

Reflections on the Divine

from the Risale-i Nur Collection

Humanity's Encounter with the Divine Series

Reflections on the Divine

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Bediüzzaman and the Risale-i Nur

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

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

Bediüzzaman had seen that modern unbelief originated from science and philosophy, not from ignorance as previo-

usly. He wrote that nature is the collection of Divine signs and therefore science and religion cannot be conflicting disciplines. Rather, they are two (apparently) different expressions of the same truth. Minds should be enlightened with sciences, while hearts need to be illuminated by religion.

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

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

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

Creation Rejects Associating Partners With God*

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

Had there been gods in either [Earth or the heavens] besides God, both surely would be in disorder. (21:22)

There is no god but God, He alone; having no partner; His is the Kingdom and to Him belongs all praise; He alone gives life and makes to die; He is living and dies not; in His hand is all good. He is powerful over everything, and unto Him is the homecoming.

One night during Ramadan I mentioned that each of those eleven statements of affirmation of Unity contained an aspect of Divine Unity and a particular good tiding (for believers). I explained only the meaning of without partner in the form of an allegorical conversation. Now, at the request of brothers at the mosque and friends attending me, I have committed this conversation to writing.

Imagine someone who, on behalf of unbelievers (who attribute everything to nature or material causes,

* The Thirty-second Word / First Station

or are polytheists or atheists), presumes to be Lord or exercise Lordship over some part of creation. That is, this being alleges that he or she owns or rules, controls or disposes, of that part. Coming upon an atom, he or she informs it in the language or according to the presumptions of materialistic science or natural philosophy that he or she is its true master and owner. The atom answers in the language of truth and revealed wisdom:

I perform many tasks, and work within, alongside, or upon an infinite variety of created, ever-evolving entities. Do you have the knowledge and power to direct me in these tasks? I work and move in a measured relationship with innumerable other atoms of a like constitution.¹ Can you command and employ all of these? If you own, arrange, or manage the infinite complexity of entities of, for example, red blood cor-

¹ Each object that moves, from minute particles to planets, displays the Eternally-Besought-of-All's stamp and Unity. Also, by virtue of its motion, each takes possession of the places in which it enters in Unity's name, thus adding them to the property of its true Owner. Each immobile entity, from plants to fixed stars, is like a seal of Unity that shows its location as missives of their Maker. Each plant and fruit is a stamp and seal of Unity that argues, in Unity's name, that its habitat and native place is the missive of its Maker. In short, by moving in Unity's name, each entity takes possession of all entities, which means that one who cannot master all stars cannot master a single particle.

puscles, of whose atoms I am but one, and do so with perfect knowledge and discipline, then presume to be my master, and only then presume me to be attributable to any other than God.

But you cannot do so, be silent then! You do not own me and cannot interfere in my operation, for all of my movements and activities are so purposeful and arranged that only One with infinite Wisdom and all-encompassing Knowledge can run them. If any other had a hand in it, there would be confusion. How can anyone who, like you, who cannot even give yourself life, whose seeing and feeling are blind to truth, who sees yourself as subject to chance and accidents of nature, even presume to interfere in my functioning?

The pretender responds as all materialists do: “Be your own master then! Why do you claim to be in the service of some other power?” The atom replies:

If I had a mind with knowledge as all-encompassing as the sun’s light and with power as intense as its heat; if I had powers of feeling as all-embracing as the seven colors in its light; if I had faces and eyes to turn to every being and every place with which my being and my place are connected; and if I had authority in and over all these connections—then perhaps, I might have claimed to be my own master. Yet even then, had I done so, I only would have been as foolish as yourself. Now get away from me, for you have no business with me!

The pretender, giving up on the atom, looks for a particular and harmonious grouping of atoms in the

cell of a living body. Coming upon a red blood corpuscle (and thinking he or she can grasp its nature and control its workings), he or she speaks to it in the name of material causality and the language of natural philosophy: "I possess you. I am your master, and you work for me." The red blood corpuscle answers in the language of truth and Divine Wisdom:

But I am not alone. If you also possess all my fellows in the blood army with whom I share the same formation pointing to our Maker, as well as the same duties and functions, and if you have the full and detailed knowledge, the awesome and subtle power, as well as the perfect wisdom to direct all the body cells through which we move and in which we operate, there might be some sense to your pretensions. But as you depend on blind and deaf nature or natural forces, you can have no influence over us, let alone mastery over me. Our order is as perfect as it is intricate. Only One Who sees, hears, and knows all things forward and backward in time and in all directions of space; only He Who governs the being and operation of all that is; only He could be our true sovereign and master. So go your way, for I have better and more important things to do than answer your nonsensical pretensions!

Unable to deceive the red blood corpuscle, the pretender moves on and comes across a larger entity they call "cell." Addressing it in the familiar language of

natural philosophy, he or she says: “True, the atom and the red blood corpuscle did not listen to me. I hope you can understand me. As I can see, you are composed of several smaller elements, like things arranged in a room. I can have a hand in this arrangement, and arrange and rearrange it. You can be my creature, and I can have power over you.” The body cell answers with wisdom and in the language of truth:

Although I am small, I perform vital tasks. I have the subtlest and yet strongest connections with all my neighboring cells, and with the whole organism of which I am a part. I perform vital functions with, for example, arteries and veins, sensory and motor nerves, electrical forces of attraction and repulsion, and the principles or elements determining my size, shape, and reproduction. If you have the knowledge and power to form an entire organism, to order and regulate the arteries and veins and nerves, and to put to work all the diverse forces and principles managing our form and function; if you can direct, with irresistible power and all-comprehending wisdom, the innumerable body cells similar to me in artistry and quality, then show your ability. Then perhaps, you might claim to master or make me.

But as you cannot, leave me—there are even now red blood cells carrying nourishment for me, white blood cells confronting diseases that might threaten me—I am busy, so do not waste my time any further with your vanity. No one as empty as you are of

true understanding, of true hearing and seeing, could ever meddle in our being. Our order is so precise, delicate, and perfect that only One with absolute Wisdom, Knowledge, and Power could control us.² If it were

² The All-Wise Maker has created the human body like a well-ordered city. Nerves function as telephones and telegraphs, while some of the blood vessels function as pipes carrying water to a fountain through which blood (the water of life) flows. Blood contains two types of corpuscles: red ones convey nutrients to the body's cells, their sustenance, according to a Divine law (analogous to merchants and officers distributing food); white ones, fewer in number, defend (analogous to soldiers) against such invaders as disease. When actively engaged in defense, they perform two revolutions like Mawlawi dervishes and display a striking and rapid fluidity. Blood repairs damage to the cells and cleans the body by collecting waste matter from the cells. As for veins and arteries, one forms channels to transport purified blood while the other forms channels for the unclean blood that gathers waste.

The All-Wise Maker created two elements in the air: nitrogen and oxygen. When oxygen encounters blood during respiration, it draws the impure carbon element polluting the blood to itself, just like amber. Combining with carbon, it transforms both substances into carbonic acid gas. Oxygen also helps to maintain body temperature and purifies the blood. In chemistry, the All-Wise Creator gave oxygen and carbon a mutual ardor, a sort of chemical affection, so that, according to Divine law, they approach each other and then combine. Science has explained how this combining, being a form of combustion, generates heat as follows:

Oxygen and carbon atoms have distinct motions that, when combined, become one motion, each pair of atoms now having the motion of one atom. Thus one of the original two motions is

otherwise, our cohesion and order would not exist or would quickly fall into chaos.

Disappointed, the pretender seeks out a still larger entity and, confronting a human body, reiterates the argument in the language of unenlightened nature and erring philosophy: “I can say that you are mine, that I have a share in owning and managing you.” The human body answers in the language of wisdom and truth and in the “natural” tongue of its order:

Do you have the knowledge and power to control and direct all human bodies similar to me that manifest the same signs of supreme power and creation? Do you have dominion over the treasuries of light, air, and water, as well as of all plants and animals, which are the ground and store of my provision and sustenance? Do you have the boundless wisdom and infinite power by which such invaluable, immaterial entities as the mind, intellect, and soul are so securely disposed in a narrow, bodily envelope, such as me, and made to “worship” by performing extremely impor-

“lost.” This “lost” motion is transformed into heat by a law of the All-Wise Creator. “Motion produces heat” is an established principle. This chemical combination removes carbon from the blood and maintain bodily temperature while, at the same time, purifying the blood. While inhaling, oxygen cleanses the body’s water of life and kindles its fire for life. While exhaling, oxygen enables words (miracles of Divine Power) to form in the mouth.

tant tasks? If you have such power, knowledge, and wisdom, demonstrate it—only then claim to own and manage me.

But as you cannot, be silent! My Maker is All-Powerful, All-Knowing, All-Seeing, and All-Hearing—this is testified to by the perfection with which I am organized and by the sign of Oneness in my face. A being as ignorant and incompetent as you could never have the least hand in His art.

The pretender, nonplussed that all points in the human body reject his or her claim to have a say, moves on and surveys humanity as a species, thinking: They live in such diverse and complex societies—I see that the devil finds a way to interfere in their affairs of will and their social relations. Is there a way for me to enter into the creation, constitution, and operation of their bodies? If I can find such a point, I will be able to control the body and its cells that turned me down.

With this intention, he or she addresses the species in the familiar language of blind nature and erring philosophy: “You appear very diverse and at great odds. I am your master and owner or, at the very least, I have a share in your making.” To this, humanity responds in the language of truth and reality, and in the tongue of wisdom and order:

Do you have the power, knowledge, and wisdom to create the rich texture covering Earth's face, woven with perfect wisdom from varied fabrics, thousands of mineral and plant and animal species, including humanity? Can you, with a like wisdom, renew this texture and do so continuously? Do you possess the all-extensive power and all-comprehending science that manages Earth, of which we are a fruit, and the universe, of which we are the seed? Can you send us, from across the universe and in measured amounts, the provisions we need for our sustenance? Can you generate all individuals of my kind, past and future, whose faces bear the same sign of supreme majesty as mine? If so, you might then, perhaps, claim mastery over me.

But as you cannot, be silent! Do not dare to say that you have a hand in me just from remarking the diversity in my kind, for that diversity is part of our ordering's perfection. Diversity and multiplicity are copies made with a perfect order from the Book of Destiny [containing the origins of beings in a perfect order] by Power. Our diversity of appearance is a sort of reproducing of our forms [dictated by Destiny]—as the perfect diversity and order of plants and animals (which are inferior to us, under our vigilance, and which we study) also testifies.

Is it at all plausible that the One Who weaves the diverse fabrics spread over and through this world's texture with great skill is other than its Maker, that the Creator of a fruit is other than the Creator of the tree from which it grows, and that the Creator of a seed is other than the Creator of the fruit it yields? You are blind,

for you do not see the miracles of His Omnipotence in my face and the wonders of His Creation in my constitution. If you had seen, you would have understood that nothing escapes my Maker's observation or tasks Him capriciously. He makes the stars as easily as He makes an atom. He creates springtime as smoothly as He creates a flower. He has placed the vast universe's index in my constitution with perfect correspondence. Could anyone who is, as you are, corporeal, incompetent, blind, and deaf have had a hand in such a Being's artistry? So be silent, and be gone!

The pretender then turns to the widespread texture overlaying Earth's face like an embellished cloak and speaks to it in the name of causality and in the language of natural philosophy: "I can manage you. I own you, or at least have a share in you." The texture answers in the name of truth and in the language of wisdom³:

If you have the skill and power to create and weave all textures that have been hung on the line of past time, laid, unlaid, and relaid seamlessly throughout all time, and that will be hung on the line of future time, according to programs and patterns pre-designed with

³ In fact, the texture is animated, continuously giving the signs of life in a regular fashion. Its embroideries are renewed continuously with perfect wisdom and order to display the various, ever-differing manifestations of its Weaver's Names.

the greatest precision and in accordance with Destiny's framework, each elegant, purposeful, and uniquely adorned; if you possess immaterial hands that can reach out from Earth's creation to its destruction, or rather, from the eternity of no-beginning to the eternity that is to come; if you have the power and science to create all individuals within this texture, restoring and renewing them in exact order and wisdom; if you can create and possess Earth itself which is, as it were, a model for me and puts me on like a veil—only if you can, only then claim mastery over me—if not, leave! You have no business here!

In my rich and harmonious diversity are demonstrated clear signs of Oneness, and the clear stamp of His Uniqueness. Only He Who controls the whole cosmos, Who can do innumerable tasks simultaneously, Who can see all beings and their actions, whether inner or outer, at the same instant, Who is present and vigilant everywhere while being unbounded by time, space, or dimension, and who has infinite wisdom, science, and power—only such a Being could ever own or have dominion over me.

The pretender turns to Earth, hoping to deceive it,⁴ and repeats the same argument in the name of

⁴ Briefly, beginning with the particle or atom, each thing visited referred the pretender to the next level: from the particle or atom to the red blood corpuscle, the cell, the body, humanity, Earth's outer garment, Earth as a globe, the sun, and the stars, respectively. Each said: "Be off! If you can subjugate the next

causality and in the language of mere naturalism: “I see that you roam about idly in the universe. Certainly you can have no master, and so I claim you.” Upon hearing this, Earth roars like thunder in the name of truth:

Do not be foolish! How can I roam about without a master? Have you ever seen any disorder, lack of wisdom or skill, in the making of my dress or in any little point or fabric of it, that you dare to say that I roam about idly? Do you presume to own my orbit, which would take some 25,000 years to traverse at a human being’s pace but which I complete in my annual round with perfect discipline and precision?⁵ Do you claim to own my ten fellow planets, which carry on their appointed tasks along their individual orbits as I do? Do you claim to have the unlimited science and power to create and control the sun, which gathers and focuses our orbits, orbits to which we are bound through the gravitation of mercy, and to make me and other planets revolve around it?

one up from me, do so, and then return and seek to master me. If you cannot subjugate that level, you also cannot subjugate me!” Thus one whose authority does not embrace stars has no acceptable claim to mastery over a single particle.

⁵ If the radius of a circle is roughly 180 million kilometers, the circle covers a distance of roughly 25,000 years [to cover on foot, provided one covers 4 kilometers (less than 3 miles) an hour and walks for 5 hours a day.]

Since you cannot plausibly make such a claim, leave me, for I have work to do. Our awesome circling, purposeful submission, and magnificent discipline show that our Maker is a Being to Whom all entities submit, and submit perfectly—as a dutiful soldier submits to his superior’s orders. He is the Wise and Absolute Ruler of Majesty, Who holds the sun and planets in their proper order as easily as He adorns each tree with its proper fruit.

Having failed to find a place in governing Earth, the pretender turns to the sun in the expectation that he or she can open a path there. Since the sun is so great an entity, he or she hopes to use it to gain control of Earth. Addressing the sun in the name of the way of associating partners with God Almighty and in the language of satanic philosophy, as sun-worshippers do, the pretender says: “You are a monarch. You are your own master. You do whatever you will.”

