the alternations of night and day, and the dominical acts of disposal in the seasons of the year, and the dominical deeds in life and death on the face of the earth and in the resurrections in this world in a style so elevated that it captivates the minds of the attentive. Since its brilliant, elevated, and wide-reaching style is clearly understood with little study, we shall not open that treasury for now.

And for example,

*When the sky is rent asunder * Heeding [the command of] its Sustainer, as in truth it must. * And when the earth is levelled * And casts out what is within it and becomes empty * And it heeds [the command of] its Sustainer, as in truth it must.*¹⁶

This explains in a truly elevated style the degree of submission and obedience to Almighty God's command of the skies and the earth. It is like this: just as a commander-in-chief opens two offices to accommodate the matters necessary for fighting, like one for strategy and one for the enrollment of soldiers, and when those matters are accomplished and the fighting is over, he addresses himself to the two offices in order to convert them into something else for some other business, they both say, either through the tongues of those employed in them or through their own tongues: "O Chief! Give us a short respite so that we can clean up the bits and pieces of the former business and throw them out, then you may honour us with your presence. There, we have thrown them out, we await your command. Order what you wish. We hear and obey! Everything you do is true, good, and beneficial."

In the same way, the heavens and the earth were opened as two arenas of obligation, trial, and examination. After the allotted period is finished, they will put aside the things pertaining to the arena of trial and say: "O our Sustainer! The command is Yours, employ us now in whatever You wish. Our right is only to obey You. Everything You do is right." Consider carefully the majestic style of those sentences!

And for example,

*Then the word went forth: "O earth, swallow up your water! And o sky withhold [your rain]!" And the water abated and the matter was ended. The ark rested on Mount Judi, and the word went forth: "Away with all those who do wrong!"*¹⁷

In order to point to a mere drop from the sea of eloquence of this verse, we shall show one aspect of its style in the mirror of a comparison. On the victory being won in a great war, the commander says "Cease fire!" to one

¹⁶ Qur'an, 84:1-5.

¹⁷ Qur'an, 11:44.

firing army and “Halt!” to another, assaulting, army. He issues the command, and at that moment the firing ceases and the assault is halted. He says: “It is finished, we have beaten them. Our flag is planted at the top of the high citadel at the enemies’ centre. Those mannerless tyrants have met with their reward and been cast down to the lowest of the low.”

In just the same way, the Peerless Sovereign issued the command to the heavens and the earth to annihilate the people of Noah. When they had carried out their duty, He decreed: “Drink up your water, O earth! Cease from your work, O skies! It is finished. Now the waters are receding. The Ark, which is a Divine official performing its duty as a tent, is settled on the top of the mountain. The wrongdoers have received retribution.” See the elevated nature of this style. It is saying: “The heavens and earth obey the command like two highly disciplined soldier.” It is thus alluding to the fact that the universe becomes angry at man’s rebellion. The heavens and the earth become incensed. And with this allusion it is saying: “One Whose commands the skies and the earth obey like two disciplined soldiers may not be rebelled against,” restraining man in awesome fashion. Thus, it describes a universal event like the Flood with all its consequences and truths in a few sentences in a concise, miraculous, beautiful, and succinct manner. You can compare this droplet from the ocean with other drops. Now consider the style displayed by the window of the words.

For example, consider the words like *an old date-stalk, withered and curved* in,

*And the moon We have determined mansions for till it returns like an old date-stalk, withered and curved,*¹⁸

see what a subtle style it displays. It is like this: one of the moon’s mansions is in the Pleiades. The Qur’an likens the moon when it is a crescent to a withered and whitened old date-stalk. Through this simile it depicts for the eye of the imagination a tree behind the green veil of the skies; one of its white, curved, luminous branches has rent the veil and raised its head; the Pleiades are like a bunch of grapes on the branch and the other stars all luminous fruits of that hidden tree of creation. If you have any discernment, you will understand what an appropriate, graceful, subtle, and elevated style and manner of expression this is in the view of the desert-dwellers, for whom the date-palm is the most important means of livelihood.

And for example, as is proven at the end of the Nineteenth Word, the words runs its course in,

*And the sun runs its course to a place appointed*¹⁹

opens a window onto an elevated style, as follows: with the words *runs its*

¹⁸ Qur’an, 36:39.

¹⁹ Qur’an, 36:38.

course, that is, ‘the sun revolves,’ it puts in mind the Maker’s tremendousness by recalling the orderly disposals of Divine power in the alternations of winter and summer and day and night, and directs one’s gaze to the missives of the Eternally Besought One inscribed by the pen of power on the pages of the seasons. It proclaims the wisdom of the All-Glorious Creator.

And with the word *lamp* in,

*And set the sun as a lamp,*²⁰

it opens a window onto the style like this: it makes one understand the Maker’s majesty and Creator’s bounty by recalling that the world is a palace and the things within it are adornments, food, and necessities prepared for man and living creatures and that the sun is a subservient candle, demonstrating that the sun is an evidence of God’s unity, and that the idolators’ greatest, most brilliant object of worship is merely a subjugated lamp, an inanimate creature. That is to say, the word *lamp* calls to mind the Creator’s mercy within the grandeur of His dominicality; it recalls His favours within the breadth of His mercy, and in so doing informs of His munificence within the majesty of His sovereignty, thereby proclaiming Divine unity, and saying indirectly: “An inanimate and subservient lamp is in no way fit to be worshipped.”

And in the *course of runs its course* it calls to mind the wondrous orderly disposals of Divine power in the revolutions of night and day and winter and summer, and in so doing makes known the grandeur of a single Maker’s power in His dominicality. That is to say, it turns man’s mind from the points of the sun and moon to the pages of night and day and winter and summer, and draws his attention to the lines of events written on those pages. For the Qur’an does not speak of the sun for the sake of the sun, but for the One Who illuminates it. Also, it does not speak of the sun’s nature, for which man has no need, but of the sun’s duty, which is that of mainspring for the order of dominical art, and centre of the order of dominical creativity, and a shuttle for the harmony and order of dominical art in the things the Pre-Eternal Inscraper weaves with the threads of day and night. You can compare others of the Qur’an’s words with these. While all are simple, ordinary words, each performs the duty of a key to treasuries of subtle meanings.

It is because the Qur’an’s style is for the greater part elevated and brilliant in the ways described above that on occasion Arab nomads were captivated by a single phrase, and without being Muslims would prostrate. One nomad prostrated on hearing the phrase:

*Therefore proclaim openly what you are commanded.*²¹

²⁰ Qur’an, 71:16.

²¹ Qur’an, 15:94.

When asked: “Have you become a Muslim?”, he replied: “No. I am prostrating at the eloquence of these words.”

Fourth Point: This is the wonderful eloquence in its wording; that is, in the words employed. Yes, just as the Qur’an is extraordinarily eloquent in regard to its style and manner of exposition, so is there a truly fluent eloquence in its wording. Clear evidence of the existence of this eloquence is the fact that it does not bore or cause weariness; while the testimony of the brilliant scholars of the sciences of rhetoric forms a decisive proof of the wisdom of the eloquence.

Yes, it does not weary even if repeated thousands of times; indeed, it gives pleasure. It is not burdensome for the memory of a small and simple child; children can memorize it easily. It is not unpleasant to the ear, pained by the slightest word, of someone extremely ill; it is easy on it. It is like sherbet to the palate of one in the throes of death. The recitation of the Qur’an gives sweet pleasure to the ear and mind of such a person just like Zemzem water to his mouth and palate. The reason for its not causing boredom, and the wisdom of it, is this: it is food and sustenance for the heart, strength and wealth for the mind, water and light for the spirit, and the cure and remedy for the soul. Everyday we eat bread, yet we do not tire of it. But if we were to eat the choicest fruit every day, it would cause boredom. That means it is because the Qur’an is truth and reality and truthfulness and guidance and wonderfully eloquent that it does not cause weariness and preserves its freshness and agreeableness as though preserving a perpetual youth. One of the Qurayshi leaders even, an expert orator, was sent by the idolators to listen to the Qur’an. He went and listened, then returned and said to them: “These words have such a sweetness and freshness that they do not resemble the words of men. I know the poets and soothsayers; these words do not resemble theirs. The best we can do is mislead our followers and say it is magic.”²² Thus, even the All-Wise Qur’an’s most obdurate enemies were amazed at its eloquence.

It would be very lengthy to explain the sources of the All-Wise Qur’an’s eloquence in its verses and words and sentences, therefore we shall keep the explanation brief and show by way of example the fluency and eloquence of the wording in one sentence obtained through the position of the letters and a single flash of miraculousness that shines forth from that positioning. Take the verse:

*Then after the distress He sent down on you a feeling of peace and drowsiness, which overcame a group of you.*²³ [to the end of the verse]

In this verse, all the letters of the alphabet are present. But, see, although all the categories of emphatic letters are together, it has not spoilt the smooth

²² Suyuti, *al-Itqan fi ‘Ulum al-Qur’an*, ii, 117; Qadi Iyad, *al-Shifa’*, i, 264.

²³ Qur’an, 3:154.

ness of style. Indeed, it has added a brilliance and harmonious, congruent, eloquent melody issuing from varied strings. Also, note carefully the following flash of eloquence: of the letters of the alphabet, *Alif* and *Ya*, since they are the lightest and have been transposed with one another like sisters, they have each been repeated twenty-one times. And since *Mim* and *Nun*²⁴ are sisters and have changed places, they have each been mentioned thirty-three times. And since *Shin*, *Sin*, and *Sad* are sisters in regard to articulation, quality, and sound, each has been mentioned three times. And although *'Ayn* and *Ghayn* are sisters, since *'Ayn* is lighter, it is mentioned six times, while because *Ghayn* is harsher, it is mentioned half as many, three times. And since *Zay*, *Dhal*, *Za*, and *Ta* are sisters in regard to articulation, quality, and sound, each is mentioned twice, while *Lam* and *Alif* in the form of *LA* have united and *Alif*'s share in the the form of *LA* is half that of *Lam*, *Lam* is mentioned forty-two times and as a half of it *Alif* twenty-one times. Since *Hamza* and *Ha* are sisters in regard to articulation, *Hamza*²⁵ is mentioned thirteen times and being a degree lighter *Ha*\ is mentioned fourteen times. And *Kaf*, *Fa* and *Qaf* are sisters; since *Qaf* has an additional point, it is mentioned ten times, *Fa*, nine times, *Kaf* nine times, *Ba* nine times, and *Ta* twelve times. Since *Ta* comes third, it is mentioned twelve times. *Ra* is *Lam*'s sister, but according to their numerical value, *Ra* is two hundred, and *Lam* thirty, so since it has risen six times more, it has fallen six. Also, since *Ra* is repeated on pronunciation, it becomes emphatic and is only mentioned six times. And because *Dad*, *Tha*, *Ha*, and *Kha* are emphatic and gain additional qualities in connection with other letters, they have each been mentioned only once. Since *Waw* is lighter than *Ha* and *Hamza*, and heavier than *Ya* and *Alif*, it is mentioned seventeen times, four times more than heavy *Hamza* and four times less than light *Alif*.

Thus, the extraordinary positioning of the letters in the passage mentioned here and their hidden relationships, and the beautiful order and fine, subtle regularity and harmony show as clearly as twice two equals four that it would not be within the limits of human thought to have composed it. As for chance and coincidence, it is impossible that it should have interfered. And so, just as the strange and wonderful order and regularity in the position of these letters leads to a fluency and eloquence in the words, so may there be many other hidden instances of wisdom. Since such an order has been followed in the letters, surely in the words, sentences and meanings such a mysterious order, such a luminous harmony, has been observed that should the eye see it, it would declare: *Ma'shallah!*, and should the reason comprehend it, it would exclaim: *Barakallah!*

²⁴ *Tanwin* is also a *Nun*.

²⁵ Pronounced and unpronounced, *Hamza* is twenty-five, and three more than *Hamza*'s silent sister *Alif*, because its points are three.

Fifth Point: This is the excellence in its manner of exposition; that is to say, the superiority, conciseness, and grandeur. Just as there is eloquence in the word-order, the wording, and the meaning, and a uniqueness in its style, so in its manner of exposition is there a superiority and excellence. Indeed, all the categories and levels of speech and address, like encouragement and deterring, praise and censure, demonstration and guidance, explanation and silencing in argument, are at the highest degree in the Qur'an's exposition.

Of the innumerable examples of its manner of exposition²⁶ in the category of encouragement and urging is that in Sura *Has there not been over man a long period of time when he was nothing – [not even] mentioned?*;²⁷ this is as sweet as the water of Kawthar and flows with the fluency of the spring of Salsabil, it is as fine as the raiment of the houris.

Of the numerous examples of the category of deterring and threatening is the start of Sura *Has the story reached you of the Overwhelming Event?*²⁸ Here the Qur'an's exposition has an effect like lead boiling in the ears of the people of misguidance, and fire burning in their brains, and *zaqqum* scalding their palates, and Hell assaulting their faces, and like a bitter thorny tree in their stomachs. An official like Hell charged by someone with inflicting torment and torture in order to demonstrate his threats, and its splitting apart with seething rage, and its saying: *well-nigh bursting with fury*²⁹ certainly show how awesomely dreadful that person's threats are.

Of the thousands of examples in the category of praise, the Qur'an's manner of exposition in the five Suras starting *al-Hamdulillah* is brilliant like the sun,³⁰ adorned like the stars, majestic like the heavens and the earth, lovable like the angels, compassionate like tenderness towards young in this world, and beautiful like Paradise in the hereafter.

Of the thousands of examples in the category of censure and restraint, in the verse, *Would any among you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother,*³¹ it censures six times. It restrains from backbiting forcibly six times over. It is like this: as is known, the *Hamza* at the beginning of the verse is interrogative. This seeps through all the words of the verse like water. Thus, with the first *Hamza* it asks: Have you no reason, the seat of question and answer, that you do not understand how ugly it is?

With the second, it asks with the word *like*: Is your heart, the seat of love and hate, so corrupted that it loves the most despicable thing?

²⁶ The style here has slipped into the clothes of this Sura's meaning.

²⁷ Qur'an, 76:1.

²⁸ Qur'an, 88:1.

²⁹ Qur'an, 67:8.

³⁰ In these phrases is an allusion to the matters discussed in these Suras.

³¹ Qur'an, 49:12.

With the third, it asks with the words *one of you*: What has happened to your social life and civilization, which receives its vitality from the community, that it finds acceptable an act which thus poisons your life?

With the fourth, it asks with the words *to eat the flesh*: What has happened to your humanity that you tear apart your friend like a savage beast?

With the fifth, it asks with the words *your brother*: Have you no compassion and fellow-feeling that you unjustly tear with your teeth at the character of the one injured, your brother in so many respects? Have you no reason that you bite at your own limbs like a madman?

And with the sixth it asks with the word *dead*: Where is your conscience? Is your nature so corrupted that you do the most repulsive thing to the most respected person, your brother, like eating his flesh? That is to say, backbiting is censured and despised by the reason, the heart, humanity, the conscience, human nature, and social and national solidarity. So see! How this verse restrains from this crime in six concise degrees, on six miraculous levels!

Of the thousands of examples of the category of proof and demonstration, is the verse:

*So consider the signs of God's mercy; how He gives life to the earth after its death. Indeed, it is He Who gives life to the dead, for He is powerful over all things.*³²

Its exposition is such in proving resurrection and banishing doubts that it could not be more clearly demonstrated. It is like this: it says that, as is proved and explained in the Ninth Truth of the Tenth Word and in the Fifth Flash of the Twenty-Second Word, every spring examples of resurrection are provided in three hundred thousand ways in the earth being raised to life with the utmost order and differentiation despite the innumerable species being all mixed up together in total confusion, thus demonstrating to the human observer that the resurrection of the dead would not be difficult for the One who does this. Also, since to write without fault or error with the pen of power hundreds of thousands of species on the page of the earth, all together and one within the other, is the seal of the Single One of Unity; with this verse it both proves Divine unity as the clearly as the sun, and it demonstrates the resurrection of the dead as easily and decisively as the rising and setting of the sun. Thus, the Qur'an demonstrates this truth in regard to manner, as described by the word how, just as it mentions it in detail in many Suras.

And for example, in Sura, *Qaf. By the Glorious Qur'an*,³³ it proves

³² Qur'an, 30:50.

³³ Qur'an, 50:1.

resurrection in such a brilliant, fine, sweet, and exalted manner that it convinces as certainly as the coming of spring. Look: in answer to the unbelievers denying the raising to life of decomposed bones and saying: “This is extraordinary; it could not be!”, it decrees:

*Do they not look to the skies above them; how we have made them and adorned them and how there is no flaw in them.... until: ... and thus will be the Resurrection.*³⁴

Its manner of exposition flows like water and shines like the stars. It gives both pleasure and delight to the heart like dates. And it is sustenance.

And in one of the most subtle examples of the category of demonstration, it says:

*Ya. Sin. * By the All-Wise Qur’an * Indeed you are one of the Messengers.*³⁵

That is, “I swear by the Wise Qur’an that you are one of the Divine Messengers.” This oath indicates that the proof of Messengership is so certain and true, and its veracity is so worthy of honour and respect, that it is sworn by. By indicating this, it is saying: “You are the Messenger, for you hold the Qur’an in your hand, and the Qur’an is the truth and it is the word of Truth. For it contains true wisdom, and bears the seal of miraculousness.”

And one of the concise and miraculous examples of the category of proof and demonstration is this:

*He says: Who will raise to life these bones when they are rotted? * Say: He will raise them Who created them in the first instance, for He has full knowledge of every kind of creation.*³⁶

That is, man asks: “Who will resurrect decayed bones?” You say: “Whoever made them in the first place and gave them life, He will resurrect them.” As was depicted in the third comparison of the Ninth Truth in the Tenth Word, if someone reassembles a large army in one day before your eyes, and someone else says: “At a bugle-call that person brought together the members of a battalion who had dispersed to rest; he is able to bring the battalion under order,” and you say, O man: “I do not believe it,” you can see what a foolish denial it would be.

In just the same way, the All-Powerful and All-Knowing One enrolls and unites anew with the command of “*Be!*” and it is, and with perfect order and the balance of wisdom, the particles and subtle faculties of the battalion-like bodies of all the animals – which are like an army – and other living creatures, and creates every century, and every spring even, all the hundreds of

³⁴ Qur’an, 50:6-11.

³⁵ Qur’an, 36:1-3.

³⁶ Qur’an, 36:78-79.

thousands of army-like species of living creatures on the face of the earth. Can it be questioned then how He can gather together at one blast of Israfil's trumpet the fundamental parts and particles of a battalion-like body, which are already familiar with one another, through taking them under order? Can it be considered unlikely? If it is considered unlikely, it is a mindless foolishness.

In the category of guidance, the Qur'an's manner of exposition is so moving and tender, and familiar and gentle that it fills the spirit with ardour, the heart with delight, the mind with interest, and the eyes with tears. Of thousands of examples is this verse:

*And yet after all this your hearts hardened and became like rocks, or even harder... to the end of the verse.*³⁷

As is proved and explained in the discussion of the third verse in the First Station of the Twentieth Word, it says to the Children of Israel: "What has happened to you that although hard rock shed tears from twelve springs like eyes before a miracle like the Staff of Moses (Peace be upon him), you remain indifferent in the face of all his miracles, with your eyes dry and tearless and your hearts hard and without fervour?" Since this meaning of guidance is explained there, we refer you to that Word, and curtail this here.

Of thousands of examples in the category of making understood and silencing in argument, consider only the following two:

*If you have doubts about the Qur'an We have revealed to Our servant Muhammad, then produce a Sura similar to it. And call upon all your helpers besides God to bear witness for you, if what you say is true.*³⁸

That is, "If you have any doubts, summon all your elders and supporters to help you and testify for you, then compose the like of a single Sura." Since this has been explained and proved in *Isharat al-I'jaz*, here we shall only point out a brief summary of it. It is as follows:

The Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition says: "O men and jinn! If you have any doubts that the Qur'an is the Word of God and imagine it to be man's word, then come on, here it is, let's see! You bring a book like this Qur'an from someone unlettered, who does not know how to read and write like the one you call Muhammad the Trustworthy, and get him to compose it! If you cannot do this, then he need not be untaught, let him be a famous man of letters and learned. And if you are not able to do this, alright, not on his own, take all the finest works of all your orators and men of eloquence, and indeed of all the literary geniuses of the past and all those of the future, and the assistance of all your gods. Work with all your strength, compose the

³⁷ Qur'an, 2:74.

³⁸ Qur'an, 2:23.

like of this Qur'an. And if you cannot do this, leave aside the truths of the Qur'an and its many miraculous aspects, which it is not possible to imitate, and compose a work which is its equal in only the eloquence of its word-order!"

Through the silencing words of

*Bring then ten Suras forged, like it,*³⁹

it says: "Come on, I do not want its true meaning from you, let it be fabrications and lies and false tales. You will not be able to do this. So it need not be as much as the whole Qur'an, just bring ten Suras like it. You will not be able to do this either, so bring a single Sura. This will be too much as well. So alright, make it the equivalent of a short Sura. You will not be able to do this either, although the need for you to do so is so great. For your honour and self-respect, your dignity and religion, your tribal honour and pride, your life and property, and your lives in this world and the next will all be saved by producing the like of it. Otherwise in this world you will remain in abasement, without honour, dignity, religion, or pride, and your lives and property will be destroyed and will perish, and in the hereafter, as is indicated by the verse,

*Then give heed to Hell-fire, whose fuel is men and stones,*⁴⁰

you will be condemned to everlasting incarceration in Hell; together with your idols you will be fuel to its fires. Since your need is thus great, and since you have now understood your impotence in eight degrees, you should be certain eight times over that the Qur'an is a miracle. So either believe in it, or be silent and go to Hell!" So see the way the Qur'an forces them to accept the argument in this category of 'silencing in argument' which is within that of 'making understood,' and say: "There is no manner of exposition better than that of the Qur'an!" Indeed, after that of the Qur'an no need remains for further exposition.

Here is a second example:

*Exhort then [O Prophet], for by your Sustainer's grace you are neither a soothsayer nor a madman * Or do they say: A poet! – let us wait and see what time will do! * Say: Wait then, I too shall wait with you. * Is it that their faculties of understanding urge them to this, or are they but a people transgressing all bounds. * Or do they say: He fabricated this [Message]? Nay, they do not believe. * Let them then produce a recital like unto it – if they speak the truth. * Or were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators? * Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, they have no firm belief. **

³⁹ Qur'an, 11:13.

⁴⁰ Qur'an, 2:24.

*Or are the treasuries of your Sustainer with them, or are they the managers [of affairs]? * Or have they a ladder by which they can [climb up to heaven and] listen [to its secrets]? Then let [such a] listener of theirs produce a manifest proof. * Or has He only daughters and you have sons? * Or is it that you ask for a reward, so that they are burdened with a load of debt? * Or that the Unseen is in their hands, and they write it down? * Or do they intend a plot [against you]? But those who defy God are themselves involved in a plot! * Or have they a god other than God? Exalted is God far above the things they associate with them.⁴¹*

Here we shall explain only one of the thousands of truths of these verses as a further example of the category of silencing in argument. It is as follows: with the word, Or....Or..., it silences every group of the people of misguidance with a rhetorical question expressing surprise and stops up all the sources of their doubts. It leaves no satanic chink through which doubts might enter and hide themselves; it closes them all. It leaves no veil of misguidance under which they might creep and lurk; it rends all of them. It leaves not one of their lies; it crushes them. In each sentence it either demolishes the essence of the blasphemous ideas of one group with a short phrase, or since the falsity is obvious, it exposes it by silence, or since it is refuted in detail in other verses, it here alludes to it briefly. For example, the first sentence alludes to the verse:

And We have not instructed him poetry, nor is it meet for him.⁴²

While the fifteenth sentence points to the verse:

Were there gods other than God in the heavens and earth, there surely would have been confusion in both.⁴³

You can make further examples from the other sentences like these. It is like this: it says at the start: Announce the Divine decrees. You are not a soothsayer, for the words of soothsayers are confused and conjectural, while yours are true and certain. And you are not mad; your enemies even attest to your perfect sanity.

Or do they say: A poet – let us wait and see what time will do!⁴⁴

Do they call you a poet, like the unreasoning, common infidels? Are they waiting for you to perish? You say to them: “Wait! I shall wait with you!” Your vast and brilliant truths are free of the imaginings of poetry and independent of their fancies.

⁴¹ Qur'an, 52:29-43.

⁴² Qur'an, 36:69.

⁴³ Qur'an, 21:22.

⁴⁴ Qur'an, 52:30.

*Or is it that their faculties of understanding urge them to this?*⁴⁵

Or like unreasoning philosophers who rely on their reasons, do they hold back from following you, saying: “Our faculties of reason are sufficient.” But reason commands that you are followed, because everything you say is reasonable. But again the reason on its own cannot reach it.

*Or are they but a people transgressing all bounds?*⁴⁶

Or is the reason for their denial their not submitting to Almighty God like wicked tyrants? But the ends of the Pharaohs and Nimrods, who were the leaders of arrogant oppressors, are known.

*Or do they say: He fabricated this [Message]? Nay, they do not believe.*⁴⁷

Or like lying dissemblers without conscience do they accuse you saying: “You have made up the Qur’an!”? But up to this time they have known you to be the most truthful among them and have called you Muhammad the Trustworthy. It means that they have no intention to believe. Otherwise let them find the like of the Qur’an among the works of men.

*Or were they created of nothing?*⁴⁸

Or like the absurd philosophers who believed the universe to be without purpose and in vain, do they suppose themselves to be aimless and without wisdom, purpose, duty, or Creator? Have they become blind that they do not see that the universe is adorned from top to bottom with instances of wisdom and bears the fruit of aims, and that beings from particles to the suns are charged with duties and are subjugated to the Divine commands?

*Or were they themselves the creators?*⁴⁹

Or do they imagine like the pharaoh-like Materialists that “They came into being by themselves, feed themselves, and themselves create everything they need,” so that they hold back from believing and worship? That means they all suppose themselves to be the Creator. Whereas the Creator of one thing has to be the Creator of everything. That is to say, their pride and conceit have made them so utterly stupid they imagine to be a Possessor of Absolute Power one who is absolutely impotent and may be defeated by a fly or a microbe. Since they have abdicated their reason and humanity to this degree and have fallen lower than the animals and even inanimate beings, do not be saddened at their denial. Consider them to be a variety of harmful animal and filthy matter! Ignore them and give them no importance!

⁴⁵ Qur’an, 52:32.

⁴⁶ Qur’an, 52:32.

⁴⁷ Qur’an, 52:33.

⁴⁸ Qur’an, 52:35.

⁴⁹ Qur’an, 52:35.

*Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay, they have no firm belief!*⁵⁰

Or, like the mindless, confused Mu'attila, who denied God all attributes and denied the Creator, do they deny God so that they do not heed the Qur'an? In which case, let them deny the existence of the heavens and the earth, or let them say: "We created them!" Let them lose their minds altogether and begin uttering the frenzied ravings of lunacy. For in the heavens as many proofs of Divine unity are apparent and are recited as the stars, and on the earth as many as the flowers. That means they have no intention of acquiring certain knowledge and finding the truth. Otherwise how do they suppose to be without inscriber the book of the universe, in one word of which is written a whole book, although they know that a letter cannot exist without the one who wrote it.

*Or are the treasures of your Sustainer with them?*⁵¹

Or, like one group of misguided philosophers who denied Almighty God the power of choice, or like the Brahmans, do they deny the source of prophethood so that they do not believe in you? In which case, let them deny all the traces of wisdom and purpose, all the order and fruits which are apparent in all beings and demonstrate will and choice, let them deny all the works of mercy and grace, and all the miracles of all the prophets! Or let them say: "All the treasures of the bounties given to creatures are with us and under our control." Let them prove they are not fit to be addressed! Do not be grieved at their denial, say: "God's unreasoning animals are many!"

*Or are they the managers [of affairs]?*⁵²

Or, like the arrogant Mu'tazilites, who made the reason dominant, do they imagine themselves to be rivals to and inspectors of the Creator's works, and want to hold the All-Glorious Creator responsible? Beware, do not lose heart! Nothing can come of the denials of self-centred people like that! You do not be deceived either!

*Or have they a ladder by which they can [climb up to heaven and] listen [to its secrets]? Then let [such a] listener of theirs produce a manifest proof!*⁵³

Or, like the spiritualists and phony soothsayers, do they follow Satan and the jinn and suppose they have found another way to the World of the Unseen? In which case, have they a ladder by which to ascend to the heavens which

⁵⁰ Qur'an, 52:36.

⁵¹ Qur'an, 52:37.

⁵² Qur'an, 52:37.

⁵³ Qur'an, 52:38.

are closed to the satans? Do they imagine that they can give the lie to your news from the heavens? The denials of such charlatans are worth nothing!

*Or has He only daughters and you have sons?*⁵⁴

Or, like the polytheist philosophers who ascribed partners to God under the name of ‘the ten intellects’ and ‘the masters of the species,’ and the Sabeans, who attributed a sort of godhead to the stars and the angels, do they ascribe offspring to Almighty God? Like the heretics and misguided, do they ascribe a son to Him, which is contrary to the necessary existence, unity, eternity, and absolute self-sufficiency of the Single and Eternally Besought One? Do they ascribe femininity to that offspring, which is opposed to the angels’ worship, purity, and kind? Do they suppose it to be an intercessor for them, so that they do not follow you? Generation is the means of multiplying, mutual assistance, perpetuation, and life for creatures like man, who is contingent, transitory, and in need of perpetuating the species, is corporeal and divisible, capable of multiplying, impotent and needy for an heir to help him. So to ascribe offspring – and a sort of offspring that those impotent, contingent, wretched men did not themselves like and could not equate with their arrogant pride, that is, female offspring – to the All-Glorious One, Whose existence is necessary and perpetual, Who endures from pre-eternity to post-eternity, Whose essence is utterly remote from and exalted above corporality, Whose being is free of and exempt from division and multiplication, and Whose Power is far above and beyond all impotence, is indeed such a delirium, such a lunatic raving that the lies and denials of those wretches who subscribe to such an idea are worth nothing. You must not be deceived. The scatter-brained nonsense, the delirious ravings of every crazy lunatic, should not be heeded!

*Or is it that you ask for a reward, so that they are burdened with a load of debt?*⁵⁵

Or, like the rebellious, overweening worshippers of this world, who have made a habit of greed and miserliness, do they find what you propose burdensome, so that they flee from you? Do they not know that you seek your wage and recompense from God alone? Is it a burden to give to their own poor one fortieth of the property given to them by God Almighty, or a part of it, and as a consequence both receive plenty, and be saved from the envy and curses of the poor? Do they consider the command to give *zakat* burdensome and therefore hold back from Islam? Their denials have no importance, and what they deserve is a slap, not an answer...

⁵⁴ Qur’an, 52:39.

⁵⁵ Qur’an, 52:40.

*Or is it that the Unseen is in their hands, and they write it down?*⁵⁶

Or, like Buddhists, who claim to be familiar with the Unseen, or the pseudo-intellectuals, who imagine their conjectures about its affairs to be certain, does what you said about the Unseen not appeal to them? That means they imagine that the World of the Unseen, which is disclosed to no one apart from the Divine Messengers, who receive revelation, and which no one has the ability to enter, is present and laid open before them, and that they obtain information from it and write it down. So do not be disheartened by the lies of these arrogant braggarts who have overstepped their mark to an infinite degree! For in a short while your truths will completely overturn their imaginings!

*Or do they intend a plot [against you]? But those who defy God are themselves involved in a plot!*⁵⁷

Or, like two-faced dissemblers and cunning atheists whose natures are corrupted and consciences rotted, do they want to deceive the people and turn them away from the guidance which they cannot obtain, to trick them, and so call you either a soothsayer, or possessed, or a sorcerer? Do they want to make others believe what they do not believe themselves? Don't think of these insidious charlatans as human beings, don't be saddened at their wiles and denials, and lose heart. Rather, increase your efforts! For they only deceive their own souls and harm themselves. And their successes in evil are temporary; it is a Divine stratagem, drawing them to perdition by degrees.

*Or have they a god other than God? Exalted is God far above the things they associate with Him!*⁵⁸

Or, like the Magians, who imagined two separate gods called the Creator of Good and the Creator of Evil, or like the idolators and worshippers of causes, who attribute a sort of godhead to different causes and imagine each of them to be a source of support for them, do they rely on other gods and contest you? Do they consider themselves free of any need of you? That means they have become blind and do not see the perfect order and flawless harmony throughout the universe, which is as clear as day. For in accordance with the decree,

*Were there gods other than God in the heavens and the earth, there surely would have been confusion in both,*⁵⁹

if there are two headmen in a village, or two governors in a town, or two kings in a country, order is turned upside down and harmony spoilt. But from a fly's wing to the lamps in the heavens, such a fine order has been observed that it leaves not so much space as a fly's wing for partners to be

⁵⁶ Qur'an, 52:41.

⁵⁷ Qur'an, 52:42.

⁵⁸ Qur'an, 52:43.

⁵⁹ Qur'an, 21:22.

associated with God. Since the above act in a manner so opposed to reason, wisdom, feeling, and what is obvious, don't let their lies put you off proclaiming the Message!

Thus, of the hundreds of jewels of these verses, which constitute a series of truths, we have briefly explained only a single jewel of the Qur'an's manner of exposition in the category of 'giving to understand' and 'silencing in argument.' If I had had the power and shown a few more jewels, you too would have said: "These verses are a miracle just on their own." But the Qur'an's manner of exposition in making understood and instruction is so wonderful, subtle, and fluent that the most simple ordinary person easily comprehends a most profound truth from the way it explains it. Yes, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition simply and clearly teaches most abstruse truths in a way that caresses the view of people in general, and neither hurts their feelings, nor irritates their minds, nor tires them. Just as when speaking with a child, childish words are used, in the same way the Qur'anic styles come down to the level of those it addresses –called in the terminology of the scholars of theology, 'Divine condescension to the mind of man'– it addresses them in that way; through comparisons in the form of allegories, it makes an illiterate common person understand abstruse Divine truths and dominical mysteries which the minds of the most learned philosophers cannot rise to.

For example, by means of a comparison, the verse,

*The Most Merciful One on the Throne established*⁶⁰

depicts Divine dominicality as a kingdom, and the degree of that dominicality as that of a King seated on the throne of his sovereignty and exercising His rule. Indeed, as the speech of the All-Glorious Creator of the universe, the Qur'an proceeds from the ultimate degree of His dominicality, passes over all the other degrees guiding those who rise to them, and passing through seventy thousand veils, it looks to each and illuminates it. It scatters its radiance and spreads its light to the thousands of levels of those it addresses, the understanding and intelligence of whom are all different. Although it has lived through ages and centuries whose capacities are all different, and has broadcast its meaning to this great extent, it has not lost an iota of its perfect youth and juvenility, and retaining its total freshness and delicacy, it teaches every ordinary person in a most easy, skilful, and comprehensible manner. Whatever aspect of a wonder-displaying book which thus teaches, convinces, and satisfies with the same lesson, the same words, numerous levels of people whose understanding and degrees are all different – whatever aspect of such a book is studied, a flash of miraculousness will surely appear.

⁶⁰ Qur'an, 20:5.

In Short: Just as when some words of the Qur'an like "All praise and thanks be to God" are recited, they fill a cave, which is the ear of a mountain, in the same way that they fill the tiny ears of a fly, so too the Qur'an's meanings satisfy ears like mountains in the same way that with the same words they teach and satisfy tiny simple minds, like a fly. For the Qur'an calls to belief all the levels of men and jinn. It teaches the sciences of belief to all. In which case, the most lowly of the common people kneels shoulder to shoulder with the most elevated of the elite, and together they listen to the Qur'an's teachings and benefit from them. That is to say, the Holy Qur'an is a heavenly repast at which the thousands of different levels of minds, intellects, hearts, and spirits find their nourishment. Their desires are fulfilled and their appetites are satisfied. In fact, numerous of its doors remain closed and are left to those who will come in the future. If you want an example of this category, from beginning to end the Qur'an forms examples of it. All the Qur'an's students and those who listen to its teachings, like the interpreters of the law, the veracious ones, the Islamic philosophers, the sages, the scholars of jurisprudence and scholars of theology, the saintly guides of those seeking knowledge of God, the spiritual poles of the lovers of God, the learned and exacting scholars, and the mass of Muslims, unanimously declare: "We understand thoroughly what the Qur'an teaches us." In short, flashes of the Qur'an's miraculousness sparkle in the category of 'making understood and instruction' just as they do in the other categories.

SECOND RAY

This Ray is the Qur'an's extraordinary comprehensiveness. It consists of five 'Flashes'.

The First Flash is the comprehensiveness in the words. This comprehensiveness is clearly apparent from the verses mentioned both in all the previous Words, and in this Word. As is indicated by the Hadith "Each verse has an outer meaning, an inner meaning, a limit, and an aim, and each has roots, and boughs, and branches,"⁶¹ the words of the Qur'an have been positioned in such a way that all its phrases, words even, and even letters, and sometimes even an omission, has many aspects. It gives to all those it addresses their share from a different door.

Take, for example, the verse,

*And the mountains [its] pegs,*⁶²

a phrase which says, "I made the mountains as stakes and masts for that earth of yours." An ordinary person's share from this phrase would be this: he sees the mountains which appear like stakes driven into the ground, thinks of the benefits and bounties in them, and offers thanks to his Creator.

⁶¹ Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, i, 146; al-Manawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iii, 54.

⁶² Qur'an, 78:7.

A poet's share from this phrase: he imagines the earth as the ground, on which is pitched in a sweeping arc the dome of the heavens like a mighty green tent adorned with electric lamps, and he sees the mountains skirting the base of the heavens to be the pegs of the tent. He worships the All-Glorious Maker in wondering amazement.

A tent-dwelling literary man's share of this phrase: he imagines the face of the earth to be a barren desert, and the mountain chains as the multifarious tents of nomads, as if the soil layer had been cast over high posts and the pointed tips of the posts had raised up the cloth of the soil, which he sees as the habitation of numerous different creatures looking one to the other. He prostrates in wonder before the Glorious Creator, Who placed and pitched so easily these august and mighty beings like tents on the face of the earth.

The share of a geographer with a literary bent from this phrase: he thinks of the globe of the earth as a ship sailing the oceans of either the air or the $\frac{3}{4}$ ther, and the mountains as masts and posts driven into the ship to balance and stabilize it. He declares: "Glory be unto You! How sublime is Your glory!" before the All-Powerful One of Perfection, Who makes the mighty globe as an orderly ship, places us on it, and makes it voyage through the far reaches of the world.

A sociologist and philosopher of human society's share of this phrase; his thoughts would go like this: the earth is a house, and the supporting post of the life of that house is animal life, while the supporting post of animal life are water, air, and earth, the conditions of life. And the supporting post of water, air, and earth are the mountains. For the mountains are the reservoirs for water, the combs for the air: they precipitate the noxious gases and purify it; they are the earth's preserver: they preserve it from being transformed into a swamp, and from the encroachment of the sea. They are also the treasuries for other necessities of human life. In utter reverence he offers praise and thanks to the Maker of Glory and Kindness, Who made these great mountains as posts for the earth – the house of our life – in this way, and appointed them as the keepers of the treasuries of our livelihood.

The share of a scholar of natural science from this phrase would be this: he would think of the earthquakes and tremors which occur as the result of upheavals and fusions in the heart of the earth being calmed with the upthrust of mountains; that the emergence of mountains is the cause of the earth's stable rotation on its axis and in its orbit and its not deviating in its annual rotation as a result of the convulsions of earthquakes; and that the anger and wrath of the earth is quieted through it breathing through the vents in the mountains. He would come to believe completely, and would exclaim: "All wisdom is God's!"

Another example:

*The heavens and the earth were joined together before We clove them asunder.*⁶³

A scholar untainted by the study of philosophy would explain the words joined together like this: while the skies were shining and cloudless, and the earth dry and without life and incapable of giving birth, the skies were opened up with rain and the earth with vegetation, and all living beings were created through a sort of marriage and impregnation. To do this was the work of One so Powerful and Glorious that the face of the earth is merely a small garden of His, while the clouds veiling the face of the skies, sponges for watering it. The scholar understands this and prostrates before the tremendousness of His power.

A searching philosopher would explain the same words in this way: while at the start of creation the heavens and earth were a formless mass, each consisting of matter like wet dough without benefit, offspring, or creatures, the All-Wise Creator both rolled them out and expanded them into a beautiful, beneficial form, and made them the source of adorned and numerous creatures. The philosopher would stand in wonder before the breadth of His wisdom.

A modern philosopher would explain the words thus: at first, our globe and the other planets which form the solar system were fused together in the form of an undifferentiated dough. Then the All-Powerful and Self-Subsistent One rolled out the dough, and placed each of the planets in its position; leaving the sun where it was and bringing the earth here, He spread earth over the globe of the earth and sprinkled it with rain from the skies, scattered light over it from the sun, and inhabited it placing us on it. The philosopher would pull his head out of the swamp of nature, and declare: "I believe in God, the One, the Unique!"

And another example:

*And the sun runs its course to a place appointed.*⁶⁴

The *Lam*, translated here as 'to', expresses also the meaning of 'in'. Thus, ordinary believers see it as meaning 'to' and understand that the sun, which is a mobile lamp providing light and heat for them, will certainly conclude its journeying and reach its place of rest, then take on a form which will no longer be beneficial. And pondering over the great bounties the All-Glorious Creator has attached to the sun, they declare: "Glory be to God! All praise and thanks be to God!"

A learned scholar would also show the *Lam* as meaning 'to', but he would think of it not only as a lamp, but also as a shuttle weaving the

⁶³ Qur'an, 21:30.

⁶⁴ Qur'an, 36:38.

tapestries of the Sustainer on the loom of spring and summer, as an ink-pot whose ink is light for the letters of the Eternally Besought One written on the pages of night and day. And thinking of the order and regularity of the world, of which the apparent movement of the sun is a sign and to which it points, he would exclaim before His wisdom: “What wonders God has willed!”, and declare before the All-Wise Maker’s art: “How great are His blessings!”, and he would bow in prostration.

A geographer and philosopher would explain the *Lam* as meaning ‘in’, like this: through the Divine command and with a spring-like motion on its own axis, the sun orders and propels the solar system. Exclaiming in wonder and amazement before the All-Glorious Maker Who thus creates and sets in order this mighty clock: “All mightiness is God’s, and all power!”, he would cast away philosophy and embrace the wisdom of the Qur’an.

A precise scholar would consider this *Lam* as both causal and adverbial, and would explain it like this: “Since the All-Wise Maker has made apparent causes a veil to His works, through a Divine law of His called gravity, He has tied the planets to the sun like stones in a sling, and causes them to revolve with different but regular motions within the sphere of His wisdom; and He has made the sun’s spinning on its own axis an apparent cause giving rise to the gravity. That is, the meaning of *(to) a place appointed*, is ‘it is in motion in its own appointed place for the stability of the solar system.’ For it is a Divine rule, a dominical law like motion apparently giving rise to heat, and heat to force, and force to gravity.” Thus, on understanding this from a single letter of the Qur’an, the philosopher would declare: “All praise and thanks be to God! It is in the Qur’an that true wisdom is to be found. I consider philosophy to be worth virtually nothing!”

And the following idea would occur to a thinker of poetic bent from this *Lam* and the stability mentioned above: “The sun is a luminous tree, and the planets are its mobile fruits. But contrary to trees the sun shakes itself so the fruits do not fall. If it did not shake itself, they would fall and be scattered.” Then he would think to himself: “The sun is the ecstatic leader of a group reciting God’s Names. It recites in ecstasy in the centre of the circle and causes others to recite.” In another treatise, I described this meaning as follows:

*Yes, the sun is a fruit-bearing tree; it shakes itself, so that the planets fall not,
its fruits.*

*If it rested in silence, the attraction would cease; and they would weep
through space, its ecstasies.*

A further example:

*It is they who shall prosper.*⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Qur’an, 2:5.

This verse is general and unspecific, it does not specify in what way they shall be successful, so that each person may find what he wants in it. Its words are few, so that they may be lengthy. For the aim of some of those it is addressing is to be saved from the Fire. Others think only of Paradise. Some desire eternal happiness. Yet others seek only God's pleasure. While others know their aim and desire to be the vision of God; and so on. In numerous places, the Qur'an leaves the words open in this way, so that they may be general. It leaves things unsaid, so that it can express many meanings. It makes it brief, so that everyone may find his share. Thus, it says, who shall prosper. It does not determine how they shall prosper. It is as if with this omission it is saying: "O Muslims! Good news! O you who fear God! You shall find prosperity through being saved from Hell. O righteous one! You shall find prosperity in Paradise. O you who seeks knowledge of God! You will attain God's pleasure. O lover of God! You will experience the vision of God." And so on.

Thus, out of thousands we have offered one example of each of the phrases, words, letters, and omissions demonstrating the comprehensiveness of the Qur'an's words. You may make analogies and compare its verses and stories with these.

Another example, the verse,

*Know then that there is no god but God, and ask forgiveness for your fault.*⁶⁶

This verse contains so many aspects and degrees that all the levels of saints have found their needs from it in all their spiritual journeyings and in all their degrees, and have found spiritual sustenance and a fresh meaning from it appropriate for their own level. For, since the Name of 'Allah' is a comprehensive Name, there are aspects of Divine unity within it to the number of the Most Beautiful Names: "There is no provider but Him! There is no creator but Him! There is no merciful one but Him!" And so on.

And, for example, among the stories of the Qur'an, the story of Moses (Peace be upon him) contains thousands of benefits, just like the Staff of Moses. There are numerous aims and aspects in the story, like consoling and comforting the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), and threatening the unbelievers, and censuring the dissemblers, and rebuking the Jews. For this reason it is repeated in many Suras. Although it expresses all the aims in every place it is repeated, only one is the main aim and the others are secondary.

If you say: How can we know all the meanings in the examples you have given, which the Qur'an intends and points to?

⁶⁶ Qur'an, 47:19.

We would reply: Since the Qur'an is a pre-eternal address, and sitting above and beyond the centuries, which, layer upon layer, are all different, addresses and instructs all of mankind lined up within them, certainly it will include and intend numerous meanings according to those varying understandings, and will make allusions to what it intends. The numerous meanings contained in the Qur'an's words similar to those mentioned here have been proved in *Isharat al-I'jaz* (Signs of Miraculousness) according to the rules of Arabic grammar, and the sciences of rhetoric, semantics, and eloquence and their rules. According to the consensus of those qualified to interpret the Shari'a and the Qur'anic commentators and scholars of theology and jurisprudence, and according to the testimony of their differences, on condition they are considered correct by the sciences of Arabic and the principles of religion, all the aspects and meanings which are found acceptable by the science of semantics, and appropriate by the science of rhetoric, and desirable by the science of eloquence, may be considered among the meanings of the Qur'an. The Qur'an has placed allusions to each of those meanings according to its degree. They are either literal or significative. If significative, there are allusions to them in either the preceding context or the after context or in other verses. Some of them have been expounded in Qur'anic commentaries of twenty, thirty, forty, sixty, and even eighty volumes, written by exacting scholars, which are clear and decisive proofs of the extraordinary comprehensiveness of the Qur'an's words. However, if in this Word we were to point out the allusions indicating all the meanings together with their rules, the discussion would become extremely prolonged. So we cut it short here, and for part of it, refer you to *Isharat al-I'jaz*.

Second Flash: This is the extraordinary comprehensiveness in its meaning. Yes, together with bestowing from the treasuries of its meaning the sources for all the interpreters of the Shari'a, the illuminations of all those seeking knowledge of God, the ways of all those seeking union with God, the paths of all the perfected from among mankind, and the schools of all the scholars, the Qur'an has at all times been the guide of all of them and directed them in their progress, and it is verified unanimously by all of them that it has illuminated their ways from its treasuries.

Third Flash: This is the extraordinary comprehensiveness in its knowledge. The Qur'an has caused to flow forth from the oceans of its own knowledge, the numerous and various sciences of the Shari'a, the multifarious sciences of reality (*haqiqat*), and the innumerable different sciences of sufism (*tariqat*). Similarly, it has caused to flow forth in abundance and good order the true wisdom of the sphere of contingency, the true sciences of the sphere of necessity, and the enigmatic knowledge of the sphere of the hereafter. One would have to write a whole volume to provide examples of this Flash, and so as mere samples, we point to the twenty-five Words so far

written. Yes, the veracious truths of all twenty-five Words are only twenty-five droplets from the ocean of the Qur'an's knowledge. If there are errors in those Words, they spring from my defective understanding.

Fourth Flash: This is the extraordinary comprehensiveness of the subjects it puts forward. Together with bringing together the extensive subjects of man and his duties, the universe and the Creator of the universe, the heavens and the earth, this world and the hereafter, the past and the future, and pre-eternity and post-eternity, the Qur'an explains all the essential and important topics from man's creation from seminal fluid till when he enters the grave; from the correct conduct of eating and sleeping to the matters of Divine Decree and Determining; from the creation of the world in six days, to the duties of the wind blowing, indicated by the oaths of,

*By the [winds] that scatter,*⁶⁷

and,

*By the [winds] sent forth;*⁶⁸

from His intervention in man's heart and will, indicated by,

*comes between a man and his heart,*⁶⁹

and,

*But you will not except as God wills,*⁷⁰

to,

*And the heavens rolled up in His right hand,*⁷¹

that is, to His holding all the heavens within His grip; from the flowers, and grapes, and dates of the earth described in,

*And We produce therein gardens of date-palms and vines,*⁷²

to the strange truth expressed by,

*When the earth is shaken to its utmost convulsion;*⁷³

from the state of the skies in,

*Then He directed [His will] towards the skies and they were smoke,*⁷⁴

to their being rent with smoke and the stars falling and being scattered in infinite space; from the world's being opened for test and examination, to its closing; from the grave, the first dwelling of the hereafter, and then from the

⁶⁷ Qur'an, 51:1.

⁶⁸ Qur'an, 77:1.

⁶⁹ Qur'an, 8:24.

⁷⁰ Qur'an, 76:30.

⁷¹ Qur'an, 39:67.

⁷² Qur'an, 36:34.

⁷³ Qur'an, 99:1.

⁷⁴ Qur'an, 41:11.

Intermediate Realm, the resurrection, and the Bridge, to eternal happiness; from the events of the past, and the creation of the body of Adam and the dispute of his two sons, to the Flood, and the drowning of the people of Pharaoh, and the major events of most of the prophets; and from the pre-eternal circumstance alluded to by,

*Am I not your Sustainer?*⁷⁵

to the post-eternal occurrence expressed by,

*Some faces that day will beam in brightness * Looking towards their Sustainer;*⁷⁶

all these fundamental, important subjects are explained in a way befitting the All-Glorious One Who administers the whole universe as though it was a palace, and opens and closes this world and the hereafter like two rooms, and regulates the earth as if it was a garden and the heavens as though they were a roof adorned with lamps, and beholds the past and the future as though they were two pages present in His sight like a single night and day, and looks on pre-eternity and post-eternity as though they were yesterday and tomorrow, in a form in which the two sides of a chain of events are joined together and touching in present time. Just as a master builder speaks of two houses he has constructed and arranged, and makes out the programme and list and index of the matters involved, so the Qur'an is fitting for the One Who makes the universe and arranges it, and writes out and displays the list and index and –if one may say so– the programme of the matters concerned with it. There is no sign of any artificiality or false display. And just as there is no trace of imitation or hint of any fraud, like speaking on behalf of someone else or supposing itself to be in someone else's place and speaking, so too with all its seriousness, all its purity, all its sincerity, the Qur'an's pure, shining, brilliant exposition declares: "I am the word and exposition of the Creator of the world," just as the light of day declares: "I came from the sun."

Indeed, apart from the Maker Who adorns this world with antique arts and fills it with delicious bounties and scatters bountifully over the face of the world together with these wonders of His art so many valuable gifts, and setting them in orderly lines spreads them out over the face of the earth, apart from this Bestower of Bounties, who else could the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition be fitting for – the Qur'an which fills the world with this clamour of salutation and acclaim, this resounding praise and thanks, and transforms the earth into a place for the recitation of God's Names, a mosque, and place for gazing on the Divine works of art? Whose speech could it be apart from His? Who can claim ownership of it apart from Him?

⁷⁵ Qur'an, 7:172.

⁷⁶ Qur'an, 75:22-3.

Whose word could it be other than His? Whose light could the exposition of the Qur'an be, which solves the talisman of creation and illuminates the world, other than the Pre-Eternal Sun's? Who has the ability to produce the like of it, and imitate it? In truth, it is impossible for the Artist Who adorns this world with His arts not to speak with man, who appreciates His art. Since He makes and knows, He surely speaks. And since He speaks, it is surely the Qur'an which is appropriate to His speech. How should a Lord of All Dominion Who is not indifferent to the way a flower is ordered remain indifferent to a discourse which brings all His dominion to a clamour of salutation and praise? Would He permit it to be attributed to others and be made as nothing?

Fifth Flash: This is the wonderful comprehensiveness of the Qur'an's style and conciseness. It consists of five 'Glow's'.

First Glow: The Qur'an's style has a comprehensiveness so wonderful that a single Sura contains the ocean of the Qur'an, which in turn contains the universe. A single of its verses contains the treasury of the Sura. And most of the verses are each a short Sura, while most of the Suras are short Qur'ans. Thus, this is a great favour and guidance and facilitating arising from its miraculous conciseness. For although everyone has need of the Qur'an all the time, either due to foolishness or for some other reason, they do not have the time to read all of it, or they do not have the opportunity. So in order that they should not to be deprived of it, each Sura is like a short Qur'an, and each long verse even has the rank of a Sura. Those who penetrate to the inner meaning of things agree that the whole Qur'an is contained in the Sura al-Fatiha, even, and the Fatiha in the *Bismillah*. The proof of this fact is the consensus of the scholars who have investigated it.

Second Glow: The verses of the Qur'an are comprehensive through their denoting and indicating all the categories of speech and true knowledge and human needs, like command and prohibition, promise and threat, encouragement and deterring, restraint and guidance, stories and comparisons, the Divine ordinances and teachings, the sciences related to the universe, and the laws and conditions of personal life, social life, the life of the heart, spiritual life, and the life of the hereafter. So that the truth of the saying, "Take whatever you want from the Qur'an for whatever you want" has become accepted to such a degree by the people of reality that it has become proverbial among them. There is such a comprehensiveness in the verses of the Qur'an that they may be the cure for every ill and the sustenance for every need. Yes, they have to be like that, because it is essential that the absolute guide of all the levels of the people of perfection, who continually rise in the degrees of progress, possesses this property.

Third Glow: This is the Qur'an's miraculous conciseness. It sometimes

happens that the Qur'an mentions the two ends of a long chain in such a way that it shows clearly the whole chain. And sometimes it happens that it includes explicitly, implicitly, figuratively, and allusively in one word many proofs of an assertion. For example, in the verse:

*And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your tongues and in your colours,*⁷⁷

by mentioning the beginning and end of the chain of the universe's creation, which forms a chain of signs and indications of Divine unity, the verse shows the second chain. It makes the first chain read it out. Yes, the first degree of the pages of the world which testify to an All-Wise Maker is the origin of the heavens and the earth, their creation. Next is the heavens being adorned with stars and the earth made to rejoice with living beings. Then the change of the seasons through the subjugation of the sun and the moon. Then is the alternation of day and night, and the chain of events within these. And so it goes on as far as the characteristics and distinguishing individual features on faces and in voices, the most widely spread loci of multiplicity. Thus, since there is an astonishing and wise order in the characteristics of individual faces, which are the furthest from order and most subject to the interference of chance, if it is shown that the pen of a most wise craftsman works there, surely the other pages, whose order is clear, will themselves be understood and display their Inscraper. And since the works of art and wisdom of a Maker are apparent in the original creation of the vast heavens and earth, Who positions them purposefully as the foundation stones of the palace of the universe; the works of His art and the impress of His wisdom will surely be most clear in His other beings. Thus, by exposing the concealed and concealing the obvious, this verse expresses a most beautiful succinctness.

Similarly in the verses from:

So give glory to God when you reach eventide till

*And to Him belongs the loftiest similitude in the heavens and the earth; for He is Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom,*⁷⁸

the chain of proofs which begins six times with the words, And among His signs..., And among His signs, is a sequence of jewels, a sequence of light, a sequence of miraculousness, a sequence of miraculous conciseness. I wish from the heart to display the hidden diamonds in these treasuries, but what can I do?, the discussion here does not support it. So postponing it to another time, I am not opening that door for now.

And for example:

⁷⁷ Qur'an, 30:22.

⁷⁸ Qur'an, 30:17-27.

*...Send me therefore * O Joseph! O Man of truth!*⁷⁹

Between ..send me therefore and O Joseph! are these words: ...Joseph, that I may ask him to interpret the dream. So I sent him, and he went to the prison and said to Joseph... That is to say, although five sentences have been abbreviated and summarized in one sentence, it does not mar the clarity or hinder the understanding.

And, for example:

*Who produces for you fire from the green tree.*⁸⁰

Here the Qur'an is saying in the face of rebellious man's denials, who is as though challenging the Qur'an by saying, "Who will raise to life rotten bones?", "Whoever created them in the first place, He will raise them to life. And that Creator knows every single aspect of every single thing. Furthermore, He who provides fire for you from the green tree, is able to give life to dry bones." Thus, this sentence looks in numerous ways to the claim that man will be raised to life, and proves it.

Firstly, with these words the Qur'an starts off the chain of bounties it lays before man, moves it forward, and calls it to mind. Having described it in detail in other verses, it cuts short the description here, and refers it to the intelligence. That is, "You cannot flee from the One Who gives you fruit and fire from trees, sustenance and seeds from plants, cereals and grains from the earth, and makes the earth a fine cradle for you filled with all your sustenance, and the world a palace in which is found all your needs – you cannot be independent of Him, or disappear into non-existence and hide there. You cannot enter the grave without duties to sleep in comfort not to be awoken.

Then it points out an evidence of the claim. With the words, the green tree, it implies: "O you who deny resurrection! Look at the trees! One Who raises to life and makes green in spring numberless bone-like trees which have been dead throughout winter, and in every tree even demonstrates three examples of resurrection through the leaves, blossoms, and fruit – the power of such a One cannot be challenged through denial or by considering resurrection improbable."

Then it points out another evidence, saying: "How do you deem it unlikely that One Who extracts for you out of dense, heavy, dark matter like a tree, subtle, light, luminous matter like fire should give fire-like life and light-like consciousness to wood-like bones?"

Then it states another evidence explicitly; it says: "One Who creates the famous tree which while green produces fire for nomads in place of matches when two of its branches are rubbed together, and combines two opposites

⁷⁹ Qur'an, 12:46.

⁸⁰ Qur'an, 36:80.

like the green and damp and the dry and hot, and makes them the source of the fire – everything, even the fundamental elements, looks to His command and acts through His power. It cannot be considered unlikely of the One Who demonstrates that none of these is independent and acts of its own accord that He should raise up man from the earth once again, who was made from earth and later returned to the earth. He may not be challenged with rebellion.”

Then, through recalling Moses’s (Peace be upon him) famous tree, it shows that this claim of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) is also that of Moses (PBH). Lightly alluding to the consensus of the prophets, it adds one more subtle point to the phrase.

Fourth Glow: The Qur’an’s conciseness is so comprehensive and wonderful that when studied carefully it becomes apparent that sometimes, through some simple detail or particular event, it compassionately shows to simple, ordinary minds most extensive, lengthy, universal rules and general laws, like showing an ocean in a ewer. We shall point out only two examples of this out of thousands.

First Example: This is the three verses expounded in detail in the First Station of the Twentieth Word, which describe under the name of ‘the teaching of the Names’ to the person of Adam, the teaching of all the sciences and branches of knowledge with which the sons of Adam have been inspired. Through the angels prostrating before Adam and Satan not prostrating, they state that most beings from fish to angels are subjugated to human kind, just as harmful creatures from snakes to Satan do not obey man and are hostile to him. And through the people of Moses (Peace be upon him) slaughtering a cow, they state that the concept of cow-worship –which was taken from the worship of cows in Egypt and showed its effect in ‘the event of the calf’– was slaughtered by Moses’ knife. And through water gushing forth from the rock and springs flowing out and spreading, they also state that the rock layer which is under the soil layer acts as the source of both water springs and the soil.

Second Example: This is the whole and the parts of the story of Moses (Peace be upon him), which is frequently repeated in the Qur’an, and each of the repetitions of which is shown as the tip of a universal rule, with each repetition stating the rule in question. For example:

*O Haman! Build me a lofty palace.*⁸¹

Pharaoh is commanding his minister: “Build me a high tower so that I can take a look at the heavens and observe them. I wonder if there is a God who governs in the skies like Moses claims, who can be seen from their

⁸¹ Qur’an, 40:36.

disposition?” Thus, through the word ‘palace’ and this minor incident, it states a strange rule dominant in the traditions of the Egyptian Pharaohs, who, because they lived in the desert with no mountains, wanted mountains, and because they did not recognize the Creator, were worshippers of nature and claimed godhead; and worshipping fame, through displaying the works of their dominion perpetuated their name and constructed the famous mountain-like pyramids; and agreed to magic and metempsychosis, and had their corpses mummified and preserved in their mountain-like tombs.

And, for example:

*This day We shall save you in your body.*⁸²

By saying to Pharaoh, who is drowning: “Today I am going to save your body which will drown,” it is expressing a death-tainted, exemplary rule of the Pharaohs’ lives, which was, as a consequence of the idea of metempsychosis and mummifying the bodies of all of them, to take them from the past and send them to be viewed by the generations of the future. And this present century a body was discovered which was the very body of Pharaoh, thrown up on the seashore where he drowned. The verse thus states a miraculous sign of the Unseen, that the body was to be borne on the waves of the centuries and cast up from the sea of time onto the shore of this century.

And, for example:

*They slaughtered your sons and let your women-folk live.*⁸³

With an event in the time of a Pharaoh, the slaughtering of the sons of the Children of Israel and the sparing of their women and daughters, it mentions the numerous massacres which the Jewish nation has suffered every age, and the role their women and girls have played in dissolute human life.

*And you will indeed find them, of all people, most greedy of life.*⁸⁴ * *And you see many of them racing each other in sin and rancour, and their eating of things forbidden. Evil indeed are the things they do.*⁸⁵ * *But they [ever] strive to do mischief on earth. And God loves not those who do mischief.*⁸⁶ * *And We gave [clear] warning to the Children of Israel in the Book, that twice they would do mischief on the earth.*⁸⁷ * *And do no evil nor mischief on the earth.*⁸⁸

These two statements of the Qur’an directed at the Jews, comprise the two fearsome general rules, that that nation hatches plots in human social life

⁸² Qur’an, 10:92.

⁸³ Qur’an, 2:49; 14:6.

⁸⁴ Qur’an, 2:96.

⁸⁵ Qur’an, 5:62.

⁸⁶ Qur’an, 5:64.

⁸⁷ Qur’an, 17:4.

⁸⁸ Qur’an, 2:60.

with their trickery, which shake human society. They say that just as it was that nation which made labour contest with capital; and through usury and compounded interest, made the poor clash with the rich, and caused the banks to be founded, and amassed wealth through wiles and fraud; so it was again that nation who, in order to take their revenge on the victors and governments under which they always suffered deprivation and oppression, were involved in every sort of corrupting covert organization and had a finger in every sort of revolution.

And, for example:

*Then seek ye for death*⁸⁹

That is, “If what you say is true, seek death, but you won’t seek it!” Thus, through a minor incident in a small gathering in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH), it points out that the Jewish nation, which is most famous among the nations of mankind for its greed for life and fear of death, will not, according to its tongue of disposition, seek death till Doomsday, and will not give up its greed for life.

And, for example:

*Thus they were stamped with humiliation and indigence.*⁹⁰

With this, it describes generally that nation’s future destiny. It is because of these fearsome rules governing the destiny and character of this nation that the Qur’an acts so severely against them. It deals them awesomely punishing slaps. From these examples draw analogies with the other stories and passages about Moses (Peace be upon him) and the Children of Israel. Now, there are very many flashes of miraculousness like the flash in this Fourth Glow behind the simple words and specific subjects of the Qur’an. A hint is enough for the wise.

Fifth Glow: This is the extraordinary comprehensiveness of the Qur’an in regard to its aims and subjects, meanings and styles, and its subtle qualities and fine virtues. Indeed, if the Suras and verses of the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition are studied carefully, and especially the openings of the Suras, and the beginnings and ends of the verses, it will be seen that although it gathers together all the categories of rhetoric, all the parts of fine speech, all the classes of elevated styles, all the sorts of fine morality, all the summaries of the sciences relating to the universe, all the indexes of Divine knowledge, all the beneficial rules for individual and human social life, and all the luminous laws of the exalted physical sciences, not a trace of confusion is apparent. In truth, to gather together in one place this many different categories of knowledge and not to cause any dispute or difficulty can only be the work of an overwhelming miraculous order.

⁸⁹ Qur’an, 2:94.

⁹⁰ Qur’an, 2:61.

Then together with the order within this comprehensiveness, as is expounded and proved in the previous twenty-four Words, to rend the veils of the habitual and commonplace, which are the source of compounded ignorance, and to draw out the wonders concealed beneath them and display them; to smash with the diamond sword of proof the idol of nature, which is the source of misguidance; to scatter with thunderous trumpet-blasts the dense layers of the sleep of heedlessness; and to uncover and reveal the obscure talisman of being and the strange riddle of the creation of the world, before which human philosophy and science have remained impotent, is most surely only the wondrous work of a wonder-worker like the Qur'an – the Qur'an, which sees reality, is familiar with the Unseen, bestows guidance, and shows the truth.

If the Qur'an's verses are considered carefully and fairly, it will be seen that they do not resemble a gradual chain of thought, following one or two aims, like other books. For the Qur'an's manner is sudden and instantaneous; it is inspired on the moment; its mark is that all its aspects arrive together but independently from distant places, a most serious and important discourse which comes singly and concisely.

Yes, who is there apart from the universe's Creator that could give a discourse concerned to this degree with the universe and the Creator of the universe? Who could step beyond his mark to an infinite degree and make the All-Glorious Creator speak according to his own whims, then make the universe speak the truth? Yes, in the Qur'an, the universe's Maker is seen to be speaking and making others speak most seriously and truthfully and in elevated and true fashion. There is no sign at all to suggest imitation. He speaks and makes speak. If, to suppose the impossible, someone like Musaylima was to step beyond his mark to an infinite degree, and by way of imitation make the All-Glorious Creator, the Sublime and Majestic One, speak according to his own ideas, and the universe as well, there certainly would be thousands of signs of imitation and indications of falsehood. For when the contemptible assume the manner of the lofty, their every action shows up their pretence. So consider carefully these verses, which proclaim this fact with an oath:

*By the star when it goes down! * Your companion is neither astray nor being misled * Nor does he say [aught] of [his own] desire * It is no less than revelation inspired!*⁹¹

THIRD RAY

This is the miraculousness of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition which is its giving news of the Unseen, preserving its youth in every age, and being appropriate to every level of person. This Ray has three 'Radiances'.

⁹¹ Qur'an, 53:1-4.

First Radiance: This is its giving news of the Unseen. It consists of three ‘Glistens’.

The First Glisten is its telling about the past, one part of the Unseen. Indeed, the All-Wise Qur’an mentions through the tongue of one whom everyone agreed was both unlettered and trustworthy the important events and significant facts concerning the prophets from the time of Adam till the Era of Bliss in a way which, confirmed by scriptures like the Torah and the Bible, tells of them with the greatest power and seriousness. It concurs with the points on which the former Books were agreed, and decides between them on the points over which they differed, pointing out the truth of the matter. That is to say, the Qur’an’s view which penetrates the Unseen sees the events of the past in a way over and above all the previous scriptures, and pronounces them right and confirms them in the matters on which they are agreed, and acts as arbiter between them, correcting in matters about which they are at variance.

However, the facts the Qur’an relates about the events of the past are not things that could have been learnt through the exercise of reason that they were communicated by it; they were rather transmitted knowledge, dependent on the heavens, on revelation. And as for transmitted knowledge, it is the domain of those who know how to read and write, and these were revealed to one known by friend and foe alike as knowing neither how to read nor how to write, and as being trustworthy; someone described as unlettered.

Also, the Qur’an tells of those past events as though it had actually seen them. For it takes the spirit and vital point of a lengthy event, and makes them the introduction to its aim. That is to say, the summaries and extracts which the Qur’an contains show that it sees all the past together with all its events. For just as someone who is an expert in some science or craft shows his skill and proficiency through some succinct words or a concise statement, so the summaries and spirits of events mentioned in the Qur’an show that the one who said them comprehends all the events and sees them, and, if one may say so, relates them with extraordinary skill.

The Second Glisten is its giving news of the future, which is another part of the Unseen. There are many sorts of this. The first sort is particular, and special to the saints and those seek the truth through illumination. For example, Muhyiddin al-’Arabi discovered numerous instances of the Qur’an’s giving news of the Unseen in the Sura,

*Alif. Lam. Mim. * The Roman Empire has been defeated.*⁹²

And Imam-i Rabbani saw many signs of the events of the Unseen and the

⁹² Qur’an, 30:1-2.

communicating of them through the ‘disjointed letters’ at the start of some Suras, and so on. For scholars of the Batiniya School, the Qur’an consisted from beginning to end of information about the Unseen. We, however, shall indicate some which are general. These too have many levels, one of which we shall discuss. Thus, the All-Wise Qur’an says to God’s Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him):⁹³

*So patiently persevere, for God’s promise is true.*⁹⁴ * *You shall enter the Sacred Mosque if God wills, with minds secure, heads shaved, hair cut short, and without fear; * He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, so it should prevail over all religion.*⁹⁵ * *But they, after this defeat of theirs will soon be victorious, * within a few years. With God is the decision.*⁹⁶ * *Soon will you see, and they will see * which of you is afflicted with madness*⁹⁷.⁹⁷ * *Or do they say: “A poet! We await for him some calamity [hatched] by time?” * Say: “Wait, then. And I shall wait with you.”*⁹⁸ * *And God will defend you from men.*⁹⁹ * *But if you cannot, and of a surety you cannot.*¹⁰⁰ * *But they will never seek it.*¹⁰¹ * *We shall show them Our signs on the furthest horizons and in their own selves, so that it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth.*¹⁰² * *Say: If the whole of mankind and the jinns were to come together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.*¹⁰³ * *God will produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him, lowly with the believers, mighty against the rejecters, fighting in the way of God, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault.*¹⁰⁴ * *And say: Praise be to God, Who will show you His signs, so that you shall know them.*¹⁰⁵ * *Say: He is the Most Merciful; we have believed in Him, and in Him have we put our trust. Soon you shall know which [of us] it is that is in manifest error.*¹⁰⁶

⁹³ Since these verses which give news of the Unseen have been expounded in numerous Qur’anic commentaries, and also due to the haste imposed on the author by his intention to have this work printed in the old [Ottoman] script, * they have not been explained here and those valuable treasures have remained closed. [*See, page 375, footnote 1 above. –Tr.]

⁹⁴ Qur’an, 30:60.

⁹⁵ Qur’an, 48:27-28.

⁹⁶ Qur’an, 30:3-4.

⁹⁷ Qur’an, 68:5-6.

⁹⁸ Qur’an, 52:30-1.

⁹⁹ Qur’an, 5:67.

¹⁰⁰ Qur’an, 2:24.

¹⁰¹ Qur’an, 2:95.

¹⁰² Qur’an, 41:53.

¹⁰³ Qur’an, 17:88.

¹⁰⁴ Qur’an, 5:54.

¹⁰⁵ Qur’an, 27:93.

¹⁰⁶ Qur’an, 67:29.

** God has promised to those among you who believe and act righteously that He will of a surety grant them inheritance [of power] in the land, as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion, which He has chosen for them; and that He will change [their state] after their fear, to one of security and peace.¹⁰⁷*

The information about the Unseen which many verses like these give turned out to be exactly true. Because it was given by one who was subject to many criticisms and objections and could have lost his cause through the tiniest mistake, and was spoken unhesitatingly, and with absolute seriousness and confidence in a way that confirmed its authenticity, this news of the Unseen demonstrates with certainty that the one who gave it had received instruction from the Pre-Eternal Master, and then he spoke.

The Third Glisten is its giving news of the Divine truths, cosmic truths, and the matters of the hereafter. The Qur'an's expositions of the Divine truths, and its explanations of the cosmos, which solve the talisman of the universe and riddle of creation, are the most important of its disclosures about the Unseen. For it is not reasonable to expect the human reason to discover those truths about the Unseen and follow them without deviating amid innumerable ways of misguidance. It is well-known that the most brilliant philosophers of mankind have been unable to solve the most insignificant of those matters by use of the reason. Furthermore, it is only after the Qur'an has elucidated those Divine truths and cosmic truths, which it points out, and after man's heart has been cleansed and his soul purified, and after his spirit has advanced and his mind been perfected that his mind affirms and accepts those truths, and he says to the Qur'an: "How great are God's blessings!" This section has been in part explained and proved in the Eleventh Word, and there is no need to repeat it. But when it comes to facts concerning the hereafter and Intermediate Realm, the human mind certainly cannot rise to them and see them on its own. However, it can prove them to the degree it sees them through the ways shown by the Qur'an. It is explained and proved in the Tenth Word just how right and true are these disclosures of the Qur'an about the Unseen.

Second Radiance: This is the Qur'an's youth. It preserves its freshness and youth every age as though newly revealed. In fact, the Qur'an has to have perpetual youth since as a pre-eternal address, it addresses at once all the levels of mankind in every age. And that is how it has been seen and is seen. Even, although all the centuries are different with regard to ideas and capacity, it as though looks to each particularly, and teaches it. Man's works and laws grow old like man, they change and are changed. But the rulings and laws of the Qur'an are so firm and well-founded that they

¹⁰⁷ Qur'an, 24:55.

increase in strength as the centuries pass. Indeed, this present age and the People of the Book this age, who have more than any other relied on themselves and stopped up their ears to the words of the Qur'an, are so in need of its guiding address of,

O People of the Book! O People of the Book!

that it is as if it addresses this age directly, and the phrase O People of the Book! comprises also the meaning of O People of the Modern Science Books!¹⁰⁸ It delivers its shout of,

*O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you*¹⁰⁹

to the ends of the world with all its strength, all its freshness, all its youth.

For example, modern civilization, which is the product of the thought of all mankind and perhaps the jinn as well, has taken up a position opposed to the Qur'an, which individuals and communities have failed to dispute. With its sorcery it impugns the Qur'an's miraculousness. Now, in order to prove the claim of the verse:

*Say: if the whole of mankind and the jinns were to gather together,*¹¹⁰

we shall compare the foundations and principles which civilization has laid in the form of dispute, with the principles of the Qur'an.

At the First Degree: The comparisons and balances which form all the Words from the First to the Twenty-Fifth, and the verses at their heads which form their truths, all prove with the certainty that two plus two equals four the Qur'an's miraculousness and superiority in the face of civilization.

At the Second Degree: Like the proofs in the Twelfth Word, it is to summarize a number of principles. By reason of its philosophy, present-day civilization accepts 'force' as the point of support in the life of society. It takes as its aim 'benefits,' and considers the principle of its life to be 'conflict.' It considers the bond between communities to be 'racialism and negative nationalism.' While its aim is to provide 'amusements' for gratifying the appetites of the soul and increasing man's needs. However, the mark of force is aggression. And since the benefits are insufficient to meet all needs, their mark is that everyone tussles and jostles over them. The mark of conflict is contention, and the mark of racialism, aggression, since it thrives on devouring others. Thus, it is because of these principles of civilization that despite all its virtues, it has provided a sort of superficial happiness for only twenty per cent of mankind and cast eighty per cent into distress and poverty.

The wisdom of the Qur'an, however, takes as its point of support 'truth' in stead of force, and in place of benefit has 'virtue and God's pleasure' as

¹⁰⁸ *Ehl-i Mekteb*, those educated in modern secular schools, as opposed to *Ehl-i Kitab*. [Tr.]

¹⁰⁹ Qur'an, 3:64.

¹¹⁰ Qur'an, 17:88.

its aims. It considers ‘the principle of mutual assistance’ to be fundamental in life, rather than conflict. In the ties between communities it accepts ‘the bonds of religion, class, and country,’ in place of racialism and nationalism. Its aims are to place a barrier before the illicit assaults of the soul’s base appetites and to urge the spirit to sublime matters, to satisfy man’s elevated emotions and encourage him towards the human perfections. And as for the truth, its mark is concord, the mark of virtue is mutual support, and the mark of mutual assistance, hastening to help one another. The mark of religion is brotherhood and attraction. And the result of reining in and tethering the evil-commanding soul and leaving the spirit free and urging it towards perfection is happiness in this world and the next. Thus, despite the virtues present-day civilization has acquired from the guidance of the Qur’an in particular, and from the preceding revealed religions, in point of fact it has thus suffered defeat before the Qur’an.

Third Degree: Of thousands of matters, we shall point out only three or four by way of example. Since the Qur’an’s principles and laws have come from pre-eternity, they shall go to post-eternity. They are not condemned to grow old and die like civilization’s laws. They are always young and strong. For example, despite all its societies for good works, all its establishments for the teaching of ethics, all its severe discipline and regulations, civilization has been unable to contest the All-Wise Qur’an on two of its matters, and has been defeated by them. These two matters are:

*Be steadfast in performing the prayers, and give zakat,*¹¹¹

and,

*God has permitted trade and forbidden usury.*¹¹²

We shall describe them, this miraculous victory, by means of an introduction. It is like this:

As is proved in *Isharat al-I’jaz*, just as the source of mankind’s revolutions is one phrase, so another phrase is the origin of all immorality.

First Phrase: “So long as I’m full, what is it to me if others die of hunger.”

Second Phrase: “You work so that I can eat.”

Yes, the upper and lower classes in human society, that is, the rich and the poor, live at peace when in equilibrium. The basis of that equilibrium is compassion and kindness in the upper classes, and respect and obedience in the lower classes. Now, the first phrase has incited the upper classes to practise oppression, immorality, and mercilessness. And just as the second has driven the lower classes to hatred, envy, and to contend the upper classes, and has negated man’s tranquillity for several centuries, so too this century,

¹¹¹ Qur’an, 2:43, etc.

¹¹² Qur’an, 2:275.

as the result of the struggle between capital and labour, it has been the cause of the momentous events of Europe well-known by all. Thus, together with all its societies for good works, all its establishments for the teaching of ethics, all its severe discipline and regulations, it could not reconcile these two classes of mankind, nor could it heal the two fearsome wounds in human life. The Qur'an, however, eradicates the first phrase with its injunction to pay zakat, and heals it. While it uproots the second phrase with its prohibition on usury and interest, and cures that. Indeed, the Qur'anic verse stands at the door of the world and declares usury and interest to be forbidden. It reads out its decree to mankind, saying: "In order to close the door of strife, close the door of usury and interest!" It forbids its students to enter it.

Second Principle: Civilization does not accept polygamy. It considers the Qur'an's decree to be contrary to wisdom and opposed to man's benefits. Indeed, if the purpose of marriage was only to satisfy lust, polygamy would have been contrary to it. But as is testified to by all animals and corroborated by plants that 'marry', the purpose and aim of marriage is reproduction. The pleasure of satisfying lust is a small wage given by Divine mercy to encourage performance of the duty. Since in truth and according to wisdom, marriage is for reproduction and the perpetuation of the species, since women can give birth only once a year, and can be impregnated only half the month, and after the age of fifty fall into despair, and men can impregnate till a hundred years old, and thus one woman is insufficient for one man, civilization has been compelled to accept numerous houses of ill-repute.

Third Principle: Unreasoning civilization criticizes the Qur'anic verse which apportions to women one third [in inheritance]. However, most of the rulings concerning social life are in accordance with the majority, and mostly a woman finds someone to protect her. As for the man, she will be a burden on him and will have to combine efforts with someone else who will leave her her means of subsistence. Thus, in this form, if a woman takes half of the father's legacy, her husband makes up her deficiency. But if the man receives two parts from his father, one part he will give to maintaining the woman he has married, thus becoming equal with his sister. The justice of the Qur'an requires it to be thus. It has decreed it in this way.¹¹³

Fourth Principle: Just as the Qur'an severely prohibits the worship of

¹¹³ This is part of my court defence, which was the supplement for the Appeal Court and which silenced the court. It is appropriate as a footnote for this passage. I told the court of law: Surely if there is any justice on the face of the earth, it will reject and quash an unjust decision which has convicted someone for expounding a most sacred, just Divine rule which governs in the social life of three hundred and fifty million people in the year one thousand three hundred and fifty, and in every century, relying on the confirmation and consensus of three hundred and fifty thousand Qur'anic commentaries, and following the beliefs of our forefathers of one thousand three hundred and fifty years.

idols, so it forbids the worship of images, which is a sort of imitation of idol-worship. Whereas civilization counts the representation of forms as one of its virtues, and has attempted to dispute the Qur'an in this matter. But represented forms, whether pictorial or concrete, are either embodied tyranny, or embodied hypocrisy, or embodied lust; they excite lust and encourage man to oppression, hypocrisy, and licentiousness. Moreover, the Qur'an compassionately commands women to wear the veil of modesty so that they will be treated with respect and those mines of compassion will not be trodden under the feet of low desires, nor be like worthless goods for the excitement of lust.¹¹⁴ Civilization, however, has drawn women out of their homes, rent their veils, and corrupted mankind. For family life continues through the mutual love and respect of man and wife. But immodest dress has destroyed sincere respect and affection, and has poisoned family life. While worship of the human form in particular has shaken morality in appalling fashion, causing the abasement of man's spirit. This may be understood from the following: to look lustfully and with desire at the corpse of a beautiful woman who is in need of pity and compassion destroys morality; so too, to look lasciviously at the representations of dead women, or of living women, for they are like little corpses, shakes to their very roots the elevated human emotions, and destroys them.

Thus, together with assisting human happiness in this world, all of thousands of matters of the Qur'an like the above three examples also serve eternal happiness. You can compare other matters to these.

Just as present-day civilization stands defeated before the Qur'anic principles concerning human social life and in reality is bankrupt in the face of the Qur'an's miraculousness, so too it has been proved decisively in the previous twenty-five Words through the comparisons between European philosophy and human science, which are the spirit of civilization, and the wisdom of the Qur'an that philosophy is impotent and the wisdom of the Qur'an miraculous. The impotence and bankruptcy of philosophy and miraculousness and wealth of Qur'anic wisdom have been proved in the Eleventh and Twelfth Words; you may refer to those.

Furthermore, just as present-day civilization is defeated before the miraculousness of the Qur'an's wisdom in regard to learning and actions, the same is true for literature and rhetoric. The comparison of the literature and rhetoric of civilization and those of the Qur'an is that of the dark grief and hopeless wailing of a motherless orphan and the low and uproarious song of a drunkard, and the yearning, hopeful sorrow of an elevated lover arising from a temporary separation and patriotic songs urging victory or war and high self-sacrifice. For in regard to the effects of its styles, literature and rhetoric

¹¹⁴ The Twenty-Fourth Flash of the Thirty-First Letter about the veiling of women has proved most decisively that Islamic dress is natural for women, and that to cast it aside is contrary to women's nature.

produce either sorrow or joy. And sadness is of two sorts. It is either a dark sorrow arising from the lack of friends, that is, having no friends or owner, which is the sorrow produced by the literature of civilization, which is stained by misguidance, enamoured of nature, tainted by heedlessness, or it is the second sorrow. This arises from the separation of friends, that is, the friends exist, but their absence causes a yearning sorrow. This is the guidance-giving, light-scattering sorrow which the Qur'an produces. Joy, too, is of two sorts. One stimulates the desires of the soul. This is the mark of civilization's literature in the fields of theatre, cinema, and the novel. While the other joy silences the soul, and is subtle and mannerly, innocently urging the spirit, heart, mind, and subtle faculties to attain to sublime matters, to their original home and eternal abode, and their companions of the hereafter; it is the joy the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition produces. It fills man with eagerness for Paradise and eternal happiness and the vision of God's beauty.

Thus, the vast meaning and mighty truth expressed by the verse,

Say: If the whole of mankind and the jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support¹¹⁵

is imagined by those of scant intelligence to be an impossible supposition for the purposes of uttering an exaggerated piece of eloquence. God forbid! It is not an exaggeration, nor is it an impossible supposition; it is an absolutely truthful piece of rhetoric, and possible and actual.

One aspect of its being in this form is this: if all the fine words of man and jinn which do not issue from the Qur'an and do not belong to it were to be gathered together, they could not imitate the Qur'an. And they have not been able to imitate it, for they have been unable to show that they have. The second aspect is this: civilization, and science and philosophy and European literature, which are the products of the thought and efforts of mankind and the jinn and even satans, remain in the very pits of impotence before the decrees, wisdom, and eloquence of the Qur'an. Just as we showed in the examples.

Third Radiance: It is as though the All-Wise Qur'an is every century turned directly towards all the classes of humanity, and addresses each particularly. Indeed, since the Qur'an summons all mankind with all its classes and instructs them in belief, the highest and most subtle science, and in knowledge of God, the broadest and most luminous branch of learning, and in the laws of Islam, which are the most important and various of the sciences, it is essential that it should instruct every class and group appropriately. What it teaches, however, is the same; it does not differ. In which case, there have to be different levels in the same lesson, and according to its degree, every class takes its share from one of the veils of the Qur'an. We

¹¹⁵ Qur'an, 17:88.

have given many examples of this, and they may be referred to. Here we shall only indicate one or two minor points, and the share of understanding of one or two classes. For example:

*He begets not, nor is He begotten * And there is none like unto Him.*¹¹⁶

The share of understanding of this of the ordinary people, which forms the most numerous class: “Almighty God is above having mother and father, relatives or wife.” While the share of a middle class: “It is to deny the divinity of Jesus (Peace be upon him), and the angels, and anything which has been born.” For although denying something impossible is apparently purposeless, according to the rules of rhetoric, a necessary statement is intended, which gives it purpose. Thus, the purpose of denying son and begetter, which are particular to corporality, is to deny the divinity of those who have offspring and parents and equals; and it is to show that they are not worthy of being worshipped. It is because of this that Sura al-Ikhlās is beneficial for everyone all the time. The share of a more advanced class: “Almighty God is above all relations which suggest giving birth and being born. He is exempt from having any partners, helpers, or fellows. His relations with all beings are those of Creator. He creates through His pre-eternal will with the command of “Be!,” and it is. He is far beyond having any relation which is contrary to perfection, or is compelling, necessitating, or involuntary.” And the share of understanding of a higher class still: “Almighty God is pre-eternal and post-eternal, He is the First and the Last. Neither in His essence, nor in His attributes, nor in His actions, has He in any way any equal, peer, like, or match, or anything similar, resembling, or analogous to Him. Only, in His acts, there may be comparisons expressing similarity:

*And God’s is the highest similitude.”*¹¹⁷

You can draw analogies with the above for other classes, which all receive different shares, like those who have attained knowledge of God, the lovers of God, and the truly sincere.

A Second Example:

*Muhammad is not the father of any of your men.*¹¹⁸

The share of understanding from this of the first class: “Zayd, the servant of God’s Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him), whom he also addressed as ‘my son,’ divorced his stately wife because he did not find himself equal to her. On God’s command, the Messenger (PBUH) took her. The verse says: ‘If the Prophet calls you son, it is in respect of his Messengership. In regard to his person, he is not your father, so that the women he takes should be unsuitable for him.’”

¹¹⁶ Qur’an, 112:3-4.

¹¹⁷ Qur’an, 16:60.

¹¹⁸ Qur’an, 33:40.

The second class's share is this: "A great ruler looks on his subjects with paternal compassion. If he is a spiritual monarch ruling both outwardly and inwardly, then since his compassion goes a hundred times beyond that of a father, his subjects look on him as a father and on themselves as his real sons. A father's view cannot be transformed into that of a husband, and a daughter's view cannot be easily transformed into the view of a wife, so since the Prophet's taking the believers' daughters would seem inappropriate, the Qur'an says: 'The Prophet (PBUH) acts kindly towards you with the eye of Divine compassion, and treats you in a fatherly manner. In the name of his Messengership, you are like his children. But with regard to his human person, he is not your father so that his taking a wife from you should be unfitting.'"

The third group would understand it like this: "You should not claim a connection with the Prophet (PBUH), and relying on his perfections and trusting in his fatherly compassion, commit errors and faults." Yes, many people are lazy because they lean on their elders and guides. They even sometimes say: "Our prayers have been performed." (Like some 'Alawis)

The Fourth Point. Another group would understand a sign from the Unseen from this verse, as follows: The Prophet's male children would not remain at the degree of 'men' [rija\l]; in consequence of some wise purpose, his descendants would not continue as men. Since through the use of the term '*rijal*' it indicates that he is the father of women, his line would continue through women. And, Praise be to God, Fatima's blessed descendants, like Hasan and Husayn, the radiant moons of two luminous lines, continued the physical and spiritual line of the Sun of Prophethood.

O God, grant blessings to him and his Family.

[The First Light here reaches a conclusion with Three Rays.]

SECOND LIGHT

The Second Light comprises Three Beams.

FIRST BEAM: According to the testimony of thousands of brilliant scholars of rhetoric and the science of rhetorical style like Zamakhshari, Sakkaki, and 'Abd al-Qahir Jurjani, there is in the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition as a whole a pleasant fluency, a superior correctness, a firm mutual solidarity, and compact proportionateness, powerful co-operation between the sentences and parts, and an elevated harmony between the verses and their aims. And yet, while there are seven or eight significant factors that might mar or destroy the harmony, co-operation, and mutual support, and the fluency and correctness, they do not mar them, indeed, they give strength to the fluency, correctness, and proportionateness. Only, those causes have exerted an influence to some extent and taken others out of the veil of the order and fluency. But just as a number of bumps and excres

cences appear on a tree, not to spoil the harmony of the tree, but to produce fruit which will be the means for the tree reaching its adorned perfection and beauty; in just the same way, these factors stick out their knobbly heads in order to express meanings which will enhance the Qur'an's fluent word-order. Thus, although the Perspicuous Qur'an was revealed part by part like stars over twenty years in response to the circumstances and needs, it possesses such a perfect harmony and displays such a proportionateness that it is as though it was revealed all at once.

Furthermore, although the circumstances which prompted the Qur'an's revelation were all different and various, its parts are so mutually supportive that it is as though it was revealed in response to only one of them. And although the Qur'an came in response to different and repeated questions, it displays the utmost blending and unity, as though it was the answer to a single question. And although the Qur'an came to explain the requirements of numerous diverse events, it displays such a perfect order that it is as though it explains a single event. And although the Qur'an was revealed through Divine condescension in styles appropriate to the understanding of the innumerable people it would address, whose circumstances were different and diverse, it displays such a fine correspondence and beautiful smoothness of style that it is as though the circumstances were one and the level of understanding the same; it flows as smoothly as water. And although the Qur'an addresses numerous classes distant from one another, it possesses such an ease of exposition, such an eloquence in its word-order, such a clarity in its manner of expression that it is as though it is addressing a single class. Even, each class supposes that it alone is being addressed. And although the Qur'an was revealed in order to guide and lead to various aims, it possesses such a perfect integrity, such a careful balance, such a fine order that it is as though the aim was one.

Thus, while these are all causes of confusion, they have been employed in the Qur'an's miraculous manner of exposition, in its fluency and proportionateness. For sure, everyone whose heart is without disease, whose mind is sound, whose conscience is not sick, whose taste is unimpaired sees in the Qur'an's manner of exposition a beautiful smoothness of style, a graceful harmony, a pleasing proportionateness, a unique eloquence. All the clear-sighted see that the Qur'an possesses an eye that sees the whole universe together with its outer and inner aspects clearly before it as though it was a page; that it turns the page as it wishes, and tells the page's meanings as it wishes. Several volumes would be necessary if we were to explain the meaning of this First Beam together with examples, so sufficing with the explanations and proofs of this fact in my Arabic treatises and in *Isharat al-I'jaz*, and in the twenty-five Words up to here, I have only pointed out here these features of the Qur'an in it as whole.

SECOND BEAM

This concerns the miraculous qualities in the Qur'an's unique style in the summaries and Most Beautiful Divine Names, which it shows at the ends of its verses.

REMINDER: There are many verses in this Second Beam. These are not only examples for the Second Beam, but for all the preceding examples and Rays. It would be extremely lengthy to explain them all giving them their due, so for now I am compelled to be brief and succinct. I have therefore indicated very concisely all the verses which form examples of this mighty mystery of miraculousness, and have postponed detailed explanation of them to another time.

Thus, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition mostly mentions summaries at the conclusion of its verses which either contain the Divine Names or their meanings; or refer the verse to the reason in order to urge it ponder over it; or they comprise a universal rule from among the aims of the Qur'an in order to corroborate and strengthen the verse. Thus, in the summaries are certain indications from the Qur'an's exalted wisdom and certain droplets from the water of life of Divine guidance, and certain sparks from the lightning of the Qur'an's miraculousness. Now I shall mention briefly only ten of those numerous indications, and point out a concise meaning of only one of numerous truths, which are all one example out of many. Most of these ten indications are found together in compact form in most verses and form a true embroidery of miraculousness. Furthermore, most of the verses we give as examples are examples of most of the indications. We shall point out only one indication for each verse, and shall just point lightly to the meanings of those verses given as examples in the preceding Words.

First Quality of Eloquence: With its miraculous exposition, the All-Wise Qur'an lays out, spreads out before the eyes, the acts and works of the All-Glorious Maker. Then it extracts the Divine Names from those works and acts, or it proves the basic aims of the Qur'an like the resurrection of the dead and Divine unity. An example of the first meaning is this:

*He it is Who has created for you all things that are on the earth, then He turned His will to the heavens and ordered them as the seven heavens, for He has knowledge of all things.*¹¹⁹

And an example of the second part:

*Have We not made the earth as a resting place * And the mountains as pegs?
* And [have We not] created you in pairs? * until, Verily the Day of
Sorting Out is a thing appointed.*¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Qur'an, 2:29.

¹²⁰ Qur'an, 78:6-17.

In the first verse it describes the Divine works, and sets out the mightiest of them, which testify through their order and aims to knowledge and power, like the premises of a conclusion, or a momentous aim. Then it extracts the Name of All-Knowing. In the second verse, as is explained briefly in the Third Point of the First Ray in the First Light, it mentions Almighty God's mighty acts and works, then concludes the resurrection of the dead, which is the Day of Sorting Out.

Second Point of Eloquence: The Qur'an unrolls the woven fabrics of Divine art and displays them to the human gaze. Then, in the summaries it passes over the weaving within the Divine Names, or else refers them to the reason.

The first example of these:

*Say: who is it that sustains you from the sky and from the earth? Or who is it that has power over hearing and sight? And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who is it that rules and regulate all affairs? They will say, "God." Say: Will you not then show piety [to Him]? * This is God, your Sustainer, The Truth.*¹²¹

Thus, at the start it asks: "Who is it that readies the skies and the earth as though they were two storehouses for your sustenance, and causes one to produce rain and the other, seeds? Is there anyone other than God Who could make them two subservient storekeepers? In which case, thanks should be offered to Him alone."

In the second phrase, it asks: "Who is the owner of your eyes and ears, the most precious of your members? From which workbench or shop did you obtain them? It is only your Sustainer that could give you them. It is He Who creates and raises you, and gave you them. In which case, there is no Sustainer but He, and the only one fit to be worshipped is He."

In the third phrase, it says: "Who is it that resurrects the dead earth and raises to life hundreds of thousands of sorts of dead beings? Who could bring this about apart from the True God and Creator of all the universe? It is surely He Who brings it about, He raises them to life. Since He is Truth, He will not violate rights; He will send you to a Supreme Tribunal. He will raise you to life just as He raises to life the earth."

In the fourth phrase, it asks: "Who other than God can administer and regulate this vast universe with perfect order as though it were a palace or a city? Since it can be none other than God, the power which administers with extreme ease the vast universe and all its heavenly bodies is so faultless and

¹²¹ Qur'an, 10:31-2.

infinite it can have no need of partner or associate, assistance or help. The One Who directs the vast universe will not leave small creatures to other hands. That means you will be obliged to say: ‘God.’”

Thus, the first and fourth phrases say “God,” the second, “Sustainer,” and the third, “Truth.” So understand how miraculously apt are the words: *This is God, your Sustainer, The Truth*. It mentions Almighty God’s vast disposals, the meaningful weavings of His power. Then through mentioning the Names of “God,” “Sustainer,” and “Truth,” it shows the source of those vast disposals of Divine power.

An example of the second:

*Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the oceans for the profit of mankind; in the rain which God sends down from the skies, and the life He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the disposal of the winds and the clouds subjugated between the sky and the earth, indeed are signs for people who think.*¹²²

First this enumerates the manifestations of Divine sovereignty in the creation of the heavens and the earth, which demonstrates Almighty God’s perfect power and the vastness of His dominicality, and testifies to His unity; and the manifestation of dominicality in the alternation of night and day, and the manifestation of Divine mercy in the subjugation of the ships in the sea, the most important means of transport in human social life; and the manifestation of the immensity of Divine power, which sends the water of life to the dead earth from the skies and raises to life hundreds of thousands of species and makes it like a exhibition of wonders; and the manifestation of mercy and power in the creation of infinite numbers of different animals on the earth from simple soil; and the manifestation of wisdom and mercy in the employment of the winds in important duties like assisting in the pollination and respiration of plants and animals and in the impelling and regulating of them so as to make them suitable to perform those duties; and the manifestation of dominicality in the subjugation and gathering together of the clouds, the means of mercy, suspended between the skies and the earth in great strange masses, and dispersing them, as though dispersing an army for rest and then summoning them back to their duties. Then, in order to urge the mind to ponder over their details and essential truths, it says: Indeed are signs for people who think. In order to rouse people’s minds with it, it refers it to their faculties of reason.

Third Quality of Eloquence: Sometimes the Qur’an explains Almighty God’s acts in detail, then sums them up with a summary. It convinces with

¹²² Qur’an, 2:164.

the details and commits it to the memory and fixes it there by summarizing it. For example:

*Thus will your Sustainer choose you and teach you the interpretation of events and perfect His favour to you and to the posterity of Jacob – even as He perfected it to your fathers Abraham and Isaac aforesaid; indeed, your Sustainer is All-Knowing, All-Wise.*¹²³

With this verse, it points out the bounties bestowed on the Prophet Joseph and his forefathers. It says: “Out of all mankind Divine favour has ennobled you with the rank of prophethood; tied all the lines of prophethood to your line and made it the chief of all lineages among mankind; it has made your family a cell of instruction and guidance in the Divine sciences and dominical wisdom, and united in you through that knowledge and wisdom, prosperous worldly dominion and the eternal happiness of the hereafter; and it has made you both a mighty ruler of Egypt, and a high prophet, and a wise guide, and has distinguished you and your forefathers with knowledge and wisdom.” It enumerates these Divine bounties, then it says: Indeed, your Sustainer is All-Knowing, All-Wise. “His dominicality and wisdom require that He made manifest in you and your fathers and forefathers the Divine Names of All-Knowing and All-Wise.” Thus, it sums up those detailed bounties with this summary.