The sun answers in the name of truth and reality and in the language of Divine Wisdom:

No, indeed! How can you utter such an untruth! I am but an obedient officer, no more than a candle in my Master’s guest-house. I could not own so much as a fly, even its wing, for even such a small thing has such immaterial faculties and fine, exquisite works of art as its eye and ear. I do not have their like in any of my workshops. I cannot make even the smallest of them.

Though rebuked by the sun, the pretender argues in the manner of Pharaohs, arrogant creatures who promote themselves as deities: “I claim you as mine in the name of causality, since you are not your own master but merely a servant.” The sun replies in the name of truth and in the language of obedience to its Creator: “I can belong only to that Being Who has created me and all resplendent stars like me, Who, having fixed them in their stations with perfect wisdom, rotates them in glory and adorns the wide heavens thereby.”

The pretender then comes among the stars and thinks: “Perhaps I can find some clients here.” Talking to them in the name of causality and its partners and in the language of corrupt philosophy as star-worshippers do, he says: “You must be under the control of many different rulers, seeing that you are situated at such vast distances from each other.” Upon this, one star, speaking for all others, answers him:

How senseless and mindless you must be, not to see or understand the signs of the Creator’s Oneness and the stamp of His Uniqueness in our nature. Do you not know how absolute is our organization, how secure the laws we obey? You think we have no order. In fact, we are the handiwork and servants of a Unique and Indivisible Being Who holds the sky (our

sea), the cosmos (our tree), and the vastness of space (our wide, maneuvering field) in His control. Like the many-colored lamps indicating human festivities, we are luminous witnesses of His perfect Dominion, brilliant evidence blazing across boundless space, of His Kingdom and Lordship.

Each of us is a shining servant displaying His Majesty, near and far, in this world and the next, and in the many worlds beyond, within the infinitude of His Creation. Each of us is a miracle from the Power of the One, a perfectly ordered fruit on the Tree of Creation, a bright manifestation of God's Unity, a home and mount and mosque for His angels, a lamp and a sun of higher worlds, an ornament, a flower, a palace of the celestial sphere, a luminescent fish in the heavenly ocean, and each a beautiful eye set in the face of the heavens.⁶ Throughout our vast community there exists profound silence amidst tranquility, movement in wisdom, light ornament with majestic grandeur, the most varied beauty in perfect harmony, and the highest art in absolute balance.

Since you accuse us of disorder and empty distances, of having no duty and no master, while we proclaim in innumerable tongues the Unity of our Majestic Maker and His being the Eternally-Besought-of-

⁶ In other words, we are only pointers beholding the wonders of the Almighty's creation and pointing others to behold them also. The heavens observe the wonders of Earth's Divine artistry with innumerable eyes. As angels do in the skies, stars observe Earth, a display hall of wonders, and their doing so urges conscious beings to observe it attentively.

All, together with His Attributes of perfection, grace, and beauty—since you accuse us, whose purity is unstained, whose obedience and servanthood are perfect, you merit a slap in the face in payment for your absurd effrontery!

The star strikes the pretender's face in a gesture like the stoning of the devil, and hurls him from the stars' domain to the bottom of Hell. It also hurls natural philosophy into the storms of uncertainty,⁷ and chance into the well of non-existence. It hurls all who arrogate to themselves some portion in the One God's Dominion into the utter darkness of improbability and impossibility, and every argument against true religion into the lowest of the low. Then the stars together recite the holy decree: Had there been gods in either (Earth or the heavens) besides God, both would be in disorder (21:22), and affirm:

⁷ After its lapse, nature repented. Understanding that its proper purpose and obligation is not to be active and cause effects, but rather to receive and to be acted upon, it realized that it is a sort of notebook of Divine Determining, susceptible to mutation and change; a sort of program of the Lord's Power, analogous to the corpus of rules of creation instituted by the All-Powerful of Majesty, an assemblage of His laws. It assumed its duty of worship in perfect submission, admitting its absolute powerlessness and therein achieved the title of God's creation and the Lord's handiwork.

“There is no place for any partner with God, neither in the interstices of a fly’s wing nor amid the heavens’ stars and spaces.”

Glory be to You! We have no knowledge save what You have taught us. You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.

O God, bestow peace and blessings on our master Muhammad, the lamp of Your Unity amidst the multiplicity of Your creatures, and the herald of Your Oneness in the display hall of Your universe, and on his Family and Companions.

Manifestations of Divine Names*

In the Name of God,
the Merciful, the Compassionate

God, there is no god but He; His are the Most Beautiful Names. (20:8)

A sovereign has different titles by which he is known and mentioned in his government's various departments, different designations and attributes among his subjects' classes, and different names and signs for his rule's levels. For example, he is the supreme judge (justice department), chief administrator (civil service), commander-in-chief (army), and supreme teacher (education department). If you know the rest of his names and titles, you will understand that he may have as many names and titles related to his government's departments and levels of his rule.

It is as if, due to his public person and private system of communication, he is present in every department. Through his laws, regulations, and representatives, he superintends all officials, watches all subjects, and is seen by them. Behind the veil at every lev-

* The Twenty-fourth Word / First Branch

el, he administers, executes his orders, and is watchful through his decree, knowledge, and power.

Similarly, the Lord of the Worlds, the Sovereign of eternity, has reputations and designations at the levels of His Lordship's manifestations. All of these differ but correspond to each other. His Names and marks differ in the spheres of His Divinity, but their manifestations are concentric with each other. In His majestic execution of His rule, His representations and appellations differ but resemble each other. In the operations of His Power, His titles differ but are linked with each other. In the manifestations of His Attributes, He has sacred ways of disclosing Himself that differ but point to each other. In His modes of acting, His wise operations are many but perfect each other. In His colorful artistry and varied works of art, His magnificent aspects of Lordship differ but correspond to each other.

In every world and division of beings, each of His Most Beautiful Names is manifested individually. In that world or sphere in which a particular Name is dominant, all other Names are subordinate. In every level and division of beings, regardless of size, God has a particular display of Himself, a particular manifestation of Lordship, and a particular manifestation

of a Name. Although the Name in question has a universal manifestation, It concentrates on something particular in such a way that you think It is exclusive to that thing.⁸

In addition, although the All-Majestic Creator is nearer to everything than itself, He is separated from it through 70,000 veils of light. For example, consider how many veils are between the Name of Creator's particular degree of creativity manifested in you and Its universal and greatest manifestation as the Creator of the Universe. This suggests that if you can go beyond the whole universe, you may reach, through the door of being created, to the highest limit of the manifestations of the Name of Creator and draw close to the Sphere of the Attribute of Creativity.

Since the veils have windows opening onto each other, the Names appear to be concentric with each other, the designations correspond to each other, the representations are like each other, the operations

⁸ For example, God manifests almost all of His Names (e.g., the Merciful, Creator, Fashioner, All-Wise, All-Knowing, etc.) on every individual. However, a particular Name's manifestation may be more apparent on one person than the others. If the Name the All-Wise is so manifested, that person may be a wise one. Thus people have different characters and everyone has a capacity and tendency toward a particular profession. (Tr.)

perfect each other, and Lordship's various dispositions cooperate with each other, then it is surely necessary for one who recognizes Almighty God by one of His Names, titles, or aspects of His Lordship not to deny His other titles, actions, and aspects of Lordship. If we do not move from the manifestation of one Name to the other Names, we are in loss.

For example, if we do not see the All-Knowing where we see the works of the All-Powerful and the Creator, we may fall into heedlessness and misguidance by regarding nature as self-originated. Thus we always should recite "He" and "He is God," and listen and hear from everything: "He is God, the One." In unison with all creation, we should proclaim: "There is no god but He." The manifest Qur'an, through the declaration: "God, there is no god but He. His are the Most Beautiful Names," points to these truths.

If you want to observe those elevated truths closer, ask a stormy sea or the quaking Earth: "What are you saying?" You will hear them repeat: "O Majestic One. O Majestic One, O Honorable One of Might. O All-Compelling One." Ask small creatures and their young who are maintained everywhere with care and compassion: "What are you saying?" They will hymn: "O Gracious One, O Gracious One, O Most

Compassionate One.”⁹ Then listen to how the heavens sing: “O Majestic One of Grace.” Listen to Earth, which says: “O Gracious One of Majesty.” Pay attention to animals and hear them invoke: “O Most Merciful One, O Provider.” When you ask the spring, you

⁹ Once I watched some cats—they only ate, played, and slept. Why are cats, who have no duties, considered blessed? When I went to bed, a cat approached and, leaning against my pillow, put its mouth to my ear and clearly purred: “O Most Compassionate One. O Most Compassionate One.” It seemed that it was refuting, for its species, my objection about cats’ lovability and blessedness. I asked myself if that recitation were unique to that cat or general for all cats, and whether only I could hear it. The next morning I listened to other cats. All repeated this invocation, but not so clearly. At first I heard: “O Most Compassionate One” among their purring in an indistinct manner. Gradually, their purring and meowing became the same: “O Most Compassionate One” as a touching, well-articulated recitation.

I related this to some visitors. They listened carefully as well, and said that they heard it to a degree. Later, I wondered why they were reciting that Name and why they were reciting it in the way of people and not in an animal tongue. I thought: Since they are very delicate, petted like children, and live amicably with people, they need great care and compassion. When they receive it, they proclaim the All-Compassionate Creator’s Mercy in their own world as thanks for that grace. Cats regard this as a special favor of God, whereas dogs regard this as a special favor of people. Cats warn people in the sleep of heedlessness, and through their cry of: “O Most Compassionate One” remind those who attribute everything to apparent “material” causes who actually sends the help and who is the source of mercy.

will hear it reciting such Names as: “O Most Caring One, O Most Merciful One, O Most Compassionate One, O Most Munificent One, O Gracious One, O Affectionate One, O Fashioner, O Illuminating One, O Favoring One, O Adorner.”

Ask those who are truly human. See how they recite and manifest all of God’s Most Beautiful Names, and how they are inscribed on their forehead. If you look carefully, you may discern them one by one. It is as if the universe were a huge orchestra singing the Divine Names. With the songs sung in the least notes and tones mixed with the highest, the universe produces a magnificent harmony.

All of the Names are manifested on humanity. However there are many Names, and their manifestation in different ways and degrees has caused variety in the universe, in the angels’ worshipping, and among human beings. It also has caused differences among the laws of Prophets, the ways of saints, and the paths of purified scholars. For example, the All-Powerful was more predominant in Jesus than the other Names manifested in him. The All-Loving One prevails in those who follow the path of love, and the All-Wise in those who follow the path of contemplation and reflection.

Consider the following: Someone is simultaneously a teacher, officer, lawyer, and civil service inspector. In each office, that person has relations, duties, salaries, responsibilities, promotions, enemies, and rivals. He meets with the sovereign under many different titles, and having recourse to him through these titles, seeks his help in many ways. Humanity, in exactly the same way and upon whom numerous Divine Names are manifested, has many duties and is the target of many kinds of enmity.

Thus we seek refuge in God by invoking many of His Names. In fact, Prophet Muhammad, the pride of humanity and the most perfect human being, prayed to God through 1,001 of His Names in his *al-Jawshan al-Kabir* supplication, and sought refuge in Him from Hellfire. This is why God commands us in *Surat al-Nas* to seek refuge in Him through three of His Titles, and via In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, He teaches us to seek help from Him through three of His Names.

Everything is an Ode of Divine Names*

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

There is nothing that does not glorify Him with praise.
(17:44)

This consists of two topics.

First topic: According to the meaning of *There is nothing that does not glorify Him with praise*, everything has many aspects, like windows, opened on Almighty God. All truths contained in creation are based on the Divine Names. Each thing owes its existence and essential nature to one or several of God's Names. The variety of art in things and the sciences also are based on a Divine Name. For example, philosophy, in its true sense, depends on the Name All-Wise, medicine on the Name All-Healing, and geometry and engineering are based on the Names All-Determining, All-Proportioning, and All-Giving of Exact Measure.

* The Thirty-second Word / Third Station

All human arts and levels of human perfections have their sources in Divine Names. Some exacting saintly scholars have concluded: “A thing’s reality consists in Divine Names, and its nature is the inscription of those realities. The manifestations of at least twenty Divine Names can be seen in one living creature.” We will discuss this subtle and comprehensive truth through a comparison and an analysis.

When extremely skillful sculptors want to draw a beautiful flower and sculpt a beautiful woman, they first determine the general lines and then, basing themselves on exact measures and planning, pursue their goals by using the necessary engineering or design knowledge. With the compasses of knowledge and purpose (or wisdom), they draw the outer lines of the eyes, ears, and the nose, and the leaves and seed-producing parts in a proportionate manner, thereby displaying their art and accord with the parts’ actual functions. This shows that these sculptors are great artists who do everything for a purpose and put everything in its proper place.

Each sculptor attaches great importance to the work’s beauty and adornment, which greatly contributes to his or her art. As these sculptors are benevolent and want to see everybody happy, their

works give the impression of pleasure and happiness, which, in turn, suggest that the sculptors are kind and gracious. These attributes originate from their love of beings. As the sculptors want other beings to recognize and love them so that they might ask for help, a desire arising from the sculptors' compassion and desire to benefit others, they fill the woman's arms with everything beneficial and attach jewels to the flower. The sculptors' personal perfections and virtues cause compassion and tenderness for others to arise in them, and they unite beauty and love in themselves. Since their sublime feelings are so pure that they become happy and exhilarated only when they see others happy, they want to be known by others. Thus they make pictures and statues that reflect all their virtues and laudable qualities.

Similarly, the All-Wise Maker has created Paradise and the world, the heavens and Earth, animals, jinn and humanity, and angels and spirit beings by manifesting His Names. He determines each according to certain measures and gives each a certain form. This displays His Names the All-Fashioner, All-Determining, and Giver of Measure. Fashioning, determining, and giving of measure are based on Knowledge and Wisdom, and therefore point to the Divine Names the All-Knowing and All-Wise.

By manifesting His Names the All-Munificent and All-Gracious, He equips His creatures with all necessary well-proportioned parts and gives each part many complex functions. By manifesting the same Names, He furnishes and adorns Earth with minerals, plants, and animals, and also provides Paradise with gardens, palaces, and houses, each of which has a particular beauty and functions.

The All-Wise Creator equips His creatures with the results of showing His Names the All-Munificent and All-Gracious, as if each embodied munificence, grace, and adornment. What leads His Munificence and Graciousness to such a display is His love of creatures and His will to be known by animate beings and loved by conscious ones. Thus the Names the All-Munificent and All-Gracious exhibit the Names the All-Loving and Recognized or Known One.