And, for example:

*O God! Lord of All Dominion, You give power to whom You will.*¹²⁴

This verse shows Almighty God’s disposals in mankind’s social life in such a way that it ties glory and abasement, poverty and riches directly to Almighty God’s will and wish. It means, “Even the disposals most dispersed through the levels of multiplicity are through Divine will and determining. Chance and coincidence cannot interfere.” After making this statement, it mentions the most important matter in man’s life, his sustenance. This verse proves with one or two introductory phrases that man’s sustenance is sent directly from the True Provider’s treasury of mercy. It is like this: “Your sustenance is tied to the earth’s life, and the earth’s being raised to life looks to the spring, and the spring is in the hands of the One Who subjugates the sun and the moon, and alternates the night and the day. In which case, only the One Who fills the face of the earth with all the fruits can give an apple to someone as true sustenance. Only He can be his true Provider.” Then it says:

*And You give sustenance to whom You please without measure.*¹²⁵

¹²³ Qur’an, 12:6.

¹²⁴ Qur’an, 3:26.

¹²⁵ Qur’an, 3:27.

It summarizes and proves those detailed acts in this sentence. That is, “The One Who gives you unlimited sustenance is He Who performs these acts.”

Fourth Point of Eloquence: It sometimes happens that the Qur’an mentions the Divine creatures with a particular arrangement of the sentence, then through showing that the creatures are within an order and balance and that they are its fruits, affords a sort of transparency and brilliance. This transparency and brilliance then show the Divine Names, the manifestation of which is through that mirror-like arrangement. It is as though the above-mentioned creatures are words, and the Names are their meanings, or the seeds of the fruits, or their essences. For example:

*Man We did create from quintessence of clay * Then We placed him as [a drop of] sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; * Then We made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a [foetus] lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be God, the Best of Creators!*¹²⁶

Thus, the Qur’an mentions in order those wonderful, strange, amazing, well-ordered and balanced stages of man’s creation in such a mirror-like fashion that

So blessed be God, the Best of Creators!

appears of itself from within them, and makes itself exclaimed. A scribe who was writing out this verse uttered the words before coming to them, and wondered to himself: “Has revelation come to me as well?” Whereas it was the perfection of the order and transparency of the preceding words and their coherence which had showed up the final words before coming to them.

And for example:

*Your Sustainer is God, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the Throne [of authority]; He draws the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession; He created the sun, the moon, and the stars, [all] subject to His command. Is it not His to create and to command? Blessed by God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds!*¹²⁷

In this verse, the Qur’an points out the sublimity of Divine power and the sovereignty of dominicality. It shows an All-Powerful One of Glory established on the throne of His dominicality, Who, with the sun, moon and stars like soldiers under orders awaiting his command, rotates the night and day one after the other like two lines or two ribbons, one white and one black,

¹²⁶ Qur’an, 23:12-14.

¹²⁷ Qur’an, 7:54.

and writes the signs of His dominicality on the pages of the universe. This he does in such a way that when a spirit hears the verse, it feels the desire to exclaim: “Blessed be God! What wonders God has willed! So Blessed be God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds!” That is to say, *Blessed be God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds* is like the summary, the seed, the fruit, and water of life, of what has preceded it.

Fifth Quality of Eloquence: The Qur’an sometimes mentions material, particular matters which are subject to change and are the means of various circumstances, then in order to transform them into the form of constant truths, summarizes them with constant, luminous, universal Divine Names, and ties them up. Or it concludes with a summary which encourages thought and the taking of lessons. An example of the first meaning:

*And He taught Adam the Names, all of them, then placed them before the angels, and said: “Tell me the Names of these if you are right.” * They said: “Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing , All-Wise!”¹²⁸*

First of all this verse mentions a particular matter, which is, “In the question of Adam’s vicegerency, it was his knowledge that gave him superiority over the angels.” Then within this event it mentions that of the angels’ defeat before Adam in respect of knowledge. Then it summarizes these two events with two universal Names: Indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise. That is: since You are All-Knowing and Wise, You instructed Adam and he prevailed over us. And since You are All-Wise, You treated us according to our abilities and gave him preference in accordance with his abilities.

An example of the second meaning:

And verily in cattle you will find an instructive sign. From what is within their bodies, between excretions and blood, We produce for your drink, milk, pure and agreeable for those who drink it...

until,

Wherein is healing for men; indeed in this is a sign for a people who thinks.¹²⁹

These verses point out that Almighty God makes creatures of His like sheep, goats, cattle, and camels into springs of pure, delicious milk for man, and artefacts like grapes and dates into cauldrons and trays laden with deliciously sweet bounties for him, and tiny miracles of His power like the honey-bee into makers of a sweet, health-giving sherbet, and then conclude with the words, *Indeed in these are signs for a people who thinks,*

¹²⁸ Qur’an, 2:31-2.

¹²⁹ Qur’an, 16:66-9.

thus urging man to think and take lessons and compare these with other things.

Sixth Quality of Eloquence: It sometimes happens that a verse spreads out dominical decrees over a great multiplicity of things, then it unifies them with a tie of unity resembling an aspect of unity, or it situates them within a universal rule. For example:

*His Throne does extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in preserving them, for He is the Most High, the Supreme.*¹³⁰

Thus, together with proving with ten phrases in Ayat al-Kursi ten levels of Divine unity in varying hues, with the phrase,

Who is there that can intercede in His presence except as He permits?,

it rejects utterly and vehemently the associating of partners with God and interference of others, and casts them away. Also, since this verse manifests the Greatest Name, its meanings related to the Divine truths are at a maximum degree, so that it demonstrates the dominical acts of disposal at a maximum level. Furthermore, after mentioning the Divine regulation of all the heavens and the earth and a preservation encompassing all things at the maximum degree, a tie of unity and aspect of unity summarize the sources of those maximum manifestations with the phrase,

For He is the Most High, the Supreme.

And, for example:

*It is God Who has created the heavens and the earth and sends down rain from the skies, and with it brings out fruits therewith to feed you; made subject to you the ships, that they may sail through the sea by His command; and the rivers [too] He has made subject to you; * and He has made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses; and the night and the day has He [also] made subject to you; * And He gives you of all that you ask for. But if you count the favours of God, never will you will able to number them.*¹³¹

These verses describe how Almighty God created the huge universe as a palace for man, and sending the water of life from the skies to the earth, made the skies and the earth two servants producing food for him. Similarly, He made ships subject to men so that they might benefit from the fruits of the earth found in every part of it, and also exchange the fruits of their labours and secure their livelihoods in every respect. That is, He made the winds as whips, ships as horses, and the seas as a desert beneath their hooves. And besides connecting man with every region of the earth by means of ships, He

¹³⁰ Qur'an, 2:255.

¹³¹ Qur'an, 14:32-4.

subjugated the rivers, great and small, to him by making them means of transport. And causing the sun and moon to travel, the True Bestower of Bounties alternates the seasons and makes them two obedient servants whereby He offers man His multicoloured bounties which change with the seasons; He created them also as two steersmen turning that mighty wheel. And He made the night and day subject to man; that is, He made the night as a veil for his sleep and repose, and the day a place of trade for winning his livelihood.

After enumerating these Divine bounties, with the summary:

And He gives you of all that you ask for. But if you count the favours of God, never will you will be able to number them,

it points out the vast extent of the bounties bestowed on man, and their abounding profusion and abundance. That is, whatever man asks for through the tongue of his capacity and innate needs, they have all been given him. An end can never be reached in counting the Divine bounties bestowed on man nor can they be exhausted. Certainly, since the heavens and the earth are a table of bounties for man, and things like the sun and the moon and night and day some of the bounties on the table, the bounties directed towards man are most surely beyond count and calculation.

Seventh Mystery of Eloquence: It sometimes happens that in order to disallow apparent causes the ability to create and to demonstrate how far they are from this, a verse points out the aims and fruits of the effects so that it may be understood that causes are only an apparent veil. For to will that most wise and purposeful aims are followed, and important results are obtained, is of necessity the work of one who is most Knowing and Wise. Whereas causes are lifeless and without intelligence. So by mentioning the aims and results, such verses show that although causes are superficially and as beings joined to and adjacent to their effects, in reality there is a great distance between them. The distance from the cause to the creation of the effect is so great that the hand of the greatest causes cannot reach the creation of the most insignificant effects. Thus, it is within this long distance between cause and effect that the Divine Names each rise like stars. The place of their rising is this distance. To the superficial glance mountains on the horizon appear to be joined to and contiguous with the skirts of the sky, although from the mountains to the sky is a vast distance in which the stars rise and other things are situated; so too the distance between causes and effects is such that it may be seen only with the light of the Qur'an through the telescope of belief. For example:

*Then let man consider his sustenance. * For that We pour forth water in abundance. * And We split the earth into fragments. * And We produce therein corn, * And grapes and nutritious plants, * And olives*

*and dates, * And enclosed gardens, dense with lofty trees, * And fruits and fodder, * For use and convenience to you and your cattle.*¹³²

By mentioning miracles of Divine power in a purposeful sequence, this verse ties causes to effects and with the words, For use and convenience to you points to an aim at its conclusion. This aim proves that within the sequence of all the causes and effects is a hidden disposer who sees and follows the aim, to whom the causes are a veil. Indeed, with the phrase, For use and convenience to you and your cattle, it disallows all the causes the ability to create. It is in effect saying: "Rain comes from the sky in order to produce food for you and your animals. Since water does not possess the ability to pity you and produce food, it means that the rain does not come, it is sent. And the earth produces plants and your food comes from there. But lacking feelings and intelligence, it is far beyond the ability of the earth to think of your sustenance and feel compassion for you, so it does not produce it itself. Furthermore, since it is remote from plants and trees to consider your food and compassionately produce fruits and grains for you, the verse demonstrates that they are strings and ropes which One All-Wise and Compassionate extends from behind the veil, to which He attaches His bounties and holds out to animate creatures." Thus, from this explanation numerous Divine Names rise, like All-Compassionate, Provider, Bestower, and All-Generous.

And another example:

*Do you not see that God makes the clouds move gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap? – then will you see rain issue forth from their midst. And He sends down from the sky mountain [masses of clouds] wherein is hail; He strikes therewith whom He pleases and He turns it away from whom He pleases. The vivid flash of His lightning well-nigh blinds the sight. * It is God Who alternates the night and the day; indeed in these things is an instructive example for those who have vision. * And God has created every animal from water; of them are some that creep on their bellies; some that walk on two legs; and some that walk on four. God creates what He wills; for verily God has power over all things.*¹³³

This verse explains the wondrous disposals in the formation of clouds and causing of rainfall, which is one of the most important miracles of dominicality and strangest veil of the treasury of mercy. Like soldiers who have dispersed to rest gather together at the call of a bugle, clouds gather and form at the Divine command when their parts have been dispersed and hidden in the atmosphere. Then, like an army is formed of small groups, the

¹³² Qur'an, 80:24-32.

¹³³ Qur'an, 24:43-5.

pieces of cloud come together and form masses –which are vast and towering, moist and white, and contain snow and hail like the moving mountains at the resurrection–from which the water of life is sent to living beings. But in its being sent a will and purpose are apparent; it comes in accordance with need. This means it is sent. While the skies are clear and empty, the mountainous pieces of cloud do not gather together of their own accord into a great gathering of wonders, they are sent by One Who knows the living creatures. In this distance, then, Divine Names rise, like All-Powerful, All-Knowing, Disposer, Designer, Nurturer, Succourer, and Giver of Life.

Eighth Quality of Eloquence: It sometimes happens that in order to impel the heart to accept Almighty God’s wondrous works in the hereafter and make the mind affirm them, the Qur’an mentions His amazing works in this world by way of preparation, or it mentions the wondrous Divine works of the future and hereafter in such a way that we acquire firm conviction about them through similar things which we observe here. For example:

*Does man not see that We created him from sperm, and behold, he stands forth an open adversary?*¹³⁴ ... to the end of the Sura.

In this discussion of the resurrection of the dead, the Qur’an proves the resurrection in seven or eight different ways. Firstly it draws attention to the first creation, saying: “You see your creation from sperm to a blood-clot, from a blood-clot to a foetus lump, and from that to the human creation, so how is it that you deny the second creation, which is like it or even easier?”

And with the words:

*Who produces for you fire out of the green tree,*¹³⁵

Almighty God indicates the mighty favours He bestows on man, saying: “The One Who bestows such bounties on you will not leave you at liberty to enter the grave and sleep never to rise again.” And by allusion it says: “You see the dead trees come to life and grow green, but you draw no conclusions from their bones springing to life when like dry fire-wood, and so deem man’s rising again unlikely. Also, could the One Who creates the heavens and the earth remain impotent before the life and death of man, the fruit of the heavens and the earth? Would the One Who administers the mighty tree attach no importance to its fruit and allow others to claim it? Do you suppose that He would abandon the result of all the tree, thus making purposeless and vain the tree of creation, which together with all its parts is kneaded with wisdom?” It says: “The One Who will raise you to

¹³⁴ Qur’an, 36:77.

¹³⁵ Qur’an, 36:80.

life at the resurrection is such that the whole universe is like a soldier under His orders.” It is utterly submissive before His command of “Be!,” and it is. It is as easy for Him to create the spring as to create a flower. He is One for Whose power it is as easy to create all animals as to create a fly. Such a One may not be challenged with the words:

*Who can give life to [dry] bones?,*¹³⁶

and His power belittled. Then, with the phrase:

*So glory be unto Him in Whose hand is the dominion of all things,*¹³⁷

it says: “He is an All-Powerful One of Glory in Whose hands are the reins of all things, with Him are the keys to all things; He alternates winter and summer as easily as turning the pages of a book, and opens and closes this world and the hereafter as though they were two houses.” Since it is thus, the conclusion of all these evidences is:

*And to Him will you all be brought back.*¹³⁸

That is, “He will raise you to life from the grave and bring you to the resurrection; there you will be called to account in the presence of the Almighty.”

Thus, all these verses have prepared the mind to accept the resurrection, and so have they prepared the heart, for they have pointed out similar deeds in this world.

It sometimes happens also that the Qur’an mentions Almighty God’s deeds of the hereafter in such a way that man may understand similar things in this world. Then no possibility remains to deny them or deem them unlikely. An example are the Suras which begin:

*When the Sun is folded up;*¹³⁹ * *When the sky is cleft asunder;*¹⁴⁰ * *When the sky is rent asunder.*¹⁴¹

In these Suras it mentions the mighty revolutions and dominical acts of disposal in the resurrection and Great Gathering in such a way that, since man sees things similar to them in this world, for example, in the autumn and spring, he accepts those revolutions easily, which cause dread to the heart and cannot be comprehended by the mind. To provide even a summary of the meaning of these three Suras would be very lengthy, so for now we shall point out a single phrase by way of example.

¹³⁶ Qur’an, 36:78.

¹³⁷ Qur’an, 36:83.

¹³⁸ Qur’an, 36:83.

¹³⁹ Sura 81, al-Takwir.

¹⁴⁰ Sura 82, al-Infitar.

¹⁴¹ Sura 84, al-Inshiqaq.

For example, the phrase:

*When the pages are laid open*¹⁴²

expresses the following: at the resurrection all the deeds of everyone will be published written on pages. Being very strange on its own, the mind cannot grasp this matter. But as the Sura indicates, the same way as in the resurrection of the spring are things similar to other points, the things similar to this laying open of the pages are quite clear. For all fruit-bearing trees or flowering plants perform deeds, acts, and duties, and in whatever way they display the Divine Names and glorify God, they perform worship. All these deeds are written in their seeds together with their life histories, and emerge in another spring in another place. Just as they mention most eloquently the deeds of their mothers and stock through the tongues of the shapes and forms they display, so they publish the pages of their deeds through their branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits. Thus, the One Who carries out this Wise, Preserving, Planned, Nurturing, Benevolent work, is He Who says:

When the pages are laid open.

You can make analogies with other points from this and deduce them if you can. To help you, I shall say the following: the phrase:

When the sun is folded up

is a brilliant metaphor meaning ‘rolling up’ and ‘gathering up’; so too it alludes to things similar to it.

The First: Almighty God drew back the veils of non-existence, the ether, and the skies, and taking from the treasury of His mercy a lamp like a sparkling brilliant to illuminate the world, displayed it to the world. When the world is closed, He shall rewrap that brilliant in its veils and remove it.

The Second: The sun is an official charged with spreading out the wares of its light and wrapping the head of the earth alternately in light and darkness. Every evening it gathers up its wares and conceals them, and sometimes it does scant business due to the veil of a cloud, and sometimes the moon draws a veil over its face and somewhat hinders its transactions, then it adjusts the account books of its wares and transactions. Similarly, a time will come when this official will resign from its post. Even if there is no cause for its dismissal, due to the enlargement of the two black spots on its face, as has begun, with Divine permission the sun will take back the light that it spreads at a dominical command and wrap it around its own head. It will be told: “No work remains for you on earth. Go to Hell and burn those who worshipped you and insulted an obedient official like yourself by inferring you were disloyal!” It will read out the decree of *When the Sun is folded up* through its black-spotted face.

¹⁴² Qur’an, 81:10.

Ninth Point of Eloquence: It sometimes happens that the All-Wise Qur'an mentions certain particular aims, then in order to impel the mind by means of them, confirms, establishes, verifies, and proves the aims through the Divine Names, which are like universal rules. For example:

*God has indeed heard the statement of the woman who pleads with you concerning her husband and carries her complaint to God; and God [always] hears the arguments between both sides among you; for God is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.*¹⁴³

Here the Qur'an is saying: "Almighty God is absolutely All-Hearing; He hears everything, even, through the Divine Name of Truth, a wife arguing with you and complaining about her husband, a truly insignificant matter. And since women manifest the subtlest manifestations of mercy and are mines of self-sacrificing compassion, He hears through the Name of Most Compassionate the rightful claim of a woman and her complaint to Him, and through the Name of Truth takes it seriously, affording it the greatest importance." Thus, in order to make this particular aim universal, One outside the sphere of contingency of the universe Who hears and sees a minor incident among creatures, must of necessity hear and see all things, and One Who is Sustainer of the universe of necessity sees the suffering of insignificant creatures within the universe who are wronged, and hears their cries. One who does not see their suffering and does not hear their cries for help cannot be the Sustainer. In which case, it establishes two mighty truths with the phrase,

For God is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

And, for example:

*Glory be to [God] who did take His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless, in order that We might show him some of Our signs, for He is indeed All-Hearing, All-Seeing.*¹⁴⁴

Here, after mentioning the Noble Messenger's (Peace and blessings be upon him) journey from the Sacred Mosque in Mecca to the Farthest Mosque in Jerusalem, which was the start of his Ascension, the Qur'an says: *for He is indeed All-Hearing, All-Seeing.* The pronoun *He* refers to either Almighty God or to the Prophet. If it refers to the Prophet, it is like this: "There was within this particular journey a general journey and universal ascension, during which, as far as *the Farthest Lote-tree* and *distance of two bow-strings*, he heard and saw the dominical signs and wonders of Divine art which were apparent to his eyes and ears in the universal degrees of the Divine Names."

¹⁴³ Qur'an, 58:1.

¹⁴⁴ Qur'an, 17:1.

It shows that that particular and insignificant journey was like a key to a journey which was universal and an assembly of wonders.

If the pronoun refers to Almighty God, it is like this: “He invited one of His servants to journey to His presence; and in order to entrust him with a duty, sent him from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, where He caused him to meet with the prophets who were gathered there. Then after showing that he was the absolute heir to the principles of all their religions, conveyed him through His realms in their inner and outer aspects as far as ‘the distance of two bow-lengths.’”

He was certainly a servant and he journeyed on an ascension that was particular, but he held a trust that was related to the whole universe, and a light which would change the universe’s colour. Since he had with him a key to open the doors of eternal happiness, Almighty God described this Being with the attributes of hearing and seeing all things. For in this way he could demonstrate the world-embracing purposes and instances of wisdom of the trust, the light, and the key.

And, for example:

*Praise be to God, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels messengers with wings, two, three, or four [pairs]: He adds to creation as He pleases, for God is Powerful over all things.*¹⁴⁵

In this Sura, the Qur’an says: “By adorning the heavens and the earth in this way and displaying the works of His perfection, their All-Glorious Creator causes innumerable spectators to extol and praise Him. He decks them out with uncountable bounties so that the heavens and the earth praise and extol unendingly the Most Merciful Creator through the tongues of all the bounties and those who receive them.” After this it points out that since the Creator has given men and the animals and birds members and wings with which to travel through the towns and lands of the earth, and since that All-Glorious One has also given wings to the angels, the inhabitants of the realm of the heavens, in order to fly through the celestial palaces of the stars and lofty lands of the constellations, He is certainly powerful over all things. The One Who gives wings to a fly, to fly from fruit to fruit, and wings to a sparrow to fly from tree to tree, is the One Who gives wings to the angels to fly from Venus to Jupiter. Furthermore, the angels are not restricted to particularity like the dwellers of the earth; they are not confined by a specific place. With the words: *two, three, or four [pairs]*, it suggests that at one time they may be present on four or more stars; it gives details. Thus, through describing “the arraying of the angels with wings,” which is a particular event, it points to a universal, general workshop of Divine power and its immensity, and

¹⁴⁵ Qur’an, 35:1.

verifies and establishes it with the summary: *For God is Powerful over all things.*

Tenth Point of Eloquence: It sometimes happens that a verse mentions man's rebellious acts, then restrains him with severe threats. Then, so that the severity of the threats should not cast him into despair and hopelessness, it concludes with some Divine Names which point to His mercy and console him. For example:

*Say: if there had been [other] gods with Him – as they say – behold they would certainly have sought out a way to the Lord of the Throne! * Glory be to Him! He is high above all that they say! – Exalted and Great [beyond measure] * The sevens heavens and the earth, and all beings therein declare His glory; there is not a thing but celebrates His praise; and yet you understand not how they declare His glory! Indeed, He is Oft-Forbearing, Most Forgiving!*¹⁴⁶

This verse says: “Say: if, like you say, God had had partners in his sovereignty, there would surely have been some signs of disorder, caused by the hand that stretched up to the throne of His dominicality and interfered. However, through the tongues of the manifestations and inscriptions of the Divine Names which they manifest, all creatures, universal or particular, great or small, from the seven levels of the heavens to microscopic organisms, glorify the All-Glorious One signified by those Names, declaring Him to be free of partners or like.

Yes, just as the heavens declare Him to be All-Holy through the light-scattering words of the suns and stars, and through the wisdom they display and their order, and testify to His unity, so the atmosphere glorifies and sanctifies Him through the voice of the clouds and words of the thunder, lightning, and rain, and testifies to His unity. The earth too glorifies and declares to be One the All-Glorious Creator through its living words known as animals, plants, and other beings; and so does it glorify Him and testify to His unity through the words of its trees and their leaves, blossoms, and fruits. Similarly, despite their tiny size and insignificance, the smallest creatures and most particular beings glorify the All-Glorious One signified by the numerous universal Names they display, and testify to His unity through the inscriptions they bear.

Thus, since man is the summary and result of the universe, and vicegerent of the earth, and its delicate fruit, this verse points out how ugly and deserving of punishment is his unbelief and associating partners with God. For it is counter and contrary to the whole universe, which altogether glorifies unanimously, with one tongue, its All-Glorious Creator and testifies in

¹⁴⁶ Qur'an, 17:42-4.

its own way to His unity, and performs the duty of worship with which it is charged, carrying it out in perfect submission. But in order not to cast man into despair, and to show the wisdom in the All-Glorious Subduer's permitting such an infinitely ugly rebellion and not destroying the universe around mankind, it says:

Indeed, He is Oft-Forbearing, Most Forgiving!

It shows with this summary the wisdom in His postponing it, and leaves a door open for hope.

Thus, you may understand from these ten indications of miraculousness that in the summaries at the conclusions of verses are numerous sprinklings of guidance and flashes of miraculousness. The greatest geniuses among the scholars of rhetoric have bitten their fingers in absolute wonder and admiration at these unique styles, and declared: "THIS IS NOT THE WORD OF MAN," and have believed with absolute certainty that

*It is no less than revelation inspired.*¹⁴⁷

This means that together with the above-mentioned indications, numerous further facets not included in our discussion are contained in other verses in the arrangement of which such an impress of miraculousness is apparent that even the blind may see it...

THE THIRD BEAM of The Second Light

The Qur'an cannot be compared with other words and speech. This is because speech is of different categories, and in regard to superiority, power, beauty and fineness, has four sources: one is the speaker, another is the person addressed, another is the purpose, and another is the form. Its source is not only the form as literary people have wrongly shown. So in speech one should consider, "Who said it? To whom did they say it? Why did they say it? In what form did they say it?" One should not consider the words only and stop there. Since speech draws its strength and beauty from these four sources, if the Qur'an's sources are studied carefully, the degree of its eloquence, superiority, and beauty will be understood. Indeed, since speech looks to the speaker, if it is command or prohibition, it comprises also the speaker's will and power in accordance with his position. Then it eliminates resistance; it has an effect like physical electricity and increases in proportion to the speech's superiority and power. Take, for example, the verse:

*O earth! swallow up your water. And O sky! withhold [your rain].*¹⁴⁸

That is, "O earth! Your duty is completed, swallow your water. O skies! No need now remains, cease giving rain." And for example:

¹⁴⁷ Qur'an, 53:4.

¹⁴⁸ Qur'an, 11:44.

*And He said to it and to the earth: Come together willingly or unwillingly. They said: We do come [together] in willing obedience.*¹⁴⁹

That is, “O earth! O skies! Come whether you want to or not, you are anyway submissive to my wisdom and power. Emerge from non-being and come to the exhibition-place of my art in existence.” And they replied: “We come in perfect obedience. Through Your power, we perform every duty that You have shown us.” Consider the power and elevatedness of these true, effective commands, which comprise power and will, then look at human words like the following nonsensical conversation with inanimate beings:

Be stationary, O earth! Be cleft, O skies! O resurrection, break forth!

Can the two commands be compared? Yes, is there any comparison between wishes arising from desires and officious commands issuing from those wishes, and the command of a commander of real authority? Can there be any comparison between such words and the effective command, “Forward march!” of a supreme commander of a vast army? For if a command such as that is heard from a common soldier, while the two commands are the same in form, in meaning they differ as greatly as a common soldier and the commander of an army.

And for example the verses:

*Indeed, His command when He wills a thing is “Be!,” and it is,*¹⁵⁰

and,

*And on Our saying to the angels: Prostrate before Adam.*¹⁵¹

Look at the power and elevatedness of these two verses, then look at man’s speech in the form of commands. Is the latter not like a fire-fly in relation to the sun? In order to describe his act to both eye and ear, a true owner describes his act while performing it, and a true artist explains his art as he works it, and a true bestower explains his bounties as he bestows them, that is, in order to combine both word and act, each says: “Look! I have done this and I am doing this in this way. I did that for this reason, and this will be thus, and I am doing this so it will be like that.”

And for example:

*Do they not look at the sky above them? How We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it? * And the earth, We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm, and produced therein every kind of beautiful growth [in pairs], * As an insight and reminder for all [God’s] servants who turn unto Him. * And We send down from the sky rain charged with blessing, and We produce there*

¹⁴⁹ Qur’an, 41:11.

¹⁵⁰ Qur’an, 36:82.

¹⁵¹ Qur’an, 2:34.

*with gardens and grain for harvests; * And tall [and stately] palm-trees, with shoots of fruit-stalks, piled one over another; * As sustenance for [God's] servants; And We give [new] life therewith to land that is dead: thus will the coming-forth [from the grave].*¹⁵²

Can there be any comparison between these descriptions, these acts, which shine like the starry fruits of Paradise in the constellation of this Sura in the skies of the Qur'an, and this mentioning many levels of proofs within them by means of the order of rhetoric, and this proving the resurrection of the dead, its conclusion, with the phrase thus will be the coming-forth, thus silencing those at the start of the Sura who deny resurrection – can there be any comparison between this and the discussions of men about meddling acts which have little connection with them? It is not even the comparison of pictures of flowers by way of copying, and real living flowers. To fully explain the meaning from *Do they not look to Thus will be the coming-forth* would be very lengthy, so we shall just pass over it with a brief indication, like this:

Since, at the start of the Sura, the unbelievers deny resurrection, the Qur'an gives a long introductory passage in order to compel them to accept it. It says: "Do you not look at the skies above you, which we have constructed in such magnificent, orderly fashion? Do you not see how We have adorned it with stars and the sun and the moon, and how We have allowed no fault or defect? Do you not see how We have spread out the earth for you and with what wisdom We have furnished it? We have fixed mountains on it and protected it from the encroachment of the sea. Do you not see how We have created every variety of plant and growing thing on the earth, beautiful and of every colour, and how We have made beautiful every part of it with them. And do you not see how we send down bounteous rain from the skies, and with it create gardens and orchards, and grains, and tall, fruit-bearing trees like the delicious date, and how I cause them to grow and send My servants sustenance with them? And do you not see that I raise to life the dead country with the rain? I create thousands of worldly resurrections. Just as I raise up with My power these plants out of this dead country, that is how your coming-forth will be at the resurrection. At the resurrection, the earth will die and you will come forth alive." Can there be any comparison between the eloquent explanations these verses set forth in proving resurrection, only one thousandth of which we have been able to allude to, and the words man puts forward to support a claim?

From the beginning of this treatise up to here, in endeavouring to make an obstinate enemy accept the Qur'an's miraculousness by way of impartial reasoning, known as ascertaining the truth, we have left secret many of the

¹⁵² Qur'an, 50:6-11.

Qur'an's rights. We have brought that Sun in among candles and drawn comparisons. We have carried out the duty of ascertaining the truth, and have proved its miraculousness in brilliant fashion. Now, in one or two words, not in the name of 'ascertaining the truth,' but in that of 'reality,' we shall point to the Qur'an's true station, which is beyond comparison.

Indeed, the comparison of other speech to the Qur'an is that of minuscule reflections of stars in pieces of glass. How can the Qur'an's words, each of which depict and show a constant truth, be compared with the meanings man depicts through his words in the minute mirrors of his thoughts and feelings? How can the angelic, living words of the Qur'an, which inspire the lights of guidance and are the speech of the All-Glorious Creator of the sun and the moon, be compared with man's biting words with their bewitching substance and sham subtleties for arousing base desires? Yes, the comparison of poisonous vermin and insects, and blessed angels and luminous spirit beings, is that of man's words and those of the Qur'an. The Twenty-Fifth Word together with the previous twenty-four Words have proved these truths. This claim of ours is not unsubstantiated; its proof is the above-mentioned conclusion. Indeed, how can the words of the Qur'an, which are all the shells of jewels of guidance, and sources of the truths of belief and springs of the fundamentals of Islam, and have come directly from the Throne of All-Merciful One, and above and beyond the universe look to man and descend to him, and comprise Divine knowledge, power, and will, and are the pre-eternal address – how can its words be compared with man's vain, fanciful, futile, desire-nurturing words?

Yes, how can the Qur'an, which is like a tree of Tuba, and spreads in the form of leaves the world of Islam with all its qualities, marks, and perfections, all its ordinances and principles, and displays as fresh and beautiful through its water of life its purified scholars and saints, each like a flower, and produces all perfections and cosmic and Divine truths as fruits, and again like a fruit-bearing tree produces numerous seeds within its fruits each like a principle and programme for actions and displays truths in continuous succession – how can this be compared with man's speech, which we know about? Where is the ground and where are the Pleiades?

Although for one thousand three hundred and fifty years, the All-Wise Qur'an has set forth and displayed all its truths in the market of the universe, and everyone, all nations, all countries have taken some of its jewels and its truths, and they do take them, neither the familiarity, nor the abundance, nor the passage of time, nor the great changes have damaged its valuable truths and fine styles, or caused it to age, or desiccated it, or made it lose its value, or extinguished its beauty. This on its own is an aspect of miraculousness.

If someone were to come forward now and put some of the truths the Qur'an brought into a childish order according to his own fancies, and if he were to compare these with some of the Qur'an's verses in order to contest them, and say "I have uttered words close to the Qur'an's," it would be utterly foolish, like in the following example: there is a common man, a builder of ordinary houses, incapable of understanding the elevated inscriptions of a master who has built a splendid palace the stones of which are various jewels, and has decorated it with harmonious adornments which look to the elevated inscriptions of all the palace and their relation to the stones. If the common man, who had no share in any of the jewels and adornment of the palace, were to enter the palace, destroy the elevated inscriptions in the valuable stones and give it a form, an order, similar to that of an ordinary house in accordance with his childish desires and tack on a few beads pleasing to his juvenile view, and then say, "Look! I have greater skill and wealth and more precious adornments than the builder of the palace," in comparison, it would be the art of a crazy, raving forger.

THIRD LIGHT

The Third Light consists of three Gleams.

FIRST GLEAM: An important aspect of the Qur'an of Miraculous Expositions's miraculousness was explained in the Thirteenth Word. It has been included here so that it might take its place among the other aspects of miraculousness, its brothers. It is as follows: if you want to see and appreciate how, like shining stars, all the Qur'an's verses scatter the darkness of unbelief by spreading the light of miraculousness and guidance, imagine yourself in the age of ignorance and desert of savagery where everything was enveloped in lifeless veils of nature, under the darkness of ignorance and heedlessness. Then suddenly from the elevated tongue of the Qur'an, you hear verses like:

*Whatever is in the heavens extols and glorifies God, for He is the Mighty, the Wise.¹⁵³ * Whatever is in the heavens and earth extols and glorifies God, the Sovereign, the Most Holy One, the Mighty, the Wise.¹⁵⁴*

See how those dead or sleeping creatures of the world spring to life at the sound of extols and glorifies in the minds of those listening, how they awake, spring up, and mention God's Names! And at the sound of,

The seven heavens and the earth and all within them extol and glorify Him,¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Qur'an, 57:1; 59:1; 61:1.

¹⁵⁴ Qur'an, 62:1.

¹⁵⁵ Qur'an, 17:44.

the stars in those black skies, each a lifeless piece of fire, and the wretched creatures on the face of the earth present the following view to those listening: the sky appears as a mouth and the stars as wisdom-displaying words and truth-uttering lights. The earth appears as a head, the land and sea as tongues, and all animals and plants as words of glorification. Otherwise you will not appreciate the subtleties of the pleasure at looking from this time to that. For if you look at each verse as having scattered its light since that time, and having become like universally accepted knowledge with the passage of time, and as shining with the other lights of Islam, and taking its colour from the sun of the Qur'an, or if you look at it through a superficial and simple veil of familiarity, you will not truly see what sort of darkness each verse scatters or how sweet is the recital of its miraculousness, and you will not appreciate this sort of its miraculousness among its many sorts. If you want to see one of the highest degrees of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition's miraculousness, listen to the following comparison:

Let us imagine an extremely strange and vast and spreading tree which is concealed beneath a veil of the unseen and hidden in a level of concealment. It is clear that there has to be a relationship, harmony, and balance between a tree and all its members like its branches, fruits, leaves, and blossom, the same as between man's members. Each of its parts takes on a form and is given a shape in accordance with the nature of the tree. So if someone appears and traces a picture on top of the veil corresponding to the members of the tree, which has never been seen, then delimits each member, and from the branches to the fruit, and the fruit to the leaves draws a form proportionately, and fills the space between its source and extremities, which are an infinite distance from one another, with drawings showing exactly the shape and form of its members, certainly no doubt will remain that the artist sees the concealed tree with an eye that penetrates and encompasses the unseen, then he depicts it.

In just the same way, the discriminating statements of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition concerning the reality of contingent beings (that is, concerning the reality of the tree of creation which stretches from the beginning of the world to the farthest limits of the hereafter, and spreads from the earth to the Divine Throne and from minute particles to the sun) have preserved the proportion between the members to such a degree and have given each member and fruit a form so suitable that at the depictions of the Qur'an, all exacting scholars have declared at the conclusion of their investigations: "What wonders God has willed! How great are God's blessings!" They have said: "It is only you who solves and unravels the talisman of the universe and riddle of creation, Oh All-Wise Qur'an!"

*And God's is the highest similitude*¹⁵⁶ – and there is no error in the comparison – let us represent the Divine Names and attributes, and dominical acts and deeds as a Tuba-tree of light, the sphere of whose grandeur stretches from pre-eternity to post-eternity, and the limits of whose vastness spread through infinite, endless space and encompass it, and the limits of whose deeds stretch from,

*It is God Who splits the seed-grain and date-stone,*¹⁵⁷ *and, Comes between man and his heart,*¹⁵⁸

to,

*Who created the heavens and the earth in six days,*¹⁵⁹ *and, And the heavens rolled up in His right hand.*¹⁶⁰

The All-Wise Qur'an has described that luminous reality, the truths of those Names and attributes, and acts and deeds, together with all their branches and twigs and aims and fruits, in a way so harmonious, so fitting for one another, so appropriate for one another, without marring one another or spoiling the decree of one another, or their being remote from one another, that all the people of illumination and those who have penetrated to the realities, and all the wise and the sage who have journeyed in the realm of the inner dimension of things, have declared: "Glory be to God!" in the face of that Discriminating Exposition, and have affirmed it, saying: "How right, how conformable with reality, how fine, how worthy!"

Take, for example, the six pillars of belief, which are like a single branch of those two mighty trees which look to the entire sphere of contingency and sphere of necessity: it depicts all the branches and boughs of those pillars –as far as the furthest fruits and flowers– observing such a harmony and proportion between them, and describes them in a manner so balanced, and illustrates them a way so symmetrical that the human mind is powerless to perceive it and stands astonished at its beauty. And the proof that a beauty of proportion and perfect relation and complete balance have been preserved between the five pillars of Islam, which are like one twig of the branch of belief, down to the finest details, smallest point of conduct, furthest aims, most profound wisdom, and most insignificant fruits, is the perfect order and balance and beauty of proportion and soundness of the Greater Shari'a of Islam, which has emerged from the decisive statements, senses, indications, and allusions of the comprehensive Qur'an; they form an irrefutable and decisive proof and just witness that cannot be doubted. This means that

¹⁵⁶ Qur'an, 16:60.

¹⁵⁷ Qur'an, 6:95.

¹⁵⁸ Qur'an, 8:24.

¹⁵⁹ Qur'an, 7:54.

¹⁶⁰ Qur'an, 39:67.

the expositions of the Qur'an cannot be attributed to man's partial knowledge, and particularly to the knowledge of someone unlettered. They rest rather on a comprehensive knowledge and are the word of One Who is able to see all things together and observe in one moment all truths between pre-eternity and post-eternity. In this we believe.

SECOND GLEAM: Since just how far the human philosophy which challenges Qur'anic wisdom has fallen in the face of that wisdom has been explained and illustrated with comparisons in the Twelfth Word and proved in the other Words, we refer readers to those treatises and for now offer a further comparison from another point of view. It is as follows:

Human science and philosophy look at the world as fixed and constant. And they discuss the nature of beings and their characteristics in detail; if they do speak of their duties before their Maker, they speak of them briefly. Quite simply, they speak only of the decoration and letters of the book of the universe, and attach no importance to its meaning. Whereas the Qur'an looks at the world as transient, passing, deceptive, travelling, unstable, and undergoing revolution. It speaks briefly of the nature of beings and their superficial and material characteristics, but mentions in detail the worshipful duties with which they are charged by the Maker, and how and in what respects they point to His Names, and their obedience before the Divine creational commands. We shall therefore look at the differences between human philosophy and Qur'anic wisdom in regard to this matter of looking at things either briefly or in detail, and shall see which is pure truth and reality.

A watch in our hand appears to be constant, but its inside is in perpetual upheaval through the motion of the workings and the constant anguish of the cogwheels and parts. In just the same way, together with its apparent stability, this world, which is a huge clock of Divine power, is perpetually revolving within upheaval and change, transience and evanescence. Indeed, since time has entered the world, night and day are like a two-headed hand counting the seconds of that huge clock. The years are like a hand counting its minutes, while the centuries count its hours. Thus, time casts the world onto the waves of death and decline. It assigns all the past and the future to non-existence, leaving in existence only the present.

Together with this form which time gives the world, with regard to space also it is like an unstable clock undergoing revolution. For since the space of the atmosphere changes swiftly and quickly passes from one state to another through being filled and emptied with clouds sometimes several times a day, it causes change like a hand counting the seconds. And the space of the earth, which is like the floor of the house of the world, since with life and death and

the animals and plants its face changes very rapidly, like a minute-hand it shows that this aspect of the world also is transient. And just as the earth is like this in regard to its face, so through the revolutions and upheavals within it, and the mountains emerging as a result and disappearing, this aspect of the world is slowly passing also, like an hour-hand. And through change like the movements of the celestial bodies, the appearance of comets, the occurrence of solar and lunar eclipses, and falling stars, the space of the heavens too, which is like the ceiling of the house of the world, shows that the heavens also are not stable and constant, but are progressing towards old age and destruction. Their change is slow and tardy like the hand counting the days in a weekly clock, but in every respect it demonstrates that it is transient and passing and heading for destruction.

Thus, the world, in regard to the world, has been constructed on these seven pillars. These pillars perpetually shake it. But when the world which is thus in motion and being shaken looks to its Maker, the motion and change is the working of the pen of power writing the missives of the Eternally Besought One. And those changing states are the mirrors of the Divine Names, which, being constantly renewed, display with ever-differing depictions the manifestation of the Names' qualities.

And so, in respect of the world, the world is both transient and hastens towards death, and is undergoing revolution. Although in reality it is departing like flowing water, to the heedless eye it appears to be frozen; due to the idea of nature, it has become dense and turbid, and become a veil concealing the hereafter. Thus, through philosophical investigation and natural science, and the seductive amusements of dissolute civilization and its intoxicated passions, sick philosophy has both increased the world's frozen state and inaction, and made denser heedlessness, and increased its opaqueness and turbidity, and caused the Maker and the hereafter to be forgotten. Whereas, with its verses,

*By the Mount [of Revelation]. * By a Book inscribed.¹⁶¹ * When the Event Inevitable comes to pass.¹⁶² * The [Day of] Noise and Clamour, * What is [the Day of] Noise and Clamour?,¹⁶³*

the Qur'an cards the world in regard to the world like cotton, and casts it away. Through its expositions like,

*Do they see nothing in the government of the heavens and the earth?¹⁶⁴ * Do they not look at the sky above them? - How We have made it.¹⁶⁵ **

¹⁶¹ Qur'an, 52:1-2.

¹⁶² Qur'an, 56:1.

¹⁶³ Qur'an, 101:1.

¹⁶⁴ Qur'an, 7:185.

¹⁶⁵ Qur'an, 50:6.

*Do the unbelievers not see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, before We clove them asunder?*¹⁶⁶

it gives the world a transparency and removes its turbidity. Through its light-scattering illuminations like,

*God is the Light of the heavens and the earth.*¹⁶⁷ * *What is the life of this world but play and amusement?*¹⁶⁸

it melts the frozen, inactive world. Through its death-tainted expressions like,

*When the sun is folded up.*¹⁶⁹ * *When the sky is cleft asunder.*¹⁷⁰ * *When the sky is rent asunder.*¹⁷¹ * *And the trumpet will be sounded, and all that are in the heavens and all that are on earth will fall down senseless, except such that it pleases God [to exempt],*¹⁷²

it smashes the delusion that the world is eternal. Through its thunderous blasts, like,

*He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from the skies and what mounts up to them. And He is with you wheresoever you may be. And God sees all that you do.*¹⁷³ * *And say: Praise be to God, Who will show you His signs, so that you shall know them. And your Sustainer is not unmindful of all that you do,*¹⁷⁴

it scatters the heedlessness born of the notion of 'nature'.

Thus, from beginning to end the Qur'an's verses which are turned towards the universe proceed according to this principle. They reveal and display the reality of the world as it is. Through showing just how ugly the ugly world is, it turns man's face from it, and points out the beautiful world's beautiful face, which looks to the Maker. It fastens man's eye on that. It instructs in true wisdom and knowledge, teaching the meanings of the book of the universe, and looking infrequently at the letters and decorations. It does not cause the meaning to be forgotten like drunken philosophy, nor make man enamoured of the ugly and waste his time on meaningless things due to the decoration of the letters.

¹⁶⁶ Qur'an, 21:30.

¹⁶⁷ Qur'an, 24:35.

¹⁶⁸ Qur'an, 6:32.

¹⁶⁹ Qur'an, 81:1.

¹⁷⁰ Qur'an, 82:1.

¹⁷¹ Qur'an, 84:1.

¹⁷² Qur'an, 39:68.

¹⁷³ Qur'an, 57:4.

¹⁷⁴ Qur'an, 27:93.

THIRD GLEAM: In the Second Gleam we pointed to the fall of human philosophy before Qur'anic wisdom and to the miraculousness of Qur'anic wisdom. Now, in this Gleam, we shall show the degree of the wisdom and science – before Qur'anic wisdom – of the purified scholars, the saints, and the enlightened among philosophers, the Ishraqiyyun, who are all students of the Qur'an, and shall make a brief indication to the Qur'an's miraculousness in this respect.

A most true indication of the All-Wise Qur'an's sublimity, and a most clear proof of its truth and justice, and a most powerful sign of its miraculousness is this: preserving all the degrees of all the areas of Divine unity together with all their necessities, and expounding them, it has preserved their balance and not spoiled it; and it has preserved the balance of all the exalted Divine truths; and it has brought together all the ordinances dictated by the Divine Names and preserved their mutual proportion; and it has brought together the dominical and Divine acts with perfect balance. Thus, this preserving and balance and bringing together is a characteristic which is certainly not present in man's works nor in the products of the thought of the eminent among mankind. It is to be found nowhere in the works of the saints who have penetrated to the inner face of beings, which looks to their Creator, nor in the books of the Ishraqiyyun, who have passed to the inward, hidden meaning of things, nor in the knowledge of the spiritual who have penetrated the World of the Unseen. As though they have practised a division of labour, it is as if each group adheres to only one or two branches of the mighty tree of reality; each busies itself with only its fruit or its leaves. They either know nothing of the others, or else do not concern themselves with them.

Absolute reality cannot be comprehended by restricted views. A universal view like the Qur'an is necessary in order to comprehend it. For sure they are instructed by the Qur'an, but with a particular mind they can only see completely one or two sides of universal reality, are preoccupied with them, and imprisoned in them. They spoil the balance of reality through either excess or negligence and mar its proportion and harmony. This truth was explained with an unusual comparison in the Second Branch of the Twenty-Fourth Word, and now we shall point to the matter with another comparison.

For example, let us suppose there is some treasure under the sea, full of innumerable jewels of various kinds. Divers are plunging the depths to search for the jewels of the treasure. Since their eyes are closed, they understand what is there through the dexterous use of their hands. A longish diamond comes into the hand of one of them. The diver assumes that the whole treasure consists of a long, pillar-like diamond. When he hears of other jewels from his companions, he imagines that they are subsidiary to the diamond he

has found, and are facets and embellishments of it. Into the hand of another passes a round ruby, while another finds a square piece of amber, and so on, each of them believes that the jewel he sees with his hand is the essential, major part of the treasure, and supposes that the things about which he hears are additional parts and details of it. So then the balance of the truths is spoilt, and the mutual proportion too is marred. The colour of many truths changes, and in order to see the true colour of reality they are obliged to resort to forced interpretation and elaborate explanations. Sometimes even they go as far as denial and rejection. Anyone who studies the books of the Ishraqiyyun philosophers and the works of sufis who rely on illuminations and visions without weighing them on the scales of the Sunna will doubtless confirm this statement of ours. That is to say, although their works concern truths similar to those of the Qur'an and are taken from the Qur'an's teachings, because they are not the Qur'an, they are defective in that way. The Qur'an's verses also, which are oceans of truths, are divers for that treasure under the sea. But their eyes are open and encompass the treasure. They see what there is in the treasure and what there is not. They describe and expound it with such harmony, order, and proportion that they show the true beauty and fineness. For example, just as they see the vastness of dominicality expressed by the verses,

*And the whole of the earth will be but His handful, and the heavens will be rolled up in His hand.¹⁷⁵ * The Day that We roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books [completed],¹⁷⁶*

so too they see the all-encompassing mercy expressed by these:

*God, there is nothing hidden from Him on the earth or in the heavens * He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases.¹⁷⁷ * There is not a moving creature, but He has grasp of its forelock.¹⁷⁸ * How many are the creatures that carry not their own sustenance? It is God who feeds [both] them and you.¹⁷⁹*

And just as they see and point out the vast extent of the creativity expressed by,

Who created the heavens and the earth and made the darkness and the light,¹⁸⁰

so too they see and show the comprehensive disposal and encompassing dominicality expressed by,

But God has created you and what you do.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Qur'an, 39:67.

¹⁷⁶ Qur'an, 21:104.

¹⁷⁷ Qur'an, 3:5-6.

¹⁷⁸ Qur'an, 11:56.

¹⁷⁹ Qur'an, 29:60.

¹⁸⁰ Qur'an, 6:1.

¹⁸¹ Qur'an, 37:96.

They see and point out the mighty truth expressed by,

*He gives life to the earth after its death,*¹⁸²

and the magnanimous truth expressed by,

*And your Sustainer inspired the bee,*¹⁸³

and the sovereign and commanding vast truth expressed by,

*The sun and the moon and the stars subjugated to His command.*¹⁸⁴

They see and show the compassionate, regulating truth expressed by,

*Do they not observe the birds above them, spreading their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except the Most Merciful; indeed He sees all things,*¹⁸⁵

and the vast truth expressed by,

*His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in preserving them,*¹⁸⁶

and the guarding truth expressed by,

*And He is with you wherever you may be,*¹⁸⁷

and the all-encompassing truth expressed by,

*He is the First and the Last and the Outward and the Inward, and He is Knowing of All Things,*¹⁸⁸

and the proximity expressed by,

*It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him; for We are nearer to him than his jugular vein,*¹⁸⁹

and the elevated truth indicated by,

*The angels ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years,*¹⁹⁰

and the all-embracing truth expressed by,

*God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion.*¹⁹¹

The Qur'an's verses see and show in detail each of the six pillars of belief in

¹⁸² Qur'an, 30:50.

¹⁸³ Qur'an, 16:68.

¹⁸⁴ Qur'an, 7:54.

¹⁸⁵ Qur'an, 67:19.

¹⁸⁶ Qur'an, 2:255.

¹⁸⁷ Qur'an, 57:4.

¹⁸⁸ Qur'an, 57:3.

¹⁸⁹ Qur'an, 50:16.

¹⁹⁰ Qur'an, 70:4.

¹⁹¹ Qur'an, 16:90.

respect of this world and the hereafter, action and knowledge. They see and show intentionally and seriously each of the five pillars of Islam, and all the principles which ensure happiness in this world and the next. They preserve their balance, perpetuate their proportion, and a form of the Qur'an's miraculousness comes into being from the source of the beauty which is born of the mutual proportion of the entirety of those truths.

It is due to this great mystery that although the scholars of theology (*kalam*) are students of the Qur'an and one section of them has written thousands of works of ten volumes each on the pillars of belief, because like the Mu'tazilites they preferred the reason to revelation, they have not been able to express with clarity so many as ten of the Qur'an's verses, or prove them decisively, or convince persuasively concerning them. It is quite simply as though they have dug tunnels under distant mountains, taken pipes with the chains of causes to the ends of the world, there cut the chains, and then demonstrated knowledge of God and the existence of the Necessarily Existent One, which are like the water of life. The Qur'an's verses, however, can all extract water from every place like the Staff of Moses, open up a window from everything, and make known the All-Glorious Maker. We have actually proved and demonstrated this fact in the Arabic treatise *Katre*, and in the other *Words*, which flow forth from the ocean of the Qur'an.

It is also due to this mystery that since all the leaders of the heretical groups who have passed to the inward nature of things (*batin*), who, not following the Sunna of the Prophet (PBUH) but relying on their visions, have returned having gone half way, and becoming leaders of a community have founded sects, have been unable to preserve the proportion and balance of the Qur'anic truths, they have fallen into innovation and misguidance and driven a community of people down the wrong road. Thus, the complete impotence of all these demonstrates the miraculousness of the Qur'an's verses.

Conclusion

Two flashes of the Qur'an's miraculousness mentioned in the Fourteenth Drop of the Nineteenth Word are its repetitions, which are imagined to be a fault, and its brevity concerning the physical sciences, both of which are sources for flashes of miraculousness. Also, a flash of the Qur'an's miraculousness which shines on the miracles of the prophets in the Qur'an is demonstrated clearly in the Second Station of the Twentieth Word. Similarly to these, numerous flashes of miraculousness have been mentioned in the other Words and in my Arabic treatises. Therefore, deeming those to be sufficient, here we shall only say this, that a further miracle of the Qur'an is that just as all the miracles of the prophets display an impress of the Qur'an's miraculousness, so with all its miracles, the Qur'an is itself a miracle of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). And all the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are a miracle of the Qur'an which demonstrate its relation with Almighty God. And with the appearance of that relation all of its words become miracles. For then a single of its words may contain the meaning of a tree of truths, like a seed; and may be connected with all the members of a mighty truth, like the centre of the heart; and since it relies on an all-encompassing knowledge and infinite will, it may look to innumerable things together with their letters, totalities, situations, and positions. It is because of this that the scholars of the science of letters claim that they have found a pageful of secrets in a single of the Qur'an's letters, and they prove what they claim to adepts of that science.

Now, gather together in your mind's eye all the Lights, Rays, Flashes, Beams, and Gleams from the start of this treatise up to here and consider them all together! As a decisive conclusion, they recite and proclaim in resounding tones the claim made at the beginning, that is,

*Say: If all mankind and the Jinn were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.*¹⁹²

¹⁹² Qur'an, 17:88.

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*¹⁹³

*O our Sustainer! Do not call us to task if we forget or do wrong.*¹⁹⁴ * *O my Sustainer! Expand for me my breast, * And make easy for me my task, * And remove the impediment from my speech, * So that they may understand what I say.*¹⁹⁵

O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad that will be pleasing to You and will be fulfilment to his truth, and to his Family, his Companions, and his brothers, and grant them peace.

*O our Sustainer! Let not our hearts deviate after you have guided us, and grant us mercy from Your Presence, for You are the Granter of bounties without measure.*¹⁹⁶ * *And the close of their prayer will be, All praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds.*¹⁹⁷ *Amen. Amen. Amen.*

¹⁹³ Qur'an, 2:32.

¹⁹⁴ Qur'an, 2:286.

¹⁹⁵ Qur'an, 20:25-28.

¹⁹⁶ Qur'an, 3:8.

¹⁹⁷ Qur'an, 10:10.

First Addendum

[Of the Addenda added to the Twenty-Fifth Word, this First Addendum consists of the Seventeenth Degree of the First Station of the Seventh Ray, *The Supreme Sign*, on account of its station.]

Knowing the aim of life in this world, and the life of life, to be belief, the tireless and insatiable traveller through the world who was questioning the universe concerning his Sustainer then said to himself: “Let us refer to the book called the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition, which is known as the word and speech of the One we are seeking, and is the most famous, brilliant, dominant book in the world, challenging everyone in every century who does not submit to it. But first we must prove that it is the book of our Creator.” And he started to search.

Since the traveller lived at this time, he looked first at the *Risale-i Nur*, which consists of flashes of the Qur’an’s miraculousness, and saw that its one hundred and thirty parts are fine points and lights of the verses of that Distinguisher between Truth and Falsehood, and authentic explanations of them. Although through striving and endeavour the *Risale-i Nur* has spread the Qur’anic truths everywhere in an age as obstinate and atheistic as this, the fact that no one has opposed it successfully proves that the Qur’an, which is its master, source, authority, and sun, is heavenly and revealed, and not man’s word. Only one proof of the Qur’an out of the hundreds of the *Risale-i Nur*, the Twenty-Fifth Word together with the last part of the Nineteenth Letter, has proved so decisively that the Qur’an is miraculous in forty aspects that everyone who has seen them, rather than criticizing or objecting to them, has been full of wonder at their proofs, appreciating and praising them. So referring it to the *Risale-i Nur* to prove the Qur’an’s miraculous aspects and its being the Word of God, the traveller only noted with brief indications several points demonstrating its greatness.

First Point: Just as with all its miracles and all its truths, which are an indication of its veracity, the Qur’an is a miracle of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), so too with all his miracles and the evidences of his prophethood and perfections of his knowledge, Muhammad (PBUH) is a miracle of the Qur’an, and a decisive proof that it is the Word of God.

Second Point: The Qur'an caused a transformation in social life in this world in so luminous, happy, and truthful a fashion, and brought about such a revolution in both men's souls, and hearts, and spirits, and minds, and in their personal lives, social lives, and political lives, and continued and directed that revolution, that every minute for fourteen centuries its six thousand six hundred and sixty-six verses have been recited with deep reverence by the tongues of at least one hundred million men, and it has trained men, purified their souls and cleansed their hearts, and has caused spirits to unfold and progress, given direction and light to minds, and vitality and happiness to life. For sure, such a book has no like; it is a wonder, a marvel, a miracle.

Third Point: The eloquence the Qur'an has demonstrated from that age till now is illustrated by the following: it caused Labid's daughter to remove from the walls of the Ka'ba the famous verses written in gold of the most celebrated poets called the Seven Hanging Poems, and to declare while doing so: "Beside the verses of the Qur'an these no longer have any value!"

Also, when a bedouin poet heard the verse,

*Therefore expound openly what you are commanded*¹

being recited, he bowed down in prostration. When asked if he had become a Muslim, he replied: "No, I was prostrating before the eloquence of this verse."

Also, thousands of brilliant scholars and learned literary figures like the geniuses of the science of rhetoric, 'Abd al-Qahir Jurjani, Sakkaki, and Zamakhshari, all reached the conclusion that, "The Qur'an's eloquence is beyond man's power, he could not achieve it."

Also, although from that time it has continuously issued a challenge provoking conceited and egotistical orators and poets, proclaiming in a way which will sting their pride: "Produce the like of one single Sura or be resigned to ignominy and ruin in this world and the next!", the obdurate orators of that time gave up disputing it verbally, the short way of producing the like of one Sura, and chose the way of the war, which was lengthy and threw their lives and property into peril, thus proving that it was not possible to take the short way.

Also, millions of Arabic books are in circulation, written since that time by the Qur'an's friends through the desire to resemble and imitate it, and by its enemies, driven to combat and criticize it, and such works are being written and have improved through the meeting of minds and ideas, but if even the most common man should listen to them, he would declare that none of them have reached it, saying: "The Qur'an does not resemble these and is not of their level. It is either lower than all of them or higher. No one in the world, no unbeliever, nor an idiot even, can say that it is lower, which means

¹ Qur'an, 15:94.

that the degree of its eloquence is above all of them.”

One time, a man recited the verse,

*All that is in the heavens and the earth extols and glorifies God,*²

and said: “I can’t see the eloquence in this, although it is considered wonderful.” So it was said to him, “You return to that time like the traveller, and then listen to it.” So imagining himself to be there before the Qur’an was revealed, he saw the beings of the world to be lifeless, without consciousness and duties, wretched and obscure in an unstable, transitory world in the middle of limitless, empty space. Suddenly, listening to this verse from the tongue of the Qur’an, he saw that it drew back a veil from the universe and face of the world, illuminating it. He saw that this pre-eternal address and eternal decree instructs the conscious beings lined up in the centuries, revealing the universe to be like a huge mosque, and foremost the heavens and the earth, and all beings, to be employed in the glorification and remembrance of God, enthusiastically performing their duties with joy and eagerness. He appreciated the degree of eloquence of this verse, and comparing the others to it, understood one of the thousands of instances of wisdom in the recitation of the Qur’an’s eloquence overspreading half the earth and a fifth of mankind, and, being held in utter veneration, perpetuating its sublime sovereignty for fourteen centuries without break.

Fourth Point: The Qur’an displays an agreeableness so true that for those who recite it, its many repetitions, which are the cause of even the sweetest things being wearied of, do not cause weariness, rather for those whose hearts are not corrupted and taste spoiled, the repetitions increase its agreeableness. Since early times this has been accepted by everyone and become proverbial. Furthermore, it demonstrates such a freshness, youth, and originality that although it has lived for fourteen centuries and has been freely available to everyone, it has preserved its freshness as though newly revealed. Each century has seen it to be young as though it was addressing that century in particular. And although in order to benefit from it all the time, all the branches of scholars have always had copies of it present with them in large numbers and have followed and emulated its style and manner of expression, it has preserved the originality in its style and manner of exposition exactly.

Fifth Point: One wing of the Qur’an is in the past, and one is in the future, and just as its root and one wing are the agreed truths of the former prophets, and it confirms and corroborates them, and they too confirm it with the tongue of unanimity, so too all the true sufi paths and ways of sainthood whose fruits, the saints and purified scholars, who receive life from the

² Qur’an, 57:1, etc.

Qur'an, show through their vital spiritual progress that their blessed tree is living, effulgent, and the means to truth. They grow and live under the protection of its second wing, and testify that the Qur'an is pure truth and the assembly of truths and in its comprehensiveness, is a matchless wonder.

Sixth Point: The Qur'an's truthfulness and veracity show that its six aspects are luminous. Indeed, the pillars of argument and proof beneath it; the flashes of the stamp of miraculousness above it; the gifts of happiness in this world and the next before it, its goal; the truths of heavenly revelation, its point of support behind it; the assent and evidence of innumerable upright minds to its right; and the true tranquillity, sincere attraction, and submission of sound hearts and clean consciences on its left all prove that the Qur'an is a wondrous, firm, unassailable citadel of both the heavens and the earth.

Similarly, the universe's Disposer, Who has made it His practice to foremost always exhibit beauty in the universe, protect good and right, and eliminate imposters and liars, has set His seal on its being sheer truth and right on six levels, and not being man's word, and its containing no error; and by giving it the most acceptable, highest, and most dominant place of respect and degree of success in the world, has confirmed and endorsed the Qur'an.

So too, the one who is the source of Islam and interpreter of the Qur'an – his believing in it and holding it in greater respect than everyone else, and being in a sleep-like state when it was revealed, and other words and speeches not resembling or coming near it, and that Interpreter's describing without hesitation and with complete confidence through the Qur'an true cosmic events of generally the past and the future from behind the veil of the Unseen, and no trickery or fault being observed in him while being under the gazes of the sharpest eyes, and his believing and affirming every pronouncement of the Qur'an with all his strength and nothing shaking him, is a stamp confirming that the Qur'an is revealed and true and the blessed Word of his own Compassionate Creator.

Also, a fifth of mankind, indeed the greater part of it, being drawn to the Qur'an and bound to it in religion and giving ear to it eagerly desirous of the truth, and according to the testimony of many indications and events and illuminations, the jinn, angels, and spirit beings also gathering around it in truth-worshipping fashion like moths whenever it is recited is a stamp confirming the Qur'an's acceptance by all beings and that it occupies an elevated position.

Also, all the classes of mankind from the most stupid and lowly to the cleverest and most learned taking their full share of the Qur'an's instruction and their understanding its profoundest truths, and all branches of scholars

like the great interpreters of the Greater Shari'a in particular, and hundreds of Islamic sciences and branches of knowledge, and the brilliant and exacting scholars of theology and the principles of religion extracting from the Qur'an all the needs and answers for their own sciences, – this is a stamp confirming that the Qur'an is a source of truth and mine of reality.

Also, although the Arab literary figures, who were the most advanced in regard to literature, – those of them who were not Muslims – had the greatest need to dispute the Qur'an, their avoiding producing the like of only a single Sura and its eloquence, eloquence being only one aspect of the seven major aspects of the Qur'an's miraculousness, as well as the famous orators and brilliant scholars up to the present who have wanted to gain fame through disputing it being unable to oppose a single aspect of its miraculousness and their remaining silent in impotence, – this is a stamp confirming that the Qur'an is a miracle and beyond the powers of man.

Yes, the value, superiority, and eloquence of a speech or word is apparent through knowing, “from whom it has come and to whom, and for what purpose;” the Qur'an then can have no like, and none can reach it. For the Qur'an is the speech and address of the Sustainer of all the worlds and Creator of the whole universe and a dialogue in no way hinting of imitation and artificiality. It is addressed to the one sent in the name of all men, indeed of all beings, the most famous and renowned of mankind, the strength and breadth of whose belief gave rise to mighty Islam and raised its owner to the level of ‘the distance of two bow-strings’ and returned him as the addressee of the Eternally Besought One. It describes and explains the matters concerning happiness in this world and the next, the results of the creation of the universe, and the dominical purposes within it. It expounds also the belief of the one it addresses, which was the highest and most extensive, and bore all the truths of Islam. It turns and shows every side of the huge universe like a map, a clock, or a house, and teaches and describes it in the manner of the Craftsman Who made them – to produce the like of this Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition is not possible; the degree of its miraculousness cannot be attained to.

Also, thousands of precise and learned scholars of high intelligence have all written commentaries expounding the Qur'an, some of which are of thirty, forty, or even seventy volumes, showing and proving through evidence and argument the innumerable qualities, fine points, characteristics, mysteries, elevated meanings, and numerous indications concerning every sort of hidden and unseen matter in the Qur'an. And the one hundred and thirty parts of the *Risale-i Nur* in particular, each of which proves with decisive arguments one quality, one fine point of the Qur'an, – all its parts, such as the Miraculousness of the Qur'an, and the Second Station of the Twentieth Word, which deduces many things from the Qur'an concerning the wonders of civilization

like the railway and the aeroplane, and the First Ray, called Signs of the Qur'an, which divulges allusions of verses to the *Risale-i Nur* and electricity, and the eight short treatises called The Eight Signs, which show how well-ordered, full of meaning, and mysterious are the words of the Qur'an, and the small treatise proving in five aspects the miraculousness of the verses at the end of Sura al-Fath in regard to their giving news of the Unseen – each part of the *Risale-i Nur* shows one truth, one light of the Qur'an. All this forms a stamp confirming that the Qur'an has no like, is a miracle and a marvel, and that it is the tongue of the World of the Unseen in the Manifest World and the Word of One All-Knowing of the Unseen.

Thus, due to these qualities and characteristics of the Qur'an indicated above in six points, six aspects, and six levels, its sublime, luminous sovereignty and sacred, mighty rule have continued in perfect splendour illuminating the centuries and the face of the earth for one thousand three hundred years. Also, on account of these qualities of the Qur'an, each of its letters has gained the sacred distinction of yielding at least ten rewards, ten merits, and ten eternal fruits, and the letters of certain verses and Suras yielding a hundred or a thousand fruits, or even more, and at blessed times the light, reward, and value of each letter rising from ten to hundreds. The traveller through the world understood this and said to his heart: "The Qur'an, which is thus miraculous in every respect, through the consensus of its Suras, the agreement of its verses, the accord of its lights and mysteries, and the concurrence of its fruits and works, so testifies with its evidences in the form of proofs to the existence, unity, attributes, and Names of a Single Necessarily Existent One that it is from its testimony that the endless testimony of all the believers has issued forth."

Thus, in brief indication to the instruction in belief and Divine unity that the traveller received from the Qur'an, it was said in the Seventeenth Degree of the First Station:

There is no god but God, the One and Unique Necessary Existent, to Whose Necessary Existence in Unity points the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, the book accepted and desired by all species of angel, men and jinn, whose verses are read each minute of the year, with the utmost reverence, by hundreds of millions of men, whose sacred sovereignty over the regions of the earth and the universe and the face of time is permanent, whose spiritual and luminous authority has run over half the earth and a fifth of humanity, for more than fourteen centuries, with the utmost splendour. Testimony and proof is also given by the unanimity of its sacred and heavenly Suras, the agreement of its luminous, divine verses, the congruence of its mysteries and lights, the correspondence of its fruits and effects, by witnessing and clear vision.

THE TENTH TOPIC OF THE FRUITS OF BELIEF,
THE ELEVENTH RAY
A Flower of Emirdağ

[An extremely powerful reply to objections raised against repetition in the Qur'an.]

My Dear and Loyal Brothers!

Due to my wretched situation, this Matter is confused and graceless. But I knew definitely that beneath the confused wording was a most valuable sort of miraculousness, though unfortunately I was incapable of expressing it. But however dull the wording, since it concerns the Qur'an, it is both worship in the form of reflection, and the shell of a sacred, elevated, shining jewel. The diamond in the hand should be looked at, not its torn clothes. Also, I wrote it in one or two days during Ramadan while extremely ill, wretched, and without food, of necessity very concisely and briefly, and including many truths and numerous proofs in a single sentence. Its deficiencies, then, should be overlooked!¹

My True and Loyal Brothers! While reading the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition in Ramadan, whichever of the thirty-three verses I came to that in the First Ray describe the allusions to the *Risale-i Nur*, I saw that the page and story of the verse also look to the *Risale-i Nur* and its Students to a degree – in so far as they have a share of the story. Particularly the Light Verses in Sura al-Nur, just as they point to the *Risale-i Nur* with ten fingers, so the Darkness Verses following it point directly at those opposing it; these afford a further share. Quite simply, I understood that this 'station' rises from particularity to universality and that one part of that universality is the *Risale-i Nur* and its Students.

Indeed, in regard to the breadth, exaltedness, and comprehensiveness that the Qur'an's address receives from firstly the extensive station of the universal dominicality of the Pre-Eternal Speaker, and from the extensive station

¹ As the Tenth Topic of the fruit of Denizli Prison, it is a small shining flower of Emirdağ and of this month of Ramadan. By explaining one instance of wisdom in the repetitions of the Qur'an, it dispels the poisonous, putrid illusions of the people of misguidance.

of the one addressed in the name of mankind, indeed of all beings, and the most extensive station of all mankind's guidance in all the centuries, and from the station of the most elevated comprehensive expositions of the Divine laws concerning the regulation of this world and the hereafter, the heavens and the earth, pre-eternity and post-eternity, and the dominicality of the Creator of the universe, and of all beings, this Address displays such an elevated miraculousness and comprehensiveness that both its apparent and simple level, which flatters the simple minds of ordinary people, the most numerous group the Qur'an addresses, and its highest level, partake of it.

It is as though, addressing every age and every class of people, not as one share of the story or one lesson from an historical story, but as parts of a universal principle, it is newly revealed. Particularly its often repeated threats of the wrongdoers, the wrongdoers, and its severe expositions of calamities visited on the heavens and the earth, in punishment for their wrongdoing – through these and the retribution visited on the 'Ad and Thamud peoples and on Pharaoh – it draws attention to the unequalled wrongs of this century, and through the salvation of prophets like Abraham (PUH) and Moses (PUH) gives consolation to the oppressed believers.

Indeed, all past time and the departed ages and centuries, which in the view of heedlessness and misguidance form a fearsome place of non-existence and a grievous, ruined graveyard, the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition shows to every century and class of people in the form of living instructive pages, strange worlds, living and endowed with spirits, and existent realms of the Sustainer which are connected with us; with an elevated miraculousness, it sometimes conveys us to those times, and sometimes brings those times to us. Infusing with life the universe, which in the view of misguidance is lifeless, wretched, dead, and a limitless wasteland revolving amid separation and decline, with the same miraculousness this same Qur'an of Mighty Stature raises to life those dead beings, makes them converse with one another as officials charged with duties and hasten to the assistance of one another; it instructs mankind, the jinn, and the angels in true, luminous, and pleasurable wisdom.

For sure, then, it gains sacred distinctions, like there being ten merits in each of its letters, and sometimes a hundred, a thousand, or thousands of merits; and if all men and jinn were to gather together, their being unable to produce the like of it; and its speaking completely appropriately with all mankind and all beings; and its all the time being inscribed with eagerness in the hearts of millions of *hafizes*; and its not causing weariness through its frequent and numerous repetitions; and despite its many obscure passages and sentences, its being settled perfectly in the delicate and simple heads of children; and its being agreeable like Zamzam water in the ears of the sick,

the dying, and those distressed by a few words; and its gaining for its students happiness in this world and the next.

Its smoothness of style, which, observing exactly its interpreter's being unlettered, allows for no bombast, artificiality, or affectedness, and its descending directly from the heavens, demonstrate a fine miraculousness. So too it shows a fine miraculousness in the grace and guidance of flattering the simple minds of ordinary people, the most numerous of the classes of men, through the condescension in its expression, and mostly opening the clearest and most evident pages like the heavens and earth, and teaching the wondrous miracles of power and meaningful lines of wisdom beneath those commonplace things.

By making known that it is also a book of prayer and summons, of invocation and Divine unity, which require repetition, it demonstrates a sort of miraculousness through making understood in a single sentence and a single story through its agreeable repetitions numerous different meanings to numerous different classes of people. Similarly, by making known that the most minor and unimportant things in ordinary, commonplace events are within its compassionate view and the sphere of its will and regulation, it demonstrates a sort of miraculousness in attaching importance to even the minor events of the Companions of the Prophet in the establishment of Islam and codification of the Shari'a, and both in those minor events being universal principles, and, in the establishment of Islam and the Shari'a, which are general, their producing most important fruits, as though they had been seeds.

With regard to repetition being necessary due to the repetition of need, the repetition of certain verses which, as answers to numerous repeated questions over a period of twenty years, instruct numerous different levels of people is not a fault, indeed, to repeat certain sentences so powerful they produce thousands of results and a number of verses resulting from countless evidences, which describe an infinite, awesome, all-embracing revolution that, by destroying utterly the vast universe and changing its shape at Doomsday, will remove the world and found the mighty hereafter in its place, and will prove that all particulars and universals from atoms to the stars are in the hand and under the disposal of a single Being, and will show the Divine wrath and dominical anger –on account of the result of the universe's creation– at mankind's wrongdoing, which brings to anger the earth and the heavens and the elements, to repeat such verses is not a fault, but most powerful miraculousness, and most elevated eloquence; an eloquence and lucid style corresponding exactly to the requirements of the subject.

For example, as is explained in the Fourteenth Flash of the *Risale-i Nur*, the sentence,

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

which forms a single verse and is repeated one hundred and fourteen times in the Qur'an, is a truth which binds the Divine Throne and the earth, and illuminates the cosmos, and for which everyone is in need all the time; if it was repeated millions of times, there would still be need for it. There is need and longing for it, not only every day like bread, but every moment like air and light.

And, for example, the verse,

And verily your Sustainer is Exalted in Might, Most Compassionate,

which is repeated eight times in Sura Ta. Sin. Mim.² Repeating on account of the result of the universe's creation and in the name of universal dominicality, the salvation of the prophets whose stories are told in the Sura, and the punishments of their peoples, in order to teach that dominical dignity requires the torments of those wrongdoing peoples while Divine compassion requires the prophets' salvation, is a concise, miraculous, and elevated miraculousness, for which, if repeated thousands of times, there would still be need and longing.

And, for example, the verse,

*Then which of the favours of your Sustainer will you deny?*³

which is repeated in Sura al-Rahman, and the verse,

Woe that Day to the rejecters of truth!,

in Sura al-Mursalat⁴ shout out threateningly to mankind and the jinn across the centuries and the heavens and the earth, the unbelief, ingratitude, and wrongdoing of those who bring the universe and the heavens and earth to anger, spoil the results of the world's creation, and deny and respond slightly to the majesty of Divine rule, and aggress against the rights of all creatures. If a general lesson thus concerned with thousands of truths and of the strength of thousands of matters is repeated thousands of times, there would still be need for it and its awe-inspiring conciseness and beautiful, miraculous eloquence.

And, for example, the repetition of the phrase,

Glory be unto You! There is no god but You: Mercy! Mercy! Save us, deliver us, preserve us, from Hell-fire!

in the supplication of the Prophet (PBUH) called *Jawshan al-Kabir*, which is a true and authentic supplication of the Qur'an and a sort of summary proceeding from it. Since it contains the greatest truth and the most important of the three supreme duties of creatures in the face of dominicality, the glorifi

² Sura 26, al-Shu'ara.

³ Qur'an, 55:13, etc.

⁴ Sura 77.

cation and praise of God and declaring Him to be All-Holy, and the most awesome question facing mankind, man being saved from eternal misery, and worship, the most necessary result of human impotence, if it is repeated thousands of times, it is still few.

Thus, repetition in the Qur'an looks to principles like these. Sometimes on one page, even, with regard to the requirements of the position and the need for explanation and the demands of eloquence, it expresses the truth of Divine unity perhaps twenty times explicitly and by implication. It does not cause boredom, but gives a power to it and inspires an eagerness. It has been explained in the *Risale-i Nur* with proofs how appropriate, fitting, and acceptable from the point of view of rhetoric are the repetitions in the Qur'an. The wisdom and meaning of the Meccan and Medinan Suras in the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition being different in regard to eloquence, miraculousness, and detail and brevity is as follows:

In Mecca, the first line of those it was addressing and those opposed to it were the Qurayshi idolators and untaught tribesmen, so a powerful and elevated style in regard to rhetoric was necessary, and a miraculous, convincing, persuasive conciseness, and in order to establish it, repetition was required. Thus, in most of the Meccan Suras, repeating and expressing the pillars of belief and degrees in the affirmation of Divine unity with a most powerful, elevated, and miraculous conciseness, it proved so powerfully the first creation and the Resurrection, God and the hereafter, not only in a single page, verse, sentence or word, but sometimes in a letter, through grammatical devices like inverting the words or sentences, making a word indefinite, and omissions and inclusions, that the geniuses and leaders of the science of rhetoric met it with wonder. The *Risale-i Nur*, and the Twenty-Fifth Word and its Addenda in particular, which prove in summary forty aspects of the Qur'an's miraculousness, and the Qur'anic commentary, *Isharat al-I'az*, from the Arabic *Risale-i Nur*, which in wondrous fashion proves the aspect of the Qur'an's miraculousness in its word-order, have demonstrated in fact that in the Meccan Suras and verses are the highest styles of eloquence and the most elevated, concise miraculousness.

As for the Medinan Suras and verses, since the first line of those they were addressing, who opposed them, were the People of the Book, such as the Jews and Christians who affirmed God's existence, what was required by eloquence and guidance and for the discussion to correspond to the situation, was not explanation of the high principles of religion and pillars of belief in a simple, clear, and detailed style, but the explanation of particular matters of the Shari'a and its injunctions, which were the cause of dispute, and the origins and causes of secondary matters and general laws. Thus, in the Medinan Suras and verses, through explanations in a detailed, clear, simple style, in the matchless manner of exposition peculiar to the Qur'an, it mostly

mentions within those particular secondary matters, a powerful and elevated summary; a conclusion and proof, a sentence relating to Divine unity, belief, or the hereafter which makes the particular matter of the Shari'a universal and ensures that it conforms to belief in God. It illuminates the passage, and elevates it. The *Risale-i Nur* has proved the qualities and fine points and elevated eloquence in the summaries and conclusions, which express Divine unity and the hereafter, and come mostly at the end of verses, like:

*Indeed, God is Powerful over all things. * Verily God has knowledge of all things. * And He is the Mighty, the Wise. * And He is Exalted in Might, Most Compassionate.*

In explaining in the Second Beam of the Second Light of the Twenty-Fifth Word, ten out of the many fine points of those summaries and conclusions, it has proved to the obstinate that they contain a supreme miracle.

Yes, in expounding those secondary matters of the Shari'a and laws of social life, the Qur'an at once raises the views of those it addresses to elevated and universal points, and transforming a simple style into an elevated one and instruction in the Shari'a to instruction in Divine unity, it shows it is both a book of law and commands and wisdom, and a book of the tenets of faith and belief, and of invocation and reflection and summons. And through teaching many of the aims of Qur'anic guidance in every passage, it displays a brilliant and miraculous eloquence different to that of the Meccan Suras.

Sometimes in two words, for example, in *Sustainer of All the Worlds* and *Your Sustainer*, through the phrase, *Your Sustainer*, it expresses Divine oneness, and through, *Sustainer of All the Worlds*, Divine unity. It expresses the Divine oneness within Divine unity. In a single sentence even it sees and situates a particle in the pupil of an eye, and with the same verse, the same hammer, it situates the sun in the sky, making it an eye to the sky. For example, after the verse,

Who created the heavens and the earth,

following the verse,

*He merges the night into the day, and He merges the day into the night,*⁵

it says:

*And He has full knowledge of all that is in [men's] hearts.*⁶

It says: "Within the vast majesty of the creation of the earth and the skies, He knows and regulates also the thoughts of the heart." And through an exposition of this sort, transforms that simple and unlettered level and particular discussion which takes into account the minds of ordinary people, into

⁵ Qur'an, 35:13.

⁶ Qur'an, 35:38.

an elevated, attractive, and general conversation for the purpose of guidance.

A Question: “Sometimes an important truth is not apparent to a superficial view, and in some positions the connection is not known when an elevated summary concerning Divine unity or a universal principle is drawn from a minor and ordinary matter, and it is imagined to be a fault. For example, to mention the extremely elevated principle: *And over all endued with knowledge, One Knowing*⁷ when Joseph (Peace be upon him) seized his brother through subterfuge, does not appear to be in keeping with eloquence. What is its meaning and purpose?”

The Answer: In most of the long and middle-length Suras, which are each small Qur’ans, and in many pages and passages, not only two or three aims are followed, for by its nature the Qur’an comprises many books and teachings, such as being a book of invocation, belief, and reflection, and a book of law, wisdom, and guidance. Thus, since it describes the majestic manifestations of Divine dominicality and its encompassing all things, as a sort of recitation of the mighty book of the universe, it follows many aims in every discussion and sometimes on a single page; while instructing in knowledge of God, the degrees in Divine unity, and the truths of belief, with an apparently weak connection it opens another subject of instruction in the following passage, joining powerful connections to the weak one. It corresponds perfectly to the discussion and raises the level of eloquence.

A Second Question: “What is the purpose of the Qur’an proving and drawing attention to the hereafter, Divine unity, and man’s reward and punishment thousands of times, explicitly, implicitly, and allusively, and teaching them in every Sura, on every page, and in every discussion?”

The Answer: To instruct in the most important, most significant, and most awesome matters in the sphere of contingency and in the revolutions in the universe’s history concerning man’s duty, the means to his eternal misery or happiness – man who undertook the vicegerency of the earth – and to remove his countless doubts and to smash his violent denials and obduracy, indeed, to make man confirm those awesome revolutions and submit to those most necessary essential matters which are as great as the revolutions, if the Qur’an draws his attention to them thousands, or even millions of times, it is not excessive, for those discussions in the Qur’an are read millions of times, and they do not cause boredom, nor does the need cease.

For example, since the verse,

*For those who believe and do righteous deeds are gardens beneath which rivers flow,⁸ * They will dwell there for ever.⁹*

⁷ Qur’an, 12:76.

⁸ Qur’an, 85:11.

⁹ Qur’an, 5:85, etc.

shows the truth of the good news of eternal happiness, which “saves from the eternal execution of the reality of death, which every moment shows itself to wretched man, both himself, and his world, and all those he loves, and gains for them an everlasting sovereignty,” if it is repeated thousands of millions of times and given the importance of the universe, it still is not excessive and does not lose its value. Thus, in teaching the innumerable, invaluable matters of this sort, and endeavouring to persuade, convince, and prove the occurrence of the awesome revolutions which will destroy the present form of the universe and transform it as though it was a house, the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition certainly draws attention to these matters thousands of times times explicitly, implicitly, and allusively, and this is not excessive, but renews the bounty which is like an essential need, the same as the essential needs of bread, medicine, air, and light are renewed.

And, for example, as is proved decisively in the *Risale-i Nur*, the wisdom in the Qur’an repeating severely, angrily, and forcefully, threatening verses like,

*For wrong-doers there is a grievous penalty.¹⁰ * But for those who reject [God] – for them will be the Fire of Hell.¹¹*

is that man’s unbelief is such a transgression against the rights of the universe and most creatures that it makes the heavens and earth angry and brings the elements to anger so that they deal blows on those wrong-doers with tempest and storm. According to the clear statement of the verses,

*And when they are cast therein, they will hear the [terrible] drawing-in of its breath as it blazes forth * Almost bursting with fury,¹²*

Hell so rages at those iniquitous deniers that it almost disintegrates with fury. Thus, through the wisdom of showing, not from the point of view of man’s smallness and insignificance before such a general crime and boundless aggression, but the importance of the rights of the Monarch of Universe’s subjects before the greatness of the wrongful crime and the awesomeness of the unjust aggression, and the boundless ugliness in the unbelief and iniquity of those deniers – in accordance with the wisdom of showing this, if repeating in His decree most wrathfully and severely the crime and its punishment, thousands, millions, or even thousands of millions of times, it still would not be excessive and a fault, because for a thousand years thousands of millions of people have read such verses every day, not with boredom, but with complete eagerness and need.

Indeed, every day, all the time, for everyone, one world disappears and the door of a new world is opened to them. Through repeating *There is no*

¹⁰ Qur’an, 14:22.

¹¹ Qur’an, 35:36.

¹² Qur’an, 67:7-8.

god but God a thousand times out of need and with longing in order to illuminate each of those transitory worlds, it makes There is no god but God a lamp for each of those changing veils. In the same way, in accordance with the wisdom of appreciating through reading the Qur'an the penalties of those crimes and the severe threats of the Pre-Eternal Monarch, which smash their obduracy, and of working to be saved from the rebellion of the soul, so as not to obscure in darkness those multiple, fleeting veils and renewed travelling universes, and not to make ugly their images which are reflected in the mirrors of their lives, and not to turn against them those guest views which may testify in favour of them, the Qur'an repeats them in most meaningful fashion. Even Satan would shudder at imagining to be out of place these so powerful, severe, and repeated threats of the Qur'an. It shows that the torments of Hell are pure justice for the deniers who do not heed them.

And, for example, in repeating many times the stories of Moses (Peace be upon him), which contain many instances of wisdom and benefits, like that of the Staff of Moses, and of the other prophets (Peace be upon them), it demonstrates that the prophethoods of all the other prophets are a proof of the veracity of the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), and that one who does not deny all of them cannot in truth deny his messengership. For this purpose, and since everyone does not always have the time or capability to read the whole Qur'an, it repeats those stories in the same way as the important pillars of belief, in order to make all the long and middle-length Suras each like a small Qur'an. To repeat them then is not excessive, it is required by eloquence, and teaches that the question of Muhammad (PBUH) is the greatest question of mankind and the most important matter of the universe.

It has been demonstrated decisively in the *Risale-i Nur* with many proofs and indications that through giving the highest position to the person of Muhammad in the Qur'an and including him in four pillars of belief and holding Muhammad is the Messenger of God equal to the pillar of There is no god but God, that the Messengership of Muhammad (PBUH) is the greatest truth in the universe, and that the Person of Muhammad is the most noble of creatures, and his universal collective personality and sacred rank, known as the Muhammadan Truth, is the most radiant Sun of the two worlds. His worthiness for this extraordinary position has also been proved. One of these proofs is this:

According to the principle of 'the cause is like the doer,' with the equivalent of all the good works performed by all his community at all times entering his book of good works; and the light which he brought illuminating all the truths of the cosmos; and his gratifying not only the jinn, mankind, and animate beings, but also the universe and the heavens and earth; and the supplications of plants, offered through the tongue of disposition, and the supplications of animals offered through the tongue of their innate need, and the

righteous of his (PBUH) community every day bequeating to him their benedictions and supplications for mercy and spiritual gains, whose millions –and together with spirit beings, even, millions of millions– of unrejectable supplications are accepted, as we actually witness with our eyes; and since each of the three hundred thousand letters of the Qur’an yield from a hundred to a thousand merits, with infinite numbers of lights entering the book of his deeds, only with regard to the recitation of the Qur’an by all his community, the One All-Knowing of the Unseen saw and knew that the Muhammadan (PBUH) Reality, which is his collective personality, would in the future be like a Tuba-tree of Paradise. It was in accordance with that position that He gave him such supreme importance in the Qur’an, and in His Decree showed the following of him and receiving of his intercession through adhering to his Illustrious Sunna to be one of the most important matters concerning man. And from time to time He took into consideration his human personality and human state in his early life, which was a seed of the majestic Tuba-tree.

Thus, since the truths repeated in the Qur’an are of this value, all sound natures will testify that in its repetitions is a powerful and extensive miracle. Unless, that is to say, a person is afflicted with some sickness of the heart and malady of the conscience due to the plague of materialism, and is included under the rule,

*Man denied the light of the sun due to disease of the eye,
His mouth denied the taste of water due to sickness.*

TWO ADDITIONS, WHICH FORM A CONCLUSION TO THE TENTH TOPIC

THE FIRST: Twelve years ago I heard that a most fearsome and obdurate atheist had instigated a conspiracy against the Qur’an, which was to have it translated. He said: “The Qur’an should be translated so that everyone can know just what it is.” That is, he hatched a dire plan with the idea of everyone seeing its unnecessary repetitions and its translation being read in its place. However, the irrefutable proofs of the *Risale-i Nur* proved decisively that “A true translation of the Qur’an is not possible, and other languages cannot preserve the Qur’an’s qualities and fine points in place of the grammatical language of Arabic. Man’s trite and partial translations cannot be substituted for the miraculous and comprehensive words of the Qur’an,

every letter of which yields from ten to a thousand merits; they may not be read in its place in mosques.” Through spreading everywhere, the *Risale-i Nur* made the fearsome plan come to nothing. I surmise that it was due to the idiotic and lunatic attempts of dissemblers to extinguish the Sun of the Qur’an on account of Satan by puffing at it like silly children having taken lessons from that atheist, that I was inspired to write this Tenth Matter while under great constraint and in a most distressing situation. But I do not know the reality of the situation since I have been unable to meet with others.

SECOND ADDITION: After our release from Denizli Prison, I was staying on the top floor of the famous Şehir Hotel. The subtle and graceful dancing of the leaves, branches, and trunks of the many poplar trees in the fine gardens opposite me at the touching of the breeze, each with a rapturous and ecstatic motion like a circle of dervishes, pained my heart, sorrowful and melancholy at being parted from my brothers and remaining alone. Suddenly the seasons of autumn and winter came to mind and a heedlessness overcame me. I so pitied those graceful poplars and living creatures swaying with perfect joyousness that my eyes filled with tears. With this reminder of the separations and non-being beneath the ornamented veil of the universe, the grief at a world-full of deaths and separations pressed down on me. Then suddenly, the Light the Muhammadan (PBUH) Truth had brought came to my assistance and transformed my grief and sorrow into joy. Indeed, I am eternally grateful to the Muhammadan Being (PBUH) for the assistance and consolation which alleviated my situation at that time, only a single instance of the boundless effulgence of that Light for me, like for all believers and everyone. It was like this:

By showing those blessed and delicate creatures to be without function or purpose, and their motion to be not out of joy, but as though trembling on the brink of non-existence and separation and tumbling into nothingness, that heedless view so touched the feelings in me of desire for permanence, love of good things, and compassion for fellow-creatures and life that it transformed the world into a sort of hell and my mind into an instrument of torture. Then, just at that point, the Light Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) had brought as a gift for mankind raised the veil; it showed in place of extinction, non-being, nothingness, purposeless, futility, and separations, meanings and instances of wisdom to the number of the leaves of the poplars, and as is proved in the *Risale-i Nur*, results and duties which may be divided into three sorts:

The First Sort looks to the All-Glorious Maker’s Names. For example, if a master craftsman makes a wondrous machine, everyone applauds him, saying: “What wonders God has willed! Blessed be God!” Similarly, the machine congratulates the craftsman through the tongue of its disposition, through displaying perfectly the results intended from it. All living beings

and all things are machines such as that; they applaud their Craftsman through their glorifications.

The Second Sort of the Instances of Wisdom looks to the views of living creatures and conscious beings. Beings each become an agreeable object of study, a book of knowledge. They leave their meanings in the sphere of existence in the minds of conscious beings and their forms in their memories, and on the tablets in the World of Similitudes, and in the notebooks of the World of the Unseen, then they depart from the Manifest World and withdraw to the World of the Unseen. That is, they leave behind an apparent existence, but gain many existences pertaining to meaning, the Unseen, and knowledge. Yes, since God exists and His knowledge encompasses everything, in the view of reality, in the world of believers there is surely no non-being, extinction, nothingness, annihilation, and transitoriness, while the world of unbelievers is full of non-existence, separation, nothingness, and transience. This is taught by the saying, which is on everyone's lips, "For those for whom God exists, everything exists; and for those for whom He does not exist, nothing exists; for them there is nothing."

IN SHORT: Just as belief saves man from eternal annihilation at the time of death, so it saves everyone's private world from the darkneses of annihilation and nothingness. Whereas unbelief, and especially if it is absolute unbelief, both sends man and his private world to non-existence with death, and casts him into infernal darkneses. It transforms the pleasures of life into bitter poisons. Let the ears ring of those who prefer the life of this world to that of the hereafter! Let them come and find a solution for this, or else let them embrace belief and be saved from these dreadful losses!

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*¹³

From your brother who is in much need
of your prayers and misses you greatly,

Said Nursi

¹³ Qur'an, 2:32.

The Twenty-Sixth Word

THE TREATISE ON DIVINE DETERMINING

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

*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.¹ * And of all things have We taken account in a Clear Book.²*

[Divine Determining³ and the power of choice⁴ are two important matters. We shall attempt to disclose a few of their mysteries in four ‘Topics’.]

FIRST TOPIC

Divine Determining and the power of choice are aspects of a belief pertaining to state and conscience which show the final limits of Islam and belief; they are not theoretical and do not pertain to knowledge. That is to say, a believer attributes everything to Almighty God, even his actions and self, till finally the power of choice confronts him, so he cannot evade his obligation and responsibility. It tells him: “You are responsible and under obligation.” Then, so that he does not become proud at his good deeds and his achievements, Divine Determining confronts him, saying: “Know your limits; the one who does them is not you.” Yes, Divine Determining and the power of choice are at the final degrees of belief and Islam; the former has been included among the matters of belief to save the soul from pride, and the latter, to make it admit to its responsibility. Obdurate evil-commanding souls clinging to Divine Determining in order to clear themselves of the responsibility of the evils they have committed, and their becoming proud and conceited on account of the virtues bestowed on them and their relying on the power of choice, are actions totally opposed to the mystery of Divine Determining and wisdom of the power of choice; they are not matters pertaining to knowledge which might give rise to such actions.

¹ Qur’an, 15:21.

² Qur’an, 36:12.

³ Divine Determining (*Qadar*; T. *Kader*) is also known as fate or destiny. [Tr.]

⁴ The power of choice or faculty of will (*juz’i irada*, *juz’-i ikhtiyari*), also known as free will. [Tr.]

For ordinary people who have not progressed spiritually there may be occasions when Divine Determining is used, and these are calamities and disasters when it is the remedy for despair and grief. But it should not be used to justify rebellion and in matters of the future so that it becomes a cause of dissipation and idleness. That is to say, Divine Determining has not been included among the matters of belief to relieve people from their obligations and responsibility, but to save them from pride and conceit. While the power of choice has been included in order to be the source of evils, not to be the source of virtues, so that people become like the Pharaoh.

Yes, as the Qur'an states, man is totally responsible for his evils, for it is he who wants the evils. Since evils are destructive, man may perpetrate much destruction with a single evil act, like burning down a house with one match, and he becomes deserving of an awesome punishment. However, he does not have the right to take pride in good deeds; his part in them is extremely small. For what wants and requires the good deeds is Divine mercy, and what creates them is dominical power. Both request and reply, reason and cause, are from God. Man only comes to have them through supplication, belief, consciousness, and consent. As for evils, it is man's soul that wants them, either through capacity or through choice, – like in the white and beautiful light of the sun some substances become black and putrefy, and the blackness is related to their capacity – however, it is Almighty God Who creates the evils through a Divine law which comprises numerous benefits. That is to say, the cause and the request are from the soul, so that it is the soul which is responsible, while it is Almighty God Who creates the evils and brings them into existence, and since they have other results and fruits which are good, they are good.

It is for the above reason that the 'acquisition' (kasb) of evil, that is, the desire for evil, is evil, but the creation of evil is not evil. A lazy man who receives damage from rain, which comprises many instances of good, may not say that the rain is not mercy. Yes, together with a minor evil in its creation are numerous instances of good. To abandon that good for a minor evil becomes a greater evil. Therefore, a minor evil becomes like good. There is no evil or ugliness in Divine creation. They rather pertain to His servant's wish and to his capacity.

Furthermore, Divine Determining is both exempt from evil and ugliness with regard to results and fruits, and free from tyranny and ugliness with respect to reason and cause. Because Divine Determining looks to the true causes and acts justly. Men construct their judgements on causes which they see superficially and fall into error within the pure justice of Divine Determining. For example, a judge finds you guilty of theft and sends you to prison. You are not a thief, but you have committed a murder which no one knows about. Thus, Divine Determining also sentenced you to imprisonment,

but it sentenced you for the secret murder and acted justly. Since the judge sentenced you for a theft of which you were innocent, he acted unjustly. Thus, in a single thing the justice of Divine Determining and Divine creation and man's wrongful choice or acquisition were apparent in two respects; you can make analogies with this for other things. That is to say, with regard to origin and end, source and branch, cause and results, Divine Determining and creation are exempt from evil, ugliness, and tyranny.

If it is said: "Man has no ability to create with his power of choice and has nothing apart from 'acquisition,' which is as though theoretical, so how is it that in the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition he is shown to be rebellious and hostile towards the Creator of the heavens and the earth, Who complains greatly about him; the Creator mobilizes Himself and all His angels to assist His believing servants against the rebellious, affording them the greatest importance?"

The Answer: Because disbelief, rebellion, and evil are destruction and non-existence. However, vast destruction and innumerable instances of non-existence may result from a single theoretical matter and one instance of non-existence. Through the helmsman of a large ship abandoning his duty, the ship may sink and the labour of all those employed on it go for nothing; all those instances of destruction will result from a single instance of non-existence. Similarly, since disbelief and rebellion are non-existence and destruction, the power of choice may provoke them through a theoretical matter and cause awesome consequences. For although disbelief is only one evil, it insults the whole universe, accusing it of being worthless and futile, and denies all beings, which display proofs of Divine unity, and is contemptuous towards all the manifestations of the Divine Names. It is therefore pure wisdom that Almighty God utters severe complaints about the unbelievers, threatening them awesomely in the name of the universe and all beings and the Divine Names; it is pure justice that they should suffer eternal punishment. Since through unbelief and rebellion man takes the way of destruction, with a small act of service, he may perform a great many works. In the face of unbelief therefore, the believers are in need of Almighty God's boundless grace. For due to one troublesome child who is trying to burn down a house, ten strong men who have undertaken to protect and repair it may be obliged to beseech the child's parents, or even have recourse to the king. In the same way the believers are in need of many Divine favours in order to withstand the unmannerly people of rebellion.

In Short: If the one speaking of Divine Determining and the power of choice has perfect belief and is aware of the Divine presence, he attributes the universe and himself to Almighty God, knowing them to be under His disposal. He has the right to speak of them. For since he knows himself and everything to be from Almighty God, he assumes the responsibility,

basing it on his power of choice. He accepts that it is the source of evils and proclaims his Sustainer free of fault. He remains within the sphere of worship and undertakes the obligations with which he is charged by Almighty God. Moreover, he does not become proud at his good deeds and achievements; he rather looks to Divine Determining and offers thanks. He sees Divine Determining in the calamities that befall him, and endures them in patience.

However, if the one speaking of Divine Determining and the power of choice is one of the heedless and neglectful, then he has no right to speak of them. For, impelled by his misguidance, his evil-commanding soul attributes the universe to causes and divides up God's property among them. And he attributes the ownership of himself to himself. He ascribes his acts to himself and to causes. His responsibility and faults, he refers to Divine Determining. He will finally ascribe the power of choice to Almighty God, and he will consider Divine Determining last of all; thus discussion of them becomes meaningless. To discuss them is only a trick of the soul which is entirely contrary to the wisdom in them, in order to save such a person from responsibility.