He adorns all creatures with delicious fruits and the lovely benefits therefrom, bestowing on them all kinds of bounties. This points to the Names the Giver of Bounties and All-Compassionate, and shows their manifestations from behind apparent veils. His will to show His Mercy and Affection leads the One Who is independent of creation to show His Munificence and Compassion, which causes creatures

to recite the Names the All-Merciful and All-Affectionate. His Essential Beauty and Perfection stimulate Him to manifest His Mercy and Affection, to show the Names the All-Beautiful with the All-Loving and All-Compassionate, which are contained in It. Absolute beauty is loved for itself, and the One with absolute beauty loves Himself. Therefore it is both beauty and love. This is also true with perfection, which is loved for itself and not because of anything else. Therefore it is both lover and beloved.

Since a beauty of infinite perfection and a perfection of infinite beauty are loved to an infinite degree, they wish to manifest themselves in mirrors according to the mirror's capacity. As the Essential Beauty and Perfection of the Majestic Maker, the All-Wise One of Beauty, the All-Powerful One of Perfection, will to show mercy and affection, the Names the All-Merciful and All-Caring must manifest themselves. Since the will to show mercy and affection is associated with compassion and bountifulness, it urges the Names the All-Compassionate and Giver of Bounties to be manifested. Compassion and bountifulness require and cause the Names the All-Loving and the Recognized to manifest themselves.

Being loved and recognized incite manifestations of grace and munificence and cause creatures

to demonstrate the Names the All-Gracious One and the Munificent One. Grace and munificence incite the Names the All-Decorating and All-Illuminating and show their acts via the beauty and illumination seen in creatures. Decoration and illumination require manifestations of the Names the Maker and the Benevolent and demonstrate them via all creatures' beautiful countenances. Making and benevolence are based on knowledge and wisdom and show the Names the All-Knowing and All-Wise via all creatures' harmonious and purposeful organization. Demanding acts of organizing, fashioning and forming, as well as of knowledge and wisdom, demonstrate the Names the Fashioner and Giver of Measure via all creatures' general forms.

In short, the Majestic Maker has made all creatures in such a fashion that most of them, particularly animate ones, display most of the Divine Names. It is as if He clothed each creature in twenty different garments, one over the other, and inscribed several of His Names on each one. For example, as pointed out in the above comparison, there are many layers of loveliness in the apparent creation of a beautiful flower and a beautiful woman. Compare vast and universal bodies with these two particular examples.

First layer: Their general forms and appearances, which recite: “O Fashioner, O Giver of Measure, O Determiner, O Organizer.”

Second layer: Their form and appearance, including all bodily members and parts, that show many Names like the All-Knowing and All-Wise.

Third layer: The forms of beauty and adornment particular to each bodily member and part, on which are inscribed many Names like the Maker and the One Who Creates Subtly and Perfectly.

Fourth layer: The detail of ornament, beauty, and elegance given to creatures as if in the embodied form of grace and munificence. They recite: “O Gracious One, O Munificent One,” and many other Names.

Fifth layer: The delicious fruits attached to that flower and lovely children, as well as the laudable virtues given to that woman as gifts, show Names like the All-Loving, All-Compassionate, and Giver of Bounties.

Sixth layer: This layer of bountifulness and benevolence recites: “O All-Merciful, O All-Caring,” and several other Names.

Seventh layer: The bounties given to them and the results attached to their existence demonstrate such gleams of beauty and grace that they deserve

pure gratitude and love kneaded with true eagerness and tenderness. This layer manifests such Names as the All-Beautiful One of Perfection and the Perfect One of Beauty.

If a flower and a beautiful woman display so many Names through their outward forms, you may compare how many Names of universal manifestation all flowers, animate beings, and vast and universal bodies demonstrate. You may understand how many sacred, enlightening Names of God (e.g., the All-Living, Self-Subsistent, and Giver of Life) a person manifests through his or her spirit, heart, reason, life, and all other senses and faculties.

Paradise, Earth's face, and springtime are all flowers. Heaven is a flower; the stars are its gilded embroideries. The sun is a flower; the seven colors in its light are its dyes. The cosmos is a beautiful, macro-human being; humanity is a normo-universe. Spirit beings, angels, jinn, and humanity have been fashioned, organized, and created as if they were beautiful individuals. As they collectively and individually manifest the All-Majestic Being's Names, each one is a different mirror to His Beauty, Perfection, Mercy, and Love. Each is also a different and true witness, as well as a different sign, of His Infinite Beauty, Per-

fection, Mercy, and Love. As all boundless perfections are possible only in the sphere of Divine Unity and Oneness or Uniqueness, any perfections imagined outside of this sphere are false.

The realities of things are based on the Divine Names, or rather they are manifestations of those Names. All things mention their Maker in numerous tongues. Also, know one of the meanings of “There is nothing that does not glorify Him with praise.” Say: “Glory be to Him Who is veiled through His manifestation’s intensity.” Understand the reason why He is the All-Mighty, All-Wise; He is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate; He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful,” and similar phrases repeated at the end of Qur’anic verses.

If you cannot see clearly the Names displayed on a flower, ponder on Paradise, look at spring attentively, or examine Earth’s face. You can read clearly the Names inscribed in those huge flowers of Mercy and see the Names’ distinct manifestations.

* * *

The following points to a flower from the eternal garden of this verse (17:44):

Every tree in blossom is an ode
rhythmic and well-composed,

singing the high and manifest praises
of the Creator.
Or something with multiple eyes opened
to watch,
and cause others to watch the wonders
of the Maker's art displayed.
Or has clothed its members in green for
their festival
so that its Lord may observe
His illustrious works and gifts upon it,
while itself displays in the display
hall—Earth—
His Mercy's embellishments before
humanity's eyes,
thereby proclaiming the wisdom in
its creation,
in that significant treasures are stored in it
by the Grace and Generosity of the
Sustainer of its fruits:
Glory be to Him, how generous
His favoring,
how clear the arguments for Him,
how manifest are His proofs!

The imagination sees angels clothed in bodies from the (branches of) these trees resembling thousands of flutes, and from these flutes are heard songs of praises of the All-Living One. The leaves are each a tongue reciting: "O Living One," and chanting all together: "There is no god but He."

Say: “O God, Master of the Kingdom, You give kingdom to whomever You will and withdraw kingdom from whomever You will.”

They incessantly utter: “O Truth,” announce: “O All-Living One,” and together proclaim: “God.”

The Colorful Page of the Book of the Universe*

Do they not look at the heaven above them, how We
have built it and adorned it? (50:6)

Look at the sky's face, where you see a silence in restful serenity, a purposive motion, radiance in majesty, a smile in adornment, all combined in creation's orderliness and art's symmetry. Its candle's brilliance, its lamp's dazzle, and its stars' glitter manifest infinite Sovereignty for those with insight and sound reasoning.

The following expounds the lines above in interpreting the verse (50:6): The verse draws attention to the sky's adorned and beautiful face. People who observe it with care must notice the silence in the extraordinary calmness and apparent rest observed there, and conclude that the sky has assumed that form through an Absolutely Powerful One's order and subjugation. If the heavenly bodies roamed at random, with their enormous size and speed of motion, the resulting noise would deafen everybody. They also

* The Thirty-second Word / A Short Addendum

would cause such tumult and confusion that the universe would collapse. If 20 buffaloes move together in the same area, you can guess what great uproar and confusion they would cause. However, according to astronomers, some moving stars are 1,000 times larger than Earth and move at a speed 70 times faster than a cannonball. Given this, from the silence of the heavenly bodies in calmness and rest, you may understand the extent of the Power of subjugation belonging to the Majestic Maker and the All-Powerful One of Perfection, and the degree of the stars' submission and obedience to Him.

A purposive motion: The verse orders us to see the purposive motion in the sky. That extremely strange and mighty motion takes place in absolute dependence on an extraordinarily subtle and comprehensive purpose. The immensity and order of a factory whose wheels and machinery turn and toil in wisdom, in perfect order and for wise purposes, show to what extent its engineer is learned and skillful. In the same way, with the sun in the center and mighty planets revolving around it in a perfect, subtle order for many wise purposes, the solar system shows the extent of the All-Powerful One's Power and Wisdom.

Radiance in majesty and a smile in adornment: The sky contains a radiance of such majesty and a

smile of such adornment that it shows the splendid sovereignty and beautiful art that the Majestic Maker controls. In the same way as innumerable illuminations used on special occasions to show the sovereign's majesty and his country's advanced civilization, the vast heavens, with their majestic glittering stars, show to attentive eyes the perfection of the Majestic Maker's sovereignty and the beauty of His art.

All combined in the orderliness of creation and the symmetry of art: The verse says:

See the order and balance in the sky and know how powerful and wise the Creator is. When you see someone turning numerous objects one round the other in a perfect order and with a special, delicate balance for many wise purposes, you may guess how wise, powerful, and skillful that one is. Likewise, together with their numberless stars of awesome size and speed, the vast heavens in their tremendous immensity have performed their duties for billions of years according to an established measure and with a certain, sensitive balance. They have never transgressed their limits, and have never caused even the slightest disorder. This shows to attentive eyes just how sensitive and exact is the measure according to which their Majestic Maker exercises His Lordship.

Like similar verses in *Surat al-Naba'*, among others, the verse also indicates that the Majestic Creator has subjugated the sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies.

Its candle's brilliance, its lamp's dazzle, and its stars' glitter manifest the Infinite Sovereignty for those with insight and sound reasoning: Almighty God has hung on the world's adorned roof a sun-like lamp that gives heat and light. He uses this as a "pot" of light to write the Eternally-Besought-of-All's "letters" on the lines of day and night on the pages of the seasons.

Like the phosphorescent hour-hands of a clock in a tall tower, He has made the moon in heaven's dome the hour-hand of the largest clock of time. He causes it to move through its mansions according to a perfect measure and fine calculations, as if He leaves a different crescent to each night and then folds all of them in itself (making it invisible). Furthermore, He has gilded the sky's beautiful face with stars that glitter and smile in that dome. All this points to His Lordship's infinite Sovereignty and His Divinity's magnificence and invites thinking people to believe in His Existence and Unity.

Look at the colorful page of the Book of
the Universe,
and see how the golden pen of the Power
has inscribed it!

No point has been left dark for those
who can see with the eyes of their hearts.
It is as if God wrote His signs with light.
See what an astounding miracle of wisdom

the universe is!
See how tremendous a spectacle the space
of the universe is!
Listen to the stars and heed their beautiful
sermons!
See what is written in these luminous
missives of Wisdom!
All of them are jointly delivering this
fruitful discourse:
Each of us is a radiant proof for
the majestic Sovereignty of an All-
Powerful One of glory.
We bear witness to the Maker's Existence
and to His Unity and Power.
We are His subtle miracles sending
light to gild
the face of the Earth, and on which the
angels make excursions.
We are the heavens' innumerable
discerning eyes
directed to Paradise and overseeing Earth.
We are the exquisite fruits attached
to the heavenly branch of the
Tree of Creation,
and to the twigs of the Milky Way,
attached by
the Majestic, All-Gracious Being's
hand of wisdom.
For the heavens' inhabitants we are
traveling mosques,
revolving houses, and exalted homes,
light-diffusing lamps, mighty
ships, planes.

We are miracles of the Power of the
All-Powerful One
of Perfection, the All-Wise One
of Majesty.
Each of us is a wonder of His creative art,
a rarity of His Wisdom, a marvel of His
creation, a world of light.
To the one who is truly human,
we present countless proofs in
countless tongues.
The atheists' eyes, may they be blind,
never see our faces,
nor do their ears hear our speech.
We are signs that speak the truth.
On us is the same stamp and seal.
We obey and glorify our Lord, and
mention Him in worship.
We are ecstatic lovers in the Milky
Way's widest circle,
the circle reciting our Lord's Names.

Reflecting on God's Singleness while looking at the fruit tree in front of my room, a series of reflections occurred to me. I relate them below.

Glory be to Him Who has made the garden of His Earth a display hall of His art. He uses it to exhibit His Wisdom, manifest His Power, cause His Mercy to blossom, the seeds of His Paradise to be sown, and His creatures to come and depart. Adorned animals, ornamented birds, fruit-bearing trees, and flowering

plants are all miracles of His Knowledge, wonders of His art, gifts of His Munificence, and offerings of His Favoring. Flowers smiling because of beautiful fruits, birds singing at the dawn breeze, raindrops glittering on flowers' cheeks, and mothers' compassion for their infants—all this is because the All-Loving One wills to make Himself known, the All-Merciful One wills to make Himself loved, the All-Compassionate One wills to make His Compassion known, and the All-Favoring One wills to make His Affection recognized by humanity, jinn, angels, and other spirit beings.

Each fruit and seed is a miracle of Divine Wisdom, a wonder of Divine art, a gift of Divine Mercy, a proof of Divine Oneness, and a sign of God's bounties in the Hereafter. They are true witnesses of His all-comprehensive Power and all-inclusive Knowledge, as well as mirrors to His Oneness in this world of multiplicity, for in the tongue of its being, each one says: "This elaborate tree is included in me. Don't be absorbed in its elaboration. All its parts and features are encapsulated in me." A seed is like the fruit's heart, a mirror to Divine Oneness. In the tongue of its being, it "recites" in its heart the Divine Names recited by the entire tree.

Seeds are also signs of Divine Destiny and embodied symbols of Divine Power. Through them, Destiny indicates and Power alludes to the fact that each elaborate tree has grown from one seed and so points to its Maker's Oneness, Who has no partner in its creation and fashioning. After it has grown and elaborated itself fully, it encapsulates all its laws, realities, and life-history in a fruit. As all of its meaning is con-

tained in a seed, it shows the Majestic Creator's wisdom in His creation and government. As in the case of that tree, Oneness also is the source of the Tree of Creation's existence and growth. Similarly, being the fruit of the universe, humanity points to Unity in the multiplicity of beings, and the human heart sees the meaning of Unity in multiplicity with the eye of belief.

These fruits and seeds are also tablets of Divine Wisdom through which Wisdom speaks to conscious beings like this:

This tree's life and the efforts spent for its growth are aimed at its fruits, which represent it and is the aim of its growth. Its life is aimed at the seeds, because each seed is an index bearing the tree's entire meaning. Thus, the One Who creates the tree and the necessary conditions for its growth aims all manifestations of His Names concerned with the tree's life at the fruit, the *raison d'être* of its existence. Furthermore, that huge tree is sometimes pruned to control its growth and make it yield better fruits for many years; they cut off some parts of it so that it may rejuvenate.

Similarly, as we are the Tree of Creation's fruit, we are the reason for the universe's creation and existence, and the human heart is the most illumined and comprehensive mirror of the Maker of the universe. Because of this, humanity undergoes frequent pruning in the form of convulsions, revolutions, upheavals, and physical and social change, and it will cause the destruction and re-construction of the universe. The door of this world will be closed and the door of a new one be opened for its judgment.

Each Science Speaks of God in Its Own Tongue*

[NOTE: The following is a brief pointer to one of the thousands of the universal proofs of the pillar of belief in God, many of which, together with explanations, are in the *Risale-i Nur*.]

In Kastomanu, some high-school students asked: “Tell us about our Creator, for our teachers do not speak of Him.” I replied that each science they study continuously speaks of God, the Creator, and makes Him known in its own tongue. I told them to listen to the sciences, not their teachers, and to consider the following examples:

A well-equipped, well-designed pharmacy has many medicines and pills composed of different precisely measured components. This indicates an extremely skillful and learned pharmacist. In the same way, the pharmacy of Earth has countless life-giving cures and medicaments (implanted within all plant and animal species). This shows and makes known, through medical science, that the All-Wise One of

* The Thirteenth Word / Second Station

Majesty is the Pharmacist of the largest pharmacy on Earth.

A wonderful factory produces thousands of different cloths woven from a simple material. This makes known a manufacturer and skillful mechanical engineer. Likewise, our planet is a traveling machinery or factory of the Master. Its countless parts, each having innumerable machines, show and make known its Manufacturer and Owner through engineering.

A shop that serves as an organized storage place for different provisions shows that it has a wondrous proprietor, preparer, and distributor of provisions and foodstuffs. In the same way, the All-Merciful One's foodstore—Earth—is a vessel of the Glorious One that annually traverses a wide orbit and houses innumerable species requiring different foods. It is filled every spring, like a huge wagon, with uncountable different provisions which it then brings to all living creatures whose sustenance was exhausted during the winter. The Master's depot and shop, which holds vast varieties of goods, equipment, and conserved food, makes its Owner, Manager, and Organizer known and loved through economics.

Imagine an army of tribes, each one requiring unique provisions, weapons, uniforms, drills, and

demobilization. If its miracle-working commander meets all their needs on his own, without forgetting and confusing any of them, the army and camp will point to him and make him loved and appreciated. In the same way, every spring a single Commander-in-Chief provides a newly recruited Divine army of countless animal and plant species with uniforms, rations, weapons, training, and demobilizations in a perfect and regular fashion. He forgets nothing and does not become confused. This makes Him known, through military science, as Earth's Ruler, Master, Administrator, and Most Holy Commander. His perfection causes admiration and acclaim, and makes Him loved, praised, and glorified.

Imagine a magnificent city illuminated by millions of mobile and fixed electric lamps with an inexhaustible fuel and power source. This makes known a wonder-working artisan and an extraordinarily talented electrician who manages the electricity, makes the lamps, establishes the power source, and brings the fuel. Such a person is admired, congratulated, and loved by others.

In just the same way, some lamps (stars and planets) in this palace of the world's roof, in this city of the universe, are far larger than Earth. They move

with amazing speed, but in a very delicate order. They do not collide with each other, become extinguished, or run out of fuel. Astronomers say that our sun, a lamp and stove in the All-Merciful One's guest-house, is several billion years old and a million times larger than Earth. To keep burning, each day it needs as much oil as the seas of Earth, as much coal as its mountains, or as many logs and wood as 10 Earths.

Such lamps point with their finger of light to an infinite power and sovereignty that, in turn, illuminates the sun and other similar stars without oil, wood, or coal. It does not allow them to be extinguished or collide with each other, even though they are larger than those lamps and are managed more perfectly. The science of electricity and the stars' testimony make known this vast exhibition's Monarch, Illuminator, Director, and Maker. They also make Him loved, glorified, and worshipped.

Imagine a marvelous book. A different book is finely written within each line, and a sura is inscribed in each word with a fine pen. This book is most meaningful and expressive, and all of its subjects corroborate each other. Such a book shows clearly that it is the product of a particular artist possessed of extraordinary perfections, arts, and skills. It makes the au-

thor appreciated with such phrases as: “What wonders God has willed” and “Blessed be God.”

The same is true of the “macro-book” of the universe. We can see a pen at work, inscribing on Earth’s face (a sheet) countless plant and animal species (volumes). They are created all together, one within the other, without error or confusion and so perfectly and finely that an ode is compressed in a word like tree, and a book’s complete index in a seed-sized point. The sciences of nature, reading, and writing make known, to the degree that this infinitely meaningful compendium of the universe, this macro-Qur’an of the cosmos, in each word of which are numerous examples of wisdom and which is greater and more perfect and meaningful than the book in the example, the Book of the Universe’s Inscriber and Author and His infinite perfections. In the meaning of “God is the Greatest,” it makes Him known. In the glorification of “Glory be to God,” it describes Him. Through praises like “All praise be to God,” it makes Him loved.

Like those mentioned, hundreds of sciences make the Majestic Creator of the universe known by His Names. Through its extensive measure, particular mirror, far-reaching view, and searching and instructing perspectives, each science makes His At-

tributes and perfections known. The Qur'an of Miraculous Expression frequently describes our Creator through such phrases as "the Lord of the heavens and Earth" and "He created the heavens and Earth" in order to teach the decisive proof explained above (which is a magnificent and brilliant proof of Divine Oneness).

This is what I told the students, who accepted and affirmed it, saying: "We thank God, for we have received an absolutely true and sacred lesson. May God be pleased with you." I added that each of us is a living machine subject to many sorrows and capable of knowing many pleasures. Although wholly impotent, we have infinite physical and spiritual enemies. Although wholly destitute, we have infinite outer and inner needs and suffer continual blows of decay and separation. But we can be connected to the Majestic Monarch via belief and worship, and find therein a point of support against our enemies and a source of help for our needs.

All people take pride in the honor and rank of the highly placed one to whom they are connected. Imagine that you are connected to the infinitely Powerful and Compassionate Monarch through belief, that you enter His service through worship

and thereby change the announcement of your execution into welcome discharge papers. This lets you understand some degree of the contentment, thankfulness, and pride you will feel.

I gave the prisoners and the students the same message: Those who recognize and obey Him prosper even if they are in prison, while those who forget Him are wretched prisoners even if they live in palaces. Once a wronged but fortunate [due to his belief and being martyred] man said to the wretched wrongdoers who were executing him: “I’m not being executed; rather, I’m being discharged from my duties and going to eternal happiness. Moreover, as I can see you even now condemned to eternal punishment, I’m taking complete revenge on you.” He then said: “There is no god but God,” and died happily.

Glory be to You. We have no knowledge save what You have taught us. Truly, you are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

He: A Point of Divine Unity*

In His Name, be He glorified.
There is nothing but it glorifies
Him with praise.

My dear and faithful brothers and sisters! While reflecting on air during a mental journey, a subtle point related to Divine Unity suddenly became clear to me in the word He in “There is no deity but He” and “Say: He is God.” I saw that the way of belief is so easy as to be necessary, and that the way of misguidance and associating partners with God is so hard as to be inconceivable. I shall explain this comprehensive matter briefly.

A handful of soil serves as a flowerbed for hundreds of flowers. If this process is attributed to nature or causality, each handful must contain hundreds of minute machines or factories [to produce the flowers] and an immaterial factory [to determine and govern their lives in place of Divine Knowledge and Destiny]. Or, each atom must know how to make each flower’s different characteristics and liv-

* The Thirteenth Word / Second Station

ing elements. Thus each atom would have infinite knowledge and power, which are unique to God.

Each air molecule (a conductor of Divine Will and Command) in each gust, each shift of air making the sound He, must have minute centers, exchanges, receivers, and transmitters of all human means of communication so that each air molecule can perform those countless acts at the same time. Or, each atom or molecule must control all relevant faculties (of mind, spirit, personality, etc.) of all means of communication, know their users' languages, and transmit them to other particles at the same time. Unbelievers, naturalists, and materialists ask us to believe this impossibility.

If attributed to the Majestic Maker, however, all air particles become soldiers under His Command. Through their Creator's permission and Power, their connection to and reliance on Him, and the manifestation of their Maker's Power, they perform their innumerable universal duties as easily as if they were one atom with only one duty. Their duties are performed instantly, and with the ease of uttering He and the movement of air. And so air becomes a "page" for the Pen of Power's endless, wonderful, orderly inscriptions. Its particles become the Pen's

ribs, and the particles' duties become the points inscribed by the Pen. All of this is done with the same ease as it takes to move one atom.

While observing and studying the world of air, I saw this truth clearly and in detail. I realized with a certainty based on knowledge that this is so because the actual word *He* and its utterance are both brilliant proofs and gleams of Divine Unity. I understood that its meaning and resonances contain a radiant manifestation of Divine Oneness and strong proof of Divine Unity. Moreover, that proof contains an indication to the identity of the One to Whom the indefinite, third-person, singular pronoun *He* refers. I came to know that both the Qur'an of Miraculous Expression and those who constantly recite the Divine Names frequently repeat this sacred word to express Divine Unity.

If several points are jumbled around one, it is almost impossible to distinguish that point. If you do several jobs simultaneously, you will be confused. If a living creature is loaded with many burdens at once, it will be crushed. If you listen to or say many words simultaneously, they become confused and muddled.

However, I saw with a certainty based on clear observation that although thousands of points, letters, and words are deposited in each air molecule—even in each atom—they are conveyed without confusion or irregularity. Also, the air performs its duties simultaneously and without confusion. Each air molecule or atom bears heavy burdens without lagging behind or displaying any weakness. Also, I saw countless words enter ears and leave mouths with perfect order. By performing all of its extraordinary duties, each atom and air molecule says in the tongue of its being and functioning, in ecstasy and perfect freedom, and through its testimony: “There is no deity but He” and “Say: He is God, the One.” All of them travel among air-clashing waves like lightning and thunderstorms in perfect order and harmony.

Given this, can we assert seriously that each atom or air molecule necessarily has infinite wisdom, knowledge, will, power, and all qualities needed to dominate all other particles so that it can perform those functions? Or, from a position of certainty based on knowledge, clear observation, and personal experience, can we assert logically that air functions here as a changing “page” for the Pen of Power and Destiny, used by the All-Majestic One with infinite knowledge and wisdom, and as a sign-

board (the Tablet of Abrogation and Confirmation) reflecting a changeable copy of the Divine decrees preserved on the Supreme Preserved Tablet?

Air shows these wonders and manifestation of Divine Oneness by transmitting sound, and shows the impossibility of what the misguided assert. In the same way, it performs other duties (e.g., transmitting such subtle forces as electricity and light, attraction and repulsion) while simultaneously transmitting sound. It also carries out duties essential for plant and animal life (e.g., respiration and pollination) with perfect order and without confusion.

Air is a very important means of conveying the Divine Will and Command. It performs its duties without any real or imagined interference from random chance, blind force, deaf nature, confused and aimless causality, or powerless, lifeless, and unknowing matter. I also understood that each atom and air molecule proclaims in the tongue of its being and functioning: "There is no deity but God" and "Say: He is God, the One." Just as I witnessed these wonders in the physical aspect of air with the key of He, so air itself became a key, like He, to the World of Symbols or Ideas and the World of Meaning.

Peace be upon everybody!

How Beings Worship God*

Have you not seen that before God prostrate all that is in the heavens and in Earth, and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the beasts, and a great number among humanity? There are still a great number unto whom the punishment is justly due. Those whom God scorns, there is none to give them honor. Surely God does what He wills. (22:18)

From the treasure of this comprehensive verse, I will discuss only one jewel: The Qur'an states that everything in creation prostrates, worships, praises, and glorifies Almighty God according to their capacities and the Divine Names that have been bestowed upon them. I explain one type of this worship below.

A mighty lord employs four classes of workers to build a large city or a magnificent palace. The first class, consisting of his slaves, receives no wages or salaries and is content with the indescribable enthusiasm and joy coming from every action, all of which are done to please their lord by carrying out

* The Twenty-fourth Word / Fourth Branch

his orders. As these slaves praise him and enumerate his virtues, they derive more pleasure and enthusiasm. They have no further demand than their connection with their lord, which they know to be a great honor. They also receive spiritual pleasure from supervising in their lord's name all that is done in his dominion and watching it from his viewpoint. They feel no need for wages, rank, or promotion.

The second class consists of ordinary servants who are unaware of the universal purposes behind their employment and what significant results it will yield. Some imagine that they are working for the small wage that the lord pays them regularly. The third class comprises animals used for certain construction-related tasks and deeds. Since their jobs correspond to their abilities, they get some sort of pleasure. This is why there is a certain pleasure in all activities. Members of this class are content with their food and the pleasure they receive as wages. The fourth class consists of those who know what they are doing, why and for whom they are working, why the others are working, and what the lord's overall purpose is. They supervise other workers and are paid according to their rank.

In exactly the same way, the Lord of the Worlds, the All-Majestic Lord of the heavens and Earth, the All-Gracious Builder of this world and the next, uses angels, animals, inanimate objects, plants, and people in this palace of the universe, in this Realm of Causality. He does this not out of need, as He is the Creator of everything, but for certain instances of wisdom like the requirements of His Might and Honor, Greatness and Lordship. He has charged these four classes with unique duties of worship.

THE FIRST CLASS ARE ANGELS. They are never promoted, for their ranks are fixed and determined. They receive a specific pleasure from the work itself and a radiance from worship. In short, their reward is found in their service. Humanity is nourished by and derives pleasure from air, water, light, and food; angels are nourished by and receive pleasure from the lights of remembrance, glorification, worship, knowledge, and love of God. They are created from light, and so light is sufficient for their sustenance. Even fragrant scents, which are close to light, are a sort of enjoyable nourishment for them, for pure spirits take pleasure in sweet scents.

Working at the command of the One Whom they worship and for His sake, serving in His name and

supervising through His view, gaining honor through connection with Him and being “refreshed” by studying His Kingdom’s material and immaterial dimensions, and being satisfied by seeing the manifestations of His Grace and Majesty give them an elevated bliss that the human mind cannot comprehend or perceive.

One class of angels worships and another class works (another form of worship). Working angels have a kind of human occupation. If one may say so, some are like shepherds or farmers. Earth is like a farm, and an appointed angel supervises its animal species by the All-Majestic Creator’s command, leave, power, and strength, and for His sake. Each animal species has a lesser angel appointed as a kind of shepherd.

Earth is an arable field for sowing plants. An angel is appointed to supervise all of them in Almighty God’s name and by His Power. Angels of lower rank worship and glorify Almighty God by supervising specific plant species. Michael, one of the bearers of God’s Throne of Sustenance—an official of the highest rank whom God employs to veil His acts related to providing for all His creatures—superintends these angels.

These angelic shepherds and farmers do not resemble human beings, for they supervise purely for God's sake, in His name, and by His Power and Command. They only observe the manifestations of God's Lordship in the species entrusted to them, study the manifestations of Divine Power and Mercy in it, communicate to it the Divine commands through some sort of inspiration, and somehow arrange its voluntary actions.

Their supervision of plants in particular consists of representing, in their angelic tongue, the plants' glorification made in the tongue of their being. They proclaim in their angelic tongue the praises and exaltations that plants offer to the Majestic Creator through their lives, regulate and use the plants' faculties correctly, and direct them toward certain ends. Such services are actions done through their partial willpower and a kind of worship and adoration. Angels do not originate or create their actions, for everything bears a stamp particular to the Creator of all things, Who has no co-creators. In short, whatever angels do is their worship and so differs from ordinary human acts.