SECOND TOPIC

This is a minute and scholarly investigation addressing scholars in particular.⁵

If you say: "How is Divine Determining compatible with the power of choice?"

The Answer: In seven ways...

The First: The All-Just and Wise One, to Whose wisdom and justice the universe testifies with the tongue of order and balance, gave to man a power of choice of unknown nature which would be the means of reward and punishment for him. We do not know many of the numerous aspects of the All-Just and Wise One's wisdom; our not knowing how the power of choice is compatible with Divine Determining does not prove that it is not so.

The Second: Of necessity everyone perceives in himself a will and choice; he knows it through his conscience. To know the nature of beings is one thing; to know they exist is something different. There are many things which although their existence is self-evident, we do not know their true nature... The power of choice may be included among these. Everything is not restricted to what we know; our not knowing them does not prove the things we do not know do not exist.

⁵ This Second Topic is the most profound and difficult of the questions of the mystery of Divine Determining. It is held by the all learned scholars to be one of the most important and controversial questions of theology and belief, yet the *Risale-i Nur* has solved it completely.

The Third: The power of choice is not opposed to Divine Determining, indeed, Divine Determining corroborates the power of choice. Because Divine Determining is a sort of Divine knowledge. Divine knowledge is connected with our will and choice, in which case it corroborates it, it does not nullify it.

The Fourth: Divine Determining is a sort of knowledge. Knowledge is dependent on the thing known. That is, it knows it as it is. The thing known is not dependent on knowledge. That is, the principles of knowledge are not fundamental so that the knowledge directs the thing known with regard to its external existence. Because the essence of the thing known and its external existence look to will and are based on power. Also, pre-eternity is not the tip of a chain reaching into the past which should be considered the end point in the existence of things and a source of compulsion. Rather, pre-eternity holds the past, the present, and the future all at once, looking at them from above like a mirror. In which case, it is not right to imagine an end to past time which stretches back within the sphere of contingency and call it pre-eternity, and to suppose that things enter that knowledge of pre-eternity in sequence, and that oneself is outside it; to reason thus is not right. Consider the following example in order to explain this mystery:

Suppose there is a mirror in your hand and the area to your right is the past and the area to your left, the future; the mirror only holds what is opposite it. Then with a movement it holds both sides, but it cannot hold all of it. However low the mirror is held, less will appear in it, and the higher it rises, the area it encompasses expands, until it can hold both sides in their entirety simultaneously. Whatever occurs in the areas reflected in the mirror in this position cannot be said to precede or follow one another, or to conform to or oppose one another. Divine Determining is part of pre-eternal knowledge, and in the words of the Hadith, pre-eternal knowledge is “at an elevated station which from its lofty view-point encompasses everything that has been and will be from pre-eternity to post-eternity.” We and our reasoning cannot be outside of it so we can be like a mirror to the area of the past.

The Fifth: Divine Determining has a connection with cause and effect. That is, this effect will occur through this cause. In which case, it may not be said that “Since so-and-so’s death is determined at such-and-such a time, what fault has the man who fired the rifle through his own choice, for if he had not fired it, the other still would have died?”

Question: Why may it not be said?

The Answer: Because Divine Determining specified that so-and-so’s death would occur through the man’s rifle. If you suppose that he did not fire

the rifle, then you are supposing that Divine Determining had no connection with it, so with what would you decree his death? If you imagine cause and effect to be separate like the Jabriyya, or you deny Divine Determining like the Mu'tazila, you leave the Sunni School and join the heretics. We people of truth say: "If he had not fired the rifle, we do not know if he would have died." The Jabariyya say: "If he had not fired it, he still would have died." While the Mu'tazila say: "If he had not fired it, he would not have died."

The Sixth:⁶ According to Maturidi, inclination, the essence of the power of choice, is a theoretical or relative matter and may be attributed to God's servants. But Ash'ari considered it to have existence, so did not attribute it to them. However, according to Ash'ari, the power of disposal within inclination is a theoretical matter, which makes the inclination and the disposal together a relative matter lacking a definite external existence. Theoretical or relative matters do not require causes through which, for their existence, necessity would intervene and nullify the will and power of choice. Rather, if the cause of the theoretical matters acquires the weight of preference, the theoretical matter may become actual and existent. In which case, at that juncture, it may be abandoned. The Qur'an may say to a person at that point: "This is evil; do not do it." Indeed, if God's servants had been the creators of their actions and had had the power to create, then their wills would have been removed. For an established rule in the sciences of religion and philosophy is: "If a thing is not necessary, it may not come into existence [of itself]." That is, there has to be a cause for a thing to come into existence. The cause necessarily requires the effect. Then no power of choice would remain.

If you say: Preference without a cause or attribute to cause the preference is impossible. Whereas the theoretical or relative matter we call human acquisition sometimes does a thing and sometimes does not; if there is nothing to cause the preference, preference without something to cause it would necessarily occur, and this demolishes one of the most important bases of theology?

The Answer: A being preferable without something to make it preferable is impossible. That is, a being deemed preferable or superior without a cause or attribute to make it so is impossible. But preference without something to cause it is permissible and occurs. Will is an attribute, and its mark is to perform a work such as that.

If you ask: "Since the one who creates the murder is Almighty God, why do you call me a murderer?"

The Answer: Because according to the rules of grammar, the active participle is derived from the infinitive, which is a relative matter. It cannot be

⁶ This is a truth addressing exact scholars in particular.

derived from the verbal noun, which is an actual or existent matter. The infinitive is our acquisition; so we are called the murderer. The verbal noun is Almighty God's creature. Something which gives an inkling of responsibility cannot be derived from the verbal noun.

The Seventh: For sure, man's faculty of will and power of choice are weak and a theoretical matter, but Almighty God, the Absolutely Wise One, made that weak and partial will a condition for the connection of His universal will. He in effect says: "My servant! Whichever way you wish to take with your will, I will take you there. In which case the responsibility is yours!" If the comparison is not mistaken, you take a powerless child onto your shoulders and leaving the choice to him, tell him you will take him wherever he wishes. The child wants to go to a high mountain so you take him there, but he either catches cold or falls. So of course you reprimand him, saying, "You wanted to go there," and you give him a slap. Thus, Almighty God, the Firmest of Judges, makes His servant's will, which is utterly weak, a condition, and His universal will follows it.

In Short: O man! You have a will known as the power of choice which is extremely weak, but whose hand in evil acts and destruction is extremely long and in good deeds is extremely short. Give one of the hands of that will of yours to supplication, so that it may reach Paradise, a fruit of the chain of good deeds, and stretch to eternal happiness. And give its other hand to the seeking of forgiveness, so that it may be short for evil deeds and will not reach the Zakkum-tree of Hell, which is one fruit of that accursed tree. That is, just as supplication and reliance on God greatly strengthen the inclination to do good, so repentance and the seeking of forgiveness cut the inclination to do evil, putting an end to its transgressions.

THIRD TOPIC

Belief in Divine Determining is one of the pillars of belief. That is, the belief that "everything is determined by Almighty God." The certain proofs for Divine Determining are so numerous they cannot be calculated. We shall show in an Introduction, simply and clearly, how strong and broad is this pillar of belief.

Introduction:

Numerous verses of the Qur'an, like,

*Nor anything fresh or dry [green or withered] but is [inscribed] in a Clear Book,*⁷

state clearly that before it comes into existence and after it passes from existence, everything is written. Through its creational signs like the order,

⁷ Qur'an, 6:59.

balance, regularity, adornment, differentiation, and the giving of form, the verses, the signs, of the mighty Qur'an inscribed by Divine power and called the universe confirm these statements of the Qur'an. Indeed, the well-ordered missives and finely balanced verses of the book of the universe testify that everything is written. The indication that everything is determined and written before it comes into existence are all beginnings, seeds, measured proportions, and forms; each of these testifies to this. For seeds and grains are subtle containers appearing from the workbench of "Be!," and it is in each of which is deposited a tiny index traced by Divine Determining. Divine power employs minute particles according to that plan of Divine Determining, and constructs the mighty miracles of power on the seeds. That is to say, everything that will happen to the tree is as though inscribed in its seed. For in regard to their substance seeds are simple and similar to one another; materially they are nothing.

Furthermore, the well-measured proportions of everything clearly show Divine Determining. Yes, whatever living creature is considered, it is as though its form and measure emerged from a wisely and skilfully wrought mould. For it to receive such a measure, form, and shape, either there has to be a truly wondrous and infinitely intricate physical mould, or else pre-eternal power cuts out the form and shape according to a well-proportioned immaterial mould that exists in knowledge and comes from Divine Determining, and clothes it in it. For example, look carefully at this tree or that animal, you will see that the particles, which are lifeless, deaf, blind, unconscious, and similar to one another, are in motion in its growth and development. In some of the being's intricate extremities the particles halt, as though seeing, knowing and recognizing the place of fruits and benefits. Then in another place they change their direction as though following some important aim. That means they are in motion in accordance with the immaterial measured proportions of the tree or animal, which come from Divine Determining, and are governed by those proportions.

Since there are the manifestations of Divine Determining to this extent in physical and visible things, certainly the forms with which things are clothed with the passing of time and the states acquired through the motions they perform will also be dependent on the ordering of Divine Determining. In a seed are two manifestations of Divine Determining; one is 'evident' and points to the Clear Book, which is a title of will and the creational commands; the other is 'theoretical' and points to the Clear Record, which is a title of Divine knowledge and the Divine command. 'Evident' Divine Determining specifies the physical nature, states, and parts of the tree which the seed comprises. While 'theoretical' Divine Determining specifies the stages, states, forms, motions, and glorifications which the tree will undergo and perform over the period of its life, and which are in the seed and will be

created from it; these stages, states, forms, and acts, which constantly change and are called its life-history, each have a regulated measure in accordance with Divine Determining, the same as the tree's branches and leaves.

Since there is such a manifestation of Divine Determining in the most common and simple of things, it surely demonstrates that all things are written before they come into existence; this may be understood with little attention. Now, evidence for the fact that the story of everything's life is written after its existence are all fruits, which in this world tell of the Clear Book and the Clear Record, and the faculty of memory in man, which points to the Preserved Tablet; these all hint and testify to this fact. Indeed, the appointed events of a tree's life are written in its seeds, which are like the hearts of its fruits. And man's life-history together with some of the past events of the world are written in his memory in such a way that, as though copying out with the hand of power and pen of Divine Determining in a faculty as tiny as a mustard seed a small note from the page of his actions, the memory gives the note to man's hand and puts it in the pocket of his mind, so that with it he will call his actions to mind at the time of reckoning. So too, due to it he may be confident that within the upheavals of transience and death there are numerous lasting mirrors in which the All-Powerful and Wise One depicts and makes permanent the identities of transient beings; and truly numerous tablets which shall endure for all eternity on which that All-Knowing Preserver inscribes the meanings of transitory beings.

In Short: Since plant life, the simplest and lowest level of life, is dependent on the ordering of Divine Determining to this extent, certainly human life, the highest level of life, has been drawn in all in its details according to the scale and measuring of Divine Determining and is inscribed by its pen. Yes, just as raindrops tell of clouds, and drops of water point to the existence of a water-source, and notes and portfolios to the existence of a large ledger, so too, the 'evident' Divine Determining which we observe and which is the physical order in living beings indicates the notebook of Divine will and creational commands known as the Clear Book. Similarly, their fruits, seeds, grains, forms, and shapes, which are like the droplets, notes, and portfolios of 'theoretical' Divine Determining, which is the non-physical order and pertains to life, indicates the Preserved Tablet, one office of Divine knowledge, which is called the Clear Record.

To Conclude: We see clearly that at the time of their growth and development the particles of living beings travel to their intricate extremities and halt, then they change their path. At each of the extremities they produce the fruits of benefits, uses, and instances of wisdom. Clearly, the forms of those things and their measures are drawn with a pen of Determining. Thus, observable, evident Determining shows that in the non-physical states of

living beings also are well-ordered, fruitful extremities and limits drawn with the pen of Determining. Divine power is the source, Divine Determining is the pattern. Power writes the meaningful book on that pattern. Since we understand clearly that the fruitful limits and purposeful extremities have been drawn with the pen of Divine Determining, physical and non-physical, certainly the states and stages which all living beings undergo in the course of their lives are also drawn with that pen. For their life-stories follow a course with order and balance; they change forms and receive shapes. Since the pen of Divine Determining thus rules in all living beings, surely the life-history of man, the world's most perfect fruit and vicegerent of the earth and bearer of the Supreme Trust, is more than anything dependent on the law of Divine Determining.

If you say: "Divine Determining has bound us like this. It has negated our freedom. Isn't belief in it a burden and irksome for the heart and spirit, which yearn for expansion and to roam freely?"

The Answer: Absolutely not! It is not burdensome; it rather affords a luminosity and joy producing a lightness, ease, and spirit, and ensuring confidence and security. Because if man does not believe in Divine Determining, he is compelled to bear a burden as heavy as the world on the shoulders of his spirit within a constricted space, which allows him only an insignificant independence and temporary freedom. For man is connected with the whole universe. He has infinite aims and desires. But since his power, will, and freedom are insufficient to meet a millionth of these, it may be understood how awesome is the burden of the distress he bears. Thus, belief in Divine Determining throws that burden in its entirety onto the ship of Divine Determining, allowing him to roam free within its perfections with perfect ease and perfect freedom of spirit and heart. It only negates the petty freedom of the evil-commanding soul and smashes its Pharaoh-like tyranny and lordship, and its acting as it wishes. Belief in Divine Determining produces such pleasure and happiness it is beyond description. We shall only allude to it with the following comparison.

Two men travelled to the seat of government of a king, and there entered his private palace, a place of rare wonders. One of them did not recognize the king and laying hands on everything and stealing them, wanted to settle there. However, he experienced certain difficulties, for he had to manage the palace and its park, oversee its revenues, work its machines, and feed its strange animals; he suffered constant distress. The paradise-like park became hell for him. He pitied everything. He could not govern them. He passed his time regretfully. Then this thieving, unmannerly man was cast into prison as a punishment. The second man recognized the king and knew himself to be his guest. He believed that all the matters in the park and

palace occurred through the regulation of the law, and that everything functioned with perfect ease in accordance with a programme. Leaving the difficulties to the king's law, he benefited with complete enjoyment from all the pleasures of that Paradise-like garden, and relying on the king's mercy and the efficacy of the administrative laws, he saw everything as agreeable and passed his life in perfect pleasure and happiness. He understood the meaning of the saying: "He who believes in Divine Determining is saved from grief."

FOURTH TOPIC

If you say: "In the First Topic you proved that everything about Divine Determining is good and beautiful. Even the evil that comes from it is good, and the ugliness, beautiful. But the disasters and tribulations in this world refute that statement."

The Answer: O my soul and my friend who feel severe pain out of intense compassion! The facts that all virtues and perfections return to existence and that the basis of all rebellion, calamities, and defects is non-existence are a proof that existence is pure good and non-existence, pure evil. Since non-existence is pure evil, circumstances that either result in non-existence or give an inkling of it, also comprise evil. Therefore, life, the most brilliant light of existence, proceeding through different circumstances, finds strength; it encounters varying situations and is purified; it takes on numerous qualities and produces the desired results, and enters many stages and displays comprehensively the impresses of the Bestower of Life's Names. It is due to this fact that certain things happen to living creatures in the form of griefs, calamities, difficulties, and tribulations whereby the lights of existence are renewed in their lives, and the darkness of non-existence draws distant and their lives are purified. For arrest, repose, silence, idleness, rest, and monotony are all, both in quality and as conditions, non-existence. Even the greatest pleasure is reduced to nothing by monotony.

In Short: Since life displays the impresses of the Most Beautiful Names, everything that happens to it is good. For example, an extremely rich and infinitely skilful person who is proficient in many crafts, for an hour and in return for a wage, clothes a miserable wretch in a bejewelled, artistically fashioned garment. This garment he made in order to make the miserable man act as a model and to display the works of his art and his extensive wealth. He works the garment on the man, gives it various forms, and alters it. In order to display every variety of his art, he cuts it, changes it, and lengthens and shortens it. Can the poor man receiving the wage be justified if he says to the person: "You are giving me trouble. You are making me bow down and stand up. By cutting and shortening this garment which makes me more beautiful, you are spoiling my beauty"? Does he have the

right to tell him: “You are acting unkindly and unfairly”? Thus, like him, in order to display the impresses of His Most Beautiful Names, the All-Glorious Maker, the Peerless Creator, alters within numerous circumstances the garment of existence He clothes on living creatures, bejewelled with senses and subtle faculties like eyes, ears, the reason, and the heart. He changes it within very many situations. Among these are circumstances in the form of suffering and calamity which show the meanings of some of His Names, and the rays of mercy within flashes of wisdom, and the subtle instances of beauty within those rays of mercy.

Conclusion

[Five Paragraphs which silenced the Old Said’s rebellious, proud, vain, conceited, and hypocritical soul, and compelled it to submit.]

FIRST PARAGRAPH: Since things exist and they are full of art, they surely have a maker. As is decisively proved in the Twenty-Second Word, if everything is not one person’s, then each thing becomes as difficult and problematical as all things. Since someone made the earth and the heavens and created them, for sure that most wise and skilful Being would not leave to others living beings, which are the fruits, results, and aims of the heavens and the earth, and spoil his work. Making it futile and without purpose, He would not hand over to others all His wise works; He would not give their thanks and worship to others.

SECOND PARAGRAPH: O my conceited soul! You resemble a grape-vine. Do not become proud! The vine itself did not attach the bunches of grapes; someone else attached them.

THIRD PARAGRAPH: O my hypocritical soul! Do not become vain, saying: “I have served religion.” According to the meaning of the saying, “God strengthens this religion by means of sinful men,”⁸ it was because you were not purified. Indeed, you should know yourself to be such a sinful man, and that your duty and worship is thanks for past bounties. For these are the function of your nature, incumbent on you due to your creation, and the result of art; know this and be saved from vanity and hypocrisy!

FOURTH PARAGRAPH: If you want knowledge of reality and true wisdom, gain knowledge of Almighty God. For the realities of beings are

⁸ *Bukhari*, Jihad, 182; *Maghazi*, 38; *Qadr*, 5; *Muslim*, Iman, 178; *Ibn Maja*, Fitan, 35.

rays of the Divine Name of Truth and the manifestations of His Names and attributes. The reality of all things, whether physical, non-physical, essential, non-essential, and the reality of all human beings, is based on a Name and relies on Its reality. Things are not merely insignificant forms without reality. There is a brief discussion of this mystery at the end of the Twentieth Word. O my soul! If you long for the life of this world and flee death, know certainly that the conditions you suppose to be life are only the minute in which you are. All the time previous to the present minute and the things of the world within that time are dead in the present minute. And all the time subsequent to the present minute and all it contains are non-existent in it, and nothing. That means the physical life on which you rely is only one minute. Some of the learned, even, said it was a tenth of a minute, rather, the passing instant. It is due to this mystery that certain saints stated that with regard to this world, this world is non-existent. Since it is thus, give up the physical life of the soul; rise to the level of life of the heart, spirit, and inner faculties; see what a broad sphere of life they have. For them, the past and the future, which for you are dead, are living; they are existent and full of life. O my soul! Like my heart, you too weep and cry out and say:

I am ephemeral; I do not want another who is thus.

I am impotent; I do not want another who is thus.

I have surrendered my spirit to the Most Merciful; I do not want another.

I want another, but let him be an eternal friend.

I am a mere atom, but I desire an Everlasting Sun.

I am nothing, yet I wish for these beings, all of them.

FIFTH PARAGRAPH: This Paragraph occurred to me in Arabic, and so it was written thus. Also, it recalls one of the thirty-three degrees of reflection in the recitation, God is Most Great.

God is Most Great! The Eternal, All-Knowing, All-Wise, Most Generous, Most Compassionate, All-Beauteous, the Inscraper, the Pre-Eternal! What is the reality of the universe in its entirety and in its parts, and its pages and levels, and what is the reality of beings altogether and singly, in their existence and continuation, but the lines of the pen of His Determining and Decree, and His setting in order and determining, with knowledge and wisdom; what are they but the skilful inscriptions of His knowledge and wisdom and regulating and forming, with art and favour; the adornments of the shining hand of His art and favour and embellishing and illuminating, with grace and munificence; the flowers of the subtleties of His favour and munificence and making known and loved, with mercy and bounty; the fruits of the effusions of His mercy and bounty and pity and compassion, with

beauty and perfection; the flashes and manifestations of His beauty and perfection through the testimony of the transience of the mirrors and the ephemerality of the places of manifestation and the permanence of that transcendent, eternal beauty, and its constant manifestation and appearance throughout the passage of the seasons, centuries, and ages, and the perpetual bestowal of bounties throughout the passage of the creatures and days and people?

Indeed, a perfect work points to one possessing intellect who performs a perfect act, and the perfect act points to one with understanding who possesses perfect names, and the perfect names point to perfect attributes, and perfect attributes point to perfect qualities, and the perfect qualities point to the perfection of the essence from which they proceed, and this is absolutely certain.

Indeed, the ephemerality of the mirrors and death of creatures together with the perpetual manifestation and constant effulgence is the clearest of proofs that their apparent beauty does not belong to the places of manifestation; it is the most eloquent statement and clearest argument for a transcendent beauty, and renewed bestowal, to the Necessary Existent, to the Enduring One, the Loving One...

O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad from pre-eternity to post-eternity to the number of things encompassed by Divine Knowledge, and to his Family and Companions, and grant them peace.

Addendum

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

[This short Addendum has great importance; it is beneficial for everyone.]

The ways leading to Almighty God are truly numerous. While all true ways are taken from the Qur'an, some are shorter, safer, and more general than others. One of these is the way of impotence, poverty, compassion, and reflection, from which, with my defective understanding, I have benefited.

Indeed, like ecstatic love, impotence is a path which, by way of worship, leads to winning God's love; but it is safer. Poverty too leads to the Divine Name of All-Merciful. And, like ecstatic love, compassion leads to the Name of All-Compassionate, but is a swifter and broader path. Also like ecstatic love, reflection leads to the Name of All-Wise, but it is a richer, broader, and more brilliant path. This path consists not of ten steps like the 'ten subtle faculties' of some of the Sufi orders (*tariqat*) employing silent recollection, nor of seven stages like the 'seven souls' of those practising public recitation, but of four steps. It is reality, rather than a *tariqat*. It is Shari'a.

However, let it not be misunderstood. It means to see one's impotence, poverty and faults before Almighty God, not to fabricate them or display them to people. The method of this short path is to follow the Practices of the Prophet (PBUH), perform the religious obligations and give up serious sins. And it is especially to perform the prescribed prayers correctly and with attention, and following them to say the *tesbihat*.

The verse, *Therefore, do not justify yourselves,*⁹ points to the first step.

The verse, *And be not like those who forget God, and He therefore makes them forget their own selves,*¹⁰ points to the second step.

⁹ Qur'an, 53:32.

¹⁰ Qur'an, 59:19.

The verse, *Whatever good happens to you is from God, but whatever evil befalls you is from yourself*,¹¹ points to the third step.

The verse, *Everything will perish save His countenance*,¹² points to the fourth step.

A brief explanation of these Four Steps is as follows:

THE FIRST STEP: As the verse, *Therefore, do not justify yourselves* suggests, it is to not purify the soul. For on account of his nature and innate disposition, man loves himself. Indeed, he loves himself before anything else, and only himself. He sacrifices everything other than himself to his own soul. He praises himself in a manner befitting some object of worship. He absolves and exonerates himself from faults in the same way. As far as he possibly can, he does not see faults as being appropriate for him, and does not accept them. He defends himself passionately as though worshipping himself. Even, using on himself the members and faculties given him as part of his nature in order to praise and glorify the True Object of Worship, he displays the meaning of the verse, *Who takes as his god his own desires*.¹³ He considers himself, he relies on himself, he fancies himself. Thus, his purification and cleansing at this stage, in this step, is to not purify himself; it is not to absolve himself.

SECOND STEP: As the verse, *And be not like those who forget God, and He therefore makes them forget their own selves* teaches, man is oblivious of himself, and is not aware of himself. If he thinks of death, it is in relation to others. If he sees transience and decline, he does not attribute them to himself. His evil-commanding soul demands that when it comes to inconvenience and service of others, he forgets himself, but when it comes to receiving his recompense, and to benefits and enjoyment, he thinks of himself, and takes his own part fervently. His purification, cleansing, and training at this stage is the reverse of this state. That is to say, when oblivious of himself, it is not to be oblivious. That is, to forget himself when it comes to pleasure, and ambition and greed, and to think of himself when it comes to death and service of others.

THIRD STEP: As the verse, *Whatever good happens to you is from God, but whatever evil befalls you is from yourself* teaches, the nature of the evil-commanding soul demands that it always considers goodness to be from itself and becomes vain and conceited. Thus, in this Step, a person sees only faults, defects, impotence, and poverty in himself, and understands that all his good qualities and perfections are bounties bestowed on him by the All-

¹¹ Qur'an, 4:79.

¹² Qur'an, 28:88.

¹³ Qur'an, 25:43; 45:23.

Glorious Creator. He gives thanks instead of being conceited, and offers praise instead of boasting. According to the meaning of the verse, *Truly he succeeds who purifies it*,¹⁴ his purification at this stage is to know his perfection to lie in imperfection, his power in impotence, and his wealth in poverty.

FOURTH STEP: As the verse, *Everything will perish save His countenance* teaches, the evil-commanding soul considers itself to be free and independent and to exist of itself. Because of this, man claims to possess a sort of dominicality. He harbours a hostile rebelliousness towards his True Object of Worship. Thus, through understanding the following fact, he is saved from this. The fact is this:

According to the apparent meaning of things, which looks to each thing itself, everything is transitory, lacking, accidental, non-existent. But according to the meaning that signifies something other than itself and in respect of each thing being a mirror to the All-Glorious Maker's Names and charged with various duties, each is a witness, it is witnessed, and it is existent. The purification and cleansing of a person at this stage is as follows:

In his existence he is non-existent, and in his non-existence he has existence. That is to say, if he values himself and attributes existence to himself, he is in a darkness of non-existence as great as the universe. That is, if he relies on his individual existence and is unmindful of the True Giver of Existence, he has an individual light of existence like that of a fire-fly and is submerged in an endless darkness of non-existence and separation. But if he gives up egotism and sees that he is a mirror of the manifestations of the True Giver of Existence, he gains all beings and an infinite existence. For he who finds the Necessary Existent One, the manifestation of Whose Names all beings manifest, finds everything.

Conclusion

The Four Steps in this way of impotence, poverty, compassion, and reflection have been explained in the twenty-six Words so far written, which are concerned with knowledge of reality, the reality of the Shari'a, and the wisdom of the Qur'an. So here we shall allude briefly to only one or two points, as follows:

Indeed, this path is shorter, because it consists of four steps. When impotence removes the hand from the soul, it gives it directly to the All-Powerful One of Glory. Whereas, when the way of ecstatic love, the swiftest way,

¹⁴ Qur'an, 91:9.

takes the hand away from the soul, it attaches it to the metaphorical beloved. Only after the beloved is found to be impermanent does it go to the True Beloved.

Also, this path is much safer, because the ravings and high-flown claims of the soul are not present on it. For, apart from impotence, poverty, and defect, the soul possesses nothing so that it oversteps its mark.

Also, this path is much broader and more universal. For, in order to attain to a constant awareness of God's presence, a person is not compelled to imagine the universe to be condemned to non-existence and to declare: "There is no existent but He," like those who believe in 'the unity of existence,' nor to suppose the universe to be condemned to imprisonment in absolute oblivion and to say, "There is nothing witnessed but He," like those who believe in 'the unity of witnessing.' Rather, since the Qur'an has most explicitly pardoned the universe and released it from execution and imprisonment, one on this path disregards the above, and dismissing beings from working on their own account and employing them on account of the All-Glorious Creator, and in the duty of manifesting the Most Beautiful Names and being mirrors to them, he considers them from the point of view of signifying something other than themselves; and being saved from absolute heedlessness he enters the Divine presence permanently; he finds a way leading to Almighty God in everything.

In Short: Dismissing beings from working on account of other beings, this way is to not look at them as signifying themselves.

The Twenty-Seventh Word

TREATISE ON INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENTS OF THE LAW (*Ijtihad*)

[Five or six years ago in an Arabic treatise, I wrote concerning a matter to do with independent judgements on points of the Shari'a. Now, at the request of two of my brothers, this Word was written about that matter in order to put in his place someone who had overstepped the mark in his attacks on it.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
If they had only referred it to the Prophet, or to those charged with authority among them, the proper investigators would have tested it from them [direct].¹*

The door of independent judgements on the law is open, but at the present time there are six 'Obstacles' to entering it.

THE FIRST: In winter when the storms are fierce even small holes are blocked up, and it is in no way reasonable to open up new doors. Under the onslaught of a mighty flood, to make openings in the wall in order to repair it leads to being drowned. In just the same way, at this time of denial and the assault of the customs of Europe and the legion of innovations and the destruction of misguidance, to open up new doors in the citadel of Islam in the name of *ijtihad*, and make openings that will be the means of those bent on destruction scaling the walls and entering it, is a crime against Islam.

THE SECOND: Independent judgements may not be made about the essential teachings of religion, for they are specified and definite. Moreover, they are like basic food and sustenance. Although at this time all effort and endeavour should be expended on their being upheld and raised to life, they are being abandoned and degraded. So to give them up, despite their being among the theoretical matters of Islam and due to being the pure and sincere

¹ Qur'an, 4:83.

interpretations of the first generations of Islam are not inadequate for the needs of all times, and to make new interpretations of the law in arbitrary fashion, is an innovation and betrayal of Islam.

THE THIRD: Just as varying goods in the market are sought after according to the season; they are in demand one after the other, so in the exhibition of the world and market of human society and civilization, every century different goods are sought after and are in demand; they are displayed in the market, demand attracts them, gazes are turned on them, minds are drawn by them. Like at the present time the goods of politics and securing the life of this world and the demand of philosophy are sought after, for example. And at the time of the first generations of Islam and in the market of that age, deducing from the Word of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth His wishes and what He wants of us were the most sought-after goods, and obtaining the means to gain through the light of prophethood and the Qur'an eternal happiness in the world of the hereafter, which had been revealed to such a degree it could not be concealed.

At that time, since people's minds, hearts and spirits were directed with all their strength towards understanding the wishes of the Sustainer of the Heavens and the Earth, the discussions, conversations, events, and circumstances of social life all looked to that. Since they occurred in accordance with those wishes, whoever had high ability, his heart and nature unconsciously received instruction in knowledge of God from everything. He received knowledge from the circumstances, events, and discussions which took place at that time. As though everything became a teacher for such a person, and inculcated in his nature and disposition the preparatory knowledge for independent judgements. That natural instruction illuminated him to such a degree that he was almost capable of interpreting the law without acquiring the knowledge, to be illuminated without fire... Thus, when someone capable who received such natural instruction in this way began to work at interpreting the law, his capacity which had become like a match manifested the mystery of Light upon Light; he became qualified to interpret it (*mujtahid*) swiftly and in a brief time.

At this time, however, due to the domination of European civilization and the supremacy of natural philosophy and the preponderance of the conditions of worldly life, minds and hearts have become scattered, and endeavour and favour divided. Minds have become strangers to non-material matters. Thus, it is because of this that if someone now was to memorize the Qur'an at the age of four and have the intelligence of a *mujtahid* like Sufyan ibn Uyayna, who held discussions with religious scholars at an early age, he would need ten times longer than Sufyan to become qualified to interpret the law. If Sufyan acquired the learning in ten years, this man would need one

hundred years. Because the period of Sufyan's natural study began at the age of reason. His disposition and abilities were slowly prepared and illuminated; they took lessons from everything and became like a match. But his counterpart at the present time, since his thought is submerged in philosophy, his mind plunged in politics, and his heart is giddy at the life of this world, his disposition and abilities have grown distant from interpretation of the law. For sure, they have become distant from interpretation of the Shari'a to the degree they have been preoccupied with the modern sciences, and have remained backward in regard to it to the extent he has become learned in the physical sciences. Therefore, he may not say: "I am as intelligent as him. Why can't I on a level with him?" He does not have the right to say this, and he cannot be on a level with him.

THE FOURTH: Just as within a body is the inclination to expand, for its growth and development. And, since it is from within, the inclination to expand is a being perfected for the body. Whereas if it is an inclination for expansion from outside it, it is to rip the body's skin; to destroy it; it is not expansion. In the same way, when the inclination to expand and will to interpret the law were present in those within the sphere of Islam through the door of perfect taqwa and the way of conforming to the essential teachings of Islam, like the righteous early generations, that was a perfection and a being perfected. But if such an inclination and desire come from those who give up the essentials, prefer the life of this world to that of the hereafter, and are tainted with materialist philosophy, it is the means of destroying the body of Islam and casting off the chain of the Shari'a from the neck.

THE FIFTH: Three points of view make interpretation of the law earthly at this time, and prevent it being heavenly. Whereas the Shari'a is heavenly, revealed, and since interpretations of it make known its hidden ordinances, they also are heavenly.

The First: The wisdom of an ordinance is one thing, while the reason for it is something different. Wisdom and benefit are the cause of its choice, not the means of its being necessitated and created. And the reason is the means for its existence. For example, the obligatory prayers are shortened while travelling; two rak'ats are performed. The reason for this permission of the Shari'a is the journey, while its wisdom is the hardship. If there is the journey but no hardship, the prayers are still shortened. For there is the reason. But if there is no journey yet hardship, it may not be the reason for shortening the prayers. Thus, contrary to this fact, the view at this time is to set up the benefit and wisdom in place of the reason, and to make its judgement in accordance with that. Such an interpretation is certainly earthly, not heavenly.

The Second: The view at the present time looks primarily to worldly

happiness, whereas the view of the Shari'a looks primarily to happiness in the hereafter, and to happiness in this world in second place and indirectly as the means to the hereafter. That is to say, the view of this time is a stranger to the spirit of the Shari'a; in which case, it may not make interpretations in its name.

The Third There is a rule: "Necessity makes permissible what is forbidden." This rule is not universal. So long as it is not by way of what is forbidden, necessity makes licit what is forbidden. But if something has become a necessity due to abuse and for illicit reasons, this necessity may not be the basis of ordinances permitting it, nor form an excuse. For example, if, through ill choice someone makes himself drunk in an unlawful way, according to scholars of the Shari'a, his actions act against him and he may not be counted as excused. If he divorces his wife, the divorce is in force. And if he commits a crime, he receives the punishment. But if it is not through ill choice, the divorce is not in force, neither does he receive punishment. And, for example, even if an alcoholic is addicted to alcohol to the degree of necessity, he may not say: "It is a necessity, and lawful for me."

Thus, at this time there are many matters which have reached the degree of necessity and have taken on the form of a general calamity afflicting people, and which, since they have arisen from ill choice, illicit desires, and forbidden acts, may not be the basis of ordinances permitting them and making what is unlawful lawful. However, since those who make interpretations at the present time make those necessities the basis of ordinances of the Shari'a, their interpretations are earthly, the products of their own fancies, tainted by philosophy, and cannot be heavenly or revealed, or in accordance with the Shari'a. However, if exercise of authority concerning the Divine ordinances of the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth and interference in the worship of His servants is without the Creator's permission, that exercise of authority and interference are rejected. For example, a number of the heedless and neglectful approve the changing of some of the marks of Islam like the Friday Sermon, and substituting the language of each country for Arabic, for two reasons:

The First: "So that in that way the mass of Muslims will understand current politics." But current politics has become so intermixed with lies and trickery and evil that it has become like the very whisperings of Satan. However, the pulpit is the seat of delivering Divine revelation, so political rumours do not have the right to rise to that high position.

The Second: "The Friday Sermon is for understanding the admonitions of certain Suras of the Qur'an." Yes, if the majority of the Islamic nation conformed to the essential teachings and incontestable matters of Islam and the ordinances which are well-known and carried them out, then the reading

of the Sermon in the known language and the translation of the Qur'an,² if it was possible, might have been desirable, in order to understand the theoretical matters of the Shari'a and its subtle matters and abstruse teachings. But the well-known, incontrovertible ordinances of Islam like the five daily prayers, fasting in Ramadan, and *zakat*, and the unlawfulness of murder, fornication, and wine are neglected. The ordinary people are not in need of learning their necessity or unlawfulness, but through encouragement and warning, to be reminded of those sacred decrees, and, through their sense of belief and feelings for Islam being stirred, to be prompted, encouraged, and reminded to conform to them. However lowly and ignorant they may be, they understand the following brief meaning from the Qur'an and Arabic Sermon: "The preacher and the reciter of the Qur'an are recalling the pillars of belief and Islam, which are known by me and everyone, and teaching us, and reciting them." A longing for them is born in their hearts. What words are there in the universe which can be compared with the miraculous, instructive reminders, warnings, and encouragement of the All-Wise Qur'an, which comes from the Sublime Throne?

THE SIXTH: Since the great interpreters of the law among the righteous early generations of Islam lived close to the time of the Companions of the Prophet, the age of light and age of truth, they were able to receive a pure light and make pure interpretations. But the interpreters of the law at this time look at the book of reality from behind so many veils and from such a long distance that they can see even its clearest letters only with difficulty.

If you say: The Companions also were human beings and not free of error and differences, while the means of interpretation of the law and the ordinances of the Shari'a is the justice and truthfulness of the Companions, on which the Islamic community have agreed, saying: "All the Companions were just and all spoke the truth."

The Answer: Yes, the absolute majority of the Companions of the Prophet were lovers of the truth, truthfulness, and justice. For in that age, the ugliness of lies and falsehood was shown in all its ugliness and the beauty of right and truthfulness was shown in all its beauty in such a way that the distance between them stretched from the ground to the Divine Throne. There was a clear separation between them, from the depths of Musaylima the Liar at the lowest of the low to the degree of truthfulness of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) at the highest of the high. Indeed, just as it was lying that brought Musaylima to the lowest of the low, so it

² The Twenty-Fifth Word, about miraculousness, has shown that a true translation of the Qur'an is not possible.

was truthfulness and right which raised Muhammad the Trustworthy to the highest of the high.

Thus, the Companions, who held elevated sentiments and worshipped good morals and were illuminated with the light of the conversation of the Sun of Prophethood, did not stretch out their hands to the buffoonery and filth of the lying in Musaylima's shop, which was so ugly and the cause of descent, and they shrank from unbelief. So too they shrank from lying, the companion of unbelief, and sought as far as they were able – especially in relating the ordinances of the Shari'a and propagating them– truth, truthfulness, and right, which are so fine and the cause of pride and glory, ascent and progress, and were the thing most in demand from the elevated treasury of the Glory of Messengership, and which illuminate man's social life with their beautiful splendour; the Companions acted in conformity with them and were desirous of them; this is certain, definite, and necessary. Whereas at this time, the distance between truth and lying has become so narrow that they are now quite simply shoulder to shoulder. It is extremely easy to pass from truthfulness to lying. Lying is even preferred to truthfulness due to the propaganda of politics and diplomacy. And so, if the most ugly and the finest things are sold in the same shop for the same price, certainly the jewel of truthfulness and right, which is most elevated and penetrates to the essence of reality, will not be obtained blindly, relying on the word and skill of the shopkeeper.

Conclusion

Sacred laws change according to the ages. Indeed, in one age different prophets may come, and they have come. Since subsequent to the Seal of the Prophets, his Greater Shari'a is sufficient for all peoples in every age, no need has remained for different laws. However, in secondary matters, the need for different schools has persisted to a degree. Just as clothes change with the change of the seasons and medicines change according to dispositions, so sacred laws change according to the ages, and their ordinances change according to the capacities of peoples. Because the secondary matters of the ordinances of the Shari'a look to human circumstances; they come according to them, and are like medicine.

At the time of the early prophets, since social classes were far apart and men's characters were both somewhat coarse and violent, and their minds, primitive and close to nomadism, the laws at that time came all in different forms, appropriate to their conditions. There were even different prophets

and laws in the same continent in the same century. Then, since with the coming of the Prophet of the end of time, man as though advanced from the primary to the secondary stage, and through numerous revolutions and upheavals reached a position at which all the human peoples could receive a single lesson and listen to a single teacher and act in accordance with a single law, no need remained for different laws, neither was there necessity for different teachers. But because they were not all at completely the same level and did not proceed in the same sort of social life, the schools of law became numerous. If, like students of a school of higher education, the vast majority of mankind were clothed in the same sort of social life and attained the same level, then all the schools could be united. But just as the state of the world does not permit that, so the schools of law cannot be the same.

If you say: The truth is one; how can the different ordinances of the four and twelve schools be true?

The Answer: The same water governs in five different ways in five ill people of different disposition, thus: for one, the water is a cure for his illness, and according to medicine, necessary. For another, it is like poison for his sickness and harmful, and medically prohibited. For another, it causes a small amount of harm, and is reprehensible medically. For another the water is beneficial and without harm; according to medicine that is sunna for him. And for yet another it is neither harmful nor beneficial; he can drink it with good health, and for him it is medically permissible. Thus, here the truth has become numerous; all five are true. Are you able to say: "The water is only a cure, only necessary, and it governs in no other way?"

Similarly, impelled by Divine wisdom, the Divine ordinances change according to the schools of law and those who follow them, and they change as truth, and all are true and right. For example, since, in accordance with Divine wisdom and determining, the majority of those who follow Imam Shafi'i are closer to village life and nomadism than the Hanafis, and are lacking in social life, which makes the community like a single body, each person recites the Fatiha behind the prayer-leader so as to himself express his pains at the Court of the Dispenser of Needs and utter his private wishes. And this is absolutely right and pure wisdom. However, since most Islamic governments favoured the school of Imam-i A'zam, the great majority of those who follow that school are closer to civilization and town life and more fitted for social life. Thus, the community becomes like a single individual and one man speaks in the name of all; all affirm him with their hearts and bind their hearts to his and his word becomes the word of all; according to the Hanafi school, the Fatiha is not recited behind the prayer-leader. And its not being recited is absolutely right and pure wisdom.

And, for example, since through forming a barrier against the assaults of

nature, the Shari'a modifies it and trains the evil-commanding soul, according to the Shafi'i school, most of whose followers are villagers, semi-nomadic, and occupied in manual labour: "Ablutions are spoiled by touching a woman; the slightest uncleanness is harmful." While according to the Hanafi School, since the great majority of its followers have entered social life and become 'semi-civilized:' "Touching women does not spoil the ablutions; there is licence for a small amount of uncleanness."

Now we shall consider a manual worker and a gentleman. Due to his craft and the manner of his livelihood, a worker is afflicted with mixing with and being in contact with women who are canonically strangers to him. Since he sits at the same hearth as them and is involved with unclean things, nature and his evil-commanding soul find the field empty and may attack him. Therefore, in order to form a barrier against such attacks, the Shari'a states concerning them: "Your ablutions will be spoiled; do not touch the women. Your prayers will be invalid; do not be tainted." A heavenly voice rings in his spiritual ears. Whereas, in accordance with social custom and in the name of common morality, the gentleman –on condition he is honourable– is not afflicted with being in contact with women who are canonically strangers to him, and in the name of cleanliness of civilization, he is not tainted to any degree with unclean things. Therefore, in the Hanafi school, the Shari'a has not shown him harshness and censure; it has shown its permissive side, and lightened it. "If your hand has been touched, your ablutions are not spoiled. If you are ashamed and do not perform the *istinja* in public, there is no harm in it. A small amount of uncleanness is permitted." It saves him from scruples. Thus, two drops from the ocean as examples for you. Make analogies with them, and if you can, balance them on the scales of the Shari'a in this way, with the balance of Sha'rani's *Mizan*.³

*Glory be unto You, we have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*⁴

O God! Grant blessings and peace to the one in whom were embodied the lights of Your love through the beauty of Your attributes; the comprehensive mirror to the manifestations of Your Most Beautiful Names; in whom was focussed the rays of Your love for the art which is in Your creatures; the most perfect and wonderful of Your artefacts, who was a sample of the perfections of Your art and an index of the beauties of Your inscriptions; and who reflected the subtleties of Your love and Your desire that Your art be appreciated; the most elevated herald of Your fine art, who proclaimed in resounding voice admiration

³ See, Sharani, *al-Mizan al-Kubra*.

⁴ Qur'an, 2:32.

for the beauty of Your inscriptions, the most wonderful praiser of the perfections of Your art; who reflected together in his being the varieties of Your love and Your appreciation for the good morals of your creatures and the subtleties of Your artefacts' qualities, comprehending all fine conduct and good morality through Your favour and the subtleties of commendable attributes through Your grace; who was the most excellent criterion and measure of everything You mention in Your Criterion of Truth and Falsehood, the Qur'an, those whom You love from among the righteous, the patient, the believers, those who fear You, who turn to You, and who repent, and all the classes of those whom You infuse with life and honour through Your love in Your Criterion of Truth and Falsehood, until they become as the leader of those whom You love; the master of those beloved by You and chief of Your beloveds; and grant blessings and peace to all his Family and Companions and brothers. Amen. Through Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!

Addendum to the Twenty-Seventh Word

On the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH)

Like Mawlana Jami, I say,

*O Messenger of God! If only like the dog of the Companions of the Cave,
I could be in Paradise among your Companions.*

Is it right that their dog is in Paradise while I am in Hell?

He was the dog of those Companions; I am the dog of yours!

In His Name, be He glorified!

And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.

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

Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and those who are with him are strong against the unbelievers, [but] compassionate amongst each other.⁵

You Ask: There are some narrations which say: “At a time when innovations are rife, some of the righteous from among the believers and those who fear God will be on a level with the Companions, or of even greater virtue.” Are these narrations sound? And if so, what is their true meaning?

The Answer: The consensus of the Sunnis, the *Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'at*, that after the prophets the most virtuous of mankind are the Companions, is a certain proof that those that are sound out of those narrations refer to minor virtues. For in minor virtues and particular perfections a quality may be deemed preferable to that which is superior and in fact preferable. But from the point of view of general virtue the Companions cannot be reached, who are the subject of Divine praise at the end of Sura al-Fath, and are praised and applauded in the Torah, Gospels, and Qur'an. For now, we shall explain three points of wisdom concerning this truth, which comprise three reasons, out of very many reasons and instances of wisdom.

⁵ Qur'an, 48:29.

First Instance of Wisdom: The conversation of the Prophet was such an elixir that someone who experienced it for one minute received lights of reality equivalent to years of spiritual journeying. For in conversation there is reflection and a being coloured. It is well-known that through reflection and following and imitating, and through the sublime light of prophethood, a truly exalted level may be reached; –like through allegiance to his sovereign and following him, a sultan’s servant may rise to a position so high a king cannot rise to it. It is due to this mystery that the greatest saints cannot reach the level of the Companions. Even saints like Jalaluddin Suyuti, who conversed many times with God’s Noble Messenger (PBUH) while awake, even if they do this and are honoured in this world with his company, they still cannot reach the Companions. For through the light of Muhammad’s (PBUH) prophethood, the Companions’ conversation was with him as Prophet. While the saints saw him (PBUH) after his death and conversed with him (PBUH) through the light of his sainthood. That is to say, the personification and appearance of God’s Noble Messenger (PBUH) is in respect of his sainthood, not in regard to his prophethood. Since that is so, however much higher the level of prophethood is to that of sainthood, one should differentiate between the two conversations to that degree.

Just how luminous an elixir was the Prophet’s company may be understood through the following: a primitive man so hard-hearted and savage he buried his daughter alive would come and be honoured with the conversation of the Prophet for an hour, and would acquire such kindness and compassion that he would not step on an ant. And an ignorant savage would converse with the Prophet for a day, then go to lands like China and India and instruct civilized peoples in the realities and guide them in perfections.

Second Reason: As is explained and proved in the discussion of interpretation of the law in the Twenty-Seventh Word, the vast majority of the Companions were at the highest level of human perfections. For at that time in the mighty revolution of Islam, good and truth appeared in all their beauty, and evil and falsehood, in all their ugliness, and they were felt physically. Such a difference was apparent between good and evil and such a distance opened up between truth and falsehood that they drew as distant from one another as belief is from unbelief, and even Hell is from Paradise. The Companions, who by nature possessed elevated emotions, were captivated by the highest morality, and inclined towards dignity and virtue, would not voluntarily stretch out their hands to evil and falsehood, and so fall to the level of Musaylima the Liar and his ridiculous utterances. For he was the herald of falsehood, evil, and lies, and their embodiment. Their characters demanded that they looked to the rank of the perfections, those of God’s Beloved (PBUH) at the highest of the high, who was the herald and embodiment of truthfulness, good, and right, and that they hastened in that way with all their strength and endeavour.

For example, it sometimes happens that in the market of human civilization and shop of social life, everyone flees in disgust from the fearsome results and ugly consequences of certain things, like from a deadly poison, let alone buying them, while the beautiful results and valuable consequences of certain other things and of immaterial goods attract the general view and demand to themselves like a universal panacea and a sparkling brilliant; everyone tries their utmost to buy them. In just the same way, in the Era of Bliss in the market of human social life, since goods like lying, evil, and unbelief gave rise to results like everlasting misery and base buffoons like Musaylima the Liar, it is certain and clear that the Companions, who were captivated by elevated characteristics and love of exalted things, would flee from them with loathing as from fatal poison. And of a necessity, the Companions, with their pure natures and praiseworthy characteristics, would, with all their strength, emotions, and faculties, be desirous of and customers for truth, truthfulness and belief, which yielded results like eternal happiness and luminous fruits like God's Noble Messenger (PBUH), as though for the most effective panacea and precious diamond. However, after that time, the distance between truthfulness and lying has gradually and by degrees diminished, until they have become shoulder to shoulder. Having begun to be sold together in the same shop, social morality has become corrupted. The propaganda of politics has caused greater demand for lying. At a time when the awesome ugliness of lying has begun to be concealed and the shining beauty of truthfulness has begun not to be apparent, who can attain to the strength, constancy, and taqwa of the Companions in the matters of justice, truthfulness, exaltedness, and right, or surpass their level? I shall explain something which occurred to me which will illuminate this to a degree. It was like this:

One time, it occurred to me, why could wondrous individuals like Muhyiddin al-'Arabi not attain to the levels of the Companions? Then, while saying, "*Glory be to my Sustainer, the Most High*" during the prayers, the meaning of the phrase was unfolded to me. Not in its complete meaning, but its reality in part became apparent to me. I said in my heart: "If only I could perform one of the five daily prayers in the same way as this phrase, it would be better than a year's worship." After the prayers I understood that that thought and state was guidance indicating that the Companions' degree in worship could not be reached. In that mighty social revolution brought about by the lights of the Qur'an, while opposites were separated from one another, and evils together with all their darkness, details and all who followed them, and good and perfections together with all their lights and results came face to face – at such an exciting time, all glorifications of God and recitations of His Names expressed all the levels of their meanings freshly and newly and in a young and unfaded fashion. So too, under the crashing of that mighty revolution all the senses and subtle inner faculties of people were awakened,

even senses like those of fancy and imagination, in an awakened and aware state, received the numerous meanings of those recitations and glorifications in accordance with their own perceptions, and absorbed them.

Thus, due to this wisdom, when the Companions, whose senses were awakened and subtle faculties, alert, uttered those blessed words comprising the lights of belief and glorification, they did so in all their meaning and they partook of them with all their senses. However, after that revolution and upheaval, the subtle faculties have gradually sunk into sleep and the senses fallen from that point of realities into heedlessness; like fruits, under the veil of familiarity, those blessed words have gradually lost their delicacy and freshness. Simply, as though drying up through the air of superficiality, only a little freshness remains, and this may be restored to its former state only through drastic surgery of a reflective and reasoning kind. Thus, it is because of this that another can reach the virtue and level the Companions attained to in forty minutes, only in forty years.

Third Reason: As is proved in the Twelfth, Twenty-Fourth, and Twenty-Fifth Words, the comparison of prophethood and sainthood is that of the sun itself and the sun's image as it appears in mirrors. Thus, however much higher the sphere of prophethood is than that of sainthood, the servants of the sphere of prophethood and the Companions, the stars of that Sun, have to be superior to the righteous in the sphere of sainthood to the same degree. The legacy of prophethood and veracity, which is the supreme sainthood, is the sainthood of the Companions; even if a saint attains to this, he still cannot reach the level of the Companions, the first rank. We shall explain three out of the numerous aspects of this Third Reason.

First Aspect: The Companions cannot be reached in interpretation of the law, that is, in deducing its ordinances, that is, in understanding what pleases Almighty God from His Word. Because that mighty Divine revolution revolved on understanding the dominical wishes and Divine ordinances. All minds were turned towards deducing the Divine ordinances. All hearts were eager to know "What does our Sustainer want from us?" All that happened at that time did so in a way that made this known and understood. The discussions of the time concerned them. Thus, since everything and all situations and discussions and conversations and stories occurred in such a way as to give some sort of instruction in these meanings, and since this perfected the Companions' capacities and illuminated their minds, and since their ability to interpret the law and deduce its ordinances was ready to be lit up like a match, someone at this time with the intelligence and capacity of the Companions could not reach in ten years or perhaps in a hundred, the level of deduction and interpretation they reached in a day or a month. Because now, worldly happiness is the focus of attention in place of eternal happiness. Mankind's attention and view is directed towards different goals.

Since the struggle for livelihood together with lack of reliance on God has bewildered man's spirit, and Naturalist and Materialist philosophies have blinded his intellect, just as the social environment does not strengthen a person's mind and capacity in the matter of interpreting the Divine law, so it confuses and scatters them. We proved in the discussion on interpretation of the law in the Twenty-Seventh Word in the comparison between Sufyan ibn Uyayna and someone of his intelligence today that the other person could not acquire in a hundred years what Sufyan acquired in ten.

Second Aspect: The level of the Companions in closeness to God cannot be attained with the feet of sainthood. For Almighty God is infinitely close to us; closer to us than everything, but we are infinitely distant from Him. Divine proximity may be gained in two ways:

The First is through the unfolding of Divine immediacy, to which the Divine proximity in prophethood looks, and which the Companions manifested through the legacy of prophethood and conversation of the Prophet.

The Second Way is to traverse the degrees of our distance from God and be honoured with Divine proximity to an extent. Most of the spiritual voyaging of sainthood is according to this, and illumination through the self and through the outside world proceeds in this way.

Thus, the first way is purely given, it is not acquired; it is attraction, the drawing of the Most Merciful One, and it is being loved by Him. The path is short, but very severe, very elevated, very pure, and without shadow. The other is acquired, long, and in shadow. Even if its strange wonders are many, it cannot reach the first in regard to quality and Divine proximity. For example, there are two ways of reaching yesterday. The first is not to be subject to the course of time. Through a sacred power, it is to rise above time, and see yesterday as present like today. The second is to traverse the distance of a year, to travel and turn, and come to yesterday. But still yesterday cannot be held; it leaves the person and departs. In just the same way, there are two ways of passing from the apparent to reality. The first is to be carried away directly on the attraction of reality, and, without entering the intermediate realm of the sufi way, to find reality within the apparent itself. The second is to pass through many levels through spiritual journeying. For sure, the saints are successful in annihilating the soul and kill the evil-commanding soul, but they still cannot reach the Companions. Because, since the Companions' souls had been purified and cleansed, through the many faculties within the soul, they manifested to a greater degree the varieties of worship, and thanks, and praise. After the soul has been annihilated, the worship of the saints acquires a simpleness and plainness.

Third Aspect: The Companions cannot be reached in regard to virtuous actions and good deeds pertaining to the hereafter. Because, just as in certain

conditions in a frightening and important post, a soldier may gain in one hour's watch the virtue of a year's worship, and by being hit by a bullet may rise in one minute to a station similar to a degree of sainthood which can only be gained in at least forty years; so too, the Companions' service in the establishment of Islam and propagating the decrees of the Qur'an and their declaring war on the whole world for Islam was so elevated that others cannot reach one minute of it in a year. It may even be said that in that sacred service all their minutes were like that one minute of the martyred soldier. All their hours were like the one hour's watch of a faithful soldier in some terrifying post in which the acts are few, but the recompense great and value high.

Indeed, since the Companions formed the first rank in the establishment of Islam and spreading of the lights of the Qur'an, in accordance with the rule 'the cause is like the doer,' a share of all the good works of all the Islamic community passes to them. The Islamic community saying "O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad and to his Family and Companions" shows that the Companions receive a share of the good works of their whole community.

Furthermore, just as an insignificant characteristic in the root of a tree takes on a large form in the tree's branches, and is larger than the largest branch; and just as a small protuberance at the beginning gradually forms a mass; and just as an excess the size of a needle point at a central point may become more than a metre at the circumference of the circle, just like these four examples, since the Companions were from the roots and foundations of the luminous tree of Islam, and were at the beginning of luminous lines of the structure of Islam, and were from among the leaders of the Islamic community and were the first of their number, and since they were close to the centre of the Sun of Prophethood and Lamp of Reality, a few of their actions were many and their small acts of service, great. To reach their level necessitates being a true Companion.

O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad, who said: "My Companions are like the stars, whichever of them you follow, you will be rightly guided,"⁶ and, "The best of centuries is my century,"⁷ and to his Family and Companions, and grant them peace.

Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.⁸

⁶ al-'Ajluni, *Kashf al-Khafa*, I, 132, No: 381.

⁷ *Bukhari*, Shahada, 9; Fada'il Ashab al-Nabi, 1; Ayman, 10, 27; Fitan, 45.

⁸ Qur'an, 2:32.

QUESTION: It is said, the Companions saw God’s Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him), then they believed. However we have believed without seeing him, in which case our belief is stronger. Also, there are narrations mentioning the strength of our belief, are there not?

THE ANSWER: At that time, when all ideas were opposed and hostile to the truths of Islam, the Companions believed so strongly –sometimes on only seeing the person of God’s Messenger (PBUH) and without miracles– that all the generally held ideas in the world did not shake them. Let alone doubts, they did not even cause some of them the slightest anxiety or scruple. You are comparing your belief with that of the Companions, but how can there be any comparison? For despite your seeing with the mind’s eye, not the Messenger’s (PBUH) humanity and bodily form, which was the seed of the Tuba-tree of his prophethood, but through all the lights of Islam and truths of the Qur’an, his luminous, magnificent collective personality, encompassed by a thousand miracles, you waver and fall into doubt at the word of a European philosopher. Yet due to their belief, the Companions did not waver in the face of the attacks of the entire world of unbelief and of the Christians, Jews, and philosophers? And how can you compare the intense fear of God of the Companions and their complete righteousness, which demonstrated the strength of their belief and proceeded from it, and your dull belief, which due to your extreme weakness does not impel you to perform even the obligatory practices completely, O you who make such a claim!? However, the Hadith the meaning of which is: “Those at the end of time who do not see me and believe, are more acceptable,”⁹ refers to particular virtues. It concerns certain special individuals. Our discussion, however, is in regard to general virtue and the majority.

SECOND QUESTION: They say that the saints and possessors of perfection abandoned the world. It even says in a Hadith: “Love of this world is the source of all error.”¹⁰ Whereas the Companions were very involved in the world. It was not abandoning the world, some of them were ahead of the civilized of that time, even. How is it that you say that even the least of such Companions was of greater worth than the greatest saint?

THE ANSWER: It has been proved decisively in the Second and Third Stopping-Places of the Thirty-Second Word that to love the face of the world which looks to the hereafter and that which looks to the Divine Names is not the cause of loss, but the means to perfection and attainment, and however far one goes in those two faces, the further one goes in worship and knowledge of God. The world of the Companions was in those two faces. They saw this world as the arable field of the hereafter, and sowed

⁹ *Musnad*, v, 248, 257, 264; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, iii, 41; iv, 89.

¹⁰ al-Munawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, iii, 368, No: 3662.

and reaped it. They saw beings as the mirrors of the Divine Names, and gazed on them yearningly. As for the transience of the world, that is its transitory face, which looks to man's base desires.

THIRD QUESTION: The sufi paths are the ways of reality. Some of the heroes and leaders of the Naqshbandi Order, which is claimed to be the most famous, the most elevated, and the highway among the sufi ways, defined its basis as follows. They said: On the Naqshbandi way four 'abandonings' are necessary: abandoning the world, abandoning the hereafter, abandoning existence, and abandoning abandoning. That is to say, on the Naqshi way one has to give up four things: both give up this world; and, on account of the soul, not make even the hereafter one's true aim; forget one's existence; and in order not to become vain and proud, not think about these acts of renunciation. That means true knowledge of God and human perfections are attained through giving up what is other than God?

THE ANSWER: If man consisted of only a heart, it would be necessary to give up everything other than God, and to leave behind even the Divine Names and attributes and bind one's heart to the Divine Essence alone. But man possesses many senses and subtle faculties charged with duties, like the mind, spirit, soul, and others. The perfect man is he who, driving all those subtle senses towards reality on the different ways of worship particular to them, marches heroically like the Companions in a broad arena and rich fashion towards the goal, with the heart as commander and the subtle faculties as soldiers. For the heart to abandon its soldiers in order to save only itself and to proceed on its own is the cause not of pride, but of distress.

FOURTH QUESTION: Where does the claim of the Companions' superiority spring from? And who put it forward? Why should this matter be made the subject of discussion at this time? Also, why is there this claim of equality with the great interpreters of the law?

THE ANSWER: There are two groups who say these things. Some are the sincere religious scholars and men of religion who, seeing certain Hadiths, open up such discussions in order to encourage and hearten the pious and the upright at this time. We do not have anything to say to them. They are anyway few and are quickly made aware. The other group, however, consists of most fearsome, conceited people who want to spread their denial of the schools of law by claiming equality with the great interpreters of the law, and to further their irreligion by claiming equality with the Companions. Because firstly, those people of misguidance have become depraved, and have become addicted to depravity, and cannot carry out the obligations of the Shari'a, since they form an obstacle to their depravity. In order to find a pretext for themselves, they say: "These questions may be interpreted. The schools of law are opposed to each other in these matters."

And the interpreters of the law were human beings like us, and may have made mistakes. In which case, like them we shall interpret the Divine law and perform our worship as we wish. Why should we be compelled to follow them?" Thus, due to these Satanic wiles, these wretches put themselves outside the fold of the schools of law. It is demonstrated clearly in the Twenty-Seventh Word just how baseless and rotten these claims are, so we refer you to that.

Secondly; that group of the people of misguidance saw that the matter does not end with the interpreters of the law, for what lay on their shoulders were only the theoretical matters of religion. Whereas this group wants to give up and change the essential teachings of religion. If they say: "We are better than them," the matter does not finish there. For interpreters of the law may interfere in theoretical matters and in secondary matters which are not categorical, but these people of misguidance who follow no school of law want to mix their ideas in the essentials of religion as well, and to change matters which are not capable of being changed, and to oppose the incontrovertible pillars of Islam. And so they are bound to attack the Companions, who are the bearers and supports of the essentials of religion. Alas! It has been proved decisively in the Twenty-Seventh Word that not animals in human form like them, but true human beings and the greatest of the saints even, who are the most perfect of true human beings, cannot win the case claiming equality with the least of the Companions.

*O God! Grant blessings and peace to Your Messenger, who said: "Do not insult my Companions! By the One in Whose hand is my self, if one of you were to spend gold equivalent to Mt. Uhud, he could not attain to the equivalent of two handfuls that one of them spent, or even half that."*¹¹

¹¹ Bukhari, Fada'il Ashab al-Nabi, 5; Muslim, Fada'il al-Sahaba, 221, 222.

The Twenty-Eighth Word

[This Word is about Paradise and consists of two Stations. The First indicates some of the subtle wonders of Paradise. However, it does not prove the existence of Paradise, since this has been proved in brilliant fashion by the twelve decisive Truths of the Tenth Word and by the firm and clear consecutive arguments in Arabic which form the basis and summary of the Tenth Word and the Second Station of this Word. This Station discusses in question and answer form a number of the aspects of Paradise which have been the cause of criticism. If Divine assistance is forthcoming, a great Word will later be written about that mighty truth. God willing.]

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

And give glad tidings to those who believe and act righteously that theirs shall be gardens beneath which flow rivers. Everytime they are fed with fruits therefrom, they will say: "Why, this is what we were fed with before." For they will be given things in similitude. And they shall have therein spouses pure, and shall abide there for ever.¹

The brief answers to a number of questions about eternal Paradise.

The descriptions of the Qur'an's verses about Paradise, which are more beautiful than Paradise, more lovely than the houris, and sweeter than the water of Salsabil, leave nothing to be said about it so that anyone should say it. However, in order to bring closer to the understanding those shining, pre-eternal, post-eternal, elevated and exquisite verses, we shall mention a number of steps, and, as samples of that Qur'anic Paradise, a number of fine points which are like samples of its flowers. We shall point to these through five allusive questions and answers. Indeed, Paradise is the means both to all spiritual and non-physical pleasures, and to all physical pleasures.

QUESTION: What connection with eternity and Paradise has faulty, deficient, changing, unstable, and suffering corporeality? Since the spirit has

¹ Qur'an, 2:25.

elevated pleasures, that is sufficient. Why is bodily resurrection necessary for bodily pleasures?

THE ANSWER: Because, just as in relation to water, air, and light, earth is dense and dark, but since it is the source and means of all the varieties of Divine artefacts, in meaning it rises above the other elements; and just as in regard to the mystery of its comprehensiveness and on condition it is purified, the human soul, which is also dense, rises above all the other human subtle faculties; so too corporeality is the richest and most comprehensive and all-embracing mirror to the manifestation of the Divine Names. All the tools and instruments for measuring the contents of the treasures of mercy and reckoning their balances lie in corporeality. For example, if scales to the number of sorts of food and their pleasures did not originate in the sense of taste in the tongue, it could not taste and weigh them all up, and recognize and experience them. Also, the instruments for experiencing and knowing the manifestations of most of the Divine Names, and tasting and recognizing them, again lie in corporeality. And the faculties for experiencing all the infinitely various pleasures are also in corporeality.

As is proved in the Eleventh Word, it is understood clearly from the disposition of the universe and man's comprehensiveness that the universe's Maker wants to make known all the treasures of His mercy, and all the manifestations of His Names, and to make experienced all the varieties of His bounties. The abode of bliss, therefore, which is a vast pool formed from the flood of the universe and a great exhibition of the textiles woven on the loom of the universe and an everlasting store of the crops produced in the arable field of this world, will resemble the universe to a degree. And it will preserve all its fundamental matters, both corporeal and spiritual. Its All-Wise Maker, the Most Compassionate One, will also give as recompense for the duties of the physical tools and instruments, pleasures worthy of them; and to His servants, as a wage and reward for the particular worship of each. Otherwise a situation would occur that was contrary to His wisdom, justice, and mercy, which is in no way fitting for the beauty of His mercy and perfection of His justice, and in no way compatible with them.

QUESTION: If a body is living, its parts are constantly being formed and dissolved; it is doomed to extinction and cannot be eternal. Eating and drinking are for the perpetuation of the individual, and sexual relations are for the perpetuation of the species. These are fundamental to this world, but there is no need for them in the world of eternity and hereafter. So why are they among the greatest pleasures of Paradise?

THE ANSWER: Firstly, the bodies of living creatures are doomed to annihilation and death in this world because of an imbalance between what is taken in and what is expended. From childhood until maturity much is

taken in, and after that what is expended increases; the balance is spoilt, and the body dies. In the world of eternity, however, the particles of the body remain constant and are not subject to composition and dissolution, or else the balance remains constant.² Like a closed circle or perpetual motion, the body of the living creature becomes eternal together with the functioning of the machine of bodily life for pleasure. Although in this world eating and drinking and sexual relations arise from need and perform a function, various delights and pleasures have been placed within them as an immediate wage for the duty performed, and these are superior to other pleasures. Since in this abode of sorrows eating and sexual relations are the means to so many wonderful and various pleasures, certainly in Paradise, which is the abode of pleasure and bliss, those pleasures will take on a sublime form. The recompense of the duties pertaining to the hereafter performed here will also be added to them as pleasure, and they will be augmented by worldly needs which have taken the form of agreeable, otherworldly appetites, so will become an all-embracing, living source of pleasure worthy of Paradise and suitable to eternity. Indeed, according to the meaning of the verse,

*And what is the life of this world but amusement and play? But indeed the Abode of the hereafter, that is life indeed,*³

substances, matters, which are inanimate and without consciousness and life in the abode of this world, there will be living and conscious. Like human beings and animals here, the trees and stones there will understand commands and carry them out. If you tell a tree to bring you such-and-such a fruit, it will bring it. And if you tell such-and-such a stone to come, it will come. Since stones and trees will take on this elevated form, it surely necessitates that, together with preserving their bodily realities, eating, drinking, and sexual relations also will take on a form higher than their worldly form, higher to the degree that Paradise is higher than this world.

QUESTION: According to the meaning of:

*Everyone will be together with those he loves,*⁴

in Paradise, friend will be together with friend. Therefore, love for God's sake kindled in a simple nomad during one minute's conversation with the Prophet (PBUH), means he has to be with the Prophet (Peace and blessings be

² In this world, the bodies of humans and animals are like guesthouses, barracks, and schools for particles. The lifeless particles enter them and acquire worthiness to be particles for the everlasting realm, which is living, then they leave them. In the hereafter, however, according to the verse, "*The Abode of the Hereafter, that is life indeed,*" the light of life is general. There is no necessity for that travelling, drill, and instruction in order to be illuminated. Particles will remain constant as permanent fixtures.

³ Qur'an, 29:64.

⁴ Bukhari, Adab, 96; Muslim, Birr, 165; Tirmidhi, Zuhd, 50; Da'wat, 98.

upon him) in Paradise. But since God's Noble Messenger (PBUH) receives limitless effulgence, how can it be united with that of a simple nomad?

THE ANSWER: We shall allude to this elevated truth with a comparison. For example, a magnificent personage set up a vast banquet and finely-adorned spectacle in a splendid garden. He prepared it in such a way that it included all the delicious foods that the sense of taste can experience, and all the fine things that please the sense of sight, and all the wonders that amuse the faculty of imagination, and so on; he included in it everything that would gratify and give pleasure to the external and inner senses. Now, there were two friends and they went together to the banquet and sat down at a table in a pavilion. But the sense of taste of one of them was very limited, so he received only minor pleasure. His eyes could see only a little, he had no sense of smell, and he could not understand the wondrous arts nor comprehend the marvels. He could only benefit from and take pleasure in a thousandth or even a millionth of that beautiful place, to the extent of his capacity. The other man however had developed his outer and inner senses, his mind, heart, emotions, and subtle faculties so perfectly and to such a degree that although he was next to his friend, he could perceive and experience all the subtleties and beauties and marvels and fine things in the exhibition, and receive their different pleasures.

Since this confused, sorrowful, and narrow world is thus, and although the greatest and the least are together, the difference between them is as great as from the ground to the Pleiades, surely in Paradise, the realm of bliss and eternity, while friend is together with friend, each will receive his share from the table of the Most Merciful and Compassionate One in accordance with his capacity and to the extent of his abilities. Even if the Paradises in which they are found are different, it will not be an obstacle to their being together. For although the eight levels of Paradise are one above the other, the roof of all of them is the Sublime Throne.⁵ If there are walled circles round a conical mountain, one within the other and one above the other from its foot to the summit, the circles are one over the other and look to one another, but do not prevent each other seeing the sun. There are also various narrations of Hadiths indicating that the Paradises are in a manner close to this.

QUESTION: It is said in Hadiths: "Although the houris are clothed in seventy garments, the marrow of their leg-bones may be seen."⁶ What does this mean? What sort of meaning can it have? What sort of beauty is this?

THE ANSWER: Its meaning is truly beautiful and its beauty is most lovely. It is like this: in this world, which is ugly, inanimate, lifeless, and for

⁵ *Bukhari*, Tawhid, 22; Jihad, 4; *Tirmidhi*, Janna, 4; *Musnad*, i, 207; ii, 197, 335, 339, 370.

⁶ *Muslim*, Janna, 14, 17; *Tirmidhi*, Qiyama, 60; Janna, 5; *Musnad*, ii, 345; iii, 16.

the most part just a husk, beauty and loveliness only appear beautiful to the eye, and so long as familiarity is not an obstacle, that is sufficient. Whereas in Paradise, which is beautiful, living, brilliant, and entirely the essence without the husk and the kernel without the shell, like the eye, all man's senses and subtle faculties will want to receive their different pleasures and various delights from the houris, the gentle sex, and from the women of this world, who will be like houris and even more beautiful. That is to say, the Hadith indicates that from the beauty of their top garments to the marrow of their bones, each layer will be the means of pleasure to a sense and a subtle faculty. Yes, by saying, "The houris wear seventy garments and the marrow of their leg-bones can be seen," the Hadith points out that however many senses, feeling, powers, and faculties man has which are enamoured of beauty, worship pleasure, are captivated by ornament, and yearn for loveliness, the houris comprise all of them – every sort of adornment and exquisite loveliness, physical and spiritual and immaterial, which will please and satisfy all of them, and gratify them and make them all happy.

That is to say, just as the houris are clothed in seventy of the varieties of the adornment of Paradise, and not one sort, none of which conceal the others; so they display beauty and loveliness perhaps seventy times greater than their own bodies and beings, all of different sorts and varieties. They demonstrate the truth indicated by the verse:

*There will be there all that the souls could desire and all that the eyes could delight in.*⁷

There is also a Hadith which states that since in Paradise there are no unnecessary, extraneous, waste-matters, the people of Paradise will not excrete waste after eating and drinking.⁸ Since in this lowly world, trees, the most ordinary of living beings, do not excrete despite taking in much nourishment, why should the people of Paradise, who are the highest class of life?

QUESTION: It says in Hadiths: "Some of the people of Paradise are given lands as extensive as the world, and thousands of palaces and hundreds of thousands of houris are bestowed on them."⁹ What need has a single person of all these things, why should it be necessary? How can this be and what does it mean?

THE ANSWER: If man was only a lifeless being, or was only a vegetable creature consisting of a stomach, or consisted only of a limited, heavy, temporary, simple corporeality or animal body, he could not own

⁷ Qur'an, 43:71.

⁸ Bukhari, Bad'u'l-Khalq, 8; Muslim, Janna, 17-19; Tirmidhi, Janna, 7; Darimi, Riqaq, 104.

⁹ Bukhari, Janna, 17; Tafsir Sura al-Qiyama, 2.

many palaces and houris, or be fit for them. But man is such a comprehensive miracle of power that even in this transitory world and brief life, if he is given the rule of all the world with its wealth and pleasures, his ambition is not satisfied – in respect of the need of some of his subtle faculties, which do not develop here. It is therefore reasonable, right, and true that a person possessing an infinite capacity who knocks on the door of an infinite mercy with the hand of infinite desires and the tongue of infinite needs will receive in an eternal abode of bliss the Divine bounties described in Hadiths. We shall observe this elevated truth through the telescope of a comparison. It is as follows:

Although, like this valley garden,¹⁰ all these gardens and vineyards of Barla have different owners, all the birds and sparrows and honey-bees in Barla, who have only a handful of grain for food, may say: “All the gardens and orchards of Barla are my pleasant resorts where I fly around and enjoy myself.” Each may take possession of Barla and include it in its property. Others sharing it does not invalidate his ownership. Similarly, a man who is a true human being may say: “My Creator made this world a house for me. The sun is my lamp and the stars my electric lights. The face of the earth is my resting-place spread with flowered carpets.” And he offers thanks to God. The other creatures sharing it does not negate his statement. On the contrary, the creatures adorn his house like decorations. And so, if in this narrow fleeting world, by virtue of his humanity, man – and even a bird – claims a sort of power of disposal over such a vast sphere and receives such a vast bounty, how can it be deemed unlikely that he is given ownership of a property stretching over a five hundred year distance in a broad and eternal abode of bliss?

Moreover, just as in this dense and dark narrow world the sun is present in the same way at the same time in numerous mirrors, so too, as is proved in the Sixteenth Word, a luminous being may be present in many places in the same way at the same time. For example, Gabriel (Peace be upon him) being on a thousand stars simultaneously, and at the Divine Throne, and in the presence of the Prophet (PBUH), and in the Divine Presence; and the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) meeting with most of the righteous of his community at the resurrection of the dead at the same time and appearing in this world in innumerable places simultaneously; and a strange group of the saints known as *abdal*, appearing at the same time in many places; and ordinary people sometimes carrying out as much as a year’s work in one minute in a dream and observing this; and everyone being in contact with and concerned with numerous places at the same time in their hearts, spirits, and imaginations – all these are well-known and may

¹⁰ That is, the garden of Süleyman, who served this poor one with perfect loyalty for eight years, where this Word was written in one or two hours.

be witnessed. Most certainly, in Paradise, therefore, which is luminous, unrestricted, broad, and eternal, the people of Paradise, whose bodies have the strength and lightness of the spirit and the swiftness of imagination, being in hundreds of thousands of places at the same time, and conversing with hundreds of thousands of houris, and receiving pleasure in hundreds of thousands of ways, is fitting for that eternal Paradise, that infinite mercy, and as told by the Bringer of Sure News (PBUH), is reality and the truth. Nevertheless, these vast truths cannot be weighed on the scales of our tiny minds.

*This tiny mind cannot perceive the true meanings,
For this scale cannot bear such a weight.*

Glory be unto to You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.¹¹

O our Sustainer! Do not call us to task if we forget or fall into error.¹²

O God! Grant blessings to Your Beloved, who by being Your Beloved and through his prayers, flung open the doors of Paradise, and because of the benedictions for him of its members, You confirmed its opening for his community, and bless him and grant him peace.

O God! Appoint us to Paradise among the righteous, through the intercession of Your Beloved, the Chosen One. Amen.

¹¹ Qur'an, 2:32.

¹² Qur'an, 2:286.

A Short Addendum
to the Word on Paradise
[On Hell]

As is proved in the Second and Eighth Words, belief bears the seed of a sort of Paradise, while unbelief conceals the seed of a sort of Hell. And just as unbelief is a seed of Hell, so Hell is one of its fruits. And just as unbelief is the reason for being sent to Hell, so it is the cause of Hell's existence and creation. For if an insignificant ruler of small dignity, small pride, and small majesty is told impudently by some unmannerly person: "You may not punish me and you cannot," if there is no prison in that place, the ruler will certainly have one built for him and will throw him into it. However, by denying Hell, the unbeliever is giving the lie to One of infinite dignity, pride, and glory, Who is sublimely and infinitely powerful, and is accusing Him of impotence, lying, and powerlessness; he is insulting His dignity and offending His pride terribly. He is rebelliously causing affront to His glory. If, to suppose the impossible, there was no reason for Hell's existence, it would certainly be created for unbelief, which comprises denial and ascribing impotence to this degree, and such an unbeliever would certainly be cast into it.

*Our Sustainer! You did not create that in vain. Glory be unto You! Save us from the penalty of the Fire!*¹³

¹³ Qur'an, 3:191.

The Twenty-Ninth Word

This, the Twenty-Ninth Word, is about the Immortality of Man's Spirit, the Angels, and the Resurrection.

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Therein came down the angels and the Spirit by the permission of their Sustainer.¹ * Say: The Spirit [comes] by command of my Sustainer.²*

[This treatise consists of an Introduction and two main Aims]

Introduction

It may be said that the existence of the angels and spirit beings is as definite as that of human beings and animals. Indeed, as is explained in the First Step of the Fifteenth Word, reality undoubtedly requires and wisdom certainly demands that like the earth the heavens have inhabitants, and that its inhabitants are intelligent, and suitable for the heavens. In the tongue of the Shari'a, those inhabitants, of which there are numerous kinds, are called angels and spirit beings.

Reality requires it to be thus. For despite the earth's smallness and insignificance in relation to the heavens, its being filled with intelligent beings and from time to time being emptied and then refilled with new ones suggests —indeed, states clearly— that the heavens too, with their majestic constellations like adorned palaces, are filled with animate creatures, the light of the light of existence, and conscious and intelligent creatures, the light of animate creatures. Like man and the jinn, those creatures are spectators of the palace of the world, and ponderers over the book of the universe, and heralds of this realm of dominicality. With their universal and

¹ Qur'an, 97:4.

² Qur'an, 17:85.

comprehensive worship, they represent the glorification of the large and universal beings in the universe.

The nature of the universe surely points to their existence. For since it is embellished and decked out with uncountable numbers of finely adorned works of art and meaningful decorations and wise embroideries, it self-evidently requires the gazes of thoughtful admirers and wondering, appreciative lovers; it demands their existence. Yes, just as beauty requires a lover, so is food is given to the hungry. Thus, the sustenance of spirits and nourishment of hearts in this boundless beauty of art looks to the angels and spirit beings; it points to them. For while this infinite adornment requires an infinite duty of contemplation and worship, man and the jinn can perform only a millionth of that infinite duty, that wise supervision, that extensive worship. This means that boundless varieties of angels and spirit beings are necessary to perform those duties, and to fill and inhabit the mighty mosque of the world with their ranks.

Indeed, a species of the spirit beings and angels is present in every aspect, in every sphere, of the universe, each charged with a duty of worship. It may be said according to both the narrations of Hadiths and the wisdom in the order of the world that from lifeless planets and stars to raindrops, all are ships or vehicles for a kind of angel. The angels mount these vehicles with Divine permission and travel observing the Manifest World; they represent their praise and glorification.

It also may be said that certain sorts of living bodies act as aeroplanes for different kinds of spirits. From the birds of Paradise, called the Green Birds in a Hadith which says: "The spirits of the people of Paradise enter into Green Birds in the Intermediate Realm and travel around Paradise in them,"³ to flies, each is a vehicle for a sort of spirit. The spirits enter into them at a Divine command, and through the faculties and senses of those living bodies like the eyes and ears, observe the miracles of creation in the corporeal world. They perform the particular glorification of each.

Just as reality necessitates it to be thus, so does wisdom. For, with an intense activity, the All-Wise Maker continuously creates subtle life and luminous intelligent beings from dense earth, which has little connection with spirit, and from turbid water, which has small relation with the light of life. He surely then creates certain sorts of intelligent beings from the seas of light and even from the oceans of darkness, from the air, electricity, and other subtle matter suitable for spirit and appropriate for life. And surely these creatures are exceedingly numerous.

³ *Muslim*, Imara, 121; *Tirmidhi*, Tafsir Sura Al-i 'Imran, 19; Fada'il al-Jihad, 13; *Ibn Maja*, Jana'iz, 4; *Darimi*, Jihad, 18; *Musnad*, i, 266; vi, 386.

First Aim

To believe in the angels and affirm that belief is a pillar of faith. There are four Fundamental Points in this Aim.

FIRST FUNDAMENTAL POINT

The perfection of existence is through life. Rather, the true existence of existence is through life. Life is the light of existence, and consciousness is the light of life. Life is the summit and foundation of everything. Life appropriates everything for living beings; it is as though it makes one thing the owner of everything. Through life, a living thing may say: "All these things belong to me. The world is my house. The universe is my property, given to me by my owner."

Just as light is the cause of things being seen, and, according to some, of the existence of colours, so is life the revealer of beings; it is the cause of their qualities being realized. Furthermore, it makes an insignificant particular general and universal, and is the cause of universal things being concentrated in a particular. It is also the cause of all the perfections of existence, by, for example, making innumerable things co-operate and unite, and making them the means of unity and being endowed with spirit. Life is even a sort of manifestation of Divine unity in the levels of multiplicity, and a mirror reflecting Divine oneness.

Consider the following: a lifeless object, even if it is a great mountain, is an orphan, a stranger, alone. Its only relations are with the place in which it is situated, and with the things which encounter it. Whatever else there is in the cosmos, it does not exist for the mountain. For the mountain has neither life through which it might be related to life, nor consciousness by which it might be concerned.

Now consider a tiny object like a bee, for example. The instant life enters it, it establishes such a connection with the universe that it is as though it concludes a trading agreement with it, especially with the flowers and plants of the earth. It can say: "The earth is my garden; it is my trading house." Thus, through the unconscious instinctive senses which impel and stimulate it in addition to the well-known five external senses and inner senses of animate beings, the bee has a feeling for, and a familiarity and reciprocal relationship with, most of the species in the world, and they are at its disposal.

If life then displays its effect thus in the tiniest of animate beings, certainly when it rises to the highest level, that of man, it will be revealed and extended and illumined to such a degree that just as a human being is able to move through the rooms of his house with his consciousness and mind, which are the light of life, so he may travel through the higher, and the spiritual and corporeal worlds with them. That is to say, just as that conscious and animate being may go in spirit as though as a guest to those worlds, those worlds too come as guests to his mirror-like spirit by being reflected and depicted there.

Life is a most brilliant proof of the All-Glorious One's unity, and one of the greatest sources of His bounty; it is a most subtle manifestation of His compassionateness, and a most hidden, unknowable, and incomparable embroidery of His art.

Life is hidden and subtle, because the life of plants even, which is the lowest of the levels of life, and the awakening of the life-force in seeds, that is, their stirring, opening, and growth, which are the first steps in plant life, has remained unfathomed by human science since the time of Adam, despite being so evident and familiar, so ubiquitous and common. Man's reason has been unable to discover its true reality.

Moreover, life is so pure and unblemished that in both its aspects, that is in both its inner and outer faces, it is pure, translucent, transparent. Not veiling it with causes, the hand of power touches it directly. Whereas It made apparent causes a veil, to be the source of the insignificant aspects of things and their base external qualities, which are inappropriate to the dignity of power.

IN SHORT: It may be said that if there was no life, existence would not be existence; it would be no different from non-existence. Life is the light of the spirit, and consciousness is the light of life. Since life and consciousness are important to this great extent; and since there is self-evidently an absolutely perfect order in the universe, and a masterly precision and most wise harmony; and since our lowly, wretched globe, our wandering earth has been filled with uncountable numbers of animate beings, intelligent beings, and beings with spirits; it may be concluded with decisive certainty that those heavenly palaces, those lofty constellations also have animate and conscious inhabitants appropriate to them. As fish swim in water, so are those luminous inhabitants present in the fire of the sun. Fire does not consume light; indeed, Fire aids light.

Moreover, since, as is plain to see, pre-eternal power creates innumerable animate beings and beings with spirits from the most common substances and densest matter, and giving it great importance, transmutes dense matter by means of life into a subtle substance; and since it strews the light of life

everywhere in great abundance, and gilds most things with the light of consciousness; with such flawless power and faultless wisdom, the All-Wise and All-Powerful One would certainly not neglect the other floods of subtle matter like light and ether, which are close to and fitting for the spirit; He would not leave them without life, without consciousness, inanimate. Indeed, He creates animate and conscious beings in great numbers from light, which is also matter, and even from meanings, air, and even words. Just as He creates numerous different species of animals, so from these torrents of subtle matter He creates numerous different spirit creatures. One kind of them are the angels, others are the varieties of spirit beings and jinn. If you wish to see just how true, self-evident, and rational it is to accept the existence of great numbers of angels and spirit beings, and as the Qur'an shows, just how contrary to truth and wisdom, and what a superstition, aberration, delirium and foolishness it is not to accept them, consider the following comparison.

There were two men, one rustic and uncouth, the other civilized and intelligent, who made friends and went to a splendid city like Istanbul. In a distant corner of that civilized and magnificent city they came across a dirty, wretched little building, a factory. They looked and saw that the strange factory was full of miserable, impoverished men working. All around the building were beings with spirits and animate beings, but their means of livelihood and conditions of life were such that some were herbivorous, they lived only on plants, while others were piscivorous, they ate nothing but fish.

The two men watched the scene. Then they saw in the distance thousands of adorned palaces and lofty castles. Among the palaces were spacious workshops and broad squares. Because of either the distance, or the defectiveness of the men's eyesight, or because they had hidden themselves, the inhabitants of the palaces were not visible to the two men. Moreover, the wretched conditions in the factory were not to be seen in the palaces. In consequence of this, the uncouth country-bumpkin, who had never before seen a city, declared: "Those palaces have no inhabitants, they are empty, there are no beings with spirits in them," uttering the most ignorant garbled nonsense. To which the second man replied:

"O you miserable man! This insignificant little building you see here has been filled with beings endowed with spirits, with workers, and there is someone who continually employs and replaces them. Look, there is not an empty space all around this factory, it has been filled with animate beings and beings with spirits. Do you think it is at all possible that there would be no high-ranking and suitable inhabitants in that orderly city, in those wisely adorned palaces so full of art which we can see in the distance? Of course

they are occupied, and the different conditions of life there are appropriate for those who live there. In place of grass, they eat pastries, and in place of fish, cakes. Their not being visible to you because of the distance, or your weak eyesight, or their hiding themselves, can at no time point to their not being there.” The fact that a thing is not seen does not indicate its non-existence.

As the above comparison indicates, the fact that the globe of the earth is the home of these infinite numbers of beings endowed with consciousness and spirit, despite its insignificance and density among the lofty heavenly bodies and planets, and even its grossest and most rotten particulars becoming masses of micro-organisms when they cease as sources of life, necessarily, demonstrably, decisively indicates, testifies to and proclaims that infinite space and the majestic heavens with their constellations and stars are full of animate beings, conscious beings, and beings with spirits. The Illustrious Shari‘a of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) and the Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition call these beings, who are created from fire, light, and even from electricity, and from other subtle flowing matter, “The angels, the jinn, and spirit beings.” There are different kinds of angels, just as there are different kinds of corporeal beings. Indeed, the angel who is appointed to a raindrop will not be of the same sort as the angel appointed to the sun. There are also a very great many different sorts of jinn and spirit beings.

The Conclusion of this Fundamental Point:

As may be established empirically, matter is not essential so that existence may be made subject to it, and be dependent on it. Rather, matter subsists through a meaning, and that meaning is life, it is spirit.

Also, as may be established through observation, matter is not the thing served so that everything may be ascribed to it. It is rather the servant; it renders service to the process of the perfection of a truth. And that truth is life. And the fundament of that truth is spirit.

Also, as is self-evident, matter is not dominant so that recourse may be made to it or perfections sought from it. Rather, it is dominated; it looks to the decree of some fundament, it is in motion in the way that that decree dictates. And that fundament is life, it is spirit, it is consciousness.

Also, as is necessary, matter is not the kernel, it is not the fundament, it is not a settled abode so that events and perfections may be affixed to it or constructed on it. Rather, it is a shell prepared to be split, rent, dissolved; it is a husk, it is froth, it is a form.

Consider the following: a creature so minute it can only be seen with a

microscope has such acute senses it can hear its friend's voice, and see its sustenance; it has extremely sensitive and sharp senses. This demonstrates that the effects of life increase and the light of the spirit intensifies in proportion to the reducing and refining of matter. It is as though the more matter is refined and the more we become distanced from our material existences, the closer we draw to the world of the spirit, the world of life, and the world of consciousness; and the more intensely the heat of the spirit and the light of life are manifested.

Is it therefore at all possible that there should be this many distillations of life, consciousness, and spirit within this veil of materiality, and that the inner world which is beyond this veil should not be full of conscious beings and beings with spirits? Is it at all possible that the sources of these numberless distillations, flashes, and fruits of meaning, spirit, life and the truth apparent in this material existence in the Manifest World should be ascribed only to matter and the motion of matter, and be explained by it? God forbid! Absolutely not! These innumerable distillations and flashes demonstrate that this material and manifest world is but a lace veil strewn over the inner and spirit worlds.

SECOND FUNDAMENTAL POINT

It may be said that all the scholars of the speculative and the scriptural sciences have, knowingly or unknowingly, united to effect a consensus in affirming, despite difference of expression, the existence and reality of the angels and spirit beings. One group of Peripatetic philosophers of the Illuminist School even, who made much progress in the study of matter, without denying the meaning of the angels, stated that each realm in creation has a spiritual, incorporeal essence. They described the angels thus. Also, a group of the early philosophers who were Illuminists, being compelled to accept the meaning of the angels, were only wrong in naming them 'the Ten Intellects and Masters of the Realms of Creation.' Through the inspiration and guidance of revelation, scholars of all the revealed religions have accepted that each realm of creation has an angel appointed to it, and have named them the Mountain Angel, the Sea Angel, and the Rain Angel, for example. Even the Materialists and Naturalists, whose reasoning is restricted to what is immediately apparent to them and who have in effect fallen from the level of humanity to that of inanimate matter, rather than being able to deny the meaning of the angels,⁴ have been compelled to accept them in one respect, though naming them the Flowing Forces.

⁴ They have been unable to find a way to deny the reality and meaning of the angels and spirit beings. In fact, they have been compelled to affirm them in one respect by claiming them to be one of the natural laws, although they described them wrongly, naming them *Kuwa-yi Sariya* or Flowing Forces. (Hey you who consider yourselves to be so clever!)

O you wretched man who is reluctant to accept the angels and spirit beings, on what do you base this view? What facts do you rely on that you oppose the conscious or otherwise unanimity of all the scholars concerning the existence and reality of the meaning of the angels and the real existence of spirit beings? And since, as was proved in the First Fundamental Point, life is the revealer of beings, indeed, is their consequence, their quintessence; and since all the scholars are in effect unanimous in their acceptance of the meaning of the angels; and this world of ours has been filled to such a degree with animate creatures and beings with spirits; is it all possible that the vastness of space and the rarefied heavens would remain empty of dwellers, have no inhabitants? You should never think that the laws in force in this creation are sufficient for the universe to be alive, because those governing laws are insubstantial commands; they are imaginary principles; they may be considered as non-existent. If there were no absolutely obedient creatures called angels to represent them, make them apparent, and take their reins into their own hands, those laws could not be defined as existent, nor be represented as having a particular identity, nor be an external reality. Whereas, Life is an external reality, and an imaginary command cannot sustain an external reality.

In Short: Since the scholars of religion and philosophy, and of the speculative and scriptural sciences, have in effect agreed that beings are not restricted to this Manifest World; and since, despite being inanimate and inappropriate for the formation of spirits, the visible Manifest World has been adorned to such an extent with beings with spirits; existence is surely not limited to it. There are numerous other levels of existence in relation to which the Manifest World is an embroidered veil.

Furthermore, since, just as the sea is appropriate for fish, and the World of the Unseen and the World of Meaning appropriate for spirits, and this necessitates their being filled with them; and since all commands testify to the existence of the meaning of the angels; certainly and without any shadow of a doubt, the most beautiful form of the angels' existence and spirit beings' reality, and the most rational view of their nature which sound intellects will accept and acclaim, is that which the Qur'an has expounded and elucidated. The Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition states that: "The angels are honoured slaves. Never contesting a command, they do whatever they are commanded. The angels are subtle, luminous beings, and are divided into different kinds."

Just as mankind is a nation and human beings are the bearers, representatives, and embodiments of the Shari'a or code of divine laws which proceeds from the attribute of Divine speech, so are the angels a mighty nation, and those of them who are workers are the bearers, representatives,

and embodiments of the 'code of laws pertaining to creation, which proceeds from the attribute of Divine will.' They are a class of God's slaves who are dependent on the commands of the creative power and pre-eternal will, which are the true effective agent, and for whom all the heavenly bodies are like places of worship, like mosques.

THIRD FUNDAMENTAL POINT

The question of the angels and spirit beings is one of those questions in which the reality of a universal may be inferred from the existence of a single particular. If a single individual is seen, the existence of the species may be concluded. Whoever denies it, denies it as a member of the species to which it belongs. While whoever accepts the single individual is compelled to accept its whole species. Since it is thus, consider the following:

Have you not seen and heard that all the scholars of the revealed religions throughout the ages from the time of Adam until now have agreed on the existence of the angels and the reality of spirit beings? The different groups of mankind have concurred in having seen and conversed with angels and in their narrations concerning them, as though they were discussing and narrating events about one another. Do you think that if a single angel had not been seen, and the existence of one or numerous individuals not been established through observation, and their existence not been perceived clearly, self-evidently, that it would have been at all possible for such accord and such a consensus to continue, and to continue persistently and unanimously in such an affirmative and positive manner, based on observation?

Also, is it at all possible that the source of this general belief should not be some necessary principles and self-evident matters? And is it all possible that a baseless delusion should persist and become permanent in all the beliefs of mankind throughout all the revolutions it has undergone? And is it all possible that the basis of the assertion of these scholars of the religions, of this mighty consensus, should not be a certain intuition and empirical certainty? And is it at all possible that that certain intuition and empirical certainty which result from innumerable signs, and those signs which have been observed on numerous occasions, and those numerous observations should not all, without doubt or hesitation, be founded on necessary principles? In which case, the cause and the basis of the assertion of the universal belief held by these scholars are the necessary and categorical principles resulting from the great number of times the angels and spirit beings have been observed and seen, which demonstrates the strength of the consensus.

Furthermore, is it all possible, rational or feasible that the unanimous testimony of the prophets and saints, who are like the suns, moons, and stars in

human society, concerning the existence of the angels and spirit beings and their actually seeing them, should be prey to doubts or be the object of suspicion? Especially since they are qualified to speak in this matter. It is obvious that two people who are qualified to speak on a matter are preferable to thousands who are not. Moreover, in this question they are affirming a matter, and people who affirm a matter are preferable to thousands who deny or reject it.

Is it at all possible for there to be any doubt concerning the statements of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, the Sun of Suns in the world of truths, which never at any time sets, shining continuously in the skies of the universe? And can there be doubt concerning the testimony and witnessings of the Muhammadan Being (PBUH), the Sun of Prophethood?

Since, if on a single occasion the existence of a single spirit being is verified, this demonstrates the real existence of the whole species; and since it proves the existence of the whole species to be true, for sure, the best and most rational and acceptable form of their real existence will be similar to that expounded by the Shari'a, described by the Qur'an, and seen by the One who ascended to a "distance of two bow-lengths."

FOURTH FUNDAMENTAL POINT

If the creatures of the universe are observed with care, it may be seen that like particulars, universals have collective identities, each of which appears as a universal function; it is apparent that each performs a universal duty. For example, just as a flower as itself displays an embroidery full of art, and with the tongue of its being recites the Creator's Names, so the garden of the globe resembles a flower, and performs an extremely orderly, universal duty of glorification. And just as a fruit issues a proclamation expressing its glorification of God within an order and regularity, so does a mighty tree in its entirety have a most well-ordered natural duty and worship. And just as a tree glorifies God through the words of its fruits, flowers and leaves, so do the vast oceans of the heavens glorify the All-Glorious Creator and praise the Sublime Maker through their suns, moons, and stars, which are like words; and so on. Although external beings are outwardly inanimate and unconscious, they all perform extremely vital, living, and conscious duties and glorification. Of a certainty, therefore, just as angels are their representatives expressing their glorification in the World of the Inner Dimensions of Things, so are they the counterparts, dwellings, and mosques of those angels in the external and manifest world.

As is explained in the Fourth Branch of the Twenty-Fourth Word, the first of the four categories of workers employed by the All-Glorious Maker of the palace of this world is that of the angels and spirit beings. Since, without

knowing it, plants and inanimate beings perform extremely important though wageless duties at the command of One Who does know; also without knowing it, animals serve extensive universal aims in return for an insignificant wage; and since, observedly, in return for two wages, one immediate and the other postponed, human beings, knowing the All-Glorious Maker's aims, are employed through their conforming to them, their taking a share of everything for themselves, and their supervising the other servants; it will certainly be the first category, as well as the fourth, which will constitute the servants and workers. They both resemble human beings in that knowing the universal aims of the All-Glorious Maker, they conform to them through worship, and they are contrary to them. For being beyond sensual pleasure and some partial wage, they consider sufficient the pleasure, perfection, delight and bliss they experience through the All-Glorious Maker's attention, command, favour, consideration, and name, through their perception of Him, connection with Him, and proximity to Him. They labour with the purest sincerity, their duties of worship varying according to their different kinds, and according to the varieties of the creatures in the universe.