THE SECOND CLASS ARE ANIMALS. Since animals also have an appetitive soul and a partial will, their

work is not “purely for the sake of God” in the sense that, to some extent, they take a share for their selves. Therefore, since the Majestic and Munificent Lord of the (Universal) Kingdom is All-Kind and Generous, He gives them a wage as their share. For example, the All-Wise Creator employs the nightingale, renowned for its love of roses, for five aims:

- To proclaim, in the name of animal species, the intense relationship between them and plant species.
- To be an orator of the Lord among animals, which may be considered guests of the All-Merciful One, in need sustenance, used to acclaiming the gifts sent by the All-Munificent Provider and to announcing their joy.
- To announce on each plant the welcome offered to them [by animals] in return for the help plants offer animals.
- To announce, in plants’ beautiful faces, animals’ intense need for plants, a need in the degree of love and passion.
- To offer, with a most pleasant yearning, a most graceful glorification and in a most delicate rose-like form, to the Court of Mercy of the All-Majestic and Gracious and Munificent Lord of All Kingdom.

God uses the nightingale for other aims and meanings. The nightingale acts to achieve these aims and meanings for His sake. It speaks in its own tongue, and we understand these meanings from its touching songs. If, unlike angels and spirit beings, it does not know exactly what its songs mean, this does not harm our understanding, for “one who listens may understand better than one who speaks.” A clock tells the time although it is unaware of it; a nightingale’s lack of detailed knowledge about these aims does not mean that it is not used for these aims. Its wage is the delight it derives from looking on smiling, beautiful roses, as well as the pleasure it receives from talking with them and unburdening itself to them. In other words, its touching songs are not complaints arising from animal grief, but rather are thanks for the All-Merciful One’s gifts.

Compare the nightingale with other small animals or insects, and you will see that each works for certain purposes. Through a particular pleasure, included in their duties as wages, they serve certain important aims contained in the Lord’s creation. Like an ordinary sailor receiving a small wage for working as a steersman on an imperial vessel, each animal employed in its God-assigned duty receives a particular wage.

A complementary note: Singing God's praise and glorification in this way is not unique to the nightingale. Most species contain one or more members that, like the nightingale, represent its species' finest feelings with the finest glorification in the finest verse. The numerous and various "nightingales" of flies and insects, in particular, sing their glorifications in fine poetry to other members of their species and give them pleasure.

Some are nocturnal. The poetry-reciting friends of all small animals sing their praises and glorifications of God when all beings enter night's peaceful silence. Each leads and is followed by their circle of silent invocation of God's Names in reciting and glorifying their Majestic Creator with their hearts. Another group is diurnal. During daytime in spring and summer, they proclaim the Most Merciful and Compassionate One's mercy of the to all living beings from the "pulpits" of trees with their ringing voices, pleasant tunes, and poetic glorifications. As though each led a circle of loud recitation of God's Names, they arouse their audiences to ecstasy. This causes each species to begin singing the Names of the All-Majestic Creator in its own particular tongue and tone.

Thus every species of beings, even stars, has a leading reciter and light-diffusing nightingale. The

most excellent, noble, illustrious, and profound, as well as the greatest and most honorable nightingale, is Prophet Muhammad. His voice is the most lyrical, his attributes are the most brilliant, his recitation of God's Names is the most perfect and comprehensive, and his thanks are the most universal. He has a most perfect identity and a most beautiful form, and brings all the beings in creation to ecstasy through his most rhythmic and most pleasant tunes and most exalted glorification. He is the glorious nightingale of humanity, the nightingale with the Qur'an. May the best of blessings and peace upon him, his Family, and his peers—the other Prophets.

Thus the glorifications and other acts of worship done by animals, in utmost obedience to God's laws of the universe's creation and operation, as well as the duties required by their existence in an amazing way through God Almighty's power, are gifts of praise offered to the Court of the All-Majestic Creator, the Giver of Life.

THE THIRD CLASS OF WORKERS are plants and inanimate objects that receive no wages, for they have no free will. Whatever they do is done purely for God's sake, by His Will and Power, and in His Name. However, as understood from their life cycles, they de-

sire some sort of pleasure from carrying out the duty of pollination and producing fruits and seeds. But they suffer no pain, while animals experience both pain and pleasure because they have some degree of choice. The fact that plants and inanimate objects have no will makes their work more perfect than that of animals. Among animal creatures possessing some sort of choice, the work of those like the bee, which are equipped with a kind of inspiration, is more perfect than those that rely on their own will.

Vegetable species pray and ask of the All-Wise Creator, each in the tongue of their beings and potentiality: “O Lord. Give us strength so that, by raising the ‘flag’ of our species throughout Earth, we may proclaim Your Lordship’s sovereignty. Grant us success so that we may worship You in every corner of the mosque of Earth. Enable us to grow in every suitable region, so that we may display the works of Your Most Beautiful Names and Your Wonderful, invaluable arts.” In response, the All-Wise Creator equips the seeds of certain species (e.g., many thorny plants and some yellow flowers) with tiny “wings of hair” so they can fly away and manifest the Divine Names on behalf of their species. He gives some species beautiful, delicious flesh that is either necessary or pleasure-giving for human be-

ings. He causes us to serve them and plant them everywhere.

Others receive a hard and indigestible “bone”-like flesh so that animals can eat them and then disperse their seeds over a wide area. He equips some with small claws that grip onto whatever touches them. They spread around and raise the “flag” of their species, exhibiting the most precious artistry of the Majestic Maker. To still other species, such as the bitter melon, He gives the force of a “shotgun” so that when the time is due, small melons fall and “shoot” their seeds to a distance of several meters so that they may be sown. They work so that, together with recitation of His Names, the All-Merciful Maker may be glorified in numerous tongues.

The All-Wise Creator, Who is the All-Powerful and All-Knowing, has created everything beautiful and with perfect orderliness. He has equipped all beings with whatever they need, directs them toward agreeable aims, and uses them in the most proper duties. He causes them to worship and glorify Him in the best manner. So if you are truly human, do not deform these beautiful things by asserting that they were created by nature, chance, or necessity. Do not foul them thereby with absurdity and

purposelessness. Do not act in an ugly fashion, and do not be ugly.

THE FOURTH CLASS ARE HUMAN BEINGS. Forming a class among the servants, they resemble angels in their extensive supervision and comprehensive knowledge, and in being the heralds of Divine Lordship. Indeed, we are more comprehensive in nature. Since we have an appetitive soul disposed toward evil (angels do not), we have the potential for almost boundless advance or decline. As we seek pleasure and a share for ourselves in our work, we resemble animals. Given this, we can receive two kinds of wages: one is insignificant, animal, and immediate; the other is angelic, universal, and postponed. Such matters have been discussed elsewhere, particularly in the Eleventh and Twenty-third words.

Subhan Allah* [Glory be to God]

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

We say Glory be to God for the following reasons:

- He is Absolutely Powerful via the Power essential to His being God, Absolutely Wealthy and free of powerlessness and need.
- He is Absolutely Perfect in His Being, Attributes and acts, and has no fault or defect. His works' perfections point to His acts' perfection, which points to His Names' perfection. His Names' perfection indicate His Attributes perfection, which testifies to His Essence's perfection. All perfection and beauty are but a dim shadow of His Perfection and Beauty. All people of spiritual experience and discovery, as well as those who unveil hidden truths in creation, agree that creation is a shadow of the Necessarily Existent Being's lights.

* From *The Seedbed of Light (Mathnawi al-Nuriya)* / The Fourth Treatise / First Chapter

- He is One and Single. He has no partners in His dominion, for the work's unity points to its doer's unity; in His being Lord and Sustainer, as indicated by the Pen's unity ["writing" on the "page" of time and space]; or in His Divinity, as Divinity requires absolute independence and being unique and peerless.
- He is All-Powerful and beginningless, without helpers and ministers, as such finite contingencies would put limits on the infinite, perfect Power.
- He is eternal and beginningless, without like or equal.
- He is the Necessarily Existent One, Who has no necessities pertaining to contingencies.
- His is the highest comparison in the heavens and earth. He is All-Mighty, All-Wise, and has no qualities attributed to Him by those with false beliefs. He has no defect, for faults and defects are particular to contingent mortals. As God is the Necessarily Existent Being, how could they be attributed to Him?
- He is the Perpetual, Eternal One Who does not change or alter, for these characteristics are particular to contingent, created beings and contrary to His absolutely necessary Existence and Oneness.

- He is the Creator of creation and space Who has no division and is not contained in space, for that is incompatible with the absolute independence essential to the Divine Being.
- He is the Eternal, Permanent One Who has no beginning or end.
- He is the Necessarily Existent Being, free of and exempt from whatever is not fitting for Him, such as incarnation and union. What relation can soil or something made of soil have with the Lord of all those who claim lordship? Being limited means being dominated, and saying that God begets something means placing limits on Him. He is absolutely free of and exempt from such mistaken beliefs and conceptions.
- He is the One Whom all angels and all that is in the heavens and on Earth glorify through what the Pen of Destiny has inscribed on their foreheads.

Al-Hamdu Lillah **[All Praise be to God]***

In the Name of God,
the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate

We say All praise be to God for the following reasons:

- All creatures and creations praise and exalt Him, either verbally or in the languages of their lives and being, by manifesting His Attributes of Perfection. In their entirety and in the languages of their having a beginning and being contingent, and of their need, destitution, and purposes they serve, they praise His Majesty.

In the languages of their displayed artistry, orderliness, balance, firmness, and perfection, and in their acts of worship and glorification, they recite His Attributes of Majesty and affirm that He is God, the Necessarily Existent, Beginningless, Perpetual, Eternal, One and Single, Peerless, Eter-

* From *The Seedbed of Light* / The Fourth Treatise / Second Chapter

nally-Besought-of-All, All-Mighty, All-Compelling, Proud, and All-Overwhelming.

They praise Him with His Attributes of Beauty and Grace, saying that He is our Creator, All-Merciful, All-Compassionate, All-Providing, All-Munificent, All-Generous, All-Loving, All-Diffusing (of blessings), All-Gracious, All-Subtle, All-Favoring, and All-Beautiful.

They mention Him with His Attributes of Perfection, saying that He is Our Creator and Owner, All-Living, Self-Subsistent, All-Sustaining, All-Knowing, All-Wise, All-Powerful, All-Willing, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, All-Speaking, and All-Witnessing. They also recite His Beautiful Names manifested in the universe.

- The universe praises, glorifies, and exalts Him by showing His Attribute of Perfection. With all its chapters, sections, pages, lines, sentences, and letters, and with the purposes it serves and the artistry and design it displays, this greatest book (the universe) is a whole in itself. Everything and everyone in it are mirrors reflecting the “lightning” of His Attribute of Majesty, the “flashes” of His Attributes of Grace and Beauty, the “gleams”

of His Attribute of Perfection, the “rays” of His Beautiful Names.

- We praise Him for the existence, which is pure good, He bestows on us; for the blessing of life, by which existence is perfected; and for the blessing of belief, the essence of true life and by which life attains perfection.
- We praise Him for the light of belief that removes darkness and illuminates the outer world as well as our inner worlds. Belief is a source of light that consists of the six pillars, from which originate the Eternal Sovereign’s rays of knowledge.
- We praise Him for belief in God, for this delivers the spirit from the darkness of annihilation, the feeling of utter desolation in the universe, seeing all things in existence as singing dirges, and from innumerable other destructive sentiments.
- We praise Him for the light of belief, which shows us Refuge, Favor, Munificence, Love, Pity, and Compassion. Belief unveils eternal life, displays its brilliance, and brings us good tidings of eternal happiness. It offers us a support and source of help, teaches us on Whom we should rely and from Whom we should seek help, and lifts the veil of lamentation from the face of the mercy envel-

oping creation. Belief also removes the pains of separation from lawful pleasures by comparing the two worlds, and enables the continuation of favors and blessings by showing the everlasting tree of favors.

The light of belief shows the true nature of all things and states thought to be controversial, strange, dead, and fearful, and makes it clear that they are all friendly, familiar, living, and amicable. This light embraces all worlds and this realm and the next, which are replete with the gifts of Mercy for believers. Thus believers must say: “All praise be to God for whatever He has created,” and approve of and be satisfied only with Him as Lord and Master. They must set their hearts on Him as the only One worthy of worship and love, and the object or goal of life.

- We praise the Lord of the Worlds for His “mercy” for the worlds, which is our master Muhammad. Through him and his Messengership, the lights of the conception of Divinity, which had been extinguished under the thick veil of corrupted philosophies and religions, were rekindled and acquired stability and constancy. Through his Messengership, that which pleases the Lord of the Worlds

became clear to humanity, and through him humanity has been guided to belief, which is the light of creation and existence.

- We praise God for the blessing of Islam, which contains whatever pleases the Lord of the Worlds. Islam shows us what pleases Him and what our Lord, the Lord of the worlds and the Lord of the heavens and Earth, wills and approves.
- We praise Him for the light of belief, which derives strength from In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Those who praise should turn their attention from the bounty to the act of giving bounties so that they may perceive that the Giver of bounties sees them, is nearer to them than they are to themselves, and makes Himself known through giving bounties and loved through favoring. When people become conscious of His seeking to make Himself known and loved, they feel compelled to be thankful to Him.

Allahu Akbar [God is the Greatest]*

In the Name of God,
the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate

We say God is the greatest for the following reasons:

- He is incomparably greater than all things, for He is the All-Powerful, Who is powerful over all things through His infinite Power. He creates everything, without exception, with the same ease: *Your creation and raising from the dead are the same as creating and raising a single soul* (31:28). He can create a giant star, a whole, and a species as easily as He can create a minute particle, a part, and an individual.
- He is the All-Knowing, Who knows all things through the limitless knowledge essential to Him as the Divine Being. Nothing escapes Him, as He is present everywhere. The comprehensive wisdom, all-embracing favor, and all-encompassing consciousness; the decrees putting all things in ex-

* From *The Seedbed of Light* / The Fourth Treatise / Third Chapter

act order; and the fruitful ordinances and measurements, appointed hours, regular provision, mercy of universal diversity, firm and magnificent organization, and exact care, all of which are witnessed throughout the whole universe, testify to the Almighty's all-encompassing Knowledge: *Should He Who creates not know?* (67:14).

- His Will includes all things. While there was infinite number of probabilities for the universe and its contents to assume a certain form, it was arranged in the present order according to exact measures. Like a tree with leaves, blossoms, and fruits, all well-ordered creatures were created of simple, inanimate elements. All this bears witness to the Almighty's all-encompassing Will and demonstrates that whatever He wills is, and whatever He does not will is not.
- He is the Eternal "Sun," and this universe shows only a shadow of His lights, manifestations of His Names, and imprints of His acts.
- He is incomparably greater than all things. He is the Eternal Sovereign. All worlds are at His disposal in absolute dependence on the order and measure He has established.