Like in a government there are various officials in the various offices, so the duties of worship and glorification vary in the spheres of the realm of dominicality. For example, through the power, strength, reckoning and command of God Almighty, the Archangel Michael is like a general overseer of God's creatures sown in the field of the face of the earth. If one may say so, he is the head of all the angels that resemble farmers. And, through the permission, command, power, and wisdom of the All-Glorious Creator, the incorporeal shepherds of all the animals have a head, a supreme angel appointed to the task.

Thus, since it is necessary for there to be an angel appointed over each of these external creatures in order to represent in the World of the Inner Dimensions of Things the duties of worship and service of glorification which it performs, and to present them knowingly to the Divine Court, the way the angels are described in the narrations of the Bringer of Sure News (PBUH) is certainly most appropriate and rational. For example, he declared: "There are some angels which have either forty, or forty thousand, heads. In all the heads are forty thousand mouths, and with the forty thousand tongues in each of those mouths they glorify God in forty thousand ways." This Hadith has a reality and both contains a meaning, and has a form, or manner of description. Its meaning is as follows:

The angels' worship is both extremely orderly and perfect, and most universal and comprehensive. As for the form of the truth, it is this:

There are certain mighty corporeal beings that perform their duties of

worship with forty thousand heads in forty thousand ways. For example, the heavens glorify God with the suns and the stars. While the earth, which is a single being, performs its duty of worship, its dominical glorification with a hundred thousand heads and with the hundreds of thousands of tongues in each mouth. Thus, the angel appointed to the globe of the earth has to be seen in this way in order to display this meaning in the World of the Inner Dimensions of Things.

I myself, even, saw a medium-sized almond tree which had close on forty large branches like heads. When I looked at one branch, I saw it had nearly forty smaller branches like tongues. Then I looked at one tongue of one of those small branches; forty flowers had opened on it. I studied the flowers considering the wisdom in them, and saw in each close on forty exquisite and well-ordered stamens, colours, and arts, each of which proclaimed one of the All-Glorious Maker's Names and their constantly varying manifestations. Is it at all possible that the All-Wise and Beauteous One, Who is the All-Glorious Maker of the almond tree, would impose this many duties on an inanimate tree, and not mount on it an appointed angel appropriate to it, to be like its spirit, to understand and express its meaning, proclaim it to the universe, and present it to the Divine Court?

O friend! So far, our explanation has been an introduction to bring the heart to acceptance, the reason to submission, and to compel the soul to surrender. If you have understood it to some degree, and wish to meet with the angels, prepare yourself. Moreover, purify yourself of wrongful prejudice. Now look, the doors of the world of the Qur'an are open! Look, the paradise of the Qur'an is with "wide-open gates"!⁵ Enter and Look! See the angels in beautiful form in the paradise of the Qur'an! Each of its revealed verses is a place to alight, so look from them:

*By the [winds] sent forth one after another [to man's profit], * Which then blow violently in tempestuous gusts * And scatter [things] far and wide; * Then separate, one from another * Then spread abroad a message.⁶*

*By the [angels] who tear out [the souls of the wicked] with violence, * By those who gently draw out [the souls of the blessed], * And by those who gently glide along [on errands of mercy], * Then press forward as if in a race, * Then arrange to do [the commands of their Lord].⁷*

Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by God's permission in every errand.⁸

⁵ Qur'an, 38:50.

⁶ Qur'an, 77:1-5.

⁷ Qur'an, 79:1-5.

⁸ Qur'an, 97:4.

...over which are [appointed] angels stern [and] severe, who flinch not [from executing] the commands they receive from God, but do [precisely] what they are commanded.⁹

Also listen to:

...Glory be to Him! They are but servants raised to honour. They speak not before He speaks and they act [in all things] by His command,¹⁰

listen to its praises. And if you wish to meet with the jinn, enter this resounding Sura:

Say, it has been revealed to me that a company of jinn listened [to the Qur'an].¹¹

See them and listen to what they say. Take a lesson from them. Look, they are saying:

*“We have really heard a wonderful recital * It gives guidance to the right, and we have believed therein: We shall not join [in worship] any [gods] with our Lord.”¹²*

Second Aim

The Second Aim is about the resurrection of the dead, the end of the world, and the life of the hereafter. It consists of four Fundamental Points, and an Introduction which is in the form of a comparison.

INTRODUCTION

If someone was to claim about a palace or a city: “This palace or city will be destroyed, and will then be repaired and reconstructed so that it is intact,” six questions would surely arise in the face of his claim.

The First: Why should they be destroyed? Is there a reason or something to necessitate it? If the answer is “Yes,” he would have to prove it.

The Second: A question such as the following would arise: “Does the builder who would destroy and then reconstruct them possess the power to

⁹ Qur'an, 66:6.

¹⁰ Qur'an, 21:26-7.

¹¹ Qur'an, 72:1.

¹² Qur'an, 72:1-2.

do so? Would he be capable of it?" If the answer is "Yes," he would have to prove it.

The Third: The following such question would arise: "Are their destruction possible? And, are they going to be destroyed in the future?" If the answer is "Yes," and if he proves both the possibility of the destruction and its occurrence, the following two further questions would arise: "Is it possible for this strange palace or city to be reconstructed from scratch, I wonder? If it is possible, will they be reconstructed?" If the answer is "Yes" and he proves these as well, then in no aspect or corner of this matter can a gap or chink remain through which any doubt, misgiving or suspicion might enter.

Thus, like in the comparison, there are facts necessitating the destruction and reconstruction of the palace of the earth and city of the universe. Its author and builder is powerful enough; its destruction is possible, and will occur. Its reconstruction is possible, and will occur. These matters will be proved after the First Fundamental Point.

FIRST FUNDAMENTAL POINT

Man's spirit is definitely immortal. Almost all the indications in the First Aim which point to the existence of the angels and spirit beings also point to the immortality of man's spirit, which is our topic here. In my opinion, the matter is so certain that further explanation would be profitless. Indeed, the distance between us and the caravans of innumerable immortal spirits who are waiting to go to the hereafter in the Intermediate and Spirit Worlds is so fine and slight that there is no need to demonstrate it with proofs. Numberless saints and people of illumination getting in touch with them, and those who discern the secrets of the grave seeing them, and even a number of ordinary people communicating with them, and the mass of people forming relations with them in true dreams, have formed a mass of unanimous reports, and quite simply become part of the commonly accepted knowledge of mankind. However, because materialist thought has stupified everyone in this age, it has been able to implant doubts in their minds concerning even the most evident matters. In order to remove these doubts, therefore, we shall set forth an Introduction and four Sources from the numerous sources springing from the heart's intuition and the intellect's insight.

Introduction

As is proved in the Fourth Truth of the Tenth Word, an eternal, everlasting, and peerless beauty requires the eternity and permanence of mirror-bearing enraptured admirers. And a faultless, eternal, and perfect art seeks the perpetuation of thoughtful heralds. And a boundless mercy and beneficence require the continued ease and happiness of needy ones to thank it.

And the foremost of those mirror-bearing enraptured admirers, those heralding thoughtful ones, those needy thankful ones is the human spirit, in which case, it will accompany that beauty, that perfection, that mercy on the endless road to eternity; it will be immortal.

As is also proved in the Tenth Word, in the Sixth Truth, not only the human spirit, but also the simplest levels of existence have not been created for extinction; they manifest a form of immortality. Even an insignificant flower, which has no spirit, when it ceases from external existence, manifests a sort of immortality in a thousand ways. For its form is made permanent in countless memories. And finding perpetuation in all its hundreds of seeds, the law according to which it was formed continues. Since the flower's law of formation, the model of its form, which resembles a tiny fragment of spirit, is made permanent by an All-Wise Preserver; and since it is preserved throughout turbulent transformations with perfect order in its tiny seeds and made permanent; if you do not understand the degree to which the human spirit, which is of an extremely comprehensive and elevated nature, and has been clothed with external existence, and is a conscious, living, and luminous commanding law, most certainly manifests immortality, and is tied and bound to eternity, if you do not understand this, how can you claim to be a conscious human being? Can it be asked of an All-Wise One of Glory, an Imperishable Preserver Who includes and preserves the programme and law of formation of a mighty tree in its tiny dot-like seed? For that law to some degree resembles a spirit, "How can He preserve the spirits of the dead?" .

• **FIRST SOURCE:** This is subjective. That is to say, if anyone studies his own life and self, he perceives an immortal spirit. Indeed, in the course of occupying its body for a number of years the spirit causes the body to change considerably, yet the spirit self-evidently remains constant. In which case, although the body is ephemeral, it does not affect the spirit's permanence, nor spoil its nature, even though the spirit is completely naked at death. However, in the course of life, the spirit gradually changes its body-clothes, and at the time of death, it is suddenly undressed. It has been established through certain conjecture, indeed, through observation, that the body subsists through the spirit; in which case, the spirit does not subsist through the body. Rather, since the spirit subsists and is dominant of itself, the body may be dispersed and gathered together again as it wishes; it will not infringe the spirit's independence.

In fact, the body is the spirit's house, it is its home; it is not its clothes. What clothes the spirit is a subtle, fine sheath, something which may be likened to a body, which is to some extent constant, and is ethereal and appropriate for the spirit. At the time of death, then, the spirit is not completely naked, it leaves its home dressed in its body-like sheath.

• **SECOND SOURCE:** This is objective. That is to say, it is a sort of empirical judgement which has been formed through repeated observations and numerous occurrences of events. Indeed, when it is understood that a single spirit continues after death, this necessitates the continuation of all spirits as a category of being. For according to the science of logic it is certain that if an intrinsic quality is observed in a single individual, the existence of that quality may be assumed in all individuals. Because it is intrinsic. If it is intrinsic, it will be present in each individual. Whereas the indications based on not one but on innumerable observations beyond calculation and count, and the signs pointing to the immortality of spirits are so definite, that like for us there is a place called the New World, that is, America, and that human beings are found there, we can in no way doubt the existence of those people. In the same way, it is unacceptable to doubt that the spirits of those who have died are now present in great numbers in the World of the Inner Dimension of Things and in the Spirit World, and that they have relations with us. Our immaterial gifts go to them, and their luminous emanations come to us.

Moreover, with certain intuition, one may perceive with one's conscience that a fundamental aspect of man continues after his death. And that fundamental aspect is spirit. As for spirit, it is not subject to destruction and dissolution. This is because it is simple and uncompounded, it has unity. As for destruction, dissolution, and decomposition, they are the function of complex and compound substances. As we explained above, life ensures a form of unity within multiplicity; it causes a sort of permanence. That is to say, unity and permanence are fundamental to spirit, from which they spread to multiplicity.

The mortality of man's spirit would be either through destruction and dissolution, whereas unity provides no opportunity for these, and its simple nature disallows decomposition; or it would be through annihilation. But the limitless compassion of the Absolutely Generous One would not permit annihilation, and His boundless munificence would not allow that He should take back from the human spirit the bounty of existence which He has bestowed on it, which it ardently desires, and of which it is worthy.

• **THIRD SOURCE:** Man's spirit, which has been clothed in a living, conscious, luminous external existence, is a comprehensive and veracious commanding law disposed to acquiring universality. And even the weakest commanding laws manifest stability and permanence. For if it is considered carefully, it will be seen that present in all species which are subject to change, is a constant truth that, revolving within the changes, transformations, and stages of life, causes the outer forms of things to change, and living and not dying, is permanent.

Thus, while the human being is an individual, because of the comprehensiveness of his nature, his universal consciousness, and all-embracing imagination, he is like a species. A law that governs and is in force in the species is also in force in the human individual. Since the All-Glorious Creator has created man as a comprehensive mirror, for universal worship, and with an exalted nature, even if the spirit-truth which is present in each individual causes the individual's outer form to change hundreds of thousands of times, with the Sustainer's permission, it will not die but will continue, departing as it came. In which case, at God's command and with His permission and through His making it permanent, the human individual's spirit, which is the conscious element and living part of him, is immortal.

• **FOURTH SOURCE:** Consider the laws that govern in species, which to a degree resemble the spirit, and since they both issue from the World of the Divine Command and Will, with regard to their source, are to a degree appropriate for the spirit, and only lack a perceptible existence. Study them and it will be seen that if those commanding laws were clothed in external existence, each of them would become the spirit of the species. And the laws are always permanent; they are always perpetual and constant. No change or transformation affects the laws' unity, or spoils them.

For example, should a fig-tree die and be dispersed, the law of its formation, which is like its spirit, will continue in its tiny seeds; it will not die. And so, since even the most commonplace and weak commanding laws are thus connected to permanence and continuance, the human spirit must be connected not only with permanence and immortality, but with all eternity. For according to the Qur'an's glorious decree of:

*Say: The Spirit (comes) by command of my Sustainer,*¹³

spirit too is a conscious and living law which has come from the World of the Divine Command, and which Pre-Eternal power has clothed with external existence. That is to say, just as the unconscious laws which proceed from the Divine attribute of will and the World of the Divine Command are always, or mostly, enduring, so is it even more definite that the spirit, which is a sort of brother to them, and like them is a manifestation of the attribute of will and comes from the World of the Command, manifests immortality. It is also more worthy of it, because it is existent, it has an external reality. And it is more potent, more elevated, because it possesses consciousness. It is also more enduring than them, and more valuable, because it is living.

¹³ Qur'an, 17:85.

SECOND FUNDAMENTAL POINT

There are matters necessitating eternal happiness, and the All-Glorious Agent is capable of bestowing that happiness. Also, the destruction of the universe and death of the world are possible, and they will occur. And the resurrection of the world and the Last Judgement are possible, and they will occur. We shall explain all these six matters briefly and in a way that will satisfy the reason. In fact, in the Tenth Word, arguments are set forth which raise the heart to the level of perfect belief, while here, we shall discuss them in the manner of the Old Said's explanations in his treatise called *Nokta* (The Point), which convince and silence the reason only.

There are matters which necessitate eternal happiness. A decisive argument pointing to those matters consists of a supposition filtered through Ten Sources and Central Points.

- **FIRST POINT:** If observed carefully, it will be seen that a perfect and intentional order embraces the whole universe. Traces of choice and flashes of purpose are to be seen in every aspect of it. What strikes the eyes through the testimony of their fruits is that in every thing is a light of intention; in every function, a flash of will; in every motion, a gleam of choice; in every composite whole, a blaze of wisdom. Thus, if there was no eternal happiness, this authentic order would merely consist of a weak and futile form. It would be a false order, not a true order. Connections and relations and immaterial things, which are the spirit of order, would be lost and come to nothing. That is to say, what gives order to order is eternal happiness. In which case, the order of the universe points to eternal happiness.

- **SECOND POINT:** Total wisdom is apparent in the universe. Indeed, Divine wisdom, which is the representation of pre-eternal favour, proclaims eternal happiness through the tongue of the observance of benefits and following of purposes demonstrated by the universe in its entirety. Because, if there was no eternal happiness, it would be necessary, through pride, to deny the wisdom and benefits which are self-evidently constant in the universe. Since the Tenth Truth of the Tenth Word demonstrates this truth like the sun, we shall content ourselves with that and cut short the discussion here.

- **THIRD POINT:** Through the testimony of reason, wisdom, deduction, and experience, the absence of futility and absence of waste in the creation of beings, which is constant, indicate eternal happiness. The sign of there being no waste and nothing vain in creation is the All-Glorious Maker's choosing and preferring the shortest way, the closest point, the lightest form, and the best manner in the creation of everything, and His sometimes imposing a hundred duties on one thing, and His attaching a thousand fruits and aims to

a slight being. Since there is no waste and nothing in vain, there will surely be eternal happiness. For non-existence and no return would make everything futile; everything would be a waste. The absence of waste in all creation, and in man for instance, which is established by science, demonstrates that man's limitless disposition, and infinite hopes, ideas, and desires will not be wasted either. In which case, man's deep-rooted desire to be perfected points to the existence of a perfection, and his desire for happiness proclaims that he is definitely destined for eternal happiness. If it was not so, contrary to all other beings, which are made wisely and with purpose, those authentic immaterial faculties, those elevated hopes, would be waste and futile; they would wither up and be for nothing. Since this truth is proved in the Eleventh Truth of the Tenth Word, we cut the discussion short here.

• **FOURTH POINT:** In each of many different things, in night and day, and winter and spring, in the skies, and even in man's personalities and in the bodies which he changes throughout his lifetime, and in sleep, which resembles death, is a different sort of resurrection resembling the resurrection of the dead; they all tell of and allude to the reality of the Day of Resurrection. For example, the day, year, lifetime of man, and revolution of God's great clock known as the earth resemble the dials of a weekly clock of ours that tell the seconds, minutes, hours and days; each the forerunner of the following, they give news of one another; they turn and function. Like they show morning after night, and spring after winter, they intimate that after death the morning of the resurrection will appear from that instrument, that vast clock.

There are many varieties of resurrection that a person experiences during his lifetime. Just as he sees the signs of the resurrection through a sort of dying every night and rebirth every morning, so it is agreed that he undergoes what resembles a resurrection every five or six years by changing all the particles in his body, and even undergoes a gradual resurrection twice a year. Also, every spring, he witnesses more than three hundred thousand sorts of resurrection and rising to life in the animal and plant kingdoms.

Thus, so many signs and indications and marks of resurrection most certainly point to the great resurrection of the dead as though they were droplets of it. An All-Wise Maker causing a sort of resurrection in that way in the animal and plant worlds, that is, raising to life exactly the same all plant roots and certain animals in the spring, and restoring other parts of them, such as leaves, flowers and fruits, not exactly the same but similar, may be an indication of a personal resurrection in the human individual within the general resurrection. For the human individual is like a species in

comparison with the other animate species, and the light of the mind has given such a breadth to human actions and thought that they encompass the past and the future. If he consumes the world even, he is not satisfied. In the other species the nature of the individual is particular; its value is personal; its view, restricted; its qualities, limited; its pleasure and pain, instantaneous. Whereas man's nature is exalted; his value, most high; his view, universal; his qualities, limitless; his immaterial pleasure and pain in part permanent. In which case, the various resurrections which are repeated in the other animate species self-evidently tell of and point to human beings being resurrected and restored to life exactly the same in the great resurrection of the dead. Since it is proved with the certainty of twice two equalling four in the Ninth Truth of the Tenth Word, we cut short the discussion here.

- **FIFTH POINT:** Those who have looked closely into the realities of creation consider that the unlimited potentialities included in the essence of man's spirit, and the unlimited abilities contained in those potentialities, and the endless desires arising from those abilities, and the infinite hopes resulting from those endless desires, and the limitless thoughts and ideas born of those infinite hopes are hands stretched out towards eternal happiness, which is beyond this Manifest World, are eyes gazing at it, that they are turned towards it. Thus, man's nature, which cannot lie, and the definite, intense, unwavering desire for eternal happiness in his nature inspire the conscience with certainty concerning the realization of eternal happiness. This fact is demonstrated as clearly as daylight in the Eleventh Truth of the Tenth Word, and so we cut this short here.

- **SIXTH POINT:** The mercy of the All-Beauteous Maker of these beings, Who is the All-Merciful, All-Compassionate One, points to eternal happiness. Yes, it is of the nature of that mercy, which makes bounty bounty and saves it from revenge, not to withhold from man eternal happiness, which delivers beings from the anguish of eternal separation. For if eternal happiness, the head, chief, aim, and result of all bounties, is not given, and if after dying, the world is not resurrected in the form of the hereafter, all bounties would be transformed into desire for revenge. And such a transformation would necessitate denying the existence of Divine mercy, which is self-evident and necessary, and, through the testimony of all the universe, unquestionable and manifest. It is a constant truth more brilliant than the sun. Look and take note of the bounties of love, compassion, and reason, some of the manifestations and subtle traces of mercy. Suppose that eternal separation and unending parting are going to drag out human life; you will see that tender love becomes a great calamity; sweet compassion, a great misfortune; that luminous reason, a great tribulation. That is to say, mercy

(because it is mercy) cannot confront true love with eternal separation. Since the Second Truth of the Tenth Word has demonstrated this fact most beautifully, we cut this short here.

- **SEVENTH POINT:** All the exquisiteness, all the virtues, all the perfections, all the attraction, all the yearning, all the compassion known and seen in the universe are meanings, significations, immaterial words. They necessarily and self-evidently show to the heart and thrust in the mind's eye the manifestations of the All-Glorious Maker's favour and kindness, benevolence and munificence. Since there is a truth, a reality, in this world, most certainly there is true mercy. And since there is true mercy, there will be eternal happiness. The Fourth Truth of the Tenth Word, and also the Second Truth, have illuminated this fact as clearly as daylight.

- **EIGHTH POINT:** Man's conscience, which is his conscious nature, looks to and points to eternal happiness. Yes, if anyone listens to his own awakened conscience, he will hear a voice crying: "Eternity! Eternity!" Should the whole universe be given to such a conscience, it could not satisfy its need for eternity. That is to say, the conscience being attracted and drawn in this way is possible only because it is attracted by a true aim and captivating truth. The conclusion of the Eleventh Truth of the Tenth Word demonstrates this fact.

- **NINTH POINT:** This is the message of Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him), who was truthful, veracious, and trustworthy. Indeed, his words opened the doors of eternal happiness; all that he said are windows opening onto everlasting bliss. In fact, he held in his hand the consensus of all the prophets (Peace be upon them) and the unanimous agreement of all the saints, for after Divine unity, all their calls and efforts were concentrated on the resurrection of the dead and eternal happiness. Is there anything that could shake such a strength? The Twelfth Truth of the Tenth Word demonstrates this truth in the most obvious manner.

- **TENTH POINT:** This is the certain news of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, which has preserved its miraculousness in seven respects for thirteen centuries, and as is proved in the Twenty-Fifth Word, is a miracle through its forty sorts of miraculousness. Yes, this news of the Qur'an is the revealer of bodily resurrection, and the discloser of the enigmatic talisman of the world and the key to the wisdom in the universe. Also, the certain rational proofs contained in the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, which it lays before the eyes, commanding that they be pondered over are thousands in number. In short, the Qur'an presents for man to study a great many verses and great many telescopes revealing eternal bliss, like,

Say, “*He will give them life Who created them in the first instance...*,”¹⁴

and,

*Seeing that He has created you in successive stages,*¹⁵

which comprise a comparison or analogy, and,

*Nor is your Sustainer ever unjust to His servants,*¹⁶

which points to evidence of justice. We explained in our treatise entitled *Nokta* (The Point) the substance of the figurative analogy in,

*Seeing that He has created you in successive stages,*¹⁷

and,

Say, ‘*He will give them life Who created them in the first instance...*’,¹⁸

which the Qur’an makes clear through other verses. It was as follows:

On passing from stage to stage, the human body undergoes wondrous and orderly transformations. From sperm to a blood-clot; from a blood-clot to flesh and bone; from flesh and bone to a new creation, that is, the transformation into human form; it follows extremely precise rules. Each of these stages has such particular laws, such determined order, such regular development that it displays the manifestations of a purpose, will, choice, and wisdom as though through glass.

Thus, the All-Wise Maker, Who creates the body in this way, changes it every year as if it were clothes. For the body to be changed and for its continuance, a compound is necessary so that new particles appear that will work and fill the place of the parts that are dissolved. Since the body’s cells are destroyed through an orderly Divine law, it requires a subtle matter, known as sustenance, which will repair it, again through an orderly dominical law. The True Provider allots and distributes this sustenance through a particular law in relation to the different needs of the body’s members.

Now, consider the behaviour of the subtle matter which the All-Wise Provider sends: you will see that while the matter’s particles are dispersed through the air, soil, and water like a caravan, they suddenly gather together in a way that suggests a deliberate action, as though they had suddenly received the order to move. They collect together in the most orderly fashion as if each particle of them was entrusted with a duty and ordered to proceed to a specified place. Also, it is apparent from their conduct that they are being propelled through a particular law of one who acts and has choice, and

¹⁴ Qur’an, 36:79.

¹⁵ Qur’an, 71:14.

¹⁶ Qur’an, 41:46.

¹⁷ Qur’an, 71:14.

¹⁸ Qur’an, 36:79.

from the realm of the inanimate are entering the animal kingdom. Then they enter a body as sustenance through a particular rule, and with a determined order and in a regular process, and after being cooked in the four kitchens of the body, undergoing four amazing transformations, and being strained through four filters, they are apportioned through regular laws and the beneficence of the True Provider according to the all-different needs of the members, and are circulated to every part of the body.

Thus, whichever of these particles you consider with the eye of wisdom, you will see that blind chance, lawless coincidence, deaf nature, and unconscious causes can in no way interfere with it; it is impelled in a discerning, orderly, hearing, and knowing fashion. For whichever stage each of them enters from the surrounding element to the body's cell, it acts as though voluntarily through the specified laws of that stage. It enters it in an orderly fashion. To whichever level it journeys, it steps with such order that it appears self-evidently to be proceeding at the command of an All-Wise Mover. In this way, it gradually advances from stage to stage, and level to level until, at the command of its Sustainer, without deviating from its aim and object, it reaches its appropriate position, for example the pupil of Tevfik's eye, where it establishes itself and works.

This situation, that is, the manifestation of dominicality in sustenance, demonstrates that first the particles were determined; they were appointed to the task, they were designated to those positions. It is as if the existence of an arrangement and order, like "This will be the sustenance of so-and-so's cells" being written on the forehead of each of them, points to each person's sustenance being written on his forehead by the pen of Divine Determining, and his name being written on his sustenance. Is it at all possible that the All-Glorious Maker, Who nurtures and sustains with boundless power and all-encompassing wisdom, Who has absolute disposal over all beings from minute particles to the planets, and spins them with order and balance, should not bring about 'the last creation,' or that he should be unable to do so?

Thus, many verses of the Qur'an present to man's view this wise last creation, which will take place at the resurrection of the dead and Great Gathering. It removes doubt and uncertainty. It says:

*Say, He will give them life Who created them in the first instance...*¹⁹

That is, the One Who created you from nothing in so wise a form is He Who will bring you to life again in the hereafter. And it says:

*And it is He Who begins [the process of] creation, then repeats it; and for Him it is most easy.*²⁰

¹⁹ Qur'an, 36:79.

²⁰ Qur'an, 30:27.

That is, “Your return and being raised to life at the resurrection is easier and more trouble-free than your creation in this world.”

Just as it is easier and more trouble-free for the soldiers of a regiment who have dispersed to rest to regather under the regimental flag at the sound of a bugle than forming a new regiment from scratch, so according to reason, it is easier and more possible than the first creation for the fundamental particles of a body, which are intermingled and familiar and connected with one another, to regather at the trumpet-blast of the angel Israfil (Peace be upon him), and reply to the All-Glorious Creator’s command with, “Here we are, O Lord!” Anyway, perhaps it is not necessary for all the particles to regather. The fundamental parts and essential particles, which are like nuclei and seeds, and are called “the root of the tail” (the coccyx)²¹ may be sufficient as a basis of the second creation. The All-Wise Creator may construct the human body on them.

The following is a summary of the judicial comparison indicated by verses like the third one above:

Nor is your Sustainer ever unjust to His servants.

We often see in this world that tyrannical, sinful and cruel men pass their lives in great ease and comfort, while the oppressed, upright and religious live under great difficulties and in degradation. Then death comes and makes the two equal. If this equality had no end and was not finite, an injustice would be apparent. However, since Divine wisdom and justice are free of all inequity as is established by the testimony of the universe, they self-evidently require a final assembly where the former will be punished and the latter receive their reward. Then disorderly, wretched men may receive punishment and reward in conformity with their potentialities, be the means of absolute justice, manifest dominical wisdom, and be the elder brother of all the beings in the world.

For sure, the realm of this world does not allow for the blossoming of man’s limitless potentialities contained within his spirit. This means he will be sent to another world. Man’s essence is indeed mighty, so he is designated for eternity. His nature is exalted, so his crimes are great. He does not resemble other beings. His order is important, too. He cannot live without order. He cannot live without meaning. He cannot be made in vain. He cannot be condemned to absolute extinction. He cannot escape to pure non-existence. Hell has opened its mouth, and awaits him. And Paradise has opened its graceful embrace, and watches him. Since the Third Truth of the Tenth Word has demonstrated these two examples most beautifully, we shall cut the discussion short here.

²¹ Bukhari, Tafsir Sura al-Zumar, 3; Tafsir Sura al-Nabi, 1; Muslim, Fitn, 141-3.

By way of example, you may make analogies and study other verses from the Qur'an similar to the two above, which contain many subtle and rational proofs.

Thus, these Ten Sources and Central Points form a decisive proof and certain supposition, and just as this sound hypothesis and powerful proof are decisive evidence for the cause and necessity of the resurrection and Day of Judgement, so —as is clearly proved in the Tenth Word— do most of the Most Beautiful Names, like All-Wise, All-Compassionate, Preserver, and All-Just, require the coming of the Last Day and resurrection, and the existence of everlasting bliss; they point clearly to the realization of eternal happiness. That is to say, the matters necessitating the resurrection of the dead and the Day of Judgement are so powerful that they leave no room at all for any doubt or uncertainty.

THIRD FUNDAMENTAL POINT

The Agent possesses the power. Without doubt, the matters necessitating the resurrection of the dead exist. Also, the One Who will bring it about is powerful to the utmost degree. There is no deficiency in His power. The greatest things and the smallest are the same in relation to His power. It is as easy for Him to create the spring as to create a flower. Yes, One so powerful that this world together with all its suns, stars, worlds, particles, and substance bear witness to His sublimity and power with endless tongues. Does any doubt or misgiving have the right to consider bodily resurrection remote from such a power?

It is plain to see that every age within this world an All-Powerful One of Glory creates a new, travelling, orderly universe. Indeed, He makes a new, well-ordered world each day. He perpetually creates and changes with perfect wisdom transient worlds and universes one after the other on the face of the heavens and the earth. He hangs on the string of time regular worlds to the number of the centuries, years, indeed, days, and through them demonstrates the tremendousness of His power. He attaches to the head of the globe the huge flower of spring which he adorns with a hundred thousand embroideries of resurrection as though it was a single flower, and through it displays the perfection of His wisdom and the beauty of His art. Can it be said of such a One, "How can He bring about the resurrection of the dead, and how can He transform this world into the hereafter?" The verse,

*Your creation and your resurrection is but like a single soul*²²

proclaims the All-Powerful One's perfect power, that nothing at all is difficult for Him, that like the smallest thing, the greatest presents no

²² Qur'an, 31:28.

difficulties for His power, and that it is as easy for His power to create innumerable individuals as to create as a single one. We have explained the verse's essential meaning briefly in the Conclusion to the Tenth Word, and in detail in the treatise entitled *Nokta* (The Point), and in the Twentieth Letter. In connection with the discussion here, we shall elucidate a part of it in the form of three 'Matters', as follows:

Divine Power is essential, in which case, impotence cannot intervene in it. Also, it is connected to the inner dimensions of things, so obstacles cannot become interpenetrated with it. Also, its relation is according to laws, so particulars are equal to universals, minor things are like comprehensive ones. We shall prove these three matters.

FIRST MATTER: Pre-Eternal Power is the necessary inherent quality of the Most Pure and Holy Divine Essence. That is to say, it is of necessity intrinsic to the Essence, it can in no way be separated from It. Since this is so, the Essence which necessitates that power clearly cannot be affected by impotence, the opposite to power. For if that were the case, it would entail the combining of opposites. Since the Essence cannot be affected by impotence, self-evidently it cannot intervene in the power which is the inherent quality of that Essence. Since impotence cannot intervene in that essential power, clearly there can be no degrees in it. For the degrees of existence of a thing are though the intervention of its opposites.

For example, the degrees of heat are through the intervention of cold, and the degrees of beauty through the intervention of ugliness; further examples can be made in the same way. Since in contingent beings these qualities are not true, natural, and inherent, necessary qualities, their opposites may enter them. With the existence of degrees, diversity, variance, and change arose in the world. Since there can be no degrees in Pre-Eternal power, of necessity, those things decreed by it will be the same in relation to it. The greatest will be equal to the smallest, and particles the same as the stars. The resurrection of all mankind will be as easy for that power as the raising to life of a single individual; the creation of spring as easy as the giving of form to a single flower. Whereas if attributed to causes, the creation of a single flower would be as difficult as the spring.

It has been proved in the footnote to the last section of the Fourth Degree of 'God is Most Great' in the Second Station of this Word, and in the Twenty-Second Word, and in the Twentieth Letter and in its Addendum, that when the creation of beings is attributed to the Single One of Unity, all things become as easy as one thing. If they are attributed to causes, the creation of a single thing becomes as difficult and problematical as that of all things.

SECOND MATTER: Divine power is related to the inner face of things. Yes, the universe has two faces like a mirror. One is its external face, which resembles the coloured face of the mirror, the other is its face which looks to its Creator. This resembles the mirror's shining face. Its external face is the arena of opposites. It is where matters like beautiful and ugly, good and evil, big and small, difficult and easy appear. It is because of this that the All-Glorious Maker has made apparent causes a veil to the disposal of His power, so that the hand of power should not appear to the mind to be directly concerned with matters that on the face of it are insignificant or unworthy. For majesty and dignity require it to be thus. But He did not give a true effect to causes and intermediaries, because the unity of oneness requires that they have none.

As for the face of beings which looks to its Creator, in everything it is shining, it is clean. The colours and distortions of individuality do not intervene in it. This aspect faces its Creator without intermediary. There are no chains and disposition of causes in it. Cause and effect cannot intrude on it. It contains nothing contorted or askew. Obstacles cannot interfere in it. A particle becomes brother to the sun.

In Short: Divine power is both simple, and infinite, and essential. The place connected to Divine power has neither intermediary, nor stain, nor is it the scene of rebellion. Therefore, within the sphere of Divine power great does not take pride of place over small. The community does not take preference over the individual. Universals cannot expect more from Divine power than particulars.

THIRD MATTER: Divine power's relation is according to laws. That is to say, it regards many and few, great and small as the same. We shall make this abstruse matter easier to understand with a number of comparisons.

In the universe, Transparency, Reciprocity, Balance, Order, Disengagedness, and Obedience are all matters which render many equal to few, and great equal to small.

First Comparison: This explains the *Mystery of Transparency*.

For example, the sun's image and reflection, which are its radiance and manifestation, display the same identity on the sea's surface and in every drop of the sea. If the globe of the earth was composed of varying fragments of glass and exposed to the sun without veil, the sun's reflection would be the same in every fragment and on the whole face of the earth, without obstruction or being divided into pieces or being diminished. If, let us suppose, the sun acted with will and through its will conferred the radiance of its light and image of its reflection, it would not be more difficult for it to

confer its radiance on the whole surface of the earth than to confer it on a single particle.

Second Comparison: This concerns the *Mystery of Reciprocity*.

For example, let us suppose there is a vast ring composed of living beings, that is, of human beings, each holding a mirror. At its centre is an individual holding a candle. The radiance and manifestation reflected in all the mirrors surrounding the central point will be the same, and its relation will be without obstacle, fragmentation or being diminished.

Third Comparison: This concerns the *Mystery of Balance*.

For example, there are an enormous set of scales which are extremely accurate and sensitive. Whichever of two suns or two stars or two mountains or two eggs or two particles are placed in its two pans, it will require the same force to raise one pan of those huge sensitive scales to the sky and lower the other to the ground.

Fourth Comparison: This concerns the *Mystery of Order*.

For example, a huge ship can be turned as easily as a tiny toy boat.

Fifth Comparison: This concerns the *Mystery of Disengagedness*.

For example, a nature disengaged from individuality regards all particulars from the smallest to the greatest as the same and enters them without being diminished or fragmented. The qualities present in the aspect of external individuality do not interfere and cause confusion; they do not alter the view of a disengaged nature such as that. For example, a fish like a needle possesses such a disengaged nature the same as a whale. Or a microbe bears an animal nature the same as a rhinoceros.

Sixth Comparison: This demonstrates the *Mystery of Obedience*.

For example, a commander causes a single private to advance with the command "Forward march!" the same as he causes an army to advance. The truth of the mystery of this comparison about obedience is as follows:

As is proved by experience, everything in the universe has a point of perfection, and everything has an inclination towards that point. Increased inclination becomes need. Increased need becomes desire. Increased desire becomes attraction, and attraction, desire, need, and inclination are each seeds and kernels which together with the essences of things conform to the creative commands of Almighty God. The absolute perfection of the true nature of contingent beings is absolute existence. Their particular perfections are an existence peculiar to each which makes each being's abilities emerge from the potential to the actual. Thus, the obedience of the whole universe to the Divine command "Be!" is the same as that of a particle, which is like a

single soldier. Contained all together in the obedience and conformity of contingent beings to the pre-eternal command of “Be!” proceeding from the Pre-Eternal will are inclination, need, desire, and attraction, which are also manifestations of Divine will. The fact that when subtle water receives the command to freeze, with a refined inclination it may split a piece of iron demonstrates the strength of the mystery of obedience.

If these six comparisons are observed in the potentialities and actions of contingent beings, which are both defective, and finite, and weak, and have no actual effect, without doubt it will be seen that everything is equal in relation to Pre-Eternal power, which is both pre-eternal, and post-eternal, and creates the whole universe out of pure non-existence, and being manifested through the works of its tremendousness leaves all minds in wonderment. Nothing at all can be difficult for it. Such a power cannot be weighed on the small scales of these mysteries, neither are they proportionate. They have been mentioned to bring the subject closer to the understanding and to dispel any doubts.

Result and Summary of the Third Fundamental Point:

Since pre-eternal power is infinite, and it is the inherent, necessary quality of the Most Pure and Holy Essence; and since the stainless, veilless inner aspect of everything is turned to it and faces it, and is in balance with respect to contingency, which consists of the equal possibility of being and non-being; and since this inner face is obedient to the order of creation and the Divine laws of the universe which form the Greater Shari‘a, the Shari‘a of Creation, and it is disengaged from and free of obstacles and different characteristics; certainly, like the smallest thing, the greatest cannot resist that power, nor expect more from it than the smallest. In which case, the raising to life of all beings with spirits at the resurrection is not more difficult for Divine power than raising a fly to life in the spring. Thus, the decree of:

*Your creation and your resurrection is but like a single soul,*²³

is no exaggeration; it is true and correct. And our claim that “the Agent possesses the power” has been proved true in decisive fashion; there is nothing to hinder it in this respect.

FOURTH FUNDAMENTAL POINT

Just as there are things necessitating the resurrection of the dead and Great Gathering, and the One Who will bring it about possesses the power to do so, so the world possesses the potential for the resurrection of the dead

²³ Qur’an, 31:28.

and Great Gathering. There are four ‘Matters’ in this assertion of mine that ‘this place is possible.’

The First is the possibility of this world’s death.

The Second is its actual death.

The Third is the possibility of the destroyed, dead world being reconstructed and resurrected in the form of the hereafter.

The Fourth is its actual reconstruction and resurrection, which are possible.

FIRST MATTER: The universe’s death is possible. For if something is included in the law of the process of perfection, there is bound to be growth and development in it. And if there is growth and development, that thing is bound to have a natural life-span. And if it has a natural life-span, there is bound to be a time for its natural death. It is established by inductive reasoning and extensive investigation that it cannot save itself from the claws of death. Indeed, just as man is the microcosm, and he cannot be saved from destruction, the world too is the macroanthropos; it neither can be saved from the clutches of death. It too will die and will then be resurrected, or it will lie in repose and then open its eyes in the morning of the resurrection.

Also, just as a living tree, which is a miniature copy of the universe, cannot save its life from destruction and dissolution, so the chain-like universe, which has branched out from the tree of creation, cannot save itself from destruction and dispersal in order to be repaired and renewed. If, with the permission of the pre-eternal will, some external disease or destructive event do not befall the world before the time of its natural death, and its All-Wise Maker also does not demolish it before that time, for sure, according to scientific reckoning, a day will come when the meanings and mysteries of the verse:

*When the sun is rolled up; * When the stars tumble; * When the mountains are swept away; * When the she-camels, ten months with young, are left untended; * When the wild beasts are herded together; * When the oceans boil over;*²⁴

will become manifest with the permission of the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One, and the death agonies of the macroanthropos which is the world will begin; it will fill space and make it reverberate with an appalling death-rattle and devastating sound; roaring, it will die. Then, at the Divine command, it will return to life once more.

²⁴ Qur’an, 81:1-6.

A Subtle, Allusive Matter

Just as water freezes to its own detriment, and ice melts to its own detriment, and a kernel gains strength to the detriment of the shell, and a word becomes coarse to the detriment of the meaning, and the spirit weakens on account of the body, and the body becomes finer on account of the spirit, so too this world, the dense world, becomes transparent and refined with the functioning of the machine of life on account of the hereafter, which is the subtle world. Creative power sprinkling the light of life on dense, lifeless, extinguished, dead objects with an astonishing activity is a sign that it dissolves, burns, and illuminates this dense world with the light of life on account of the subtle world.

No matter how weak reality is, it does not die; it is not annihilated like a form. Rather, it travels in individuals and forms. Reality grows, develops, and gradually expands, while the shell and the form wear out, become finer, and break up. They are renewed in a better form so as to become suitable to the stature of the stable and expanded reality. In regard to increase and decrease, reality and form are in inverse proportion. That is to say, the more substantial form grows, the weaker reality becomes. The less substantial form becomes, to that degree the reality grows stronger.

Thus, this law encompasses all things included in the law of the process of perfection. This means that a time is certain to come when the Manifest World, which is the shell and form of the mighty reality of the universe, will break up, with the permission of the All-Glorious Creator. Then it will be renewed in a better form. The meaning will be realized of the verse:

*That day the Earth will be changed into a different Earth.*²⁵

In Short: The death of the world is possible. Moreover, there can be no doubt that it is possible.

SECOND MATTER: This is the actual death of the world. The proof of this matter is the consensus of all the revealed religions; the testimony of all sound natures; the indication of all the changes, transformations, and alterations in the universe; the testimony to the number of centuries and years through their deaths in this guesthouse of the world, of all living worlds and mobile worlds to the death of the world itself.

If you want to imagine the death agonies of the world as the Qur'an points them out, think of how the parts of the universe are bound to one another with an exact, exalted order. They are held with such a hidden, delicate, subtle bond and are so bound within an order that on a single one

²⁵ Qur'an, 14:48.

of the lofty heavenly bodies receiving the command: “Be!” or, “Leave your orbit!”, the world will go into its death agonies. The stars will collide, the heavenly bodies reel, a great din will strike up in infinite space like the devastating sound of millions of cannon-balls and great guns the size of globes. Clashing and colliding with one another, sending out showers of sparks, the mountains taking flight, the seas burning, the face of the earth will be flattened.

Thus, through this death and those agonies the Pre-Eternal One of Power will shake up the universe. He will purify the universe, and Hell and the matters of Hell will draw to one side, and Paradise and the matters appropriate for Paradise draw to the other, and the world of the hereafter will become manifest.

THIRD MATTER: The return to life of the world, which will die, is possible. For, as is proved in the Second Fundamental Point, there is no deficiency in Divine power, and the things necessitating it are extremely powerful. The matter is within the realm of the possible. And if a possible matter has something extremely powerful necessitating it, and there is no deficiency in the power of the agent, it may be regarded not as possible, but as actual.

An Allusive Point

If the universe is studied carefully, it will be seen that within it are two elements that have spread everywhere and become rooted; with their traces and fruits like good and evil, beauty and ugliness, benefit and harm, perfection and defect, light and darkness, guidance and misguidance, light and fire, belief and unbelief, obedience and rebellion, and fear and love, opposites clash with one another in the universe. They are constantly manifested through change and transformation. Their wheels turn like the workshop of the crops of some other world.

Of a certainty, the branches and results, which are opposites, of those two elements will continue into eternity; they will become concentrated and separate from one another. Then they will be manifested in the form of Paradise and Hell. Since it is out of this transient world that the permanent world will be made, its fundamental elements will certainly go to eternity and permanence.

Indeed, Paradise and Hell are the two fruits of the branch of the tree of creation, which stretches, inclines, and goes towards eternity; they are the two results of the chain of the universe; the two storehouses of this flood of Divine activity; the two pools of beings, which flow in waves towards eternity; and the place of manifestation, the one of Divine favour, the other of Divine wrath. When the hand of power shakes up the universe with a violent motion, those two pools will fill up with the appropriate matters.

The secret of this Allusive Point is as follows:

As eternal benevolence and pre-eternal wisdom necessitated, the Pre-Eternally All-Wise One created this world to be a place of trial, an arena of examination, a mirror to His Most Beautiful Names, and a page for the pen of Divine Determining and power. Now, trial and examination are the cause of growth and development. And growth causes the disposition to unfold. And this unfolding causes the abilities to become apparent. And this emergence of the abilities causes the relative truths to become evident. And the relative truths' becoming evident causes the embroideries of the manifestations of the All-Glorious Maker's Most Beautiful Names to be displayed, and the universe to be transformed into a missive of the Eternally Besought One. It is through this mystery of examination and the mystery of man's accountability that the diamond-like essences of elevated spirits are purified of the coal-like matter of base spirits, and the two separated out from one another.

Thus, since it was for mysteries such as these, and for other most subtle and elevated instances of wisdom which we do not yet know of that the Pre-Eternally All-Wise One willed the world in this form, He also willed the change and transformation of this world for those instances of wisdom. He mixed together opposites for its change and transformation, and brought them face to face. Combining harm with benefit, including evil with good, and mingling ugliness with beauty, He kneaded them together like dough, and made the universe subject to the law of change and mutation, and the principle of transformation and perfection.

A day will come when this assembly of examination is closed, and the period of trial is finished, and the Divine Names have carried out their decree, and the pen of Divine Determining has completed writing its missives, and Divine power completed the embroideries of its art, and beings have fulfilled their duties, and creatures accomplished their acts of service, and everything has stated its meaning, and this world produced the seedlings of the hereafter, and the earth has displayed and exhibited all the miracles of power of the All-Powerful Maker, and all the wonders of His art, and this transient world has attached to the string of time the tableaux forming the panoramas of eternity.

For the eternal wisdom and pre-eternal beneficence of the All-Glorious Maker necessitate truths like the results of the examination and trial, the truths of those Divine Names' manifestations, the truths of the missives of the pen of Divine Determining, the originals of those sample-like embroideries of art, the aims and benefits of the duties of beings, the wages of the acts of service of creatures, the truths of the meanings the book of the universe stated, the sprouting of the seeds of innate disposition, the opening

of a Supreme Court of Judgement, the displaying of the sample-like panoramas taken from this world, the rending of the veil of apparent causes, and the surrendering of everything directly to the All-Glorious Creator. Since the All-Glorious Maker's pre-eternal wisdom and beneficence necessitate these truths, they require the purification of those opposites in order to deliver the world from change and transience, transformation and extinction, and to separate out the causes of change and the matters of conflict. And most certainly they will bring about the resurrection and purify those opposites in order to obtain these results.

Thus, as a result of this purification Hell will take on its eternal and dreadful form, and its inmates will manifest the threat:

*And get you apart this day, O you sinners!*²⁶

While Paradise will assume its everlasting and majestic form, and its people and companions will manifest the address of:

*Peace be upon you! Well have you done! Enter here to dwell for ever.*²⁷

As is proved in the Second Question of the First Station of the Twenty-Eighth Word, through His perfect power, the Pre-Eternally All-Wise One will give the inhabitants of these two houses eternal and permanent bodies which will not be subject to dissolution, change, old age, or decline. For there will be no causes of change, which are the cause of decline.

FOURTH MATTER: This is possible, it will occur. Indeed, after dying, the world will be resurrected as the hereafter. After being destroyed, the One Who made the world will repair and reconstruct it in an even better form, and will convert it into one of the mansions of the hereafter. Just as the proof of this is, foremost, the agreement of the Holy Qur'an together with all its verses comprising thousands of rational proofs and all the revealed scriptures, so do the attributes of the All-Glorious One pertaining to His might and those pertaining to His beauty, and all His Beautiful Names, clearly indicate its occurrence. So too did He promise He would create the resurrection and Great Gathering through all His heavenly decrees which He sent to His prophets. And since He has promised, most certainly shall He bring it about. You may refer to the Eighth Truth of the Tenth Word concerning this matter.

Also, just as foremost Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him), with the strength of his thousand miracles, and all the prophets and messengers, saints and the righteous agreed on its occurrence and gave

²⁶ Qur'an, 36:59.

²⁷ Qur'an, 39:73.

news of it, so does the universe together with all its creational signs tell of its occurrence.

In Short: The Tenth Word with all its truths, and the Twenty-Eighth Word with all its proofs in the ‘Especially’s’ in its Second Station, have demonstrated with the certainty of the sun’s rising in the morning after setting the previous evening that after the setting of the life of this world, the sun of truth will appear once more in the form of the life of the hereafter.

Thus, seeking assistance from the Divine Name of All-Wise and benefiting from the effulgence of the Qur’an, from the beginning up to here our explanations have taken the form of four ‘Fundamental Points’ in order to prepare the heart for acceptance, the soul for surrender, and to convince the reason. But who are we that we should speak of this matter? What does this world’s true Owner, the universe’s Creator, these beings’s Master, say? We should listen to Him. Can others dare to interfere officiously while the Owner of this domain speaks?

We must listen to the Pre-Eternal Discourse of the All-Wise Maker which He delivers addressing all the ranks of those of each successive century in the mosque of the world and place of instruction which is the earth, with thousands of decrees like,

*When the Earth is rocked with a great convulsion,
And the Earth casts out its burdens,
And man cries out: “What is happening to it?”
On that Day it will relate what all those upon it have done.
For so your Sustainer will have commanded it.
On that Day men will go forth in groups to the Judgement, to receive requital for
their former deeds.
Then anyone who has done an atom’s weight of good, shall see it.
And anyone who has done an atom’s weight of evil, shall see it,²⁸*

which causes the earth to tremble, and,

*But give glad tidings to those who believe and do good works that theirs shall be
Paradises beneath which flow rivers. Whenever they are given fruits therefrom
as sustenance, they will say: “This is what we ate before as sustenance,” for
they shall be offered it in a form resembling that of this world. And they shall
have there women pure and good, and they shall dwell there for ever,²⁹*

which fills all creatures with joy and eagerness. We must give heed to these decrees of the Possessor of All Dominion, the Owner of This World and the

²⁸ Qur’an, 99:1-8.

²⁹ Qur’an, 2:25.

Next, and we must say, “We believe in it and we affirm it.”

*All glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.*³⁰

*O our Sustainer, do not punish us if we forget or do wrong.*³¹ *O God, grant blessings to our master Muhammad, and to the Family of our master Muhammad, as You granted blessings to our master Abraham and to the Family of our master Abraham; indeed, all praise is Yours, all splendour.*

³⁰ Qur'an, 2:32.

³¹ Qur'an, 2:286.

The Thirtieth Word

[This Word explains the talisman of creation by solving an important talisman of the All-Wise Qur'an. It is an explanation of 'Ene'¹ and 'Zerre'² to the extent of an 'Alif'³ and a 'Point'.⁴ It consists of two Aims. The first of these concerns the nature and result of the human 'I', and the second, the motion and duties of minute particles.]

First Aim

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

*We did indeed offer the Trust to the heavens, and the earth, and the mountains; but they refused to undertake it being afraid thereof. But man assumed it; indeed, he is most unjust, most foolish.*⁵

We shall indicate a single jewel from the great treasure of this verse, as follows.

The 'I' is one component, one aspect, of the numerous aspects of the 'Trust', from the bearing of which the sky, earth, and mountains shrank, and of which they were frightened. Indeed, from the time of Adam until now, the 'I' has been the seed of a terrible tree of Zaqqum⁶ and at the same time, of a luminous tree of Tuba,⁷ which shoot out branches around the world of mankind. Before attempting to elucidate this vast truth, we shall give an explanation by way of an introduction which will facilitate the understanding of it.

¹ The Turkish for 'I' or 'ego'. To avoid confusion with other interpretations, 'ene' has been translated throughout as the 'I', and 'enaniyet' as 'I-ness'. [Tr.]

² The Turkish for a mote, atom, or particle. [Tr.]

³ The first letter of the Arabic alphabet consisting of a vertical stroke, (C). [Tr.]

⁴ The equivalent of the dot in English, also indicating a small quantity. [Tr.]

⁵ Qur'an, 33:72.

⁶ See, Qur'an, 37:62; 44:43; 56:52.

⁷ See, Qur'an, 13:29.

Just as the 'I' is the key to the Divine Names, which are hidden treasures, so is it the key to the locked talisman of creation; it is a problem-solving riddle, a wondrous talisman. When its nature is known, both the 'I' itself, that strange riddle, that amazing talisman, is disclosed, and it discloses the talisman of the universe and the treasures of the Necessary World. We have discussed this problem as follows in my Arabic treatise, *Şemme* (Intimations).

The key to the world is in the hand of man and is attached to his self. For while being apparently open, the doors of the universe are in fact closed. God Almighty has given to man by way of a Trust, such a key, called the 'I', that it opens all the doors of the world; He has given him an enigmatic 'I' with which he may discover the hidden treasures of the Creator of the universe. But the 'I' is also an extremely complicated riddle and a talisman that is difficult to solve. When its true nature and the purpose of its creation are known, as it is itself solved, so will be the universe.

The All-Wise Maker gave to man as a Trust an 'I' which comprises indications and samples that show and cause to recognize the truths of the attributes and functions of His dominicality, so that the 'I' might be a unit of measurement and the attributes of dominicality and functions of Divinity might be known. However, it is not necessary for a unit of measurement to have actual existence; like hypothetical lines in geometry, a unit of measurement may be formed by hypothesis and supposition. It is not necessary for its actual existence to be established by concrete knowledge and proofs.

Question: Why is knowledge of the attributes and Names of God Almighty connected to the 'I'?

The Answer: Since an absolute and all-encompassing thing has no limits or end, neither may a shape be given to it, nor may a form be conferred on it, nor may it be determined; what its quiddity is may not be comprehended. For example, an endless light without darkness may not be known or perceived. But if a line of real or imaginary darkness is drawn, then it becomes known. Thus, since God Almighty's attributes like knowledge and power, and Names like All-Wise and All-Compassionate are all-encompassing, limitless, and without like, they may not be determined, and what they are may not be known or perceived. Therefore, since they do not have limits or an actual end, it is necessary to draw a hypothetical and imaginary limit. The 'I' does this. It imagines in itself a fictitious dominicality, ownership, power, and knowledge: it draws a line. By doing this it places an imaginary limit on the all-encompassing attributes, saying, "Up to here, mine, after that, His;" it makes a division. With the tiny units of measurement in itself, it slowly understands the true nature of the attributes.

For example, with its imagined dominicality over what it owns, the 'I' may understand the dominicality of its Creator over contingent creation.

And with its apparent ownership, it may understand the true ownership of its Creator, saying: “Like I am the owner of this house, so too is the Creator the owner of the universe.” And with its partial knowledge, it may understand His knowledge, and with its small amount of acquired art, it may understand the originative art of the Glorious Maker. For example, the ‘I’ says: “As I made this house and arranged it, so someone must have made the universe and arranged it,” and so on. Thousands of mysterious states, attributes, and perceptions which make known and show to a degree all the Divine attributes and functions are contained within the ‘I’. That is to say, the ‘I’ is mirror-like, and, like a unit of measurement and tool for discovery, it has an indicative meaning; having no meaning in itself, it shows the meaning of others. It is a conscious strand from the thick rope of the human being, a fine thread from the raiment of the essence of humanity, it is an Alif from the book of the character of mankind, and it has two faces.

The first of these faces looks towards good and existence. With this face it is only capable of receiving favour; it accepts what is given, itself it cannot create. This face is not active, it does not have the ability to create. Its other face looks towards evil and goes to non-existence. That face is active, it has the power to act. Furthermore, the real nature of the ‘I’ is indicative; it shows the meaning of things other than itself. Its dominicality is imaginary. Its existence is so weak and insubstantial that in itself it cannot bear or support anything at all. Rather, it is a sort of scale or measure, like a thermometer or barometer, that indicates the degrees and amounts of things; it is a measure that makes known the absolute, all-encompassing and limitless attributes of the Necessary Being.

Thus, he who knows his own self in this way, and realizes and acts according to it, is included in the good news of,

*Truly he succeeds who purifies it.*⁸

He truly carries out the Trust, and through the telescope of his ‘I’, he sees what the universe is and what duties it is performing. When he obtains information about the universe, he sees that his ‘I’ confirms it. This knowledge will remain as light and wisdom for him, and will not be transformed into darkness and futility. When the ‘I’ fulfils its duty in this way, it abandons its imaginary dominicality and supposed ownership, which are the units of measurement, and it says: “His is the sovereignty and to Him is due all praise; His is the judgement and to Him will you all be brought back.” It achieves true worship. It attains the rank of ‘the Most Excellent of Patterns.’⁹

But if, forgetting the wisdom of its creation and abandoning the duty of its nature, the ‘I’ views itself solely in the light of its nominal and apparent

⁸ Qur’an, 91:9.

⁹ Qur’an, 95:4.

meaning, if it believes that it owns itself, then it betrays the Trust, and it comes under the category of,

*And he fails who corrupts its.*¹⁰

It was of this aspect of the Trust, therefore, which gives rise to all ascribing of partners to God, evil, and misguidance, that the heavens, earth, and mountains were terrified; they were frightened of associating hypothetical partners with God.

Indeed, if the 'I' is not known for what it is, an insubstantial Alif, a thread, a hypothetical line, it may burgeon in concealment under the ground, gradually swelling. It will permeate all parts of a human being. Like a gigantic dragon it will swallow up the human being; that entire person with all his faculties will, quite simply, become pure 'I'. Then too, the 'I-ness' of the human race gives strength to the individual 'I-ness' by means of human racialism and national racialism, and the 'I', gaining support from the 'I-ness' of the human race, contests the commands of the Glorious Maker, like Satan. Then, using itself as a yardstick, it compares everyone, everything even, with itself; it divides God Almighty's sovereignty between them and other causes. It falls into ascribing partners to God on a vast scale, indicating the meaning of:

*To assign partners to God is verily a great transgression.*¹¹

It is just like a man who steals a brass coin from the public treasury; he can only justify his action by agreeing to take a silver coin for each of his friends who is present. So the man who says: "I own myself," must believe and say: "Everything owns itself."

Thus, while in this treacherous position, the 'I' is in absolute ignorance. Even if it knows thousands of branches of science, with compounded ignorance it is most ignorant. For when its senses and thoughts yield the lights of knowledge of the universe, those lights are extinguished because such an 'I' does not find any material within itself with which to confirm, illuminate, and perpetuate them. Whatever it encounters is dyed with the colours that are within it. Even if it encounters pure wisdom, the wisdom takes the form, within that 'I', of absolute futility. For the colour of an 'I' that is in this condition is atheism and ascribing partners to God, it is denial of God Almighty. If the whole universe is full of shining signs, a dark point in the 'I' hides them from view, as though extinguished.

The nature of man and the 'I' within his nature have been explained clearly and in detail in the Eleventh Word, as indicating something other than themselves. They are shown to be a most sensitive scale and accurate

¹⁰ Qur'an, 91:10.

¹¹ Qur'an, 31:13.

measure, an encompassing index and perfect map, a comprehensive mirror, and a fitting calendar and diary for the universe. Since we consider the explanation in that Word to be sufficient and it may be referred to, we curtail and conclude the introduction here. If you have understood the introduction, come, let us enter upon the truth.

* * *

Consider this: in the world of humanity, from the time of Adam up to now, two great currents, two lines of thought, have always been and will so continue. Like two mighty trees, they have spread out their branches in all directions and in every class of humanity. One of them is the line of prophethood and religion, the other the line of philosophy in its various forms. Whenever those two lines have been in agreement and united, that is to say, if the line of philosophy, having joined the line of religion, has been obedient and of service to it, the world of humanity has experienced a brilliant happiness and social life. Whereas, when they have become separated, goodness and light have been drawn to the side of the line of prophethood and religion, and evil and misguidance to the side of the line of philosophy. Now let us find the origin and foundations of those two lines.

The line of philosophy that does not obey the line of religion, taking the form of a tree of Zaqqum, scatters the darkness of ascribing partners to God and misguidance on all sides. In the branch of the power of intellect, even, it produces the fruit of atheism, Materialism, and Naturalism for the consumption of the human intellect. And in the realm of the power of passion, it pours the tyrannies of Nimrod, Pharaoh, and Shaddad on mankind.¹² And in the realm of the power of animal appetites, it nurtures and bears the fruit of goddesses, idols, and those who claim divinity.

The origin of the tree of Zaqqum together with that of the line of prophethood, which is like the Tuba-tree of worship, are in the two faces of the 'I'. The blessed branches of the line of prophethood in the garden of the globe of the earth are the following: in the branch of the power of intellect, it has nurtured the fruits of the prophets, the messengers, and the saints. In the branch of the power of repulsion, it has resulted in angelic kings and just rulers. And in the branch of the power of attraction, it has resulted in people of good character and modest and beautiful manner, both generous and gracious. So the line of prophethood has shown how mankind is the most perfect fruit of

¹² It was the swamp of Naturalist philosophy that gave birth to idols and established goddesses in the heads of the ancient Greeks, that nourished and nurtured Nimrods and Pharaohs. It was again that same Naturalist philosophy that produced the philosophies of ancient Egypt and Babylon, which either reached the degree of magic or, since they were represented by the elite, were considered to be magic by the people generally. Most certainly, if man does not perceive the light of God Almighty because of the veil of Nature, he will attribute divinity to everything and will thus cause himself nothing but trouble.

the universe. We shall explain the two faces of the 'I' as the root and pivot and as a principal seed of those two trees. That is to say, prophethood takes hold of one face of the 'I', and philosophy takes hold of the other, causing them to diverge.

The First Face, which is the face of prophethood: It is the origin of sheer worship. That is to say, the 'I' knows itself to be a bondsman. It realizes that it serves one other than itself. Its essence has only an indicative meaning. That is, it understands that it carries the meaning of another. Its existence is dependent; that is, it believes that its existence is due only to the existence of another, and that the continuance of its existence is due solely to the creativity of that other. Its ownership is illusory; that is, it knows that with the permission of its owner it has an apparent and temporary ownership. Its reality is shadow-like; that is, a contingent and insignificant shadow that displays the manifestation of a true and necessary reality. As to its function, being a measure and balance for the attributes and functions of its Creator, it is conscious service.

It is in this way that the prophets, and the pure ones and saints who were from the line of the prophets, regarded the 'I', they saw it in this regard, and understood the truth. They handed over the sovereignty to the Lord of All Sovereignty and concluded that that Lord of All Glory has no partner or like, neither in His sovereignty, nor in His dominicality, nor in His Divinity. He has no need of assistant or deputy. The key to all things is in His hand. He has absolute power over all things. They also concluded that causes are but an apparent veil; nature is the set of rules of His creation, a collection of His laws, and the way in which He demonstrates His power.

Thus, this shining, luminous, beautiful face is like a living and meaningful seed out of which the Glorious Creator has created a Tuba-tree of worship, the blessed branches of which have adorned with luminous fruits all parts of the world of humanity. By scattering the darkness of all the past, it shows that that long past time is not a place of non-existence and a vast graveyard as philosophy would have it, but is a radiant garden and a place of light for the luminous souls who have departed this world, who have cast off their heavy loads and remain free. It is a luminous, many-runged ascent and an orbit of lights for passing souls in order that they may jump to the future and eternal felicity.

As for the second face, it is represented by philosophy. And as for philosophy, it regards the 'I' as carrying no meaning other than its own. That is to say, it declares that the 'I' points only to itself, that its meaning is in itself. It considers that the 'I' works purely on its own account. It regards its existence as necessary and essential, that is, it says that it exists in itself and of itself. It falsely assumes that the 'I' owns its own life and is the real mas

ter in its sphere of disposal. It supposes it to be a constant reality. And it considers the 'I's' duty to be perfection of self, which originates from love of self, and likewise, philosophies have constructed their modes of thought on many such corrupt foundations. We have given definite proof in our other treatises, especially in the Words, and more particularly in the Twelfth and Twenty-Fifth Words, of how baseless and rotten these foundations are.

Even men like Plato and Aristotle, Ibn-i Sina and Farabi, who were the most illustrious representatives and authorities of the line of philosophy, said that the ultimate aim of humanity is to liken themselves to the Necessary Being, that is to say, to actually resemble Him. They thus delivered judgement in the manner of Pharaoh, and, by whipping up 'I-ness' and allowing polytheism to run free in the valleys, opened the way to numerous different ways of associating partners with God, like worship of causes, idols, nature, and the stars. They closed the doors of impotence and weakness, poverty and need, deficiency and imperfection, which are intrinsic to human beings, thus obstructing the road to worship. Being immersed in Naturalism and being completely incapable of emerging from associating partners with God, they were unable to find the broad gate of thanks.

On the other hand, the line of prophethood considered, in the manner of a worshipper, that the aim of humanity and duty of human beings is to be moulded by God-given ethics and good character, and, by knowing their impotence to seek refuge with Divine power, by seeing their weakness to rely on Divine strength, by realizing their poverty to trust in Divine mercy, by perceiving their need to seek help from Divine riches, by seeing their faults to ask for pardon through Divine forgiveness, and by realizing their deficiency to be glorifiers of Divine perfection.

So, it is because the philosophy which does not obey the line of religion thus lost its way, that the 'I' took the reins into its own hands and ran into all sorts of misguidance. And out of the 'I' that was in this position, a tree of Zaqqum sprang forth and engulfed more than half of mankind.

Thus, in the branch of power of animal appetites of that tree, the fruits it has presented to mankind are idols and goddesses. Because, according to the principles of philosophy, power is approved. "Might is right" is the norm, even. It says, "All power to the strongest." "The winner takes all," and, "In power there is right."¹³ It has given moral support to tyranny, encouraged despots, and urged oppressors to claim divinity.

Also, by appropriating the beauty in works of art and the fineness in the decoration and attributing them to the works of art themselves and their decoration, and by not relating them to the manifestation of the sacred and sheer

¹³ The principle of prophethood says: "Power is in right; right is not in power." It thus halts tyranny and ensures justice.

beauty of the Maker and Fashioner, it says: “How beautiful it is,” instead of, “How beautifully made it is,” thus regarding each as an idol worthy of worship. Moreover, because it admires a fraudulent, boasting, ostentatious, hypocritical beauty that may be sold to anyone, it has acclaimed the hypocrites, and has made idol-like people monuments for its own worshippers.¹⁴ In the branch of power of passion of that tree, it has nurtured the fruits of greater and lesser Nimrods, Pharaohs, and Shaddads ruling over unfortunate mankind. In the branch of power of intellect, it has produced fruits like atheism, Materialism, and Naturalism in the mind of humanity, and has thrown it into confusion.

Now, in order to illuminate this truth, we shall compare the results which are born of the sound foundations of the line of prophethood with those originating from the rotten foundations of the way of philosophy, and shall mention three or four examples.

First Example: According to the rule of: Be moulded by God-given ethics, which is one of the principles of the line of prophethood concerning individual life, there is the instruction: “Be distinguished by God-given morals and turn towards God Almighty with humility recognizing your impotence, poverty, and defectiveness, and so be a slave in His presence.” Whereas, the self-seeking rule of philosophy, “Try to imitate the Necessarily Existent One” is mankind’s aim for perfection. No, indeed, the essence of humanity has been kneaded with infinite impotence, weakness, poverty, and need, while the essence of the Necessarily Existent One is infinitely omnipotent, powerful, self-sufficient, and without need.

Second Example: Among the principles of the line of prophethood concerning social life are those of mutual assistance, magnanimity, and generosity. These have been harnessed for the help and assistance of all things from the sun and moon down to even plants. For the assistance of animals, for example, and the help of animals for human beings, and even that of particles of food for the cells of the body. Whereas, among the principles of the line of philosophy concerning social life is that of conflict, which springs from the misuse of their inborn dispositions by a number of tyrants, brutish men, and savage beasts. Indeed, they have accepted this principle at so fundamental a level and at such a general one that they have idiotically declared: “Life is a conflict.”

Third Example: One of the valuable results and exalted principles of the line of prophethood concerning Divine unity is: “If a thing has unity, it must proceed from only one.” That is, “Since each thing in itself and all things collectively have unity, they therefore must be the creation of one single being.”

¹⁴ That is to say, in order to appear desirable to their worshippers and to gain their attention, those idol-like people display, through hypocritical ostentation, a sort of worshipful attitude.

Whereas, one of the beliefs of ancient philosophy is: “From one, one proceeds.” That is, “From one person, only one single thing can proceed. Everything else proceeds from him by means of intermediaries.”

This misleading principle of philosophy, which is stained by associating partners with God, presents the Absolutely Self-Sufficient and Omnipotent One as being in need of impotent intermediaries, and gives all causes and intermediaries a sort of partnership in His dominicality. It attributes to the Glorious Creator the title of ‘Prime Mover’, which in fact indicates the status of creature. Moreover, it allots the rest of His sovereignty to causes and intermediaries, thus opening the way to associating partners with Him in a most comprehensive manner. If the Illuminists (Ishraqiyyun), who were pre-eminent philosophers, uttered nonsense like this, you can imagine how much more absurd will be what inferior philosophers, like the Materialists and Naturalists, say.

Fourth Example: According to the meaning of,

*There is nothing but extols His limitless glory and praise,*¹⁵

which is one of the wise principles of prophethood, “If the purpose and wisdom of everything, in particular every living being, has one aspect which looks to the being itself, then the purposes which concern its Maker and the instances of wisdom which look to its Creator must be myriad. Each thing, a single fruit, for example, has as much wisdom and as many purposes as all the fruits of a tree.” This principle, which is pure truth, results from the joining of one of the forms of philosophy with the line of prophethood.

Whereas, the nonsensical principles of a deceiving philosophy that has not joined this line says: “The purpose of every living being looks to itself or is connected with benefits for mankind,” thus considering in it an extremely senseless futility and attaching a purpose, a tiny fruit, to a tree as huge as a mountain. Because this truth has been explained to some extent in the Tenth Truth of the Tenth Word and some parts have been mentioned in the treatise called *Lemeat* (Gleams), we have cut it short here. However, you can extend these four examples to thousands.

It is because of these rotten foundations and disastrous results of philosophy that geniuses from among the Muslim philosophers like Ibn-i Sina and Farabi were charmed by its apparent glitter and were deceived into taking this way, and thus attained only the rank of an ordinary believer. Hujjat al-Islam al-Ghazzali did not accord them that rank, even.

Also, the foremost of the Mu’tazilites, who were among the most learned scholars of Islamic theology, being fascinated by the apparent glamour of the way of philosophy and being closely involved with it, assumed intellect to be

¹⁵ Qur’an, 17:44.

self-sufficient. Because of this they could attain only the rank of deviating, novice believers. Moreover, because those famous literary figures of Islam, like Abu al-'Ala al-Ma'arri, who was renowned for his pessimism, and 'Umar Khayyam, who was characterized by his pitiful weeping, took pleasure at the line of philosophy's caressing their evil-commanding souls, they received contemptuous and condemnatory rebuffs and restraining and chastening slaps from the people of truth and perfection, who said: "You are being insolent, you are approaching heresy, and you are disseminating heresy."

A further result of the rotten foundations of the line of philosophy is that although the 'I' has, in itself, an essence as insubstantial as air, because the inauspicious attitude of philosophy regards it as relating only to itself, it is as if that vapour-like 'I' becomes liquid; and then, because of its familiarity and preoccupation with materialism, it hardens. Next, through neglect and denial, that 'I-ness' freezes. Then, through rebelliousness it becomes opaque, losing its transparency. Then, it gradually becomes denser and envelops its owner. It becomes distended with the thoughts of mankind. Next, supposing the rest of humanity, and even causes, to be like itself, although they do not accept this and disclaim it, it gives to each of them the status of a Pharaoh. Then at this point it takes up its position contesting the commands of the Glorious Creator, it says:

*Who could give life to bones that have crumbled to dust?*¹⁶

and, as a challenge, accuses the Absolutely Omnipotent One of impotence. It even debases the attributes of the Glorious Creator. It either rejects or denies or distorts what does not suit its interests and does not please its Pharaoh-like evil-commanding soul.

One group of philosophers, by calling Almighty God 'Self-Necessitating', denied Him choice. They rejected the endless testimony of all creation, which proves that He has choice. Glory be to God! Although all the beings in the universe from the smallest particles to the sun show that the Creator has choice, each with its own appointed individuality, order, wisdom, and measure, this blind philosophy refused to see it. Moreover, another group of philosophers said: "Divine knowledge is not concerned with insignificant matters," and denied its awesome comprehensiveness, and thus rejected the veracious witnessing of all beings.

Furthermore, by attributing effects to causes, philosophy has given nature the power to create. As has been definitely proved in the Twenty-Second Word, since philosophy does not see the evident stamp on everything as signifying the Creator of All Things, and assumes nature to be the originator, which is impotent, inanimate, unconscious, and blind, and whose apparent power is in the hands of chance and force which are also blind, it attributes to

¹⁶ Qur'an, 36:78.

nature certain beings, each of which expresses thousands of instances of exalted wisdom and is like a missive from the Eternally Besought One.

In addition, the philosophers did not find the door to resurrection and the hereafter, which, as is proved in the Tenth Word, God Almighty with all of His Names, and the universe with all of its truths, and the line of prophethood with all of its verifications, and the revealed books with all of their verses demonstrate. They therefore denied the resurrection and ascribed pre-eternity to souls. You can deduce from these superstitions what their views on other matters would be. Indeed, the powers of evil have raised up the minds of atheistic philosophers as though with the beaks and talons of their 'I's and have dropped them in the valleys of misguidance. Thus, IN THE MICROCOSM, THE 'I' IS THE IDOL, LIKE THOSE IN THE MACROCOSM SUCH AS NATURE.

*Hence, he who rejects idols and believes in God has indeed taken hold of a support most unfailling, which shall never give way: for God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.*¹⁷

It is appropriate to mention here the meaning of a fictitious event that I described in semi-verse in *Lemeat* as an imaginary journey, which will illuminate the aforementioned truth.

Eight years before writing this treatise, in Istanbul during the month of Ramadan, when the Old Said, who was concerned with the study of philosophy, was about to be transformed into the New Said, while pondering over the three ways that are indicated at the end of Sura al-Fatiha,

*The way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace, not those who have received Your wrath, nor those who go astray,*¹⁸

I saw something resembling a dream or vision, an imaginary event, which was as follows.

I saw myself in a vast desert. A layer of murky, dispiriting, and suffocating cloud had covered the whole face of the earth. There was neither breeze, nor light, nor water, none of these was to be found. I imagined that everywhere was full of monsters, dangerous and dreadful creatures. It occurred to me that through on the other side of this land there should be light, breeze, and water. It was necessary to get there. I realized that I was being driven on involuntarily. Under the earth I wormed my way into a tunnel-like cave and gradually travelled through the earth. I saw that many people had passed along this subterranean way before me, on all sides they were submerged. I saw their footprints, and once I heard some of their voices, then later they ceased.

¹⁷ Qur'an, 2:256.

¹⁸ Qur'an, 1:7.

O my friend who is accompanying me on my imaginary journey! That land is nature and the philosophy of Naturalism. And the tunnel is the way that the philosophers have opened up with their thought in order to reach the truth. The footprints I saw were those of famous philosophers like Plato and Aristotle,¹⁹ and the voices I heard those of geniuses like Ibn Sina and Farabi. Indeed, I saw in various books some of the things Ibn Sina had said and some of his principles, but he had become stuck, he could go no further, he was submerged before reaching the truth. Anyhow, in order to save you from anxiety, I showed you a small part of truth. Now I return to my journey.

Gradually I realized that I had been given two things to use. One was a torch; it would scatter the darkness of that subterranean nature. The other was a device which, by smashing mighty boulders and huge rocks, would open up a way for me. I was told: "This torch and device have been given to you from the treasury of the Qur'an." So I carried on for a long time in this way. Then suddenly I realized that I had come out on the other side. I saw a world where everywhere there was rejoicing, bright sunshine in a most beautiful springtime and an invigorating breeze and delicious life-giving water. I said: "All praise be to God!"

Then I realized that I did not own myself, someone was testing me. As in the first part of the journey, I found myself in that vast desert under the suffocating cloud. And, though now on another way, still someone was driving me on. This time it was not under the earth; I was making this long journey on the face of the earth in order to reach the other side. I saw things in this part of my journey so strange and curious they cannot be described: the sea was raging, storms threatened me, everything caused difficulties for me. But once again, with the means of travel that had been given to me from the Qur'an, I overcame them and passed on. On the way I saw that there were corpses of travellers everywhere. Those who had completed the journey were one in a thousand. At any rate, having been saved from the cloud I had reached the other side of the earth and had come out in full view of the dazzling sun. Breathing in the invigorating breeze, I declared: "All praise be to God!"

I started looking round that heaven-like world. Then I saw that there was someone who would not let me stay there. In an instant he took me to that

¹⁹ If you say: "Who do think you are to challenge these famous philosophers? You are like a mere fly and yet you meddle in the flight of eagles," I would reply: "While having a pre-eternal teacher like the Qur'an, in matters concerning truth and the knowledge of God, I do not have to attach as much value as that of a fly's wing to those eagles, who are the students of misguided philosophy and deluded intellect. However inferior I am to them, their teacher is a thousand times more inferior than mine. With the help of my teacher, whatever caused them to become submerged did not so much as dampen my toes. An insignificant private who acts in accordance with the laws and commands of a great king is able to achieve more than a great field marshal of an insignificant king..."

vast desert as though to show me another way. There I saw different sorts of things, some like aeroplanes, some like cars, some like hoists, which had descended exactly like lifts. Whoever, according to his power and capacity, jumped onto them, was taken up. I, too, jumped onto one of them, and in a trice it took me up above the cloud. I came out among the most beautiful green and spectacular mountain-tops. The layer of cloud came no more than half-way up the mountains. Everywhere was the gentlest of breezes, the most delicious water, and the softest of lights. I saw that on all sides were these lift-like allegorical vehicles. Even though I had seen them in the first two parts of my journey and on the other face of the earth, I had not understood what they were. Now I realized that they were manifestations of verses of the All-Wise Qur'an.

Thus, the first way, which is indicated by, *Nor those who go astray*, is that of those who are submerged in nature and those who are followers of the philosophy of Naturalism. You have seen in this first way how many difficulties there are in passing to the truth and the light. The second way, which is indicated by, *Nor those who have received Your wrath*, is that of those who worship causes and those who give the power to create and the effect to intermediaries, like the Peripatetic philosophers. These tried to open the way to the ultimate truth and knowledge of the Necessarily Existent One by means of the intellect and reason alone. As for the third way, which is indicated by, *Those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace*, it is the luminous highway of the people of the Qur'an, who are the people of the straight path. This luminous highway is a brilliant way revealed and bestowed by the Most Merciful One. It is the shortest, the easiest, the safest way, and it is open to everyone.

Second Aim

[The Second Aim points out a single gem from the treasure of the following verse, and concerns the transformation of minute particles.]

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
And yet, the unbelievers assert, “Never will the Hour come upon us!” Say,
“Nay! But most surely, by my Sustainer, it will come upon you – by Him Who
knows the Unseen, – from Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the
heavens or on the earth, nor is there anything less than that, or greater, but it is
in the Clear Book.”²⁰*

[This Second Aim points out a mere atom’s weight from the great treasure of this verse; that is, some jewels from the caskets that are particles, and it discusses to some small degree their motion and duty. It consists of an Introduction and three Points.]

Introduction

The transformation of particles are the vibrations and wanderings that occur while the signs of creation are being written in the book of the universe by the pen of power of the Pre-Eternal Inscraper. They are not games of chance and jumbled meaningless motion like the Materialists and Naturalists fancy. For like all beings, every particle says “In the Name of God” at the start of its motion, and it raises loads infinitely exceeding its strength. For example, a seed the size of a grain of wheat shoulders a load the size of a huge pine-tree. And on completion of its duty, it says “All praise be to God.” For by exhibiting an art that is beautiful and full of purpose and a decoration that is fine and full of benefits which astound all minds, it displays a work of art like an ode in praise of the Glorious Maker. Look carefully at pomegranates and ears of corn, for example.

²⁰ Qur’an, 34:3.

Indeed, the transformations of particles are the motion and meaningful vibrations that proceed according to the dictation and principles of the ‘Clear Record,’ which is a title of Divine knowledge and command and is the arrangement of the past origin and future progeny of everything in the World of the Unseen. They proceed by means of transcription from the ‘Clear Book,’ which is a title for Divine power and will and is formed of present time and the Manifest World and consists of the free disposal of that power and will in the creation of things. Thus, this motion and meaningful vibration proceed from the writing and drawing of the words of power in the ‘Tablet of Effacement and Reaffirmation,’ which is a metaphorical page, and the reality of the stream of time.²¹

²¹ This footnote is an explanation of the long sentence [here, a paragraph] defining the transformations of minute particles, which is the subject of the Second Aim.

The Clear Record and the Clear Book are repeated in several places in the All-Wise Qur’an. One group of commentators on the Qur’an maintained that they are the same, while others stated that they are different from one another. Their explanations as to their true meanings were diverse, but in short they agreed that they are both titles to describe Divine knowledge. However, through the effulgence of the Qur’an, I came to the conclusion that the Clear Record, which looks more to the World of the Unseen than to the Manifest World, was a title for one aspect of God’s knowledge and His command. That is to say, it looks more to the past and future than to present time. It looks more to the origin and progeny and to the roots and seeds of everything, rather than to them in their visible existence. It is a notebook for Divine Determining. The existence of this notebook has been proved in the Twenty-Sixth Word and also in the footnote of the Tenth Word.

Yes, this Clear Record is a sort of title for the knowledge and commands of God. That is to say, the origins, sources and roots from which things are brought into existence with perfect order and art show that they must be arranged in accordance with a notebook of the principles of Divine knowledge. And because the results, progeny, and seeds of things contain the indexes and programmes of beings which will come into existence subsequently, they indicate that they must be a small register of Divine commands.

For example, a seed may be seen as the programme and index that will give form to the structure of the whole tree, and, furthermore, as the tiny embodiment of the commands that cause the tree to come into existence and determine its programmes and indexes. In short, the Clear Record is like an index and programme of the tree of creation, which spreads its branches through every part of the past and the future, and of the World of the Unseen. In this sense, the Clear Record is a notebook and register of the principles of Divine Determining. Through the dictation and requirement of those principles, particles are employed in their duties and motion in things, as those things come into existence.

As for the Clear Book, it looks more to the Manifest World than to the World of the Unseen. That is to say, it looks more to present time than to the past and the future. It is a title, a notebook, a book of the will and power of God, rather than of His knowledge and commands. If the Clear Record is the notebook for Divine Determining, the Clear Book is the notebook for Divine power. That is to say, the fact that everything in its existence, essence, attributes and functions displays perfect art and order proves that it has been given existence through the laws of an effective will and the principles of a flawless power. And, as well as its specified and individual form, everything has been given an appointed measure and particular shape. Therefore, the power and will have a universal and comprehensive register of laws, a great ledger, according to which the particular form and substance of everything is cut out, sewn and clothed. (Overleaf)

(21 cont.) The existence of this ledger, like the Clear Record, has been proved among the questions of Divine Determining and man’s will in the Twenty-Sixth Word.

Just look at the stupidity of the people of neglect, misguidance and philosophy, they have perceived that ‘Preserved Tablet’ of creative power, and the manifestation, reflection, and demonstration in things of that perspicaciously written book of dominical wisdom and will, and yet, God forbid, by naming it ‘nature,’ they have made it completely meaningless. Whereas, by means of the dictation of the Clear Record, that is, through the decree and instruction of Divine Determining, Divine Power is creating the chain of beings, each link of which is a sign in the creation of things. It is causing the motion of particles, it is writing on the metaphorical page of time, which is called the Tablet of Effacement and Reaffirmation.

Thus, the motion of particles is the vibration and motion from that writing and transcription, which occurs while beings pass from the World of the Unseen to the Manifest World, as they pass from

FIRST POINT

The First Point discusses two Matters.

FIRST MATTER: In every facet of the motion of all particles the light of Divine unity shines like the sun. For as is proved briefly in the First Indication of the Tenth Word and in detail in the Twenty-Second Word, if every particle is not an official of God acting with His permission and under His authority, and if it is not undergoing change within His knowledge and power, then every particle must have infinite knowledge and limitless power; it must have eyes that see everything, a face that looks to all things, and authority over all things. For every particle of the elements acts, or can act, in an orderly fashion in all animate beings. But the order within things and laws according to which they are formed differ from one thing to the next. If their order was not known to the particles, the particles could not act, or even if they could act, they could not act without error. In which case, the particles which are performing their duties in beings are either acting with the permission and at the command, and within the knowledge and at the will, of the owner of an all-encompassing knowledge, or they themselves must have such an all-encompassing knowledge and power.

Yes, all particles of air can enter the bodies of all animate beings, the fruits of all flowers, and the structures of all leaves. They can act within them, although the way the beings are formed is all different and their order and systems quite distinct. As though the factory of a fig were a loom for weaving cloth and the factory of a pomegranate, a machine for producing sugar, and so on; the programmes of their structures and bodies all differ from each

knowledge to power. And as for the Tablet of Effacement of Reaffirmation, it is a slate for writing and erasing, an ever-changing notebook of the Supreme Preserved Tablet, which is fixed and constant. It is its notebook in the sphere of contingency, where all things are unceasing manifestations of life and death, existence and ephemerality. And this is the reality of time. Indeed, what we call time, which is a mighty river flowing in creation, has a reality like everything else. Its reality is like the ink and the page of the writing of Power in the Tablet of Effacement and Reaffirmation.

None knows the Unseen, save God.

other. A particle of air, then, enters or can enter all of them. It takes up its position and acts in a wise and masterly fashion without error. And on completion of its duty it departs. A mobile particle of mobile air, therefore, either must know the forms, shapes, measures, and formations with which plants and animals, and even fruits and flowers, are clothed, or else it must be an official acting under the command and will of one who does know.

Similarly with a stationary particle of stationary earth: since it has the ability to be the means and place of cultivation for all the seeds of all flowering plants and fruit-bearing trees, either there must be in the particle itself or in the handful of soil that is its little house immaterial machinery and factories in good working order to the number of the varieties of the trees and plants, and flowers and fruits –in fact, it is in every single particle that there must be a factory peculiar to it and all the equipment and machinery necessary for the running of the factory– or else it must have a miraculous knowledge that knows all things about all things and a miracle-working power that creates everything from nothing; or, those duties are performed at the command and with the permission of One Who is Knowing of All Things, and through the power and might of One Who is Absolutely Powerful over All Things.

If an untrained and inexperienced, common, ordinary, and blind man was to go to Europe and in all the factories there to work at all the trades and crafts in perfect and masterly fashion, and if he was to display a wise and artistic skill to such a degree that it left everyone speechless with amazement, anyone with a grain of consciousness would know that the man was not acting on his own initiative, but that a master of all trades was teaching him and causing him to work.

And if there was a blind and impotent man who lived in a simple little house and was unable even to rise from his place, and if small fragments of stone, and bits and pieces of material like bone and cotton were to enter his little house and then sacks of sugar, bales of cloth, crates of jewelry, finely-made clothes encrusted with jewels, and delicious foods were to emerge, would anyone with a grain of intelligence not say: “That man is a wretched doorkeeper or merely a latch on the door of the factory of a wondrous miracle-working being, which is the source of his miracles”?

In exactly the same way, the motion and duties of particles of air in plants and trees, and blossom and fruit, all of which are missives of the Eternally Besought One, antique dominical works of art, miracles of power, and wonders of wisdom, indicate that the particles are acting under the command and at the will of an All-Wise and Glorious Maker, an All-Generous and Beauteous Creator.

Particles of earth, also, since they are the source and means for the shoots

and plants produced by seeds, each of which is a different factory and workbench, a different printing-press, treasury, and antique, a different manifesto proclaiming the Glorious Maker's Names and ode hymning His perfections, it is as definite as two plus two equalling four that the particles of earth are acting at the command, with the permission, and through the will and power of an All-Glorious Maker Who is Lord of the command of "Be!" and it is,²² and to Whose command everything is subjugated. In this we believe.

SECOND MATTER: The Second Matter indicates briefly the duties and instances of wisdom in the motion of particles.

The Materialists, whose use of their reasons is limited to what is immediately apparent to them, have, in their nonsensical philosophies which are based on foundations of futility, taken the transformations of particles, which they regard as the results of coincidence, as the fundamental basis of all their principles and shown that the Divine works and creatures result from those transformations. Anyone with a grain of intelligence would know how contrary to reason is their attributing creatures adorned with infinite instances of wisdom to something based on purposeless, meaningless coincidence, which is quite without order.

Whereas, from the point of view of the wisdom of the All-Wise Qur'an, the transformations of particles have many purposes and duties, and demonstrate many instances of wisdom. The Qur'an points to these duties and instances of wisdom with many of its verses, such as:

*And there is nothing but extols His limitless glory and praise.*²³

We shall mention several of these by way of examples.

The First: Renewing and refreshing the manifestations of His act of creation, the Necessarily Existent One takes all spirits as models and in order to every year clothe them in fresh bodies through miracles of His power, and through His wisdom to transcribe thousands and thousands of different books from every book, and to demonstrate single truths in constantly differing forms, and also to prepare the ground and make way for the beings, worlds and universes, which follow on one after the other, group by group, the Glorious Creator causes particles to move and employs them through His power.

The Second: The Glorious Lord of All Dominion created this world, and especially the field of the face of the earth, in the form of a cultivated property. That is to say, He prepared it in such a way that it would flourish and produce ever-fresh crops and He might sow and reap the numberless miracles of His power. Thus, by causing the motion of particles with wisdom and

²² Qur'an, 36:82, etc.

²³ Qur'an, 17:44.

employing them in an orderly fashion in His field of the earth, He displays every age, every season, every month, indeed every day, and every hour, endless beings through miracles of His power, each of which is a cosmos, and causes His field to produce constantly differing crops. He demonstrates through the motion of particles, gifts from the infinite treasury of His mercy and samples of His endless power.

The Third: The Pre-Eternal Inscraper caused the motion of particles with perfect wisdom and employed them with perfect order so that, through displaying the embroideries of the endless manifestations of the Divine Names, He might exhibit the endless embroideries in a limited field, and set forth the manifestations of the Names, and He might write the infinite signs, which will point to infinite meanings, on a small page.

Yes, in essence this year's crops are like those of last year, but their meanings are different. Since the relative determinations are changed, their meanings change and increase. And although the relative determinations and transient embodiments are replaced and are apparently ephemeral, their beautiful meanings are preserved and are constant and permanent.

Since the leaves, flowers, and fruits of last spring's tree do not have spirits, in reality they are the same as those of this spring. But the relative embodiments differ. And, the relative embodiments of this spring replace those of last spring with different embodiments in order to set forth the meanings of the functions of the Divine Names, whose manifestations are being constantly renewed.

The Fourth: The All-Wise and Glorious One causes the motion of particles in the narrow tillage of this world, in the workshop and field of the face of the earth, thus making the cosmos as flowing and beings as travelling, in order to grow things like crops or items for decoration or provision suitable for the most broad World of the Inner Dimensions of Things, and endless other worlds of the hereafter, like the infinite World of Similitudes. He thus grows in this small world vast quantities of crops appropriate for those vast worlds. He causes an endless flood to flow through the world from the infinite treasury of His power and to pour into the World of the Unseen, and some of it into the worlds of the hereafter.

The Fifth: By causing the motion of particles with perfect wisdom through His power and employing them with perfect order in order to display infinite Divine perfections, endless manifestations of beauty and glory, and countless dominical glorifications in this narrow and limited field and finite and short time, He causes endless glorification in finite time and in a limited field. He displays infinite manifestations of His beauty and glory and perfection. He creates many truths concerning the Unseen, many fruits for the hereafter, and a great many embroideries and meaningful weavings from

the enduring selfhood and forms of ephemeral creatures appropriate for the World of Similitudes and the Tablet. Therefore, the One Who causes the motion of particles is the One Who displays these grand purposes and mighty instances of wisdom. If it were otherwise, there would have to be a brain as huge as the sun in every particle.

Those brainless philosophers suppose to be purposeless the transformations of particles, which occur with wisdom not limited to the five above examples, but with infinite wisdom. They fancy the particles, which revolve like Mevlevi dervishes glorifying God and reciting His Names in two ecstatic movements, one turning on their own axes, the other describing circles, to be reeling around as though stunned and aimless. It may be understood from this, then, that their knowledge is not knowledge, it is ignorance, and their philosophy, futility.

(A sixth and lengthy example will be discussed in the Third Point.)

SECOND POINT

In every particle there are two truthful evidences to the existence and unity of the Necessarily Existent One. Indeed, by carrying out its important duties consciously and by raising mighty loads despite being powerless and lifeless, a particle bear decisive witness to the existence of the Necessarily Existent One. And by conforming to the universal order peculiar to each place it enters, and by settling anywhere as though it was its homeland, it testifies to the unity of the Necessarily Existent One and to the oneness of that Being Who is the Owner of all things, with their apparent faces and their inner aspects which look to Him. That is to say, whoever owns the particles must also own all the places it enters.

Thus, since its loads are extremely heavy and its duties endless, the particle demonstrates that it is mobile and acting at the command of One Possessing Absolute Power, and in His name. And, the fact that it conforms as though knowingly to the universal order of the cosmos and enters each place without obstacle shows that it acts through the power and wisdom of a single Being Possessing Absolute Knowledge.

A private soldier has relations with his squad, his company, his battalion, his regiment, and his division, and so on, and has duties in connection with each. Since he knows all those relations and duties, he will act in conformity with them. For, having received training and instruction under military discipline, he complies with the rules and regulations of a single supreme commander who commands all those sections.

In the same way, all particles are suitably placed within compounds, and with every facet of the compounds have different beneficial relations and different well-regulated duties that yield wise results that are all different. It

is therefore surely only One in the grasp of whose power is the whole universe who can place the particles in such a way as to preserve all their relations with and duties in all the facets of the compounds, and not spoil the wise results.

For example, a particle located in Tevfik's²⁴ eye is suitably placed with regard to the blood-vessels like the arteries and veins, and the motor and sensory nerves, and has a wise and purposeful relationship with the face, and then with the head, the trunk, and with the entire human body, and has beneficial duties in relation to each. This demonstrates that only one who creates all the members of the body will be able to place the particle in that position.

Particles entering the body as sustenance in the caravan of food in particular make their journey with astonishing order and wisdom. On their way, they pass through modes and stages in an orderly manner, and progressing consciously without confusion carry on till they are strained through the four filters in the bodies of animate beings. They are then loaded onto the red blood-corpuscles in order to come to the assistance of the members and cells which are in need of sustenance, rendering this assistance according to a law of generosity. It may be clearly understood from this that the One Who drives these particles and causes them to pass through thousands of different states must of necessity be a Generous Sustainer, a Compassionate Creator, in relation to Whose power particles and stars are equal.

Moreover, all particles act within embroideries of the greatest art and have relations with all the other particles therein. Since each is in a position of both dominance and subjection to all the rest, both to each individually and to all of them generally, it either knows and creates that wonderfully skilful embroidery and wisdom-displaying ornamented art, which is a thousand times impossible, or each of them is a point assigned to that motion, which proceeds from the law of Divine Determining and pen of power of the All-Wise Maker.

For example, if the stones of the dome of Aya Sophia are not dependent on the command and skill of its architect, all the stones must have skill in the art of building like that of the architect Sinan, and must be either subject to, or dominant over, the rest of the stones. That is, they must have the power to say: "Come, we shall stand shoulder to shoulder in order not to fall and collapse."

In the same way, if the particles in creatures, which are thousands of times more skilfully fashioned, wonderful, and full of wisdom than the dome of Aya Sophia, are not dependent on the command of the master builder of the

²⁴ The first scribe of the *Risale-i Nur*.

universe, to each of them must be ascribed as many attributes of perfection as those of the universe's Maker.

Glory be to God! Since the unbelievers do not accept a Necessarily Existent One, they are compelled according to their beliefs to accept as many false gods as there are particles. Thus, no matter how illustrious a philosopher or scholar an unbeliever may be, he is in profound ignorance to the utmost degree.

THIRD POINT

This Point is an indication to the sixth example of the mighty instances of wisdom in the motion of particles, which was promised at the end of the First Point.

As was stated in the footnote of the answer to the Second Question in the Twenty-Eighth Word, a further instance of wisdom of the thousands contained in the transformations of particles and their motion in the bodies of animate beings, is to illuminate the particles and to make them alive and meaningful in order to be fitting for the construction of the world of the hereafter. It is as if the bodies of animals and humans, and even plants, are like guest-houses, barracks, and schools for those who enter in order to take lessons and be trained; inanimate particles enter them and are illuminated. Simply, the particles receive training and instruction and acquire a fineness. By fulfilling different duties, they become worthy to be particles in the world of permanence and the realm of the hereafter, which is alive with all of its elements.

Question: How is it known that there is this wisdom in the motion of particles?

Answer: Firstly: It is known through the wisdom of the Maker, which is proved by all the wise benefits and purposes and the order in all creatures. For a wisdom that attaches universal wisdom to the most particular thing would not leave without wisdom and purpose the motion of particles, which demonstrate the greatest activity in the flood of the universe and are the means for embroideries full of wisdom. Also, a wisdom and sovereignty which does not leave the smallest creature without a wage, recompense, and perfection in its duties, would not leave its most numerous officials and principal servants without light, without a wage.

Secondly: By causing the motion of the elements and employing them, the All-Wise Maker raises them to the degree of minerals as though it was a wage of perfection, and instructs them in the glorification peculiar to minerals. And through causing the motion of minerals and employing them, He

confers on them the rank of the degree of vegetable life. And by presenting vegetable life in the form of sustenance, He grants it, through its motion and employment, the degree of fineness of animal life. And through employing the particles in animals, He raises them by way of being sustenance to the degree of human life. And by purifying the particles in a human body through repeated filtering, and by favouring them, He promotes them to the most delicate and subtle places, which are the brain and the heart. From all this it may be understood that the motion of particles is not without wisdom, but that the particles are made to hasten to a sort of perfection worthy of themselves.

Thirdly: Among the particles in animate beings, some, like those in pips and seeds, receive such a light, fineness, and quality that they are like a spirit or a king to the rest of the particles, to a huge tree, for example. Thus, since among all the particles of a huge tree some rise to this rank through fulfilling their delicate duties and passing through the many stages in the life of the tree, it demonstrates that through the command of the All-Wise Maker these particles receive a fineness, light, rank, and instruction on account of and in honour of the Divine Names manifested on them in accordance with the sorts of motion that are the functions of their natures, and in honour of them.

To Conclude: Since²⁵ the All-Wise Maker has specified for everything a suitable point of perfection and an appropriate level of the effulgence of existence, by giving everything a disposition that will strive to reach that point of perfection, He drives them towards it. This ‘Law of Dominicality’ is in force in all plants and animals, as it is in inanimate beings, in which it promotes plain earth to the rank of diamonds and to the level of priceless jewels. Within this truth, the tip of a mighty ‘Law of Dominicality’ is apparent.