- He is the Eternal Ruler. He ordered the universe through the laws of His usual way of acting, the prescripts of His Destiny and Decree, the precepts of His Will and Wisdom, the requirements of His Favor and Mercy, and the manifestations of His Names and Attributes. What we call laws (of nature) are but manifestations of His Knowledge, Command, and Will on all species.
- He is the Eternal Maker, Who has created and founded this macrocosm (the universe) and this microcosm (humanity). His stamp is on the foreheads of both, nay, on each part of both.
- He is the Eternal Designer. This universe consists of the lines of the “pen” of His Destiny and Decree, the designs of the “compasses” of His Wisdom, the fruits of the diffusion of His Mercy, the decorations of the “bright hand” of His Favoring, the flowers of the dispensations of His Munificence, and the rays of the manifestations of His Grace.
- He is the Eternally Powerful. This universe consists of the miracles of His Power, which testify that He is powerful over all things. Nothing has been (or is) able to escape His Power’s dominion, in relation to which a minute particle and the sun are the same.

- He is the Creator, Originator, and Fashioner for Whom are the Beautiful Names. All heavenly objects are shining proofs of His Divinity and Grandeur, and radiating witnesses of His Lordship and Splendor.
- He is the Creator of all things, the Provider of all living beings, the Giver of bounties to all in need of bounty, the Merciful in both worlds. Our master Muhammad and Paradise are works of His comprehensive Mercy. He is the Lord and Sustainer of all things, Who rears, trains, and maintains all things.
- He is the Fashioner of all things, the One Who has ordered this world and controls all things.
- He is exalted high above human comprehension, and absolutely free of incompetence and defect.
- He is incomparably greater than all things, for He is the greatest, Most High, Most Beautiful, the Best because of Himself, and the Most Grand and Most Majestic by Himself.

The Ranks in Manifesting *Allahu akbar* [God is the Greatest]*

First rank

In the Name of God,
the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate

Say: “All praise be to God, Who has never taken to Himself a son, and Who has no partner in sovereignty. Nor (needs) He any guardian due to weakness and humiliation. Magnify Him with all magnificence.” (18:111)

We believe and are at Your command. God is the greatest, greater than all things in power and knowledge, for He is the Fashioner Who made humanity and the universe by His Power, and inscribed humanity and the universe with the “pen” of His Destiny. Like the microcosm (humanity), this macrocosm (the universe) is something made by His Power, “inscribed” by His Destiny. He has made it a “mosque,” while making human beings worshippers in it. He has established the former as an abode, and the latter as a servant inhabiting it.

* From *The Seedbed of Light* / The Fourth Treatise / Fourth Chapter / Second Section

His art in the universe has been manifested as a book, while His coloring of humanity has flourished as speech. His Power in the universe displays His Majesty, while His Mercy toward humanity arranges His provision. His Majesty in the universe bears witness that He is One, while His provision of humanity announces that He is Single. His stamp on the universe, both on it as a whole and in its parts, shows itself in apparent calmness in never-ending motion, while His seal on humanity is on each part of as well as the entire human body.

Look at His works, which are firm and well-ordered. There is absolute order despite absolute abundance, absolute measure and balance despite absolute speed, absolute firmness despite absolute facility, absolute beauty of art despite absolute heterogeneity, absolute harmony and correlation despite absolute distance, absolute distinction despite absolute compositeness, and absolute worth and value despite infinite economy. This obvious quality of existence bears witness for a sensible person, and compels one who denies to admit that existence belongs to One Absolutely Powerful, the absolutely All-Knowing.

Existence can be explained with absolute ease by attributing it to One Divine Being. If you try to

explain it by attributing it to various origins, you encounter insurmountable barriers. If you attribute it to the One Divine Being, the whole universe will be as easy to create as a honeybee, and a honeybee will be as easy to create as a fruit. If, by contrast, you ascribe it to multiple origins, creating a honeybee will be as difficult as creating the universe, and creating a fruit will be as difficult as creating all trees in the universe.

This is because a single being, with a single movement, can produce an effect and deal with a whole. If that effect or treatment is expected of multiple beings, it will be obtained, if at all, only with extreme difficulty and after many controversies. Which is easier or more difficult: managing an army by a single commander or the soldiers, constructing a building by a architect or the stones, having planets revolve around a single sun or vice versa?

When existence is attributed to One Divine Being, the connection between existence and that Being becomes like a boundless power, and causes do not have to be of the same power. Also, the effect produced becomes great in proportion to the Being to Whom it is attributed. Otherwise each cause would have to be so infinitely powerful that it could

create existence, and the effect produced would be proportional to its own size only.

When all things are attributed to One Divine Being, they do not have to be created from absolute non-existence, for creation means giving external, material existence to things that already exist in Divine Knowledge. It is like developing a form reflected in a mirror, putting in words the meaning in one's mind, or rubbing a substance to make letters written in invisible ink visible. However, if things are ascribed to themselves or their causes, they have to be created from absolute non-existence. This is impossible.

The ease with which One Divine Being does this makes the existence of things as easy as absolutely necessary; the difficulty in the latter is beyond measure. A living being's existence requires that the particles forming it, which are spread out in the soil, water, and air, should come together. Therefore each particle or atom would have to have universal knowledge and absolute will. Anything with such knowledge and will would be independent of and have no need for any partners. Nowhere in the universe has any sign of such things and partners been found. Creating the heavens and Earth requires a perfect, infinite power that has no partner. Other-

wise, this power would have to be limited by a finite power, which is inconceivable. An infinite power does not need partners and is not obliged to admit them, even if they were to exist (they do not).

This Power has no partners, assistants, or ministers. Material causes are only a thin veil before the Eternal Power's operation, and have no creative affect in the existence of things. Human beings, the noblest cause and equipped with willpower, have only a very small part in those of their actions done through free will. If we do not have complete control over ourselves, despite our free will, how can animals, plants, and inanimate objects [and the lifeless, blind, and deaf laws that only have nominal existence] be partners with the Creator of the heavens and Earth in creating and controlling things?

Obviously, the "envelope" in which the Sovereign puts His gifts, the "handkerchief" in which He wraps His offerings, or the "soldier" by whom He sends His bounties cannot be partners with Him in His Kingdom. Nature and causes, which are like "soldiers" through whom the Absolute Sovereign sends His bounties to us, envelopes or chests in which He stores His offerings to us, handkerchiefs in which He wraps His gifts

for us, cannot be partners with Him or means of creative effect in executing His commands.

Second rank

God is the greatest, greater than all things in power and knowledge. He is the Creator, All-Knowing, Maker, All-Wise, All-Merciful, All-Compassionate. All earthly creatures and heavenly objects are the miracles of an All-Knowing Creator's Power. The multicolored and decorated plants and innumerable species of adorned animals distributed throughout the garden of Earth are the wonders of an All-Wise Maker's Art. Its smiling flowers and bedecked fruits are gifts of Mercy from an All-Merciful, All-Compassionate One.

Everything proclaims that their Creator, Fashioner, and Giver of gifts is powerful over all things, knows everything, and encompasses all things in mercy and knowledge. In relation to His Power, everything without exception is equal. All past events are miracles of an All-Wise Maker's art, and bear witness that that Maker is powerful over all future contingencies and that He can do whatever He wills in the future, for He is the All-Knowing Creator, All-Wise, and All-Mighty.

Glory be to Him Who has made the garden of Earth an exhibition of His art, the assembling ground of His Creativity's products, a place where His Power and Wisdom are manifested, a garden where His Mercy blossoms, the field to be sown for Paradise, and a place where creatures come and depart in a continuous flux according to fixed measures.

Ornamented animals, bedecked birds, fruit-bearing trees, flowering plants—all are miracles of His Knowledge, marvels of His Art, gifts of His Generosity, and proofs of His Favor. Smiling flowers promising fruits, birds singing at dawn, raindrops splashing on flowers, a mother's compassion for her infant—all are instances of an All-Loving One making Himself known, an All-Merciful One making Himself loved, imprints of the Compassion of an All-Pitying One, and the Pitying of a Most Kind One for jinn, humanity, spirit beings, angels, and animals.

Seeds, fruits, grains, and flowers are miracles of Wisdom, marvels of art, gifts of Mercy, proofs of [Divine] Oneness, and witnesses of His Bountifulness in the Hereafter. They proclaim that their Creator is powerful over and knows all things, and that He encompasses all things in mercy, knowledge, creativity, sustaining, making, and fashioning.

In relation to His Attributes of creating, arranging, maintaining, making, and fashioning, the sun is like a seed, a star like a flower, and Earth like a grain. Seeds and fruits mirror [Divine] Unity in the Realm of Multiplicity, and are signs of Destiny and indications of Power. The source of multiplicity (the universe and its contents) is the Realm of Unity. Multiplicity testifies to the Creator's Oneness in originating and fashioning, and ends in Unity pointing out the Maker's Wisdom in creating, sustaining, and maintaining.

As the universal view encompasses and considers all particulars, Wisdom manifests that the Creator of all things considers the particular. If the particular is a fruit, obviously it is the reason why the tree was created. We are the fruit of the universe, the Creator's most manifest purpose [in creating the universe]. The heart is like a seed or the nucleus [of a person], and the brightest mirror of the Maker of creation. Thus we are the universe's pivot upon which the wheel of creation turns, and for the sake of which the universe is continually destroyed and changed, transformed and renewed.

God is the greatest: O Great One! O God, You are One
Whose Grandeur, Greatness, and Majesty cannot be
grasped by intellects. All things announce in unison:
There is no god but He, continually seek: O Truth, and
eternally say: O Living One!

Third rank

God is the greatest, greater than all things in power and knowledge. He is All-Powerful, All-Determining, All-Knowing, All-Wise, All-Fashioning, All-Munificent, All-Subtle and Favoring, All-Decorating, All-Loving, the One Making Himself Known, All-Merciful, All-Compassionate, All-Pitying, All-Beautiful, the One with Absolute Beauty and Perfection, and the Eternal Designer. The truths of the worlds (in whole and in parts) and of creation (in whole and in parts), and existence and maintenance all consist in the lines drawn by the “pen” of His Decree and Destiny according to a definite ordering, determining, knowledge, and wisdom, and in the designs made by the “compasses” of His Knowledge and Wisdom according to a definite art and fashion.

They consist of decorations made by the “bright hand” of His art, Fashioning, Decorating, and Illustrating with favor and munificence; in the flowers of His Favoring, Munificence, Making Known, and Loving with mercy and bountifulness; and in the fruits of the overflowing spring of His Mercy, Bountifulness, Pitying, and Affection with grace and perfection. They also consist of the radiations of an everlasting Beauty and perpetual Perfection, as attested to

by the fact that the mirrors [reflecting those truths—that is, all creatures] are mortal and the reflections disappear, while manifestations of Beauty are permanent and continue to confer bounties despite their recipients' mortality.

The mortality of mirrors and the decay of creatures, despite the perpetual manifestation [of Divine Names, Attributes, and acts] in utmost abundance, is a clear sign and convincing argument that the manifest Beauty and flowering Perfection do not belong to those on whom they are manifested. This is a most eloquent explanation and evident proof of the abstract Beauty and ever-renewed Benevolence, of the Necessarily Existent and the All-Loving, Permanent One.

A perfect work points to a perfect act. A perfect act indicates a perfect name and a perfect agent. A perfect name betokens a perfect attribute. A perfect attribute shows a perfect function or essential capacity. A perfect function or essential capacity demonstrates the perfection of the Being through what is befitting for that Being, Who is the Most Evident Truth.

Fourth rank

May His Majesty be exalted. God is the greatest, for He is All-Just and the source of justice, the All-

Judging, All-Ruling, and All-Wise. He founded the tree of this universe in 6 days by the principles of His Will and Wisdom, divided it into branches by the precepts of His Decree and Destiny, arranged it by the rules of His way of acting, decorated it by the precepts of His Favor and Mercy, and illuminated it through the manifestations of His Names and Attributes. His creation's orderliness and balance; His creatures' decorations; the similarity, correct proportions, mutual assistance and answering among them; and the firm, conscious artistry in all things Destiny has determined for each, according to its capacity, attest to this.

There is a comprehensive, all-inclusive wisdom in creation's ordering; a perfect favoring in equipping each thing with necessary parts and organs, as well as making it good-looking and well-proportioned; an all-encompassing mercy in gratifying each creature's needs; an all-inclusive provision in each creature's raising and breeding all these qualities in creation and the life conferred on each living thing or being to make it an exhibition of the Creator's manifestations; and the beauties granted to it for certain purposes show that the Creator is One.

Members of a species die but the species remains. Each feels innate love for its Creator, Whom it adores,

and an attraction toward Him. Its coming into existence, formation and life, and the perfect functioning of its bodily parts, are amazing. All such qualities in creation also show that the Creator and the Lord is One.

Plants and animals are sustained and nursed, and produce wisely and for many sublime purposes. There is a perfect and purposeful order in changes occurring on Earth, and each thing has amazing, perfect artistry and beauty despite its coming into existence as if all at once. All of this demonstrates that the Creator and Ruler is One.

Innumerable living creatures in the universe need provision. Creation is very diverse, and so meeting the needs of each part of creation requires great diversity. No creature can meet its needs. Seeing that a single grape costs almost as much as the universe, for the co-operation of all elements (especially the sun, soil, water, and the vine) is required to produce it, it is clear that no creature can fulfill even one of its needs. But the needs of every creature are met just on time from unexpected sources. This universal, precise provision shows that the Creator and Provider is One.

Every creature is essentially weak and helpless. It has nothing of its own. Whatever it has in the

name of strength and wealth is from the Creator. Its acknowledgement of its weakness and helplessness attracts Divine help. Therefore its strength lies in its weakness, and its power derives from its helplessness. Inanimate matter and substances are equipped and radiated with life and consciences. They undergo numerous changes during their life-history. Their neediness, their innate capacity, is a prayer acceptable by God. All of this shows that the Creator is One, Immutable and Answerer of prayers.

A conscious, living being draws close to God through its supplications and acts of worship. Sincere, regular worship and supplications enable one to have deep insight and an “eye of the heart” by which one can penetrate into the meaning of things and events, and the Divine purposes in creation, and unveil some hidden truths in creation and pertaining to Divinity. Regular worship, prayer, and remembrance of God give one peace and tranquillity and make one a perfect human being, a best pattern of creation—all such qualities of creation and many others unmentioned are witnesses that this universe is managed by a single All-Wise One; sustained and raised by a single, All-Munificent Lord, One Besought-of-All; serves a single Master; and is at the disposal of a single Ruler. Also, the origin of cre-

ation is a single Power, the stamps of Whose Oneness appear on each of Its “missives,” on each of Its “pages,” and as abundantly as the number of those missives and pages.

Every flower and fruit, plant and tree, animal and rock, sand particle and stone is a manifest seal demonstrating that the One Who placed it is the “In-scriber” of this space, the land and sea, and all their contents. He is the Designer of the sun and moon on the page of the heavens. May the Majesty of that Designer be exalted. He is God the greatest.