And since the All-Generous Creator bestows as payment to the animals He employs in the mighty law of generation a particular pleasure as a sort of wage. And He gives a wage of perfection to the animals employed in other dominical functions, like bees and nightingales, for example. He confers on them a level whereat they feel eagerness and receive pleasure. And within this the tip of a mighty ‘Law of Generosity’ is apparent.

And since the reality of everything looks to the manifestation of one of God Almighty’s Names, and is bound to it, and is a mirror to it; whatever beauty is apparent in each, it is due to the Name; the Name requires it to be thus. Whether or not the thing is aware of it, in the view of reality the beauty is demanded. And from this truth, the tip of a most mighty ‘Law of Beauty and Making Beautiful’ is apparent.

²⁵ The sentence answering this ‘since’ and that at the beginning of the following six paragraphs is on page 581.

And since, as is necessitated by His law of generosity, when the life of a thing ends, the Generous Creator does not take back the rank and perfection He has bestowed on it, but makes permanent the fruits, results, and real meaning and identity of that bearer of perfection, and, if it has a spirit, its spirit. For example, He makes permanent the meanings and fruits of the perfections He has made manifest on man in this world. He will even return to a thankful believer the embodiment of the thanks and praise for the transient fruits that he has eaten in the form of a fruit of Paradise. And in this truth, the tip of a mighty 'Law of Mercy' is apparent.

And since the Peerless Creator wastes nothing, He does nothing in vain. He even utilizes in the creatures of springtime the material dZbris of those of the previous autumn, who, having accomplished their duties, have died, including them in their construction. For sure, according to the meaning of,

*On the Day the earth will be changed into another earth,*²⁶

and the indication of,

*But, indeed, the life of the hereafter, that is the true life,*²⁷

it is indeed a requirement of wisdom that the particles of the earth, which are inanimate and unconscious yet perform important duties in this world, should be utilized and included in some of the constructions of the hereafter, the stones, the trees, and all things of which will most certainly be animate and conscious. For to leave in the world the particles of the world when it has been destroyed or to cast them into non-existence would be wasteful. And from this truth, the tip of truly mighty 'Law of Wisdom' is apparent.

And since the many results, meanings, and fruits of this world, and the woven pages of the acts and deeds, and the spirits and bodies, of those like jinn and human beings who are charged with the Trust are sent to the market of the hereafter. Certainly, it is a requirement of justice and wisdom that after receiving their particular perfection in accordance with the performance of their duties, the particles of the earth, which accompany and serve those fruits and meanings, will be included in the construction of the hereafter. That is, they will be included in it together with the dZbris of this world, which will be destroyed, after many times serving and receiving the light of life, and after being the means for the glorifications of animate creatures. And from this truth, the tip of a truly mighty 'Law of Justice' is apparent.

And since, just as the spirit is dominant over the body, so the commands that bring things into existence, which are written by Divine Determining, are dominant over inanimate matter. Inanimate matter is able to assume a position and an order due to the immaterial writing of Divine Determining.

²⁶ Qur'an, 14:48.

²⁷ Qur'an, 29:64.

For example, in all kinds of eggs and sperm, and varieties of seeds and grains, matter acquires different ranks and lights according to the commands that bring things into existence, which are all written differently by Divine Determining. The inanimate matter of seeds, which is all the same in regard to its substance,²⁸ becomes the source of innumerable different beings. It obtains ranks and lights which are all different. Most certainly, then, it is the requirement of an all-encompassing knowledge that if a particle has been repeatedly in the service of life and of the dominical glorifications that are in life, the wisdom of those meanings will be recorded on the immaterial forehead of the particle by the pen of Divine Determining, which neglects nothing at all. And in this, the tip of a truly mighty 'Law of All-Encompassing Knowledge' is apparent.

Since this is the case, particles are not without purpose.²⁹

IN SHORT: Beyond the visible tips of each of the seven above-mentioned laws, that is, the 'Law of Dominicality', the 'Law of Generosity', the 'Law of Beauty', the 'Law of Mercy', the 'Law of Wisdom', the 'Law of Justice', and the 'Law of All-Encompassing Knowledge', and of a great many other vast laws, a Greatest Name and the greatest manifestation of that Greatest Name is pointed to. It may be understood from that manifestation that, like the rest of the creatures, the transformations of particles in this world are occurring with a sensitive balance measured with knowledge, according to the commands given by Divine power that bring things into existence, on the limits drawn by Divine Determining, for most exalted instances of wisdom. Simply, they are being prepared to go to another higher world.³⁰ In which case, the bodies of animate beings are each like schools, barracks, and guest-houses for the instruction of those travelling particles. It may be stated with certainty that it is so.

²⁸ Indeed, the seeds are all compounds of the four elements; they are formed of matter like hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon. Materially they may be considered to be the same; the difference between them lies only in the immaterial writing of Divine Determining.

²⁹ This sentence is the answer to the word 'since' at the beginning of the preceding seven paragraphs.

³⁰ For, as may be observed, the light of life is kindled and scattered most freely in this turbid and lowly world with an activity that is extremely extensive, and a fresh light of life is illuminated widely, even in insignificant material and rotten substances, and that dense and insignificant matter is refined and polished with the light of life. This indicates clearly that this turbid and lifeless world is being dissolved, polished and made beautiful through the motion of particles and the light of life for the sake of another most subtle, exalted, pure and living world. It is as if it is being adorned in order to go to some subtle world. If those people, therefore, whose minds are so straitened that they cannot squeeze into them the idea of bodily resurrection look with the light of the Qur'an, they will see a 'Law of the Self-Subsistent One through which the universe subsists' that is so comprehensive as to resurrect all particles as though they were an army. It may be clearly seen to be in force and prevailing over creation.

CONCLUSION

As is stated and proved in the First Word, all things say: “In the Name of God.” Thus, like all beings, all particles and all groups and particular assemblages of particles say: “In the Name of God” with the tongue of disposition, and they are in motion.

According to the meaning of the previous three Points, at the beginning of their motion all particles recite: “In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate” through the tongue of disposition. That is, “I am moving in the name of God, for His sake, with His permission, and through His power.” Then, like all creatures, at the end of their motion, all particles and all groups of particles declare through the tongue of disposition: “All praise be God, Sustainer of All the Worlds.” Each particle thus shows itself to be like the tip of a tiny pen of power tracing the embroideries of the skilfully-worked creatures, which are like odes of praise. Indeed, each of them is like the point of a needle turning on creatures, which in turn are like the records of a mighty, immaterial, dominical gramophone with innumerable arms; they cause those creatures to recite odes glorifying their Sustainer and to hymn praises to God.

They will cry out therein, “All Glory be unto You, O God!” And “Peace” will be their greeting therein. And their call will close with, “All praise is due to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds!”³¹

All glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us, indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise!³²

O our Sustainer! Let not our hearts swerve from the truth after You have guided us, and bestow upon us the gift of Your grace; for, indeed, You are the Giver of Gifts.³³

O God! Grant blessings to our master Muhammad that will be pleasing to You and fulfilment to his truth, and to his Family, his Companions, and his brothers, and grant them peace. And protect us and protect our religion. Amen. O Sustainer of All the Worlds!

³¹ Qur’an, 10:10.

³² Qur’an, 2:32.

³³ Qur’an, 3:8.

The Thirty-First Word

On the Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him)

[NOTE: The Ascension is a question that results from the essentials and pillars of belief, and follows on after them, a light that draws strength from the lights of the pillars of belief. For sure, the Ascension cannot be proved independently to irreligious atheists who do not accept the pillars of belief, because it cannot be discussed with those who neither know God, nor recognize the Prophet, nor accept the angels, and who deny the existence of the heavens. Firstly those pillars must be proved. Since this is the case, we shall address the discussion to a believer who, since he considers it unlikely, has misgivings about the Ascension and we shall explain it to him. However, from time to time we shall take into account the atheist who is the position of listener and shall set forth the matter to him. Some flashes of the truth of the Ascension have been mentioned in others of the other Words. At the insistence of my brothers we seek the grace from Almighty God to unite all those different flashes with the essence of the truth, and with all of them to form a mirror to the beauty of the perfections of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him).]

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

Limitless in His glory is He Who transported His servant by night from the Inviolable House of Worship to the Remote House of Worship, the environs of which We had blessed, so that We might show him some of Our signs: for, indeed, He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.¹

*It is no less than inspiration sent down to him; * He was taught by one mighty in power, * Endued with wisdom: for he appeared in [stately form] * While he was in the horizon's loftiest part. * Then he*

¹ Qur'an, 17:1.

*approached and came closer, * And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or [even] nearer; * And thus did [God] reveal unto His servant whatever He revealed. * The [servant's] heart in no way falsified what it saw. * Will you, then, dispute with him as to what he saw? * For, indeed, he saw him at a second descent, * Near the Lote-tree of the farthest limit, * Near it is to the Garden of Abode. * Behold, the Lote-tree was shrouded in mystery unspeakable. * [His] eye did not waver, nor yet did it stray. * Truly did he see some of the most profound of his Sustainer's signs.²*

Since it is related to our question here, I shall expound two allusions –based on principles of the science of rhetoric– contained in the pronominal phrase *for indeed He*, which is part of the vast treasury of the first sublime verse mentioned above. It was also explained in the treatise about the Qur'an's miraculousness.

After mentioning the journey of God's Most Noble Beloved (Upon whom be the best of blessings and most perfect peace) from the mosque at Mecca to the mosque in Jerusalem, which was the beginning of his Ascension, the All-Wise Qur'an says: *He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing*. This phrase, together with the pronoun in the phrase, for indeed He, which alludes to the furthest point of the Ascension indicated to by the verses from Sura an-Najm, refers either to Almighty God or to the Prophet (PBUH).

If it refers to the Prophet (PBUH), the rule of rhetoric and the relationship in the sequence of the words states the following: there is, within this particular journey a general one and a universal ascent during which the Prophet (PBUH) heard and saw the dominical signs and wonders of Divine art which his eyes and ears happened upon within the universal degrees of the Divine Names as far as *the Lote-tree of the farthest limit* and *the distance of two bow-lengths*. It indicates that his insignificant and particular journey was like the key to a journey that is both universal and an exhibition of marvels.

If the pronoun refers to Almighty God, it is thus: in order to invite one of His servants on a journey to His presence and to entrust him with a duty, after sending him from the Mosque in Mecca to that in Jerusalem, which is where the prophets gather, and causing him to meet with them and demonstrating that he was the sole heir of the principles of the religions of all the prophets, He took him on a journey through both the external face of the world of existence and the face that looks to its Creator as far as *the Lote-tree of the farthest limit* and *the distance of two bow-lengths*.

Certainly, he was a servant and the journey was a particular Ascension,

² Qur'an, 53:4-18.

but he had been accorded a Trust that was connected to the whole universe and had been given a light that would change the colour of the universe. Moreover, since he had with him the key to open the door leading to eternal happiness, God Almighty bestowed on him the attribute of “seeing and hearing all things” so that he might demonstrate the world-embracing comprehensive wisdom of the Trust, light, and key – wisdom and purposes which encompassed the whole universe and embraced all creatures.

This profound truth contains four Principles.

The First: Why was the Ascension necessary?

The Second: What was the reality of the Ascension?

The Third: What was the wisdom and purpose of the Ascension?

The Fourth: What are the fruits and benefits of the Ascension?

First Principle

The reason for the Ascension’s necessity

It is said, for example, that Almighty God is *closer to him than his jugular vein*.³ He is closer to everything than anything else. He is free of and beyond corporeality and space. However, all the saints are able to converse with Him in their hearts, so why was the Saint, Muhammad (PBUH), successful in holding an inward conversation with God that any saint may do in his heart, only after and as a result of a long journey like the Ascension?

The Answer: We shall make this profound mystery easier to understand by means of two comparisons. Consider these two comparisons from the Twelfth Word, which are about the mystery of the Qur’an’s miraculousness and the mystery of the Ascension.

First Comparison: A king has two sorts of interviewing, conversation, and discussion at his disposal, and two modes of address and favour. The first is to converse with a common subject about a particular matter and special need by means of a private telephone. The second, under the title of august sovereignty, in the name of supreme kingship, with the dignity of universal rule, and with the aim of publishing and promulgating his commands, is to converse and speak through an envoy connected to those matters or by means of a high official related to those commands. It is also to speak through an illustrious edict that proclaims his majesty.

Thus, *And God’s is the highest similitude*,⁴ like this comparison, the

³ Qur’an, 50:16.

⁴ Qur’an, 16:60.

Creator of the universe, the Lord of all things with their apparent and inner faces, the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, has two modes of conversing, speaking, and favouring. The first is particular and private, the other universal and general. The Ascension, therefore, was a manifestation of the sainthood of Muhammad (PBUH) in the form of a universality and exaltedness superior to all other sainthood. It was being honoured by God Almighty's conversation and address through His Name of Sustainer of All the Universe and title of Creator of All Beings.

Second Comparison: A man holds up the mirror he is holding to the sun. According to its capacity, the mirror receives light, which contains the seven colours, from the sun, and a reflection. The man becomes connected with the sun and converses with it in relation to these. If he directs the luminous mirror towards his dark house or his tiny, private garden, which is covered by a roof, he cannot benefit in relation to the sun's value, but only in accordance with the capacity of the mirror.

A second man, however, puts down the mirror, faces the sun directly, and sees its majesty and understands its grandeur. Then he climbs a very high mountain, sees the brilliance of the sun's broad dominion and converses with it in person and without veil. Then he returns and makes large windows in his house and in the roof over his garden, and opens up ways to the sun in the sky, and speaks and converses with the constant light of the actual sun. And he is able to speak to it gratefully as follows:

"O amiable sun, who is the beauty of the world and pet of the skies, who gilds the face of the earth with its light and makes it and the faces of all flowers smile! You have heated and illuminated my little house and garden in the same way that you have illuminated the whole world and warmed the face of the earth." The first man with the mirror, however, cannot say that, for the sun's reflection and traces are limited and restricted by the mirror, and are in accordance with the restriction.

Thus, the manifestation of the Single and Eternally Besought One, the Pre-Eternal Sun and Post-Eternal Sovereign, appears in the human essence in two forms, which comprise innumerable degrees.

The First is a manifestation through a dominical relationship which is extended to the mirror of the heart. Through it, everyone may receive the particular and universal manifestation of the Pre-Eternal Sun's light, discourse, and conversation in relation to his capacity, and in the relation to the manifestation of the Divine Names and attributes in his traversing the degrees in his spiritual journeying. The degrees of sainthood, which proceed under the shadow of most of the Names and attributes, arise from this sort.

The Second: Since man possesses comprehensiveness and is the most enlightened fruit of the tree of the universe, and since he is able to display at

once in the mirror of his spirit all the Divine Names manifested in the universe, Almighty God displayed, through the manifestation of His Essence and at the greatest level of the Most Beautiful Names, in the member of the human race who reflected them most comprehensively the greatest manifestation of those Names. This display and manifestation is the inner meaning of the Ascension of Muhammad (PBUH), by which his sainthood became the source of his messengership.

Sainthood proceeds through shadow and resembles the first man in the Second Comparison. While in messengership there is no shadow, it looks directly to the oneness of the All-Glorious One and resembles the second man in the Second Comparison. As for the Ascension, since it was the greatest wonder of Muhammad's sainthood and also its highest degree, it was transformed into the degree of messengership. The inner face of the Ascension was sainthood, it went from creation to Creator. While its apparent face was messengership, it came from Creator to creation. Sainthood is spiritual journeying in the levels close to God; it needs a certain amount of time and many degrees must be traversed. While messengership, whose light is greatest, looks to the mystery of uncovering Divine immediacy, for which the passing instant is sufficient. It was for this reason that it is said in the Hadith: "He went and returned in an instant."⁵

Now we say to the atheist who is in the position of listener: "Since the universe resembles a most orderly country, magnificent city, and adorned palace, it surely must have a ruler, owner, and builder. And since there is such a magnificent, All-Glorious Owner, All-Perfect Ruler, and All-Beauteous Maker; and since there was a human being whose view was universal and who demonstrated a relationship with the entire world, country, city, and palace and was connected to all of them through his senses and faculties of perception; certainly, the Magnificent Maker would have an elevated relationship to the fullest degree with that human being, whose view was universal and consciousness comprehensive, and would favour him with an exalted and sacred address.

Among those who manifested this relationship from the time of Adam (Peace be upon him) up to now, Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him) demonstrated it at the very fullest degree according to the testimony of his achievements, that is, his having taken half the globe and a fifth of mankind under this direction and control and having transformed and illuminated the spiritual shape of the universe. This being so, the Ascension, which comprised the very fullest degree of that relationship, is most worthy and suitable for him.

⁵ Suyuti, *al-Khasa'is al-Kubra*, i, 439, 444; Qadi Iyad, *al-Shifa'*, 190, 192.

Second Principle

What was the reality of the Ascension?

The Answer: It consisted of the journeying of the person of Muhammad (PBUH) through the degrees of perfection. That is, through the various Names and titles He makes manifest in the disposition of creatures, and by showing that special servant of His all the works of His dominicality which He displays in the spheres, creation, and regulation within the sovereignty of His dominicality, and in the levels of the heavens within those spheres –each of which is the means to a seat of dominicality and centre for the disposal of power– God Almighty made that servant both embrace all human perfections, and display all the Divine manifestations, and view all the levels of the universe, and the herald of the sovereignty of dominicality and the proclaimer of those things pleasing to God, and the solver of the talisman of the universe. And so that he could do this, He mounted him on Buraq, caused him to flash through the heavens like lightning traversing all its levels, observe Divine dominicality from mansion to mansion like the moon, and from sphere to sphere, and showing him each of the prophets, his brothers, whose abodes are in the heavens of those spheres, He raised him to the station of a distance of two bow-lengths and displayed to him His oneness and His Word and the vision of Himself.

This exalted truth may be examined through the telescope of two comparisons.

First Comparison: As is explained in the Twenty-Fourth Word, a king has different titles in the different spheres and offices of his government, different qualities and attributes in the classes of his subjects, and different names and marks in the degrees of his sovereignty. For example, he is Wise Judge in the judiciary, Sovereign in the civil service, Commander-in-Chief in the army, Caliph in the learned establishment, and so on; it is the same with the rest of his names and titles. In each sphere he has a seat or chair which has the meaning of a throne. The single king may be able to have a thousand names and titles in those spheres of sovereignty and levels of government; he may have a thousand thrones of sovereignty one within the other. It is as if the ruler is present and knowing in every sphere through his corporate personality and through his telephone; and sees and is seen in every class through his law, regulation, and representatives; and administers and observes from behind the veil in every level through his command, knowledge, and power; and has a different centre and headquarters in every sphere. His decrees are all different from one another, and his levels are all different from one another.

Thus, a king such as this may allow a person of his choosing to visit all his different spheres and offices and may show him the imperial dominion and sovereign commands special to each. He may cause him to travel from sphere to sphere and from level to level until he brings him to his presence. There he will entrust him with certain universal and general commands concerning all those spheres and will send him back.

Similarly to this comparison, the Sustainer of All the Worlds, Who is the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, has functions and attributes in the levels of His dominicality which are all different but that look to one another; and Names and signatures in the spheres of His Divinity which are all different but which appear one within the other; and manifestations and revelations in the performance of His splendid deeds which are all different but which resemble each other; and titles in the disposal of His power which are all different, but which hint of one another; and sacred appearances in the manifestation of His attributes which are all different but which all point to each other; and acts of disposal in the manifestation of His actions which are all different but complete one another; and He has a majestic dominicality in His multicoloured art and creatures whose aspects are all different but which gaze on one another.

As a consequence of this vast mystery, He ordered the universe and arranged it in an amazing and wonderful fashion with different formations one over the other from particles, which are the tiniest level of creatures, to the heavens, and from the first level of the heavens to the Sublime Throne. Each heaven is like the roof of a different world, a throne for dominicality, a centre for Divine disposal.

For sure, with regard to Divine oneness, all the Divine Names may be found in those spheres and levels; they are manifested together with the titles. But just as in the Ministry of Justice the title of Wise Judge was fundamental and dominant and there the rest of the king's titles looked to its command and were dependent on it, so in each level of creatures, in each heaven, one Name, one Divine title, is dominant, and the other titles look to it.

For example, in whichever sphere of the heavens the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) met with Jesus (Peace be upon him), who manifested the Name of All-Powerful, in that sphere God Almighty Himself was manifested with title of All-Powerful. And, for example, the most predominant in the sphere of the heavens which is Moses' (Peace be upon him) seat is the title of Speaker, which he manifested. And so on.

Thus, since the person of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) manifested the Greatest Name, and all the Divine Names, and since his prophethood was universal, he was surely connected with all the spheres of

dominicality. And to meet with the prophets whose seats are in those spheres and to pass through all those levels, surely necessitates the fact of the Ascension.

Second Comparison: The title of Commander-in-Chief, which is one of the titles of a king, is manifested and makes an appearance in every rank of the army from that of the commander-in-chief, which is a broad and universal rank, to that of a corporal, which is special and particular. For example, a private sees in the person of his corporal a sample of the imposing title of Commander-in-Chief, he looks to it and takes his orders from it. On becoming a corporal, the manifestation of the title in the sergeant's rank will command his attention and it will be to that that he will look. Then, if he is promoted to the rank of sergeant, he will see a sample of the title of Commander-in-Chief and a manifestation of it in the lieutenant's rank. It will be present together with a seat peculiar to it at that rank. And so on. He will see the title in each of its ranks of captain, major, general, and field marshal in relation to its smallness or largeness.

Now, if the Commander-in-Chief wishes to entrust the private with a duty which concerns all the ranks of the army, if he wishes to promote him to a rank where he can observe each sphere like an inspector and himself be observed; he will cause him to make a tour of inspection of the ranks, from that of the corporal to the highest, and will also allow him to be seen. Then he will receive him into his presence and honouring him with conversation and conferring on him a decoration and a decree, will send him back whence he came in an instant.

The following point must be noted in this comparison: if the king is not in any way powerless and if he has spiritual power in the same way that he has material power, he will not appoint persons like the general, field marshal and lieutenant as his representatives but will himself be present everywhere in person. He will give his orders directly, merely from behind certain veils and individuals, themselves of rank. In fact, there are narrations relating that certain kings who were saints of the highest level executed their affairs in many spheres in the form of different individuals.

As far as the truth we looked at in this comparison is concerned, since the Commander-in-Chief was in no way impotent, the order and command came directly from him in every sphere. Affairs were executed through his command, will, and power.

Like this comparison, the commands and authoritative functions of the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, Who is the Ruler of the heavens and the earth, Owner of the command of "*Be!*" *and it is*,⁶ and the Absolute Commander, are in force in all the levels of creatures and are conformed to

⁶ See, Qur'an, 36:82, etc.

with perfect obedience and order. Each appears as a sphere of dominicality, a level of rulership in the levels of creatures and classes of beings, which stretch from particles to the planets and from flies to the heavens, and which, great and small, particular and universal, are all different but are such that they look one to the other.

Now, the way to understand the exalted aims and mighty results of the entire universe and to see all the different duties of worship of all its levels; and, through observing the sovereignty of dominicality of the One of Grandeur and the splendour of His rule, to understand what is pleasing to Him; and to be the herald of His sovereignty, is to make a journey through all those levels and spheres until the Sublime Throne, which is the title of the greatest sphere, is reached; until *The distance of two bow-lengths*. It is to meet there with the All-Glorious and Beauteous One. And this journey is the reality of the Ascension.

Like ordinary human beings travel in the mind with the speed of imagination, and saints journey in the heart with the speed of lightning, like angels, which are luminous bodies, circulate with the speed of spirit from the Throne to the earth and from the earth to the Throne; and like the people of Paradise will rise to Paradise from the resurrection with the speed of Buraq through a distance greater than five hundred years;⁷ of a certainty the body of Muhammad (PBUH) went together with his elevated spirit as far as the Divine Throne. For the body of Muhammad (PBUH) was the treasury of the faculties of the spirit of Muhammad (PBUH), and the means for the performance of its duties, which is light and has the characteristics of light, is subtler than the hearts of the saints, more insubstantial than the spirits of the dead and the bodies of the angels, and more ethereal than the astral bodies and subtle bodies.

Now we consider the atheist who is listening. It comes to mind that he would think of saying: "I do not recognize God and I do not know the Prophet (PBUH), how should I believe in the Ascension?" To which we would reply as follows.

Since the universe and beings exist, and within them are acts and creation; and since an orderly act cannot occur without an author, a meaningful book cannot be without a scribe, and a skilful embroidery be without an embroiderer; the purposeful acts which fill the universe surely have an author, and the meaningful letters and amazing embroideries which cover the face of the earth and are renewed from season to season have a scribe and an embroiderer.

And since two governors directing the same matter spoils the order in that matter being spoilt; and since from a fly's wing to the lamps in the heavens

⁷ Bukhari, viii, 147; Ibn Mubarak, *al-Zuhd*, ii, 122.

there is perfect order, there must be only one governor, one ruler. For the art and wisdom in everything is so wonderful it necessitates that the Maker of one thing is powerful over all things, to the extent that He knows every matter. Since this is so, if He was not One, there would have to be gods to the number of beings. These would be both opposed to and similar to one another, and it would therefore be a hundred thousand times impossible for this wonderful order not to be broken.

Furthermore, since as is self-evidently apparent, at a command the classes of beings are in motion in a fashion a thousand times more well-ordered than an army – each group, from the stars, sun and moon and their motions to the flowers of the almond, displaying the decorations and uniforms the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One has conferred on it, and the motion He has determined, a thousand times more regularly and perfectly than an army – since this is so, the universe has an Absolute Ruler behind the veil of the Unseen to Whose command its beings look and conform.

And since according to the testimony of all the wise matters He carries out and splendid works He displays, the Ruler is an All-Glorious Sovereign; and since according to the bounties He demonstrates He is a most Compassionate Sustainer, and according to the beautiful examples of His art which He exhibits, He is a Maker Who loves His art; and since He is an All-Wise Creator Who wishes to attract to His works of art the admiring gazes of conscious beings through the adornments and skills He demonstrates; and since it may be understood that He wishes to make known to conscious beings the meaning of the adornments, which astound the mind, that He displays in the creation of the world and to inform them through the wisdom of His dominicality about where creatures come from and where they are going; most certainly, this All-Wise Ruler and All-Knowing Maker wishes to demonstrate His dominicality.

And since he wishes to make Himself known and loved by conscious creatures through the great many works of benevolence and mercy and wonders of art He displays, He will surely make known to them by means of a herald what He desires of them and what those things are that please Him, and concern them.

Since this is so, He will appoint one of the conscious beings and will proclaim His dominicality through him. He will honour a herald with the proximity of His presence and make him the means of exhibiting the art which He loves. He will appoint one of them as a teacher in order to inform other conscious beings of those exalted aims and to display His perfections. He will certainly appoint a guide so that the talisman contained in the universe and the riddle of dominicality He has concealed within beings will not remain meaningless. And He will appoint a guide who will teach the purposes contained in the beauties of art He displays and publishes as a

spectacle for all to gaze on so that they do not remain useless and vain. Moreover, in order to announce the things that please Him to conscious beings, He will raise one of them to a rank above the others, and will inform him of those things and send him to them.

Since reality and wisdom require it to be thus and the one most worthy to perform this duty was the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), for he actually performed those duties most perfectly, to which fact the world of Islam which he founded and the light of Islam which he showed are truthful and just witnesses; this necessitates that he should have risen above all the rest of the universe, surpassed all beings, and attained to a rank at which he held a universal, elevated, and all-embracing conversation with the Creator of all beings. Thus, the Ascension expresses this truth as well.

In Short: Since He has formed, arranged, and adorned the vast universe in this way for mighty purposes and sublime aims such as those mentioned above; and since among beings mankind exists to see this universal dominicality together with all its subtleties and this supreme Divine sovereignty together with all its truths; most certainly that Absolute Ruler will speak with man, He will inform him of His purposes.

Since everyone cannot free themselves from particular, insignificant, and lowly matters and rise to the highest and universal position, and therefore cannot themselves receive the Ruler's universal address, certain special individuals from among human beings will be appointed to that duty so that it may be related to in two respects. First, in order to teach human beings, they must be human beings themselves. And in order to be able to receive the address directly, they must be extremely exalted spiritually.

Thus, since among those human beings the one who made known the purposes of the universe's Maker most perfectly, disclosed the talisman of the universe and solved the riddle of creation, and who heralded the sublimity of the sovereignty of dominicality in the best way was Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), certainly, of all human beings he would make a spiritual journey in the form of an Ascension touring the corporeal world; he would traverse all the levels to beyond the intermediate world of the Divine Names, the manifestation of the Divine attributes and acts, and the levels of beings, all of which are known as the seventy thousand veils. And the Ascension was this.

Again the following comes to mind: O listener! You are thinking of asking: "How should I believe it? What does it mean to traverse a distance of thousands of years to a Sustainer Who is closer than anything else and to meet with Him after passing through seventy thousand veils?" To which we reply as follows:

God Almighty is closer to everything than anything else, but everything is infinitely distant from Him. For example, if the sun possessed consciousness and the power of speech, it would be able to converse with you by means of a mirror held in your hand. It would have power of disposal over you as it wished. Indeed, although it would be closer to you than the pupil of your eye, which is like a mirror, you would be approximately four thousand years' distance from it and could in no way draw closer to it. If you progressed and rose to the position of the moon and came to the point of being face to face with it, you would still only be able to be a sort of mirror to it.

Similarly, although the All-Glorious One, Who is the Sun of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, is closer to everything than anything else, everything is infinitely distant from Him. Only one who traverses all beings, rises above particularity and gradually passes through the thousands of veils in the degrees of universality till he approaches a Divine Name which encompasses all beings, and then traverses the many degrees beyond it, may be honoured by a sort of Divine proximity.

For example, a private is far inferior in rank to the commander-in-chief. He looks to his commander through the small sample of his commander's rank he sees in his corporal, at a great distance and beyond many veils, as it were. To gain true proximity to his rank through his corporate personality, the private has to pass through many universal degrees or ranks, like that of lieutenant, captain, and major. Whereas the commander-in-chief can be present with the private and seeing, in person as well as in meaning, through his commands, regulations, view, decree, and knowledge. Since this truth has been proved decisively in the Sixteenth Word, we deem that sufficient and cut short the discussion here.

Again it comes to mind that you are thinking of asking: "I deny the existence of the heavens and I do not believe in the angels, so how can I believe in someone travelling in the heavens and meeting with the angels?"

Yes, of course, it is difficult to demonstrate something and convince someone like you over whose eyes a veil has been drawn and who sees only what is immediately apparent to them. But the truth is so brilliant that even the blind can see it, so we also say what is unanimously agreed, that the depths of space are full of matter called 'ether'. Subtle energies like light, electricity, and heat point to the existence of some subtle matter which fills space. For just as fruits clearly demonstrate the existence of the tree that bore them, flowers their flower-bed, shoots their seed-bed, and fishes the sea, the stars also thrust before the mind's eye the necessary existence of their source, seed-bed, sea, and flower-bed.

Since there are different formations in the world above us and different rules are seen to be in force under different conditions, the heavens, which

are the source of those rules, also differ. And since just as in man there are immaterial faculties apart from his body, like the mind, heart, spirit, imagination, and memory, certainly in the world, which is the macroanthropos, and in the universe, which is the tree of which man is the fruit, there are other worlds apart from the corporeal world. Moreover, there are heavens to each world, from the world of the earth to the world of Paradise.

As far as the angels are concerned, we say this: on the globe of the earth, which is medium-sized among the planets and insignificant and dense among the stars, animate and conscious beings, the most valuable and luminous among beings, are found in countless numbers. So surely the stars, which are like embellished castles and fine palaces compared to the earth, which is like a dark house, and the skies, which are like the seas of the stars, will be the dwelling-places of angels and spirit beings, which are conscious, animate, extremely numerous, and of various sorts.

In my commentary on the Holy Qur'an called *Isharat al-I'jaz* (Signs of Miraculousness), both the existence and plurality of the heavens have been proved conclusively in the section on the verse,

*Then He applied His design to the heavens and fashioned them into seven heavens,*⁸

and in the Twenty-Ninth Word we have proved the existence of angels with the finality of two plus two equals four, so considering those to be sufficient we cut short the discussion here.

In Short: It is required by wisdom and by reason that the heavens are formed of ether, that they are the source of subtle energies like electricity, light, heat, and gravity, and that, in accordance with the Hadith, "The heavens are waves held back,"⁹ they are favourable for the motion of stars and planets. It is further required that from *majarrat al-sama'*¹⁰ (the Milky Way) to the closest planet they should consist of seven levels in different states and formations, and that each level, each world, from the world of the earth to the Intermediate Realm and World of Similitudes, to the World of the Hereafter, should have a heaven, like a roof.

And the following comes to mind: O atheist! You say: "Man is only able to ascend to a height of one or two kilometres with a thousand difficulties by means of the aeroplane.¹¹ How then could someone come and go bodily within a few minutes covering a distance that would normally take thousands of years?"

⁸ Qur'an, 2:29.

⁹ *Tirmidhi*, Tafsir Sura al-Hadid, 1; *Musnad*, ii, 370.

¹⁰ Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, xx, 123; Ibn Hajar, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, viii, 135.

¹¹ This treatise was written in 1928 or '29. [Tr.]

To which we reply: According to your science, in its annual rotation a heavy body like the earth cuts a distance of approximately one hundred and eighty-eight hours in one minute. In one year it covers a distance of approximately twenty-five thousand years. Should an All-Powerful and Glorious One, then, Who causes its regular motion and revolves it like a stone in a sling be unable to convey a human being to His Throne? Should a wisdom that causes the body of the earth, which is extremely heavy, to travel around the sun through a dominical law known the sun's gravity like a Mevlevi dervish be unable to raise a human body to the Throne of the All-Merciful One like lightning through the gravity of that All-Merciful One's mercy and the attraction of the Pre-Eternal Sun's love?

Again it comes to mind that you would say: "All right, so he could ascend there, but why did he and why should he? Would it not have been enough if he had gone just in heart and spirit like the saints?"

To which we would reply: Since the All-Glorious Maker wished to display His wondrous signs which lie in both the outer aspects of things and in their aspects that look directly to Himself, and to make the workshops and sources of the universe spectacles to be gazed upon, and to point out the results of man's actions in the hereafter, it was necessary to take together with his heart and spirit as far as His Throne Muhammad's (PBUH) eyes, which were like the key to the world of visible objects, and his ears, which perceived the signs in the world of sound. Furthermore, it is required by wisdom and reason that the All-Glorious Maker should have taken as far as His Throne his blessed body, which was like the machine of his spirit comprising different members and components, by means of which be performed his duties.

Just as in Paradise Divine wisdom makes the body accompany the spirit, because it is the body that is the means by which the duties of worship are performed and the means of innumerable pleasures and pains, so did his blessed body accompany his spirit. Since the body goes to Paradise together with the spirit, it is pure wisdom that He should have made the blessed body of Muhammad (PBUH) accompany his self, which ascended to the Lote-tree of the farthest limit, which is the trunk of the home of Paradise.

Again it comes to mind that you would say: "According to rational criteria is it not impossible to traverse a distance of thousands of years in several minutes?"

To which we would reply: The motion in the different works of the All-Glorious Maker's art varies to the utmost degree. For example, it is well-known how different are the speeds of light, electricity, spirit, and imagination, and that of sound. And, as has been established by science, the speeds of the motion of different planets are so different that it astounds the mind.

How then should the motion at the speed of spirit of his subtle body, which followed his exalted spirit during the Ascension, seem contrary to reason?

Furthermore, it sometimes happens that on sleeping for ten minutes you are subject to a year's-worth of different states. And even, if the words spoken and heard during a dream lasting one minute were collected together, for them to be spoken and heard in the waking world, a day or even longer, would be necessary. That means a single period of time is relative; it may seem like one day to one person and like a year to another.

Consider the meaning of this by means of a comparison. Let us imagine a clock which measures the speed of the movement displayed by man, cannon-balls, sound, light, electricity, spirit, and imagination. The clock has ten hands. One shows the hours while another counts the minutes in a sphere sixty times greater. Another hand counts the seconds in a sphere sixty times greater than the previous one, and yet others each count regularly decreasing fractions to a tenth of a second in vast spheres that regularly increase sixty times.

Let us suppose the circles described by the hand counting hours was the size of our clock, so that of the hand counting tenths of a second would have to be the size of the annual orbit of the earth, or even larger. Now, let us suppose there are two people. One of them is as though mounted on the hour-hand and observes according to its motion while the other is on the hand counting tenths of a second. There will be an enormous difference, as great as the relation between our clock and the annual orbit of the earth, as regards the things observed by these two individuals in the same period of time.

Thus, since time is like a hue, shade, or ribbon of motion, a rule that is in force in motion is also in force in time. And so, although the things we observe in the period of one hour would be equalled in amount by the conscious individual mounted on the hour-hand of the clock, like the one mounted on the hand counting tenths of a second, God's Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him) mounted Buraq of Divine Assistance and in the same space of time, in that specified hour, like lightning traversed the entire sphere of contingency, saw the wonders of the outer aspects of things and the aspects which look to their Creator, ascended to the point of the sphere of necessity, was honoured with Divine conversation and favoured with the vision of Divine beauty, received his decree, and returned to his duty. It was possible for this to happen, and it did happen.

And again it comes to mind that you would say: "Yes, so it could happen, it is possible. But everything possible does not occur, does it? Is there anything else similar to this so that it can be accepted? How can the occurrence of something to which there are no similar cases be posited through only probability?"

To which we would reply: There are so many similar cases to it that they cannot be enumerated. For example, anyone who possesses sight can ascend with his eyes from the ground to the planet Neptune in a second. Anyone who has knowledge can mount the laws of astronomy with his intellect and travel beyond the stars in a minute. Anyone who has belief can, by mounting his thought on the action and pillars of the obligatory prayers, through a sort of Ascension, leave the universe behind and go as far as the Divine presence. Anyone who sees with his heart and any saint of perfection can, through his spiritual journeying, traverse in forty days the Divine Throne and the sphere of the Divine Names and attributes. And certain persons, even, like Shaykh Geylani and Imam-i Rabbani, truthfully recorded their spiritual ascensions as far as the Throne, which lasted a minute.

Furthermore, there is the coming and going of the angels, which are luminous bodies, from the Divine Throne to the earth and from the earth to the Throne in a short period of time. And the people of Paradise ascend to the gardens of Paradise from the plain of resurrection in a short space of time. Of course, this many examples demonstrate that it is pure wisdom, completely rational, and an occurrence about which there can be no doubt that the person of Muhammad (PBUH), who is the Lord of all the saints, the leader of all the believers, the head of the people of Paradise, and is accepted by all the angels, should have had an ascension which was the means of spiritual journeying, and that it should have been in a form appropriate to his rank.

Third Principle

What was the wisdom and purpose of the Ascension?

The Answer: The wisdom of the Ascension is so exalted that human thought cannot comprehend it. It is so profound that human thought cannot reach it, and so subtle and fine that the intellect cannot see it by itself. But even if the reality of the instances of wisdom in the Ascension cannot be comprehended, their existence may be made known through certain indications. For example, as follows:

In order to demonstrate the light of His unity and the manifestation of His oneness in these levels of multiplicity, the Creator of the universe chose an eminent individual to represent all creatures, and took him by means of an Ascension that was like a link from the furthest levels of multiplicity to the source of unity. There, addressing him as representing all conscious beings, He explained to him the Divine purposes and made them known through him, and observed through his gaze the beauty of His art and perfection of His dominicality in the mirrors of His creatures, and caused him to observe them.

Moreover, according to the testimony of His works, the Maker of the world possesses infinite beauty and perfection. The two of them, both beauty and perfection, are loved for themselves. Since this is so, the Possessor of that beauty and perfection has an infinite love for them, and His infinite love is manifested in many different ways in His works of art. He loves His works of art because He sees His beauty and perfection within them.

The most lovable and elevated among the works of art are animate beings. The most lovable and elevated among animate beings are conscious beings. And by reason of their comprehensiveness, the most lovable among conscious beings are to be found among human beings. The most lovable individual among human beings is the one who has most fully developed his potentiality and displayed the samples within it of the perfections manifested in all creatures and spread among them.

Thus, in order to see at one point and in one mirror all the varieties of His love spread through all creatures and to display, through the mystery of His oneness, all the varieties of His beauty, the Maker of beings will take a person who is at the degree of being a luminous fruit of the tree of creation and whose heart is like a seed containing the essential truths of that tree, and will demonstrate the belovedness of that individual, who represents the universe, through an Ascension that is like a thread linking the seed, which is the origin, with the fruit, which is the end. He will draw him to His presence and honour him with the beauty of the vision of Himself. And, in order to cause him to spread that sacred state to others, He will favour him with His Word and entrust him with His Decree.

In order to look at this exalted wisdom, we shall observe it through the telescope of two comparisons.

First Comparison: As is explained in detail in the story-comparison in the Eleventh Word, there was an illustrious king who had vast treasures and in those treasures many varieties of jewels were to be found. He had much skill in strange crafts, comprehensive knowledge of innumerable curious arts, and erudition and learning in numberless wondrous sciences. In accordance with the mystery that every possessor of beauty and perfection wants both to see and display his beauty and perfection, of course that skilful king wished to open an exhibition and to set up displays within it in order to reveal to the people the splendour of his sovereignty so they might gaze on it, and to manifest both the glitter of his wealth and the wonders of his art and the marvels of his knowledge. In this way he might observe his own transcendent beauty and perfection in two respects. The first was so that he himself might see with his own eyes, which were cognizant of reality, while the other was so that he might look through the gaze of others.

As a consequence of this wisdom, he began to build a huge and splendid

palace. It was magnificently divided into apartments and mansions. He adorned it with every sort of bejewelled treasure from his coffers, and decorated it with the finest and most gorgeous arts of his own handiwork. He ordered it with the greatest refinements of his knowledge and science, and decked it out and completed it with the miraculous works of his learning. Next, he spread tables with varieties of bounties and the most delicious of foods worthy for each group and prepared a general banquet. Then, in order to display his perfections to his subjects, he invited them to the banquet and to behold the perfections.

Then he appointed one of them as the highest ranking general, invited him up from the lower levels and mansions to tour sphere after sphere in the levels rising one after the other. Showing him the successive machinery and workshops of his wonderful art and the storehouses for the produce coming from below, he brought him to his own particular sphere and private apartment. There, he honoured him through showing him the blessed person who was the source of all those perfections and taking him into his presence. He informed him of the true nature of the palace and of his own perfections. He appointed him as guide to the other spectators and sent him back. He was to describe to the people the palace's maker by means of its contents, inscriptions, and wonders, and inform those who entered the palace of the allusive meanings of the inscriptions within it, what the works of art signified, and what the harmonious and well-proportioned inscriptions and works of art in its interior were, and how they pointed to the perfections and skills of the palace's owner. He was also to teach them the correct behaviour and formalities in viewing the exhibition and describe the protocol and ceremonies which were in accordance with the pleasure and desires of the learned and skilful king, who did not appear.

In exactly the same way, *And God's is the highest similitude*, the All-Glorious Maker, Who is the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, desired to behold and display His infinite perfections and boundless beauty. So He made this world in such a fashion that every being utters His perfections with numerous tongues and points to His beauty with many signs. The universe shows through all its beings the many hidden immaterial treasures in all of His Most Beautiful Names and the many veiled subtleties in all of His sacred titles. And it shows this in such a way that, although since the time of Adam, all sciences together with all of their laws have studied this book of the universe, only a tiny proportion of the book's meanings and signs, which state and point to the Divine Names and perfections, have been read.

Thus, the wisdom of the All-Glorious One of Beauty, the All-Beauteous One of Glory, the Maker possessing Perfection, Who opens the palace of the world as though it was an exhibition in order to see and display His own transcendent beauty and perfections, requires that He should inform

someone of the meaning of the palace's signs so that they do not remain vain and without benefit for conscious beings on the earth. His wisdom requires that He should cause one of them to travel in the higher worlds, which are the sources of the wonders in the palace and are the treasuries of their results; that He should elevate him above all others, honour him with His close presence and cause him to tour the worlds of the hereafter, and entrust him with numerous duties, such as teacher to all His servants, herald of the sovereignty of His dominicality, announcer of those things pleasing to Himself, and expounder of the signs of creation in the palace of the world; that He should mark out his pre-eminence by conferring on him the decorations of miracles, and should make known through a decree like the Qur'an that that person is the truthful personal interpreter of the All-Glorious One.

Thus, by way of example, we have demonstrated through the telescope of this comparison one or two of the many instances of wisdom in the Ascension. Others may be thought of in the same way.

Second Comparison: If a knowledgeable and skilful person were to compose and write a miraculous book, and on all the book's pages were as many truths as would fill a hundred books, and in all its lines as many subtle meanings as would fill a hundred pages, and in all its words as many truths as would fill a hundred lines, and in all its letters as many meanings as would fill a hundred words, and if all the meanings and truths of the book were to look to and point to the transcendent perfections of its miracle-displaying writer, he most certainly would not leave such an inexhaustible treasury closed and thus worthless. He would surely teach it to others so that such a valuable book would not remain meaningless and vain, and his own hidden perfections would become apparent and find their perfection, and his transcendent beauty be seen; and so that he too should be pleased, and that he should make himself loved. Moreover, he would cause someone to go through that wonderful book from the first page to the last and teach him all its meanings and truths so that the person would then teach them to others.

In exactly the same way, in order to display His perfections, His beauty, and the truths of His Names, the Pre-Eternal Inscraper has written the universe in such a way that all beings set forth and state His infinite perfections, Names, and attributes together with their innumerable facets and aspects. Of course, if a book's meaning remains unknown, its value is reduced to nothing. However, a book like the universe, every word of which contains thousands of meanings, cannot lose its value or be made to do so.

Since this is so, the book's Writer will certainly make it known and explain a part of it to each group according to their capacity. He will instruct in all the contents of the book the individual who has the most extensive and

comprehensive view, the most universal consciousness, and the greatest ability. Wisdom requires that He should take the individual on a lofty journey in order to teach him all the contents of such a book and its universal truths. That is, He should cause him to travel from the furthest extreme of the levels of multiplicity, which is the first page, to the sphere of Divine oneness, which is the final page. Thus, through this comparison, you can look to an extent at the exalted instances of wisdom in the Ascension.

Now, we shall consider the atheist who is listening, and, listening to his heart, we shall learn what state it is in. And so it comes to mind that his heart would say: “I have begun to believe in it now, but I still do not have a clear understanding of it. I have three more important difficulties.

“*The First:* Why was this mighty Ascension special to Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him)?

“*The Second:* How is he the seed of the universe? And you say that the universe was created from his Light, and also that he was its farthest and most illumined fruit. What does that mean?

“*The Third:* In your explanations above you say that he made his Ascension in order to rise to the celestial realm and to see the machinery and workshops of the works of art found in the realm of the earth, and the treasuries of their results. What does this mean?”

The Answer

Your First Difficulty: It has been analysed in detail in the first thirty Words, so here we shall set out a concise list briefly indicating the perfections of Muhammad (PBUH), the signs of his prophethood, and the fact that he was the most worthy to make the Ascension. It is as follows.

Firstly: Despite numerous corruptions in the texts of Holy Scriptures like the Torah, Gospels, and Psalms, in recent times even, an exacting scholar like Husayn Jisri extracted one hundred and fourteen good tidings of Muhammad’s prophethood (PBUH), which he set forth in his *Risale-i Hamidiye*.¹²

Secondly: It has been proved historically that there were many predictions accurately forecasting the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), like those of the two soothsayers Shiqq and Satih, which, a while previously to his prophethood, gave news of it and the fact that he was to be the final prophet.¹³

Thirdly: There were hundreds of extraordinary happenings, famous in history, called irhasat, that is, signs forewarning men of a coming prophet, like, for example, on the night of Muhammad’s (PBUH) birth, the idols in the

¹² Husayn al-Jisri, *Risale-i Hamidiye* 4 vols. Turk.tr. Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı (Istanbul: 1308); Suyuti, *al-Khasa’is al-Kubra*, i, 26, 73.

¹³ Ibn Sayyid al-Nas, *Uyun al-Athar*, I, 29; Qadi Iyad, *al-Shifa’*, i, 364-6.

Ka'ba fell from their places and the famous palace of Khosroes the Persian was rent asunder.¹⁴

Fourthly: History and the Prophet's biographies show that he satisfied the thirst of an army with water flowing from his fingers, that in the presence of a large congregation in the mosque, the dry wooden support against which Muhammad (PBUH) was leaning moaned like a camel and wept on being separated from him when he ascended the pulpit, and that he was distinguished by close on a thousand miracles attested to by the verses of the Qur'an, such as,

*And the moon split,*¹⁵

referring to the splitting of the moon, and verified by those who investigated them.

Fifthly: Anyone who considers the facts and is fair and just cannot hesitate to agree that, as is unanimously agreed by friend and foe alike, good moral qualities were to be found at the highest degree in his personality, and that, in accordance with the testimony of all his dealings and actions, attributes and character of the greatest excellence were apparent in the way he performed his duties and proclaimed Islam, and, in accordance with the fine qualities and conduct enjoined by the religion of Islam, laudable virtues of the highest order were to be found in the law he brought.

Sixthly: As is alluded to in the Second Indication of the Tenth Word, it is a requirement of wisdom that Divinity be manifested. And this desire of Divinity to be manifested is met at the highest level and most brilliantly by the comprehensive worship performed by Muhammad (PBUH) in the practice of his religion. Also, wisdom and truth require that the Creator of the world displays His beauty in its utter perfection through some means. And the one who met that wish, and displayed and described His beauty most perfectly was self-evidently the person of Muhammad (PBUH).

It was also clearly Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to the desire of the world's Maker to exhibit and attract attentive gazes towards His perfect art within infinite beauty, heralded that art with the loudest voice.

Again it was necessarily Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to the desire of the Sustainer of All the Worlds to proclaim His unity in the levels of multiplicity, announced all the degrees of unity, each at the greatest level of unity.

And, as is indicated by the utter beauty in beings and as is required by truth and wisdom, the world's Owner desires to see and display in mirrors, His infinite essential beauty and the subtleties and qualities of His exquisite

¹⁴ Qadi Iyad, *al-Shifa'*, i, 366-8; Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, i, 126.

¹⁵ Qur'an, 54:1.

ness. And again it was self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to that desire, acted as a mirror and displayed His beauty in the most radiant fashion, and loved it and made others love it.

Also, in response to the desire of the Maker of the palace of this world to exhibit His hidden treasures, which are filled with the most wonderful miracles and priceless jewels, and through them to describe and make known His perfections, it was again self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who exhibited, described, and displayed them in the most comprehensive fashion.

Also, since the Maker of the universe has made it in such a way that He adorns it with different varieties of wonders and embellishments and has included conscious creatures in it so that they might make tours and excursions and ponder over it and take lessons, wisdom requires that He should desire to make known the meanings and value of the works of art to those who observe and ponder over them. And it was again self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to this desire of the universe's Maker, by means of the All-Wise Qur'an, acted as guide in the most comprehensive fashion to jinn and man, indeed, to spirit beings and angels.

Also, the All-Wise Ruler of the universe wishes, by means of an envoy, to cause all conscious beings to unravel the obscure talisman containing the aims and purposes of the change and transformations in the universe and to solve the riddle of the three perplexing questions: "Where do beings come from?", "What is their destination?", and, "What are they?" And again it was self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to this wish of the All-Wise Ruler, by means of the truths of the Qur'an, unravelled the talisman and solved the riddle in the clearest and most comprehensive fashion.

Also, the All-Glorious Maker of the universe desires to make Himself known to conscious beings by means of all His fine artefacts and to make them love Him through all His precious bounties, and, most certainly, to make known to them by means of an envoy His wishes and what will please Him in return for those bounties. And again it was self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to this desire of the All-Glorious Maker, by means of the Qur'an, expounded those wishes and things that please Him in the most exalted and perfect fashion.

Also, since the Sustainer of All the Worlds has given to man, who is the fruit of the universe, a comprehensive disposition which encompasses the universe and has prepared him for universal worship, and since, because of his faculties and senses, multiplicity and the world afflict man, the Sustainer desires to turn man's face from multiplicity to unity, from transience to permanence. And again it was self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to this desire, by means of the Qur'an, acted as guide in the most comprehensive and complete fashion, and in the best way, and carried out the duty of prophethood in the most perfect manner.

Among beings the most superior are animate beings, and among animate beings the most superior are conscious beings, and among conscious beings the most superior are true human beings. So the one among true human beings who carried out the above-mentioned duties at the most comprehensive level and in the most perfect manner would rise through an all-embracing Ascension to *the distance of two bow-lengths*, knock at the door of eternal happiness, open the treasury of Mercy, and see the hidden truths of belief. Again it would be him.

Seventhly: As is plain to see, beings are made beautiful with the utmost degree of fine embellishment and adornment. Such an embellishment and adornment clearly demonstrate that their Maker possesses an extremely strong will to make beautiful and intention to adorn. The will to make beautiful and adorn demonstrates that the Maker necessarily possesses a strong desire for and holy love towards His art. And among beings the one who displayed altogether in himself the most comprehensive and subtle wonders of art, and knew them and made them known and himself loved, and who appreciated the beauties to be found in other beings, declaring: “What wonders God has willed!”, and was most beloved in the sight of his Maker, Who nurtures and loves His art, would most certainly be him.

Thus, the one who, declaring: “Glory be to God! What wonders God has willed! God is most Great!” in the face of the exquisiteness that gilds beings and the subtle perfections that illuminate them, causes the heavens to ring out, and who, through the strains of the Qur’an, causes the universe to reverberate, and through his admiration and appreciation, his contemplation and display, and his mentioning of the Divine Names and affirmation of Divine unity, brings land and sea to ecstasy, is again self-evidently that one (PBUH).

And so, according to the meaning of ‘the cause is like the doer,’ it is pure truth and sheer wisdom that the one in whose scales shall be found the equivalent of all the good deeds performed by his community, and whose spiritual perfections draw strength from the benedictions of all his community, and who, as a result of the duties he discharged in his messengership, received immaterial recompense and boundless emanations of Divine mercy and love, should advance by the stairway of the Ascension as far as Paradise, *the Lote-tree of the farthest limit*, the Divine Throne, and *the distance of two bow-lengths*.

Your Second Difficulty: O you who is listening! This second truth that you make difficult is so profound and exalted that the mind can neither rise to it nor draw close to it. It may be seen only with the light of belief. However, the fact that this truth exists may be brought close to the understanding by means of allegory and comparison. In which case, we shall attempt to do that to some small degree.

Thus, when the universe is considered from the point of view of wisdom,

it is seen to bear the meaning of a mighty tree. For just as a tree has branches, leaves, blossom and fruit, so in this lower world, which is one part of the tree of creation, there are elements, which are like its branches; plants and trees, which are like its leaves; animals, which are like its flowers; and man, which is like the fruit.

Furthermore, the Divine Name of All-Wise requires that a law of that All-Glorious Maker which is in force in trees generally will also be in force in the mighty tree of creation. Since this is so, wisdom requires that the tree of creation also be formed from a seed, and such a seed that contains the essentials and principles of other worlds besides the corporeal world. For the fundamental and original seed of the universe, which comprises thousands of different worlds, cannot be a scrap of desiccated matter.

Since before the tree of the universe there was no tree of the same kind, it is also a requirement of the Name of All-Wise that meaning and light, which are like a source and seed to it, should be clothed with the garment of a fruit on the tree of the universe. For a seed cannot remain permanently unclothed. And since at the beginning of creation it was not clothed in the garment of a fruit, it would surely be clothed in it at the end. And since that fruit is mankind; and since, as was proved above, the most famous fruit and sublime result from among mankind, who attracted the attention of all and confined to himself the gaze of a fifth of mankind, and with his moral and spiritual qualities caused the world to consider him with either feelings of love or of wonder, is the Person of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), most certainly, light, which was the seed from which the universe was formed, would become clothed in corporeality in his person and would appear in the form of an ultimate fruit.

O listener! Do not consider it improbable that this strange and mighty universe is created from the particular essence of a human being! Why should the All-Powerful One of Glory, Who creates a huge pine-tree –a sort of world– from a seed the size of a grain of wheat, not create the universe from ‘the Light of Muhammad’ (Peace and blessings be upon him)?¹⁶ Why should He not be able to do so?

Since, like the Tree of Tuba, the tree of the universe has its roots and trunk above and branches below, there is a luminous connecting line from the level of the fruit below to that of the original seed. Thus, the Ascension is the sheath and form of that connecting line, the way of which Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) opened up. He went through his sainthood, returned through his messengership, and left the door open. The saints of his community following after him, travel that luminous highway with the heart and spirit in the shadow of the Prophet’s Ascension, and according to their abilities, rise to elevated ranks.

¹⁶ Suyuti, *al-Hawi li'l-Fatawa*, ii, Qastalani, *al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyya*, i, 25-83.

Also, as was proved above, the universe's Maker made it and decked it out in the form of a palace for the aims demonstrated in the answer to the First Difficulty. Since Muhammad (PBUH) was the means of all those aims being realized, he must have been regarded with favour by the universe's Maker before the universe was created, he must have been the first recipient of His manifestation. For the result and fruit of a thing is considered first. That is to say, material existence comes last and meaning comes first. However, since Muhammad (PBUH) was both the most perfect fruit, and the means of all other fruits acquiring value, and the means of all the aims becoming manifest, his Light must have received the first manifestation of creativity.

Your Third Difficulty: This is so extensive that those like us with straitened minds cannot contain and comprehend it. However, we can look at it from afar.

Yes, the immaterial workshops and universal laws of the lower world are in the higher worlds. And the fruits of the actions of jinn and men and the results of the actions of all the innumerable creatures on the earth, which is an exhibition of works of art, are also represented in the higher worlds. Moreover, a great many signs and the testimony of many narrations show that good deeds will take on the form of the fruits of Paradise and bad deeds the form of the bitter food of Hell. The wisdom in creation and the Divine Name of All-Wise necessitate this and the All-Wise Qur'an indicates it.

For sure, the multiplicity on the face of the earth is so widespread and the creation so ramified that its species of creatures and classes of beings are far more numerous than all the beings dispersed throughout the universe. In a state of constant change, they ever fill the earth and are emptied from it. Thus, the sources and mines of this multiplicity and these particulars are universal laws and universal manifestations of the Divine Names.

Those universal laws and universal, all-encompassing manifestations of the Names are to some extent sheer and undifferentiated and each forms a heaven which is like the Throne and ceiling of a world and its centre of direction. One of those worlds is Paradise, the Garden of the Abode at the Lote-tree of the farthest limit. It is established by accounts given by the Bringer of Sure News (PBUH) that the praise and glorification on the earth takes on the form of the fruits of that Paradise.¹⁷ Thus, these three points demonstrate that the treasuries of the results and fruits produced on the earth are there, in the heavens, and that the crops and produce of those results and fruits also return there.

Do not say: "How can it be that my words 'All praise be to God!', which are formed only of air, should become a corporeal fruit of Paradise?"

¹⁷ *Kanz al-'Ummal*, i, 459-60; Manzari, *al-Tarhib wa'l-Tarhib*, ii, 422-3.

because, sometimes while dreaming you eat in the form of a delicious apple a good word you uttered during the day while awake. And sometimes you eat at night in the form of something bitter, an ugly word you uttered during the day. If you slander and backbite, you are made to eat it in the form of putrid flesh. In which case, the good words and ugly words you say in the sleep of this world, you will eat in the form of fruits in the world of the hereafter, which is the world of consciousness. You should not consider it unlikely that you will eat them.

Fourth Principle

What are the fruits and benefits of the Ascension?

The Answer: We shall mention only five, by way of example, of the more than five hundred fruits of the Ascension, which has the meaning of the Tree of Tuba.

FIRST FRUIT

This fruit has brought to the universe and mankind a treasury, a gift of pre-eternal and post-eternal Light, which is to see with the eyes the truths of the pillars of belief and to behold the angels, Paradise, the hereafter, and even the All-Glorious One. It raises the universe from an imaginary state of wretchedness, transitoriness, and disorder and, through that Light and fruit, shows its reality, which is its consisting of sacred missives of the Eternally Besought One and being a beautiful mirror to the beauty of Divine oneness. It has made happy and pleased the universe and all conscious beings.

Furthermore, through this Light and sacred fruit, it shows that man is not merely bewildered, wretched, impotent, impoverished, with endless needs and innumerable enemies, ephemeral and impermanent, which is like the state of misguidance; it shows man in his true form of being a miracle of the Eternally Besought One's power on 'the most excellent of patterns,' a comprehensive copy of the Eternally Besought One's missives, an addressee of the Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal Monarch, the special bondsman, the admirer and friend of His perfections, the lover bewildered at His beauty, and a beloved guest appointed to eternal Paradise. It has filled all human beings who are true human beings with infinite joy and infinite longing.

SECOND FRUIT

This fruit has brought to jinn and man as a gift the fundamentals of Islam, and first and foremost the prescribed prayers,¹⁸ which constitute those things pleasing to the Sustainer, the Ruler of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, Who is

¹⁸ Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, iii, 406; *al-Sunna al-Kubra*, iv, 362.

the Maker of beings, Owner of the universe, and Sustainer of all the worlds. To discover the things that please Him brings such happiness it cannot be described. For how eager is everyone to find out, from a distance, the desires of a powerful benefactor or generous king, and if they find out, how delighted they are. They say longingly: "If only there was some means by which I could communicate with that personage directly. If only I could learn what he wants of me. If only I knew what would please him that I could do."

Man, then, should understand just how necessary it is to be desirous and eager to discover the wishes and pleasure of the Ruler of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity. For all beings are in the grasp of His power, and the beauty and perfections to be found in all beings are but pale shadows in relation to His beauty and perfection, and being needy for Him in innumerable ways, man constantly receives countless numbers of His bounties.

Thus, as a direct fruit of the Ascension, Muhammad (PBUH) heard with utter certainty what it is that pleases the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, behind seventy thousand veils, and returning, brought it as a gift to mankind.

Indeed, how curious is man to learn the conditions on the moon. If someone was to go there and return bringing news of it, both what self-sacrifice he would display, and, if he was to understand the conditions there, how he would be overcome by wonder and curiosity. But the moon is merely touring in the domain of a Lord of such dominion that it encircles the globe of the earth like a fly, and the globe flies round the sun like a moth, while the sun is one lamp among thousands and is just a candle in a guest-house of that Glorious Lord of All Dominion.

Thus, Muhammad (PBUH) saw the works and wonders of art and treasuries of mercy in the everlasting realm of this All-Glorious One, and he returned and informed mankind. And so, if mankind does not listen to him with complete wonder, curiosity, and love, you can understand how contrary to reason and wisdom is their attitude.

THIRD FRUIT

Muhammad (PBUH) saw the treasury of eternal happiness, obtained the key, and brought it as a gift to jinn and men. Yes, through the Ascension, he saw Paradise with his own eyes and witnessed the eternal manifestations of the All-Glorious and Merciful One's mercy; he understood eternal happiness with absolute and utter certainty and brought as a gift to jinn and men the good news of its existence.

If wretched jinn and men imagine themselves and all beings to be in the soul-searing situation of an unstable world amid the upheavals of decease and separation, being poured with the flood of time and motion of particles

into the oceans of non-existence and eternal separation, it cannot be described how precious and enheartening such good news is in the ears of ephemeral jinn and men, who thus supposed themselves to be condemned to eternal annihilation. If, at the moment he is to be executed and sent to non-existence, a man is pardoned and given a palace in proximity to the king, what great joy this would cause him. So, gather up all such joy and happiness to the number of jinn and men and then evaluate this good news.

FOURTH FRUIT

Just as he himself sampled the fruit of the vision of Divine beauty, so did he bring to jinn and men the gift of this fruit being attainable by all believers. You may understand from the following how delightful, pleasing, and exquisite a fruit this is.

Everyone of fine perception loves one who possesses beauty and perfection and is benevolent, and his love increases proportionately to their degrees; it reaches the degree of worship and a pitch whereat he would sacrifice his very life. On seeing that person only once, his love becomes such he would sacrifice the world. However, in relation to the beauty, perfection, and benevolence of God Almighty, the beauty, perfection and benevolence of all beings are not the equivalent of even a few tiny sparks in relation to the sun. That is to say, if you are a true human being, you may understand how delightful and fine a fruit it is and what happiness and joy it brings to receive in eternal happiness the vision of the All-Glorious One of Perfection, Who is worthy of boundless love, infinite longing, and being gazed upon eternally.

FIFTH FRUIT

Man's being the precious fruit of the universe and the petted beloved of the Maker of the universe was understood through the Ascension, and he brought this fruit to jinn and men. This fruit raises man, an insignificant creature, a weak animal, an impotent conscious being, to an elevated rank of pride above all the beings in the universe. It gives man indescribable pleasure and joyful happiness. For if it is said to an ordinary private: "You have been promoted to the rank of field marshal," how delighted he will be. But wretched man is an ephemeral, impotent 'rational animal' who constantly suffers the blows of decease and separation. If then he is told that not only will he make excursions and tours with the speed of imagination and breadth of the spirit in an eternal never-ending Paradise within the mercy of an All-Compassionate and Generous Merciful One, and journey in the mind in accordance with all the desires of his heart in both the outer dimensions of things and those dimensions that look directly to their Creator, but that he will also behold the vision of Divine beauty in eternal happiness, you can imagine what a profound joy and true happiness a human being who has not fallen from the level of humanity would feel in his heart.

Now we say to our listener: Tear off the shirt of atheism and throw it away! Listen with believing ears! Look with Muslim eyes! We shall show you through two short comparisons the great value in one or two further fruits.

For example, you and I are together in a certain country. We see that everything is hostile to us and to each other, and is strange to us. Everywhere is full of ghastly corpses. The sounds to be heard are the weeping of orphans and the lamentations of the oppressed. So if someone appears when we are in that situation bringing good news from the king of the country by which those of his subjects who were strange to us assume the form of friends and the enemies turn into brothers, and the ghastly corpses are seen to be worshipping and praising and glorifying in deep humility and submission; and if the piteous weeping becomes praise and exaltation and cries of “Long live the king!”, and the deaths and plunder and pillage are transformed into demobilizations and release from duty; and if we join the general joy to our own joy, you will certainly understand how joyful and happy that news is.

Thus, when the beings in the universe are considered with the eye of misguidance, as they were before the light of belief, which is one fruit of the Ascension of Muhammad (PBUH), they are seen to be strange, menacing, troublesome, dreadful, terrifying corpses the size of mountains, while the appointed hour is severing people’s heads and casting them into the pit of eternal, never-ending nothingness. Although misguidance interprets all the voices as being lamentations occasioned by separation and decease, the truths of the pillars of belief, which are fruits of the Ascension, show you that just as beings are brothers and friends to you and praisers and glorifiers of the All-Glorious One, so are death and decease a demobilization and discharge from duties; in reality those voices are all glorifications of God. If you wish to study this truth in its entirety, you may refer to the Second and Eighth Words.

The Second Comparison: You and I are in a place resembling a vast desert. There is a sand-storm in the sea of sand and the night is so black we cannot see even our hands. If suddenly, without without friend or protector, hungry and thirsty, we were despairing and giving up hope, a person was to pass through the curtain of blackness and approach us bringing a car as a gift; and if he was to seat us in it, and then instantly install us in a place like Paradise where our future was secure, food and drink ready prepared, and where we had a most kindly and sympathetic protector, you can understand how pleased we would be.

Thus, that great desert is the face of this world. The sea of sand consists of beings and wretched man, who are tossed around by the force of the flood

of time and the motion of particles within events. All human beings see the future with the eye of misguidance, enveloped in terrifying darkness, and their hearts are harrowed with anxiety. They know no one they can make hear their cries for help. They are infinitely hungry, infinitely thirsty.

However, when this world is seen in terms of things pleasing to God, which is a fruit of the Ascension; that is, it is seen to be the guest-house of Someone exceedingly generous, and human beings are seen to His guests and officials, and the future to be as delightful as Paradise, as sweet as mercy, as shining as eternal happiness, you will understand what a delightful, exquisitely sweet fruit it is.

At this point, the one who is listening says: “Never-ending praise and thanks be to Almighty God, for I have been saved from atheism and now affirm Divine unity. I have attained a complete belief, I have gained perfect belief.”

And we say: “Brother! We congratulate you. May Almighty God allow us the intercession of His Most Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him). AMEN.”

O God! Grant blessings to him at whose sign the moon split, and from whose fingers water flowed forth like the spring of Kawthar, the one who made the Ascension and whose eye did not waver, our master Muhammad, and to all his Family and Companions, from the beginning of the world to the end of the Great Gathering.

All glory be unto to You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise!¹⁹

*O our Sustainer! Accept this from us; for, indeed, You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing!²⁰ * O our Sustainer! Do not take us to task if we forget or unwittingly do wrong!²¹ * O our Sustainer! Let not our hearts swerve from the truth after You have guided us!²² * O our Sustainer! Perfect our light for us and grant us forgiveness; for, indeed, You are Powerful over all things!²³ * And their call will close with, ‘All praise is due to God, the Sustainer of all the worlds.’²⁴*

¹⁹ Qur’an, 2:32.

²⁰ Qur’an, 2:127.

²¹ Qur’an, 2:286.

²² Qur’an, 3:8.

²³ Qur’an, 66:8.

²⁴ Qur’an, 10:10.

Addendum to the
Nineteenth Letter and Thirty-First Word

About the Miracle of
the Splitting of the Moon

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
The Hour is nigh, and the moon is split. * But if they see a sign, they turn away,
and say: "This is evident magic."¹*

Philosophers and their unreasoning imitators, who want to eclipse with their vicious delusions the Splitting of the Moon, which is a miracle of Muhammad (PBUH) that shines like the moon, say: "If the Splitting of the Moon had occurred, it would have been known to the whole world and would have been related throughout the subsequent history of man."

The Answer: Since the Splitting of the Moon was demonstrated as an evidence of prophethood, and happened instantaneously, at night when people were asleep, and before a gathering who, although they witnessed such an evidence, denied it; and since there were obstacles hindering the sighting of it such as mist, clouds, and time-differences between different parts of the world; and since at that time science and civilization were not widespread, and observation of the skies was very limited, and the event itself was exceptional, there was, therefore, nothing to necessitate that it should have been seen all over the world and passed into the general histories. For now, listen to Five Points out of many that will scatter those clouds of delusion concerning the Splitting of the Moon.

¹ Qur'an, 54:1-2.

FIRST POINT

The extreme stubbornness of the unbelievers there at that time is well-known and is recorded in history. And yet, when the All-Wise Qur'an announced this event to the whole world through saying:

And the moon is split,

not one of those unbelievers, who denied the Qur'an, spoke up to give the lie to this verse; that is, not one of them denied the event it was announcing. If the event had not been considered as a definite fact by the unbelievers at that time, they would have taken the verse as a pretext, denied it in a most fearsome manner, and tried to attack and overthrow Muhammad's (PBUH) claim to prophethood. However, the biographies of the Prophet and histories mentioning the event relate nothing to suggest that the unbelievers denied it. The only thing that history relates is, as the verse:

And [they] say, "This is evident magic,"

points out, the unbelievers who saw the event declared it to be magic, and said that if the caravans in other places had seen it, it was true, otherwise he had bewitched them. The caravans arriving the following morning from the Yemen and other places announced that they had seen such a happening. So the unbelievers then said of the Pride of All the Worlds (PBUH) that, God forbid, the magic of Abu Talib's orphan had affected the heavens.²

SECOND POINT

The majority of the most illustrious scholars, like Sa'd al-Din Taftazani, declared that like the Prophet had satisfied the thirst of a whole army with water flowing from his fingers, and the whole congregation had heard a dry wooden post against which Muhammad (PBUH) had leant while delivering the sermon weep on being separated from him, the Splitting of the Moon, too, was *mutawatir*,³ that is, had been transmitted by numerous authorities. That is to say, these events had been passed down from group to group forming such a vast congregation that a conspiracy to lie would have been impossible. Like the appearance of the famous Haley's Comet a thousand years ago had been unanimously reported, and the existence of the island of Ceylon was certain due to unanimous reports, although we had not seen it.

And so, it is unreasonable to foster baseless doubts in such certain,

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vii, 145; Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, ii, 266, 268.

³ Bukhari, ii, 251; v, 62; vi, 178; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, ii, 472; Suyuti, *Nazm al-Mutanathir fi'l-Hadith al-Mutawatir*, 135; Bayhaqi, *Dala'il*, i, 279-81.

witnessed matters. It is enough that they are not impossible. And as for the Splitting of the Moon, it is quite as possible as a mountain's splitting with a volcanic eruption.

THIRD POINT

Miracles are for proving claims to prophethood and for convincing those who deny those claims, they are not for compelling people to believe. Therefore, miracles have to be manifested to those who hear claims to prophethood at a degree that will persuade them. Just as it would be contrary to the All-Wise and Glorious One's wisdom to display them all over the world or in so self-evident a manner that all would be compelled to believe, so would it also be contrary to the mystery of man's accountability. For this accountability requires "opening the door to the reason and not removing the power of choice." If the All-Wise Creator had left the moon split for one or two hours in order to show it to the whole world as the philosophers wished, and it had been recorded in all the general histories of man, then it would have been like all other occurrences in the heavens and would not have been an evidence to Muhammad's (PBUH) claim to prophethood nor been special to his messengership. Or else it would have been such a self-evident miracle that it would have negated the power of choice, a part of man's reason, compelling it to accept it; willy-nilly, it would have had to assent to his prophethood. Someone with a coal-like spirit like Abu Jahl would have remained at the same level as someone with a diamond-like spirit like Abu Bakr the Veracious; the mystery of man's accountability would have been lost. It was due to this mystery that, being both instantaneous, and at nighttime, and at a time of sleep, and time differences, mist, and cloud and other obstacles concealing it, it was not shown to the whole world and did not pass into the histories.

FOURTH POINT

Since this event occurred instantaneously at night while everyone was sleeping, of course it was not seen all over the world. Even if some people had seen it, they would not have believed their eyes. And even if it had made them believe, such a significant event would not have become a permanent source for future histories through isolated individual reports.

In some books it is written that after the moon split into two halves, it fell to earth, but veracious scholars have rejected such additions, saying that they were perhaps added by dissemblers with the intention of reducing to nothing the value of this evident miracle.

And, for example, just as the same time in England and Spain, which were then enveloped in mists of ignorance, would have been just after sunset, in America daytime, and in China and Japan morning, so too in other places there would have been other obstacles preventing it being seen. Now consider these unreasoning objectors who say that the histories of peoples like the English, Chinese, Japanese, and Americans do not mention it, and that therefore it did not occur. A thousand curses be on the heads of those who toady to Europe and repeat such things.

FIFTH POINT

The Splitting of the Moon happened neither of its own accord in consequence of certain causes, nor as a result of chance, nor was it a natural event that occurred through the ordinary laws of nature. Rather, the All-Wise Creator of the Sun and the Moon caused it to happen as something out of the ordinary in order to confirm His Messenger's messengership and to illuminate his claim.

As the mystery of guidance, the mystery of human accountability, and the wisdom of messengership required, it was demonstrated as a convincing proof to certain people specified by dominical wisdom. The mystery of wisdom required that it was not shown to people in every region of the world, who had not yet heard of Muhammad's (PBUH) claim to prophethood. Numerous obstacles prevented them, therefore, such as mist, cloud, and time-differences, and the fact that in some countries the moon had not risen, and in others the sun had risen, while in others it was morning, and in yet others the sun had just set.

If it had been shown to all and sundry, it would have been shown as a result of the Sign of Muhammad (PBUH), and a miracle of prophethood, in which case his messengership would have been so manifest that everyone would have been compelled to affirm it. No choice would have remained for the reason. And belief is attained through man's power of choice and his reason. The mystery of human accountability would have gone for nothing. And if it had been shown merely as an occurrence in the heavens, its connection with Muhammad's (PBUH) messengership would have been severed, and it would have retained no peculiarity to him.

To Conclude: There is no longer any doubt concerning the possibility that the Splitting of the Moon occurred; it has been proved decisively. And now we shall mention six⁴ of the many evidences pointing to its occurrence.

⁴ That is to say, there are six proofs concerning the event in the form of a sixfold consensus. Unfortunately, the explanation of them is brief, although they deserve more.

The concurrence of the Companions of the Prophet, who were all men of justice, on its occurrence.

Their agreement in expounding the verse, And the moon is split of all exacting commentators on the Qur'an.

The fact that, relying on numerous different chains of authorities and lines of transmission, all the scholars of the Prophetic Hadiths and transmitters of the sound narrations narrated the event.⁵

The testimony of all the saints and the veracious, those who receive inspiration, and uncover the mysteries of the creation.

The confirmation of learned scholars and theologians, whose ways differ greatly from one another.

The fact that the Community of Muhammad (PBUH) accepted its occurrence, which, on an established principle, never agrees upon error.⁶

These six evidences prove the Splitting of the Moon as clearly as the sun.

CONCLUSION

Up to here this Addendum has been in the name of establishing the truth, and for the sake of silencing those enemies who deny it. Its concluding sentences will now be in the name of the truth and for the sake of belief. Indeed, establishing the truth spoke as above, now the truth speaks.

The Seal of the Office of Prophethood, who was the luminous moon of its heaven, proved his sainthood through his Ascension. This was the greatest wonder and supreme miracle of sainthood, achieved through his worship, which was so elevated as to make him God's beloved. That is to say, by travelling with his earthly body through the heavens, his superiority and his being God's beloved were demonstrated to the dwellers of the heavens and inhabitants of the lofty worlds. So too, through the moon, which is bound to the earth and suspended in the heavens, being split into two halves at the sign of an inhabitant of the earth, a miracle indicating to that earth-dweller's messengership was displayed to the other inhabitants of the earth. Thus, the person of Muhammad (PBUH) flew to the very summit of perfections on the two luminous wings of messengership and sainthood – like the two luminous unfolded wings of the moon; he ascended to the distance of two bow-lengths; he became the cause of pride of both the inhabitants of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth....

⁵ *Musnad*, i, 377, 413, 447, 456; iii, 207, 220, 275, 278; iv, 81; Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vi, 469.

⁶ Suyuti, *Nazm al-Mutanathir fi l-Hadith al-Mutawatir*, 180; Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, xii, 13623-4; xvii, 666-7; Ibn 'Adi, *al-Kamil fi'l-Du'afa'*, iii, 1307.

Upon him and upon his Family be blessings and peace such as will fill the earth and the heavens.

Glory be unto You! we have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.⁷

O God! For the sake of the one at whose sign the moon split make my heart and the hearts of all true students of the Risale-i Nur like the moon in the face of the Sun of the Qur'an. AMEN. AMEN.

⁷ Qur'an, 2:32.

The Thirty-Second Word

[This Word consists of three Stopping-Places. It is an addendum explaining the Eighth Flash of the Twenty-Second Word, and is also a commentary on the first of the fifty-five tongues with which all the beings in the universe testify to Divine unity. These tongues have been alluded to in my treatise called *Katre* (A Droplet). It is one truth, which has been clothed in the garment of comparison, of many truths pertaining to the verse: *Had there been in heaven or on earth any deities other than God, there surely would have been confusion in both.*¹]

First Stopping-Place

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

Had there been in heaven or on earth any deities other than God, there surely would have been confusion in both.

There is no god but God, He is One, He has no partner; His is the dominion and His is the praise; He grants life and deals death, and is living and dies not; all good is in His hand; He is powerful over all things; and with Him all things have their end.

One night in Ramadan, I said that the above sentence affirming Divine unity consists of eleven phrases, and that in each of them is a degree expressing that unity and some good news. But of those degrees I only discussed the meaning and significance of He has no partner, and that was in the manner of an allegorical conversation and imaginary debate that would be accessible to ordinary people. I am now writing down that conversation at the request and desire of my much-valued brothers who assist me and my friends from the mosque. It is as follows.

Let us suppose one person represents all those things set up as partners to God that all the different varieties of idolators imagine to exist. These

¹ Qur'an, 21:22.

idolators are the people of unbelief and misguidance, who worship nature and causes, for example, and assign partners to God. The fictitious person wants to have mastery over one of the beings in the universe, and so claims to be its true owner.

Firstly, that maker of false claims encountered a particle, which is the smallest of those beings, and he spoke to it in the language of Naturalism and philosophy saying that he was to be its master and true owner. But the particle replied to him with the tongue of truth and dominical wisdom, saying:

“I perform innumerable duties. Entering many creatures which are all different I do my work in them. And there are, from among countless particles like me, those that move from place to place² and work with me. If you have the knowledge and power to employ me in all those duties, and the authority and ability to employ and have at your command all those others as well, and if you are able to be the true owner of and to have total control over the beings of which I become a part in complete order, for example, over red blood-corpuses, then you can claim to be master over me and ascribe me to something other than God Almighty. But if you cannot do all these things, be silent!

“And in the same way that you cannot have mastery over me, you cannot interfere in any way. For there is such complete orderliness in our duties and motion that one who does not have infinite wisdom and all-encompassing knowledge cannot meddle with us. If he did, it would cause chaos. However, a person like you who is thick, impotent, and unseeing, and is in the clutches of blind chance and nature, could not even begin to stretch out a finger to interfere.”

So, just like the Materialists, the one making these claims said: “In that case, own yourself. Why do you say you are working on someone else’s account?” To which the particle replied:

“If I had a brain like the sun, and all-embracing knowledge like its light, and all-encompassing power like its heat, and comprehensive senses like the seven colours in its light, and if I had a face that looked to all the places in which I travel and all the beings in which I work, and an eye that looked to them and words that carried authority with them, then perhaps I would

² Indeed, every object which is in motion, from minute particles to the planets, displays on itself the stamp of ‘eternal besoughtness’ and unity. Also, by reason of its movement, each of them takes possession of all the places in which it travels in the name of unity, thus including them in the property of its owner. As for those creatures that are not in motion, they are each of them, from plants to the fixed stars, like a seal of unity showing the place in which it is situated to be the missive of its Maker. That is to say, all flowers and fruits are stamps and seals of unity which demonstrate, in the name of unity, that their habitats and native places are the missives of their Maker. In short, through their motion all things take possession of all things in the name of unity. That is, one who does not have all the stars within his grasp cannot have mastery over a single particle.

indulge in foolishness like you and claim to own myself. Get out! Go away! You won't get anything out of me!"

So, when the representative of those things held to be God's partners despaired of the particle, he hoped to pursue the matter with a red blood-corpuscle. And coming across one he said to it on behalf of causes and in the language of nature and philosophy: "I am your master and owner." And the red corpuscle replied to him through the tongue of truth and Divine wisdom:

"I am not alone. If you are able to own all my fellows in the army of blood whose stamp, nature as officials, and order is the same, and if you have subtle wisdom and mighty power enough to own all the cells of the body in which we travel and are employed with perfect wisdom, and if you can demonstrate this to be the case, then perhaps some meaning might be found in your claim.

"But someone stupified like yourself cannot be owner with your only support being deaf nature and blind force; indeed, you are unable to interfere in so much as an atom. For the order with which we function is so perfect that only one who sees, hears, knows, and does everything can have authority over us." And saying: "So, be silent! My duty is so important and the order so perfect that I have no time to answer garbled rubbish such as yours," it repelled him.

Then, since he was unable to mislead it, the representative left and next came across the little house known as a cell of the body. He said to it in the language of philosophy and nature: "I could not persuade the particle and red corpuscle but perhaps you will be reasonable. Since you have been made of several substances just like a minute house, I am able to make you. You will be my artefact and true property." The cell responded to him through the tongue of wisdom and truth, saying:

"I am only a minute little thing but I have very important duties and very sensitive relations; I am connected to the body as a whole as well as to all its cells. For example, I perform complex and faultless duties in the veins, and in regard to the arteries, the sensory and motor nerves, the powers of attraction and repulsion and procreation, and the imaginative faculty. If you have the knowledge and power to form, arrange, and employ the whole body and all its blood-vessels, nerves and faculties, and if you have comprehensive wisdom and penetrating power with which to control all the body's cells, which are like me, as regards qualities and artistry we are brothers, demonstrate it. Only then can you claim to be able to make me. If you cannot, then off with you!

"The red corpuscles bring my food, while the white ones combat illnesses which attack me. I have work to do, do not distract me! Anyway, an impotent, lifeless, deaf and blind thing like you cannot in any way interfere with

us. For we have such an exact, subtle and faultless order³ that if the one who has authority over us was not Absolutely Wise, Absolutely Powerful and Absolutely Knowing, our order would be broken and our regularity spoilt.”

Then the one making the claims despaired of it, too. He encountered the body of a human being and said to it, once again as the Naturalists say, in the language of blind nature and aimless philosophy: “You are mine, it is I who made you; or anyway I have a share in you.” The human body answered with the tongue of reality and wisdom and through the eloquence of its order:

“If you possess the power and knowledge to have actual control over the bodies of all human beings, who are the same as me and on whose faces are the stamp of power and seal of creation which are the same, and if you have the wealth and jurisdiction to own, from water and air to plants and animals, the treasures of my sustenance, and if you have infinite power and boundless wisdom with which to employ me with perfect wisdom and cause me to perform my worship, and the power and wisdom to lodge in a narrow, lowly

³ The All-Wise Maker has created the human body as though it was a well-arranged city. A number of the blood-vessels perform the duties of telephones and telegraphs, while others of them are like pipes from a fountain through which blood, which is the water of life, flows. As for blood, created within it are two sorts of corpuscles. One of them, known as red corpuscles, distributes nutrients to the cells of the body; it conveys sustenance to the cells according to a Divine law. (Like merchants and food officials.) The other sort are white corpuscles, which are fewer in number than the former. Their duty, like soldiers, is defence against enemies, such as illness. Whenever they undertake that defence, with their two revolutions like Mevlevi dervishes, they take on a swift and wonderful state. As for blood as a whole, it has two general duties; the first is to repair damage done to the body's cells and the second is to collect any waste-matter from the cells and to clean the body. There are two sorts of blood-vessels, veins and arteries. One of these carry purified blood, they are the channels through which clean blood is conveyed. The others are the channels for the turbid blood which collects the waste-matter; these convey the blood to where breathing occurs; that is, the lungs.

The All-Wise Maker created in the air two elements, nitrogen and oxygen. As for oxygen, when it comes into contact with the blood in breathing, it draws to itself, like amber, the impure element, carbon, which is polluting the blood. The two combine and are transformed into matter called carbonic acid gas. Oxygen also maintains the body temperature, and purifies the blood. This is because, in the science of chemistry, the All-Wise Maker bestowed on oxygen and carbon an intense relationship, which might be described as ‘chemical passion’, whereby, according to this Divine law, when those two elements come close to each other, they combine. It has been established by science that heat is produced by combining, because it is a sort of combustion.

The wisdom in this is as follows: the motion of the particles of those two elements is different. On combining, the particles of one element unite with those of the other, each two particles thereafter moving with a single motion. One motion remains suspended, because before combining there were two motions; now two particles have become one. Each pair of particles has acquired a motion like a single particle. The other motion is transformed into heat according to a law of the All-Wise Maker. As a matter of fact, ‘motion produces heat’ is an established principle.

Thus, as a consequence of this fact, by this chemical combination, as carbon is removed from the blood the body temperature of human beings is maintained and at the same time the blood is purified. On inhaling, oxygen both cleanses the body's water of life and kindles the fire of life. On exhaling, it yields, in the mouth, the fruit of words, which are miracles of Divine Power.

GLORY BE UNTO HIM AT WHOSE ART THE MIND IS BEWILDERED.

vessel like me immaterial and subtle faculties like the spirit, heart, and intellect, which are extremely vast and exalted and for which I am merely the sheath, then demonstrate all these and afterwards say that you made me. Otherwise, be silent!

“Moreover, according to the testimony of the perfect order in my body and the indication of the stamp of unity on my face, my Maker is One Who is powerful over all things, knows all things, and sees and hears all things. Someone aimless and impotent like you cannot meddle in His art. You cannot interfere in so much as an atom.”

The representative of the things imagined to be God’s partners could find no way in which to interfere in the body so he went off. Next, he encountered the human race and said to himself “This is a disorganized and unruly group. Perhaps, like Satan interferes in their individual and social actions which they perform through the exercise of their wills, I’ll be able to find some way to interfere in the functioning of their bodies and natures. And then, finding some way, I’ll be able to exercise control over the body and the body’s cell which sent me packing.”

So, he said to the human race, once again in the language of deaf nature and aimless philosophy: “You seem to be to be in great confusion. I am your master and owner, or at least I partly own you.” To which the human race answered through the tongue of truth and reality, wisdom and order:

“If you possess the power and wisdom to make the shirt that clothes the whole globe of the earth and is woven and sewn with perfect wisdom from the multicoloured threads of all the hundreds of thousands of animal and plant species, of which we are one, and to make the carpet which is spread over the face of the earth and is woven from the hundreds of thousands of species of animate beings and is created in an extremely fine and ornamented fashion, and to continuously renew and refurbish it, and if you possess comprehensive power and all-embracing wisdom with which to have free disposal over the globe of the earth of which we are the fruit, and over the universe of which we are the seed, and to send us our vital necessities from all the regions of the cosmos with the balance of wisdom, and if you have the ability to create all those like us who have gone before us and those who will come after us, on whose faces the stamp of power is the same, then, perhaps, you can claim to have mastery over me.

“But if you cannot, be silent! Do not say that, seeing confusion in my species, you will be able to interfere in some way, because the order is faultless. The conditions you imagine to be confused and disorderly are transcribed with perfect order according to the book of power and Divine Determining. For the perfect order in animals and plants, which are far inferior to us and are under our supervision, demonstrates that this seeming disorder in us is but a sort of writing.

“Is it at all possible that the one who artistically positions one thread running through a whole carpet should be other than the master designer of the carpet; or that the one who creates a fruit should be other than the creator of the tree that bore it; or that the one who creates the seed should be other than the fashioner of the being that produced the seed?”

“Also your eyes are blind: you do not see the miracles of power on my face, the wonders of creation in my being. If you did see them, you would understand that my Maker is such that nothing at all can withstand Him or be difficult for Him. The stars are as easy for Him as particles. He creates the spring with as much ease as a flower. He is One Who includes the index of the vast universe in my being with perfect order. Could a lifeless, impotent, blind and deaf thing like you interfere in any way in the art of such a Being? So, be silent!” And saying: “Off with you! Go away!”, he drove him away.

Next the one making these claims went and addressed the broad carpet covering the face of the earth and the lavishly decorated and embroidered shirt clothing it on behalf of causes and in the language of nature and philosophy, claiming: “I can have control over you and be your owner, or at least have a share in you.” So the shirt, the carpet,⁴ said to him on behalf of truth and reality and through the tongue of wisdom:

“If you have the power and art to weave and create all the well-ordered and purposeful shirts and carpets, whose embroideries are all different, which have clothed the earth to the number of years and centuries, then have been removed in an orderly fashion and strung on the line of past time, and will clothe the earth again, carpets and shirts whose programmes and forms have been drawn and specified in the sphere of Divine Determining, and which will be attached to the ribbon of future time, and if you have two wise and powerful hands with which to reach from the creation of the world to its destruction, indeed, from pre-eternity to post-eternity, and if you have the wisdom and ability to create every one of all my threads and to repair and renew them with perfect order and wisdom, and if you are able to hold in your hand and create the globe, which is our model and is wearing us, making us its veil and outer garment, then you can claim to have mastery over me. If you cannot, then away with you! There is no place for you here!

“Moreover, there is on us such a stamp of unity and seal of oneness that one who does not have the whole universe within the grasp of his power, and who cannot see at one time all things with all their functions, and cannot do innumerable things at the same time, who is not all-present and all-seeing everywhere, who is not unconfined by space, and who does not possess infinite wisdom, knowledge, and power, such a one cannot own us, neither could he interfere.”

⁴ In fact, the carpet is both living and vibrates in a regular fashion. Its embroideries are being continuously replaced with perfect wisdom and order in order to display the ever-differing manifestations of the Weaver’s Names.

So the representative went off, saying: “Perhaps I will be able to persuade the globe of the earth and find something going for me there.” So he went and said to the globe,⁵ once again on behalf of causes and in the language of nature: “Since you travel in such an aimless manner, you demonstrate that you have no owner. In which case, you can be mine.” To which the earth replied in a thunderous voice, in the name of truth and with the tongue of reality:

“Do not talk such utter nonsense! How could I be just aimless and without an owner? Have you found my garments or even the tiniest point or thread in them to be in disarray, without order, and have you seen them to be without wisdom, purpose and art that you tell me I am ownerless and aimless?”

“If you can really own my vast orbit round which I travel in one year, a distance that should take approximately twenty-five thousand years,⁶ where I perform my duty of service with perfect balance and wisdom, and own the ten planets, which are my brothers and are charged with duties like myself, together with the space through which they travel, and if you have infinite wisdom and power with which to create and position the sun, which is our leader and to which we are bound and attached by a compassionate attraction, and to fasten me and the other planets to it like stones in a sling, and to employ us and cause us to revolve with perfect order and wisdom, then you can claim to have mastery over me. But if you cannot, get out! Go to Hell! I’ve got work to do, my duty to perform.

“Moreover, our magnificent order, awesome movement, and purposeful subjugation demonstrate that our Master is such that all beings from minute particles to the stars and galaxies are obedient and subjugated to him like soldiers under orders. He is an All-Wise Possessor of Glory, a Possessor of Absolute Sovereignty Who arrays the sun with planets as easily as He arrays and ornaments a tree with its fruit.”

Since the claimer could find nothing for himself on the earth, he went off and said to himself about the sun: “This a huge great thing. Perhaps I’ll be able to find a hole in it and open up a way in; then maybe I’ll be able to subjugate it as well as the earth.” So he said to the sun, as the fire-worshippers

⁵ In short, the particle referred the claimer to the red corpuscle. The red corpuscle referred him to the cell and the cell referred him to the human body; the human body to the human race and the human race to the earth’s shirt, which is woven from all the species of animate creatures. The earth’s shirt referred him to the globe of the earth, which in turn referred him to the sun. And the sun referred him to all the stars. Each one of them said; “Go away! If you are able to take possession of the next one up from me, do so, then come and try to be my master. If you are unable to defeat it, then you are unable to get possession of me.” That is to say, one whose authority does not extend to all the stars cannot make a single particle heed his claim to mastery.

⁶ If half the diameter of a circle is approximately one hundred and eighty million kilometres, the circle covers approximately a twenty-five thousand year distance.

speak, in the name of idolatry and in the language of the philosophy that is the mouthpiece of the Devil: “You are a ruler, you own yourself; you dispose of matters freely, as you wish.” But the sun replied to him in the name of truth and through the tongue of reality and Divine wisdom, saying:

“God forbid! A hundred thousand times, God forbid! I am a subservient official. I am a candelabrum in my Lord’s guest-house. I am not the true owner of a fly, or even of a fly’s wing. For in the fly’s being there are immaterial jewels and antique works of art, like eyes and ears, such as are not in my shop. They are outside the sphere of my power,” thus reprimanding him.

So the one making the claims changed his approach and said with the tongue of devilish philosophy: “Since you do not own yourself, you are a servant; I claim you on behalf of causes.” To which the sun replied, speaking for truth and reality and with the tongue of worship:

“I can only belong to one who is able to create all the lofty stars, which are my fellows, to place them in the heavens with faultless wisdom, make them revolve with utter magnificence and to adorn them with exquisite finery.”

Next the claimer said to himself: “The stars are a great multitude, and they seem to be all scattered and in disorder. Perhaps I will be able to gain something out of them on behalf of my clients.” So he went in among them and said to them on behalf of causes and those things ascribed to God as partners, in the language of rebellious philosophy and as the Sabeen star-worshippers said: “Since you are so scattered, you are all under the jurisdiction of different rulers.” To which one star replied, speaking for all the others:

“Just how stunned, brainless, stupid and blind you are not to see and understand the stamp of unity and seal of oneness on us, and not to recognize our lofty order and regularity and the laws of our worship. You imagine us to be without order. But we are the works of art and servants of a Single and Unique One Who holds in the grasp of His power the heavens, which are our seas, the cosmos, which is our tree, and infinite space, which is where we make our excursions.

“We are like electric illuminations and resplendent witnesses displaying the perfection of His dominicality. We are radiant proofs proclaiming the sovereignty of His dominicality. With all our different sorts, we are luminous servants in the domain of His sovereignty which give light and display the majesty of that sovereignty in the lofty dwellings and in the lowly ones, in the dwellings of this world, the Intermediate World and the hereafter.

“Indeed, each of us is a miracle of the Single and Unique One’s power, a well-ordered fruit of the tree of creation, an illuminated proof of unity; each of us is a dwelling place, aeroplane and mosque for the angels, and a lamp and sun for the lofty worlds, and a witness to the sovereignty of dominicality; and each of us is an ornament, palace, and flower of space, and a shining

fish in the heavenly seas, and a beautiful eye in the face of the sky.⁷

“Furthermore, throughout us as a whole there is a silence within tranquillity, a motion within wisdom, an adornment within majesty, a beauty of creation within order, and a perfection of art within symmetry.

“And although we are thus and proclaim our Glorious Maker and His unity, oneness, eternal besoughtness, and His attributes of beauty, glory and perfection to the whole universe with innumerable tongues, you still accuse us utterly pure, clean, obedient and subservient servants of being confused, disorderly, and without duties, and even of being without an owner. You therefore deserve a truly punishing slap.”

And one star, like the stone hurled at Satan, delivered such a mighty slap at the claimer’s face that it flung him from the stars to the very pit of Hell. And it cast nature,⁸ which was together with him, into the valleys of delusion, and chance into the chasm of non-existence, and those things ascribed to God as partners into the darkness of impossibility, and the philosophy that is hostile to religion down to the lowest of the low. All the stars recited this sacred decree together with that star:

*Had there been in heaven or earth any deities other than God, there surely would have been confusion in both.*⁹

And they proclaimed: “There is nothing, from a fly’s wing to the lamps in the heavens, nothing, even the size of a fly’s wing, in which those things ascribed to God as partners could interfere.”

*Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise!*¹⁰

O God! Grant blessings and peace to our master Muhammad, the Lamp of Your Unity in the multiplicity of Your creatures, and the Herald of Your Oneness in the exhibition of Your creation, and to all his Family and Companions.

⁷ This means, we are indications observing and contemplating the wonders of God Almighty’s creation and causing others to contemplate them. That is, just as the heavens are seen to be observing the wonders of Divine art on the earth with countless eyes, so like the angels in the skies, the stars watch the earth, which is an exhibition of wonders and marvels, and they cause conscious creatures to observe it with attention.

⁸ But after its fall, nature repented. It understood that its true duty was not to act and to have an effect, but to accept and be passive. And it recognized that it was a sort of notebook of Divine Determining, but a notebook capable of change and transformation; that it was a sort of programme of dominical power, was similar to the body of the rules of creation laid down by the All-Powerful One of Glory, and was a collection of His laws. It assumed its duty of worship with perfect submission acknowledging its utter impotence, and thus acquired the title of Divine creation and dominical art.

⁹ Qur’an, 21:22.

¹⁰ Qur’an, 2:32.

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Look, then, to the signs of God's mercy, how He
restores to life the earth after its death.¹¹*

The following section¹² alludes to one flower from the pre-eternal garden of the above verse.

It is as if all the blossoming trees are beautifully composed odes speaking poetically through the tongue of disposition reciting the manifest praises of the Glorious Creator.

Or, it is as if all the blossoming trees have opened thousands of gazing eyes and have caused thousands of others to open in order to behold, not with one or two eyes but with thousands, the Glorious Fashioner's wonders of art which are being broadcast and exhibited, and so that attentive people will gaze on them, too.

Or, it is as if all the blossoming trees have beautified their verdant limbs with the finest adornment for the moment of their parade and for their own particular festivals in the general festival of spring, so that their Glorious Monarch will contemplate the gifts, subtle wonders, and resplendent works of art He has bestowed upon them; and so that He will present to creation's gaze the bejewelled instances of His mercy, in springtime, and on the face of the earth, which is the exhibition of Divine art; and so that He will proclaim to mankind the wisdom in the creation of the tree.

He demonstrates the perfection of Divine power through showing what important treasure hangs on their delicate branches and what significant wealth there is in the fruits of His merciful bounties.

*The imagination sees heavenly angels embodied from these trees
With thousands of flutes.
From these flutes the consciousness hears
The praises of the Ever-Living One.
Their leaves have tongues, each reciting the word: It is He! It is He!*

Meaning,

*O Ever-Living One! O Ever-Living One!
Since all things chant in unison: There is no god but He,
And they are seeking Truth,
From beginning to end they recite: O Ever-Living One!
They are chanting in unison: O God!
And We send down from the skies water rich in blessings.¹³*

¹¹ Qur'an, 30:50.

¹² In the original text this section is in Arabic, together with the author's Turkish rendering, which is the source of the translation here. The lines at the end are in Persian. [Tr.]

¹³ Qur'an, 50:9.

A Short Addendum to the First Stopping-Place

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?*¹⁴

Then look at the face of the heavens, you see how it is silent in its tranquillity; how it is in motion with wisdom, how it is radiant with majesty, how it smiles with its adornment. An unending and infinite sovereignty is proclaimed to those who think by the order in its creation, by the symmetry in its art, by its shining lamps, its brilliant lanterns, its glittering stars.

Do they not look at the sky above them? How We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it?

The following explains the above passage, *Then look at the face of the heavens*, etc., which in turn is an explanation of the verse quoted.

Firstly, the phrase: *How it is silent in its tranquillity.*

The verse directs an attentive gaze to the beautifully adorned face of the heavens so that the one beholding it may become aware of the silence there which is within a vast tranquillity, and so that he may understand that it is thus through the command and subjugation of One Possessing Absolute Power.

For if they had been independent and unrestrained, those huge globes, all in close proximity to each other, those infinite, awesome heavenly bodies, would have caused such an uproar with their enormously swift revolutions that they would have deafened the cosmos. And there would have been such confusion in that tumultuous commotion that it would have scattered the universe. It is well-known what a commotion and uproar it causes if twenty water-buffalo work on top of each other. Whereas, we know that there are among the stars some which are thousands of times larger than the earth and which revolve at a speed seventy times faster than that of a cannon-ball. So the degree of power and subjugation of the Glorious Maker and All-Powerful One of Perfection may be understood from this, together with the degree of obedience and submission to Him of the stars.

¹⁴ Qur'an, 50:6.

Secondly, the phrase: *How it is in motion with wisdom.*

The verse commands us to look at the motion on the face of the heavens, which is with wisdom and purpose. Indeed, that mighty, wondrous motion occurs within a precise and comprehensive wisdom.

For example, a craftsman who operates a factory's machinery with wisdom and purpose demonstrates the degree of his skill and craftsmanship in proportion to the order and grandeur of the factory. Similarly, when we look at it in this way, the degree of power and wisdom of the All-Powerful One of Glory become apparent to us through His making the mighty sun as a factory, and its planets, those awesome, immense globes, like the factory's machinery, and His spinning and revolving them like stones in a sling.

Thirdly, *How it is radiant with majesty, how it smiles with its adornment.*

It has this meaning: the radiant majesty and smiling adornment on the face of the heavens are such that they demonstrate the sublimity of the Glorious Maker's sovereignty and exquisiteness of His artistry. As the myriad electric lamps hung about on festival days demonstrate the degree of the king's majesty and achievement in material progress, the vast heavens, too, with their majestic and adorned stars demonstrate to attentive gazes the sublime sovereignty and exquisite artistry of the Glorious Maker.

Fourthly, *By the order in its creation, by the symmetry in its art.*

This phrase says the following: look at the order of the creatures on the face of the heavens and see their symmetry and precise balance, then understand just how powerful and wise is their Maker.

Indeed, the vast heavens demonstrate the degree of power and wisdom of the One Who transforms various and tiny creatures or animals, thus preparing them for their duties, and Who impels each of them on a determined way by means of its particular balance, and the degree of their obedience and subjugation to Him. Similarly, the vast heavens demonstrate to attentive gazes through their awesome vastness and innumerable stars, and the stars, through their imposing hugeness and speedy revolutions and the fact that they do not exceed their bounds by an iota, even for a second, or neglect their duties for a tenth of a second, the exceedingly fine and particular balance with which the Glorious Maker carries out His dominicality.

Fifthly, *An unending and infinite sovereignty is proclaimed to those who think by its shining lamps, its brilliant lanterns, its glittering stars.*

This phrase states clearly what is alluded to in the above verse, and in many similar to it, which mention the subjugation of the sun, moon, and stars. That is to say, to attach the heat and light-giving lamp of the sun to the embellished ceiling of the skies, and to make it the ink-pot for writing the missives of the Eternally Besought One in lines of day and night on the

pages of summer and winter; and to make the moon, like the hour-hands which shines on the large clocks on minarets and towers, an hour-hand of time's mighty clock on the dome of the heavens, and to make it move through its mansions with precise balance and perfect measure in the form of many varying crescents so that it leaves one crescent one night and then later returns to collect it; and to adorn the beautiful face of the sky with stars that twinkle and smile in the dome of the heavens, all these are signs of the unlimited sovereignty of a sustaining dominicality. They are indications of a majestic Divinity which makes Itself known to conscious creatures. They invite those who think to believe and to affirm Divine unity.

*Look upon the coloured page of the book of the universe;
 See what forms the golden pen of power has traced.
 No dark point remains for the gaze of the heart's eye;
 It is as if God as inscribed His signs with light.
 Look! What a miracle of wisdom is the amazing universe!
 Look! What a wondrous spectacle is the vastness of space!
 Then listen to the stars, listen to their harmonious address!
 See what wisdom has emblazed on the decree of its light.
 Altogether they start to speak with the tongue of truth,
 They address the majesty of the All-Powerful, All-Glorious One's sovereignty:
 We are each of us light-scattering proofs of the existence of our Maker,
 We are witnesses both to His unity and His power,
 We are subtle miracles
 gilding the face of the skies for the angels to gaze upon.
 We are the innumerable attentive eyes of the heavens
 which watch the earth, which study Paradise.
 We are the innumerable exquisite fruits
 which the hand of wisdom of the All-Glorious and Beauteous One
 has fastened
 To the celestial portion of the tree of creation,
 to all the branches of the Milky Way.
 For the inhabitants of the heavens,
 we are each of us a travelling mosque, a spinning house, a lofty home,
 Each is an illumining lamp, a mighty ship, an aeroplane.
 We are each of us a miracle of power, a wonder of creative art
 Created by the Powerful One of Perfection, the All-Wise One of Glory;
 A rarity of His wisdom, a marvel of His creation, a world of light.
 We demonstrated to mankind innumerable proofs,*

*We made them hear with these innumerable tongues of ours;
But their accursed unseeing, unbelieving eyes did not see our faces,
They did not hear our words.*

And we are signs that speak the truth:

Our stamp is one, our seal is one,

We are mastered by our Sustainer;

We glorify Him through our subjugation;

We recite His Names;

We are each of us in ecstasy,

A member of the mighty circle of the Milky Way.

Second Stopping-Place

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

*Say: He is God, the One and Only. God, the Eternally Besought One.*¹⁵

This Stopping-Place consists of three Aims.

THE FIRST AIM

The representative of the people of misguidance and those who assign partners to God fell to earth at the slap he received from a star, as was described at the end of the First Stopping-Place. So, because he could find nothing going for him anywhere from the particles to the stars, he gave up laying claim to them in that way and instead tried by means of three important questions to induce doubts in believers' minds about Divine unity and oneness.

The First Question: He said in the manner of the atheists: "O you who believe in One God! Looking on behalf of my clients, I could find nothing, nor get anything at all out of the beings in the universe; I could not substantiate my claims. But then, how do you prove the existence of One Who is Single and Unique and possesses infinite power? Why do you not think it possible for others to interfere and to share in His power?"

The Answer: It is decisively proved in the Twenty-Second Word that every creature, every particle, every star, is an illuminating argument for the Necessarily Existent and Absolutely Powerful One. Every link in the chains of beings in the universe is a clear evidence for His unity. The All-Wise Qur'an proves this with its innumerable proofs, and mentions most frequently those proofs that are clearest in the view of people generally. For example:

*If you ask them, who is it that created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, "God."*¹⁶

*And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and colours.*¹⁷

With these and many verses like them, the All-Wise Qur'an presents the

¹⁵ Qur'an, 112:1-2.

¹⁶ Qur'an, 31:25; 39:38.

¹⁷ Qur'an, 30:22.

creation of the heavens and earth as self-evident proofs of Divine unity. And so, whether they like it or not, because of the way the heavens and earth have been created, anyone who is conscious and intelligent will be compelled to affirm the Glorious Creator. As the Qur'an says: They will certainly say, "God."

In the First Stopping-Place we started with a particle and demonstrated the stamp of unity on beings as far as the stars and the heavens. With verses like these the Qur'an repels the ascribing of partners to God from the stars and heavens down to particles. It indicates this in the following way.

The Possessor of Absolute Power Who creates the heavens and earth with such order and balance, of course creates the solar system, which is a region of it. The solar system is self-evidently within His controlling and directing grasp.

Since that Absolutely Powerful One holds the sun and its planets within His grasp, and orders, subjugates, and directs them, certainly the earth, which is a member of the solar system and is tied to the sun, is also within His regulating and controlling grasp. Since this is so, the beings which are created and inscribed on the face of the earth and are like its aims and fruits are also within His sustaining and perfecting grasp.

And since all the creatures spread and scattered over the earth, which gild and adorn its face, are continuously renewed, coming and going, filling the earth and being emptied from it, they are all of them within the grasp of His knowledge and power; and since they are measured and ordered on the scales of justice and wisdom; and since all the species of animate beings are within the grasp of His power; certainly, all the well-ordered and faultless members of those species, which are like miniature specimens of the cosmos, balance-sheets of its species, and tiny indexes of the book of the universe, must also be within His creating, sustaining, directing, and perfecting grasp.

And since this is so, the cells, blood-corpuscles, limbs and muscles which comprise those animate creatures' bodies are also self-evidently within the grasp of His knowledge and power.

And since every cell and corpuscle is under His command and within His grasp, and since they are in motion according to His laws, surely the particles out of which they are formed and which are like shuttles weaving the embroideries of art which clothe them, are also necessarily within the grasp of His power and the sphere of His knowledge. For they are in motion in orderly fashion faultlessly performing duties at His command, with His permission, and through His power.

And since this is so, the identifying features and distinguishing marks to be found on everyone, all the differences in faces, voices and languages, of necessity also occur through His knowledge and wisdom.

So now look again at the verse which mentions and points out the beginning and end of this chain:

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: indeed, in that are signs for those who know.

We therefore now say: O representative of the unbelievers! You can see, these arguments as strong as the chains of the universe prove the path of affirming Divine unity, and they demonstrate a Possessor of Absolute Power. Since the creation of the heavens and the earth demonstrates an All-Powerful Maker, and the infinite power of that All-Powerful Maker, and that His infinite power is at the point of infinite perfection, there is an absolute lack of need for any partners. That is to say, He in no way needs any associates.

Since He has no need, why do you take that dark path? Why is it you feel constrained to take it? Moreover, since both He, and beings, are in absolutely no need of partners, just as it is impossible for there to be any partners in His Divinity, so it is impossible for there to be any in His creation and sustaining of beings. Their existence is impossible. The reason for this is as follows:

We proved that the power of the Maker of the heavens and the earth is both infinite and at the point of infinite perfection. If there was any partner, it would mean that, although His power is infinite, another finite power would threaten and overcome His infinite and perfect power and would take possession of a certain areas of it. It would then be necessary, without there being any compulsion, for something finite to make something infinite finite and limited, and for itself to become infinite for a time. This is a manifold and most irrational impossibility.

Also, since there is no need for partners, and, since their existence is impossible, to claim otherwise is purely arbitrary. That is, since there is no cause that could induce such a claim, rationally or logically, it would be meaningless. According to the science of jurisprudence, such a claim is designated 'arbitrary'. That is, it is a meaningless 'abstract claim'.

A principle of the sciences of theology and jurisprudence is this, that a probability not originating from any indication or sign has no importance; it cannot induce doubt in a matter that is definite. It cannot shake the certainty that is based on sound judgement.

For example, it is possible that Barla or Eûridir Lake consists of grape-molasses or that it has been transformed into oil. But since that possibility does not originate from any indication, it does not affect our certain knowledge, or induce doubt in the fact, that it consists of water.

Therefore, we questioned every sort of creature from every corner of the cosmos and whatever was questioned, from the particles to the stars in the First Stopping-Place, and from the creation of the heavens and the earth to the individual features in faces in the Second Stopping-Place, everything demonstrated through the tongue of its being the seal of unity; everything testified that God is One.

You saw this for yourself. There is, then, nothing in any of the creatures in the universe on which the possibility of God having any partners could be constructed. That is to say, since to claim that God does have partners is purely arbitrary and meaningless and is an 'abstract claim', it is pure ignorance and unqualified stupidity.

Thus, nothing remained for the representative of the people of misguidance to say in the face of this. The only thing he could say was: "What indicates that God has partners is the configuration of causes in the cosmos. It is that everything is tied to a cause. So that means that causes have an actual effect, and if they have an effect, are not they able to be God's partners?"

The Answer: Effects have been tied to causes because Divine will and wisdom require them to be so, and so that great numbers of the Divine Names may be manifested. Everything has been tied to a cause, but we have decisively proved in numerous places, including many of the Words, that "causes have no actual power with which to create their effects." So, for now we shall just say this:

Among causes human beings are self-evidently the most superior, and have the greatest power of choice and the most extensive ability to control and direct other causes. And among the most obvious of man's actions over which he exercises choice are eating and the powers of speech and thought. Furthermore, all these faculties are extremely well-ordered, wonderful, and purposeful chains. But of the hundred links in these chains only one is subject to man's power of choice.

For example, in the chain of actions concerning food, which stretches from the nourishment of the body's cells to the forming of fruit, only moving the jaw and chewing the food is subject to man's choice. And in the chain of speech, only exhaling air and blowing it into the mould of articulated letters. And while a word in the mouth is a seed, it becomes like a tree; in the air it yields the fruits of millions of the same word and enters the ears of listeners along with millions of others. Man's imagination can barely reach this metaphorical shoot, so how should the short arm of choice reach it?

Since among causes man is the most superior and has the greatest power of choice and yet his hands are thus tied from real creation, how should other causes, such as inanimate creatures, animals, the elements, and nature have any real power of disposal over other causes? Each of those causes is

only a container; a cover for the dominical works; a tray-bearer for the gifts of the Compassionate One.

Of course, the receptacle for a king's gift, or the handkerchief in which it is wrapped, or the individual who brings the gift, which is placed in his hand, can in no way be partners in the king's sovereignty. Anyone who supposes that they are partners is imagining nonsensical absurdities. In the same way, apparent causes and intermediaries can have absolutely no share in God's sustaining of His creatures. Their lot is only to perform a service of worship.

THE SECOND AIM

The representative of those who ascribe partners to God could in no respect prove that way, and so, although despairing, since he wanted to destroy the way of those who affirm Divine unity, he tried to sow doubts in their minds by asking the following question:

The Second Question: "O you who affirm Divine unity! You say, 'Say: He is God, the One and Only. God, the Eternally Besought One;'¹⁸ that the Creator of the universe is one, He is single, He is eternally besought by all creatures; and that the Creator of everything is He. That He is one in essence and at the same time the reins of everything are directly in His hand, the key to everything is in His grasp; one thing cannot be an obstacle to another. And you say that at the same instant He has total disposal over all things and all their states. How can such a far-fetched fact be believed? How can a single individual be in innumerable places and do innumerable things at the same time with no difficulty?"

The Answer: This question may be answered through explaining an extremely profound, subtle, elevated, and comprehensive mystery concerning Divine oneness and eternal besoughtness. Man's mind can only look at this mystery through the telescope and observatory of comparison and allegory. While there is nothing similar or analogous to God Almighty's Essence and attributes, the functions of His attributes may be looked at to an extent by means of comparison and allegory. So we shall point to that mystery through comparisons of a material nature.

First Comparison: As is proved in the Sixteenth Word, a single individual may attain universality or comprehensiveness through the means of different mirrors. While actually being a particular or part of something greater than itself, it is as though it becomes a universal with numerous qualities and functions.

Indeed, matter like glass and water may be a mirror to physical objects,

¹⁸ Qur'an, 112:1-2.

and one such object may attain universality in such a mirror. In the same way, air, ether, and some creatures from the World of Similitudes are like mirrors to lucent objects and spirit beings. Those mirror-like creatures pass with the speed of lightning or imagination to being means of travel and spectating, so that the lucent and spirit beings travel with the speed of imagination in those spotless mirrors, those subtle dwellings. In the space of a single instant the spirit beings can enter thousands of places. And because they are lucent and because their reflections are the same as them and possess their qualities, they are as though present in person in every mirror, everywhere, as is contrary to the case with physical beings.

The reflections and likenesses of dense corporeal beings are not identical to the corporeality of those beings; they do not possess their qualities and may be thought of as dead. For example, although the sun is a particular and a single individual, it becomes like a universal by means of shining objects. It reflects its image, a sun like itself, in all shining objects, drops of water, and fragments of glass on the face of the earth, according to their capacity. The sun's heat, light, and the seven colours in its light, a sort of likeness of the essential sun, is found in all shining physical objects.

Let us suppose the sun had knowledge and consciousness, then every mirror would be like a sort of dwelling-place or seat or chair for it, it would be in contact with everything in person. It would be able to communicate with all conscious creatures by means of mirrors, with the pupil of every eye, even, each of which would be like a telephone. One thing would not be an obstacle to another. Communicating with one thing would not be a barrier to communicating with another. While being present everywhere, it would be present nowhere.

If the sun, which is like a material, partial, and inanimate mirror to only the Divine Name of LIGHT out of innumerable Names, can therefore display universal activity in an unlimited number of places while being a single individual, should the All-Glorious One, with the oneness of His Essence, be unable to perform innumerable actions at the same time?

Second Comparison: Since the cosmos is like a tree, all trees may be likened to the truths of the universe. So we shall take the mighty and majestic plane-tree facing this room as a miniature example of the universe and demonstrate with it the manifestation of Divine oneness in the universe.

This tree has at least ten thousand fruits and each fruit has at least a hundred winged seeds. At one instant of time the ten thousand fruits and million seeds display altogether one art and creativity. While the centre of the laws of the tree's formation is present in its roots and trunk, through a manifestation of Divine will and a condensing of the dominical command, which may be described as particular, individuated, and a 'knot' of life, it is also

present at the ends of all its branches, within every fruit and every seed. No part of any member of the tree is lacking the laws, they are not obstacles to one another; the tree is formed through them.

And that single manifestation of will and law issuing from a command are not transmitted and radiated like light, heat, and air. For they leave no trace nor may any hint of them be perceived in the long distances and various beings between the places they go. If their being present in all the fruits and seeds had occurred through being transmitted and radiated, some trace or hint of them would be perceived. Rather, they are present in all those places without being fragmented or radiated.

The universal and general actions are not incompatible with His oneness and individuality. It may even be said that while the manifestation of will, and the law and life-source are present in all the places, they are present in none of them.

It is as if the law has as many eyes and ears as there are fruits and seeds of the majestic tree. Yes, each part of the tree is like a centre of the senses of the law, so that their long intermediaries are not a veil and do not form a barrier, but like telephone wires, are a means of facilitating and bringing things closer. The farthest is like the nearest.

Since, as is clear from observation, through a single partial manifestation of an attribute of the Single and Eternally Besought One like will, millions of events occur in millions of places without intermediary, one has to be certain, completely certain, that the All-Glorious One can have total disposal over the tree of the universe, together with all its parts and particles, through the manifestation of His power and will.

As is proved and explained in the Sixteenth Word, while being in one place and being particulars identifiable as single, through the mystery of luminosity, impotent and subjugated creatures like the sun, and semi-luminous creatures like spirit-beings, which are restricted by matter, and the laws issuing from a command and the manifestations of will which are the life-source and centre of direction of this plane-tree, which in turn are like its light and spirit, are clearly present in numerous places and in numerous events. While being particulars restricted by matter, it is as though they acquire an absolute universality, and through the exercise of will, in the space of one second may demonstrably perform a great number of works. You see for yourself and you will not be able to deny it.

The Single and Most Pure and Holy Essence, Whose attributes are all-comprehending and functions, universal, is far beyond and exalted above matter, and is utterly remote and free from any restriction and the darkness of density. All these lights and luminous beings are but obscure shadows of His Sacred Names; and all existence and life and the World of Spirits, the

Intermediate Realm, and the World of Similitudes, semi-transparent mirrors reflecting His beauty.

What being can be hidden in the face of His oneness, which is within the manifestation of His attributes and actions, which in turn are evident through His universal will, absolute power, and all-embracing knowledge? What matter can be difficult for Him? What place can be concealed from Him? What object can remain distant from Him? What individual can draw close to Him without acquiring universality? Can anything at all be hidden from Him? Can any matter at all be an obstacle to another? Can any place at all be empty of His presence?

Ibn al-‘Abbas (May God be pleased with him) said: “In all beings are an immaterial eye that sees and ear that hears.” Is this not so? Are the chains of beings not each like a wire or vein for the swift conveyance of His commands and laws? Are obstacles and difficulties not means and intermediaries in His disposal of beings? Are causes and intermediaries not merely an apparent veil?

While He is present nowhere, is He not present everywhere? Does He have any need to be located in a place or situation? Can the veils of distance, smallness, and the degrees of existence be obstacles to His proximity, power of disposal, and witnessing?

Moreover, could the qualities pertaining to material, contingent, dense, numerous, restricted, and limited beings, and the states of change, transformation, division, and occupying space, which are their particular and confined necessary consequences, in any way touch the Most Pure and Holy Essence, Who is far beyond matter, is Necessarily Existent, the Light of Lights, and is Single, One, and free from any restriction or limitation and exalted above and pure of any fault or deficiency? Could impotence in any way be fitting for Him? Could any defect approach the skirt of His splendour and glory?

Conclusion of the Second Aim

Once, when I was reflecting on Divine oneness, I looked at the fruits on the plane-tree outside my room. A chain of thought came to me as inspiration, and I write it here in Arabic exactly as it came to me.¹⁹

All these fruits and the seeds within them are miracles of dominical wisdom, wonders of Divine art, gifts of Divine mercy, material proofs of Divine unity, bearers of the good news that Divine favours will be granted in the hereafter. Just as they are all truthful witnesses to His all-embracing power and knowledge, each of them is a mirror confirming His unity in all the

¹⁹ In the original text the author follows the section in Arabic with a Turkish rendering of which is the basis of the translation here. [Tr.]

corners of the world of multiplicity and in all the parts of the world of this tree, a world that has become multiple.

They turn the gaze from multiplicity to unity. Each of them says through the tongue of its being: “Do not let your glance wander over all this mighty spreading tree lest you become distracted, for the whole tree is within us. Its multiplicity is contained within our unity.”

Even, just as every seed, which is like the heart of the fruit, is a physical mirror confirming Divine unity, so it mentions and recites in the silent prayer of its heart the Divine Names the mighty tree recites in its audible prayer.

Furthermore, just as the fruits and seeds are mirrors professing Divine unity, so they are the visible signs of Divine Determining and embodied tokens of Divine power. Through these words, Divine Determining and power intimate the following:

“The many branches and twigs of this tree appeared from a single seed and demonstrate the unity of the tree’s Artist in creating it and giving it form. Then, after growing and spreading its branches, it gathered together all its truths in a single fruit. It encapsulated its entire meaning in a single seed, thereby demonstrating the wisdom in the Glorious Creator’s creation and planning.”

Similarly, the tree of the universe takes its existence from a source of unity and is sustained by it. And man, the fruit of the universe, demonstrates unity within this multiplicity of beings, while with the eye of faith his heart sees the mystery of unity within multiplicity.

Moreover, the fruits and seeds are allusions of dominical wisdom. Wisdom says the following with them to those who are aware: “The comprehensive regard towards this tree and its planning look with their comprehensiveness and universality to a single fruit. For the fruit is a miniature specimen of the tree. It is what is aimed at by the tree. Also, the comprehensive regard and planning look to every seed within the fruit, for the seed bears the meaning or index of the whole tree. That is to say, since the fruit is the aim the tree’s existence and the purpose of its creation, the One Who plans the tree regards each fruit with all His Names connected to the planning. Moreover, the mighty tree is sometimes pruned and trimmed for the sake of the tiny fruit; some parts of it are destroyed so that it may make new growth. It is grafted in order to produce even better, permanent fruit.”

In the same way, man, who is the fruit of the tree of the universe, is the purpose of its creation and existence and the aim of the creation of beings. While his heart, which is the seed of the fruit, is a most brilliant and comprehensive mirror to the universe’s Maker. It follows on from this wisdom,

therefore, that tiny man will be the cause of the destruction and transformation of the universe. He will be the point of momentous revolutions like the Day of Resurrection. It will be for his judgement that the door of this world will be closed and that of the hereafter opened.

Since we have arrived at a discussion of resurrection, it is appropriate to explain one point concerning its reality which demonstrates the clarity and strength with which the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition illuminates and proves resurrection.

The result yielded by this sequence of thought shows that if it is necessary for man's judgement and his gaining eternal happiness, the whole universe will be destroyed and that a power capable of destroying and transforming the universe shows itself and exists. But resurrection has many degrees. It is obligatory to believe in some of them; they must be acknowledged. Whereas others become apparent according to levels in spiritual and intellectual development, and for these knowledge pertaining to both are necessary.

In order to present cogent and strong proofs for the simplest and easiest level, the All-Wise Qur'an points out a power capable of opening up a truly vast realm of resurrection. The degree of resurrection in which it is necessary for all to believe is this:

After human beings die, their spirits depart for another realm. And their bodies rot except for a minute cell from the base of the spine which will act as a seed. It remains intact, and on the Day of Resurrection God Almighty will create the human body out of it and return its spirit to it.²⁰ This degree is so simple, then, it may be seen every spring through millions of examples.

Sometimes in order to prove this degree, the verses of the Qur'an point out the unlimited activity of a power capable of raising to life all particles, and sometimes the traces of a power and wisdom capable of sending all creatures to extinction and then recalling them. Then they point to the activity and traces of a power and wisdom able to scatter the stars and shatter the heavens, and sometimes to the activity and manifestations of a power and wisdom capable of causing all animate creatures to die and then raising them to life again all at once at a single trumpet-blast.

Sometimes the verses demonstrate the manifestations of a power and wisdom that will raise to life the face of the earth and animate creatures all separately. And sometimes they demonstrate the traces of a power and wisdom that, lopping off its mountains, will cause the globe of the earth to disintegrate completely, and then restoring it will transform it into an even more excellent form.

That is to say, apart from the Day of Resurrection, in which it is obligatory for everyone to believe and to acknowledge, with that power and wisdom,

²⁰ See, page 544, footnote 22.

God Almighty can create numerous other degrees and resurrections. And what is more, dominical wisdom requires that besides certainly bringing about mankind's resurrection, He shall bring about all those other degrees or create certain other important matters.

A Question: You say: "You make much use of analogies in the form of comparisons or parables in the Words. Whereas according to the science of logic, this form of analogy does not afford certainty. A logical proof is required for matters of certain knowledge. Analogy in the form of comparison and parable is utilized by scholars of canon law in matters in which the prevailing opinion is sufficient. Also, you present comparisons in the form of certain stories; the stories are imaginary and cannot be true. Is this not contrary to reality?"

The Answer: It has often been stated in the science of logic that analogies in the form of comparisons and parables do not afford certain knowledge. However, there is a certain type of this form of analogy that forms a proof more powerful than those proofs consisting of certain knowledge used in logic. Also, it is more certain than that sort of deduction. This type of analogy is as follows.

It demonstrates the tip of a universal truth by means of a partial comparison and constructs its judgement on that truth. It demonstrates the truth's law in a particular matter, so that the vast truth may be known and particular matters may be ascribed to it.

For example, although the sun is a single being, by means of luminosity it is present in every shining object. A law of a truth is demonstrated by means of this comparison which states that light and luminosity cannot be restricted: for them, distance and proximity are the same, many and few are equal, and space cannot conquer them.

This is another example: a tree's fruits and leaves are all shaped and formed at the same time, in the same fashion, easily and perfectly, in a single centre and through a law issuing from a command. This is a comparison or parable demonstrating the tip of a mighty truth and universal law. It proves the truth and the truth's law in a truly decisive form, so that, like the tree, the mighty universe displays and is the field of operation of that law of truth and mystery of Divine oneness.

Thus, the analogies, comparisons, and parables employed in all the Words are in this form and are more powerful and afford more certainty than the categorical proofs of logic.

Answer to the second part of the question: It is a well-known fact that in the art of composition, when the true meaning of a word or phrase is used solely as the means to perceive another meaning, it is called an 'allusive

expression.’ The essential meaning of a phrase defined as ‘allusive’ is not the means of either truth or falsehood; it is its allusive meaning that is such. If the allusive meaning is correct then the phrase is true. Even if its essential meaning is false, it does not damage its veracity. If the allusive meaning is not correct while its essential meaning is, then the phrase is false.

For example, “So-and-so’s salvation is of great length.” That is, “His sword-belt is very long.” This phrase alludes to the man’s tall stature. If he was tall but did not have a sword and belt, the phrase would still be correct and true. If he was not tall but had a long sword and belt, then the phrase would be false, since it is not its essential meaning that is intended.

So, the stories or parables in the Words, like for example, those in the Tenth and Twenty-Second Words, are sorts of allusions. The truths at the end of the stories are extremely correct, extremely true and conformable to reality; they are the allusive meanings of the stories. Their essential meanings are comparisons that bring distant objects close like a telescope and however they may be it does not damage their veracity and truthfulness. Moreover, all those stories are comparisons or parables. Purely to enable people in general to understand, what is properly communicated without words is put into words, and immaterial and abstract matters are represented in material form.

THIRD AIM

After receiving this decisive and convincing answer to his second question,²¹ the representative of all the people of misguidance was reduced to silence, but then asked the following third question.

“Phrases in the Qur’an like *The Best of Creators*,²² and *The Most Compassionate of the Compassionate*,²³ suggest that there are other creators and compassionate ones. And you also say, ‘the Creator of all the worlds possesses endless perfections. United in Him are the utmost levels of every kind of perfection.’ Whereas, the perfections of beings are known through their opposites: if there was no pain, pleasure would not be a sort of perfection; if there was no darkness, light could not be proved to exist; if there was no separation, there would be no pleasure in union, and so on, would there?”

The Answer: We shall answer the first part of the question in five Indications.

FIRST INDICATION: From beginning to end, the Qur’an demonstrates Divine unity; this is a clear indication that those sort of phrases in the Qur’an

²¹ That is, the question at the beginning of the Second Aim, not the small questions at the end of the Conclusion.

²² Qur’an, 23:14, etc.

²³ Qur’an, 7:151, etc.

are not as you understand them. Rather, *The Best of Creators* is to say, “He is at the highest and best rank of creativity,” which in no way indicates that there is another creator. Like the other attributes, creativity has many degrees or ranks. The Best of Creators means, “He is a Glorious Creator at the furthest and most excellent degree of creativity.”

SECOND INDICATION: Terms like, *The Best of Creators* do not look to a plurality of creators, but to the varieties of the state of being creature. That is, “He is a Creator Who creates everything in an appropriate form, at the most faultless degree.” Verses like, *Who makes most excellent everything He creates*,²⁴ express this meaning.

THIRD INDICATION: The comparison suggested by terms like, *The Best of Creators*, *God is Most Great*, *The Best Judge between truth and falsehood*,²⁵ and *The Most Bountiful* are not comparative and superlative adjectives comparing God Almighty’s attributes and actions, which are actual, with others who possess samples of those attributes and actions. For all the perfections in the universe, and in jinn, men, and angels, are but pale shadows in relation to His perfection. How should any comparison be possible? It is rather human beings, and particularly the people of neglect, who see perfection in terms of comparison.

For example, a private shows complete obedience and respect to his corporal. It seems to him that all benefits come from him and he thinks little of the king. Even if he does think of him, it is still to the corporal that he shows his gratitude. So it is said to the private: “See here! The king is much greater than your corporal, it is only him that you should thank.” Now this sentence does not compare the king’s imperial commandership, which is actual, with that of the corporal, which is partial and only apparent; because to do so would be meaningless. It is a result of what the private considers to be important, of how he sees his relations with the corporal, that he prefers him and loves and thanks only him.

Similarly, when apparent causes are imagined to be the creator and bestower of bounties in the view of the people of neglect, they become a veil to the True Bestower of Bounties. These neglectful people cling onto causes and think that bounties and favours are from them; they praise and acclaim them. The Qur’an says: “God Almighty is a greater, more excellent Creator, a far better Bestower of Bounties. So look to Him, and thank Him.”

FOURTH INDICATION: Just as there may be comparison between actual beings and preference for some over others, so there may be comparisons between possible or even hypothetical things and preference. Numerous

²⁴ Qur’an, 32:7.

²⁵ Qur’an, 6:57.

degrees or levels are present in the true natures of most things. So too, in the view of the intellect, innumerable degrees may be present in the true natures of the Divine Names and sacred attributes. Whereas God Almighty is at the most perfect and excellent of all the possible and imagined degrees of those attributes and Names. The whole universe witnesses to this truth through all its perfections. *His are the Most Beautiful Names*,²⁶ “describing all His Names as the most excellent,” expresses this meaning.

FIFTH INDICATION: This use of the comparative and superlative is not to be understood in terms of creatures, but in terms of the fact that God Almighty has two sorts of manifestations and attributes.

The First Sort: Through the mystery of His unity, this consists of His disposal over creatures under the veil of causes and intermediaries and in the form of a universal law.

The Second Sort: Through the mystery of His oneness, it is His disposal over creatures directly, without veil, regarding each in a particular way. This means that through the mystery of oneness, His bestowal, creation, and grandeur which are direct are greater and more elevated and excellent than the works of His bestowal, creation, and grandeur which are apparent through the manifestations of causes and intermediaries.

For example, let us suppose there is a king, but he is a saint-king. He has great numbers of officials and commanders but they are only veils, for the authority and execution of all matters are directly in his hand. The king’s power of disposal and execution of affairs are of two kinds:

The First Kind: The execution of affairs he demonstrates and the commands he gives through a universal law in the form of visible officials and commanders in accordance with their abilities and ranks.

The Second Kind: This is not through a universal law. He does not make visible officials a veil; his execution of affairs and royal favours are direct and may be described as more elevated and excellent.

In the same way, the Creator of the universe, the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, has made numerous causes and intermediaries a veil to His execution of affairs and has demonstrated the majesty of His dominicality. But He left private telephones in His servants’ hearts so that they might leave causes behind and turn directly to Him, and might say: *You alone do we worship and You alone do we ask for help!*²⁷

Thus, the meanings of *The Best of Creators*, *Most Compassionate of the Compassionate*, and, *God is Most Great* look to this meaning, too.

²⁶ Qur’an, 17:110, etc.

²⁷ Qur’an, 1:5.

We shall answer the second part of the representative's question with five Signs.

The First Sign: In his question, he said: "If something has no opposite, how can it be perfection?"

The Answer: The questioner does not know what true perfection is. What he has in mind is only relative perfection. For merits, virtues, and qualities that look to something and are acquired relatively to something else are not real, they are relative and weak. If what they look to disappears, then they too will disappear.

For example, the relative pleasure and merits of heat occur through the effect of cold, and the relative pleasure of food, through the effect of the pain of hunger. If the cold and hunger disappear, then the pleasure diminishes. Whereas true pleasure, love, perfection, and virtue are such that they are not constructed on imagining something else. They are present of themselves. They are essential, inherent truths.

Qualities such as the following are like this: the pleasures of existence, life, love, knowledge, mercy, and compassion; and the beauty of light, sight, speech, noble-heartedness, fine character, and form; the perfection of essence and of attribute and perfection in actions. Whether or not there is something else, these qualities will not change. Thus, all the perfections of the Glorious Fashioner, the Beauteous Maker, the Perfect Creator are true perfections; they are essential and what is other than Him cannot affect Him. They can only be recipients.

The Second Sign: Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani wrote in *Sharh al-Mawaqif*: "The cause of love is either pleasure, benefit, resemblance (that is, inclination towards creatures of same kind), or perfection. For perfection is loved for itself." That is to say, if you love something, you love it either because of the pleasure it affords, or the benefits it brings, or because it is similar in kind, like the inclination towards children, or because it possesses some perfection. If it is for perfection, no other cause or purpose is necessary; it is loved purely for itself. For example, in the olden days everybody loved people who possessed perfection; even if they had no connection with them they would still love them admiringly.

Thus, since all God Almighty's perfections and qualities and all the degrees in His Beautiful Names are true perfections, they are loved for themselves. The Glorious One, Who is the true beloved, loves His perfections, which are true perfections, and the beauties of His attributes and Names in a manner appropriate to Himself. And He loves the good qualities of His art and creatures, which are mirrors reflecting those perfections.

He loves His prophets and saints, especially the Most Noble Beloved,

who is the Lord of the Prophets and Prince of the Saints. That is, with His love for His own beauty, He loves His Beloved One, who is the mirror to that beauty. With His love for His own Names, He loves His Beloved One and his brothers who are comprehensive and aware loci of those Names' manifestations.

With His love for His art, He loves His Beloved One and those like him who are heralds and exhibitors of that art. With His love for His artefacts, He loves His Beloved One and those who follow him who appreciate and admire those artefacts and respond to them saying: "What wonders God has willed! How beautifully they have been made." And with His love for the good qualities of His creatures, He loves His Most Noble Beloved One and his followers and brothers in whom are united the finest of moral qualities.

The Third Sign: All the perfections in all the universe are signs and indications of a Glorious Being's perfection and beauty. Indeed, all the goodness, perfection, and beauty in the universe is but a pale shadow in relation to His true perfection. We shall indicate briefly five proofs of this truth.

First Proof: A perfect and splendidly adorned and decorated palace plainly points to perfect skill and craftsmanship. And that craftsmanship and art, which is a perfect act, plainly points to a perfect author, master, and craftsman together with his titles and names like Fashioner and Adorner. And those perfect names doubtlessly point to the master's perfect and skilful attributes. And that perfect skill and those attributes self-evidently point to his perfect ability and faculty. And that perfect ability and faculty necessarily point to the perfection of his essence and the exaltedness of his nature.

In exactly the same way, this palace of the universe, this perfect and adorned work of art, self-evidently points to actions of the utmost perfection. For perfections in works of art result from perfection of action and they demonstrate it. And perfection of actions point to a Perfect Author and the perfect Names of that Author. That is, in relation to the works of art, they point to the perfection of Names like, Planner, Fashioner, All-Wise, All-Compassionate, and Adorner.

Moreover, the perfection of the Names and titles, without any doubt, point to the Author's perfect attributes. For if the attributes were not perfect, the Names and titles which originate from the attributes would not be perfect. And the perfection of the attributes self-evidently points to the perfection of His functioning essence, because it is from the functioning essence that the attributes proceed. And the perfection of essential functions point at the degree of 'knowledge of certainty' to the perfection of the functioning essence. They point to a perfection so worthy that although the light of the perfection passes through the veils of functions, attributes, Names, actions,

and works of art, it still demonstrates the goodness, beauty, and perfection to be seen to this great extent in the universe,

Thus, after the existence of this degree of true, essential perfection has been established with cogent proofs what importance remains for relative perfections, which look to other things and which exist only in so far as they gain superiority over their likes and opposites? You may understand, then, just how paltry they become.

Second Proof: When the universe is studied as something from which lessons are to be taken, the conscience and heart may conjecture and perceive the following: the one who has so beautified and adorned the universe with all manner of fine things, himself possesses an infinite degree of beauty and perfection so that he might make it thus.

Third Proof: It is a well-known fact that works of art which are well-proportioned, symmetrical, perfect, and beautiful are based on an exceedingly well-drawn-up plan. And a perfectly drawn plan points to a perfectly sound knowledge, fine intellect, and refined faculty of spirit. That is to say, it is the spirit's immaterial beauty which is manifested in art by means of knowledge. Thus, the universe, with its innumerable material fine qualities, is formed of the distillations of immaterial fine qualities pertaining to knowledge. And those immaterial qualities pertaining to knowledge and those perfections are certainly the manifestations of an infinite, eternal loveliness, beauty, and perfection.

Fourth Proof: It is obvious that that which gives light must possess light, and that which illuminates must be luminous, that bounty comes from riches, and kindness proceeds from one who is kind. Since this so, since all this loveliness and beauty is given to the universe and perfection is bestowed on beings, they point to an eternal beauty as light points to the sun.

Beings pass over the face of the earth like a vast river sparkling with flashes of perfection. In the same way that a river sparkles with manifestations of the sun, the flood of beings momentarily sparkles with flashes of loveliness, beauty, and perfection, and then is gone. And the beings following after them display the same flashes and sparkling. It may be understood from this that just as the manifestations and instances of beauty on the flowing bubbles of water are not from themselves, but are manifestations and instances of beauty from the light of a sun, so the qualities and perfections which glisten briefly on the flood of the universe are the flashes of the beauty of an Eternal Sun's Names.

Yes, the annihilation of the mirrors and the vanishing of beings is together with perpetual manifestation and constant effulgence. It is clear from the manifestations appearing that their apparent beauty is not theirs; they are rather eloquent manifestos and clear proofs of a Transcendent

Beauty and Renewed Munificence; of the Necessarily Existent, the Loving One, the Undying One.

Fifth Proof: If four people who have arrived via four different routes all speak of the same event, it suggests with a certainty born of unanimity that the event definitely occurred. Thus, although their ways, dispositions, abilities, and times were all different, all the scholars of religion with their different ranks, the saints and purified ones with their different paths and ways, and the true philosophers with their different creeds are in agreement. They are the people of illumination and experiential knowledge, who have unveiled the secrets of the cosmos and have observed and borne witness to the truth – through their unveilings, illuminations, and witnessings, they have unanimously agreed that the qualities and perfections to be seen in the mirrors and displays of the universe and its beings, are the manifestations of a Single Necessarily Existent One's perfection and the manifestations of the beauty of His Names.

Their consensus and accord, then, constitutes an unshakeable proof.

Let us suppose that in order not to hear this Sign, the representative of the people of misguidance was compelled to stop up his ears and flee. For certainly, like bats, heads so plunged into darkness cannot endure these lights. In which case, from here on we shall consider them little, if at all.

The Fourth Sign: Rather than looking to its likes and opposites, the pleasure, loveliness, and beauty of a thing look to where those qualities are manifested. For example, generosity is a fine and pleasing attribute. The pleasure a generous person obtains from the joy and pleasure of those he has favoured is thousands of times more gratifying than the relative pleasure obtained from feeling superior to other generous people.

Also, a kind and compassionate person receives true pleasure proportionately to those towards whom he has been compassionate find ease and comfort. For example, the pleasure a mother receives from the happiness and comfort of her children, because of her compassion, is so strong she would sacrifice her very soul for their comfort. The pleasure of such compassion will even make a hen attack a lion in order to protect her chicks.

Thus, the true pleasure, goodness, happiness and perfection in elevated attributes do not look to peers and opposites, but to their dependants and the places they are manifested. The beauty, therefore, of the Glorious and Perfect One's mercy, Who is Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent, Clement and Benevolent, Compassionate and Merciful, looks to those who receive His mercy.

There are endless degrees in the happiness, ease and joy of those who receive the manifestation of His mercy and compassion, and especially those who receive its endless varieties in everlasting Paradise. We may

understand that, according to the degrees of their happiness and joy, the Merciful and Compassionate One experiences exalted, pure, holy, and beautiful meanings, like fondness and love, in a manner appropriate to Him, that may be described through qualities which are proper to Him. He possesses utterly pure and holy qualities which we may not mention because the Shari'a does not permit it, but which may be described as 'sacred pleasure,' 'holy love,' 'pure joy' and 'sacred happiness.' We have proved in many places that they are infinitely more exalted, elevated, holy, and pure than the love, joy, and happiness that we see in the universe and may perceive among creatures. If you wish to take a look at a flash of those meanings, then look through the telescope of the following comparisons.

For example, a noble-hearted and magnanimous personage laid out a fine banquet on his magnificent voyaging ship in order to feed the poor, the needy, and hungry. Then he himself watched from on deck. You can understand how pleased and happy the thankful pleasure and appreciative gratitude of the poor, hungry and needy made that generous personage; how much it gratified him.

Man is not the true owner of even the humblest repast and is merely like a distributor. Therefore, if his joy is thus, you can draw an analogy with the sacred meanings of love and results of mercy that pertain to the Merciful and Compassionate One and which we are powerless to express. For He causes men, jinn, and animals to journey in the seas of space, and to board the mighty earth, which is a dominical ship. Then, loading the table of the face of the earth with innumerable varieties of foods, He invites all living creatures to the feast, which is a sort of light snack or appetizer. For besides this, He will make each of every sort of perfect delight a table laden with bounties in a permanent and everlasting realm. He will inaugurate an unending and comprehensive banquet of innumerable pleasures and subtle wonders, which will be true food for His countless and endlessly needy and yearning slaves.

And, for example, a skilful and practised craftsman who likes to display his ingenuity, after inventing an object like a gramophone which plays without records, will set it up, try it out and then show it off. If it gives the desired and expected results perfectly, how proud will its inventor feel, how pleased and gratified will he be. He will say to himself: "May God bless this!"

And so, if an insignificant man is so pleased with the smooth working of a gramophone and with his craftsmanship which is only superficial, for in reality he creates nothing, then how should the All-Glorious Maker be? For He created the mighty universe as an orchestra and gramophone, and He made the earth, and all the animate creatures on it, and among animate creatures especially man. And man's head He created in such a fashion that it is a

dominical gramophone and Divine orchestra so that science and philosophy are struck with wonderment at the art and craftsmanship displayed in it.

Thus, all these beings show all the results desired of them to the utmost degree and in the best possible way. They are completely obedient to the commands that give them existence, which are described by the creatures' particular worship and glorification and their appointed salutations to God. The pride, pleasure and joy together with the sacred meanings and pure qualities, which we are unable to describe, that are obtained from these and from the attainment of the dominical aims sought from the beings, are so exalted and holy that if all the minds of mankind were to unite and become one mind, it would still be unable to reach or comprehend their substance.

And another example. What pleasure and enjoyment a just ruler who loves to enforce justice and right receives from giving the oppressed their rights and receiving their thanks and from punishing the wrongdoers and taking revenge for the oppressed. You can draw an analogy with the sacred meanings pertaining to the Absolutely Wise One, the Truly Just One, the All-Compelling and Glorious One, which arise from establishing justice, and not only for men and jinn, but for all creatures.

That is to say, the sacred meanings arising from bestowing the right of existence and the right of life on everything, from protecting existence and life from aggressors, and from arresting and restraining those ghastly creatures from their aggression; and that arise especially from the judgement of men and jinn at the Great Gathering in the realm of the hereafter. And besides this, the sacred meanings arising from the greatest manifestation of justice and wisdom that is apparent in animate creatures.

Thus, as may be seen from these three examples, just as a great many degrees of loveliness, beauty, grace, and perfection are present in all the thousand and one Divine Names, so there are a great many degrees of love, pride, glory, and grandeur.

It is because of this that the elevated and authoritative saints who manifested the Name of Loving One said: "Love is the very leaven of the universe. It is through love that all beings are in motion. It is from love that the laws of attraction, affinity, and ecstasy present in all beings spring." One of them wrote the following:

*The firmament is intoxicated, the angels and the stars are intoxicated,
The heavens are intoxicated, the moon and the earth are intoxicated,
The elements are intoxicated, the plants, the trees and mankind are intoxicated,
Animate creatures are all intoxicated,
All the particles of all beings are altogether intoxicated, and yet more
intoxicated.*

That is to say, everyone receives the manifestation of Divine love and is

intoxicated in accordance with his capacity. It is well-known that every heart has affection for someone who bestows kindnesses on it, and that it loves true perfection and is enamoured of noble beauty. And the heart loves even more one who bestows kindnesses, not only on itself, but also on those it loves and feels compassion for.

And so, as we explained before, may it not be understood from the following just how deserving of love and passion is the All-Beauteous and Glorious One, the All-Perfect Beloved One, and how intoxicated and giddy is the whole universe with love of Him? For He is named with a thousand Names each of which is the source of thousands of perfections and the means for thousands of degrees of beauty. And through His bounties, in all the Names are thousands of treasuries containing bounties, and He makes all those beings we love happy.

It is because of this mystery that the saints who manifested the Name of Loving One declared: “We do not want Paradise. One flash of the Divine love will suffice us for ever.”

It is also because of this that as is recorded in the Hadith: “A minute’s vision of the Divine beauteousness in Paradise will far surpass all its other delights.”²⁸

Thus, these endless perfections of love only occur through the All-Glorious One’s Names and His creatures within the sphere of His unity and oneness. That is to say, those perfections that are imagined to exist outside that sphere are not perfections at all.

The Fifth Sign: The Fifth Sign consists of five Points.

First Point: The representative of the people of misguidance said next: “The world is execrated in your Hadiths and called ‘carrion.’²⁹ Also, all the saints and people of truth have contempt for the world, they say that it is pernicious and unclean. Whereas, you show it to be the means and proof of all Divine perfections and speak of it rapturously.”

The Answer: The world has three faces.

Its First Face looks to God Almighty’s Names; it displays their impress. It is a mirror to them, reflecting their meanings. This face of the world consists of innumerable letters or missives describing the Eternally Besought One. This face is utterly beautiful, and is worthy of love, not loathing.

Its Second Face looks to the hereafter. It is the seed-bed of the hereafter and arable field for Paradise. It is the flower-bed of mercy. This face is also beautiful like the first one and is deserving of love not contempt.

²⁸ *Tirmidhi*, Zuhd, 14; *Ibn Maja*, Zuhd, 3; *Darimi*, Muqaddima, 32; *Suyuti*, *al-Durr al-Manthur*, iii, 305-6.

²⁹ *Ibn Maja*, No: 4112; *al-Manawi*, *Fayd al-Qadir*, No: 4281.

Its Third Face looks to man's base appetites. It is a veil of neglect and a plaything for satisfying the desires of the worldly. This face is ugly because it is transient and mortal; it is full of pain and it deceives. The contempt described in the Hadith and the loathing of the people of truth, then, is for this face.

The importance and approbation which the All-Wise Qur'an demonstrates towards the universe and all beings is towards the first two faces. It is the first two faces of the world that the Companions of the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) and other people of God seek.

There are four classes of people who have contempt for the world.

The First: Those who seek knowledge of God. They have contempt for it because it is a barrier to knowledge, love, and worship of God.

The Second: Those who look to the hereafter. They see the world as ugly either because unavoidable worldly matters prevent them from doing works pertaining to the hereafter. Or, due to their elevated degree of belief, they see it as ugly in relation to the perfections and beauties of Paradise.

Indeed, in the same way that a handsome man will appear ugly when compared to the Prophet Joseph (Peace be upon him), however valuable the qualities of this world, when compared to those of Paradise, they become as nothing.

The Third: These have contempt for this world because they cannot obtain it. This contempt arises not from loathing but from love.

The Fourth: These have contempt for the world because although they obtain it, it does not stay, it leaves them. And this vexes them. They insult it in order to console themselves and say it is foul. But this arises from love of the world, whereas acceptable contempt arises from love of the hereafter and the love that springs from knowledge of God.

That is to say, acceptable contempt is of the first two kinds. May God Almighty make us like those people. Amen.

IN VENERATION OF THE LORD OF THE PROPHETS

Third Stopping-Place

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.³⁰*

FIRST TOPIC

According to the meaning of *And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise*, everything has numerous aspects that give onto God Almighty like windows.

The realities of all beings and of the universe are based on the Divine Names. Each being's reality is based on one Name or on many. The attributes of things and the arts they display are also based on and rely upon a Name. True natural science is based on the Name of All-Wise, true medicine on the Name of Healer, and geometry on the Name of Determiner, and so on. In the same way that all the sciences are based on and come to an end in a Name, the realities of all arts and sciences, and of all human attainments, are based on the Divine Names. Indeed, one group of the most learned of the saints stated that the Divine Names constitute the true reality of things, while the essences of things are only shadows of that reality. They said too that even only apparently as many as twenty manifestations and impresses of the Divine Names may be seen on a single living creature. We shall try to make this subtle yet vast truth easier to understand by means of a comparison, and shall analyze it by passing it through a sieve two or three times as it were. However long our discussion, it would still be short, but one should not become bored.

When a skilful portraitist or sculptor wishes to paint a picture of a beautiful flower or to sculpt a great beauty belonging to mankind's fair sex, firstly he determines the general shapes of those two objects with a few lines. He determines these by ordering and adjusting them, by estimating and measuring them. And this he does according to rules and limits defined by geometry.

It is clear that this ordering and measuring is carried out with knowledge and wisdom or purpose. That is to say, the acts of ordering and limiting turn on the compasses of knowledge and wisdom. In which case, the meanings of knowledge and wisdom govern behind the ordering and limiting. The compasses of knowledge and wisdom, then, point to themselves and they demon

³⁰ Qur'an, 17:44.

strate that, within those limits, they have begun the portrayal of small particulars like the eyes, ears, nose, leaves, and stamens.

Now we see that the members determined by the motion of those inner compasses are taking shape artistically and carefully. Since this is so, the one who turns these knowledge and wisdom compasses possesses meanings of craftsmanship and care; it is they who command and then display themselves.

Thus, it may be understood from this that they point to inherent qualities of beauty and adornment. Since this is so, what makes the craftsmanship and care function is the will to beautify and the intention to decorate. In which case, it is at their command that the artist begins to adorn and illuminate. He gives a smiling and living form to the statue and flower. And what makes this meaning of beautifying and illuminating function is surely the meaning of favouring and munificence.

Yes, these two meanings govern him to such a degree that, quite simply, the flower is an embodied favour, and the statue, embodied munificence. So now it is the meanings of making loved and known that impel the meanings of favouring and munificence and make them work. That is, behind the latter two meanings, the meanings of making himself known through his art and making people love him govern.

This making loved and known, without a doubt arise from an inclination toward being merciful and the will to bestow bounties. So, since mercy and the will to bestow bounties are governing behind them, he will adorn the statue with all sorts of bounties and also bestow the form of the flower as a present. Thus, he fills the statue's hands and pockets with precious bounties and bestows the form of the flower as jewels. That is to say, what makes his mercy and will to bestow function is a feeling of gentleness and pity. That is, the meaning of pity and gentleness impels the mercy and bounty.

Furthermore, what impels and makes manifest the meaning of pity and gentleness within that person, who is self-sufficient and needs no one, are the meanings of beauty and perfection. These desire to be manifested. And as for love and mercy, which are the sweetest and most delightful parts of that beauty, they desire to be seen in the mirror of art and to see themselves through the eyes of yearning admirers.

That is to say, since beauty and perfection are loved for themselves, they love themselves above everything. They are also both loveliness and love. The union of beauty and love stems from this point. Since beauty loves itself, it desires to see itself in mirrors. Thus all the lovable bounties and beautiful fruits which were set on the statue and on the picture bear the flashes, each according to its capacity, of that meaning of beauty. They display those flashes both to the owner of the beauty and to others.

In exactly the same way, the All-Wise Maker delimits, orders and gives determined proportions and shapes to all things, particular and universal, through the manifestation of His Names; to Paradise and this world, the heavens and the earth, plants and animals, men and jinn, angels and spirit beings. By doing this, He causes them to recite His Names of Determiner, Orderer, and Giver of Form.

He determines the limits of their general shapes in such a manner that He displays His Names of All-Knowing and All-Wise. Then, through the definition of knowledge and wisdom, He begins to form them within those limits. He does this in such a way that He displays the meanings of craftsmanship and care and His Names of Maker and Munificent.

Next, with the miraculous hand of art and the brush of munificence He gives the colours of beauty and adornment to the members of that form, whether a single human being or a single flower, like the eyes, ears, leaves, and stamens. If it is the earth, He gives the colours of beauty and adornment to its minerals, plants and animals. If it is Paradise, He gives the colours of beauty and adornment to its gardens, palaces, and houris. And so on. You can make analogies for the rest, too.

Furthermore, He adorns and illuminates in such a fashion that the meanings of favouring and munificence are predominant in those objects. They govern to a degree where those adorned beings, those illuminated artefacts, become like embodied favours and incarnate munificence. They mention the Names of Gracious and Munificent.

Next, what impels the favouring and munificence to manifest are clearly the actions of making loved and known. That is, the qualities of making Himself loved by animate creatures and known by conscious ones. They cause animate and conscious beings to recite the Names of Loving and Known One behind the Names of Gracious and Munificent, and for this recitation, which is performed by the very mode of their beings, to be heard.

Then, embellishing those adorned and beautiful creatures with delicious fruits and lovable results, He turns from adorning to bestowing bounties, from graciousness to compassionateness. He causes them to recite the Names of Bestower and Compassionate and displays the manifestation of those two Names behind the outer veils.

Next, what impels that One, Who is absolutely without need, to manifest these Names of Compassionate and Munificent are the qualities of mercy and gentleness, which display the Names of Gentle and Merciful and cause them to be recited.

And what impels the meanings of mercifulness and gentleness to manifest are doubtless, an essential beauty and perfection which desire to become evident; they cause the Name of Beautiful, and the Names of Loving and

Compassionate, which are within the Name of Beautiful, to be recited. For beauty is loved for itself. Beauty and one possessing beauty love themselves. Moreover, it is both loveliness and love.

Perfection, also, is loved for itself; no other cause is necessary. It is both lover and beloved. Since a beauty that is at the utmost degree of perfection and a perfection that is at the utmost degree of beauty are loved and are worthy of love to the utmost degree, most certainly will they desire to see and to exhibit themselves through displaying their flashes and manifestations in mirrors, in accordance with the capacity of the mirrors.

That is to say, the beauty and perfection essential to the All-Glorious Maker, the All-Wise One of Beauty, the All-Powerful One of Perfection, require the qualities of mercy and gentleness, and impel the Names of Merciful and Gentle to be manifested.

As for mercy and gentleness, through displaying compassion and bounty, they impel the manifestation of the Names of Compassionate and Bestower.

And compassionateness and bestowal require the qualities of making known and loved and impel the Names of Loving and Known One to be manifested.

Making known and loved impel the meanings of favouring and munificence and display them on some of the facets of those artefacts; they cause the Names of Gracious and Munificent to be recited amongst them.

As for the qualities of graciousness and munificence, they impel the acts of adorning and illuminating. They cause the Names of Adorner and Illuminer to be recited by the tongues of the artefacts' beauty and luminosity.

And the qualities of adorning and beautifying require the meanings of craftsmanship and care. They cause the Names of Maker and Bountiful to be recited by the beautiful features of the artefacts.

As for craftsmanship and care, they require knowledge and wisdom, and they cause the Names of All-Wise and All-Knowing to be recited by their well-ordered, wise, and purposeful members.

And knowledge and wisdom require the acts of ordering, forming, and shaping. They display the Names of Determiner and Giver of Form, causing them to be recited by the artefact in its entirety, through its form.

Thus, the All-Glorious Maker has made all His creatures or artefacts in such a way that He causes most of them, and especially animate beings, to recite numerous Divine Names. It is as if He has dressed each creature in twenty different shirts, one on top of another or has enfolded them in twenty veils, and on each shirt or veil He has inscribed different Names.

For example, as was demonstrated in the comparison, there are many

pages in what is only apparent in the creation of a beautiful member of mankind's fair sex or of a beautiful flower. From these two small and particular examples you can draw analogies with other large and universal creatures.

The First Page: It is the state which demonstrates the general shape and proportion. It mentions the Names of O Giver of Form! O Determiner! O Orderer!

The Second Page: This is the plain and unadorned state of the human being and flower in the comparison, which occurs with the disclosure of the forms of all the different members of those two creatures. Many Names, like All-Knowing and All-Wise, for example, are written on this page.

The Third Page: Through bestowing a different beauty and adornment on all the different members of those two creatures, many Names like Maker and Designer, for example, are written on this page.

The Fourth Page: Such a beauty and adornment are given to those two artefacts it is as though they have become embodied favours and munificence. This page mentions and recites numerous Names, like for example, O Gracious One! O Munificent One!

The Fifth Page: Through attaching delicious fruits to the flower and lovable children and a fine character to the beautiful woman, this page recites Names like O Loving One! O Compassionate One! O Bestower of Bounties!

The Sixth Page: On this page of bestowal and bounties, Names like O Merciful One! O Gentle One! are recited.

The Seventh Page: Flashes of such beauty are apparent in these bounties and results that they are worthy of a sincere gratitude and pure love which have been kneaded with true desire and compassion. On this page, the Names of O Beauteous One of Perfection! O Perfect One of Beauty! are inscribed and recited.

Thus, if the beautiful flower and human being display this number of Names, and that only in material and apparent form, you can conclude what exalted and universal Names all flowers and animate creatures, as well as vast, universal beings, cause to be recited.

You can also conclude how many luminous, sacred Names, like Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, and Giver of Life, man recites and causes to be recited by reason of his spirit, heart, mind, and through the pages of life and other subtle qualities.

Thus, Paradise is a flower. The company of houris is also a flower. The face of the earth is a flower. The spring is a flower. The heavens are a flower, while the stars are their gilded embroideries. And the sun is a flower, while the seven colours in its light are the flower's embroidered colours.

The universe is a beautiful and huge human being, in the same way that each human being is a miniature universe. The company of houris, the assembly of spirit beings, the realm of angels, the congregation of jinn, and human kind, have all been formed, ordered, and created as if they were beautiful individuals. Just as they all display the Beauteous Maker's Names through their universality, as does each individual singly, so are they all different mirrors to His beauty and perfection, mercy and love. All are truthful witnesses to His infinite beauty and perfection, mercy and love. All are signs and tokens of that beauty and perfection, mercy and love.

Thus, this infinite number of different sorts of perfections occurs within the sphere of Divine unity and oneness. That is to say, what are imagined to be perfections outside that sphere are not perfections at all.

Understand therefore that the reality of beings is based on and relies on the Divine Names; rather, that their true realities are the manifestations of those Names; and that everything mentions and glorifies its Maker with numerous tongues in numerous ways.

And understand one meaning of the verse:

*And there is not a single thing but extols His glory and praise.*³¹

Say, "Glory be to Him Who is hidden in the intensity of His manifestation." And understand one reason why phrases like the following are repeatedly mentioned at the end of the Qur'an's verses:

*And He is the Mighty, the Wise.*³² * *And He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*³³ * *And He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.*³⁴

If you are unable to read the Names in a flower and cannot see them clearly, look at Paradise, study the spring, watch the face of the earth. You will be able to read clearly the Names written there, for they are the huge flowers of mercy. You will be able to see and understand their impresses and manifestations.

³¹ Qur'an, 17:44.

³² Qur'an, 3:62, etc.

³³ Qur'an, 42:5, etc.

³⁴ Qur'an, 30:54, etc.

The Second Point of the Second Topic

When the representative of the people of misguidance could find no support or basis on which to build his misguidance and was thus defeated in argument, he said the following:

“I consider happiness in this world and life’s pleasures, and the progress of civilization and perfection of arts as all lying in refusal to think of the hereafter and to know God, in love of this world, in absolute freedom and licence and in relying exclusively on myself. And in so doing I have drawn most men onto this path, through the assistance of Satan, and continue to do so.”

The Answer: We say, in the name of the Qur’an: O wretched man! Come to your senses! Do not listen to the representative of the people of misguidance. If you do listen to him, your loss will be so great that your intelligence, spirit, and heart will shudder even to imagine it. There are two paths in front of you.

The First: The path of wretchedness laid out in front of you by the representative of the people of misguidance.

The Second: The path of happiness defined for you by the All-Wise Qur’an.

You will have noted and understood numerous comparisons between these two paths in the Words, particularly the Short Words. So, note and understand now one of those thousands of comparisons which is suitable to this discussion.

The path of assigning partners to God, misguidance, dissipation and vice causes man to fall to the lowest degree. Afflicted with infinite pains, he is forced to bear an infinitely heavy load on his weak and powerless shoulders. For if man does not recognize God and place his trust in Him, he becomes extremely weak and impotent, needy and impoverished, a suffering, grieving and ephemeral animal, exposed to endless misfortunes. Suffering continuously the pain of separation from all the objects of love and attachment, he will ultimately abandon all of his loved ones and go alone to the darkness of the grave.

Throughout his life, he struggles vainly, with an extremely limited will,

slight power, a short lifespan and dull mind, against infinite pains and hopes. To no avail, he strives to attain innumerable desires and goals.

Even though he is unable to bear the burden of his own being, he takes the load of the vast world onto his wretched shoulders and mind. He suffers the torment of Hell before even arriving there.

Indeed, in order to avoid feeling this grievous pain, this awesome spiritual torment, the people of misguidance have recourse to a drunkenness that is like a form of stupor and thus are temporarily able to avoid feeling their pain. But when they do feel it, they suddenly feel the proximity of the grave. For whoever is not a true bondsman of God Almighty will imagine that he owns himself. But with his partial and limited will and his petty power and strength, he is unable to administer and control his being in this tempestuous world. He sees thousands of different sorts of enemy attacking his life, from harmful microbes to earthquakes. In an awesome state of painful fear he looks towards the door of the grave, that at all times appears dreadful to him.

While in this state, man will also be troubled by the state of the world and of mankind, for as a human being he is attached to both. But, he does not imagine them to be in the control of One All-Wise, All-Knowing, All-Powerful, Merciful and Generous, and has attributed them instead to chance and to nature. And so, together with his own pains, he suffers also the pains of the world and of mankind. Earthquakes, plagues, storms, famine and scarcity, separation and decease; all of this torments him in the most painful and sombre fashion.

But such a man is not worthy of pity and sympathy, for he himself is responsible for it.

In the Eighth Word is a comparison between two brothers who entered a well. One was not content with a refreshing, sweet, reputable, pleasant and licit drink at a splendid feast with pleasant friends in a beautiful garden and so drank some ugly and unclean wine in order to obtain illicit and impure pleasure. He became drunk and then imagined himself to be in some foul place in the middle of winter surrounded by wild beasts, and trembling cried out.

But such a man is not worthy of pity, for he imagined his honourable and blessed companions to be monsters, and thus insulted them. He also imagined the delicious foods and clean dishes at the feast to be impure and filthy stones and began smashing them. And the respected books and profound writings there to be meaningless and banal designs, and so ripped them up and trod on them.

Such a person is not merely unworthy of sympathy, rather, he deserves a good beating.

In exactly the same way, a person who, through incorrect choice and the lunacy of misguidance, is intoxicated with unbelief, imagines this hospice of the world, which belongs to the All-Wise Maker, to be the plaything of chance and natural forces. He fancies the passage of creatures into the World of the Unseen, that is in fact renewing the manifestation of the Divine Names, to be execution and annihilation. He supposes the echoes of those creatures' glorification of God, who are accomplishing their duties with the passing of time, to be the lamentations of death and eternal separation. He deems the pages of created beings, which are inscriptions of the Eternally Besought One, to be meaningless and confused. He imagines the door of the grave, which opens onto the world of mercy, to be the entrance to the darkness of non-existence. And he deems the appointed hour, which is in reality an invitation to join his true friends, to be the onset of separation from all of them.

Such a person both brings upon himself grievous and ghastly torments, and denies, denigrates and insults all beings and God's Names and His inscriptions. He is, therefore, not only unworthy of compassion and sympathy but also deserving of severe punishment. He is not in any way worthy of pity.

And so, O wretched people of misguidance and dissipation! What accomplishment of yours, what art, what perfection, what civilization, what progress, can confront this awesome silence of the grave, this crushing despair? Where can you find that true consolation that is the most urgent need of the human spirit?

What nature, what causality, what partner ascribed by you to God, what discovery, what nationality, what false object of worship, in each of which you place so much trust and to which you attribute God's works and His sustaining bounties, which of them can deliver you from the darkness of death that you imagine to be eternal annihilation? Which of them can enable you to cross the frontiers of the grave, the boundaries of the intermediate realm, the marches of the plain of resurrection, the Bridge of Sirat? Or can bring about your eternal happiness?

But know that most definitely you will travel on this path for you cannot close the door of the grave. And a traveller on such a path ought to rely on one whose control and command embraces all this vast sphere and its extensive boundaries.

O wretched people of misguidance and neglect! In accordance with the principles that 'the consequence of an illicit love is suffering a merciless torment,' you are suffering a fully justified punishment, for you are unlawfully employing your innate capacity for love, knowledge, thanks and worship that relate properly to the essence, attributes and Names of God Almighty, on your own soul and the life of this world.

You have lavished the love that belongs to God Almighty on yourself. Your own soul has become your beloved and will cause you endless suffering: you are not giving true peace to that beloved. You are suffering constantly because you do not hand it over to the Possessor of Absolute Power Who is the only true beloved and you do not trust wholly in Him.

You suffer further misfortunes because you give to the world the love that belongs to God Almighty's Names and attributes and divide up the works of His art among causes in the world. One group of those innumerable beloveds of yours will turn their backs on you and leave you without even saying good-bye. Another group will not even recognize you, or if they do, they will not love you. Or if they love you, their love will be of no use. You will constantly suffer from innumerable separations and farewells without hope of return.

This, then, is the essence and true nature of what the people of misguidance call life's happiness, human perfection, the advantages of civilization and the pleasure of freedom. And dissipation and intoxication are but a veil; they temporarily block all feeling. So, say, "I spit on the intelligence of those who follow such a path."

But as for the luminous highway of the Qur'an, it cures with the truths of faith all the wounds of the people of misguidance. It disperses all the gloom and darkness of that first path. It closes the door on all misguidance and perdition.

It cures man's weakness, powerlessness, poverty and need with trust in One All-Powerful and Compassionate. For, handing over the burden of his life and being to His power and mercy instead of loading it on himself, man finds ease and comfort as if he were riding on his own life and soul. The Qur'an states that he is not a 'rational animal', but rather a true man and a well-accepted guest of the All-Merciful One.

It gently cures man of the wounds inflicted on him by the transience of the world, the ephemeral nature of things and the love of them, and delivers him from the darkness of delusion and fancy. It does this by showing the world to be a guest-house of the All-Merciful One, and the beings in it to be mirrors to the Divine Names and ever-fresh inscriptions of the Eternally Besought One.

It shows death and the appointed hour to be the bridge to the intermediate realm and the prelude to joining and meeting beloved ones already in the world of eternity. It thus cures the wounds inflicted by the notion of death as eternal separation, as held by the people of misguidance. It demonstrates that separation is in fact the truest form of meeting.

Further, by establishing that the grave is a door opening onto the world of

mercy, an abode of happiness, a garden of Paradise, the luminous realm of the All-Merciful One, it dispels man's most terrifying fear and shows that the apparently painful, troublesome and unpleasant journey to the intermediate realm is in fact the most pleasurable, enjoyable and joyous of journeys. With the grave, it shows that the grave is not a dragon's mouth but is, rather, a door opening onto the garden of mercy.

The Qur'an also says to the believer, "Since you have only partial and restricted choice, hand over your affairs to your Owner's universal will. Since your power is slight, rely on that of the Possessor of Absolute Power. Since your life is brief, think of eternal life. Do not fret! There is an unending life. If your mind is dull, let the sun of the Qur'an shine on you. Look with the light of belief, and instead of the fire-fly of your own mind, each verse of the Qur'an will illumine you like a star.

"Since you have innumerable hopes and pains, know that infinite reward and limitless mercy await you. Since you have innumerable desires and aims, do not think of them and become disturbed. This world cannot contain them; the proper place for them is another realm, and the one who will grant them is one other than yourself."

The Qur'an also says, "O man! You do not own yourself. Rather, you are totally owned by One Whose power is infinite, an All-Compassionate One of Glory Whose mercy is infinite. Therefore, do not trouble yourself by shouldering the burden of your life, for it is He Who grants you life and administers it.

"Also, the world is not without an owner. So do not be anxious thinking of the state of it and load that burden onto your mind, for the world's Owner is All-Wise and All-Knowing. You are a guest so do not be officious and meddlesome.

"Furthermore, creatures such as men and animals have not been left to their own devices, rather, they are all officials with specific duties. They are watched over by an All-Wise and Compassionate One. Do not distress your spirit thinking of their pains and afflictions. Do not try to be more sympathetic and kind-hearted than their All-Compassionate Creator.

"Also, the reins of all those things that are hostile to you, from microbes to plagues, storms, famine and earthquakes, are in the hands of that All-Compassionate All-Wise One. Being All-Wise, He does nothing in vain. Being All-Compassionate, His mercy is superabundant. There is a form of grace and favour contained in everything He does."

The Qur'an also says, "This world is indeed ephemeral, nevertheless, it produces the necessities for an everlasting world. It is transient and fleeting, but it yields eternal fruits, and displays the manifestations of an Eternal

Being's eternal Names. Its pleasures are indeed few and its pains many, but the favours of the All-Merciful and Compassionate One are everlasting and true pleasures. And as for the pains of this world, they too yield a sort of pleasure by reason of the reward to be had for enduring them.

“Since the sphere of the licit is sufficient for all the pleasures, delights and joys of the spirit, heart and soul, do not approach the sphere of the illicit. For one pleasure within that sphere sometimes leads to a thousand pains. It will also cause the loss of the All-Merciful One's favours, which are true and lasting pleasures.

“Furthermore, as described above, illicit pleasure on the path of misguidance causes man to fall to the lowest of the low. Then no civilization, no philosophy can provide a remedy for him, and no human progress and scientific advances can deliver him from that deep, dark pit. Whereas, the All-Wise Qur'an elevates man, through belief and good deeds, from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, and demonstrates that it does this with clear proofs. And it fills in that deep pit with rungs of inner development and spiritual progress.

“Moreover, it facilitates man's long, stormy and troublesome journey towards eternity. It shows him the means for traversing a distance of a thousand years, or rather of fifty thousand years, in a single day.

“Also, through making known the All-Glorious One, Who is the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, it confers on man the position of a bondsman, guest and official entrusted with specific duties. And it ensures that he travels with the greatest ease both in the guest-house of this world and in the stages and stopping-places of the intermediate realm and the hereafter.

“A loyal official will travel in his monarch's kingdom and pass through the frontiers of each province with ease, journeying by the fastest means, such as by aeroplane, ship or train. So too one who forms a relation with the Pre-Eternal Monarch through belief and obeys Him through good works will pass with the speed of lightning or of Buraq through the stages of this guest-house of the world, the spheres of the intermediate realm and the world of resurrection and the extensive frontiers of all the realms that are beyond the grave, until he attains eternal happiness.” The Qur'an proves this truth decisively and points it out to those who are purified and to the saints.

The truth of the Qur'an also says, “O believer! Do not give your infinite capacity for love to your ugly, defective, evil, and for you, harmful instinctual soul. Do not take it as your object of love and its whims as your object of worship. Take rather the One Who has bestowed on you that infinite capacity for love. He will also make you infinitely happy in the future, and, through His bounties, all those to whom you are attached and whose happiness makes you happy.

“Take for your object of love and worship One Who possesses infinite perfection and a beauty that is infinitely sacred, exalted, transcendent, faultless, flawless and unfading. The beauty of His mercy and the mercy of His beauty are demonstrated by all the beauties and bounties of Paradise. All of His Names are infinitely beautiful and in each of them are abundant lights of fairness and beauty. His beauty and perfection are indicated and pointed to by all the fairness, beauty, virtue and perfection of all lovable and loved objects in the cosmos.”

The Qur’an also says, “O man! Do not squander your infinite capacity to love, which properly belongs to His Names and attributes, on other transient creatures. For the works and creatures of God are ephemeral, but the Beautiful Names, whose impress and manifestation may be seen on them, are eternal and permanent. And in each of His Names and attributes there are thousands of degrees of bounty and beauty, perfection and love. Look only at the Name of All-Merciful: Paradise is a manifestation of it, eternal happiness, a flash of it, and all the sustenance and bounty in the world, a mere drop of it.”

Consider carefully, then, this verse which indicates the true nature of the people of misguidance and that of the people of belief, with regard to their lives and duties:

*Verily We have created man in the fairest of forms, then sent him down to the lowest of the low, except for those who believe and do good deeds.*³⁵

And this verse that indicates their final result and outcome:

*The heavens and the earth wept not over them.*³⁶

How sublimely and miraculously they express the comparison we have made. Since the truth expressed miraculously and concisely in the first verse is explained in detail in the Eleventh Word, we refer our readers to that part of the Risale-i Nur for a discussion of it.

As for the second verse, we shall show, through a brief indication, how sublime a truth it expresses. It is as follows.

The explicit meaning of the verse is that the heavens and the earth do not weep when the people of misguidance die. The implied meaning is that the heavens and the earth do weep when the people of belief depart this world. For the people of misguidance, through their denial of the duties and functions of the heavens and earth, their ignorance of their meaning, their rejection of their value, their refusal to recognize their Maker, are in fact acting insultingly and with hostility toward them. So, of course, the heavens

³⁵ Qur’an, 95:4-6.

³⁶ Qur’an, 44:29.

and earth will not weep over them, but in fact curse them and rejoice at their death.

As for the implied meaning, that the heavens and earth weep over the death of the people of belief, this is because they know the duties and functions of the heavens and earth, assent to their true realities, and understand, through belief, the meanings they express. They say, “How beautifully they have been made, how finely they are carrying out their duties.” They respect them and assign them their true worth. They love them and the Names they mirror for the sake of God Almighty. And so it is for this reason that the heavens and earth grieve over the death of the people of belief as if weeping.

An Important Question

You say, “Love is not voluntary. And, as a consequence of innate need, I love delicious foods and fruits. I love my father, mother and children, my wife, and my friends and companions. I love the prophets and the saints. And I love my life and my youth, the spring, beautiful things and the world. How may I not love these things? So how should I rather give all this love to God Almighty’s essence, attributes and Names? What does this mean?”

The Answer: Listen to four ‘Points’.

FIRST POINT

Indeed, love is not voluntary, but by means of the will love’s face may turn from one object of love to another. For example, when a beloved displays some ugliness or shows that he is a veil or mirror to another beloved, who is truly worthy of love, then love’s face may be turned from the metaphorical to the true beloved.

SECOND POINT

We do not tell you not to love the things you enumerated, but rather to love them for God Almighty’s sake and in the name of His love. For example, to love delicious foods and luscious fruits as being the bounty of God Almighty, the All-Merciful and Compassionate One, is to love His Names of All-Merciful and Bestower of Bounties, and, moreover, takes on the meaning of thanks. This love is to seek gain contentedly within the sphere of the licit, which shows that it is not only for the sake of the instinctual soul but is in the name of the All-Merciful One. It is to eat thoughtfully and with gratitude.

Furthermore, love and respect for parents, when for the sake of the wisdom and mercy that compassionately fitted you out and caused them to bring you up with tender care, pertain to God Almighty’s love. The sign that this love, respect and compassion are for God’s sake is that when they are old

and are of no more use to you and bring you only trouble and difficulty, you are even more loving, kind and compassionate towards them. The verse,

*Should one of them, or both, attain to old age in your care, never say to them a word of contempt,*³⁷

summons children to respect and be kind to their parents in five degrees, and demonstrates how important are the rights of parents in the eyes of the Qur'an, and how ugly ingratitude towards them.

A father desires only his son, and no one else, to be much better than himself, however, the son cannot claim any rights over his father in return for this. That is to say, there is no inherent cause for dispute between parents and child. This is because dispute arises from envy and jealousy and there is nothing of this in the father towards his son. Or it arises from abuse of rights and the son has no rights that he can claim against his father. If he considers his father to be unjust, he may not rebel against him. That is to say, one who does rebel against his father and cause him pain is a monster, a corrupted human being.

And, to love and protect children with perfect compassion and tenderness because they are gifts of the All-Compassionate and Generous One once again pertains to God. The sign indicating that that love is for Almighty God's sake is patience and thankfulness should they die, rather than crying out in despair. It is to say, "He was a lovable little being created and owned by my Creator, Who entrusted him to my supervision. Now that His wisdom requires it to be thus, He has taken him from me, taken him to a better place. If I had one apparent share in that little creature, a thousand true shares belonged to his Creator." It is to submit saying, "All authority is with God."

As for friends and acquaintances, if they are friends of God Almighty by reason of their belief and good works, according to the meaning of 'love for God's sake,' that love, too, pertains to God.

Furthermore, love and cherish your wife as a companionable and gracious gift of divine mercy. But do not fasten your love to her physical beauty, which swiftly fades. Rather, woman's most attractive and agreeable beauty is the fineness of character that accompanies the delicacy and refinement peculiar to her. As for her most precious and sweet beauty, it is her earnest, sincere, sublime and luminous compassion. This beautiful tenderness and fineness of character continues and increases until the end of her days. Moreover, that weak and delicate creature's rights of respect will be protected by that love. Otherwise, when her superficial beauty fades the poor woman will lose her rights, even when she most needs them.

³⁷ Qur'an, 17:23.

And to love the prophets and saints as God Almighty's most esteemed bondsmen is to do so for the sake and in the name of God Almighty, and from that point of view it pertains to Him.

And to love and preserve life as most precious wealth and capital that will gain eternal life, and a comprehensive treasury yielding eternal perfections which Almighty God has given to you and to all humanity, and to employ it in His service, is, once again, in one respect, love that pertains to the True Object of Worship.

Also, to admire, love and put to proper use the grace and beauty of youth as being a fine, sweet and beautiful bounty of Almighty God is a sort of licit and thankful love.

And to love the spring thoughtfully as being the page of the subtlest and most beautiful inscriptions of Almighty God's luminous Names and the most finely adorned and glittering exhibition of the All-Wise Maker's antique art is to love His Names.

And to love this world as being the tillage for the hereafter, as a mirror of the Divine Names and a missive of God Almighty, and as a temporary guest-house, on condition that the evil-commanding soul does not interfere, is to do so for God Almighty's sake.

In short: Love this world and the creatures in it as pointing to a meaning beyond themselves, like a word. Do not love them just for themselves. Say, "How beautifully they have been made." Do not say, "How beautiful they are." Do not give any opportunity to other loves to enter into your inner heart because the inner heart is the mirror of the Eternally Besought One and pertains only to Him. Say, "O God, grant us love for You, and love for that which will draw us closer to You."³⁸

Thus, if in this form, all the loves that you have enumerated will give a pain-free pleasure, and, in one respect, an unending union. Moreover, they will increase love of God. They are licit loves. And are, furthermore a sort of gratitude which is pure pleasure, and thought, which is pure love.

For example, if a mighty king³⁹ were to bestow an apple on you, there would be two loves for that apple and two pleasures in it. The first of these is that the apple would be loved because it is an apple, and there would be a pleasure peculiar to and to the extent of the apple. This love does not concern the king. On the contrary, the man who puts the apple to his mouth and eats it in the king's presence loves the apple itself and his own soul rather than the king. It sometimes happens that the king is not pleased with that

³⁸ *Kanz al-'Ummal*, i, 195; Waliuddin Tabrizi, *Mishkat al-Masabih*, i, 762.

³⁹ Once two tribal chiefs entered the presence of a king. They were in exactly the same situation as is described here.

love which nourishes the instinctual soul; in fact, he detests it. Moreover, the pleasure that the apple gives is very limited and passes quickly. After the apple is eaten it is gone, only regret remains.

As for the second love, it is for the royal favour that is demonstrated by means of the apple. One who holds the apple precious as if it were the sample and embodiment of a royal favour shows that he loves his king. Moreover, the pleasure in that fruit, which is a sort of container for the favour, is such that it is far greater than the pleasure obtained from a thousand apples. This pleasure, then, is the essence of thankfulness. This love is a respectful love for the king.

In exactly the same way, if all bounties and fruits are loved for themselves, if they are thoughtlessly delighted in only for the material pleasures that they yield, that love is merely love of self. Also, those pleasures are transient and bring pain. But, if they are loved as favours proceeding from Almighty God's mercy and as fruits of His munificence, and if pleasure is obtained from them with good appetite by appreciating the degree of kindness in that munificence and favour, then it has both the meaning of gratitude and is a pain-free pleasure.

THIRD POINT

There are levels in the love for God Almighty's Names. As we explained above, sometimes the Names are loved with a love for finely made objects. Sometimes they are loved as being titles of the Divine perfections. Sometimes, man is needy and desirous of the Names by reason of the comprehensiveness of his true nature together with his having endless needs. It is through those needs that he loves.

For example, if someone were to come forward and do a kindness to all your relations, and the poor, the weak and the needy, for all of whom you feel sympathy although you are powerless to meet their need for help, how that person's favour-granting title and generous name would please you, how you would love that person through that title.

So too, think only of God Almighty's Names of All-Merciful and Compassionate. They make happy all the believing fathers and forefathers, relations and friends whom you love and feel sympathy for, in this world by means of all kinds of bounties, and in Paradise by means of all kinds of delights. They cause happiness by showing you in eternal bliss to them, and them in eternal bliss to you. So how deserving of being loved is the Name of All-Merciful and the title of All-Compassionate. And you can see for yourself just how needy for those two Names is the human spirit. And you can understand just how appropriate is the phrase, 'Praise be to God for His mercifulness and His compassionateness.'

You are connected to the world and as a result are afflicted by its wretchedness, so if you consider carefully, you may understand just how needy and desirous is your spirit for the Name of All-Wise and for the title of Nurturer. For the Owner of those Names orders, regulates and sustains with perfect wisdom the world, which is like a sort of house for you, and the creatures within it, which are its familiar furniture and lovable decorations.

And you are altogether connected to other human beings and grieve when they die. So, if you consider carefully, you may understand just how needy is your spirit for the Names of Inheritor and Resurrector, and for the titles Eternal, All-Generous, Giver of Life, and Munificent. For the Owner of these Names saves human beings at the time of their death from the darkness of non-existence and establishes them in a far finer place than this world.

Thus, since man's nature is exalted and his disposition comprehensive, he is, by his very nature, needy with thousands of different sorts of needs for the innumerable Divine Names, each of which has many degrees. Intensified need is longing. Intensified longing is love. And intensified love is passion. As the spirit is perfected, the degrees of love unfold according to the degrees of the Names. Furthermore, since the Names are the titles and manifestations of the One of Glory, love of them will be transformed into love of the Divine Essence.

Now, just as an example, we shall explain one of the innumerable degrees of the Names of All-Just, All-Wise, Truth, and All-Merciful. If you wish to see the Names of All-Merciful and Compassionate, and Truth within wisdom and justice to the utmost extent, consider the following comparison.

Let us suppose there is an army in which there are four hundred different sections. And the uniforms that each section prefers are different, the provisions that please them, the weapons they will carry with ease and the medicines to cure their particular ills are all different. Furthermore, rather than being separated into squads and companies, they are all intermingled.

If the peerless and single king, then, out of perfect compassion and solicitude, wonderful power, miraculous all-embracing knowledge and extraordinary justice and wisdom, without confusing or forgetting any of them were himself, in person, without helper, to give all of them their completely different though appropriate uniforms, provisions, medicines and weapons, would you not see what a powerful, solicitous, just and generous personage that king was. For if there were individuals from ten nations in one battalion, it would be extremely difficult to clothe and equip them all differently. Whatever people they were from they would of necessity have to be fitted out in the same way.

Similarly, if you wish to see the manifestation of the Names of Truth and All-Merciful and Compassionate within the justice and wisdom of God Almighty, look at the plant and animal armies comprising four hundred thousand magnificent nations with their tents pitched on the face of the earth in springtime. For those groups and sections are all one within the other. And the uniform of each one is different, and the provisions, weapons, way of life, drill and demobilization are all different. Furthermore, they do not have the power to provide for those needs and the tongues to ask for those wishes. So, watch and see the titles of Truth, All-Merciful, Provider, Compassionate and Generous together with order and equilibrium within the sphere of wisdom and justice. See how, without confusing, obscuring or forgetting any of them, He sustains, regulates and administers them all.

Could another hand, therefore, interfere in a matter performed with such amazing and all-encompassing order and balance? What, apart from the One Who is Single and Unique, Absolutely Wise, and Powerful over all things, could even stretch out its hand towards this art, this organizing, this sustaining, this administering? What cause could interfere?

FOURTH POINT

You ask: “So long as they are in the form that the Qur’an commands, what are the results and benefits of all my different and various loves? That is, my love for food, myself, my wife, parents and children, my friends, the saints, the prophets, beautiful things, the spring and this world?”

The Answer: It would be necessary to write a thick book in order to explain all the results. For now only one or two results will be briefly alluded to. Firstly, the immediate results in this world will be explained, then those that will become apparent in the hereafter will be mentioned.

As was explained above, loves such as those of the people of neglect and those attached to this world, that are for the sake of the evil-commanding soul, bring many tribulations, and much pain and suffering in this world. While the ease, pleasures and enjoyment they bring are little and few.

For example, compassion becomes a painful calamity on account of impotence. Love becomes a calamitous misfortune on account of separation. Pleasure becomes a poisoned cup on account of its transience. And in the hereafter, because they were not for God Almighty’s sake, they will either be without benefit or will be torment. (If they were illicit.)

Question: How might love for the prophets and saints be without benefit?

The Answer: In the same way that the love of the Christians for Jesus (Peace be upon him), and the heretics for ‘Ali (May God be pleased with him) remain without benefit. If that love is in the form that the Qur’an

directs, for God Almighty's sake and in the name of the All-Merciful One's love, then it has favourable results both in this world and in the hereafter.

Now, to return to our subject, the results in this world of your love for delicious foods and luscious fruits will be that they are a pain-free bounty and a pleasure that is the essence of gratitude.

Your love of your instinctual soul. The result will be pity it, to train it, and to prevent harmful desires. Then the soul will not ride you, it will not make you a prisoner of its desires, rather, you will ride it. You will drive your soul, not to whims and fancies, but to right-guidance.

Your love for your wife. Since it will be built on her being a mine of tenderness, a gift of compassion and on her fineness of character, if you have sincere love and affection for her, she too will have earnest love and respect for you. As the two of you approach old age these sentiments will increase, you will pass your life happily. But if it is otherwise, if it is love of a pretty face and for the sake of the instinctual soul, then that love will be quickly destroyed and so too will be good relations.

Your love for your father and mother. Since it will be for God Almighty's sake, it will be both worship and the older they grow the more your love and respect for them will increase. If you earnestly desire and pray, with the noblest of sentiments and most manly zeal, that they will live far into old age, and even kiss their hands with sincere respect and say, "Let me gain even more reward on their account", it will obtain for you a most elevated pleasure of the spirit. But if it is otherwise, and for the sake of the soul and this world, when they grow old and approach the time of becoming a burden for you, if you show them, with the most base and despicable sentiment, that they are a nuisance and then wish for the deaths of those respected people, who were the cause of your life, it will be savage and grievous pain for the spirit.

Your love for your children. As for love for those lovable, friendly creatures whom God Almighty entrusts to your supervision and upbringing, it will be a most happy love, a most happy bounty. Neither shall you suffer too much pain at their misfortunes, nor shall you cry out with despair at their deaths. As was stated above you will say, "Since their Creator is both All-Wise and Compassionate, as far as they are concerned, that death is happiness." Moreover, concerning yourself, you will think of the mercifulness of the One Who gave them to you and you will be saved from the pain of separation.

Your love for your friends. Since it is for God's sake, because separation from those friends, and even their deaths, will not be an obstacle to your conversing and your brotherhood, you will benefit from that immaterial love and relation of the spirit. And the pleasure of meeting will be permanent. If it is not for the sake of God, the pleasure of one day's meeting will result in

the pain of a hundred days' separation.⁴⁰

Your love for the prophets and saints. Since the intermediate realm, which seems to the people of neglect to be a dark, lonely and desolate place, appears to you as a stopping-place illuminated by the presence of those luminous beings, the fact that you will go there will not induce terror and fright, but, on the contrary, an inclination towards it and a feeling of longing; it will not drive away the pleasure of worldly life.

But if it is otherwise, if love for the prophets and saints is of the same sort as the love of the subscribers to modern culture for their idols and heroes, on thinking of the death and disappearance of those perfect human beings and of their rotting in that mighty grave known as the past, it will add one more sorrow to lives that are already painful. That is to say, each will say to himself, "I too will end up in the grave, which rots even such perfect men."

Whereas, when they are seen from the first point of view, they are thought of with complete ease of mind, for they have discarded the clothes of their bodies in the past and now their dwelling-place is the intermediate realm, which is the waiting-room for the future. And the graveyard will be seen as having a familiarity and friendliness.

Your love for beautiful things. Since it is for the sake of the One Who fashioned them, it will be in the manner of, "How beautifully they have been made." This love is pleasurable thought and it causes the gaze of beauty-worshipping delight to see the more elevated and holy and thousand times more beautiful treasures of the degrees of God's beauty. This love opens up a way to these treasures because it transfers the eye from those beautiful works to the beauty of the Divine actions. And it opens a way from them to the beauty of the Names, and from them to the beauty of the attributes, and from them to the One of Glory's peerless beauty; it opens a way to the heart. Thus, if this love is in this form, it is both pleasurable, and it is worship, and it is thought.

Your love of youth. Since you have loved it as a beautiful bounty of God Almighty, you have, of course, done so in worship, you have not drowned it in dissipation and destroyed it. Since this is the case, the worship you have gained during your youth is the undying fruit of that transient state. As you grow older, because you will have obtained the enduring fruits that are the positive aspect of youth, you will have been saved from its harm and excesses.

Also, in old age you will see that you have achieved success in performing more worship, and so will be more worthy to receive Divine mercy. Unlike the people of neglect, you will not feel sadness for the pleasures of

⁴⁰ One second's meeting for God's sake is a year. Whereas, if it is for the sake of this world, a year is a second.

youth that lasted five or ten years, then wail for fifty years, “Alas, my youth has fled!” Neither will you be like one of them who said, “If only my youth would return one day, I would tell it of the woes old age has brought me.”

Your love for finely adorned exhibitions like the spring. Since it is in the form of contemplating Divine artistry, when the spring ends the pleasure of the spectacle does not fade. For the meanings that the spring delivers, like a gilded missive, may be contemplated all the time. Both your imagination and time are like films in the cinema, they both cause the pleasure of that contemplation to continue for you, and they renew the spring’s meanings and beauties. Your love, therefore, cannot be temporary and full of regret and pain. Rather, it will be full of pleasure and enjoyment.

Your love of this world. Since it is in the name of God Almighty, the formidable creatures of this world will be like familiar friends for you. Since you love it as the tillage for the hereafter, you will be able to find in everything capital or a fruit that will produce benefits in the hereafter. Neither will its disasters frighten you, nor will its transience and ephemerality trouble you. You will pass your sojourn in this guest-house with the greatest of ease. But should you love it as the people of neglect do, then as we have told you a hundred times, you will drown and perish in a fruitless love, condemned to a depressing, crushing and suffocating transitoriness.

Thus we have shown only one subtle point out of hundreds from each of the loves you enumerated, when they are in the form that the Qur’an directs. We indicated too one hundredth of the harm they cause if they are not in this way. Now, if you want to hear and understand the results of these loves in the eternal realm, in the world of the hereafter, the results to which the All-Wise Qur’an points with its clear and distinct verses, then we shall show briefly by means of an Introduction and nine Indications the results and one hundredth of the benefits of those various licit loves in the hereafter.

AN INTRODUCTION

God Almighty, with His glorious Divinity, His beautiful mercy, His mighty dominicality, His generous benevolence, His immense power, and His subtle wisdom, has equipped and adorned tiny man with many senses and feelings, limbs and systems, members and faculties, and subtle and immaterial aspects so that through them He might cause man to perceive, know, taste and recognize the limitless varieties and levels of His bounty, munificence and mercy; and so that, through these tools, He might cause man to ponder over, know and love the endless kinds of manifestations of His thousand and one Names. Just as each of man’s great many members and faculties performs a completely different service and worship, so too does each of them have completely different pleasures, pains, duties and rewards.

For example, the eye beholds the beauty of forms and the varieties of the

beautiful miracles of power in the world of things seen. Its duty, taking its lesson from these, is gratitude to its Maker. The pleasures and pains peculiar to sight are known, there is no need to enlarge upon them.

And, for example, the ear perceives the various sorts of sounds and their melodious songs, and the subtle instances of God Almighty's mercy in the world of things heard. Its worship, pleasures and rewards are all different.

And, for example, the sense of smell perceives the subtle instances of mercy within the realm of scents. It has a duty of gratitude and pleasure peculiar to itself. And, of course, it has a reward, too.

And, for example, the sense of taste, in the tongue; through appreciating all the tastes of foods, it performs its duty with a truly diverse thankfulness; and so on. All man's faculties, including his important subtle aspects such as the heart, intellect and spirit, have quite distinct duties, pleasures and pains.

Thus, God Almighty, the Possessor of Absolute Wisdom, will certainly give suitable recompense to each one of those faculties, which He employs in human beings. Everyone may perceive with his conscience the immediate results in this world of those numerous varieties of love, as was explained above, and they may be confirmed through experience.

As for the results in the hereafter, their existence and reality have been conclusively, through briefly, proved by the decisively clear Twelve Truths of the Tenth Word, and by the six self-evident Fundamental Points of the Twenty-Ninth Word. They are also clearly demonstrated in detail by the distinct verses and the explanations, allusions, symbols and indications of the All-Wise Qur'an, which is, 'The most truthful of all words, most eloquent in its order, the Word of God – The Lord, The Mighty, The All-Knowing.' There is no need to present more extensive proofs. In any case, there are further proofs in other Words: in the Second Station of the Twenty-Eighth Word, which is about Paradise and is in Arabic, and in the Twenty-Ninth Word.

First Indication: According to the Qur'an, the result in the hereafter of licit and thankful love for delicious foods and fruits is again delicious food and fruit, but in a form appropriate for Paradise. This licit love desires those foods and fruits of the hereafter. So much so that when you utter the phrase 'Praise be to God' over the fruit you eat in this world, it will be embodied as a fruit of Paradise and presented to you there. Here you eat fruit, while there you will eat 'Praise be to God'.

Since you see Divine munificence and the All-Merciful One's favours in bounty and food, as is established by Hadith, the indications of the Qur'an, and the requirements of wisdom and mercy that that pleasurable

gratitude will be given to you in Paradise in the form of a truly delicious food.⁴¹

Second Indication: Licit love for your instinctual soul in this world is not a love built on its good qualities, but rather one that sees its short-comings and trains it with a compassion that seeks to perfect it, and that impels it towards good. This love results in giving to the soul objects of love worthy of it in Paradise.