Whence the world sings in unison: *There is no god but He.*

Fifth rank

God is the greatest. He is the Creator, All-Powerful, Fashioner, and All-Seeing. All celestial bodies and pearl-like stars are proofs of His Divinity and Grandeur, witnesses of His Lordship and Might. They attest to and proclaim the splendor of His Lordship’s Kingdom, the vastness of His Rule and Wisdom, and His Power’s magnificence and greatness.

Do they not look at the heaven above them, how We have built it and decorated it? (50:6). Look at the sky and see the serene silence, purposeful mo-

tion, and magnificent glittering smile with its orderly creation and well-proportioned art. Its “lamp” shines for the changing of seasons, its “lantern” radiates for the world’s illumination, its stars glitter for the worlds’ decoration. All proclaims the boundless Sovereignty in the universe’s organization and maintenance.

That All-Powerful Creator knows all things and has a Will so comprehensive that whatever He wills is, and whatever He does not will is not. He is powerful over all things by an absolute, all-encompassing Power essential to His Divine Being. Just as it is inconceivable for the sun to exist without light and heat, it is inconceivable for the God and Creator of the heavens to be without all-encompassing Knowledge and absolute Power. He knows all things by an all-encompassing Knowledge essential to His Divine Being. Nothing can escape this Knowledge, by virtue of Its relation with all things and Its penetrative capability and comprehensiveness.

Whatever is observed in creation (e.g., orderliness, balance, and harmony; all-inclusive wisdom, perfect favoring, well-established measures, well-arranged dispensation, fruitful decrees, appointed hours, regular provision, and pleasing care [given to all things];

and perfect, distinguishing measurement, order and firmness, and the absolute ease thereof) testifies to the all-encompassing Knowledge of the Knower of the Unseen and of all things. The verse: *Should He Who creates not know? He is All-Subtle, All-Aware* (67:14), points out that the existence of something requires knowing it. If the beauty of art in one's work points to one's consciousness to the extent of a small star's brightness on a pitch-dark night, humanity's creation indicates its Creator's Knowledge to the extent of the sun's splendor at noon.

As He knows all things, His Will encompasses all things. Nothing takes place without His Will. Power produces the effect, Knowledge distinguishes, and Will apportions and individualizes. This is how things come into existence. There are as many witnesses of the Almighty's Will as there are characteristics, attributes, and states of things.

Creating and fashioning each thing with the distinguishing character and attributes purposefully chosen for it out of innumerable alternatives and potentialities; forming each most delicately and with most sensitive measures in an infinitely diverse flux; creating diverse, well-formed living beings from simple, inanimate elements (e.g., creating humanity with its

senses and all other systems and bodily organs from a sperm [and an egg], a bird and its bodily systems from an egg, a tree with all its parts from a seed) witness that everything is given its individual character and attributes by the Almighty's Will and Choice. Glory be to Him.

The correspondence in bodily structures and basic systems among a species' members shows that their Maker is One and Single. However, the fact that each one is unique demonstrates that that One and Single Maker does whatever He wills and judges however He wishes. May His Majesty be exalted.

As the All-Knowing and All-Willing Creator has an all-encompassing Knowledge and all-inclusive Will, He has a perfect Power issuing from and essential to His Divine Being. That Power has no opposite, for that would require the agreement or combination of two opposites, which, by universal assent, is inconceivable. There can be no grades in that Power, for in relation to It everything, without exception, is equal. This is because the Power is not material.

The transparency of the immaterial dimension of existence with which It deals, the interrelation among things, the exact balance in creation, the perfect order of existence, and the utmost obedience of existence

to It testify to this. The absolute order and harmony in creation, the absolute measuredness and distinctness observed in it, despite the speed and ease of creation and the created's infinite multiplicity, individualization, and diversity, also testify to this fact.

The One Who has that Power can create anything, without exception, with great ease because He is One and Single, and because of the necessity of His existence and being totally different from the created (He is unrestricted, indivisible, and uncontained by space). Nothing impedes Him; rather, whatever seems to be an impediment serves as a means of ease, although He has no need for any help in conducting and executing His commands. He can do so because anything He creates, without exception, has the same quality of art as that seen in everything else. Whoever creates the latter creates the former. The One Who creates a seed, which is a small-scale copy of its tree into which the Creator has included the tree by the principles of His Knowledge, must undoubtedly be the Creator of the tree. It is not difficult for the Power That brings into existence the particulars to create the universals.

Just as the copy of the "Qur'an of wisdom" inscribed in an atom with ether particles has the same

quality of beauty and art found in the copy of the “Qur’an of grandeur” written on the pages of the heavens in the ink of stars and suns, so creating a honeybee and an ant requires no less skill and artistry than creating a date palm. The art contained in a rose is not less than the art contained in a pearl-like star. While the utmost and perfect ease of creating things causes the misguided to confuse creation with self-formation, which requires accepting impossibilities and superstitions that contradict sound reasoning and judgment, it leads people of truth to the certainty that planets and minute particles are the same in relation to the Power of the Creator of the universe. May His Majesty be exalted and His Name be extolled. There is no God but He.

Sixth rank

God is the greatest, greater than all things in power and knowledge. He is the All-Just, All-Wise, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, One, Single, and Eternal Sovereign. All worlds are at the disposal of His “hands” of order and balance, arranging and measuring, Justice and Wisdom, and Knowledge and Power. They show His Oneness and Singleness. Nothing is excluded from His order and balance or His arranging and measuring, which are two “chapters”

of the Manifest Record and the Manifest Book,¹⁰

¹⁰ The Manifest Record and Manifest Book are explained in *The Thirtieth Word: The Manifest Record and Manifest Book* are repeated in several places in the Qur'an. Some interpreters maintain that the phrases are identical in meaning; others say they have different meaning and connotations. Although their explanations of the true meanings and contents differ, they agree that both describe Divine Knowledge. However, via the Qur'an's enlightenment, I have this conviction:

The Manifest Record, which looks more to the Unseen world than to the visible, material world, expresses one aspect of Divine Knowledge and Commands. Looking more to the past and future than to the present, it is a book of Divine Destiny that contains the origin, the roots and the seeds of things rather than their flourishing forms in their visible existence.

The origins, sources, and roots from which God Almighty shapes things with perfect order and art, show that they are arranged according to a book of the principles contained in Divine Knowledge. The seeds and fruits, which contain the indexes and programs of beings that will subsequently come into existence, constitute a miniature register of Divine Commands. For example, a seed is said to be the program and index according to which a whole tree may be formed. Moreover, it is the miniature embodiment of the Divine principles that cause the tree to come into existence and that determine this program and index. In short, the Manifest Record is an index and program of the Tree of Creation as a whole, which spreads its branches through the past, future, and the Unseen world. In this sense, it is a book of Divine Destiny or a register of its principles. Through these principles' dictates and demands, minute particles or atoms are used and managed to bring things into existence.

which, in turn, are the titles to the Knowledge and Command of the All-Knowing and All-Wise, and the Power and Will of the All-Mighty and All-Com-

The Manifest Book looks more to the visible, material world than to the Unseen world, for it looks more to the present than to the past and future. It expresses Divine Power and Will, rather than Divine Knowledge and Commands or laws and principles of creation. If the Manifest Record is the book of the Divine Destiny, the Manifest Book is the book of Divine Power. The perfect art and orderliness in everything's essence and existence, attributes and functions, demonstrate that everything is given existence according to the laws of an effective will and the principles of an absolute power. Also, it is specifically formed and given an appointed measure and particular shape. Therefore, this shows that Divine Power and Will have a universal, comprehensive register of laws, a great book, according to which a particular form and substance is determined for each entity.

It is curious that the people of neglect, misguidance and [corrupt] philosophy, although they have felt the existence of God's Supreme Preserved or Guarded Tablet (*Lawhun Mahfuz*) and seen the manifestations and reflections of that book of Divine Wisdom and Will, have named it "nature," and thus made it completely meaningless. In reality, however, through the dictates of the Manifest Record (the decree and instruction of Divine Destiny), Divine Power uses particles or atoms to create or manifest the chain of beings, each link of which is His sign, on the metaphorical page of time (the Tablet of Effacement and Confirmation). This means that particles or atoms are set to move so that beings may be transferred from the Unseen world to the material, visible world; from (the Realm of) Knowledge to the (Realm of) Power. (Tr.)

passionate. The order and balance in this Book, together with that Record, testify that all is at the All-Merciful's disposal, the All-Pitying's ordering, the All-Gracious' decorating, and the All-Ruling's measuring.

In sum: The manifestations of the Divine Names "the First" and "the Last" in creation refer to beginning and end, origin and issue, past and future, command and knowledge, and point to the Manifest Record. The manifestations of the Names "the Outward" and "the Inward" on things connected with God's Attribute of Creation point to the Manifest Book.

The universe is like a huge tree, and each world in it is like a tree. The universe's creation and division into worlds and species may be likened to a tree. A tree has an origin (its seed) and an issue that carries on its task after its death (the seed in its fruit). Its beginning and end manifest "the First" and "the Last." Through its composition and the purposes it serves, the original seed is an index or code for the tree's formation. Thus it manifests "the First." The seeds in the tree's fruits manifest "the Last."

Seeds are like miniature chests containing the Pen of Destiny's inscribed index and code for forming new trees that exactly resemble the original

one. A tree's exterior manifests the Name "the Outward." Through its perfect, well-ordered structure, decoration, and purposes it serves, it is like a perfectly beautiful dress made with perfect wisdom and favor to fit the tree. The tree's interior manifests the Name "the Inward." Through its perfect, amazing organization and the way it is fed, its interior is like an extraordinary machine or factory working in perfect order and balance.

The tree's beginning resembles an amazing code, its end an extraordinary index, and both point to the Manifest Record. Its exterior points to the Manifest Book, just as human memory indicates the Supreme Guarded Tablet. All trees' original seeds and fruits indicate the Manifest Record, and their exteriors and interiors symbolize the Manifest Book. Compare with a particular tree the "tree" of Earth with its past and future, the "tree" of the universe with its beginning and future, and the "tree" of a person with his or her ancestors and descendants.

Seventh rank

God is the greatest, greater than all things in power and knowledge. He is the Creator, Opener, All-Acting, All-Knowing, Giver of Gifts, Distributor of

Blessings, and Eternal “Sun.”¹¹ All worlds and their contents are shadows of His lights, works of His acts, colors of the embroidery of His Names’ manifestations, lines of the “pen” of His Destiny and Decree, and mirrors manifesting His Attributes of Beauty, Majesty, and Perfection. All of this is attested to by the Eternal Witness—the Almighty Himself—with all His Books, Pages, or Scrolls; by creation’s signs of and the Qur’an’s verses; by Earth, with its manifestations of absolute riches and wealth despite its essential destitution and need; and by the Prophets, saints and purified, exacting scholars with enlightened intellects and illumined hearts, their investigations, spiritual discoveries and supplications, and the blessings with which they are favored.

All of the above, with utmost certainty, accept the testimony of creation’s signs, the Qur’an’s verses, and the testament of the heavenly Books and Pages containing the testimony of the Necessarily Existent One. All of these witnesses agree that all creatures are works of His Power, inscriptions of His Destiny, mirrors of His Names, and images of His lights.

¹¹ Using these Names to view the Divine acts and imprints behind creatures, one can move to the One called by these Names.

Refuting False Notions About the Origin of Existence*

KNOW, O FRIEND, that those who say: “Things are formed by themselves,” “Causes have brought it about,” or “Nature requires it [to be so]” cause much confusion, for such statements are false. You exist. So, according to the first statement, you are your own creature. According to the second one, [material] causes have brought you about. According to the last one, some unconscious, deaf, and blind laws or forces [attributed to nature] or lifeless things called “nature” required your existence. But the truth is that you are a creature of God, the Almighty.

As for the first statement, things cannot be formed by themselves, because each particle or atom forming your body would have to have an eye to see your whole body and all of creation, as well as consciousness [to be aware of all requirements of life and existence]. Your perfect composition, the perfection of art in you, requires this, for all particles of existence

* From *The Seedbed of Light* / The Sixth Treatise / Second Addendum

are in vital and substantial relations with each other and with all creation.

To print a book, a printing house must have as many iron letters or keys as needed to print it. If you made yourself, you must contain as many molds as the number of atoms in you, for they are in conscious relation and communication with each other. Your composition is uniform, meaning that all parts are in close interrelation with each other. Therefore, like the stones forming an arch or a dome, all your atoms or building blocks should be both dominant over and dominated by each other. They also should be like the manifestations of the Names and Attributes of the One Who rolls up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books—both opposite and complementary to each other.

Causes cannot create anything by themselves. For example, if bottles containing medical ingredients fall off the shelf and become mixed on the floor, would the desired medicine be produced? Using the same analogy, could you be formed by chance or random causes? How could innumerable deaf, blind, and unconscious causes come together and create something that has perfect order? By coming together they only increase in deafness and blindness. Each human

being is a perfect work of art [intelligent, conscious, and equipped with endless and extremely complex feelings, senses, and faculties, and feeling infinite need]. How can that which is deaf, blind, and unconscious bestow hearing, sight, and consciousness on something else?

Assume that innumerable causes come together in a most orderly fashion and in exact measure to create a cell in your eye. With the same amount of effort, then, the universe's basic parts or elements, including huge heavenly objects, should be able to assemble themselves in your palm or in each of your cells. Why? Because if you work in a house, this means the house contains you. All of the universe's parts and contents are related to humanity. So if causes created you, the entire universe should be able to operate within each of your body's parts and be contained by one of your cells. This is a most inconceivable sophistry.

Nature cannot create because it is something supposed to exist, a name bestowed by those who do not know the real facts of the matter. However, in its true meaning, it is a Divine art, a painting by the All-Merciful.

“Natural forces” are only manifestations of the Power of the All-Merciful, All-Knowing, All-Aware,

All-Willing. “Chance” is only a mistaken supposition put forward by those who are unaware of or deny the Single Maker. In many of my treatises included in this book, I have argued that this wonderful art [that constitutes the essence of what they call nature] is really the work of the Power of the All-Aware, All-Seeing, having all the attributes of Perfection.

Could something restricted, solid, inanimate, whose existence or non-existence is equally possible (meaning that one must prefer its existence and create it), have woven the universe’s garment? Could a gnat have participated in weaving these perfectly designed and adorned garments in which those words are dressed? The only explanation for your existence and that of creation is that everything that has been created is a creature of an Eternal Maker, and that they all testify to this fact.

There are other witnesses: the Qur’an and all other revealed books; the writings of saints and believers in God’s existence and Unity; all that exists and happens in the universe; the lord of creation and all other Prophets, saints, and angels; Prophet Muhammad; humanity and jinn with all their “natural” needs; and God—all of these testify that *there is no god but He* (3:18).