As is explicitly stated and proved by a great number of verses in the Qur'an, when the soul utilises its desires and wishes correctly and employs its faculties and senses in the best way in this world, that is, in the way of God Almighty, as a result of this licit and worshipful love the Absolutely Generous One will bestow on it houris in Paradise, the everlasting realm. He will clothe these houris in seventy varieties of the finery of Paradise. He will adorn their beings with seventy kinds of beauty that will carress and gratify all the senses of the soul. Each houri will be like a miniature animated Paradise.

Furthermore, your love of youth in this world, that is, the result of expending the power of youth in worship, will be eternal youth in the realm of bliss.

Third Indication: Licit love for your wife in this world is sincere love in consequence of her delicate tenderness, fine virtues and good character, together with your protecting her from disobeying God obstinately and sinning. The Absolutely Merciful One has promised that as a result of this licit love your wife shall be given to you as an eternal wife in the hereafter, the realm of bliss. She will be in a form more beautifully adorned and attractive than the Houris. You will relate to one another in delight your former adventures in the world, bringing to mind old memories. She will be an intimate, gracious and eternal friend, who loves and is beloved. And, most certainly, that which He promises shall definitely be given.

Fourth Indication: The result of licit love for parents and children is this. According to the Qur'an, the Most Merciful of the Merciful will bestow on that happy family, even though their stations may be quite different, the pure pleasure of each other's company in the everlasting realm.

He will return children who die before reaching the age of fifteen years, that is, the age of puberty, once more to the embrace of their fathers and mothers, in a manner appropriate to Paradise. They will be most beautifully adorned and lovable, in the form of the children of Paradise, who are known

⁴¹ Baghawi, *Masabih al-Sunna*, iii, 197; *Musnad*, iii, 439; *Ibn Maja*, ii, 1093, No: 3285.

as immortal youths.⁴² He will gratify their child-cherishing sentiments and will give them that pleasure and delight eternally. Since those children had not reached the age of responsibility, they will remain eternally as lovable and sweet children.

Every pleasurable thing in this world will be found in its highest form in Paradise. Some people surmise that since Paradise is not appropriate for reproduction, there will be none of this cherishing of children, which is so sweet, that is, the pleasure of loving and carressing them. But it will be there too and in the most delightful and sweet form. This then is good news for those whose children die before puberty.

Fifth Indication: The result of love for righteous friends in this world, according to the decree of, 'Love for God's sake' is, as the Qur'an states, *Facing one another on thrones of happiness.*⁴³ God Almighty will seat them on the chairs of Heaven facing one another. He will cause them to meet with their friends, pleasantly, agreeably and sweetly. They will enjoy themselves recounting their old memories and adventures in this world, with a pure love and companionship that will not be subject to separation.

Sixth Indication: The result of love for the prophets and saints is as the Qur'an explains. That is, it will be both to benefit in the intermediate world and at the resurrection from the intercession of the prophets and saints, and also to profit abundantly, through that love, from the station and blessings that befit them.

Indeed, according to the meaning of 'a person will be together with whom he loves,'⁴⁴ an ordinary man may approach the highest station by following an exalted person whom he loves.

Seventh Indication: The result of licit love for beautiful things and the spring. That is, to see with the eye of, 'how beautifully they have been made,' and to love the beauty and order of the acts, which lie behind those works of art. To love the manifestations of the Beautiful Names, which lie behind the order and harmony of the actions, and to love the manifestations of the attributes behind those Beautiful Names. And so on.

The result will be to see in Paradise, the everlasting realm, the manifestation of the Names, and the beauty and attributes within the Names, in a form a thousand times more beautiful than the beautiful creatures to be seen here.

⁴² Qur'an, 76:19, 56:17.

⁴³ Qur'an, 15:47, 37:44.

⁴⁴ See, page 515, footnote 4.

More than this even, Imam Rabbani (May God be pleased with him) said, “The subtle exquisiteness of Paradise will be the similitude of the manifestation of God’s Names.”⁴⁵ Just think of it!

Eighth Indication: The result in the hereafter of thoughtful love in this world for the two beautiful faces of the world, which are the tillage for the hereafter and the mirror of the Divine Names. An everlasting Paradise will be given that is as large as the world but is not ephemeral and transient like this world. And the Names, only pale shadows of which are shown in this world, will be displayed in the mirror of Paradise in a most brilliant form.

Moreover, the result of loving the world as being the tillage of the hereafter is as follows. When the world is seen thus, that is, as a seed-bed or small place of cultivation that produces only shoots, it results in a Paradise where those shoots burgeon and blossom. For in this world man’s senses and faculties are tiny shoots and in Paradise they will unfold in the most perfect form. And his abilities, which are here like tiny seeds, will be given to him there in a form that will blossom with all sorts of delights and perfections. This is proved by the indications of the Qur’an and by Hadith, and is necessitated by mercy and wisdom.

For it is not blameworthy love of the world, which is the source of every fault, but love of its two faces that look to God’s Names and to the hereafter, and is for the sake of the Names and the hereafter. It is to cultivate those faces with thoughtful worship, as if taking the whole world as the means for worship. It is, therefore, most definitely necessitated by mercy and wisdom that a reward should be given that is as large as the world. And, one who through love of the hereafter, has loved its seed-bed, and through love of Almighty God, has loved the mirror of His Names, will most certainly desire a beloved like the world, and that too will be a Paradise as great as the world.

Question: What is the use of such a vast and empty Paradise?

Answer: If it was possible for you to travel with speed of imagination round all the regions of the earth and most of the stars, you would be able to say, “The whole universe is mine.” The fact that the angels, other human beings and the animals share the world with you would not quash your claim. In the same way, if Paradise is thus full, you would be able to say, “Paradise is mine.” The meaning of the Hadith, A five hundred year Paradise will be given to some of those in Paradise, has been explained in the Twenty-Eighth Word and the Twentieth Flash, the Treatise on Sincerity.

Ninth Indication: The result of faith and love of God. It is proved by the consensus of the

⁴⁵ Suyuti, *al-Fath al-Kabir*, iii, 62; al-Manawi, *Fayd al-Qadir*, v, 373.

people of unveiling and verification, by certain Hadith,⁴⁶ and by the Qur'an that a thousand years of happy life in this world is not worth one hour of life in Paradise, and that a thousand years of heavenly life is not worth one hour's vision and contemplation of the All-Glorious One, Who possesses incomparable beauty and perfection.

Everyone may perceive in his conscience a great longing for the vision of a personage famous for his magnificence and perfection, like the Prophet Solomon (Peace be upon him), and a great yearning to behold a personage distinguished by his beauty, like the Prophet Joseph (Peace be upon him). And so, if you can, compare how longed-for, sought after, and desire-arousing is the vision of One, one manifestation of Whose beauty and perfection are all the virtues and perfections of Paradise, which are thousands of times more elevated than all the virtues and perfections of this world.

O God, bestow upon us in this world love for You and love for that which will draw us closer to You, and the right-guidedness that You have commanded, and, in the next world Your mercy and the vision of You.

Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; You are indeed All-Knowing, All-Wise.⁴⁷

O God, grant blessings and peace to the one whom You sent as a mercy to all the worlds, and to all his Family and Companions. Amen.

Reminder

Do not consider over-lengthy the detailed explanations in the last section of this Word; they are short in relation to their importance and require further explanation.

It is not I who speaks in any of the Words; it is reality in the name of 'INDICATIONS FROM THE QUR'AN.' As for reality, it speaks the truth. Should you see anything incorrect, then you can be certain that without my being aware of it my own ideas interfered and caused the error.

⁴⁶ Included in the Hadith is the following: "That vision far surpasses all the other delights of Paradise, so much so that it causes them to be forgotten. And after the vision the loveliness and beauty of those who experience it will have increased to such a degree that when they return, it will be only with difficulty and scrutiny that their families in their mansions will recognize them."*

* al-Munziri, *al-Tarhib wa'l-Tarhib*, iv, 541, 556.

⁴⁷ Qur'an, 2:32.

Supplication

O God! When a man knocks on the door of a grand palace and it is not opened to him, he knocks on it and calls out in the voice of someone who is familiar to the palace, so that it may be opened. Thus this wretched one knocks on the door of the Court of Your Mercy crying out in the voice of Your well-loved servant Uvays al-Qarani and with his supplication. Open that Court of Yours to me, as you opened it to him! I cry out as he did:

O God! You are our Sustainer, for we are mere slaves; we are powerless to sustain and raise ourselves. That is to say, the One Who sustains us is You! It is You Who is the Creator, for we are creatures, we are being made! It is You Who is the Provider, for we are in need of provision, we have no power! That is to say, the One One Who creates us and bestows on us our provisions is You! It is You Who is the Owner, because we are totally owned property; someone other than us has power of disposal over us. That is to say, it is You Who is our Owner! And You, You are Mighty! You possess grandeur and sublimity! As for us we look to our baseness and see that there are manifestations of a mightiness on us. That is to say, we are mirrors to Your mightiness! And it is You Who is the Possessor of Absolute Riches, because we are utterly wanting, and riches are bestowed on us that our indigent hands could not obtain. That is to say, it is You Who is rich, the One Who gives is You! And You, You are the Ever-Living, Ever-Enduring One, because we, we are dying, and in our dying and in our being resurrected we see the manifestation of a perpetual giver of life! And You, You are Ever-Enduring, because we see Your continuation and perpetualness in our demise and transience! And the One Who responds to us and answers us, the Granter of Gifts, is You. For all of us beings, we are ever crying out and requesting, entreating, imploring by tongue and by state. And our desires are brought about, our aims are achieved. In other words, the One Who answers us is You!...

So forgive me my sins and bear with me and heal my ills, O my God! O All-Sufficing One! O Sustainer! O Faithful One! O Most Compassionate One! O Healer! O Munificent One! O Forgiving One! Pardon all my sins, and grant me health from all sicknesses, and be pleased with me for all eternity! Through Your Mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!

And the close of their prayer will be: All praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds!

The Thirty-Third Word

This Word consists of
Thirty-Three Windows

While being the Thirty-Third Letter,
this is also the Thirty-Third Word.

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
We shall show them Our signs in the furthest horizons and in themselves, so that
it will become clear to them that this [Qur'an] is indeed the Truth. Is it not
enough that your Sustainer witnesses all things?*¹

Question: We would like a concise explanation of the ways man and the universe, that is, the microcosm and the macrocosm, point to the necessary existence and unity of God and His dominical attributes and functions, which the two parts of the above verse denote. For the unbelievers have gone too far, they are saying: “For how long shall we say: ‘And He is powerful over all things,’ and have to raise our hands?”

Answer: The thirty-three Words that have been written form thirty-three drops from the ocean of this verse and from the seas of truth which flow from it. If you look at them, you will find your answer. What we say now is only a sort of hint to the sprinkling of a single drop from the ocean.

For example, if a wonder-worker wants to build a splendid palace, he first of all sets the foundations in a wise and regular fashion, and plans them in a way suitable to their future purpose and results. Then he skilfully divides them into sections and apartments. Next, he orders and arranges the apartments, and decorates them with tapestries, then illuminates them with electric lights. Then, in order to renew his ingenious works and favours in that

¹ Qur'an, 41:53.

magnificent and adorned palace, he makes fresh creations and new changes and transformations in every level of it. And then he installs a telephone in every apartment connected to his own abode, and opens up a window from each, so that his may be seen.

In just the same way, *And God's is the highest similitude*,² the Peerless Creator, Who is named with a thousand and one sacred Names such as All-Glorious Maker, All-Wise Sovereign, All-Just Arbiter, willed the creation of the palace of the universe and tree of the cosmos, which forms the macrocosm. He set the foundations of the palace, the tree, in six days through the principles of wisdom and laws of His pre-eternal knowledge. Then He divided and formed it into the higher and lower levels and branches through the principles of Divine Determining and Decree. Next, He adorned everything, each world, in an appropriate manner, like the heavens with the stars and the earth with flowers. Then He manifested and made luminous His Names within the arena of those universal laws and general principles. And then in a special way sent to the assistance of individuals crying out at the constraint of those universal laws His Names of Most Merciful and All-Compassionate. That is to say, within those universal and general principles He has special favours, special succour, special manifestations, so that everything may seek help from Him and look to Him at all times for every need. Then from every apartment, every level, every world, every realm of being, every individual, from everything, He opened up windows which would show Himself, that is, make known His existence and unity. He left a telephone in every heart.

For now we shall not attempt to discuss those innumerable windows, which is anyway beyond our power. Referring them to the all-encompassing knowledge of God, we shall only point out in a concise and brief manner thirty-three Windows – since it corresponds to the blessed number of the *tesbihat* following the prescribed prayers, and for a more detailed explanation of this, which forms the Thirty-Third Letter and Thirty-Third Word and consists of gleams from verses of the Qur'an, we refer readers to the rest of the Words.

² Qur'an, 16:60.

First Window

If we look, we see that all things and especially living creatures have numerous different needs and numerous different wants. And those wants and needs are provided for them at the appropriate time, in unexpected ways, from places they do not know and their hands cannot reach; succour comes to them. But the power of these needy beings is insufficient for even the smallest of those endless things they wish for; they cannot meet their needs. Consider yourself: of how many things are you in need that your hands cannot reach, like your external and inner senses and their needs? Compare all other living creatures with yourself. See, just as singly they testify to the Necessary Existence and point to His unity, so in their totality they show to the rea

son a Necessarily Existent One behind the veil of the Unseen, a Single One of Unity, among titles of Most Generous, All-Compassionate, Nurturer, and Disposer.

O ignorant unbeliever and dissolute heedless one! With what can you explain this wise, percipient, compassionate activity? Deaf nature? Blind force? Senseless chance? Can you explain it through impotent, lifeless causes?

Second Window

While in their existence and individuality, things are in a hesitant, bewildered, and shapeless form among innumerable possible ways, they are suddenly given a most well-ordered and wise aspect of individuality. For example, every human being has on his face characteristics which differentiate him from all his fellow humans, and it is equipped with utter wisdom with external and inner senses. This proves that the face is a most brilliant stamp of Divine oneness. And just as each face testifies to the existence of an All-Wise Maker and points to His existence, so too the stamp which all faces display in their totality shows to the mind's eye that all things are a seal peculiar to their Creator.

O denier! To what workshop can you refer these stamps which can in no way be imitated, and the stamp of Eternal Besoughtedness which is on the totality?

Third Window

The army of all the various species of animals and plants on the face of the earth consists of four hundred thousand different groups.³ Their being managed and raised with perfect balance and order through their sustenance, papers, weapons, uniforms, instructions, and demobilizations, which are all different with nothing being forgotten and none of them being confused, is a stamp of the Single One of Unity as brilliant as the sun which can in no way be doubted. Who other than One possessing boundless power, all-encompassing knowledge, and infinite wisdom could have any part in this administration, which is wondrous to the utmost degree. For if one who cannot administer and raise all together these species and nations, which are one within the other, interferes with one of them, he will throw the lot into disorder. Whereas according to the meaning of,

*So turn your vision again, do you see any flaw?*⁴

there is no sign of confusion. That means not so much as a finger can interfere.

Fourth Window

This is the acceptability of the supplications offered through the tongue of latent ability by all seeds, and through the tongue of innate need by all animals, and through the tongue of exigency by the desperate.

Yes, just as all these innumerable supplications are observedly accepted and responded to, so in a large measure do they in their entirety self-evidently indicate and point to an All-Compassionate and Generous Creator, the Answerer of Prayer.

Fifth Window

We see that things and particularly living beings come into existence of a sudden, instantaneously. But, while things which appear suddenly out of a simple substance should be simple, formless, and without art, they are created with an art and beauty requiring much skill, they are decorated with

³ The members of some of those groups, even, are more numerous than all the members of the human race from the time of Adam up to the Last Day.

⁴ Qur'an, 67:3.

painstaking embroideries requiring much time, and adorned with wonderful arts requiring many tools. Thus, just as each of these instantaneous, wondrous arts and beautiful combinations indicates the necessary existence of an All-Wise Creator and the unity of His dominicality, so in their totality do they show in most brilliant fashion an infinitely Powerful, infinitely Wise Necessarily Existent One.

So now, O stupefied denier! How can you explain this? With ‘nature’, which is unconscious, impotent, and ignorant like you? Or do you want to make an infinite mistake and call that All-Holy Maker ‘nature’, and on the pretext of naming Him that, attribute the miracles of His power to it and perpetrate an impossibility compounded a thousand times over?

Sixth Window

In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day and the boats which travel through the seas for the benefit of men, and in what God sends down from the sky as rain and with it raises to life the earth after its death and raises in it every sort of living being, and in the circulating of the winds and the clouds subjugated between the heavens and the earth, are signs for a people who thinks.⁵

This verse both points out the Divine existence and unity, and forms a truly large window displaying a Greatest Name.

The gist of the verse is this: all the worlds in the higher and lower levels of the universe show with all-different tongues a single result, that is, the dominicality of a single All-Wise Maker. It is as follows: just as in the heavens – and astronomy even admits to it – extremely well-ordered movements for extremely extensive results show the existence, unity, and perfect dominicality of an All-Powerful One of Glory, so too on the earth – and geography even testifies to it and acknowledges it – most orderly changes, like in the seasons, for most extensive benefits show the existence and unity and perfect dominicality of the same All-Powerful One of Glory.

Also, just as, being given their sustenance with perfect mercy, and being clothed in different forms with perfect wisdom, and being decked out with all sorts of senses through perfect dominicality, each of all the animals on the land and in the sea again testifies to the existence of the All-Powerful One of Glory and indicates His unity, so in their totality do they show on a vast scale the tremendousness of His Godhead and the perfection of His

⁵ Qur’an, 2:164.

dominicality. So too, just as each of the well-ordered plants in gardens, and the finely adorned flowers which the plants display, and the well-proportioned fruits which the flowers display, and the embellished embroideries which the fruits display, testifies to the existence of the All-Wise Maker and points to His unity, so too in their totality do they show most brilliantly the beauty of His mercy and the perfection of His dominicality.

Also, just as the drops of rain sent from the clouds in the sky charged with duties for important instances of wisdom and aims and necessary benefits and results again demonstrate to the number of their drops the the necessary existence and unity and perfect dominicality of the All-Wise Maker, so too do all the mountains on the earth and the storing-up in them of minerals with all their different properties for numerous different benefits show with the strength and firmness of a mountain the existence and unity of the All-Wise Maker and the perfection of His dominicality.

Also, just as, being adorned with numerous varieties of well-ordered flowers, the small hills in the plains and among the mountains each testifies to the necessary existence of an All-Wise Maker and points to His unity, and all together show the majesty of His sovereignty and the perfection of His dominicality, so the great variety of the orderly shapes of all the leaves of the grasses and trees, and all their different stages and states and well-balanced and ecstatic movements again show the necessary existence and unity and perfect dominicality of the All-Wise Maker.

Also, just as the regular development at the time of their growth of all living bodies, and each being equipped with all sorts of organs and their being directed consciously towards numerous different fruits again testify to the necessary existence of the All-Wise Maker and indicate His unity, and in their totality show on a truly vast scale His all-encompassing power, and all-embracing wisdom, and the beauty of His art, and the perfection of His dominicality, so too souls and spirits being situated in all animal bodies, and their being armed in most orderly fashion with numerous sorts of systems and faculties, and their being sent on numerous different errands with perfect wisdom testify to the number of animals, indeed to the number of their faculties, to the necessary existence of the All-Wise Maker and point to His unity. And in their totality they show most brilliantly the beauty of His mercy and the perfection of His dominicality.

Also, just as the inspirations from the Unseen imparted to all hearts, which make known to man every sort of science and knowledge and truth and teach the animals how to procure their needs, make known the existence of an All-Compassionate Sustainer and point to His dominicality, so their external and inner senses, which like rays gathering immaterial flowers from the garden of the universe, are all keys to different worlds, demonstrate as clearly as the sun the necessary existence, unity, oneness, and perfect domin

icality of the All-Wise Maker, the All-Knowing Creator, the Most Compassionate Creator, the All-Generous Provider.

Thus, from the twelve windows, the twelve aspects, mentioned here a vast window opens which displays with a twelve-coloured light of truth the oneness, unity, and perfect dominicality of God Almighty .

O unhappy denier! With what can you block up this window which is as broad as the globe of the earth, indeed, as its yearly orbit? And with what can you extinguish this source of light which shines like the sun? Behind which veil of heedlessness can you hide it?

Seventh Window

The perfect order of the works of art scattered over the face of the universe, and their perfect proportion and balance, and the perfection of their adornment, and the ease in their creation, and their resembling one another, and their exhibiting a single nature demonstrate on a vast scale the necessary existence and perfect power and unity of an All-Wise Maker.

Moreover, just as the creation of innumerable, different, well-ordered complex beings from inanimate and simple elements again testifies, to the number of those composite beings, to the All-Wise Maker's necessary existence and points to His unity, so in their totality do those beings demonstrate in truly brilliant fashion His unity and the perfection of His power.

Then the utmost distinguishing and differentiating of beings as they are renewed while being assembled and dissolved –that is, during what is called the composition of beings– amid the utmost degree of intermingling and confusion, for example the distinguishing of the shoots and growth of seeds and roots without confusing them in any way although they are all mixed up, and the mixed-up substances entering trees being divided between the leaves, flowers, and fruits, and the nutrients which enter the body in mixed-up form being differentiated and separated out with perfect wisdom and perfect balance for the cells of the body, – again demonstrate the necessary existence and perfect power and unity of the Absolutely Wise One, the Absolutely Knowing One, the Absolutely Powerful One.

Then too the making of the world of minute particles into a boundless, broad arable field and every instant sowing and harvesting it and obtaining the fresh crops of different universes from it, and those inanimate, impotent, ignorant particles being made to perform innumerable orderly duties most consciously, wisely, and capably – this also shows the necessary existence of the All-Powerful One of Glory and Maker of Perfection, and His perfect

Power and the grandeur of His sovereignty and His unity and the perfection of His dominicality.

Thus through these four ways a large window is opened onto knowledge of God; addressing the reason, it displays the All-Wise Maker on a large scale.

Now, you unhappy heedless one! If you do not want to see Him and learn of Him in this way, divest yourself of your reason; become an animal, and thus be saved!

Eighth Window

The testimony of all the prophets (Peace be upon them), who among mankind possessed luminous spirits, relying on their manifest and evident miracles; and the testimony of all the saints, who with their luminous hearts are the spiritual poles of mankind, relying on their illuminations and wonder-working; and testimony of all the purified scholars, who possess luminous minds, relying on their researches and verifications; –the testimony of all these to the necessary existence, unity, and perfect dominicality of the Single One of Unity, the Necessary Existent, the Creator of All Things, forms a truly vast and light-filled window.

O you unfortunate denier! In whom do you place your trust so that you do not heed these? Or by closing your eyes in the daytime do you imagine the world to be plunged into night?

Ninth Window

The universal worship in the cosmos self-evidently demonstrates an Absolute Object of Worship. Yes, the perfect obedience and worship of all angels and spirit beings, – which is established by the testimony of those who have penetrated to the spirit world and the inner dimension of things and have met with the angels and spirit beings– and of all living beings self-evidently performing their duties in perfect order and in a worshipful manner, and of all inanimate things self-evidently carrying out their duties with perfect submission and in a worshipful manner, all demonstrate the necessary existence and unity of a True Object of Worship.

So too the true knowledge of the knowing, which has the strength of consensus, and the fruitful thanks of all those who offer thanks, and the radiant glorification of all those who recite God's Names, and the bounty-increasing praises of all those recite God's praises, and all the demonstrative proofs and

descriptions of Divine unity of all those who acknowledge it, and the true love and passion of all lovers of God, and the true will and desire of those who seek Him, and the earnest searching and penitence of all those who turn to Him, –all these demonstrate the necessary existence and perfect dominicality and unity of that Pre-Eternal All-Worshipped One, the One Who is Known, Mentioned, Thanked, Praised, One, Beloved, Desired, and Sought.

So too all the acceptable worship of perfected human beings and the spiritual radiance and supplications, visions and illuminations resulting from their acceptable worship again demonstrate the necessary existence and unity and perfect dominicality of that Eternal Being, the Enduring Object of Worship. Thus, these three aspects open up a broad, light-giving window onto Divine unity.

Tenth Window

*And He sends down water from the sky and brings forth with it fruits for your sustenance; and He has made subject to you the ships, that they sail through the sea by His command; and He has made the rivers subject to you; * And He has made subject to you the sun and the moon, both diligently pursuing their courses; and He has made subject to you the night and the day. * And He gives you of all that you ask Him. But if you count God's bounties, you will never be able to number them.⁶*

The mutual assistance and co-operation of beings in the universe and the fact that they respond to one another show that all creatures are raised by a single Nurturer, are organized by a single Director, are under the jurisdiction of a single Disposer, are the servants of a single Lord. For through an all-embracing law of mutual assistance, the sun cooks the necessities for the lives of living beings on the earth through a dominical command, and the moon acts as a calendar, and light, air, water, and sustenance hasten to the assistance of living beings, and plants hasten to the assistance of animals, and animals hasten to the assistance of human beings, and the members of the body hasten to assist one another, and particles of food even hasten to the assistance of the cells of the body. This most wise and generous mutual assistance of these beings, and their responding to one another's needs and their supporting and strengthening one another in accordance with a law of generosity, a law of compassion, a law of mercy, show clearly and self-evidently that they are the servants, officials, and creatures of a sole, unique

⁶ Qur'an, 14:32-34.

Single One of Unity, a Peerless Eternally Besought One, an Absolutely Powerful, Absolutely Knowing, Absolutely Compassionate, Absolutely Generous Necessarily Existent One.

O wretched bankrupt philosophy! What have you say in the face of this mighty window? Can your chance interfere in this?

Eleventh Window

*For indeed in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest.*⁷

Through knowing a single Creator, all spirits and hearts are delivered from the distress and confusion arising from misguidance, and from the spiritual pains arising from distress. They are saved by attributing all beings to a single Maker. They find assurance through the remembrance of a single God. For, as is proved decisively in the Twenty-Second Word, if all beings are not attributed to a single being, it becomes necessary to ascribe a single thing to innumerable causes, and then the existence of a single thing becomes as difficult as all beings. For if attributed to God, innumerable things are ascribed to a single being, and if they are not attributed to Him, it becomes necessary to attribute everything to innumerable causes. Then a single fruit becomes as difficult as the universe, indeed, more difficult. For just as if the management of one soldier is given to a hundred different people, a hundred difficulties arise, and if a hundred soldiers are given to the direction of one officer, they are as easy to manage as a single soldier, so too the coinciding of numerous different causes in the creation of a single thing is difficult to the hundredth degree. And if the creation of numerous things is given to a single being, it becomes easy to the hundredth degree.

Thus, it is only by recognizing the Creator's unity and knowledge of God that man may be delivered from the boundless distress arising from the desire to search for the truth inherent in his nature. Since there are endless difficulties and pains in unbelief and associating partners with God, that way is certainly impossible and devoid of truth. While since suitably to the ease, abundance, and fine art in the creation of beings, there is a boundless ease in affirming Divine unity, that way is surely necessary and the truth.

O you miserable people of misguidance! See how dark and full of pain is the way of misguidance! What is it that makes you take it? And see how easy and pleasant is the way of belief and affirming Divine unity! Take that way and be delivered!

⁷ Qur'an, 13:28.

Twelfth Window

*Glorify the Name of your Sustainer, the All-Highest, * Who has created, and given order and proportion, * And Who has determined [the nature of all things] and guided [them towards their fulfilment].⁸*

According to the meaning of this verse, all things, and especially living creatures, have been given a form and regular proportions in accordance with wisdom as though they have emerged from a purposeful mould. Contained in those measured proportions are intricate extremities for various benefits and uses. And the form of their clothes and their proportions, which they change throughout the periods of their lives, are each immaterial and well-ordered and measured, and are composed of the appointed events of their lives again in a fashion suitable to wisdom and benefits. This shows clearly that those innumerable creatures, whose forms and proportions have been planned in the sphere of determining of an All-Powerful One of Glory, an All-Wise One of Perfection, and who have been given forms fashioned in the workshop of Divine power, point to that Being's necessary existence and testify to His unity and perfect power with endless tongues. Look at your own body and its members and the fruits of its intricate and complex places! See the perfect power within the perfect wisdom!

Thirteenth Window

According to the meaning of:

And there is nothing but extols His limitless glory and praise,⁹

everything recalls its Creator through its own particular tongue and declares to His holiness. Yes, the glorifications all beings utter audibly and through the tongues of their beings demonstrate the existence of a single Most Holy Being. The testimony of innate disposition may not be rejected. Especially if the evidence comes from all sides, it cannot be doubted. Look! The well-ordered forms of beings, which through their manner of creation comprise endless testimony, and offer evidence in innumerable ways through the tongue of disposition and look to a single centre like concentric circles – all these are tongues. Similarly, their well-proportioned and balanced assemblages are all testifying tongues. And their perfect lives are all glorifying tongues. Thus, as is proved in the Twenty-Fourth Word, their glorifying,

⁸ Qur'an, 87:1-3.

⁹ Qur'an, 17:44.

extolling, and testifying to a single Most Holy Being through all these tongues demonstrate a Necessarily Existent One as light shows the sun, and point to the perfection of His Godhead.

Fourteenth Window

*Say: who is it in whose hands is the governance of all things?¹⁰ * And there is nothing but its treasures are with Us.¹¹ * There is not a moving creature but He has grasp of its forelock.¹² * Indeed my Sustainer watches over and records all things.¹³*

According to the meaning of these verses, all things are in need of a single All-Glorious Creator in everything, in all matters and circumstances. Indeed, we look at the beings in the universe and we see that there is the manifestation of an absolute force within an absolute weakness, and the traces of an absolute power are apparent within an absolute impotence; like, for example, the wonderful states and stages plants display when the life-force awakens in their seeds and roots. There is the manifestation too of an absolute wealth within an absolute poverty and dryness; like the poverty of trees and the soil in winter and their glittering wealth and riches in the spring. The sprinklings of an absolute life are also apparent within an absolute lifelessness; like the transformation of the elements into living matter. There is, moreover, the manifestation of an all-encompassing consciousness within an absolute ignorance; like everything, from minute particles to the stars, acting consciously and conforming to the order of the universe and to the demands of wisdom and requirements of life.

Thus, this power within impotence, and strength within weakness, and wealth and riches within poverty, and life and consciousness within lifelessness and ignorance necessarily and self-evidently open up windows on every side onto the necessary existence and unity of a Possessor of Absolute Power and Absolute Strength, a Possessor of Absolute Riches, an Absolutely Knowing, All-Living and Self-Sufficient One. In their totality they point to a luminous highway on a vast scale.

And so, O you heedless one who has fallen into the swamp of nature! If you do not quit nature and recognize Divine power, you have to accept that in everything, in every minute particle even, reside an infinite force and power, a boundless wisdom and skill, and the ability to see, know, and administer most other beings.

¹⁰ Qur'an, 23:88.

¹¹ Qur'an, 15:21.

¹² Qur'an, 11:56.

¹³ Qur'an, 11:57.

Fifteenth Window

According to the meaning of the verse:

*Who has created everything in the best way,*¹⁴

everything is cut out according to its innate abilities with perfect measure and order, and put together with the finest art, in the shortest way, the best form, the lightest manner, and most practicable shape. Look at the clothes of birds, for example, and the easy way they ruffle up their feathers and continuously use them. Also, things are given bodies and dressed in forms in a wise manner with no waste and nothing in vain; they testify to their number to the necessary existence of an All-Wise Maker and point to that Possessor of Absolute Power and Knowledge.

Sixteenth Window

The order and ordering in the creation and disposal of creatures, which are renewed season by season on the earth, show clearly a universal wisdom. Since an attribute cannot be without the one it qualifies, this universal wisdom necessarily shows an All-Wise One. The wonderful adornment within the veil of wisdom, self-evidently shows a perfect beneficence, and that perfect beneficence necessarily points to a gracious, All-Generous Creator. The all-encompassing benevolence and bestowal within the veil of beneficence show self-evidently an all-embracing mercy, and that all-embracing mercy shows necessarily an All-Merciful and All-Compassionate One. The sustenance and foods of all living creatures above the veil of mercy, all perfectly appropriate for their needs, show clearly a sustaining Providence and a compassionate dominicality, and that sustaining and administering necessarily point to an All-Generous Provider.

Yes, all the creatures on the face of the earth, thus raised with perfect wisdom, adorned with perfect beneficence, bestowed upon with perfect mercy, and nurtured with perfect compassion, testify to the necessary existence of an All-Wise, Munificent, Compassionate, Providing Maker, and points to His unity.

Look at and consider also the universal wisdom which is apparent on the face of the earth as a whole and is to be seen in its totality and shows clearly purpose and will; and the perfect beneficence embracing all creatures, which

¹⁴ Qur'an, 32:7.

comprises the wisdom; and the all-encompassing mercy, which comprises the beneficence and wisdom and includes all the beings of the earth; and the most generous sustaining and nurturing, which comprises the mercy and wisdom and beneficence and embraces all living creatures. Just as the seven colours form light, and the light, which illuminates the face of the earth, undoubtedly shows the sun, so too that beneficence within wisdom, and mercy within beneficence, and sustaining and nurturing within mercy show brilliantly on a large scale and at a high degree the unity and perfect dominicality of an utterly Wise, Generous, Compassionate, Providing Necessarily Existent One.

O you stupefied and heedless denier! With what can you explain this wise, generous, compassionate, providential sustaining, this strange, wonderful, miraculous state of affairs which is before your eyes? With chance and coincidence, which are aimless like you? With force, which is blind like your heart? With nature, which is deaf like your head? With causes which are impotent, lifeless, and ignorant like you? Or do you want to give the name of 'nature,' which is utterly impotent, ignorant, deaf, blind, contingent, and wretched, to the All-Glorious One, Who is utterly holy, pure, exalted, and free of all defect and absolutely Powerful, Knowing, Hearing, and Seeing, and thus perpetrate an infinite error? So with what force can you extinguish this truth brilliant as the sun? Under which veil of heedlessness can you conceal it?

Seventeenth Window

*Indeed in the heavens and earth are signs for those who believe.*¹⁵

If we observe the face of the earth in the summer, we see that an absolute munificence and liberality, which necessitate confusion and disarrangement, is to be seen within a total harmony and order. Look at all the plants which adorn the face of the earth!

And the utter speed in the creation of things, which necessitates imbalance and disorder, is apparent within a perfect equilibrium. Look at all the fruits which decorate the face of the earth!

And an absolute multiplicity, which necessitates unimportance, indeed, ugliness, is apparent within a perfect beauty of art. Look at all the flowers which gild the face of the earth!

And the absolute ease in the creation of things, which necessitates lack of

¹⁵ Qur'an, 45:3.

art and simplicity, is to be seen within an infinite art and skill and attention. Look carefully at all seeds, which are like the tiny containers and programmes of the members of plants and trees and the small cases containing their life-histories!

And the great distances, which necessitate difference and diversity, appear within an correspondence and conformity. Look at all the varieties of cereal grains sown in every part of the earth!

And the total intermingling, which necessitates confusion and muddle, is on the contrary to be seen within a perfect differentiation and separation. Consider the perfect differentiation of seeds when they sprout, despite being cast into the earth all mixed-up together and all resembling one another with regard to their substance, and the various substances which enter trees being separated out perfectly for the leaves, flowers, and fruits, and the foods which enter the stomach all mixed-up together being separated out perfectly according to the various members and cells. See the perfect power within the perfect wisdom!

And the great abundance and infinite profusion, which necessitate unimportance and worthlessness, are to be seen as most valuable and expensive in regard to the creatures and art on the face of the earth. Within these innumerable wonders of art, consider only the varieties of mulberry, those confections of Divine power, on the table of the All-Merciful One on the face of the earth! See them within the perfect mercy, the perfect art!

Thus, just as the day shows the light, and the light the sun, the great value together with the utter profusion; and the boundless intermingling and intermixing together with the utmost differentiation and separation within the utter profusion; and the great distance together with the utmost conformity and resemblance within the limitless differentiation and separation; and the infinite ease and facility together with the infinite care in the making within the utmost resemblance; and the absolute speed and rapidity together with the total equilibrium and balance and lack of waste within the most beautiful making; and the infinite abundance and multiplicity together with the highest degree of beauty of art within utter lack of waste; and the utmost munificence together with absolute order within the highest degree of beauty of art, all testify to the necessary existence, perfect power, beautiful dominicality, and unity and oneness of an All-Powerful One of Glory, an All-Wise One of Perfection, an All-Compassionate and Beauteous One. They demonstrate the meaning of the verse:

*His are the Most Beautiful Names.*¹⁶

So now, O you ignorant, heedless, obstinate wretch! With what can you

¹⁶ Qur'an, 20:8; 59:24.

interpret this mighty truth? With what can you explain this infinitely miraculous and wonderful state of affairs? To what can you attribute these truly extraordinary arts? What veil of heedlessness can you draw across this window as broad as the earth and so close it? Where is your chance and coincidence, your unconscious companion on which you rely and call ‘nature,’ your friend and support in misguidance? It is totally impossible for chance and coincidence to interfere in these matters, isn’t it? And to attribute to ‘nature’ one thousandth of them is impossible a thousand times over, isn’t it?

Or does lifeless, impotent nature have immaterial machines and printing presses within each single thing, made from each, and to the number of each?

Eighteenth Window

*Do they not consider the government of the heavens and the earth?*¹⁷

Consider this comparison which is explained in the Twenty-Second Word: a fine, well-ordered, well-crafted work like a palace self-evidently points to a well-ordered act. That is to say, a building indicates the act of building. And a fine, well-ordered act necessarily points to a proficient agent, a skilful master, a builder. And the titles of proficient master and builder point self-evidently to a perfect attribute, that is, to a faculty for the craft. And that perfect attribute and that perfect faculty for the craft self-evidently indicate the existence of a perfect innate ability. And a perfect innate ability indicate the existence of an exalted spirit and elevated essence.

In just the same way, the constantly renewed works filling the face of the earth, indeed the universe, show clearly acts of the utmost perfection. And these acts, which are encompassed by total order and wisdom, point clearly to an agent whose titles and Names are perfect. For it is clearly obvious that well-ordered, wise acts cannot be without the one who performs them. And titles of the utmost perfection point to the utterly perfect attributes of that agent. For according to the rules of grammar, the active particle is formed from the infinitive [that is, what is called ‘the root’ in Arabic grammar]; so too the source and roots of nouns, names and titles are attributes. And attributes at the utmost degree of perfection point indubitably to utterly perfect essential qualities. And those perfect essential qualities –which we are unable to describe– point most certainly to an essence which is at the utmost peak of perfection.

Thus, since in every part of the world all the works of art and creatures

¹⁷ Qur’an, 7:185.

are perfect works, each of them testifies to an act, and the act testifies to a Name, and the Name to an attribute, and the attribute to a quality, and the quality to the Essence. Thus, just as singly they testify to the necessary existence of the All-Glorious Maker to the number of creatures and indicate His oneness, so altogether they form an ascension in Divine knowledge as strong as the chains of beings. They form a proof of reality in continuous sequence which no doubt can pierce or penetrate.

So now, O wretched, heedless denier! With what can you smash this proof which is as powerful as the chain of the universe? With what can you close this latticed window with its innumerable spaces through which shine rays of truth to the number of these creatures? Which veil of heedlessness can you draw over it?

Nineteenth Window

According to the meaning of the verse:

*The seven heavens and the earth and all within them extol His limitless glory, and there is nothing but it extols His limitless glory and praise,*¹⁸

the All-Glorious Maker has attached innumerable meanings and instances of wisdom to the heavenly bodies so that it is as if, in order to express His glory and beauty, He has adorned the heavens with the words of the suns, moons and stars. To the beings in the atmosphere also He has attached instances of wisdom and meanings and aims, as if to make it speak through the words of the thunder, lightning, and drops of rain, and give instruction in the perfection of His wisdom and beauty of His mercy.

He causes the head of the earth to speak too with its meaningful words known as animals and plants and displays the perfections of His art to the universe. Then He makes the plants and trees speak, all words of that head, through the words of their leaves, flowers, and fruits and again proclaims the perfection of His art and beauty of His mercy. Their flowers and fruits, too, He makes speak, through the words of their seeds, and gives instruction to the aware and conscious in the subtleties of His art and the perfection of His dominicality. And so, out of these innumerable words of glorification, we shall lend our ears and listen to a single shoot and a single flower and their manner of expression, and learn the way in which they testify.

Yes, all plants and all trees describe their Maker with numerous tongues in such a way that they leave those who study them in amazement,

¹⁸ Qur'an, 17:44.

causing them to exclaim: “Glory be to God! How wonderfully they bear witness to Him!”

Yes, the glorification of plants at the time their flowers open, and the moment they produce new shoots, and when they offer their smiling words is as beautiful and clear as themselves. For through the beautiful mouth of each flower and the tongues of its orderly shoots and the words of its well-measured seeds, the order demonstrates wisdom and is observedly within a balance which demonstrates knowledge. And the balance is within an embroidery of art which demonstrates skill and craft. And the embroidery of art is within an adornment which demonstrates favour and munificence. And the adornment is within subtle scents which demonstrate mercy and bestowal. And these meaningful qualities one within the other form such a tongue of testimony that it both describes the All-Beauteous Maker through His Names, and portrays Him through His attributes, and expounds the manifestation of His Names, and expresses His making Himself loved and known.

If you hear such testimony from a single flower, will your doubts and suspicions and heedlessness persist when you listen to all the flowers in the dominical gardens on the face of the earth and hear with what elevated strength they proclaim the necessary existence and unity of the All-Glorious Maker? If they do persist, can it be said of you that you are a conscious human being?

Come, now look carefully at a tree! See its delicate mouth within the orderly emergence of the leaves in spring, and the blossoms opening in a measured manner, and the fruits swelling with wisdom and mercy and dancing at the blowing of the breeze in the hands of the branches like innocent children. See the just balance within the wise order expressed through the tongue of the leaves becoming green at a generous hand, through that of the flowers smiling with the joy of a favour received, and through the words of the fruits laughing through a manifestation of mercy. See the careful arts and embroideries within the balance demonstrating justice; and the mercy within the skilful embroideries and adornment; and the various sweet tastes and delightful scents, which indicate mercy and bestowal; and the seeds, each of which is a miracle of power within the agreeable tastes: all these point in most clear fashion to the necessary existence and unity of an All-Wise, Generous, Compassionate, Beneficent, Bountiful Maker, a Bestower of Beauty and Favours, to the beauty of His mercy and perfection of His dominicality. Thus, if you can listen at the same time to the tongues of disposition of all the trees on the earth, you will see and understand what exquisite jewels are to be found in the treasury of the verse:

*All that is in the heavens and on the earth extols God's limitless glory.*¹⁹

¹⁹ Qur'an, 62:1; 64:1.

O you unhappy heedless one who supposes himself to be free through his ingratitude! If the All-Generous One of Beauty, Who makes Himself known to you and loved by you through these innumerable tongues had not wanted you to know Him, He would have silenced them. Since they have not been silenced, they should be heeded. You cannot be saved by closing your ears in heedlessness. For the universe does not fall silent at you stopping up your ears, the beings within it will not be silent, the witnesses to Divine unity will not hold their tongues. And for sure, they will condemn you...

Twentieth Window²⁰

*So glory be to Him in Whose hands is the dominion of all things.²¹ * And there is nothing but its treasures are with Us; but We only send it down in a measure defined. * And We send forth the winds to fertilize [the plants], and We send down rain from the skies providing you with water therewith, and you are not the keepers of its stores.²²*

Just as perfect wisdom and beauty of art are apparent in particulars and results and in details, so do the universal elements and large creatures take up their positions in accordance with wisdom and art, despite their apparently being mixed up together by chance without order. Thus, as its other wise duties show, light shines in order to proclaim and make known the

²⁰ The true meaning of this Twentieth Window occurred to my heart at one time in Arabic in this way:
 The sparkling of the light is through Your illuminating and making it known;
 The rolling on of the ages is through Your despatching and employing them;
 Glory be unto You, how mighty is Your rule!
 The flowing forth of the rivers is through Your storing them up and subjugating them;
 The decorations of stones is through Your designing and fashioning them;
 Glory be unto You, how sublime is Your wisdom!
 The smiling of the flowers is through Your adorning and beautifying them;
 The embellishing of fruits is through Your bestowal and munificence;
 Glory be unto You, how beautiful is Your art!
 The carolling of the birds is through Your making them speak and Your avail;
 The singing of the rain is through Your causing it to fall, Your bestowal;
 Glory be unto You, how vast is Your Mercy!
 The motion of the moons is through Your determining, Your planning,
 Your rotating them, Your illuminating them;
 Glory be unto You, how brilliant Your proofs, how dazzling Your sovereignty!

²¹ Qur'an, 36:83.

²² Qur'an, 15:21-2.

Divine creatures on the face of the earth, with the permission of its Sustainer. This means that light is employed by a Wise Maker; by means of it, He makes manifest His antique works of art in the exhibitions of the market of this world.

Now consider the winds! According to the testimony of their other wise, generous benefits and duties, they are hastening to extremely numerous and important tasks. It means that their movement in waves is a being employed, a being despatched, a being utilized by an All-Wise Maker; it is a working expeditiously to speedily carry out the commands of their Sustainer.

Now consider the springs, the streams, and the rivers! Their welling-up out of the ground and out of mountains is not by chance. For it is demonstrated by the testimony of their benefits and fruits, the works of Divine mercy, and by the statement of their being stored up in mountains with the balance of wisdom in proportion to need, that they are subjugated and stored up by an All-Wise Sustainer, and that their flowing forth is their conforming exuberantly to His command.

Now consider all the varieties of stones and jewels and minerals in the earth! Their decorations and beneficial properties, the wise benefits connected to them, and their being prepared in a manner appropriate to human and animal needs and vital necessities all show that they are made in that way through the decoration, arrangement, planning, and forming of an All-Wise Maker.

Now consider the flowers and fruits! Their smiles, tastes, beauties, embroideries, and scents are all like invitations to and menus for the table of a Most Munificent Maker, an All-Compassionate Bestower of Bounties; they are given as various menus and invitations to each species of beings through their different colours, scents, and tastes.

Now consider the birds! A certain indication that their twittering and chirruping is an All-Wise Maker's causing them to speak is the astonishing way in which they express their feelings to one another with those sounds, and state their intentions.

Now consider the clouds! A definite indication that the pattering of the rain is not a meaningless sound and that the crashing of thunder and lightning is not a futile din is that those strange beings are created in empty space. Also drops of rain like the water of life are milked from the clouds, suckling the living creatures on the earth so needy and longing for them. These facts show that the pattering and crashing are most meaningful and full of wisdom. For at the command of a Most Generous Sustainer, the rain calls out to those longing for it: "Good news! We are coming!" They express this meaning.

Now look at the sky and consider carefully only the moon out of all the innumerable bodies within it! That its motion is at the command of an All-Powerful and Wise One is demonstrated by the important instances of wisdom connected to it and concerning the earth. Since we have explained these in other places in the *Risale-i Nur*, we cut this short here.

Thus, the universal elements we have enumerated from light to the moon open in large measure a truly extensive window. They proclaim and show the unity of a Necessarily Existent One, and the perfection of His power, and grandeur of His sovereignty.

And so O heedless one! If you are able to silence this voice, crashing like thunder and extinguish this light brilliant as the sun, forget God! Otherwise come to your senses! Say, All Glory be unto You! And,

*The seven heavens and the earth and all within them extol His limitless glory!*²³

Twenty-First Window

*And the sun runs its course to a place appointed, that is the determining of the Almighty, the All-Knowing.*²⁴

The universe's lamp, the sun, forms a window onto the existence and unity of the universe's Maker that is as brilliant and luminous as the sun itself. Indeed, despite their great differences with regard to size, position, and speed, the twelve planets including our globe known as the solar system are in motion and revolve with perfect order and wisdom and perfect balance without a second's confusion, and are bound to the sun through a Divine law known as gravity, that is, they follow their leader as though in prayer. This demonstrates on a vast scale the tremendousness of Divine power and the unity of their Sustainer. Those lifeless bodies, those vast unconscious masses, are rotated and employed within the utmost order and wise balance, in various forms and over varying distances and in varying motions, proving the degree of the power and the wisdom; you compare for yourself. If chance was to interfere the tiniest amount in this vast and complex matter, it would cause an explosion so great it would scatter the universe. If it was to arrest the motion of one of them for a minute, it would cause it to leave its orbit and would open the possibility of its colliding with another planet. You

²³ Qur'an, 17:44.

²⁴ Qur'an, 36:38.

can understand how awesome would be the collision of bodies thousands of times larger than the earth.

Now we shall refer to the all-encompassing knowledge of God the wonders of the solar system, that is, the twelve planets which are the sun's followers and fruits, and consider only our own planet, the earth, which is here before our eyes. We see that our planet is made to travel on a long journey around the sun by a dominical command as its most important duty –as is described in the Third Letter– in a way that demonstrates the grandeur of dominical majesty and the loftiness of the sovereignty of the Godhead and the perfection of His mercy and wisdom. It has been made a dominical ship filled with the wonders of Divine art, and a travelling dwelling like an exhibition, for God's conscious servants to gaze on. And the moon has been attached to it with precise reckoning for mighty instances of wisdom, like being an hour-hand for telling the time. The moon too has been given various mansions through which to journey. Thus, these aspects of this blessed planet of ours prove the necessary existence and unity of a Possessor of Absolute Power with a testimony as powerful as the globe of the earth itself. You can make an analogy with the rest of the solar system from this.

Furthermore, the sun is made to turn on its own axis like a spinning-wheel, in order to wind into a ball the immaterial threads called gravity and tie the planets with them and set them in order. So too is it impelled together with its planets at a speed that cuts five hours' distance a second towards, according to one estimate, the Constellation of Hercules, or towards the 'Sun of Suns'. This most certainly occurs through the power and at the command of the All-Glorious One, the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity. It is as though He makes the solar system perform these manoeuvres like a platoon of soldiers under orders, and so demonstrates the majesty of His dominicality.

O you astronomers! What chance can interfere in these matters? The hands of what causes can reach them? What force can draw close to this? Come on, you say! Would an All-Glorious Monarch such as this display impotence and permit others to have a role in his sovereignty? Would He give to other hands living creatures in particular, which are the fruit, result, aim, and essence of the universe? Would He permit another to interfere? Especially man, would He leave him to his own devices, the most comprehensive of those fruits, the most perfect of the results, vicegerent of the earth, and His mirror-like guest? Would He refer him to nature and chance and reduce the majesty of His sovereignty to nothing; reduce to nothing His perfect wisdom?

Twenty-Second Window

*Have We not made the earth a cradle, * And the mountains as pegs, * And created you as pairs?²⁵ * So behold the signs of God's Mercy, how He raises to life the earth after its death.²⁶*

The globe of the earth is a head with a hundred thousand mouths. In each mouth are a hundred thousand tongues. On each tongue are a hundred thousand proofs, each one of which testifies in numerous ways to the necessary existence, unity, sacred attributes, and Most Beautiful Names of an All-Glorious One.

Yes, we consider the first creation of the earth and we see that rock was created from matter in a fluid state, and that soil was created from rock. If that substance had remained fluid, it would not have been habitable, and if after becoming rock, the fluid had become hard as iron, it would not have been suitable for use. So what gave it its state was surely the wisdom of an All-Wise Maker Who saw the needs of the earth's inhabitants. Then the layer of soil was thrown over the pegs of mountains so that the earthquakes arising from internal upheavals could breathe through the mountains and they would not cause the earth to be shaken out of its motion and duties, and so that the mountains would preserve the earth from the encroachment of the sea, and all would be storehouses for the vital necessities of living beings, and would purify the air from noxious gases so allowing living beings to breathe, and so that they would accumulate and hold water reserves, and would be a source and mine for the minerals necessary for living creatures.

Thus, this situation testifies most clearly and powerfully to the necessary existence and unity of a Possessor of Absolute Power, an All-Wise and Compassionate One.

O geographers! With what can you explain this? What chance could make this dominical ship full of these wonderful creatures into an exhibition of marvels, and spin it at a speed whereby it covers a distance of twenty-four thousand years a year while not allowing a single of the objects arranged on its face to fall off?

Consider also the strange arts on the face of the earth. How wisely the elements are employed in their functions! How well they attend to the guests of the Most Merciful One on the earth through the command of that All-Wise and Powerful One, and hasten to serve them!

²⁵ Qur'an, 78:6-8.

²⁶ Qur'an, 30:50.

Also look at these embroidered lines within strange and wondrous arts on face of the earth, multicolored and full of strange wisdom! See how the brooks and streams, seas and rivers, mountains and hills have all been made dwellings and means of transport suitable for His various creatures and servants. See how with perfect wisdom and order He has then filled them with hundreds of thousands of varieties of plants and animals, and given them life and made them rejoice, and how regularly minute by minute He discharges the creatures and empties those dwellings with death, and then once again in orderly fashion refills them in the form of 'resurrection after death.' This testifies with hundreds of thousands of tongues to the necessary existence and unity of an All-Powerful One of Glory, an All-Wise One of Perfection.

In Short: The earth, the face of which is an exhibition of marvels of art, a display of wonders of creation, a place of passage for the caravans of beings, and a mosque and dwelling for the ranks of worshippers, is like the heart of all the universe; it thus displays the light of Divine unity to the same degree as the universe.

O geographer! If the head of the earth has a hundred thousand mouths and with the hundred thousand tongues in each it makes known God, and still you do not recognize Him and plunge your head in the swamp of nature, then ponder over the greatness of your fault! Know what a grievous punishment it makes you deserve! Come to your senses and extract your head from the swamp! Say, *I believe in God in Whose hand is the sovereignty of all things.*

Twenty-Third Window

*Who creates death and life.*²⁷

Life is the most luminous, the most beautiful of the miracles of dominical power. It is the most powerful and most brilliant of the proofs of Divine unity. It is the most comprehensive and most shining of the mirrors displaying the manifestations of the Eternally Besought One. Yes, on its own, life makes known a Living and Self-Subsistent One together with all his Names and acts. For life is a light, a medicament, like a potion blended from numerous attributes. Just as the seven colours are combined in light, and various drugs are blended together in a medicament, so life is a reality made of

²⁷ Qur'an, 67:2.

numerous attributes. Some of the attributes in its reality expand by means of the senses; they unfold and are differentiated. However the greater part make themselves perceived in the form of the emotions; they make themselves known by welling up out of life.

Furthermore, life comprises provision, mercy, grace, and wisdom, which are dominant in the regulation, and administration of the universe. It is as if life fastens them on behind it and draws them into the place it enters. For example, when life enters a body, the Name of All-Wise is also manifested; it makes its home well and orders it with wisdom. In the same way, the Name of All-Generous is manifested, and it organizes and decorates its dwelling according to its needs. At the same time, the manifestation of the Name of All-Compassionate is apparent; it bestows all sorts of bounties for the continuance and perfection of life. Again at the same time, the manifestation of the Name of Provider appears; it produces the sustenance, material and immaterial, necessary for the perpetuation and unfolding of the life, and in part stores them up within its body. That is to say, life is like a point of focus; various attributes enter one another, indeed, they become one and the same. It is as if in its entirety life is both knowledge, and at the same time power, and at the same time wisdom and mercy, and so on... Thus, with regard to this comprehensive essence, life is a mirror of the Eternally Besought One reflecting the essential dominical attributes. It is due to this mystery that the Necessarily Existent One, Who is the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One, creates life in great abundance and plenitude, and scatters it far and wide and broadcasts it, and gathers everything around life and makes it serve it. For life's duty is great. Yes, it is not easy to be the mirror of the Eternally Besought One, it is not some petty duty.

Thus, the instantaneous and continuous coming into existence from nothing of these countless, numberless lives which we all the time see before our eyes, –and of spirits, which are the origins and essences of lives– their being sent, demonstrate the necessary existence, sacred attributes, and Most Beautiful Names of a Necessarily Existent and Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One as clearly as sunbeams show the existence of the sun. Just as someone who does not recognize and accept the existence of the sun is compelled to deny the light which fills the day, so one who does not recognize the Sun of Divine Oneness, Who is Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent and the Giver of Life and Death, has to deny the existence of the living creatures which fill the earth and even the past and the future; he has to fall a hundred times lower than an animal, to fall from the level of life to become something utterly ignorant and lifeless.

Twenty-Fourth Window

*There is no God but He, everything will perish save His countenance, His is the command and to Him shall you return.*²⁸

Death is a proof of dominicality as much as life is a proof of it; it is a most powerful proof of Divine unity. As the verse,

*Who creates death and life*²⁹

indicates, death is not non-existence, annihilation, non-being, an authorless extinction; rather, as is shown in the First Letter, it is a being discharged from service by an All-Wise Author, a change of residence, an exchange of bodies, a rest from duty, a being freed from the prison of the body; it is a wise and orderly work of wisdom. Indeed, just as the living face of the earth and the well-fashioned and living creatures upon it testify to the necessary existence and unity of an All-Wise Maker, so too with their deaths do those living beings bear witness to the eternity and unity of an Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One. Since it is proved and elucidated in the Twenty-Second Word that death is an extremely powerful proof of Divine unity and eternity, we refer the discussion to that Word and here only explain one important point. It is as follows:

Both with their existences do living beings point to the existence of a Necessarily Existent One, and with their deaths do those living beings testify to the eternity and unity of an Ever-Living Eternal One. For example, the face of the earth, which is a single living creature, points to its Maker with its order and circumstances; so too it points to Him when it dies. That is, when winter conceals the earth's face with its white shroud, it turns the gazes of men away from itself—their gaze moves to the past behind the corpse of that departing spring—and it shows them a far wider scene. That is to say, all the past springs of the earth, which were all miracles of power, inform them that new living springtime creatures of the earth will come, and since they all testify to the existence of those future wonders of Divine power, each a living earth, they testify brilliantly and powerfully and on a vast scale to the necessary existence, unity, everlastingness, and eternity of an All-Glorious Maker, an All-Powerful One of Perfection, an Ever-Living Eternal One; they demonstrate such brilliant proofs that whether one wants to or not they make one declare: "I believe in God, the One, the Unique!"

²⁸ Qur'an, 28:88.

²⁹ Qur'an, 67:2.

In Short: According to the meaning of the verse,

*And gives life to the earth after its death,*³⁰

just as this living earth testifies to the Maker with the spring, so with its death it turns man's gaze to the miracles of Divine power lined up on the two wings of time, the past and the future; it alludes to thousands of miracles of power in place of one miracle. And each of those springs testifies more certainly than this present spring, for those which have departed towards the past have gone together with their apparent causes, and after them others like them have come in their places. This means that apparent causes are nothing: only that an All-Powerful One of Glory creates the springs, and tying them to causes with His wisdom shows that He has sent them. As for the faces of the earth lined up in future time, they testify still more brilliantly. For they will be made anew from nothing, from non-being, and sent; they will be put on the earth, made to do their duty, and then sent away.

And so, O heedless one deviated into nature and drowning in its swamp! How can something which does not possess hands wise and powerful enough to reach all the past and all the future interfere in the life of the earth? Can your total nonentity of nature interfere in it? If you want to be saved, say: "At the very most, nature is a notebook of Divine power. And as for chance, it is a veil to hidden Divine wisdom which conceals our ignorance." Approach the truth!

Twenty-Fifth Window

Like one struck points to the striker, and a finely fashioned work of art necessitates the artist, and an offspring requires a parent, and an under surface demands a top surface, and so on... like all these qualities known as relative matters which are not absolute and cannot exist without each other, contingency, which is apparent in particulars in the universe as well as in it as a whole, points to necessity. And the state of being acted upon which is to be seen in all of them points to an act, and the createdness apparent in all of them points to creativity, and the multiplicity and composition to be seen in all demand unity. And necessity, an act, creativity, and unity clearly and necessarily require one who is not contingent, acted upon, numerous, compounded, and created, but bears the attributes of being necessary, an agent, one, and a creator. In which case, all contingency, states of being acted upon, createdness, multiplicity and composition testify to the Necessarily Existent One, the One Who acts as He wills, the Creator of All Things, the Single One of Unity.

³⁰ Qur'an, 30:19.

In Short: Just as necessity is apparent from contingency, the act from the state of being acted upon, and unity from multiplicity, and the existence of the former indicate the latter with certainty, in the same way, qualities like createdness and having all their needs provided for, which are to be seen in beings, clearly point to the existence of attributes like Making and Providing. In turn the existence of these attributes point necessarily and self-evidently to the existence of an All-Compassionate Maker Who is a Creator and a Provider. That is to say, with the tongues of the hundreds of attributes of this sort which they bear, every being testifies to hundreds of the Necessarily Existent One's Most Beautiful Names. If this testimony is not admitted, it becomes necessary to deny all the attributes of this sort pertaining to beings...

Twenty-Sixth Window³¹

The ever-renewed instances of beauty and fairness passing over the faces of the beings in the universe show that they are shadows of the manifestations of an Eternal Beauteous One. Yes, bubbles sparkling on the surface of a river and then disappearing, and other bubbles coming after them and sparkling like those that preceded them shows that they are mirrors to the rays of a perpetual sun. In the same way, the flashes of beauty which sparkle on the travelling beings in the river of flowing time point to an Eternal Beauteous One and are signs of Him.

Also, the ardent love in the heart of the universe points to an Undying Beloved. As is indicated by the fact that something which is not found in the tree itself will not be present in authentic form in its fruit, the ardent love of God present in human kind, the responsive fruit of the tree of the universe, shows that a true love and passion is to be found in all the universe, but in other forms. In which case, this true love and passion in the heart of the universe points to a Pre-Eternal Beloved. Moreover, all the attractions and magnetic forces which appear in numerous different forms in the heart of the universe, show to aware hearts that they are thus through the attraction of a drawing truth.

Also, according to the consensus of the saints and those who uncover the mysteries of creation, who are the most sensitive and luminous of creatures, relying on their illuminations and witnessing, they have received the manifestation of a Beauteous One of Glory and through their illuminations have perceived that All-Glorious One of Beauty making Himself known to them

³¹ This window addresses those lovers of God who approach Him with the heart in particular, rather than people generally.

and loved by them. Their unanimously telling of this again testifies with certainty to a Necessarily Existent One, to the existence of a Beauteous One of Glory, and to His making Himself known to man.

Also, the pen of beautifying and adorning which works on beings and on the face of the universe points clearly to the beauty of the Names of the pen's Owner. Thus, the beauty on the face of the universe, and the love in its heart, and the attraction in its breast, and the uncovering and witnessing in its eye, and the beauty and adornment on it as a whole, open up a truly subtle and luminous window. It displays to aware minds and hearts a Beauteous One of Glory, an Undying Beloved, an Eternal Worshipped One all of Whose Names are beautiful.

O heedless one who flounders amid suffocating doubts in the darkness of matter and obscurity of delusion! Come to your senses! Rise to a state worthy of humanity! Look through these four openings, see the beauty of unity, attain perfect belief, and become a true man!...

Twenty-Seventh Window

*God is the Creator of all things, and of all things He is the Guardian and Disposer.*³²

We look at things which appear to be causes and effects in the universe and we see that the most elevated cause possesses insufficient power for the most ordinary effect. This means that causes are a veil, and something else makes the effects. To take only a small example out of innumerable creatures let us consider the faculty of memory, which is situated in man's head in a space as tiny as a mustard seed: we see that it is like a book so comprehensive –indeed, like a library– that within it is written without confusion the entire story of a person's life.

What cause can be shown for this miracle of power? The grey matter of the brain? The simple unconscious particles of its cells? The winds of chance and coincidence? But that miracle of art can only be the work of an All-Wise Maker Who, in order to inform man that all the actions he has performed have been recorded and will be recalled at the time of accounting, writes out a small ledger from the great book of man's deeds to be published at the resurrection, and gives it to the hand of his mind. Thus, since they are comparable to man's faculty of memory, make an analogy with all eggs, seeds, and grains, and then compare other effects to these small and

³² Qur'an, 39:62.

comprehensive miracles. Because whichever effect and work of art you look at, it contains such wonderful art that not only its common, simple cause, but if all causes were to gather, they would declare their impotence before it.

For example, suppose the sun, which is imagined to be a large cause, to possess will and consciousness; if it is said to it: “Are you able to make a fly?”, of course it would reply: “Through my Creator’s bounty, there is plenty of light, heat, and colours in my shop, but such things in the fly’s being as eyes, ears, and life are neither in my shop, nor are they within my power.”

Furthermore, the wonderful art and adornment in effects dismiss causes, and indicating the Necessarily Existent One, the Causer of Causes, in accordance with the verse,

*And to Him goes back every affair,*³³

hand over matters to Him. In the same way, the results, purposes, and benefits attached to effects demonstrate self-evidently that they are the works of an All-Generous Sustainer, an All-Wise and Compassionate One, beyond the veil of causes. For unconscious causes certainly cannot think of some aim and work for it. And yet we see that each creature which comes into existence does so following not one, but many aims, benefits, and instances of wisdom. That means an All-Wise and Generous Sustainer makes those things and sends them. He makes those benefits the aim of their existence.

For example, it is going to rain. It is obvious how distant the causes that apparently result in rain are from thinking of animals and having pity and compassion on them. That means it is sent to their assistance through the wisdom of a Compassionate Creator Who creates the animals and guarantees their sustenance. Rain is even called ‘mercy’. Because, since it comprises numerous works of mercy and benefits, it is as if mercy has become embodied as rain, has been formed into drops, and arrives in that way.

Furthermore, all the finely adorned plants which smile at creatures and the embellishments and displays in animals self-evidently point to the necessary existence and unity of an All-Glorious One behind the veil of the Unseen; One Who wants to make Himself known and loved through these beautifully adorned fine arts. That is to say, this adornment in things and these displays and embellishment indicate of a certainty the attributes of making known and making loved. While the attributes of making known and making loved self-evidently testify to the necessary existence and unity of an All-Powerful Maker Who is Loving and Known.

In Short: Since causes are extremely commonplace and impotent and the effects attributed to them are most valuable and full of art, this dismisses causes. The aims and benefits of effects also discharge ignorant and lifeless

³³ Qur’an, 11:123.

causes, and hand them over to an All-Wise Maker. Also, the adornment and skill on the face of effects indicates a Wise Maker Who wants to make His power known to conscious beings and desires to make Himself loved.

O wretched worshipper of causes! With what can you explain these important truths? How can you deceive yourself? If you have sense, rend the veil of causes and declare: “He is One, He has no partners!” Be saved from innumerable delusions!

Twenty-Eighth Window

*And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variations in your tongues and in your colours; verily in that are signs for those who know.*³⁴

We look at the universe, and we see that a wisdom and ordering embrace everything from the cells of the body to the totality of the world.

We look at the cells of the body, and we see that through the command and according to the law of one who considers what is beneficial for the body and administers it, there is a significant management in those miniscule cells. On the one hand a sort of sustenance is stored up in the stomach in the form of fat and expended at the time of need, and on the other in those tiny cells there is a regulation and storing up.

We look at plants, and a most wise planning and nurturing are apparent.

We look at animals, and we see a rearing and nurturing which are generous to the utmost degree.

We look at the mighty elements of the universe, and we see a majestic government and illumination following momentous aims.

We look at the universe as a whole, and we see a perfect ordering for exalted instances of wisdom and elevated aims, as though it was a country, a city, or a palace.

As is described and proved in the First Stopping-Place of the Thirty-Second Word, from minute particles to the stars, not the tiniest place is left for associating partners with God. All beings are in effect so interrelated that one who cannot subjugate all the stars and hold them in his hand, cannot make a particle heed his claims to be its lord and sustainer. It is necessary to own all the stars in order to be the true sustainer of a single particle.

Furthermore, as is described and proved in the Second Stopping-Place of the Thirty-Second Word, one not capable of creating and arranging the

³⁴ Qur'an, 30:22.

heavens cannot make the individual features on the human face. That is to say, one who is not Sustainer of all the heavens cannot make the distinguishing features on a single human face.

Thus, this is a window as large as the universe, which, if looked through, the following verses will also appear to the mind's eye, written on the pages of the universe in large letters:

*God is the Creator of all things, and of all things He is the Guardian and Disposer * His are the keys of the heavens and the earth.*³⁵

One who does not see these has either no mind or no heart. Or he is an animal in human form!

Twenty-Ninth Window

*And there is not a thing but extols His limitless glory and praise.*³⁶

One spring I was setting out on a journey, a stranger, and deep in contemplation. While skirting a hill, a brilliant yellow buttercup struck my eye. It immediately brought to mind the same species of buttercup I had seen long before in my native land and in other countries. This meaning was imparted to my heart: whoever this flower is the seal of, the stamp of, the signature of, the impress of, all the flowers of that species throughout the earth are surely His seals, His stamps. After this notion of the seal, the following thought occurred to me: just as a seal stamped on a letter denotes the letter's author, in the same way, this flower is a seal signifying the Most Merciful One. And this hillock which is inscribed with the impresses of these species and written with the lines of these plants so full of meaning, is the missive of the flower's Maker. This hill too is a seal. This plateau and plain have taken on the form of a missive of the Most Merciful One.

After this thought, the following fact came to mind: like a seal, everything ascribes all things to its own Creator; it proves each is the letter of its own Scribe. Thus, all things are windows onto Divine unity in such a way that each ascribes all things to a Single One of Unity. That is to say, there is an impress so wonderful, an art so miraculous in each thing, and especially in each living being, that the one who makes it and inscribes it so meaningfully can make all things, and the one who makes all things is certainly Him. That is to say, one who cannot make all things cannot create a single thing.

³⁵ Qur'an, 39:62-3.

³⁶ Qur'an, 17:44.

O heedless one! Look at the face of the universe! See the pages of beings one within the other like letters of the Eternally Besought One, each letter stamped with innumerable seals of Divine unity! Who can deny the testimony of all these seals? What power can silence them? Whichever of them you listen to with the ear of the heart, you will hear it declaring: "I testify that there is no god but God!"

Thirtieth Window

*If there were in the heavens and the earth other gods besides God, there surely would have been confusion in both.³⁷ * Everything will perish save His countenance; His is the command, and to Him shall you return.³⁸*

This is the Window of the scholars of theology (*kalam*), based on contingency and createdness, and their highway for proving the Necessarily Existent One. For all the details, we refer you to the scholars' great books like *Sharh al-Mawaqif* and *Sharh al-Maqasid*, and here only demonstrate one or two rays which spill on the spirit from the effulgence of the Qur'an and this Window. It is as follows:

It is the requirement of dominion and rulership not to accept rivals; they reject partnership; they repudiate interference. It is because of this that if there are two headmen in a village, they will destroy its tranquillity and order. Or if there are two chief officials in a district, or two governors in a province, they will cause chaos. Or if there are two kings in a country, they will cause complete and stormy confusion. Since a pale shadow and petty example of dominion and rulership in impotent human beings needy for assistance does not accept the interference of rivals, opponents, or peers, then you may compare how fully a rulership which is in the form of absolute sovereignty and a dominion at the degree of dominicality will enforce that law of the rejection of interference in One Possessing Absolute Power. That is to say, the most definite and constant necessity of Godhead and dominicality are unity and singleness. The clear proof and certain testimony to this are the perfect order and beautiful harmony in the universe. There is such an order from the wing of a fly to the lamps in the heavens that the intellect prostrates before it in wonder and appreciation, declaring: "Glory be to God! What wonders God has willed! How great are God's blessings!" Had there been an iota of space for partners to God, and had there been interference, as the verse,

³⁷ Qur'an, 21:22.

³⁸ Qur'an, 28:88.

*If there were in the heavens and the earth other gods besides God, there would have been confusion in both*³⁹

indicates, the order would have been destroyed, the form changed, and signs of disorder would have appeared. But as the verses,

*So turn your vision again: do you see any flaw? * Then turn your vision a second time; your vision will come back to you in a state dazzled and truly defeated*⁴⁰

state and point out, however much the human gaze tries to find faults, it can find none anywhere, and returns worn out to its dwelling, the eye, and says to the fault-finding mind who sent it: "I am worn out for nothing; there are no faults." This shows that the order and regularity are most perfect. That is to say, the order in the universe is a definitive witness to Divine unity.

Come now, let us consider 'createdness'. The scholars of theology stated:

"The world is subject to change. And everything which is subject to change is created. Every created thing has a creator, a maker. In which case, the universe has a pre-eternal creator."

And we say, yes, the universe is created. For we see that every century, indeed, every year and every season one universe, one world, goes and another comes. This means that there is an All-Powerful One of Glory Who, creating the universe anew, creates a universe every year, indeed, every season, and every day, and shows it to the aware and conscious. Then He takes it back and puts another in its place. He attaches one universe after the other like the links of a chain, and hangs them on the string of time. For sure, the universes which appear from nothing and disappear before our eyes every spring, each a new universe the same as this world, are miracles of the power of the Omnipotent One Who creates them. The One Who continuously creates and changes the worlds within the world most definitely created the world too. And He made the world and the face of the earth a guest-house for those great visitors.

Now let us come to the discussion of 'contingency'. The scholars of theology said:

"Contingency is equal in regard to both existence and non-existence." That is, if existence and non-existence are both equally possible, one who will specify, prefer, and create is necessary. For contingent beings cannot create one another in uninterrupted and never-ending chains of cause and effect. Neither can one create another, and that the next, in the form of causation. In which case there is a Necessarily Existent One Who creates them. They rendered null and void the never-ending causal sequences with the

³⁹ Qur'an, 21:22.

⁴⁰ Qur'an, 67:3-4.

famous twelve categorical proofs called ‘the ladder argument,’ and demonstrated causality to be impossible. They cut the chains of causes and proved the existence of the Necessarily Existent One.

And we say this: it is more certain and easier to demonstrate a stamp peculiar to the Creator of All Things on everything than causes being cut at the extremities of the world with the proofs refuting causality. Through the effulgence of the Qur’an, all the Windows and all the Words are based on this principle. Nevertheless, the point of contingency possesses an infinite breadth. It demonstrates the existence of the Necessarily Existent One in innumerable respects. It is not restricted to the way of the scholars of theology – cutting the chains of causes, which in truth is a mighty and broad highway; it opens a path to knowledge of the Necessarily Existent One by ways beyond count. It is as follows:

We see that in its existence, its attributes, and its lifetime, while hesitant among innumerable possibilities, that is, among truly numerous ways and aspects, each thing follows a well-ordered way in regard to its being in innumerable respects. Its attributes also are given it in a particular way. All the attributes and states which it changes throughout its life are specified in the same fashion. This means it is impelled on a wise way amid innumerable ways through the will of one who specifies, the choice of one who chooses, and the creation of a wise creator. He clothes it with well-ordered attributes and states. Then it is taken out of isolation and made part of a compound body, and the possibilities increase, for they may be found in that body in thousands of ways. Whereas among those fruitless possibilities, it is given a particular, fruitful state, whereby important results and benefits are obtained from that body, and it is made to carry out important functions. Then the body is made a component of another body. Again the possibilities increase, for it could exist in thousands of ways. Thus, it is given one state among those thousands of ways. And through that state it is made to perform important functions; and so on. It progressively demonstrates more certainly the necessary existence of an All-Wise Planner. It makes known that it is being impelled by the command of an All-Knowing Commander. Body within body, each has a function, a well-ordered duty, in all the compounds that one within the other themselves become components of larger compounds, and has relationships particular to each, in the same way that a soldier has a function and well-ordered duty in his squad, his company, his battalion, his regiment, his division, and his army, and a relationship particular to each of these sections, one within the other. A cell from the pupil of your eye has a duty in your eye and a relationship with it, and has wise functions and duties in your head as a whole and a relationship with it. If it confuses these the tiniest jot, the health and organization of the body will be spoilt. It has particular functions with regard to each of the veins, the sensory and motor

nerves, and even the body as a whole, and wise relations with them. That specified state has been given it within thousands of possibilities through the wisdom of an All-Wise Maker.

In just the same way, each of the creatures in the universe testifies to the Necessarily Existent One through the particular being, the wise form, the beneficial attributes given it among numerous possibilities. So too when they enter compounds, those creatures proclaim their Maker with a different tongue in each compound. Step by step till the greatest compound, through their relations, functions, and duties, they testify to the necessary existence, choice, and will of their All-Wise Maker. Because the one who situates a thing in all the compounds while preserving its wise relations, must be the Creator of all the compounds. That is to say, it is as though one single thing testifies to Him with thousands of tongues. Thus, from the point of view of contingency, the testimony to the existence of the Necessarily Existent One is as numerous, not as the number of beings in the universe, but as the attributes of beings and the compounds they form.

O heedless one! One who does not hear this testimony, these voices which fill the universe, must be dead and unreasoning, is that not so? Come on, you say...

Thirty-First Window

*We have created man in the best of forms.⁴¹ * And in the earth there are signs for those who are certain * And in your own selves; will you not then not see?⁴²*

This Window is the Window of man, and it is concerned with man's self. For more elaborate discussions of it in this respect, we refer you to the detailed books of the thousands of learned and scholarly saints, and here only point out a few principles we have received from the effulgence of the Qur'an. It is like this:

As is explained in the Eleventh Word, "Man is a missive so comprehensive that through his self, Almighty God makes perceived to him all His Names." For the details we refer you to the other Words, and here only explain three Points.

⁴¹ Qur'an, 95:4.

⁴² Qur'an, 51:20-1.

FIRST POINT

Man is a mirror to the Divine Names in three aspects.

The First Aspect: Like the darkness of the night shows up light, so through his weakness and impotence, his poverty and need, his defects and faults, man makes known the power, strength, riches, and mercy of an All-Powerful One of Glory, and so on... he acts as a mirror to numerous Divine attributes in this way. Even, through searching for a point of support in his infinite impotence and boundless weakness in the face of his innumerable enemies, his conscience perpetually looks to the Necessarily Existent One. And since he is compelled in his utter poverty and endless need to seek for a point of assistance in the face of his innumerable aims, his conscience in that respect all the time leans on the Court of an All-Compassionate One of Riches and opens its hands in supplication to Him. That is to say, in regard to this point of support and point of assistance in the conscience, two small windows are opened onto the Court of Mercy of the All-Powerful and All-Compassionate One, which may all the time be looked through.

The Second Aspect of being mirror-like is this: through particulars like his partial knowledge, power, senses of sight and hearing, ownership and sovereignty, which are sorts of samples given to him, man acts as a mirror to the knowledge, power, sight, hearing, and sovereignty of dominicality of the Master of the Universe; he understands them and makes them known. For example, he says: "Just as I make this house and know how to make it, and I see it and own it and administer it, so the mighty palace of the universe has a Maker. Its Maker knows it, sees it, makes it, administers it." And so on..

The Third Aspect of being mirror-like: man acts as a mirror to the Divine Names, the imprint of which are upon him. There are more than seventy Names the impresses of which are apparent in man's comprehensive nature. These have been described to a degree at the start of the Third Stopping- Place of the Thirty-Second Word. For example, through his creation, man shows the Names of Maker and Creator; through his being on the 'Most Excellent of Patterns,' the Names of Most Merciful and All-Compassionate, and through the fine way he is nurtured and raised, the Names of All-Generous and Granter of Favours, and so on; he shows the differing impresses of different Names through all his members and faculties, all his organs and limbs, all his subtle senses and faculties, all his feelings and emotions. That is to say, just as among the Names there is a Greatest Name, so among the impresses of those Names there is a greatest impress, and that is man.

O you who considers himself to be a true man! Read yourself! You may otherwise be either animal-like or inanimate!

SECOND POINT

This points to an important mystery of Divine oneness. It is like this:

The relationship between man's spirit and his body is such that it causes all his members and parts to assist one another. That is, man's spirit is a commanding law from among the laws pertaining to creation –the manifestation of Divine will– which has been clothed in external existence, and is a subtle dominical faculty. Thus, in administering the parts of the body, and hearing their immaterial voices, and seeing their needs, they do not form obstacles to one another, nor do they confuse the spirit. Near and far are the same in relation to the spirit. They do not veil one another. If the spirit wishes, it can bring the majority to the assistance of one. If it wishes, it can know, perceive, and administer through each part of the body. Even, if it acquires great luminosity, it may see and hear through all the parts.

In the same way, *And God's is highest similitude*,⁴³ since the spirit, a commanding law of Almighty God, displays this ability in the body and members of man, who is the microcosm, surely, the boundless acts, the innumerable voices, the endless supplications, the uncountable matters in the universe, which is the macrocosm, will present no difficulty to the all-embracing will and absolute power of the Necessarily Existent One. They will not form obstacles to one another. They will not occupy that All-Glorious Creator, nor confuse Him. He sees them all simultaneously, and hears all the voices simultaneously. Close and distant are the same for Him. If He wishes, He sends all to the assistance of one. He can see everything and hear their voices through everything. He knows everything through everything, and so on...

THIRD POINT

Life has a most important nature and significant function, but since it has been discussed in detail in the Window on Life [the Twenty-Third Window] and in the Eighth Phrase of the Twentieth Letter, we refer you to those, and here only make the following reminder.

The impresses in life, which, intermingled, boil up in the form of emotions, point to numerous Names and essential Divine qualities. They act as mirrors reflecting the essential qualities of the Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent One in most brilliant fashion. But this is not the time to explain this mystery to those who do not recognize God or do not yet fully affirm Him, and so we here close this door...

⁴³ Qur'an, 16:60.

Thirty-Second Window

*It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth to make it prevail over all religion, and God is sufficient as witness.⁴⁴ * Say: O men! I am sent unto you all as the Messenger of God, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, there is no God but He; it is He Who gives life and death.⁴⁵*

This is the Window of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), the Sun of the skies of messengership, indeed, the Sun of Suns. Since it has been proved in the Thirty-First Word, the Treatise on the Ascension, in the Nineteenth Word, the Treatise on the prophethood of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), and in Nineteen Signs of the Nineteenth Letter, how luminous and evident is this most brilliant, large, and light-giving window, we shall think of those two Words, and that Letter and its Nineteenth Sign, and refer the word to them. For now we just say this:

Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), the living, articulate proof of Divine unity, demonstrated and proclaimed Divine unity throughout his life with the two wings of messengership and sainthood, that is, with a strength that comprised the consensus of all the prophets who had preceded him and the unanimity of the saints and purified scholars who came after him. He opened up a window onto knowledge of God as broad and brilliant and luminous as the World of Islam. Millions of purified and veracious scholars like Imam Ghazzali, Imam-i Rabbani, Muhyiddin al-'Arabi, and 'Abd al-Qadir Geylani look through that Window, and show it also to others. Is there any veil that can obscure a Window such as this? Can the person who accusingly does not look through this Window be said to possess reason? Come on, you say!

⁴⁴ Qur'an, 48:28.

⁴⁵ Qur'an, 7:158.

Thirty-Third Window

*Praise be to God, Who has revealed to His servant the Book, and has allowed no crookedness therein.⁴⁶ * Alif. Lam. Ra. A Book which We have revealed to you, in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness into light.⁴⁷*

Think of all the Windows we have mentioned as being a few drops from the ocean of the Qur'an, then you will be able to compare how many lights of Divine unity like the water of life the Qur'an contains. But even if the Qur'an, the source and origin and fountain of all those Windows, is considered in an extremely brief and simple manner, it still forms a most brilliant, luminous, comprehensive Window. To see how certain and shining and luminous this Window is, we refer you to the Treatise on the Miraculousness of the Qur'an, the Twenty-Fifth Word, and to the Eighteenth Sign of the Nineteenth Letter. And beseeching the Merciful Throne of the All-Glorious One, Who sent us the Qur'an, we say:

*Oh our Sustainer! Do not take us to task if we forget or unwittingly do wrong!⁴⁸
* Oh our Sustainer! Let not our hearts deviate now after You have guided us!⁴⁹ *
Oh our Sustainer! Accept this from us; indeed You are the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing!⁵⁰ * And turn unto us; for You are the Oft-Returning, Most Compassionate.⁵¹*

⁴⁶ Qur'an, 18:1.

⁴⁷ Qur'an, 14:1.

⁴⁸ Qur'an, 2:285.

⁴⁹ Qur'an, 3:8.

⁵⁰ Qur'an, 2:127.

⁵¹ Qur'an, 2:128.

Note

God willing, this Thirty-Third Letter of Thirty-Three Windows will bring to belief those without belief, strengthen the belief of those whose belief is weak, make certain the belief of those whose belief is strong but imitative, give greater breadth to the belief of those whose belief is certain, lead to progress in knowledge of God –the basis and means of all true perfection– for those whose belief has breadth, and open up more brilliant vistas for them. You cannot say, therefore, that “One window is enough for me,” because if your reason is satisfied, your heart wants its share as well, and so will your spirit want its share. Your imagination will also want its share of the light. The other Windows are also necessary, therefore, for each contains different benefits.

In the Treatise on the Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), it was primarily the believer who was addressed, while the atheist was in the position of listener. But in this treatise, it is the denier who is addressed, while it is the believer who is in the position of listener. This should be taken into consideration when looking at it.

Unfortunately, due to an important reason, this letter was written with extreme speed. It has also remained in the state of the first draft. There will certainly therefore be some irregularities and defects in the way it is expressed, which are due to me. I request of my brothers then that they look at it with tolerance, and correct it if they are able, and pray for my forgiveness.

Peace be on those who follow Guidance, and may those who follow their own desires be censured.

Glory be unto You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.⁵²

O God, grant blessings and peace to the one whom You sent as a Mercy to All the Worlds, and to his Family and Companions, and grant them peace. Amen.

⁵² Qur'an, 2:32.

Gleams

From between the Crescents of Ramadan and the Festival

Flowers from the Seeds of Reality

A short 'Mathnawi' and collection on the subject of belief
for the *Risale-i Nur* students

Bediuzzaman
S A I D N U R S I

NOTE

The reason this work entitled *Lemeat* (Gleams) is not about only one or two subjects like other collections (*diwan*), is that it was written in order to expound to a degree Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's previous work, *Hakikat Çekirdekleri* (Seeds of Reality), and in prose form; and it does not indulge in fancies and imaginings like other collections of poetry or in unbalanced emotion. It was written as scholarly instruction for some of his students, including his nephew who was assisting him, about the truths of the Qur'an and belief entirely in accordance with logic; it was a lesson about the Qur'an and belief. As Ustad himself said, and we understood the same thing, he had no propensity for verse and poetry, and did not occupy himself with them, portraying the meaning of *And We did not teach him poetry*.¹

Working every day for two or two and a half hours, this work was written in versified form in twenty days during Ramadan while Bediuzzaman was a member of the Darü'l-Hikmet and had numerous preoccupations. Although to write one page of verse is as difficult as writing ten of prose, and it was written in this short period of time, it was dictated 'extempore', without study, and was published without being changed or corrected. In our opinion it is a marvel on account of the *Risale-i Nur*. There has been no other versified collection of poetry that can be read in straightforward manner, as though it was prose, like this one.² God willing, this work will at some time be a sort of Mathnawi for the *Risale-i Nur* students. It is also a sort of index of the *Risale-i Nur*, which appeared ten years subsequently and was completed in twenty-three years; a sort of forerunner of the *Risale-i Nur*, giving the good tidings of its major parts.

The *Risale-i Nur* students,
Sungur, Mehmed Feyzi, Hüsrev

¹ Qur'an, 36:69

² NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION: While attempting to convey the meaning as faithfully as possible, the present translation has not attempted to reflect the versified aspects of the original. It is hoped that since, as was stated above, the work was written primarily to convey the author's ideas, the readers will benefit, despite the loss of many of the subtleties. [Tr.]

W A R N I N G

In accordance with the rule ‘A man is hostile to what he does not know,’ I have attached no importance to the rules of versification and rhyme, since I do not know them. I at no time wanted to transform reality to comply with the demands of versification, as though sacrificing lucidity to rhyme. I have clothed the most exalted truths in a rumpled dress in this unversified, unrhymed piece. Firstly, I did not know any better and was only thinking of the meaning. Secondly, I wanted to demonstrate my criticism of those poets who chip away and file the body to suit the clothes. Thirdly, a childish style such as this was preferred in order to busy the instinctual soul as well as the heart during Ramadan. But, my reader, I confess I made a mistake. Beware, do not do likewise! Don’t be distracted by the torn style and so be disrespectful towards its exalted truths!

S T A T E M E N T O F I N T E N T I O N

O Reader! I confess in advance that I have many complaints about my abilities in the art of writing and versification. Even now I cannot write my name properly. Nor have I made versification and metre a chapter of my life. But suddenly my mind was beset by a persistent desire for verse. There is an epic about the expeditions of the Companions called *Qawl-i Nawala Sisaban*. Its natural verse, like a hymn, was pleasing to my spirit. So I chose its form of verse, but in a way particular to myself. I wrote some poetry which resembled verse, but I took absolutely no pains with the metre. Anyone who wishes may read it easily as prose without thinking of the versification. Also it should be thought of as prose so that the meaning may be understood. In every section there is a pointer to the meaning. It should not depend on rhyme. A hat may be without a tassel, and metre may be without rhyme, and verse without rules. I think that if the words and versification attract the attention to themselves through their art, they busy the mind with themselves. It is better to be at odds and ends in order not to distract attention from the meaning.

My master in this work was the Qur’an; my book was life; the one I addressed, myself. And you, my reader, are my listener. The listener has no

right to criticize; he takes what pleases him, and ignores what he does not like. This work of mine proceeded from the effulgence of blessed Ramadan,³ so it is my hope that it will have an effect on the hearts of my brothers in religion, and their tongues will utter a prayer of forgiveness for me, or recite a *Fatiha*, God willing.

The Supplicant

*My demolished grave in which are piled up⁴
 Seventy-nine dead Said's⁵ with his sins and sorrows.
 The eightieth is a gravestone to a grave;
 Altogether they weep at Islam's decline.⁶
 Together with my gravestone and moaning grave of dead Said's
 I go forward to the field of tomorrow's future.
 I am certain that the skies of the future and Asia
 Will together surrender to Islam's clean, shining hand.
 For it promises the prosperity of belief;
 It affords peace and security to mankind.*

³ In fact, the date it was written is signified by the line, "*Najm adabin wulida li-hilalay Ramadan;*" that is, "A literary star born of the two crescents of Ramadan." It makes 1337. [1337 according to the Rumi calendar. According to the Hijri calendar, it was 1339. 1st Ramadan, 1339 fell on 8th May, 1921. –Tr.]

⁴ This line is his signature.

⁵ Since the body is renewed twice every year, it means that [each year] two Said's have died. Also, this year Said is in his seventy-ninth year. It means one Said has died every year, so that he will live to this date. [Bediuzzaman died in 1379 according to the Hijri calendar, and his grave was demolished and moved in 1380. –Tr.]

⁶ With a premonition of the future, he perceived its present state, twenty years later.

*In the Name of God, the Merciful,
the Compassionate.
All praise be to God, the Sustainer of All the Worlds,
and peace and blessings be upon Muhammad,
the Chief of His Messengers, and on all his Family and Companions*

Two Sublime Proofs of the Affirmation of Divine Unity

In its entirety the universe is a supreme proof; it declares God's glory and unity with both its manifest and its unseen tongues. Yes, it recites the unity of the Most Merciful in resounding voice, saying:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

All its particles and cells, all its parts and members, are tongues mentioning God. Together they declare in that resounding voice:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

The tongues are various, the voices of differing pitch, but they are united on one point: the mentioning of Him, saying:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

It is the macroanthropos; it mentions God in high-sounding voice, while all its parts and particles join their tiny voices to its mighty voice. In unison they declare:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

The world recites the Qur'an's verses within its circle for God's remembrance, the Qur'anic dawn spills forth its light. All beings with spirits express this idea:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

The Glorious Criterion of Truth and Falsehood, articulate proof of Divine unity, all of whose verses are truthful tongues, all its rays are flashes of belief. All together they declare:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

If you lay your ear on the breast of that Criterion, in its profoundest depths you will hear clearly a heavenly voice which recites:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

Its voice is utterly exalted, utterly serious, truly sincere, most familiar; it is utterly convincing, decked out with proofs. Repeatedly it declares:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

All six aspects are transparent in this enlightened proof: upon it is the shining stamp of miraculousness; in this shines the light of guidance, which says:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

Yes, beneath it is interwoven logic and elegant proof; on its right is its questioning the intelligence; the mind affirms it on its every side, saying:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

On its left is its calling on the conscience to testify; before it is pure good; its aim is happiness and prosperity. Its key is every instant:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

Its support beyond it is heavenly: unadulterated Divine revelation. All these six aspects are luminous, manifested in its constellations,

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!

Can any thieving suspicion, any stealthy doubt, any renegade delusion steal in on that resplendent castle with its walls of lofty Suras, every word of which is an angel uttering:

THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE!?

The Qur'an of Mighty Stature is an ocean affirming Divine unity. To take a single drop as an example, a single Sura: Sura al-Ikhlās.⁷ Only a single, slight allusion out of innumerable allusions: its six phrases, three negative, three positive, refute all kinds of ascription of partners to God, and prove seven aspects of the affirmation of Divine unity:

The First Phrase: Say, He is is unassociated. That is, it is defined as absolute. But within that definition is a specification:

THERE IS NO 'HE' BUT HE

This is an allusion to the experiential (*shuhud*) affirmation of Divine unity. If the reality-perceiving gaze becomes immersed in the affirmation of Divine unity, it says:

THERE IS NOTHING OBSERVED SAVE HE!

The Second Phrase: God, The One is an explicit affirmation of the unity of the Godhead. Reality declares in the tongue of truth:

⁷ Sura 112.

THERE IS NOTHING FIT TO BE WORSHIPPED SAVE HE!

The Third Phrase: *God, the Eternally Besought One.* This is the shell of two pearls of the affirmation of Divine unity. The first is the affirmation of the unity of Divine dominicality. Yes, it declares with the tongue of the order of the universe:

THERE IS NO CREATOR SAVE HE!

The second pearl is the affirmation of the unity of Divine Self-Subsistence. Yes, the universe in its entirety declares through the tongue of need for an effectual power, both for its coming into being and its continued existence:

THERE IS NO SELF-SUBSISTENT SAVE HE!

The Fourth Phrase: *He begets not.* This conceals the affirmation of the unity of Divine Glory, rejecting every sort of ascription of partners to God. It decisively refutes disbelief. That is, one who is subject to change or division, or who reproduces, can be neither God, nor Creator, nor Self-Subsistent.

The negation, *lam* (not), refutes the idea of offspring, or the blasphemy of paternity, and rejects them.

The greater part of man's misguidance has arisen from this association of partners with God at various times, in the form of 'the ten intellects,' or the angels, or Jesus (PUH) or Uzayr being Divine offspring.

The Fifth Phrase: *And neither is He begotten* indicates the affirmation of Divine pre-eternity and unity. Thus: one whose existence is not necessary or pre-eternal cannot be God. That is, one created in time, or born of physical matter, or descended from a progenitor, cannot be the universe's protector.

Causality, the worship of stars, idolatry, and Naturalism: these are all varieties of the association of partners with God, all stages of misguidance.

The Sixth: *And there is none like unto Him.* This is a comprehensive affirmation of Divine unity. That is, the negating *lam* infers that He has no like, partner, or peer either in His essence, or in His attributes, or in His actions.

In meaning, each of these six phrases is the result of the others, and the proof of the others; proofs in sequence, set in order in the fortress of this Sura.

That is to say, included in Sura al-Ikhlās appropriately to its stature are thirty suras in sequence and order, a source of their effulgent dawn.

None knows the Unseen save God

Causes Are Purely Apparent

Divine grandeur and dignity require that natural causes are but a screen to the Hand of Power in the mind's eye,
While Divine unity and glory require that natural causes draw back their hands and have no true effect in the works of power.⁸

Existence Is Not Restricted to the Physical World

The innumerable sorts of existence could not be restricted to this manifest world; it could not contain them;
The physical world but is a lace veil strewn over the irradiating worlds of the Unseen.

The Universality of the Pen of Power Proclaims Divine Unity

The skilful works of art found in every corner of creation clearly refute the creativity of causes;
The inscriptions of the Pen of Power in every point of creation necessarily reject the existence of intermediaries.

Nothing Can Exist Without Everything Else

Throughout the universe the mystery of co-operation is both concealed and pervasive; intimated in every part of it are mutual assistance and the reciprocal answering of needs.
Only an all-encompassing power could do this, and create the particle, situating it suitably to all its relations.
Every line and word of the book of the world is living; need drives each, acquaints one with the other.
Wherever they come from, they respond to the call for help; in the name of Divine unity, they meet with their surroundings.
Every living word has a face and eye that looks to all the sentences.

⁸ This means they should refrain from having any true effect, and not interfere in creation.

**The Sun's Motion Is For Gravity,
And Gravity Makes Stable the Solar System**

The sun is a fruit-bearing tree; it shakes itself so that the planets fall not, its fruits.
If it rested in silence, the attraction would cease; and they would weep through space, its ecstasies.

Small Things Are Tied To Big Things

Certainly, the one who created the mosquito created both the sun and the Milky Way;
And the one who ordered the flea's stomach clearly set in order the solar system;
While the one who gave sight to the eye and need to the stomach, definitely painted the sky's eye with light and spread a table of foods over the face of the earth.

There is a Miraculousness in the Order of the Universe

See, there is a miraculousness in the writing of the universe; if to suppose the impossible all natural causes were effective agents possessing will,
In utter impotence they would prostrate before its miraculousness, conforming to it and declaring:
"Glory be to You! We have no power! It is You Who is the All-Glorious Pre-Eternal Possessor of Power, O our Sustainer!"

Everything is Equal Before Divine Power

*Your creation and your resurrection are but as a single soul.*⁹

Divine power is essential, inherent; impotence cannot impinge on it.
There can be no degrees in it, obstacles cannot intervene in it. For power, there is no difference between universal and particular;
For everything is tied to everything else; one who cannot make everything can make nothing.

⁹ Qur'an, 31:28.

**Without Holding the Universe in One's Hand,
One Cannot Create a Particle**

To raise up the earth together with innumerable suns and stars and string them in order
like prayer-beads,
And to place them on the head and chest of endless space – no one's hand has the
strength for this.
There is nothing in the world that can claim to create anything.

Raising a Species to Life Is The Same as Raising to Life an Individual

Just as raising to life a fly drowsy with death-tainted sleep presents no difficulty to
Divine power,
So will neither the death of the earth nor its resurrection present any difficulty.
Nor will raising to life all beings with spirits present much problem.

Nature Is Divine Art

Nature is not the printer, it is the press;
It is not the inscriber, but the inscription; it is not the doer, it is the recipient; It is not the
source, but the pattern. It is not the orderer, it is the order;
It is not the power, but the law; it is a code of laws proceeding from the attribute of will;
it has no external reality.

The Conscience Recognizes God Through Attraction

In the conscience is an attraction, a being drawn; it is permanently drawn through the
attraction of an attractive force.
If the All-Beauteous One were to appear, if He were to be manifested permanently in
refulgent fashion without veil, conscious beings would be overcome by ecstasy.
Man's conscious nature testifies decisively to a Necessarily Existent, One of Glory and
Beauty;
It testifies through the ecstasy, and the attraction.

Innate Disposition Speaks the Truth

The innate disposition of things does not lie, whatever it says is the truth. The inclination to grow, the tongue of the seed, says: “I shall sprout and produce fruit..”, and what it says is proved true.

The desire for life murmurs in the depths of the egg: “With Divine permission I shall be a chick.” What it says is true.

If a handful of water intends to freeze inside an iron cannon-ball, when the temperature falls

The desire to expand within it says: “Expand! I need more space.” This command cannot be gainsaid.

Strong iron strives, but cannot prove it wrong; the water’s truthfulness and honesty split the iron.

All these inclinations are creational commands, Divine decrees. They are all natural laws, all manifestations of will.