KNOW, O FRIEND, that the falsehood of attributing creation to things themselves, nature, or causes can be explained through the example of a fruit-bearing tree. If you attribute this tree to God, the One and Single, you attribute it to its seed and to the laws of germination, creation, and growth issuing from the Necessarily Existent Being, the One and Single, and on which that seed depends. The tree is dependent on the laws issuing from a Single Creator because of the ease coming from the Oneness of Him Who governs its germination, growth, and life. It is just as easy for that Single Creator to grow that seed into a large coconut palm bearing countless fruits or into a very small one with only a few fruits.

But if you attribute a tree to itself, causes, or nature, then each fruit, blossom, leaf, branch, and twig on it would need whatever the whole tree does, for each part is an epitome of a whole. Thus, whatever is needed by the whole is needed by each part.

Consider these two alternatives. The first one, which is done by God with perfect ease, makes creation necessary and inevitable, whereas the second one is so unbelievably difficult that it renders the creation of anything inconceivable.

In short: If you attribute creation to things themselves, you must accept that every cell of your body can encompass the universe. If you attribute creation to material causes, you must affirm that every cell is like a room in which all causes operating in the universe are included, for all cells are the same and display the same structure. This uniformity leads you to unity in diversity, to the interrelatedness seen in the universe, and therefore to the Maker's unity. Something unified, displaying uniformity, and composed of countless interrelated parts in a basic relationship with each other could not have been created by more than one Creator. How can a cell in which even a gnat's two wings cannot be included contain the many material, bodily causes needed for it to function?

Something having external, material existence is more established, stable, and fixed than something having only an ideal, immaterial existence. A tiny particle of the former can contain a mountain of the latter. [For example, a mountain's reflection can fit into a small mirror. Since whatever exists is contingent, its existence or non-existence was equally possible. Its coming into existence was the result of a preference by One having the absolute authority of preference, the One with an absolutely necessary

existence without which nothing could exist. Therefore,] that necessary existence is more established, stable, and fixed than all material existence. It is the Real Existence, and so cannot be contained by contingent existence.

Contingent things—whatever exists other than the Necessarily Existent One—are reflected in the mirror of the Eternal, all-encompassing Knowledge, while their real existence consists in their existence in that Knowledge [as meaning]. They come into material existence through the manifestation of the lights of Necessary Existence, and thus show the Necessarily Existent One's existence. Their material existence in the corporeal world, the result of their transference from the all-encompassing sphere of Knowledge, can never be of the same essence and quality, or of the same existential degree, as that of Real Existence.



- * Reflect on the lines of the universe, for they are mis-sives to you from the High Abode.

The Book of Creation displays orderliness as clearly as the midday sun and exhibits Power's mir-

* From *The Seedbed of Light* / The Eleventh Treatise / Second Proof

acle in every word or letter. Its composition is so miraculous that, even supposing that each natural cause were a free agent, each cause would prostrate humbly before this miraculousness, acknowledging: “Glory be to You. We have no power. Surely, You are All-Mighty, All-Wise.”

This Book’s order is so subtle and delicate that inserting a new point in its exact place requires an absolute power that can create everything, for each letter—especially living ones—has inner relations with sentences and a strong connection with all other words. Thus, whoever created a gnat’s eyes created the sun, and whoever ordered a flea’s stomach ordered the solar system. Refer to: *Your creation and resurrection are but as a single soul* (31:28), and see how truthful a witness comes from a bee’s tongue, which is only one of Power’s miracles or represents a small word in this Book.

Ponder over a micro-organism that, although invisible to the naked eye, is a sample of creation. The One Who “wrote” it in that miraculous fashion also “wrote” the universe. If you study it and discern its subtle mechanisms and wonderful systems, you will be convinced that its existence and life cannot be attributed to lifeless, simple, natural causes

that cannot distinguish between possibilities. Otherwise you must admit that each particle contains the consciousness of sages, the knowledge of scientists, and the genius of statesmen or administrators, and that they communicate with each other directly. Even the superstitious are ashamed of such a claim.

There is no explanation other than to regard it as a miracle of Divine Power, the invention of the One Who invented and arranged the universe. If this were not so, it would be impossible for the two most important natural causes or laws, gravity and repulsion, to come together in an atom. Gravity and repulsion, motion and similar phenomena, are names of Divine principles or ways of operating represented as laws. They may be accepted as laws, provided they are not promoted to being the foundation of an agent nature. Being only names or titles or having nominal existence, they should not be accorded real, external existence.

Question: Why do people believe in matter's eternity and attribute all species' formation to random motions of particles or similar things?

Answer: Reasoning or rational judgment does not always lead to belief, as being rationally convinced does not mean believing in God. They cannot per-

ceive their mistake, as their reasoning is based on a superficial view and imitation. If they were to pursue this line of reasoning, they would see how illogical and irrational such a belief is. If, despite this, they still hold such a belief, they are heedless of the Creator. Such a strange deviation! How can those who find it hard to accept the eternity of God, the Glorified, and attribute creation to Him—although eternity and creativity are among the Divine Essence’s indispensable Attributes—attribute eternity and creativity to countless particles and helpless things?

Recall this well-known incident: Once, people were scanning the sky for the new crescent moon to mark Ramadan’s beginning. An old man claimed he had seen it, when what he had really seen was a downward-curving white hair from his eyebrow. It is that hair-like thing that blinds people to the truth. Humanity is of noble character by creation. While pursuing truth, people sometimes encounter falsehood and keep it in their hearts. Other times, while digging out the truth they come across misguidance and, supposing it to be the truth, accept it.

Question: What are those things called “nature,” “laws,” and “forces,” and how are people deceived by them?

Answer: Nature is the comprehensive Divine “Shari‘a” established for the order and harmony among everything contained in the visible, material world. This law of creation also is called the “way of God.” Nature is the result of all nominal laws in creation. Forces are the principles of this “Shari‘a,” and laws are elements of the same “Shari‘a.” The regularity of its principles and elements leads people to see it as “nature” with a real, external existence, and, after that, as an agent. Although the human heart or mind cannot be convinced that nature is a true agent, those who deny the All-Majestic Creator and refuse to understand the Divine Power’s miraculous works might begin to see this blind, ignorant nature as the origin of things.

Nature is something printed, not a printer; a design, not a designer; an object acted on, not an agent; a rule or measure, not an origin; an order, not an orderer. It is a principle without power, a set of laws without real or external existence that issues from the Divine Attributes of Will and Power.

Suppose a young person comes to this exquisite world from another one and enters a beautiful, richly adorned palace. No one to whom this building and decoration can be attributed is seen. So this

person, after seeing a comprehensive book containing the blueprint and information on how the palace was built and furnished, and due to his or her ignorance and obsession with the builder, thinks that the book built the palace. In the same way, the heedlessness of some people concerning the All-Majestic Creator allows them to deceive themselves into accepting the natural world as its own originator.

God has two kinds of “Shari‘a.” One issues from the Divine Attribute of Speech and regulates or orders the acts of servants issuing from their free will. The other issues from the Divine Attribute of Will and Power, comprises the Divine commands of creation, and is the result of the Divine Way of acting. The first one comprises comprehensible laws, while the second one consists of nominal laws, wrongly called “laws of nature.” They have no creative or inventive part in existence, for that is unique to the Divine Power.

Everything that exists is connected to all other things; nothing can exist or survive by itself. The one who created a single thing created all things, and can only be the One, Eternally-Besought-of-All. By contrast, natural causes, to which the misguided ascribe creativity, are numerous, do not know one another,

and are blind. Attributing creativity to them means accepting that innumerable blind, lifeless things have come together by chance and formed that vast, orderly universe, [the existence, order, and harmony of which manifestly require absolute knowledge and will, power and wisdom]. *Then leave them to plunge and play* (6:91).

To sum up: The Book of the Universe's observed order and regularity, and the manifest miraculousness in its composition, are two proofs of Divine Unity showing that the universe and its contents are works of the absolute Power, infinite Knowledge, and eternal Will of God.

Question: How can the order, harmony, and regularity be established?

Answer: Science functions as if humanity's senses have discovered this order by deduction and induction. Each branch of science is based upon or studies one aspect of existence. Science's universal principles originate in this order, harmony, and regularity. Each branch comprises the universal principles and rules prevalent in the species it studies. Those principles' universality and uniformity point to the order's magnificence, for without it universal rules could not be inferred. Scientists discover that

order through science, and by it see that the macro-human being (the universe) is as orderly as themselves. There is wisdom in everything, for nothing is purposeless or left to its own devices.

The Book of Creation, with all its systems, worlds of living creatures and particles, proclaims Divine Unity. Altogether they declare: *There is no god but God.*



* Praise be to God, Whom all things glorify with their own visible and perceptible words. For example, lights, rivers, and rain clouds are the words of the source of light, water, and air, respectively.

Glory be to Him Whom praise:
 the source of light with lights;
 water and air with rivers and clouds...
 earth and plants with rocks and flowers...
 the atmosphere and trees with birds
 and fruits...
 clouds and sky with rain and moons...
 Light shines by His illuminating and
 displaying it.
 Air produces waves by His controlling
 and charging it (with tasks).
 Water bursts forth and flows by His
 subjugating and depositing it,

* From *The Seedbed of Light* / The Twelfth Treatise (An Important Topic)

which is praise for the One Who
 determines all things
 and appoints for each thing a
 particular nature.
 Stones are adorned by His shaping and
 arranging them.
 Flowers smile by His making them
 adorned and beautiful.
 Fruits appear richly adorned by His
 favoring and graciousness,
 which is a manifest, comely praise
 for the One
 Who creates every thing with a
 particular nature.
 Birds sing by His enabling them to speak
 and making them lovely.
 Rain trills by His sending it down and
 making it vital for beings.
 Moons move by His determining
 and directing,
 which is an eloquent glorification for the
 All-Determining,
 a luminous sign for the All-
 Overwhelming.
 Glory be to Him Whom praise:
 the heavens with constellations and light-
 giving objects...
 the planetary systems with suns, stars,
 and moons...
 the atmosphere with thunderbolts,
 lightning, and rain...
 Earth with animals, plants, and trees...
 Trees praise Him with leaves and flowers,

then with well-proportioned fruits.
When flowers stop praising, fruits
begin to speak
with an eloquent, light-diffusing praise.
A seed hymns silently by heart, full
of mysteries;
a book is inscribed in it—the record
of its tree's life-history.
It voices the praise of the Splitter of
grains, the Originator.
All plants praise and worship, glorify and
prostrate before the All-Determining.
The smiles of plants through their
flowers are
praise manifest for one able to discern.
Their sprouts and spikes are their mouths,
seeds and
grains the words of the poetry they recite...
Their proportions and orderliness are
another tongue,
and their design is by the designing of the
All-Illuminating.
Each is a work of art adorned by the All-
Radiating.
With their being sustenance, their colors
and smells,
they describe and praise the Originator.
They describe His Attributes, make His
Names known,
and interpret His will to make Himself
known and loved.
The grains in the ears and flowers like
eyes are “drops”

of the manifestations of the Originator...
So His servants may love Him and His
creatures may know him.
A tree in blossom is an expression of
praise in verse,
with many “eyes” that have opened.
It has adorned its green parts for its
festive day,
in order that its Lord may watch His
illustrious works.
It exhibits the gems attached to it to those
with eyes to see;
and proclaims to humanity the wisdom in
its creation,
with the treasury deposited in it by the
Munificence of the Lord of fruits.
Glory be to Him Who does good whatever
He does:
how illustrious His proof, how clear
His explanations!
Who is the All-Shaping Originator,
All-Able Creator,
All-Illuminating Fashioner, Who creates
each thing
with a nature particular to it.
Look at His Mercy in the season of spring
to see His art:
the season of spring is a festive day for
His servants...
the day when His creation—trees and
plants—adorn themselves...
Each plant manifests to the degree
of its rank

the sovereignty of its Sovereign and the
 gifts of its Owner...
 It is ready to receive and fulfill His orders;
 renders much service in His Name...
 It blossoms and yields fruits by His leave,
 resembling a clean table for His guests...
 Light and air, soil, and water are
 conveyors of His
 commands and bearers of His Throne,
 publicizing His Art, illustrating
 His Wisdom.
 Knowledge and Wisdom: light is
 their throne.
 Grace and Mercy: water is their throne.
 Preserving and reviving: soil is
 their throne.
 Command and Will: air is their throne.

KNOW, O FRIEND, that all those elements are ob-
 jects on which His Names are manifested; they are
 media, not sources or origins; they are acted on, not
 agents. They are conveyors by His Strength and car-
 ry what they carry by His leave, by His Names...
 they do what they do by His Power.

If what falls to the part of things did not consist
 only of being objects where His Names are mani-
 fested, being only passive media, it would have been
 necessary for soil and air, light and water to have in
 each of their particles or atoms or molecules an infi-
 nite knowledge, power, and creative ability. For ex-

ample, air passes through the atmosphere and visits the particles of all plants destined to grow. Its passing causes countless marvels—miracles of the art of Him Who has created the heavens—to appear.

If it were possible for a simple, lifeless, ignorant particle to build those trees, attach those fruits to them, and to shape those flowers—in short, to invent all those things—and if it were able to bear this Earth, you would have the right to doubt the Oneness of Him Who has no partners. Otherwise, it is beyond doubt that only He Who holds all creation in His Power’s grasp, in His Wisdom’s grasp, can claim any ownership and dominion of things.

Every grain, drop, or particle works in the service of plants, fruits, or flowers. If they were not employed by the Lord of the heavens, each grain, drop, or particle would have enough art, power, and wisdom to invent and direct all of those creatures.

Glory be to Him Whom trees praise
with their leaves, blossoms, and fruits...
Bursting of blossoms amidst multiplicity
of leaves
to lead the way to the growth of fruits,
and the growth of fruits in the lap
of the flowers—
which are daughters of trees—
dancing in the hands of green branches,

moved by enlivening breezes—
all is an eloquent speech extolling Him
 Who has built them,
 Who is One, Overwhelming.
Their mouths, letters, and words...
 are leaves, flowers, and fruits.
Leaves dance in delight at mentioning
 the Creator...
Flowers smile in gratitude to the
 All-Able One
 for their adornment...
Fruits joy in what Mercy provides
 for them,
 singing sweet melodies,
well-ordered, well-proportioned,
 in shining colors...
artistically designed and embroidered,
 with wonderful shape;
richly adorned and marvelously painted,
 delicious in the eating.
The marvelous art they display,
 their being in great variety and with
 diverse skins—
all this is in praise of the Originator and
 describes the All-Able.
They describe His Attributes and make
 His Names known,
 interpreting that He wills to be loved
 and manifests His Affection.
The drops of the Creator's manifestations
 come out
 of the mouths of fruits that He wills
 to be known

and loved by His servants, and manifest
His Compassion for His creatures
in poverty.

Glory be to Him. How clear His proof,
how vast His Power, how manifest
His Mercy.

He is All-Building and All-Shaping,
All-Composing and All-Arranging,
All-Spreading and All-Promising.

Glory be to Him: How gracious
His Majesty,
how majestic His Grace, how great
His Sovereignty.

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