Divine will directs all beings, in this way: all inclinations are conforming to the dominical commands.

The manifestation in the conscience is the same; attraction and ecstasy are two polished souls,

Two burnished mirrors, within which are reflected Sempiternal Beauty, and the light of belief.

Prophethood Is Essential For Mankind

Divine power does not leave the ant without leader, or bees without a queen;
It surely would not leave mankind without prophet or code of laws. In any case, the order of the world demands this.

The Ascension Was for the Angels What the Splitting of the Moon Was for Mankind

In truth, as a wonder, the angels saw an Ascension, a supreme sainthood within incontestable prophethood.

That shining Being mounted Buraq, became as lightning, and like the mansions of the moon observed the World of Light.

Just as for mankind scattered through this Manifest World, *And the Moon split*¹⁰ was an important miracle in the corporeal realm;

So for the dwellers in the Spirit World, the Ascension, that is, *Glory be to Him Who conveyed*,¹¹ was the greatest miracle.

¹⁰ Qur’an, 54:1.

¹¹ Qur’an, 17:1.

The Proof of the Confession of Faith Is Within It

The confession of faith contains two phrases, each of which testifies to the other and is its proof and evidence.

The former is an argument from cause to effect, and the latter an argument from effect to cause.

Life is a Manifestation of Unity

Life is a light of unity; it manifests unity in this realm of multiplicity. Yes, it manifests unity, unifying multiplicity and making it one.

Life appropriates all things to everything. While for a lifeless thing all things are non-existent.

Spirit is a Law Clothed in External Existence

Spirit is a luminous law clothed in external existence, endowed with consciousness.

Existent spirit is the brother, the companion, of intelligent law.

Like fixed and constant natural laws, spirit comes from the world of the Divine command and attribute of will.

Power clothes it in a being decked out with senses, attaches consciousness to its head, makes a subtle inner faculty the shell for that pearl.

If the Creator's power were to clothe the laws of species in external existence, each would become a spirit;

If it were to remove the spirit from the being and take the intelligence from its head, it would again become an undying law.

Existence Without Life Resembles Non-Existence

Both light and life disclose beings. See, if there is no light of life,

Existence is stained with non-existence; indeed, it is non-existence. Yes, a stranger, an orphan; if it is the moon, it is without life...

Thanks to Life, the Ant Is Greater than the Earth

If you were to weigh the ant on the scales of existence, the universe emerging from it could not be contained in our globe.
 In my view, the globe is living. But if according to what others suppose, you were to take the dead globe and place it in the opposite pan to the ant,
 It would not weigh even half its conscious head.

Christianity Will Submit To Islam

Christianity will either erupt or be extinguished. It will surrender and submit to Islam. It was split repeatedly until finally Protestantism appeared, but in that it did not find what would rectify it.
 The veil was again rent, it fell into absolute misguidance. However, a part of it approached the affirmation of Divine unity; in that it will find salvation.
 It is preparing to be split again.¹² If it is not extinguished, it will be purified and will join Islam.
 In this lies a mighty mystery to which the Glory of the Messengers alluded when he said: "Jesus will come and follow my Shari'a; he will be of my community."¹³

The Impossible May Appear Possible When Seen Indirectly

It is well-known, a large group of people looked for the crescent moon of the 'Id, but no one could see anything.
 Then an old man swore he had seen it. But what he had seen was a curved white eyelash. The eyelash had been his moon. But can one compare a curved eyelash and the crescent moon? If you have understood our parable:
 The motion of particles has become the eyelash over the reason; each particle, a dark eyelash blinding the materialist eye.
 It cannot see the One Who fashioned all these beings, so has been engulfed in misguidance.
 But can there be any comparison between that motion and the universe's Orderer? It is a compounded impossibility that the former be the latter!

¹² This alludes to the situation which resulted from the Great War. Indeed, it is an accurate prediction foretelling the Second World War.

¹³ .*Bukhari*, iv, 205; *Muslim*, i, 136; Bijuri, *Jawharat al-Tawhid*, 29, 232.

The Qur'an Requires Mirrors, Not Someone to Act on Its Behalf

Rather than proofs it is the sacredness of the source that drives the mass of the Umma and the ordinary people to conform to it and encourages them to obey it.

Ninety per cent of the Shari'a consists of the incontestable matters and essentials of religion, each of which is a diamond pillar.

Only ten per cent are matters open to interpretation, controversial, and secondary. Ninety diamond pillars may not be put in the purse of someone with ten gold pieces, nor be made to follow him.

The source of the diamond pillars is the Qur'an and Hadith. They are their property and should always be sought from them.

Books and interpretations of the Shari'a should be mirrors of the Qur'an, or telescopes. That Sun of Miraculous Exposition is not in need of shadows or anyone to act on its behalf!

The Falsifier of the Truth Looks On the False as True

Since by nature man is noble, he intentionally seeks the truth.

Sometimes he encounters falsehood, and supposing it to be the truth, stores it away in his heart...

Then when digging out the truth he involuntarily falls into misguidance; supposing it to be the truth, he commits it to his head.

The Mirrors of Divine Power Are Numerous

The power of the All-Glorious One has numerous mirrors. They open up windows each more transparent and subtle than the other, onto the World of Similitudes.

Various mirrors from water to air, air to ether, ether to similitudes, similitudes to spirits, spirits to time, time to imagination, and from imagination to thought, all represent the manifesting attributes. Turn your ear to the mirror of the air: a single word becomes millions!

The Pen of Power writes it out in extraordinary fashion, this mystery of reproduction...

Representation Is of Various Sorts

The image in a mirror may be of four sorts: either the identity alone; or the identity together with its particularities; or both the identity and the rays of the thing's nature; or both its true nature and its identity.

The images in the mirrors of luminous spirits are living and connected; expansive lights which even if not the same as the spirits, are not other than them.

If the sun had been living and its heat light, and its colours consciousness, it would have possessed the above qualities of the image in the mirror.

The key to this mystery is this: Gabriel is both at "the Lote-tree," and in the form of Dihya, and in the Prophet's company, and who knows in how many other places!

While God knows how many places Azra'il is present simultaneously, seizing the spirits of the dying.

At the same time, the Prophet appears to his community both in the visions of the saints, and in true dreams,

And at the resurrection of the dead he will meet with all through his intercession.

The 'substitutes' (*abdal*) of saints appear and are seen in numerous places at the same time.

All Those Qualified May Interpret the Law, But They May Not Be Lawgivers

Everyone capable who is qualified to practise *ijtihad*, may interpret matters for himself which are not incontestable; and they are binding on himself, but not on others. He cannot make laws and call on the Umma to conform to them. His ideas are from the Shari'a, but they are not the Shari'a. He may be a *mujtahid*, but he cannot be the Lawmaker.

The Shari'a is ratified through the consensus of the majority of scholars. The first condition for calling on others to accept an idea is the surmised acceptance of the majority.¹⁴

Such a call is otherwise innovation; it gets stuck in the gullet, never again to emerge!

¹⁴ *Zann-ı kabul-u cumhur*: "The surmised acceptance of the majority of *mujtahids* and learned authorities of the correctness of a judgement, that is, the strong possibility of their accepting it." [See, Abdullah Yeğin, *Yeni Lugat* (Istanbul: 1975), 782]. [Tr.]

The Light of Reason Comes From the Heart

Unenlightened illuminati should know that ideas cannot be enlightened without the light of the heart.

So long as the light of the mind and of the heart are not combined, there is darkness, producing oppression and ignorance. Darkness garbed in sham light.

If the white of the eye, which resembles daytime, is not combined with the black pupil, which resembles night, it is not an eye, it will see nothing. Unseeing sight is also worth nothing.

So, if the black depths of the heart are not present in the white of thought, the miscellaneous information in the mind will produce no knowledge or insight. There can be no reason without the heart.

Undigested Knowledge Should Not Be Imparted To Others

The truly learned guide is a sheep, not a bird; he gives his knowledge altruistically.

For the sheep gives its lamb digested, pure milk;

Whereas the bird gives its chick regurgitated vomit.

Destruction Is Easy; The Weak Person Is Destructive

The condition of the existence of the whole is the existence of all the parts; while its non-existence may be through the non-existence of one of its parts; so destruction is easy.

It is because of this that the impotent man never approaches anything positively and constructively; he always acts negatively, and is always destructive.

Force Should Always Serve Right

If the principles of wisdom, codes of government, laws of right, and rules of force do not aid and support one another,

They will be neither fruitful nor effective among the mass of the people. The marks of the Shari'a will be neglected and remain in abeyance.

The people will not rely on them in their affairs, nor have confidence in them.

Sometimes Opposites Comprise Their Opposites

Sometimes opposites conceal their opposites. In the language of politics, the word becomes the opposite of its meaning.

Tyranny has donned the cap of justice.¹⁵ Treachery has found a cheap dress in patriotism.

Jihad and war in God's way have been called revolt. Enslavement to the animal passions, the despotism of Satan, have been called freedom.

Things have become their opposites, forms have been transposed, names have been swapped, places have been exchanged.

Politics Based On Self-Interest Is Savagery

The politics of the present, which is founded on self-interest, is a rapacious beast.

If you feign affection for a ravenous beast, you will not attract its compassion but will whet its appetite.

Then it will turn on you, and both its claws and fangs will want their rent from you.

No Limit Has Been Placed On Man's Powers, So His Crimes Are Great

Unlike the animals, there is no natural limit on man's powers; the good and evil that proceed from them are infinite.

If the selfishness of this power and the egotism of that one are combined with pride and obstinacy, man commits such sins¹⁶ that up to the present mankind

Has found no name for them. Just as they indicate Hell's necessity, so their penalty can only be Hell.

And, for example, in order to justify just one of his lies, a man sincerely desires the downfall of Islam.

The present has shown that neither is Hell unnecessary, nor is Paradise won easily.

¹⁵ This speaks of the present as though seeing it.

¹⁶ This is a prediction about the future.

Sometimes Good Leads To Evil

While in reality the qualities of the upper classes should be the cause of humility and self-effacement, regrettably they have led to arrogance and oppression.

And while the helplessness of the poor and poverty of the common people should have led to the upper classes being gracious and compassionate, unfortunately it has resulted in the common people's abasement and servitude.

If honour and good result from something, it is offered to the leaders and upper classes. But any evils and bad results are divided among the common people and ordinary soldiers.

The honour won by a victorious tribe is expressed as adulation for "Hasan Agha," but any evils are poured on his soldiers as vituperation. A sorry evil among mankind!

The Absence of an Objective Strengthens Egotism

If people have no aim in mind, or they are overcome by forgetfulness or they feign forgetfulness, their minds turn in on themselves and revolve around them.

The ego strengthens, sometimes growing angry; it is not deflated, that it might become "we." Those who love themselves, love no one else.

The Life of Revolution Sprang From the Death of *Zakat* and the Life of Usury

The origin of all revolutions, all anarchy and corruption; the inciter and source of evils, depravity and abomination, are two phrases, or one or two words:

The first is this: "I'm full, so what is it to me if others die of hunger?" And the second: "You suffer so I can be comfortable. You work so that I can eat. The food's for me, labouring's for you."

There is one single cure for the fatal poison of the first phrase, that will cut it at the root and heal it:

That is the *Zakat* of the Shari'a, a pillar of Islam. In the second phrase is a tree of *Zaqqum*; what will extirpate it is the prohibition on usury and interest.

If mankind wants what's best and it loves life, it must impose *Zakat* and abolish usury and interest.

If Mankind Wants Life, It Must Put to Death Usury of Every Sort

Relations between the upper and lower classes have been severed. From below arise cries of revolution, shouts of revenge, screams of hatred and envy.

From above descend fires of tyranny and scorn, the burden of arrogance, the inciter of oppression.

What should arise from below are love, obedience, respect, and conformity. And from above should descend compassion and bounty, kindness and education.

If mankind wants these, it should embrace *Zakat* and drive out usury and interest.

Qur'anic justice stands at the door of the world telling usury and interest: "No entry! You have no right to enter! Return whence you came!"

Mankind did not heed this command, and received a blow;¹⁷ it should heed it now before receiving one more severe.

Mankind Smashed Slavery, So Will It Smash Wage-Earning

In a dream I said: the skirmishing between nations and states is making way for fierce battle between the social classes.

For in the era of slavery, man did not want slavery and smashed it, spilling his blood.

Now he has become a wage-earner; he bears that burden and will smash it too.

Mankind has grown old, having passed through five stages: primitive nomadism, slavery, captivity;¹⁸ now the wage-earning age has begun and is passing.

An Unlawful Way Leads to the Opposite of What Was Intended

The murderer may not inherit¹⁹ is an important principle: "Someone who pursues his goal by unlawful paths, generally pays the penalty of achieving the opposite of what he intended."

¹⁷ This is a powerful prediction. Mankind did not listen, and received an awesome blow with this Second World War.

¹⁸ See, Nursi, *Mektubat* (Ottoman ed.) (Istanbul n.p., n.d.), 455. Here, Bediuzzaman, ascribing it to "the materialist view of history," lists five main stages that mankind has passed through: i) primitive nomadism; ii) slavery; iii) captivity; iv) wage-earning; v) ownership and free enterprise. Concerning the third stage, he writes: "... (men) were saved from slavery, but in accordance with the tyrannical principle 'Might is right,' the powerful treated the weak as captives. Then as a result of numerous revolutions such as the French Revolution, that stage was transformed into the wage-earning stage..." [Tr.]

¹⁹ *Tirmidhi*, Fara'id, 18, No: 2109; *Ibn Maja*, Fara'id, 8, No: 2645; *Musnad*, i, 49; *Darimi*, Fara'id, 41.

Love of Europe was illicit, as well as blind imitation and familiarity. Its consequences and recompense were the tyrannical animosity of the beloved, and crimes. The loser and sinner will find neither pleasure nor salvation.

A Grain of Truth Is To Be Found in the Jabriyya and Mu'tazila

O seeker after truth! The Shari'a differentiates between the past and disasters, and the future and sins.

Divine Determining²⁰ is looked to in connection with the past and calamities, and the word is the Jabriyya's.

Man's accountability is considered concerning the future and sins; then the word is the Mu'tazila's. The Mu'tazila and Jabriyya are reconciled here.

Both these false schools contain a grain of truth; it has a particular place; it is false when made general.

Impotence and Anxiety Are For the Inadequate

If you want life, don't cling onto impotence in things for which there are solutions;
If you want ease of mind, don't become needlessly anxious about things for which there is no solution.

Sometimes Little Things Do Big Works

Under some conditions a small point²¹ raises its owner to the highest of the high...
Then there are circumstances when a slight movement sends down the doer to the lowest of the low...

For Some People A Moment Is A Year

Some people's innate capacities blossom in a instant, while others are gradual, unfolding little by little. Human nature contains both of these.

They look to conditions, and change accordingly. Sometimes they develop slowly.

Sometimes they are dark like gunpowder, then suddenly explode into luminous fire.

²⁰ Divine Determining (*Kader*), sometimes known as 'fate', 'destiny', or 'predestination'. For a detailed exposition, see, the Twenty-Sixth Word in the present volume. [Tr.]

²¹ That is, a diacritical point (*hareke*) in the Arabic or Ottoman script. [Tr.]

Sometimes one look transforms coal into diamonds. Sometimes a touch transmutes stone into elixir.

A single glance of God's Messenger in an instant transformed an ignorant nomad into an enlightened man of knowledge.

If you want an example, 'Umar before Islam, and 'Umar after Islam.

Compare the two: a seed, a tree. It instantaneously produced fruit, that look of Muhammad, the Prophetic effulgence.

Of a sudden he changed the coal-like natures of the Arabian people into diamonds, with their morals as black as gunpowder, they all became luminous lights.

Falsehoods Are Blasphemies

One grain of truth wipes out a million lies. O grain of reality razes a castle of dreams. Honesty is a grand principle, a lustrous jewel.

If for the truth to be uttered it is damaging, it resigns its place to silence; lies have no place, even if they have some use.

Everything you say should be true, all your pronouncements right, but you have no right to say all that is true.

One should be well aware of this, and take as one's principle: 'Take what is clear and untroubled, leave what is turbid and distressing.'

See the good side of things; you will have good thoughts. Know things to be good and think of them as good; you will find the pleasure in life.

In life, hope and thinking favourably of things are life itself. While to think the worst is despair, the destroyer of happiness and slayer of life.

A Dream Assembly

*Comparisons between the Shari'a and modern civilization,
and the genius of modern science and guidance of the Shari'a*

In a true dream on a Friday night at the beginning of the Armistice Period following the First War, I was asked by a vast assembly in a World of Similitudes:

"What will the Islamic world's situation be following its defeat?" I replied as the deputy for the present age, and they listened to me:

This State, which through undertaking from early times the religious obligation of jihad to maintain Islam's independence and uphold the Word of God, considered itself bound to sacrifice itself for the undivided unity of the Islamic world and saw itself as the standard-bearer of the Caliphate –

this State's, this Muslim nation's, past calamity will certainly bring about Islam's prosperity and freedom.

The disaster of the past will be made up for in the future. One who loses three and gains three hundred makes no loss. The zealous will transform its past into the future.

For wondrously this calamity has made unfold compassion, Islamic solidarity and brotherhood, the leaven of our lives, and has expedited the shaking, the destruction, of civilization.

Present-day low civilization will change form, its system will fall apart, then Islamic civilization will emerge.

Muslims will certainly be the first to enter it voluntarily. If you want a comparison, look closely at the principles of the civilization of the Shari'a and those of present-day civilization, and consider their results:

The principles of present-day civilization are negative. Its foundations and values are five negative principles. Its machinery is based on these.

Its point of support is force instead of right, and the mark of force is aggression and hostility, and their result is treachery.

Its goal is mean self-interest instead of virtue, and the mark of self-interest is rivalry and dispute, and their result, crime.

Its law of life is conflict instead of co-operation, and the mark of conflict is this: contention and mutual repulsion, and their result, poverty.

Its principle for relations between peoples is racialism, which flourishes through harming others and is nourished through devouring others.

The mark of negative nationalism and racialism is ghastly clashes, disastrous collisions, and their result, annihilation.

The fifth is this: its alluring service is to excite lust and the appetites of the soul and facilitate the gratification of whims, and their result is vice.

The mark of lust and passion is always this: they transform man into a beast, changing his character; they deform him, perverting his humanity.

If most of these civilized people were turned inside out, you would see their characters in the form of apes and foxes, snakes, bears, and swine.

They appear to the imagination in their pelts and skins! Examples of its products are these. The Shari'a, however, is the balance and equilibrium of the earth.

The mercy in the Shari'a comes from the skies of the Qur'an. The principles of Qur'anic civilization are positive. Its wheel of happiness turns on five positive principles:

Its point of support is truth instead of force, and the constant mark of truth is justice and balance. Security and well-being result from these, and villainy disappears.

Its aim is virtue instead of self-interest, and the mark of virtue is love and mutual attraction. Happiness results from these, and enmity disappears.

Its principle in life is co-operation instead of conflict and killing, and its mark is unity and solidarity, and the community is strengthened.

Its service takes the form of guidance and direction instead of lust and passion. And the mark of guidance is progress and prosperity in way befitting humanity;

The spirit is illumined and perfected in the way it requires. The way it unifies the masses repulses racialism and negative nationalism;

It establishes in place of them the bonds of religion, patriotic relations, ties of class, and the brotherhood of belief.

The mark of these bonds are sincere brotherhood, general well-being; defence in the case of external aggression. You have understood now the reason Islam was affronted, and did not embrace civilization.

Up to the present, Muslims have not entered this present civilization voluntarily, it has not suited them, moreover it has clamped on them fetters of bondage.

While it should be the cure for mankind, it has become poison. It has cast eighty per cent into penury and misery, and produced a false happiness for ten per cent.

The remaining ten per cent it has left uneasily between the two. Commercial profits have been the tyrannical minority's. But true happiness is happiness for all;

Or at least salvation for the majority. The Qur'an, revealed as a mercy for mankind, only accepts civilization of this kind,

Happiness for all, or at least for the majority. In its present form the passions are unrestricted, caprice too is free; it is an animal freedom.

The passions dominate, caprice too is despotic; they have made unessential needs essential, and banished comfort and ease.

In primitive life, a man was in need of four things, civilization has put him in need of a hundred, and impoverished him.

Lawful labours are insufficient to meet the cost. This has driven mankind to trickery and the unlawful. It is on this point that it corrupted morality.

It bestowed wealth and glitter on society and mankind, but made the individual immoral and indigent. There are numerous witnesses to this.

This malignant civilization vomited all at once the combined savagery and crimes, all the cruelty and treachery, of former centuries, and its stomach is still queasy.²²

The Islamic world's holding back from it is both meaningful and noteworthy. It has been loath to accept it, and has acted coldly.

Yes, the distinguishing quality of the Divine light of the Illustrious Shari'a is independence and self-sufficiency.

²² This means it will vomit in even more violent fashion. Yes, it vomited so terribly in the two World Wars that it filthied the faces of the land, sea, and air, staining them with its blood.

It will not give up that quality, that light of guidance, so that the genius of Rome, the spirit of civilization, should dominate it.

The guidance of the former cannot combine with the philosophy of the latter, nor be grafted onto it, nor follow it.

The Shari'a has nourished the compassion and dignity of belief in the spirit of Islam. The Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition has taken the truths of the Shari'a in its shining hand;

Each is a Staff of Moses in that shining hand. In the future that sorcerer civilization will prostrate in wonderment before it.

Now, note this: Ancient Rome and Greece were two geniuses; twins from a single stock. One fanciful, the other materialist.

Like oil and water, they never combined. It needed time, civilization worked at it too, and so did Christianity, but none was successful at combining them.

Both preserved their independence. And now it is as though those two spirits have changed their bodies; one has become German, the other, French.

They experienced a sort of metempsychosis. O my dream-brother! This is what time has shown. Like two genius oxen those twins rejected any moves to combine them; They still are not reconciled. Since they are twins, they are brothers and friends, companions in progress; but they fought and never made peace.

How could it be that with its different source, origin, and place of appearance, the light of the Qur'an and guidance of the Shari'a should be reconciled with the genius of Rome, the spirit of modern civilization, and should join and combine with it?

Their origins are different: guidance descended from the heavens, genius emerged from the earth. Guidance works in the heart, and works the mind.

Genius works in the mind and confuses the heart. Guidance illumines the spirit, making it seeds sprout and flourish; dark Nature is illumined by it.

Its potentiality for perfection suddenly advances; it makes the carnal soul a docile servant; it gives aspiring man an angelic countenance.

As for genius, it looks primarily to the soul and physical being, it plunges into Nature, making the soul an arable field; the animal potentialities develop and flourish;

It subjugates the spirit, dessicating its seeds; it shows up satanic features in mankind. But guidance gives happiness to life, it spreads light in this life and the next; it exalts mankind.

Antichrist-like²³ genius, blind in one eye, sees only the domain of this life; it is materialist and worships this world. It turns men into beasts.

Yes, deaf genius worships Nature, it empowers blind force. But guidance

²³ There is a subtle indication in this.

recognizes conscious art and looks to purposeful power. Genius draws a curtain of ingratitude over the earth; guidance scatters the light of thanks.

It is because of this that genius is deaf and blind, while guidance is hearing and seeing. In the view of genius, the bounties of the earth are ownerless booty;

It provokes the desire to seize and steal them thanklessly, to savagely snap them off from Nature.

In the view of guidance, the bounties scattered over the breast of the earth and face of the universe are the fruits of mercy; it sees a gracious hand beneath every bounty, and has it kissed in gratitude.

I cannot deny that there are numerous virtues in civilization, but they are neither the property of Christianity, nor the invention of Europe.

Nor are they the product of this century; they are common property, produced by the conjunction of minds and ideas, from the laws of the revealed religions, out of innate need,

And particularly from the Islamic revolution brought about by the Shari'a of Muhammad. No one can claim ownership of them.

The leader of the Dream Assembly asked another question:

“Man of the present century! Calamities are always the result of treachery and the cause of reward. Divine Determining dealt a blow and issued its decree.

“With which of your actions did you issue the fatwa to both Divine Decree and Determining so that they decreed this calamity and gave you a beating?”

I replied: The error of the majority is always the cause of general disasters. Mankind's misguided ideas, Nimrod-like obduracy, Pharaoh-like pride, Swelled and swelled on the earth till it reached the skies. It upset too the sensitive mystery of creation.

It caused to descend from the heavens the plague and storm of the last war's quakes; it caused a heavenly blow to be visited on the infidel. That is, the calamity was the calamity of all mankind.

The joint cause, inclusive of all mankind, were the misguided ideas arising from Materialism. Bestial freedom, the despotism of the appetites.

The reason for our share was our neglect and giving up of the pillars of Islam. For the Exalted Creator wanted one hour out of the twenty-four.

He demanded of us, and for us, only one hour for the five daily prayers, and commanded this. But out of laziness we gave them up, neglected them due to heedlessness.

So we received the following punishment: He made us perform prayers of a sort these last five years by constant twenty-four hour drill and hardship, being driven on and made to strive.

He also wanted of us one month's fasting a year, but we pitied ourselves, so in atonement He compelled us to fast for five years.

As *Zakat*, He wanted either a fortieth or a tenth of the property He had given us, but out of stinginess we did wrong: we mixed the illicit with our property, and did not give it voluntarily.

So He had our accumulated *Zakat* taken from us, and saved us from what was unlawful.

The deed fitted the punishment. The punishment fitted the deed.

Righteous acts are of two sorts: one positive and voluntary, the other negative and enforced. All pains and calamities are good works; but negative and enforced. The Hadith offered consolation.²⁴

This sinful nation took its ablutions with its blood; it repented actively. As an immediate reward, four million, a fifth of this nation, were raised to the degree of sainthood. It gave them the ranks of martyrdom and ghazis; it obliterated the sin.

The lofty dream assembly appreciated these words.

I awoke suddenly; rather, with awakening I went to sleep. I think the waking state is a dream and the dream state a sort of wakefulness.

There was this age's deputy, and here is Said-i Nursi!

The Ignorant Suppose Metaphors To Be Fact

If figures of speech fall from the hand of knowledge to that of ignorance, they are transformed into fact, opening the door to superstition.

When small I saw an eclipse of the moon. I asked my mother, and she said: "A snake has swallowed it." I asked her: "Why is it visible, then?" She said: "The snakes there are semi-transparent." She thought a metaphor was reality. At a Divine command, on the earth interposing between "the head" and "the tail", which are the points of intersection of the moon and circuit of the sun, the moon is eclipsed. The two hypothetical arcs were called "Tinnin", it was named with a fanciful simile. Tinnin means the Serpent.²⁵

Exaggeration Is Implied Disparagement

Whatever you describe, describe it as it is. In my opinion, exaggerated praise is implied disparagement.

Favour greater than Divine favour is not favour...

²⁴ See, Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, vi, 383; Suyuti, *al-Khasa'is al-Kubra*, ii, 477-8; *Musnad*, iv, 195-6. See also, *Bukhari*, i, 167.

²⁵ For a fuller explanation, see, Nursi, *The Flashes Collection* (Istanbul: Sözlür Publications, 1995), 128.

Fame Is Tyrannical

Fame is a despot; it ascribes to its owner the property of others.
 As in the famous Nasreddin Hoja joke, his *Zakat*, that is, one tenth, is his true property...
 The imaginary renown of Rustam-i Sistani plundered an age of the glories of Iran.
 That famous fancy swelled with plunder and pillage, it was mixed with superstition, and
 threw down mankind.

Those Who Suppose Religion and Life Can Be Separated Are the Cause of Disaster

The mistake of the Young Turks: they did not know our religion is the basis of life; they
 thought nation and Islam were different.
 They imagined civilization would endure and always be dominant, and saw happiness
 and prosperity to lie within it.
 Now time has shown civilization's system to be corrupt and harmful;²⁶ incontrovertible
 experience has taught us this.
 Religion is the very life of life, its light and its basis. This nation will be revived only
 through the revival of religion. Islam understood this.
 Contrary to other religions, our nation has progressed to the extent we adhered to our
 religion. And it has declined to the degree we neglected it.
 This is an historical fact which occurred due to our feigned forgetfulness.

Death Is Not Terrifying As Is Imagined

Misguidance is misleading, it makes death terrifying. Death is a change of clothes, or a
 change of abode. It removes man from dungeon to garden.
 Whoever wants life should want martyrdom. The Qur'an describes the martyr's life.
 Martyrs, who do not experience the pangs of death, all know themselves to be alive
 and see themselves thus.
 But they find their new lives to be purer. They do not suppose they have died. Note
 carefully what their relation to the dead is, it is like this:
 In a dream two men are walking in a beautiful garden holding every sort of delight. One
 knows it is only a dream and receives no pleasure.
 It does not delight him; it fills him with regret. The other one thinks it is the waking
 world, and receives true pleasure; it is real to him.

²⁶ This is an accurate prediction; it looks to irreligious, tyrannical civilization, in the throes of death

The dream is the shadow of the similitude, and the similitude is the shadow of the Intermediate Realm. It is due to this that their principles resemble each other.

**Politics Are a Satan in the World of Ideas;
One Should Seek Refuge With God From Them**

The politics of civilization sacrifice the minority for the comfort of the majority. Indeed, the despotic minority sacrifices the majority of people for themselves.

Qur'anic justice would not take the life of a single innocent, spill their blood, or sacrifice him even for all mankind, let alone the majority.

The verse, *If anyone slew a person –unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land– it would be as if he slew the whole people*²⁷ lays two mighty mysteries before the eyes.

One is pure justice. This sublime principle deems equal the individual and the community, the person and mankind; Divine justice sees no difference between them; this is a constant Sunna.

An individual may sacrifice his rights himself, but they cannot be sacrificed otherwise, even for all mankind.

The cancelling of his rights, or the spilling of his blood, or the smearing of his name is equal to the cancelling of the rights of all humanity, or the besmirching of it, and is its equivalent.

The second mystery is this: if a selfish man murders an innocent out of greed or passion, he will lay waste the whole world if he can, should it be an obstacle to his desires, and wipe out all humanity.

**Weakness Emboldens the Enemy;
God May Try His Servants, but They May Not Try Him**

O fearful, weak one! Your fear and weakness are in vain and cause you harm; they embolden outside influences and attract them.

O you who suffers from doubts and delusions! Definite benefits may not be sacrificed for imaginary harms. What you need is action; the result is with God.

One may not interfere in God's concerns. He draws His servant to the arena of trial and says: "If you do that, I'll do this."

²⁷ Qur'an, 5:32.

But the servant can never try God. If he says: “God should help, so I’ll do this,” he is overstepping his mark.

Satan said to Jesus: “Since it is He Who does everything; His determining does not change. Throw yourself down off the mountain and let’s see what happens to you.”

Jesus replied: “Confound you! God’s servants cannot put Him to the test!”

Don’t Overdo It In Things You Like

The cure for one ailment merely exacerbates another; the antidote becomes poison. If the cure is taken to excess, it is the cause of ill, and is fatal.

The Eye of Obstinance Supposes an Angel To Be Satan

Obstinance is this: if Satan helps someone, he calls him “an angel” and calls down blessings on him.

But if he sees an angel on the opposing side, he supposes it to be Satan in a different guise, and calls down curses on the angel.

After Finding What’s Right, Don’t Cause Dispute for the Sake of Something Better

O seeker after truth! If there is consensus concerning what is right and dispute concerning what is better, sometimes what is right is better than what is better. And sometimes what is good is better than what is better.

Islam Is Peace and Reconciliation, It Wants No Dispute or Hostility Within

O World of Islam! Your life lies in unity, and if you want unity, your guiding principle should be this:

It should be “This is true,” rather than “This alone is true.” And “This is the best,” rather than “This is the only good way.”

All Muslims should say about his own school and way: “This is true, I don’t interfere with others. If others are good, mine is the best.”

They should not say: “This is the only true way, the others are all false. Only

mine is good, the others are all wrong and unpleasant.”

The exclusivist mentality arises from love of self. It later becomes a sickness and leads to dispute.

The multiplication of ills and cures is right, and right too multiplies. The increase in the varieties of needs and foods is right, and right becomes various.

The increase in capacities and education is right, and right too multiplies. A single substance is both poison and the antidote.

The truth is not fixed in secondary matters; it is relative and compound in accordance with different temperaments.²⁸

The temperaments of the authoritative scholars imparted a share to it, and it was realized and compounded accordingly; the founders of the schools made judgements in absolute, unspecific terms.

They left it to the various temperaments and their leanings to specify the limits of their schools; but bigoted attachment to them was the cause of generalization.

The partisanship arising from this led to dispute. The profound rifts between the social classes before Islam,

And their extraordinary distance from each other, demanded a great many prophets at any one time, and a variety of sacred laws, and numerous schools.

Islam caused a revolution among mankind, and men drew closer to each other. It reduced to one the sacred law, and there was one Prophet.

But the levels of men were not the same, so the schools of law multiplied. When a single training and instruction is sufficient, the schools will unite.

**There is Great Wisdom in the Creation and Combining of Opposites:
The Sun and a Minute Particle Are Equal in the Hand of Power**

O Brother with an alert heart! Power is manifested in the combining of opposites. Do you know why there is pain in pleasure, evil within good, ugliness within beauty, harm within benefit, revenge within beneficence, fire within light?

It is so that the relative truths may be established; that there may be many things within one thing, and that they may find existence and become apparent.

Swift motion makes a point into a line. Its being spun at speed makes a flash of light, a luminous circle.

²⁸ For further explanation, see, the Conclusion of the Twenty-Seventh Word, pp. 500-2 of the present work. [Tr.]

The function of relative truths is that seeds should sprout in this world. They form the mud of the universe, the links in its order, the connections between its inscriptions. In the hereafter these relative matters will be truths. The degrees of heat are caused by the intervention of cold.

The degrees of beauty come about through the intervention of ugliness. The cause becomes the reason.

Light is indebted to darkness, pleasure is indebted to pain; there is no health without illness.

If there was no Paradise, perhaps Hell would not be torment. It cannot be without extreme cold. If there was no extreme cold, it would not burn.

The Undying Creator demonstrated His wisdom in the creation of opposites. His majesty became apparent.

That Eternal All-Powerful One displayed His power in the combining of opposites. His tremendousness was manifested.

Since Divine power is a necessary inherent quality, and necessarily essential to that Pre-Eternal One, it can comprise no opposites, impotence cannot intervene in it, there can be no degrees in it, nothing can be difficult for it.

The sun became a niche for the light of His power. The surface of the sea became a mirror to the light of the niche, the dewdrops' eyes all became mirrors.

The sun the broad surface of the sea reflects is reflected also by the droplets in the creases of its frowns; the tiny eye of the dewdrop also shines like a star.

They hold the same identity: in the view of the sun, the dewdrop and the sea are the same, its power makes them equal; the pupil of the dewdrop's eye is a tiny sun.

The magnificent sun also is a tiny dewdrop; the pupil of its eye is a light received from the Sun of Power; it is the moon to that power.

The heavens are an ocean; at the breath of the Most Merciful, droplets undulate in the creases of its frowns, which are the stars and suns.

Power was manifested, it scattered coruscating gleams on those droplets. Every sun a droplet, every star a dewdrop, each the likeness of a flash.

The drop-like sun is a tiny reflection of that manifestation's effulgence. It makes its burnished soul pearl-like to that glass gleam. The dewdrop stars shine

In its delicate eye, it gives a place to the flash, the flash becomes a lamp, its eye becomes glass, its lamp is lit up.

**If You Have Any Qualities, They Should Remain in the
Dust of Concealment, So They May Flourish**

O man of famous quality! Don't be oppressive by displaying your qualities; if they remain in concealment, you'll be a source of bounty and blessing for your brothers. If you appear beneath all your brothers, and there is the possibility of its being you, it will attract respect to each of them.

But if you emerge from concealment and display yourself, although when beneath them you were revered, above, you become a tyrant. There you were a sun, here you cast shadows.

You belittle your brothers, and lose them their respect. That means, to display one's qualities and one's individuality is doubly tyrannical. If it is thus, that is how you will appear.

So what place remains for lying artificiality and hypocrisy, the 'personality,' and fame? This is a profound mystery, springing from Divine wisdom and perfect order.

An exceptional individual draws the veil of concealment over himself within his species or group, thus affording it value in the view of others, and making it appreciated.

Examples for you: saints among mankind, the appointed hour within a lifetime are unknown, indefinite. Concealed within Friday is the hour prayers are accepted.

Hidden in Ramadan is the Night of Power. Concealed in the Most Beautiful Names is the elixir of the Greatest Name.

It is their indefiniteness that makes these examples awesome, this mystery, beautiful; they are proved through concealment.

For example, there is a balance in the appointed hour being vague; it holds true, whatever your circumstances.

The two pans of fear and hope, working for the next world or for this; imagined permanent existence imparts a pleasure to life.

Twenty years of uncertain life are preferable to a thousand-year lifetime the end of which is specified. For after half of it had passed, every passing hour you would be taking another step towards the gallows.

Your suffering would increase proportionately; it would afford you no solace; you would find no peace.

It Is Mistaken To Feel Mercy and Anger Greater Than God's

Greater mercy than God's may not be bestowed. Greater wrath than God's may not be visited on something.

So leave matters to the All-Just and Compassionate One, for to be more compassionate causes you pain, and to be more wrathful is wrongful.

Wastefulness Leads To Squandering, Squandering Leads To Poverty

My wasteful brother! Two morsels which are the same as regards nutrition, one costing one *kurush*, the other, costing ten,
 Are equal both before they enter the mouth, and after they have passed down the gullet.
 Only for a few seconds in the mouth do they give pleasure to the heedless.
 They have different tastes, which always deceives it, that sense of taste; it is a doorkeeper and inspector for the body and stomach.
 The taste's effect is negative, not positive; its function, only to tip the doorkeeper and gratify it; to give pleasure to that senseless one!
 To confuse it in its true duty, to give it eleven *kurush* rather than one, is a satanic habit.
 The most prodigal of wastefulness, the worst form of extravagance, is one sort, one way: so don't seek it.

The Sense of Taste Is a Telegraphist; Don't Seduce It By Gratifying It²⁹

Divine dominicality, wisdom, and grace, made two centres with the mouth and nose, placing within them a frontier post, and correspondents.
 In the microcosm, God made the blood-vessels telephones, and the nerves, telegraphs.
 That True Provider made the sense of smell a telephone, and posted the sense of taste to the telegraph. Out of His mercy, he put an instruction sheet on the food: flavour, and colour, and smell.
 Thus, these three attributes are proclamations, invitations, permits, and heralds on the part of the food; with them it invites the needy and its customers.
 He gave taste, sight, and smell to the feeding animals as tools. He adorned the foods with various decorations, then soothed their flighty breasts, and attracted the indifferent by exciting them.
 When the food enters the mouth, the sense of taste immediately sends telegraphs to every part of the body. The sense of smell telephones, giving information about the types of foods.
 These senses act according to all the different needs of the different animals receiving food; the necessary preparations are made, or it receives a refusal.
 Then they throw it out, and spit it in your face! Since they have been charged with this by wisdom, don't seduce them with pleasure. Don't deceive them by gratifying them.

²⁹ This piece forms the seed of *İktisad Risalesi* [The Nineteenth Flash]. Indeed, he expressed in ten lines the ten-page *Treatise On Frugality* before it came into existence.

For then they will forget what true appetite is; false appetite will be born; it will strike your head, bringing illness and disease as penalties.

True pleasure springs from true appetite, true appetite from true need; this pleasure is ample for king and beggar alike.

Moreover, a *dinar* and a *dirhem* are equal; the pleasure jumbles them together, soothing the pain.

Like Intention, Point of View May Transform Habitual Actions Into Worship

Note this point! Just as through intention, permissible habitual actions may become worship, so according to the point of view, the physical sciences may become knowledge of God.

If you study and reflect, that is, if you look at things as signifying one other than themselves,³⁰ and in respect to art: “How beautifully the Maker made these, how well He did it!” instead of: “How beautiful it is;”

If you look from this point of view at the universe, the inscriptions of the Pre-Eternal Inscraper, His order and wisdom, and flashes of purpose and art will illuminate your doubts;

The sciences of the universe will become knowledge of God. But if you look at things as signifying themselves from the point of view of Nature, saying: “The thing looks to itself alone,”

If you look thus at the universe, whatever the extent of your scientific knowledge, it will be ignorance. Wretched truths become worthless in worthless hands. The witnesses to this are many.

At This Time the Shari’a Does Not Permit Us Affluence

When tasty foods call one, one should say: “It’s as though I ate it.” For someone who made this his rule, did not eat a mosque!³¹

Formerly, most Muslims did not go hungry; they enjoyed comfortable living to an extent. Now, however, most have declined into penury, and the Shari’a no longer permits the taking of pleasure.

³⁰ ‘*Mana-yı Harfi:*’ the Qur’anic view that things bear the meaning of one other than themselves, that is, point to their Maker, and His Names and attributes, like a letter or word signifies its writer, as opposed to ‘*Mana-yı İsmi,*’ the view that things signify themselves alone. [Tr.]

³¹ There is a mosque in Istanbul called ‘Sanki Yedim’ (It is as though I ate it). The man who said “It is as though I ate it” saved himself from his appetites and built the mosque with the proceeds.

The subsistence of the mass of Muslims, and most innocents, is simple. It is a thousand times preferable to follow them in their simple sustenance
 Than to resemble the extravagant minority, or the few profligates, in their luxurious living.

Sometimes the Absence of Bounty Is Bounty

Memory is a bounty, but for an immoral person at times of misfortune, forgetfulness is preferable.
 Forgetfulness is also a bounty; it allows one to suffer the pains of only one day; it makes one forget the accumulated sorrows.

All Misfortunes Have Sides Which Are Bounty

O you smitten by misfortune! Within the misfortune is a bounty. Look closely and you will see it!
 Just as in everything is a degree of heat, so in every calamity a degree of bounty is to be found. Think of a worse calamity, then see the extent of the bounty in the lesser one, And offer abundant thanks to God. For if you're scared by exaggerating it, and whine and complain, it will grow.
 And as it grows it will worsen. If you are anxious, it will double. Its image in your heart will turn into fact.
 It will learn from reality, then turn on you and start striking your heart...

Don't Appear Important, Or You'll Be Put Down

O you with an inflated ego and conceited head! You should understand this rule: in the social building of the human community, everyone has a window, called a rank, in which to see and be seen.
 If the window is larger than a person's stature and worth, he will stretch and lengthen through pride. But if the window is smaller than his stature and aspiration, he will bend and bow down out of modesty.
 In the mature and perfected, the measure of greatness is smallness. While in the faulty, the measure of littleness is bigness.

If Qualities Change Places, Their Natures Change

One quality... different places, one face. It is sometimes a demon, sometimes an angel, sometimes upright, sometimes wicked; some examples are these:

If an attribute which for the weak in the face of the strong is considered to be dignity, is found in the strong, it is pride and arrogance.

If an attribute which for the strong before the weak is considered to be humility, is found in the weak, it is abasement and hypocrisy.

In his office, a person of authority's gravity is dignity, and his humility abasement. But in his house, his humility is modesty, and his gravity, arrogance.

Tolerance in someone speaking on his own account is patriotism, and self-sacrifice, a quality, a good deed.

But if the person is speaking on account of others, his tolerance is treachery, and self-sacrifice, an attribute, a wicked act.

In setting up the preliminaries reliance on God is laziness. But handing over to Him in the reaping the consequences is the reliance taught by the Shari'a.

Contentment with one's lot in respect of the fruits of one's labour is praiseworthy contentment, and strengthens the desire to work.

But sufficing with existent goods is not desirable contentment, but lack of aspiration. There are numerous other examples.

The Qur'an mentions absolute good works and taqwa. By its indefiniteness, it hints at the existence of degrees; its conciseness is a detailed explanation; its silence, an expansive word.

Both 'Truth Will Prevail,' and Its Consequences, Are Intended

Friend! One time, a questioner asked: "Since 'truth will prevail' is the truth, why have the infidel prevailed over the Muslim, and force over right?"

I replied: Consider these four points and your difficulty will be resolved. The first point is this. It is not necessary that every means of every truth is true.

Similarly, not every means of every falsehood has to be false. This result emerges: a means which is false prevails over a true means. In which case, a truth is overcome by a falsehood. It occurs temporarily and indirectly; not essentially or permanently.

However, finally, it is always still the truth's. Force possesses a truth, there is an underlying meaning in its creation. The second point is this:

While it is obligatory that all attributes of all Muslims are Muslim, outwardly it is not always thus.

Similarly, not all the attributes of all infidels have to be infidel and to arise from their unbelief.

So too, all the attributes of all sinners do not always have to be sinful and have arisen from their sinfulness.

This means an infidel's Muslim attribute prevails over a Muslim's unlawful attribute. Indirectly, the infidel prevails over him.

Furthermore, in this world the right of life is general and all-embracing. It is a universal mercy that has a meaningful manifestation, a wise inner purpose, which unbelief does not impede.

The third point is this: two of the All-Glorious One's attributes of perfection, two 'legislative' manifestations: the determining through His choice, which proceeds from the attribute of Will, and that is the Shari'a of Creation;

And the well-known Shari'a, which proceeds from the attribute of Speech.

Just as there is compliance and rebellion in the face of the commands of the latter, so there is compliance and rebellion before the creational commands.

The reward and punishment for the former is received mostly in the hereafter, while the penalties and rewards of the latter are suffered mostly in the realm of this world.

For example, the reward of patience is victory. The penalty for laziness is poverty; and the reward of toil is wealth.

The reward of constancy is victory. The penalty of poison is illness, the reward of its antidote is health.

Sometimes the injunctions of both Shari'as are included in a single thing; it has faces looking to both.

That means obedience to the creational command is a truth. Obedience prevails; rebellion in the face of the injunction is a false stand.

If a truth has been the means to a falsehood, when it prevails, it will have been the means to a falsehood. Indirectly, a truth is defeated by a falsehood, but not essentially.

This means that "the truth prevails" means "essentially." Also, the end is intended, and the restriction of viewpoint is meant.

The fourth point is this: a truth remained unexpressed, or powerless, or adulterated, or convoluted. It needed to be expressed and opened up, or given fresh strength.

In order to improve and gild it, falsehood had to be temporarily imposed on it, in order to assay that ingot of truth.

Then it could emerge pure and unadulterated from its origins. Even if falsehood prevails in this world, it cannot win the war. "*The future belongs to the God-conscious*"³² will strike them a blow!

So falsehood is defeated. The mystery of "truth prevails" inflicts punishment on it; see, truth prevails!

³² Qur'an, 7:128.

A Few Social Principles

If you want some principles for society: unequal justice is not justice.
 Resemblance is an important reason for contrariety. Mutual proportion is the basis of solidarity.
 Small-mindedness is the source of pride. Pusillanimity is the mine of arrogance.
 Impotence is the source of opposition.
 Curiosity is the teacher of knowledge. Need is the master of progress. Distress is the teacher of dissipation.
 Thus, the source of dissipation is distress. As for distress, its mine is despair and pessimism.
 Misguidance springs from ideas, darkness stems from the heart, wastefulness pertains to the body.

Women Left Their Homes and Led Mankind Astray

When men become amiable through following their fancies, women become masculine by being impudent.³³
 Low civilization took womankind out of their homes, and turning them into common goods, destroyed the respect in which they were held.
 The Shari'a of Islam mercifully invites them back to their homes. It is there they are respected, in their homes they are comfortable, in family life.
 Cleanliness is their adornment; their good character is their splendour; their gracious beauty is their chastity; their compassion, their perfection; their children, their relaxation.
 With so many tools of corruption, one has to be as strong and unyielding as steel to withstand them.
 A beautiful woman entering a gathering of brothers, arouses veins of hypocrisy, rivalry, envy, and selfishness. Slumbering desires suddenly awaken.
 Increased freedom for women led to a sudden unfolding of bad morality in mankind. The represented forms of little smiling corpses have played a large role in making the evil-polluted perverse spirit of modern man what it is.³⁴
 The prohibited statue is either petrified tyranny, or embodied lust, or personified hypocrisy. Or it is a talisman, attracting those evil spirits.

³³ This is the basis of *Tesettür Risalesi* [The Twenty-Fourth Flash, Treatise On Islamic Dress for Women]. Twenty years later, a court of law forever shamed itself and its judges by making it the pretext for the author's conviction.

³⁴ Just as to look lustfully at a dead woman shows an awesomely degenerate soul, so to look at a beautiful picture of an unfortunate female corpse needy for compassion, extinguishes the elevated sentiments of the spirit.

The Scope of Divine Power Rejects Intermediaries and Helpers

From the point of view of the comprehensive effectiveness of the disposals of the All-Glorious and Powerful One's power, our sun is like a particle.
 There are vast disposals of power in a single realm of beings. Take the gravity between two particles,
 Then go and put it beside the gravity between the Sun of Suns and the Milky Way.
 Bring an angel whose load is a snowflake to the radiant angel who holds the sun; put a needle-fish beside a whale;
 Conceive at once of the vast manifestation of the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One of Glory,
 His perfect art in things from the smallest to the greatest;
 Customary matters like gravity and laws, fluid intermediaries, are only names for the manifestation of His power and the disposal of His wisdom;
 They signify Him alone; they can have no other meaning; think of them together, you will necessarily understand the true cause.
 In the view of that power, apparent intermediaries, helpers, and partners are all false, all imaginary and impossible.
 Life is the perfection of existence, its rank is high and important. Consequently, I say: why should the globe, our world, not be obedient and subjugated to it, like an animal?
 Living birds of the Pre-Eternal Sovereign of this sort are numerous, spread through the arena of space, majestic, beautiful.
 Dispersed through the garden of creation, they spin; their refrains, their motion, are words of glorification, modes of worship, of the Pre-Eternal Undying One, the Eternal All-Wise One.
 The globe resembles a living being, it displays signs of life. If to suppose the impossible it was reduced to the size of an egg,
 There is a strong possibility it would become a tiny animal. If a micro-organism was expanded to the size of the earth, most probably it would be just like it.
 If the world was reduced to the size of a man, and the stars transformed into particles, it is possible it would become a conscious animal, as well as intelligent.
 This means the world with all its parts is a glorifying servant of the Undying Creator, the Eternal All-Powerful One, obedient, subjugated.
 To be large quantitatively does not always infer being great qualitatively, for a clock the size of a mustard-seed is more eloquent than a clock the size of Aya Sophia.
 A fly's creation is more wondrous than that of an elephant, that indiscriminating creature.
 If a Qur'an was to be written by the Pen of Power in atoms of ether on the

minutest particle, the art being in inverse proportion to the size of the page, Its eloquence would be equal to a Qur'an written in stars on the face of the heavens. The Pre-Eternal Inscraper's art is everywhere of the utmost beauty and perfection. Everywhere it is thus. The pen proclaims Divine unity since it always works with utter perfection. Study carefully this most meaningful piece!

The Angels Are a Community, Charged With the Shari'a of Creation

There are two Divine Shari'as: proceeding from two attributes, man is addressed by both, and bound to comply with both.

The Shari'a of Creation, which proceeds from the attribute of Will, orders the circumstances and motions of the world, the macrocosm, which are not voluntary. It is dominical will, and is also wrongly termed 'Nature.'

The Shari'a proceeding from the attribute of Speech is the code of laws which orders the actions of man, the microcosm, which are voluntary.

The two Shari'as sometimes come together in the same place. The Divine angels are a vast community, a Divine army.

They are obedient bearers of the first Shari'a, workers and representatives. Some of them are worshipping slaves of God, others through the Divine Throne in ecstasy.

As Matter Is Refined, Life Is Intensified

Life is fundamental, basic; matter is dependent on it, and subsists through it. If you compare a microscopic organism with its five senses, and man's senses, you will see that however much larger man is than the organism, his senses are inferior to the same degree.

The organism hears its brother's voice. It sees its food. If it was enlarged to the size of a man, its senses would be wondrous, its life dazzling, and the sight of it like a lightning flash lighting up the skies.

Man is not a living being composed of dead beings, but a living human cell composed of thousands of millions of living cells.

Man is like the Sura Ya. Sin., in which is inscribed Sura Ya. Sin. *Blessed be God, the Best of Creators!*³⁵

³⁵ Qur'an, 23:14.

Materialism Is an Immaterial Plague

Materialism is an immaterial plague; mankind caught this fearsome fever.³⁶ Its inculcation and imitation caused mankind to be visited suddenly by Divine wrath. This plague spreads to the extent the ability to criticize spreads. It was inculcated by science, and learnt blind imitation from modern civilization. Freedom led to criticism; misguidance sprang from its pride.

There Is Nothing Idle In Existence; The Unemployed Man Works On Account of Non-Existence

The most miserable, wretched, and distressed person, is the unemployed. For idleness is non-existence within existence, death within life. Whereas exertion is the life of existence, and the waking state of life!

Usury and Interest Cause Absolute Harm to Islam

Usury is the cause of idleness, it extinguishes enthusiasm for work. The profit of the doors of usury and their containers, the banks, is always for the worst group of mankind, the infidels. The infidels' profits go to the worst of them, that is, the oppressors. The profit of the oppressors always goes to the worst of them; that is, the dissolute; it causes the World of Islam absolute harm. In the view of the Shari'a all mankind cannot always be prosperous. For a belligerent infidel is disrespectful, unchaste, and his blood is spilt for nothing, always.

The Qur'an Will Defend Itself and Perpetuate Its Sovereignty³⁷

I saw someone who was stricken by despair, he was sick with pessimism. He said: "The 'ulama have decreased in number, quantity has replaced quality. 'I'm frightened our religion will die out one day.'" I replied: So long as the universe is not extinguished, Islamic belief will not die. Also, so long as the marks of Islam, the minarets of religion, the places of

³⁶ This alludes to the First World War.

³⁷ This piece, which was written thirty-five years ago, is in a style that could have been written this year. That is, it was a sort of prediction inspired by the effulgence of Ramadan.

Divine worship, the works of the Shari'a, all like nails struck in the face of the earth, –so long as they are not extinguished, Islam will ever shine.

All the mosques are instructors, teaching their frequenters; and all the instructors have become masters; through the tongue of disposition, without error or forgetfulness, they instil in them the religion.

All the marks are learned teachers, constantly teaching the spirit of Islam to those who look on them. With the centuries, they have become the cause of continuity.

The lights of Islam are as though embodied in its marks; and the pure water of Islam has solidified in its places of worship, embodying them – each a pillar of belief.

The injunctions of Islam are as though embodied within its works; the pillars of Islam have become petrified in its worlds – each a diamond pillar; through them the earth and sky are bound together .

Especially the orator of the Qur'an of Miraculous Exposition, a constantly repeated pre-eternal discourse; no village, no place at all has remained within the Islamic lands

That does not listen to its address, does not hear its teaching. According to the inner meaning of *Indeed We preserve it*,³⁸ to be a *hafiz* is a very high station. To recite it is worship for men and jinn.

It is for this reason it should be taught, and its incontestable matters mentioned. With constant repetition, theoretical matters become incontestable, and turn into self-evident facts, not requiring further expounding.

The essentials of religion ceased being theoretical matters and became essentials. To mention them is sufficient. To remind is enough. The Qur'an is always a healer.³⁹

The Islamic revival and social awakening provides evidence for everyone and a balance, for reminders and mentioning.

Since social life began in Islam, the belief of an individual is not restricted to proofs particular to himself; it is based on the conscience. Indeed, it is based on innumerable matters in the common heart.

It is worthy of note, it is difficult to abolish even a weak school of thought as time passes.

So what about Islam, which is based on the two firm foundations of revelation and innate disposition, and has ruled so effectively for so many centuries!

With its firmly rooted principles, its profound works, it has cohered to half the globe, becoming a natural spirit. If it is now eclipsed, it will immediately emerge!

But regrettably certain giddy infidels with their false arguments attack the firm foundations of this lofty palace whenever they find the chance.

³⁸ Qur'an, 15:9.

³⁹ For further explanation, see, The Twenty-Seventh Word, pp. 498-9 in the present work. [Tr.]

They try to shake them. But those principles cannot be interfered with, or tampered with; fall silent now, irreligion! That scoundrel is bankrupt. Enough now, the experiment of disbelief and lies!

The Islamic world's advance-post against the world of unbelief was the Darülfunun.⁴⁰ But due to indifference and heedlessness, the reptilian foe of Nature Opened up a breach behind the front; irreligion assaulted, the nation was well shaken. The advance-post should be a paradise illuminated with the spirit of Islam. It should be the firmest, and truly awakened, or it should not be that institution. It must not deceive Islam. The heart is the seat of belief; the mind is where the light of belief is reflected.⁴¹

Sometimes it is a *mujahid*, sometimes it is a sweep; if the doubts of the mind do not enter the heart, the likelihood is belief and the conscience will not be shaken. For if as some people suppose belief is in the mind, numerous possibilities, all pitiless enemies, oppose 'absolute certainty,' which is the spirit of belief. The heart and conscience are the seat of belief. Intuition and inspiration are the evidence for belief. A sixth sense, the way of belief. Thought and intellect, the watchmen of belief.

Reminding About Incontestable Matters Is Needed, Rather Than Instruction In Theoretical Ones

The essentials of religion, the incontestable matters of the Shari'a, are present in people's hearts; they are made conscious of them by being reminded. The desired result is obtained. Arabic⁴² performs this reminder in more lofty fashion. The Arabic Khutba in the Friday prayers is sufficient for recalling the essentials and incontestable matters. There, instruction in theoretical matters is not required. Moreover, those Arabic words stamp an imprint of unity on the face of Islam's conscience; to multiply [their language] is unacceptable.

⁴⁰ *Darü'l-Fünun*: the university opened finally in 1869 after 24 years of preparations and unsuccessful attempts. Based on the Western model, it was designed to teach the modern sciences. [Tr.]

⁴¹ See the piece, *The Light of Reason Comes From the Heart*, above p. 739. [Tr.]

⁴² The author perceived an event that was to occur ten years later, and attempted to reply to it.

Hadiths Say To The Qur'an's Verses: It's Impossible To Reach You!

If you compare verses and Hadiths, you will see clearly that the most eloquent of men was the conveyer of revelation, yet not even his eloquence was equal to the eloquence of the Qur'an's verses.

Not even he could emulate it. That means that all the words issuing from Muhammad's tongue were not his.

Expound The Qur'an's Miraculousness Concisely

One time I had a dream: I was at the foot of Mount Ararat. The mountain suddenly exploded, scattering rocks the size of mountains all over the world, shaking it. Then a man appeared at my side. He told me: "Expound the aspects of the Qur'an's miraculousness you know, concisely and succinctly!"

I thought of the dream's meaning while still dreaming, telling myself: the explosion here symbolizes a revolution in mankind.

As a result of it the guidance of the Criterion of Truth and Falsehood will be exalted everywhere, and will rule. And the time will come to expound its miraculousness!

I said to the questioner in reply: The Qur'an's miraculousness is manifested from seven sources, it is also composed of seven elements:

First Source: This is the fluency of its wording, arising from the purity of its language; and its brilliant manner of exposition, born of the beauty of the word-order; the eloquence of the meanings, the originality of the concepts, the excellence of the inferences, and the singularity of its styles.

Combined with these, in its miraculousness are a wondrous embroidery and exposition, and an original art and language, so its repetition never wearies or bores.

Second Element: A treasury of occult sciences containing the hidden principles of cosmic events, the obscure mysteries of the Divine truths, the unseen matters of revelation, events concealed in the past, and matters hidden in the future.

The tongue of the worlds of the Unseen speaks with the Manifest World; it discloses its matters symbolically; its aim is mankind, a luminous flash of miraculousness.

Third Source: It has a wondrous comprehensiveness in five aspects. In its words, meanings, injunctions, and its knowledge, and the balance of its aims.

Its words contain truly vast possibilities and numerous aspects, yet each is

the one preferred by eloquence, the most correct in its Arabic and apt in the view of the Shari'a.

Its meaning: The miraculousness of its exposition at once comprehends and comprises the ways of all the saints, the illuminations of those versed in knowledge of God, the schools of those on the sufi way, the ways of the scholars of kala\m, and the paths of the philosophers. The breadth of its evidence, the expanse of its meanings. If you look through this window, what a broad arena you will see!

The scope of its injunctions: The wondrous Shari'a has deduced from it all the principles for the happiness of this world and the next, all the means of salvation.

Its pronouncements at once embrace all the relations of social life, all methods of education, the realities of all conditions.

The profundity of its knowledge: It has brought together in its paradise, in the fortresses of its Suras, both the physical sciences and the Divine sciences, and all signs, allusions, and indications to them.

Its aims and purposes: It has applied perfect balance and regular sequence; conformed with the principles of the innate nature of things and unity, and has preserved the balance.

So see the marvellous encompassment in the comprehensiveness of its words, the breadth of its meanings, the scope of its injunctions, the profundity of its knowledge, and the balance of its aims.

Fourth Element: It bestows a luminous effulgence on every age in accordance with its understanding and degree of literacy, and on all the classes of men in accordance with their capacities and abilities.

Its door is open to every era and every class within each. It is as though this Speech of the Most Merciful is freshly revealed every instant, everywhere.

The Qur'an grows younger as it grows older; its signs become apparent; it rends the veil of Nature and causes, that Divine address.

It sheds the light of Divine unity continuously from every verse. It raises the veil of the Manifest World, cast over the Unseen.

The loftiness of its address invites man's attentive gaze, for it is the tongue of the Unseen; it speaks with the Manifest World. Its wondrous freshness proceeds from this element, an all-encompassing ocean!

Divine condescension to the mind's of men, to make it familiar. The variety of the styles of its revelation makes it familiar to men and jinn.

Fifth Source: It relates in an original style laden with meaning, as though itself had witnessed them, of its stories and narrations, and truthful accounts, making their essential points ;

With them it warns mankind. What it relates is these: it tells of former events, and future events, the secrets of Hell and of Heaven;

Truths of the Unseen, and mysteries of the Manifest World, Divine mysteries, stories about cosmic relations;

Clear stories that neither fact has refuted, nor logic. Even if logic does not accept them, it cannot refute them – the revealed books, which are revered by all the world.

It relates faithfully the points on which they agree, and mentions in correct form the subjects on which they differ. These matters issuing from one “unlettered” was a wonder of the time!

Sixth Element: It was the founder of the religion of Islam, and comprises it. If you investigate time and place, neither the past was capable of producing the like of Islam, nor is the future.

This heavenly thread holds the globe in its annual and daily rotations, and spins it. It weighed down heavily on the earth and mounted it, but the earth still does not give up its rebellion.

Seventh Source: The six lights pouring forth from these six sources blend together; from this a beauty becomes apparent, and from this an intuition, a luminous means of understanding.

This produces a pleasure: the pleasure of miraculousness may be known, but our language is inadequate to describe it. The mind too is defective; that celestial star may be seen, but not held.

For thirteen centuries the Qur’an’s enemies have desired to challenge it, while it has aroused in its friends a desire to imitate it. This too is a proof of its miraculousness.

Millions of Arabic books have been written in consequence of these two intense desires, coming into the library of existence.

If they are compared with revelation, if they are weighed up, relying on the evidence of their eyes and ears not only the learned scholar, even the common man, will declare: “This is heavenly, those are human!”

They will also say: “It doesn’t resemble them, it is not of the same class. It is therefore lower than all of them, and this is self-evidently not true.

“In which case, it is superior to all of them.” Its meanings in all that time. The door is open, dedicated to mankind; it has summoned to itself spirits and minds!

Man had power over it, and laid claim to it, but his meanings still could not oppose the Qur’an; he never could; now the time of testing has passed.

It does not resemble other books, it cannot be compared to them. For it was dominical wisdom its being revealed bit by bit over twenty years in relation to need, in miscellaneous parts.

The immediate causes of revelation were various and distinct. The questions about any one matter were repeated and various. The events related to injunctions were numerous and changed. The times of revelation were distinct and different.

The conditions it was considering were various and different; the groups of those it was addressing were numerous and remote from each other; the aims of its guidance were graded and various.

Its structure, and expositions, and replies, and addresses were based on these foundations.

Yet despite this, its smoothness of style and lack of defect, its mutual proportion and harmony, demonstrated its perfection.

Witness to this is that according to the science of rhetoric, the Qur'an has a characteristic not present in other speech: if you listen to other speech, you will see the speaker (or writer) behind it, or you will find him within it. Style is the mirror of man.

O dream-questioner! You asked for conciseness, so I have made an indication. If you want a detailed exposition, that is beyond my capabilities! A fly cannot behold the sky. For of the forty sorts of miraculousness, only one is the eloquence of the word-order; and an exposition of it did not fit in *Isharat al-I'jaz*.

My hundred-page commentary was insufficient for it. Rather, I want a detailed exposition from spirit-inspirations like yourself!

**The Fanciful, Lust-Exciting Genius-Style Hand of Western Literature
Cannot Reach Up To the Healing, Light-Scattering, Guidance-Laden,
Eternal Literature of the Qur'an**

A state of mind pleasing to the mature and perfected with their appreciation of meaning, does not gratify the childish, whimsical, and dissolute,

It does not entertain them. In consequence, those raised amid base, dissolute, carnal and lusty pleasures will not experience spiritual pleasure.

Looking with the 'novel-based' view of modern literature, which issued from Europe, they will neither see nor experience the elevated subtleties, the majestic virtues, of the Qur'an.

Their touchstone cannot assay those virtues. There are three areas in which literature promenades; it roams within their bounds:

Either love and sorrow, or heroism and valour, or depiction of reality. In foreign literature, it does not seek the truth in heroism; it rather instils a desire for power by applauding mankind's cruelties.

As regards sorrow and love, it does not know true love; it injects into the soul a lust-exciting thrill.

In the question of depicting reality, it does not look on the universe as Divine art; it does not see it with its hue of the Most Merciful.

It rather approaches it from the point of view of 'Nature,' and depicts it thus; and it cannot be freed from this.

For this reason, what it inculcates is love of 'Nature.' It instils in the heart a

feeling of materialism, from which it cannot easily be saved. Again, that unmannerly literature, both sedative and narcotic, can provide no beneficial salve for the distress of the spirit which arises from the misguidance resulting from the above.

It has found a single remedy, and that is its novels and fiction. Books with their dead living, the cinema with its animated corpses. The dead cannot bestow life! And the theatre with its reincarnations and ghosts from the vast grave known as the past. – It is completely unashamed at these three sorts of its fiction.

It has put a mendacious tongue in mankind's mouth, attached a lustful eye to its face, dressed the world in a scarlet petticoat, and does not recognize sheer beauty. If it points to the sun, it puts in the reader's mind a beautiful blonde actress. It apparently says: "Vice is bad, it is not fitting for man."

It points out its harmful consequences. But its depictions so incite vice that they make the mouth water and the reason cannot remain in control.

They whet the appetite, excite desire, so the emotions no longer heed anything. The literature of the Qur'an, however, does not stir up desire;

It imparts a sense of love of the truth, a passion for sheer loveliness, an appreciation and taste for beauty, a desire for reality. And it does not deceive.

It does not look at the universe from the point of view of Nature; it speaks of it from the point of view of Divine art, with the colouring of the Most Merciful. It does not confuse the mind.

It instils the light of knowledge of the Maker. It points out His signs in all things. Both produce a touching sorrow, but they do not resemble each other.

The literature born of Europe excites a pathetic sorrow arising from the lack of friends, from being ownerless; not an elevated sorrow.

For it is a woebegone sadness inspired by deaf Nature and blind force. It shows the world as desolate, not in any other way.

It depicts it in this way, holds the sorrowing man there, places him ownerless among strangers, leaving him without hope.

Due to this feeling of consternation it has given him, he gradually sinks into misguidance; it opens up the way to atheism, from whence it is difficult to return. Perhaps he never will return.

Qur'anic literature produces a sorrow, but it is the sorrow of love, not of orphans. It arises from separation from friends, not from the lack of them.

Its view of the universe, in place of blind Nature, is as conscious, merciful Divine art; it does not speak of Nature.

Instead of blind force, it describes wise and purposeful Divine power. The universe, therefore, does not take on the form of a desolate wasteland.

Indeed, in the view of the grieving one it addresses, it becomes a gathering of friends. On every side mutual love and response, which cause no distress.

The friendliness at every corner draws the melancholy person into society, giving him a yearning sorrow, an elevated feeling; not a dejected mournfulness.

Both give rise to eagerness. But through the eagerness provoked by the foreign literature, the soul becomes excited, the desires are stimulated; its gives no joy to the spirit.

The Qur'an's eagerness, however, fires the spirit, gives rise to a lofty eagerness. It is for this reason that the Shari'a of Muhammad (PBUH) wants no amusements or diversion.

It has forbidden some musical instruments, for amusement, and permitted others. That is to say, instruments producing Qur'anic sorrow or revelational eagerness are not harmful.

But if it produces the woebegone grief of the orphan or carnal thrills, the instrument is prohibited. It changes from person to person, not everyone is the same.

Branches Offer Fruits In the Name of Mercy

On every side the branches of the tree of creation apparently extend the fruits of bounties to the hands of beings with spirits.

But in reality it is a hand of mercy, a hand of power, which holds out to us those branches and fruits.

You should kiss that hand of mercy in gratitude; you should proclaim the holiness of that hand of power thankfully.

An Explanation of the Three Ways Indicated at the End of Sura al-Fatiha

O brother full of hope! Take your imagination and come with me. See, we are in a land, we look around. There is no one to see us.

A layer of black cloud has settled on the high mountains, like tent-posts. The cloud has covered too the whole face of the earth.

It forms a solid ceiling, but its six sides are open, so the sun is visible. We are under the cloud, the darkness oppresses us.

The distress is suffocating, the airlessness is killing us. Now three ways are open to us. One is a luminous world, I beheld it once, that metaphorical land.

Yes, I came here once before, I have passed down these three ways. The first way is this:
 most people take it; it is the way of the world, it invites us to travel it.
 See, we are on our way, we are going on foot. See how the sea-sands of the desert scorch
 us with their anger, threatening us!
 See the mountainous waves; they are threatening us too. Now thanks be to God we have
 emerged on the other side, we can see the face of the sun.
 But only we know the difficulties we have suffered. Oh! we have returned to the
 wasteland, the ceiling of cloud with its lowering darkness. What we need is the eye
 of the heart to illumine things.
 A wondrous light-filled world; if you have the courage, we shall enter it together, this
 way so fraught with dangers. Our second way:
 We shall plunge through Nature-earth, and pass to the other side. Or trembling, we shall
 pass through a natural tunnel.
 I travelled this way one time, fearlessly and full of prayer. But on that occasion I had with
 me a substance to smelt and rend the Nature-earth.
 The third way: The Qur'an had given me that miraculous evidence. Brother, stick close
 behind me, and have no fear!
 See, here await us tunnel-like caves and underground torrents. They will let us pass.
 Don't let these awesome lifeless beings of Nature scare you in the slightest!
 For behind its sour face is the smiling countenance of its compassionate Owner. I
 perceived that radium-like substance of the Qur'an through its light.
 There, you see! We have come out in the light-filled world, see this delicate earth, this
 soft and gentle air. Raise your head! See, it has drawn its head to the skies, rent the
 clouds, leaving them far below. This Tuba-tree invites us –
 It is the Qur'an. It has spread its branches everywhere. We must hang onto this branch
 which is trailing down, so that it can raise us up.
 That heavenly tree – on earth, one of its personifications is the Illustrious Shari'a. That is
 to say, we ascended to this world of light in that way without difficulty; we were
 shaken by no distress.
 Since we went wrong, we'll return to our former place and find the right way. See, our
 third way! Over the mountains hovers a Royal Falcon;
 He is reciting the ezan to the whole world. See, the supreme muezzin, Muhammad al-
 Hashimi (PBUH), is summoning mankind to the luminous world of light. He enjoins
 supplication and obligatory prayers.
 Look at the mountains! See, the guidance has rent the clouds! The mountain of the
 Shari'a has raised its head to the skies. How it has adorned the face and eye of the
 earth!
 Now we must depart from here in the aircraft of endeavour. The light and

breeze are there; the light of beauty is there. Ah, now here is the Uhud of Divine unity, that mighty mountain.

Here is the Judi of Islam, that wholesome mountain. Here is the Mountain of the Moon, the Qur'an of al-Azhar, the pure water of the Nile flows from that sublime source. Take a drink of its sweet water!

*So blessed be God, the Best of Creators.*⁴³ * *And their call shall close with "All praise be to God, Sustainer of All the Worlds!"*⁴⁴

Friend! Now cast away your imagination and don your reason! The first two ways are those of "*those who have received Your anger*" and "*those who have gone astray.*"⁴⁵ Their perils are numerous. On them is perpetual winter, their autumn and summer. Only one out of a hundred is saved, like Plato and Socrates.

The third way is easy, and direct and straight. Weak and strong are equal. Everyone may take it. The most comfortable is this: to be either martyr or 'ghazi'.

Now we come to the conclusion: Yes, the first two ways are the path and school of the genius of science. As for the guidance of the Qur'an, the third way is its straight path; it will take us there.

*O God! Guide us to the straight path. * The path of those whom You have blessed, not those who have received Your anger, nor those who have gone astray.*

All True Pain Is In Misguidance, and All True Pleasure In Belief; A Mighty Truth Robed In Imagination

Prudent fellow-traveller! My friend! If you want to see clearly the differences between the luminous way of the "straight path" and the gloomy path of "those who have received Your anger" and "those who have gone astray,"

Come, take your fancy and mount your imagination, together we shall go to the darkness of non-existence. We shall visit that vast grave, that city of the dead.

A Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One took us out of that place of darkness with His hand of power, mounted us on existence, and sent us to this world, this city without pleasures.

Now we have come to the world of existence, this fearful desert. Our eyes have opened, we've looked in the six directions.

⁴³ Qur'an, 23:14.

⁴⁴ Qur'an, 10:10.

⁴⁵ Qur'an, 1:7.

Firstly we look before us seeking favours, but tribulations and pains assault us like enemies. We take fright at that and draw back.

We look to left and right to the natural elements, seeking assistance. But we see their hearts are hard and merciless. They grind their teeth, glowering at us angrily. They heed neither plea nor plaint.

Like creatures beleaguered, we despairingly lift our gazes upwards. Seeking help, we look to the heavenly bodies, but they threaten us awesomely.

As though each was a bomb; having shot out of their cases they are speeding through space. But somehow or other they do not obstruct each other.

If by chance one confused its way, this Manifest World would be blown to pieces, God forbid! It is tied to coincidence; no good can come of that.

In despair we turn back our gaze from that direction, overcome by grievous bewilderment. We bow our heads and look to ourselves; we consider and study ourselves.

Now we hear the shouts of myriad needs coming from our wretched selves. The cries of thousands of wants issue forth. While expecting solace, we take fright.

No good comes from that either. Seeking refuge, we consult our consciences, we look within seeking a solution. Alas, again we can find none; we have to help the conscience.

For in it are thousands of hopes, turbulent emotions, wild desires, spread throughout the universe. We tremble with all of them, and cannot offer help.

Compressed in the world of existence, those hopes stretch out to pre-eternity on one side and post-eternity on the other. They have such breadth, if they swallowed the world, the conscience still would not be satisfied.

Wherever we have recourse on this grievous road, we encounter misfortune. For the ways of "those who have received Your anger" and "those who have gone astray" are thus. Chance and misguidance beset that road.

We follow it and fall into our present state. Even now we temporarily forget its beginning and end, the Maker and resurrection of the dead.

It is worse than Hell, it scorches more terribly, it crushes our spirits. For we had recourse to those six directions, but this state resulted.

It fills us with awesome terror, making us shudder with impotence, disquiet and apprehension, orphanhood and despair, so that it racks our conscience.

Now we shall form a front opposite each of the directions and try to repulse them. Firstly we have recourse to our own strength, but alas! we are powerless, weak.

Secondly, we address ourselves to silencing the needs of the soul. But alas! we see that they cry out unceasingly.

Thirdly, we cry out for help seeking a saviour, but no one hears or responds.

We suppose everything to be hostile, everything strange. Nothing consoles our hearts, nothing gives a sense of security, or true pleasure.

Fourthly, the more we looked at the celestial bodies, the more they filled us with fright and awe. Vexing the conscience, alienating it; tormenting the mind, filling it with delusions.

Brother! That is the way of misguidance! On it we experienced all the darkness of unbelief. Come, now, my brother, we'll turn again to that non-being.

Again we shall come. This time our way is the Straight Path, and the way of belief. Our guide and leader are wisdom and the Qur'an, the Falcon that overflies the centuries.

At one time, the Pre-Eternal Sovereign's mercy and grace willed our existence, His power brought us forth, graciously mounting us on the law of His will, completing us stage after stage.

Then it compassionately clothed us in the garment of existence, bestowed on us the Trust and its rank; the mark of this is supplication and the obligatory prayers.

All the stages are stopping-places on our long road. To make our road easy, Divine Determining issued a decree and pasted it on the page of our foreheads;

Wherever we go, with whichever group we are guests, we are welcomed in truly brotherly fashion. We give of our belongings, and we receive from theirs.

Love born of commerce, they nourish us, adorn us with gifts, then they see us on our way. Now at last we have come to the door of the world. We hear a noise.

See, we have arrived at the earth. We have stepped foot in the Manifest World. The festival of the Most Merciful, the clamorous habitation of man.

We know nothing at all, our guide and leader is the will of the Merciful One. Our guide's deputy, our delicate eyes. We open our eyes and look around. Do we recall the first time we came?

We were strangers, orphans. Our enemies were many. We did not know our protector.

Now, with the light of belief, we have a strong pillar, a point of support, a protector, who repulses those enemies.

And that is belief in God, which is the light of our spirits, and light of our lives, and spirit of our spirits. Now our hearts are easy, we disregard the enemies, not even recognizing them.

When on our first journey we consulted our consciences, we heard innumerable cries and laments, and complaints.

It was due to them that we were overcome by misfortune. For our hopes and desires, capacity and senses always desire eternity. But we did not know how to obtain it, hence their lamentations and cries.

However, all praise be to God, this time we have found a point of succour which always gives life to our innate disposition and hopes; it makes them take flight for eternity. Our innate disposition shows them the way from that point, and seeks help; drinks down the water of life, and races to its perfection through that point of succour, that encouraging, elusive symbol.

The second pole of belief is affirmation of the resurrection of the dead. Everlasting happiness is that shell's pearl. The proof of belief, the Qur'an; the conscience, a human mystery.

Now raise your head, and take a look at the universe. Speak a word with it. It appeared formidable on our former way. Now it is smiling, laughing on every side, coyly winking and blinking.

Do you not see, our eyes have become bees? They fly everywhere in the garden of the universe, around the profusion of flowers; each flower proffers them a delectable draft.

Each also offers solace, love, and a feeling of familiarity. They too give and take, and offer testimony, they make honey flow forth from honey, that mysterious falcon.

As our gaze alights on the motions of the heavenly bodies, or the stars, or suns, they show up the Creator's wisdom, and the manner of His instruction, and the manifestation of His mercy, making them take flight.

It is as though the sun is speaking with us, saying: "My brothers! Don't feel frightened or dismayed. You are welcome, how good you have come! This dwelling-place is yours, I am but a candle-holder.

"I am like you, but a pure, obedient, unrebelling servant. Out of His utter mercy, the Single and Eternally Besought One subjected me so that I would serve you with my light. Light and heat are from me, supplication and prayer from you!"

Now look at the moon! And the stars and the seas; each says in its own tongue:

"Welcome! It's good you've come! Don't you recognize us?"

Look through the mystery of co-operation, through the signs of the order. Each says: "We are all servants, mirrors of the All-Glorious One's mercy; don't worry, don't be dismayed!

"Don't feel frightened or sceptical at the crashing of the thunder and cries of events, for within them are the rolling of recitations, the clamour of glorifications, the tumult of supplication and entreaty.

"The All-Glorious One Who sent us to you holds their reins in His hands. The eye of faith reads on their faces the signs of mercy; each proclaims them."

O believer with a wakeful heart! Let our eyes rest a little; we shall hand over our sensitive ears to the blessed hand of belief in their place. We shall send them to the world to listen to its delightful refrains.

The universal mourning and lamentations of death imagined on our first way are now all supplications and orisons, cries of glorification.

Listen to the murmuring of the air, the twittering of chicks, the pattering of the rain, the plashing of the seas, the crashing of thunder, the crackling of stones; all are meaningful refrains.

The humming of the air, the intoning of the thunder, the strains of the waves are all recitations of Grandeur. The chanting of the rains, the warbling of birds are all glorifications of Mercy, allusions to reality.

The sounds of things are all sounds of existence: "I too exist," they say. The silent universe suddenly finds voice: "Don't suppose us to be lifeless, O chattering man!"

A tasty morsel or droplet of rain; the birds break into song.

With their different voices, their tiny songs, they applaud mercy, alight on bounties, proclaiming their thanks.

Implicitly they say: "Beings of the universe, my brothers! How fine are our circumstances;

We are tenderly nourished, we are happy at our lot." With beaks upstretched they scatter their songs on the air.

In its entirety the universe is a lofty orchestra; through the light of belief its recitations, its glorifications, are heard.

For its wisdom rejects the existence of chance, its order repulses it; in unison they banish doubt.

Fellow-traveller! We are leaving now this world of similitudes, stepping down from imagination and fancy. We shall alight in the arena of reason, take stock, and close down those ways.

Our first way, full of pain, that of "those who have received Your anger" and "those who have gone astray," inflicts suffering on the innermost conscience, and severe pain. Consciousness showed this; we became the reverse of conscious.

We have to be saved from it, we need to be, so the pain can be pacified, or numbed, we can't endure it otherwise; no one heeds the cries for help.

Guidance is healing, but fancies block out the feelings. This requires solace, it requires feigned unmindfulness, it requires occupation, it requires entertainment. Enchanting desires.

Then it can deceive the conscience and put the spirit to sleep so they feel no pain.

Otherwise that grievous suffering scorches the conscience; the pain is unendurable, the despair cannot be borne.

This means, however far one deviates from the Straight Path, to that extent one is affected in that way, causing the conscience to cry out. Within every pleasure is a pain, a taint.

That means glittering civilization, which is a mixture of fancy, lust, amusement, and licentiousness, is a deceptive panacea for the ghastly distress arising from misguidance, a poisonous narcotic.

My dear friend! On our second way, that light-filled road, we perceived a state of mind in which life became a source of pleasure, pains became joys.

We understood that it imparts a state to the spirit varying in degree according the strength of belief. The body receives pleasure through the spirit, the spirit receives pleasure through the conscience.

An immediate pleasure is felt in the conscience; a spiritual paradise is present in the heart. To think of it is to open it up; while consciousness is marked by its secrets.

Now, however much the heart is aroused, the conscience stimulated, the spirit stirred, it increases the pleasure, transforming fire into light, and winter into spring.

The doors of paradises open up in the conscience, the world becomes a paradise. Within it our spirits take flight, soaring like kites, entreating, praying.

Worthy fellow-traveller! Farewell for now. Let us offer a prayer together, then we shall part, to meet again!

O God! Lead us to the Straight Path. Amen.

Reply to the Anglican Church

One time, as a artifice, a pitiless enemy of Islam, a cunning politician, a suspicious parson who wanted to swagger and show off, asked us four things, –in the form of denial, at a terrible time he had his claws at our throat, in his glee at our misfortune; he wanted six hundred words. A reply was needed like a slap in the face of his glee, and his wiles, and his denial, like spitting in his face, to silence him. I won't address him. I have the following answer for a lover of truth.

He asked first: “What is the religion of Muhammad (PBUH)?”

I replied: It is the Qur'an. The basic aims of the Qur'an are the six pillars of belief and the five pillars of Islam.

In the second he asked: “What has it given to life and thought?”

I replied: To thought, the affirmation of Divine unity; to life, moderation and the middle way. My witnesses for this are

*Say: He is God, the One.⁴⁶ * Therefore stand firm [in the Straight Way] as you are commanded.⁴⁷*

In the third, he said: “What remedies has it for the present discord and turmoil?”

I replied: The prohibition of usury and interest and the payment of *Zakat*. My witnesses for this are these:

*God will deprive usury of all blessing.⁴⁸ * God has permitted trade and forbidden usury.⁴⁹ * And be steadfast in prayer, and practise regular charity [Zakat].⁵⁰*

In the fourth, he asked: “How does it look on man's revolutions?”

I replied: Labour, striving, are fundamental. Wealth should not be accumulated in the hands of tyrants, and held on to. My witnesses for this:

*Man has nothing save that which he strives.⁵¹ * Those who store up gold and silver and do not spend it in God's way, announce to them a most grievous penalty.⁵²*

⁴⁶ Qur'an, 112:1.

⁴⁷ Qur'an, 11:112.

⁴⁸ Qur'an, 2:276.

⁴⁹ Qur'an, 2:275.

⁵⁰ Qur'an, 2:43, etc.

⁵¹ Qur'an, 53:39.

⁵² Qur'an, 9:34.

About the *Risale-i Nur, The Words,* and their Author

The Words forms the first part of the *Risale-i Nur* Collection, a Qur'anic commentary exceeding five thousand pages which was written in Turkish by one of the most important Islamic scholars this century, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, in order to prove and explain the truths of belief to contemporary Muslims and modern man. In Bediuzzaman's view, in the face of the assaults of materialist philosophy at the present time, the question which takes priority over all else for Muslims is the saving and strengthening of belief. For it is only in belief in God that man's true happiness and progress, and the cure for the wounds caused him by materialism and misguidance, are to be found. Bediuzzaman devoted his life and learning to the achievement of these.

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was born in 1877 in eastern Turkey and died in 1960 in Urfa in Turkey. Readers may refer to his biography for details of his long and exemplary life, which spanned the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, its collapse after the First World War and the setting up of the Republic, then the twenty-five years of Republican Peoples' Party rule, well-known for the measures taken against Islam, followed by the ten years of Democrat rule, when conditions eased a little for Bediuzzaman. Here we shall mention just a few points which are relevant to the *Risale-i Nur* and will assist in understanding *The Words*. With this same aim some general points about the *Risale-i Nur* are included, and the method, which is particular to Bediuzzaman, that it employs for teaching the Qur'anic truths.

Bediuzzaman displayed an extraordinary intelligence and ability to learn from an early age, completing the normal course of *medrese* (religious school) education at the early age of fourteen, when he obtained his diploma. He became famous for both his prodigious memory and his unbeaten record in debating with other religious scholars. Another characteristic Bediuzzaman displayed from an early age was an instinctive dissatisfaction with the existing education system, which when older he formulated into comprehensive proposals for its reform. The heart of these proposals was the bringing together and joint teaching of the traditional religious sciences and the modern sciences, together with the founding of a university in the Eastern Provinces of the Empire, the *Medresetü'z-Zehra*, where this and his other proposals would be put into practice. In 1907 his endeavours in this field took him to Istanbul where he presented a petition at the court of Sultan Abdulhamid. Although subsequently he twice received funds for the construction of his university, and its foundations were laid in 1913, it was never completed due to war and the vicissitudes of the times.

Contrary to the practice of religious scholars at that time, Bediuzzaman himself studied and mastered almost all the physical and mathematical sciences, and later studied philosophy, for he believed that it was only in this way that Islamic theology (*kalam*) could be renewed and successfully answer the attacks to which the Qur'an and Islam were then subject.

In the course of time, the physical sciences had been dropped from *medrese* education, which had contributed directly to the Ottoman decline relative to the advance of the West. Now, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Europe had gained dominance over the Islamic world, and in efforts to extend its dominance, was attacking the Qur'an and Islam in the name of science and progress in particular, falsely claiming them to be incompatible. Within the Empire too were a small minority who favoured adopting Western philosophy and civilization. Thus, all Bediuzzaman's endeavour was to prove and demonstrate the falseness of these accusations, and that far from being incompatible with science and progress, the Qur'an was the source of true progress and civilization, and in addition, since this was the case, Islam would dominate the future, despite its relative decline and regression at that time.

The years up to the end of the First World War were the final decades of the Ottoman Empire and were, in the words of Bediuzzaman, the period of the 'Old Said'. He strove to serve the cause of the Empire and Islam through active involvement in social life and the public domain. In the War, he commanded the militia forces on the Caucasian Front against the invading Russians, for which he was later awarded a War Medal. To maintain the morale of his men he himself disdained to enter the trenches in spite of the constant shelling, and it was while withstanding the overwhelming assaults of the enemy that he wrote his celebrated Qur'anic commentary, *Signs of Miraculousness (Isharat al-I'jaz)*, dictating to a scribe while on horseback. Stating that the Qur'an encompasses the sciences which make known the physical world, the commentary is an original and important work which, in Bediuzzaman's words, forms a model for the commentaries he hoped would be written in the future, which would bring together the religious and modern sciences in the way he proposed. Bediuzzaman was taken prisoner in March 1916 and held in Russia for two years before escaping in early 1918, and returning to Istanbul via Warsaw, Berlin, and Vienna.

The defeat of the Ottomans saw the end of the Empire and its dismemberment, and the occupation of Istanbul and parts of Turkey by foreign forces. These bitter years saw also the transformation of the Old Said into the New Said, the second main period of Bediuzzaman's life. Despite the acclaim he received and services he performed as a member of the Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-İslamiye, and combatting the British, Bediuzzaman underwent a profound mental and spiritual change in the process of which he turned his back on the world, and realizing the inadequacy of the 'human' science and philosophy he had studied as a means of reaching the truth, took the revealed Qur'an as his "sole guide". In recognition of his services to the Independence Struggle, Bediuzzaman was invited to Ankara by Mustafa Kemal, but on arrival there, found that at the very time of the victory

of the Turks and Islam, atheistic ideas were being propagated among the Deputies and officials, and many were lax in performing their religious duties. He published various works which successfully countered this.

Remaining some eight months in Ankara, Bediuzzaman understood the way the new leaders were going to take, and that on the one hand he could not work alongside them, and on the other they were not to be combated in the realm of politics. So when offered various posts and benefits, he declined them and left Ankara for Van, where he withdrew into a life of worship and contemplation; he was seeking the best way to proceed.

Within a short time, Bediuzzaman's fears about the new regime began to be realized: the first steps were taken towards secularization and reducing the power of Islam within the state, and even its eradication from Turkish life. In early 1925 there was a rebellion in the east in which Bediuzzaman played no part, but as a consequence of which was sent into exile in western Anatolia along with many hundreds of others. Thus unjustly began twenty-five years of exile, imprisonment, and unlawful oppression for Bediuzzaman. He was sent to Barla, a tiny village in the mountains of Isparta Province. However, the attempt to entirely isolate and silence him had the reverse effect, for Bediuzzaman was both prepared and uniquely qualified to face the new challenge: these years saw the writing of the *Risale-i Nur*, which silently spread and took root, combating in the most constructive way the attempt to uproot Islam, and the unbelief and materialist philosophy it was hoped to instil in the Muslim people of Turkey.

Thus, it may be seen from this that the *Risale-i Nur* was written to expound and explain the truths of the Qur'an and belief to modern man, bewildered as he is by the assaults of materialist philosophy, so that he may attain true and certain belief which will not be shaken by those assaults. In explaining these truths, the *Risale-i Nur* demonstrates the Qur'an's superiority in every respect, and, although "in order not to cause aversion" philosophy's ideas are rarely openly stated, is in one respect a refutation of materialist Western philosophy. It should be stated here that Bediuzzaman was not anti-Western as such, -- indeed, he differentiated between harmful and beneficial philosophy, and hoped for the salvation of all mankind -- but was uncompromising against the unbelief and atheism which is opposed to religion; in recent times the weapon of this has mostly been materialist philosophies such as Positivism and Naturalism, which use science to justify their ideas.

As the New Said, Bediuzzaman had immersed himself in the Qur'an, searching for a way to relate its truths to modern man. In Barla in his isolation he began to write treatises explaining and proving these truths, for now the Qur'an itself and its truths were under direct attack. The first of these was on the Resurrection of the Dead, which in a unique style, proves bodily Resurrection rationally, where even the greatest scholars previously had confessed their impotence. He described the method employed in this as consisting of three stages: first God's existence is proved, and His Names and attributes, then the Resurrection of the Dead is "constructed" on these and proved. Bediuzzaman did not ascribe

these writings to himself, but said they proceeded from the Qur'an itself, were "rays shining out of from [its] truths."

Thus, rather than being a Qur'anic commentary which expounds all its verses giving the immediate reasons for their revelation and the apparent meanings of the words and sentences, the *Risale-i Nur* is what is known as a *manevisi tefsir*, or commentary which expounds the truths of the Qur'an, that is, explains and proves the verses containing the Qur'anic teachings about the essential truths of belief. For there are various sorts of commentaries. The verses mostly expounded in the *Risale-i Nur* are those concerned with truths of belief such as the Divine Names and attributes and the Divine activity in the universe, the Divine existence and Unity, resurrection, prophethood, Divine Determining or destiny, and man's duties of worship. Bediuzzaman explains how the Qur'an addresses all men in every age in accordance with the degree of their understanding and development; it has a face that looks to each age. The *Risale-i Nur*, then, explains that face of the Qur'an which looks to this age. We shall now look at further aspects of the *Risale-i Nur* related to this point.

In numerous of its verses, the Holy Qur'an invites man to observe the universe and reflect on the Divine activity within it; following just this method, Bediuzzaman provides proofs and explanations for the truths of belief. He likens the universe to a book, and looking at it in the way shown by the Qur'an, that is, 'reading' it for its meaning, learns of the Divine Names and attributes and other truths of belief. The book's purpose is to describe its Author and Maker; beings become evidences and signs to their Creator. Thus, an important element in the way of the *Risale-i Nur* is reflection or contemplation (*tefekkiir*), 'reading' the Book of the Universe in order to increase in knowledge of God and to obtain 'certain, verified belief' in all the truths of belief.

Bediuzzaman demonstrates that the irrefutable truths, such as Divine Unity, arrived at in this way are the only rational and logical explanation of the universe, and making comparisons with Naturalist and Materialist philosophy, which have used science's findings about the universe to deny those truths, show the concepts on which they are based, such as causality and Nature, to be irrational and logically absurd.

Indeed, far from contradicting them, in uncovering the order and working of the universe, science broadens and deepens knowledge of the truths of belief. In the *Risale-i Nur* many descriptions of the Divine activity in the universe are looked at through the eyes of science, and reflect Bediuzzaman's knowledge of it. The *Risale-i Nur* shows that there is no contradiction or conflict between religion and science.

In addition, all these matters discussed in the *Risale-i Nur* are set out as reasoned arguments and proved according to logic. All the most important of the truths of belief are proved so clearly that even unbelievers can see their necessity. So too, inspired by the Qur'an, even the most profound and inaccessible truths are made accessible by means of comparisons, which bring them close to

the understanding like telescopes, so that they are readily understandable by ordinary people and those with no previous knowledge of these questions.

Another aspect of the *Risale-i Nur* related to the face of the Qur'an which looks to this age, is that it explains everything from the point of view of wisdom; that is, as is mentioned again below, it explains the purpose of everything. It considers things from the point of view of the Divine Name of All-Wise.

Also, following this method, in the *Risale-i Nur* Bediuzzaman solved many mysteries of religion, such as bodily resurrection and Divine Determining and man's will, and the riddle of the constant activity in the universe and the motion of particles, before which man, relying on his own intellect and philosophy, had been impotent.

While in Barla, Bediuzzaman put the treatise on Resurrection and the pieces that followed it together in the form of a collection and gave it the name of *The Words* (*Sözler*). The pieces were thirty-two in number, the thirty-third was added later. The treatise on Resurrection became the Tenth Word. The first nine are short, simple pieces describing through the use of comparisons the virtues and benefits of belief and of worship -- in the *Risale-i Nur* are many analyses and comparisons of guidance and misguidance, belief and unbelief, which point out the grievous pains of unbelief and demonstrate that man's true happiness and progress are only to be found in recognition of the world's Owner and submission to Him.

The *Words* that follow the Tenth comprise numerous subjects, all of great importance; among them are the Twelfth and Thirteenth Words and their comparisons between the Qur'an and philosophy; the explanations of Divine Unity, Oneness, and God's closeness to us and our distance from Him in the Sixteenth and Thirty-Second Words; the proofs of the Qur'an's miraculousness in the Twenty-Fifth Word, which answers in particular criticisms made by atheists and scientists; the Twenty-Sixth on Divine Determining and man's faculty of will; the immortality of man's spirit, the angels and resurrection in the Twenty-Ninth Word; and the nature of man's ego and the transformation of minute particles of the Thirtieth. Readers may refer to the Contents at the beginning of the book for details. *The Words* was followed by *Mektubat, Letters*, a collection of thirty-three letters of varying lengths from Bediuzzaman to his students. And this was followed by *Lem'alar, The Flashes Collection*, and *Şualar, The Rays Collection*, which was completed in 1949. Included in these last two are Bediuzzaman's defence speeches from the trials at Eskişehir in 1935, and Afyon in 1948-9. Together with these are three collections of letters, one for each of Bediuzzaman's main places of exile: *Barla Lahikası, Kastamonu Lahikası*, and *Emirdağ Lahikası*.

The way the *Risale-i Nur* was written and disseminated was unique, like the work itself. Bediuzzaman would dictate at speed to a scribe, who would write down the piece in question with equal speed; the actual writing was very quick. Bediuzzaman had no books for reference and the writing of religious works was

of course forbidden. They were all written therefore in the mountains and out in the countryside. Handwritten copies were then made, these were secretly copied out in the houses of the *Risale-i Nur* 'Students', as they were called, and passed from village to village, and then from town to town, till they spread throughout Turkey. Only in 1946 were *Risale-i Nur* Students able to obtain duplicating machines, while it was not till 1956 that The Words and other collections were printed on modern presses in the new, Latin, script. The figure given for hand-written copies is 600,000.

It may be seen from the above figure how the *Risale-i Nur* movement spread within Turkey, despite all efforts to stop it. After 1950, the period of what Bediuzzaman called 'the Third Said', there was a great increase in the number of Students, particularly among the young and those who had been through the secular education system of the Republic. At the same time the number of Students outside Turkey increased. It is no exaggeration to say that with its conveying the Qur'anic message in a way that addresses and answers modern man's needs, the *Risale-i Nur* played a major role in keeping alive the Islamic faith in Turkey in those dark days, and in the resurgence of Islam that has occurred subsequently.

Above all, the people of this age want reasonable answers to everything, they want to know "why?" And although science has opened up the universe from the minutest sub-atomic particles to the obscurest, most distant reaches of space, it has remained impotent before this question; it has been unable to provide the answer to the question "why?" Whereas, taking its inspiration from the Divine Revelation of the Qur'an, the *Risale-i Nur* looks at things from the point of view of wisdom; it explains the wisdom, purposes and aims of all the various matters it discusses. It points out the purposes of everything, from the universe and all the beings in it and all the realms of creation to man and his comprehensive disposition and his duties of worship; it answers the question "why?" In addition it provides reasonable, satisfying answers to all sorts of questions to do with belief, life, man, and existence; parts of it are even written in the form of question and answer. One of the *Risale-i Nur*'s most important characteristics is this, which accounts for its unparalleled success in saving and strengthening the belief of many hundreds of thousands, and probably millions, of people throughout the world. Philosophy, and science when in the service of philosophy, cast the world into ultimate meaninglessness and man into a mire of doubts, fears, and ultimate hopelessness. In explaining the Qur'anic message for man in this modern age, the *Risale-i Nur* raises man out that dark hopelessness by illuminating with meaning both himself and the world in which he finds himself.